

This Great State

A Rigorous Examination of Leadership in Maine - Present, Past and Future By Alex Hammer

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To those on life's journey who have touched me and taught me the only true lesson - how better to love.

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INTRODUCTION

At 7:32 pm on August 29, 1965 I entered this world, this country, and this great state. For it is at that moment, at St. Joseph's hospital in Bangor, that I was born the second of five children to Max and Clara Hammer.

You will not be at all surprised to hear that I do not remember the details of this event.

I grew up for all but four of my childhood years in Orono, graduating from Orono High School in 1983 and the University of Maine at Orono (USAA National Scholar, #1 graduate in the College of Arts & Sciences, All-Eastern United States Division I Athlete (relay)) in 1988.

I went to college an extra year because I was rather track and running obsessed in those days, and wanted to use up my full eligibility after sitting out a year from athletics upon transferring to UMaine (which was much less expensive and where my father was on the faculty) from Bates College, where I had also done quite well.

I loved and feel great affection for both schools.

In 1988 I accepted an offer to attend graduate school in Philadelphia at Temple University, which - although I would never have guessed it at the time - began a span of 16+ years until early 2005 when I lived out of state.

Although from a young age I had at a deep level always felt fortunate to be from Maine, I think that it was during the adult years away from the state (I had also lived in upstate NY for around four years of my childhood) that the power and the draw and the intensity to my spirit in regard to - for me - what it means to be in Maine took deepest root.

In early 2006 I began the pieces that comprise this work. That followed a November 2005 incident in which I was struck by a pickup truck while a pedestrian in Bangor and seriously injured (29 days at Eastern Maine Medical Center followed by the better part of a year on crutches). During this time I feel that my life became deeper, and I hope that my writing became deeper as well.

Sometimes I guess things in life can be mixed blessings. Lemonade from lemons kind of thing.

I like to think that who we are as individuals is influenced by our surroundings, and our family and friends and experiences to be sure, but that there is an element intrinsic also to our beings that transcends even all of these in regard to marking who we are.

I believe that there is - or can be - great authenticity and even power at the individual level, but that there is remoteness and shallowness and even loss when we do not forge deeper meaningful positive ties and connections with others and our larger world.

I want the best for our state, realizing that I am but one out of over a million presently calling Maine home. I love Maine, and it saddens me some of the things that we have collectively experienced and still face. I believe that Maine and Mainers have a collective strength (perhaps quieter in nature than some places) and decency that can propel Maine to prosperity and leadership in the most broad (as well as fundamental) aspects of those terms. I believe that there is a yearning in the

human condition, wherever we live, to have had an impact in this life and to have done something real. When we do accomplish, in moments or accumulated in larger pieces, such real successes, that is, I believe, an awakening to our potentials that is (if you will allow this notion) somewhat timeless.

I hope fiercely for an end to wars, and poverty and lack, but no less so for a cessation of mediocrity in any aspect over which we reside and bear some control. When we think of others that have made a difference in our lives, I want to live in a world in which it means something in regard to the sincere efforts that we have made.

That they have been noticed and built upon.

I believe in the saying that "to those to whom much has been given, much is expected". Much of this book holds to a high standard (if not account) our leading elected officials - and all of us really - towards together defining and accomplishing our better sides and our realistic ideals. "This Great State" is a researched and also theoretical testament to directions in which we may be taking ourselves and those in which we are being led. It is a reflection and an examination of what we are doing with our lives and our state.

It is, in any parts that may resonate if they do, a call to action in regard to meeting our collective challenges with courage and integrity. Of many voices, and a world in which sometimes asking a better question (and holding strong in the demand for a better answer) is enough to make at least a dent of real progress in an often difficult world.

To me, I would not be who I am (whatever that is!) - not even close - if I was not from Maine. Maine is a great state. And - only if you agree - I want us together to make it, extend it, preserve it, and grow it, so much greater.

If the book touches you to reach out to others to work on common problems, and fosters constructive dialogue, then I will have considered it a success.

Alex Hammer hscpub@aol.com (207) 945-5240 September 2008

This Great State

Excerpt: "Many Mainers realize, I believe, that we have come (or more precisely remain) at that proverbial and oft-cited crossroads. It is a crossroads, to cite a few dimensions, between economic well-being versus lack, between traditions versus modernized change, between urban (and suburban) versus rural, between globalization versus protectionism or isolationism and between development and environment to name but a few. In such dichotomies, it is easy to move to and fro, railing against one and then the other, seeking a balance that can seem elusive and ever in flux. What is that balance and where is it to be found? Of course it is multi-faceted and (importantly) multi-voiced, but I believe that it includes the following:"

**This Great State
Jan 10, 2006**

http://www.magic-citynews.com/Alex_Hammer_88/This_Great_State_51495149.shtml

Maine is - those who live here and others would agree - a great state. But it can be greater. Politicians and others over the course of time offer their thoughts and visions in regard to how Maine can successfully meet its challenges and prosper or lead the way.

In this election year as I run for Governor, I offer my own thoughts in regard to a leading and bountiful Maine. Here we go.

In an earlier Magic City Morning Star column, entitled " [A Crowded Field for Governor](#)," I discussed my experience that most individuals, regardless of their political preferences, consider the 2006 Maine Governor's race to be an important if not critical election. Why is that? Many Mainers realize, I believe, that we have come (or more precisely remain) at that proverbial and oft-cited crossroads.

It is a crossroads, to cite a few dimensions, between economic well-being versus lack, between traditions versus modernized change, between urban (and suburban) versus rural, between globalization versus protectionism or isolationism and between development and environment to name but a few.

In such dichotomies, it is easy to move to and fro, railing against one and then the other, seeking a balance that can seem elusive and ever in flux. What is that balance and where is it to be found? Of course it is multi-faceted and (importantly) multi-voiced, but I believe that it includes the following: Perhaps most importantly it involves a successful transition in which a significant enough portion of Maine's economic mix profits from (rather than is diminished by) the 21st century information-rich global economy that the world has become. In addition, and this is the critical piece, this success incorporates Maine's quality of life traditions and values. In other columns I address my views regarding building successful bridges generally across common divides for better government (Lewiston Sun Journal November 6, 2005) as well as a beginning detailing of successful economic development in Maine (Bangor Daily News September 15, 2005). Maine can reconcile dimensions that often seem to be at odds, building, supporting, and buttressing each aspect rather than tearing its opposite down.

In the present column I would like to focus on the notion of fundamental versus minor change, and provide examples in regard to how it can contribute towards our greatness as a state. Much of what is typically considered change or reform in Maine is in my view more accurately described as tinkering around the edges of less than advantageous (or flawed) strategies and policy. Within these often small areas debates emerge that serve to reinforce the validity of the (limited) scope of inquiry and focus. What exactly am I talking about in practical terms? An example: In the area of Maine being able to compete successfully in a full manner with other states, not just in small sized areas but overall, I propose the development of a Maine Competitive Council. Multi-discipline and multi-agency in its composition, the Maine Competitive Council would be charged with integrating and coordinating Maine's efforts such that they are maximized for profit and success. The Council experts could, in each respective area (e.g. economic development, education) work collaboratively with or possibly within the state agency(ies) responsible for that area. Hence, a Council with expert members focused on Economic Development could work hand-in hand or as part of The Maine Department of Economic and Community Development.

The Maine Competitive Council and Maine generally will employ a list of strategies to have us working as smart or smarter than other states, not just as hard. Some ways in which this will be accomplished include:

1. The use of coordinated statewide networks that focus on identified areas in which Maine can be a National and/or International leader in that 21st century economy. Such networks will research, identify and then integrate Maine's unique and difficult to replicate strengths such that they can be more powerfully leveraged and marketed for export to address identified market needs in high growth areas (see the Maine Environmental Science Network detailed in BDN article as one example of this).
2. The use of best practices such that rather than re-creating the wheel Maine is able to profit from the most efficient and effective processes and program elements utilized elsewhere.
3. ROI-sensitive technology investments that increase productivity and profits. This can include business intelligence software that helps to optimize in line with desired goals and parameters projects and project management, schedules, inventory, distribution, vendor relationships etc. By ROI-sensitive in this case I mean that we will be looking at the investments carefully before making them to make sure that they provide real benefits in highly needed areas and that we possess the necessary expertise (or can successfully import it) to insure their success (that includes phasing things in at manageable levels rather than trying to do too much at once and all heck breaking loose).
4. Other ROI-sensitive investments. No state can afford to waste money. Maine certainly cannot. We must be certain that we are investing in the right areas in the right amounts. By investment I mean spending that financially gives back (yes, over time) more than what was put into it. Otherwise it's only an expense. In regard to tax-break advantages - let them earn it. How about less or no money up front until promises are delivered and maintained? I realize that we are in competition with other states, but indiscriminate use of business tax break incentives is simply in my view "buying jobs", which anyone can do if you pay enough for them. This competition, when it goes beyond the point of what makes logical economic sense for a State, is simply, as is termed, "a race to the bottom" that Maine does not need and cannot afford. In addition, I would refrain from giving any tax break considerations to those who do not show the proper respect for the health and vitality of the State of Maine by being good corporate citizens, both in their history and continuing forward.

And they must respect Maine's environment. Let us reach out as a state, as I have said previously, for Maine to be a beacon for all businesses that are environmentally friendly worldwide, for them to stay, grow and come to Maine and prosper.

To insure that statewide interests do not transgress local concerns, I would like to develop five Regional planning committees: Central Maine, Down East, Northern Maine, Southern Maine, and Western Maine, that would each provide representatives to the Maine Competitive Council to insure that local and regional interests are being adequately addressed. Citizen input is also crucial and I would like to see a substantial percentage of representation on the Competitive Council come from these ranks. Maine is a bright state, and when we bring together the best of what we have, well harnessed and directed, we unleash the full capabilities of what we have to offer. Finally, I believe that any discussion regarding greatness of a state would be remiss without a few words about expectations. It's easy to get used to lowered expectations, especially when one experiences a lack of optimal performance over time. That, I believe is why we accept debates in which both sides of an argument are still focused around the edges in contrast to fundamental, positive and progressive change.

Mainers are as good as anyone anywhere, but I hear from many quarters throughout the state that we don't always fully know it in terms of what we expect from ourselves or others in the state. I realize that it is of course always a little dangerous to generalize on any matter. Raised expectations, in my view, can also be thought of as embodying positive self-esteem. While not being overly prideful or boastful, when you know as a state that you're good or as good as anyone else, you want and yes expect the best things available in life for those you love as well as yourself, and will not accept less.

Why should we accept less?

There is a saying that if you shoot for the stars and miss you may still hit the moon.

Maine is a great state. It's future is in our hands. I personally am tired of nibbling around the edges of less productive policies that don't fundamentally solve the problems that we face.

Let us work together and take honest stock of where we are and assess and determine realistically what we need to do, and are able to do, to make real progress.

And then let's shoot for the stars.

Alex Hammer is a candidate for Governor of Maine residing in Bangor. The campaign or Alex Hammer may be reached at P.O. Box 202, Bangor, ME 04402.

Words to Live By

Excerpt: "The high cost of healthcare coverage has become a crushing burden, creating a drag on our economy, threatening businesses small and large... The growing cost of healthcare is at the root of the state's financial problems, and is affecting our economy in ways we may not even realize... Make no mistake, we are in the early stages of a healthcare financing crisis that will only get worse without strategic action... The sooner we rein-in the high cost of healthcare, the sooner we can put more Maine people to work in good paying jobs and get our economy moving. Governor John Baldacci Inauguration Speech January 8, 2003"

Words to Live By Feb 12, 2006

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A few samples from a much larger collection:

In 2005 the State of Maine witnessed a contentious budget battle along party lines. Reacting to the

passage of a budget eked out by Democrats 18-16 in the Senate (and 77-73 in the House) Senate Republican leader Paul Davis remarked "The Democrats had the numbers, and they got what they wanted. This is no different than a bully stealing a ball just because he can. In this case, the bully has stolen the checkbook and the credit card, and our children will be left to pay the bill". He added "This budget was approved with absolute arrogance rooted in ignorance and capped off with a Democratic Governor offering praise. It was disgusting."

The language was just as strong on taxes. Explaining a Washington, D.C. based Tax Foundation report tabbing Maine as the highest-taxed state in the country, Bill Becker, Executive Director of the Maine Heritage Policy Foundation commented that the report should "come as no surprise. The governor and the legislature raised taxes, fines and fees hundreds of million of dollars over the last year and they ignored federal tax breaks, costing Maine families additional millions. The most disturbing aspect of this whole situation is that all the while, they claimed not to raise taxes."

Regarding Maine's bond ratings, the Bangor Daily News on 5-11-05 reported "Gov. John E. Baldacci sounded upbeat and encouraged Tuesday after his meeting Monday with Wall Street bond brokers, whom he described as generally supportive of Maine's efforts to improve the state's economic profile...Baldacci said Tuesday the \$400 million borrowing proposal in the current budget didn't come up with the financial representatives he met." On 5-25-05, the same newspaper reported "Following through with a warning issued four months ago, Moody's Investor's Services announced Tuesday it would drop Maine's bond rating...The announcement hardly caught legislative leaders or state officials by surprise...The downward pressure on Maine's rating is driven largely by the steady narrowing of the state's financial operations over the past several years as indicated by slow progress towards restoration of depleted reserves, (a) continuing tight liquidity position leading to four years of cash flow borrowing and the use of one-time solutions to balance the state's operating budget' Moody's stated in a press release."

Additionally, the very same day as this reported bad economic news for Maine, 5-25-05, USA Today reported regarding states collectively, under a headline entitled "States Take in Record \$600B" "State government revenues are soaring again, ending a period of budget shortfalls...In another sign that hard times are over, states borrowed 23% less in the first four months of 2005 than a year earlier, according to The Bond Buyer, a newspaper that tracks government finance."

And finally, lest we stray too far from where we began:

It's been a long time since the state has had a Democratic governor and a Democratic Legislature. But that gives me neither the license nor the liberty to move forward on any of my proposals without the involvement of the other parties.
Governor John Baldacci

Inauguration Speech January 8, 2003

Alex Hammer is an Independent candidate for Governor residing in Bangor. The campaign's website is www.hammer2006.com.

The Problem With Moral Victories

Excerpt: "There is a famous story of a hand that said that it wasn't going to feed food to the mouth, because the mouth got all the pleasure of eating and the hand did all this unrewarded work! So it stopped out of stubbornness, wouldn't listen to reason and the person starved. Talk about cutting off your nose to spite your face! In Maine we have many great resources and parts and individual and collective efforts that make up the whole. And sometimes we have hands that - clinging to those moral victories - will not feed those mouths."

The Problem With Moral Victories

Feb 18, 2006

http://www.magic-city-news.com/Alex_Hammer_88/The_Problem_With_Moral_Victories_53885388.shtml

In a number of Op-Ed pieces in this and other newspapers throughout Maine I have detailed what I

perceive to be some of the limitations of excessive partisanship (see copies of Op-Eds on our campaign website, www.Hammer2006.com). In the 21st century information-rich global economy that the world has become (I use this phrasing often because we need to “get this” and have it sink in) the world is full of external competitive economic pressures, both nationally and internationally, and if Maine is in a divided state within itself it is at a major disadvantage as a state in regard to competing successfully against these economic forces.

But why are we so partisan (and for those few that may doubt we are, see for example my Op-Ed “[Words to Live By](#)”, which recounts contentious 2005 Maine partisan budget battle among other factors)?

Why do (some) children who want candy throw temper tantrums at home or in a store because they did not get what they want?

We are of course not children but we are capable of giving in to our less than altruistic natures. We want what we want because we want it. Yeah, the other guy or gal wants what he or she wants, but they’re misinformed. They’re trying to hurt Maine, etc.

Boundaries in life (and advocacy) are essential. But side-effect damages of pressure when overused outweigh the gains that are achieved. It is damage to the combatants themselves and also collateral damage.

At this point you’re (perhaps) going to jump in and call me a relativist, that I believe that any point is as good as any other and that there is nothing worth standing up for.

No.

I stand up for a lot but I attempt to do so (I hope I always do so) in a highly civilized manner, encouraging respect for differing philosophical viewpoints and encouraging (where desirable) constructive-linguaged dialogue. I know that even if I am 100% right and you are 100% incorrect (or vice versa) if the process is antagonistic we’re most likely not going anywhere but in circles or increased conflict. Are you moving out of state (collectively, not likely). Am I moving out of state (collectively, not likely. And in my own personal case I missed the state too much and worked too hard to get back here). So in practical terms, how much is generally really being accomplished? We know all this intellectually but then we rationalize. We’re being antagonistic for the other’s own good or for the good of the state we tell ourselves. And more than that, if we didn’t oppose strongly the other side would get a foothold and win out. We have an obligation to oppose. But then we get stalemate. Or if one side has the numbers or leverage they get more of their things through but the other side certainly isn’t a partner and the populace becomes disenfranchised from all the rancor and lack of bipartisan results and tunes out or jumps on both sides - majority and minority - and says politicians are as good as lawyers or used car salesmen (with apologies to those professions also, no one should be stereotyped in a blanket manner).

And we relish in moral victories. What we prevented the other side from accomplishing becomes more prominent and a source of pride than what we individually (or collaboratively with the other side) would have been able to produce in terms of positive effects. It’s that famous “politics of destruction”. It may seem easier to tear down than build up, and possibly more fun. But while it takes great skill to build a beautiful building, any bulldozer can demolish it in short order.

Isn’t this a little bit sad?

Nor am I a utopian. I am glad that we have police when people break the law (and jails). I think that Afghanistan was a good war after 9-11 but I worry that the Iraq invasion was premature (lack of world consensus and postwar planning and apparent direct evidence of weapons of mass destruction though I am also very glad that dictator Saddam Hussein is removed from power) and now should be handled responsibly (not an immediate pullout) but is costing us very heavily financially and in other ways. A Governor isn’t focused on foreign policy, but this is the idea of responsible balance and also pragmatics that came to mind.

My personal motto is “Don’t look for trouble, don’t run from trouble”. If we are weak on crime or terrorists we invite trouble. We should never forget this But at the same time, there is a saying that the only way to keep someone in a ditch is to stay down there with them, and is that really where we would choose to live and be?

Just as we can give a hand-up but not a hand out, certainly we can find the right combination of both incentives and accountability that foster an optimum process towards results among those with differing agendas and world views in Maine.

The past is the past and the present is here now.
But the future is still to be written.

Imagination is a powerful force. We are writing the future together, and that is the beauty of it. And power. And with that power comes responsibility. Future generations will judge us as we have judged our predecessors. Did we make the world a better place? Did we try to do the best with what we have? Did we settle for moral victories in Maine or did we really compete in an effective and bipartisan way in this global economy?

Many say they love Maine, but if this is not too harsh as they say "the proof is in the pudding". Can you reconcile your views with your neighbor who disagrees? Are you into real victories for Maine or moral victories for your group or yourself?

There is a famous story of a hand that said that it wasn't going to feed food to the mouth, because the mouth got all the pleasure of eating and the hand did all this unrewarded work! So it stopped out of stubbornness, wouldn't listen to reason and the person starved. Talk about cutting off your nose to spite your face! In Maine we have many great resources and parts and individual and collective efforts that make up the whole. And sometimes we have hands that - clinging to those moral victories - will not feed those mouths. I'd like to see strong parties (and Independents) within a more productive Maine. When well managed, a team can have stars (i.e. political party-based ideas that win out) without undermining the fundamental concept of team. Sometimes one idea is more right and can carry more of the lead. But it is a delicate balance and the team concept must come first for optimal success (how many superstars, not well integrated or accepted or accepting of the contributions of others, reside on losing teams?).

Use your imagination to picture increased opportunities for Maine and for Maine problem-solving than perhaps has - at least in recent memory - ever existed before.

And no more being satisfied with only moral victories in Maine. Alex Hammer is an Independent Candidate for Governor residing in Bangor.

Dirigo - The Missing Piece

Excerpt: "I believe that we need to sit down together in a bi-partisan way and almost start at the beginning defining each key term and process in regard to how Dirigo is proposed to work, and - very important - measured. They say that when a task seems insurmountable, such as fixing Dirigo may seem to be (and the same principle can be applied to the much much larger monster, DHHS) you have to break things down into smaller units that are more manageable. It's like the principle of when life seems stressful just take it one day or one task at a time. But smaller is not enough. There has to be shared understanding. When each piece is built upon earlier pieces that are well understood and in agreement in a bipartisan fashion, then you're starting to set a framework by which a system can be built and evolve that is well understood and, critically importantly, enjoys broad support."

Dirigo - The Missing Piece

Mar 18, 2006

http://www.magic-city-news.com/Alex_Hammer_88/Dirigo_The_Missing_Piece_55285528.shtml

Most individuals are likely keenly aware that the issue of healthcare in Maine, including the Dirigo initiative, has come center stage, continuing into this election cycle.

The Kennebec Journal on March 14 summarized the divisions regarding Dirigo as follows "Health insurers say Dirigo unfairly forces them to pay for savings that are mostly imaginary. Republicans say the initiative is too expensive and unsustainable. Democrats defend it, saying Dirigo is the only plan on the table to address a growing health-care crisis." The paper concluded in part, "All three groups may be right and yet they are all still missing the point. Maine's health-care system was too

expensive before Dirigo. It remains too expensive. Arguing Dirigo to death will not solve the problem. Addressing the program's weaknesses might."

The same article indicates that "Maine's health insurance costs are some of the highest in the nation. We spend more of our income on health care than 45 other states" and "roughly 130,000 Mainers are uninsured...about 9,000 Mainers are insured under the program; only about 2,000 of that number were uninsured before they joined Dirigo." The Administration now reports currently that 15,000 "have had coverage" in Dirigo.

The most recent issues regarding Dirigo focuses on the funding source for the program and also who will administer and manage Dirigo. The Governor has recently proposed a major structural change to Dirigo such that an outside provider, currently Anthem, will no longer be administering the program and Dirigo will instead be self-administered. Dirigo is funded by a highly contentious (to say the least) savings offset payment (SOP) funding mechanism in which supposedly realized savings from the program are recouped from health insurance companies to continue operations. I say supposedly because there has been major news coverage attesting to the fact that the determination of the SOP has seen huge disagreement. The Administration stated that Dirigo saved a reported \$137 million and a \$43.7 million savings figure was set as a determination by the insurance commissioner (during the process a greater than \$6 million overestimated figure was admitted and concerns were raised in regard to the accuracy of

figures and the broadness from which it was derived). Much of this \$43.7 million total has been reported to have come, actually, as a result of a voluntary cap on hospital costs (which has been argued is not part of the actual Dirigo program) and less than \$3 million of the \$43.7 million total has been reported attributable to reductions in uncompensated care.

Additionally, this SOP determination is now facing legal challenges with the litigants claiming that the SOP is flawed and that they haven't seen the savings indicated (they also object to the legislature imposing a tax but the Administration has indicated that the SOP is not a tax). Insurance companies want to pass on this assessed cost to consumers in the form of higher premiums, which, in order to reach the original Dirigo agreement was apparently made permissible. Governor Baldacci supports legislation to prevent them from doing this and is very strident in his language against them. Opponents to the SOP believe strongly that it is another tax. Republican candidate for Governor Peter Mills indicates of Dirigo that "The product has become notorious because so many other Maine premium payers (650,000 of them) are now being taxed to benefit so few." The Maine Heritage Policy Center puts the number of SOP premium payers at up to 759,000, with 260,000 of those below 300% of the poverty line. Perhaps worst of all, as health care costs continue to climb more small business will elect not to provide coverage, adding to those uninsured. This is to be expected from the information above. Additionally, it has been pointed out that as certain large insurers, including those that have out of state plans are exempted from the SOP, this may encourage other large companies to leave Maine in their health coverage selection.

On the official government of Maine website, at

www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/healthpolicy/ under the heading of "What is the Dirigo Health Reform Act?" it states "Controlling costs, improving quality, and ensuring access - the Dirigo Health Reform Act is a

comprehensive solution to address rising health care costs, improve quality of care, and ensure access to coverage for Maine's uninsured. This public private partnership will create an affordable health plan, create a state health plan, invest in public health and disease prevention to assure every man, woman and child in Maine has affordable quality care through a reliable and accessible health care system. The Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance is responsible for overseeing the implementation of Dirigo Health Reform."

The official website for Dirigo is www.dirigohealth.maine.gov. While there you can read the Governor's March 15, 2006 press release entitled "Governor Outlines Proposal to Expand Dirigo Health", at

www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/healthpolicy/news/3_15_06.htm Governor Baldacci has been quick to label opposition to Dirigo as political rhetoric. While some may use Dirigo for political advantage it is quite apparent that the program has insured far less than envisioned and at significant cost (I almost said exorbitant cost and in all reality that is likely a more appropriate term). Importantly, only a small percentage of those signing up for Dirigo are previously uninsured, the remaining merely switching from other insurance.

Despite its poor start and current condition, I am of the camp that would like to improve rather than scrap Dirigo. There are at least three major reasons why I feel this way. One, I do believe that a significant percentage of Maine citizens support the underlying objectives of Dirigo, which is to reduce the number of Mainers without healthcare insurance and wring cost savings out of the system. I think that this is reflected in the fact that Dirigo initially received largely bipartisan

approval to come into existence (it passed by a reported 105-38 margin in the House and 25-8 in the Senate). Concern about Dirigo in its current and proposed directions need not reflect an abandonment of the desired objectives from which the program emanated, but instead may serve as apt recognition of the significant difficulties that Dirigo is having in regard to reaching those objectives.

Concern over Dirigo is intensifying for those who disagree, as do I, with the Governor's proposal to end private operation of Dirigo in order for the state to self-insure the program itself. The cursory (at best) and hastily called March 2 meeting (coinciding on the day that Peter Mills would have proposed his Dirigo fix in the legislature) soliciting proposals within 10 days to improve Dirigo was perhaps a sham because (and this is nothing new opponents to the Governor will tell you whether it be in healthcare or across the board) those suggestions were not used and instead just days following the deliverance of the alternatives which Democrats had requested the Governor instead put forth his structural change that widens the rift with his opponents.

And he accuses the Republicans of playing politics with Dirigo?

Also, I believe that the Governor is apparently "doubling down" (or using offense as his defense) by expanding Dirigo before it has been demonstrated that the inefficiencies of the current system have been fixed (and when you increase the size of an inefficient system those inefficiencies, all things being equal, also expand). Before the Governor's proposal to exit from the one private player in the Dirigo system, Anthem, many had been calling for just the opposite, route, to increase the level of carriers and competition that offer Dirigo.

I like the fact that the Governor is a "big thinker" when it comes to an objective like Dirigo, and I commend all Mainers that support Dirigo for having similarly lofty goals. But I think that the way to reach those goals must be contained within collaboration and really should not be viewed whether or that is indeed the reality - as being uncompromising or (in the extreme) heavy handed. I don't believe that that gets us to where we want to go.

One doesn't need to be an economics major to realize that in a capitalistic society (such as our own) that competition and market forces provide healthier products and better business results than both bureaucratic management and single-entity control. While Governor Baldacci has assailed the profit motive (and it can be noted Anthem indicates also that they were receiving meager profit anyway), profit and economic survival drive business success, not governmental bureaucracy. Picture a bureaucrat, whose job is secure, and their relative motivation to provide efficiencies in healthcare versus a private company in which the livelihood and success and future of the business - and one's job! - depends upon its success in selling and managing productively its products. I believe strongly in a government oversight role, even enhanced in areas of critical citizen need or safety to regulate and insure protections, but thinking that the government - bureaucrats - can wring efficiencies and cost savings out of business that the private sector cannot is to me - well, highly misguided and actually stupid. A March 16 article in the Bangor Daily News states in part "On Wednesday, Trish Riley, head of the Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance, said the governor's plan would eliminate the profit motive that has contributed to higher costs under Anthem's administration. 'Anthem is required to spend about 75 percent of premiums on paying medical claims,' she said. 'The other 25 percent goes to marketing, administration and profit. That will now be money that [the Dirigo agency] will be able to use to make coverage available to more people.'" A major problem with this argument, however, it seems to me, is that whoever runs the program is going to have administration and marketing costs, so that rings really hollow and untrue. And we've already discussed the profit situation and motive.

While I mentioned about an aim of Dirigo to reduce the rolls of the uninsured being a general goal that many may share on both sides of the aisle, whether Mainers collectively want to go the further leap of an envisioned universal health care system does, I believe, break down more along political and in fact philosophical beliefs in regard to what you feel the proper role of government is, and is not.

I believe in sustainable practices and that we should be as fully generous as sustainable processes allow but not beyond these. I believe that it is compassionate and good to give what one has but not to give what one does not have. My strong focus in economic development in this campaign has been on the development of the most sophisticated and insightful economic development strategies amongst all of my competitors towards growing the total pie in Maine through better meeting the needs of a hyper-competitive and information-rich global economy of the 21st century that the world has become. This is opposed to a focus on competing over a smaller pie, in which an I win and you lose mentality pushes us ever further behind other states no matter who wins or loses.

Please remember this: Those whose primary emphasis is on either increased healthcare spending or

increased tax breaks are fundamentally focused on carving out, in a manner in which they believe in, a larger share of that smaller pie. While we need to also do things that make sense immediately, I am of the belief and focus that only longer term efforts, strategies and focuses will fundamentally get us out of the economic quagmire in which we find ourselves that result in difficulties in healthcare and other areas. I believe that we have largely been running around in circles, making relative more or less progress based upon how the rest of the country is doing in good times and bad, but not fundamentally addressing the long term issues such as successfully competing in a global economy that would once and for all free us - at least to the extent that they have freed others doing better outside of Maine - from these constraints.

This is a critical point to remember also: There are no INHERENT difficulties that present us from doing as well as other states. We are intelligent, we are hard working, we have more than our fair share of natural resources. Yes we are a small state but the much more determining factor is that we have not had the vision to position ourselves effectively enough in the world as it has evolved.

I am not implying that all that work is on the macro level. We should continue to work in a very aggressive manner to bring clearly identified cost efficiencies to the healthcare system (and in other systems) and work to structure our healthcare system, as I will elaborate further, so that we get the greatest bang for our buck. We should do this aggressively but within the context of that larger economic and global picture.

The second reason that I would like to improve rather than scrap Dirigo is that I agree with the argument that the program is still relatively new. I don't agree that Dirigo is the model for the nation (that's more extreme than even spin) and I do feel that the program is experiencing significant difficulties as discussed, but I believe that there are elements of the program that are strong in terms of focus on better quality of care and extracting cost savings.

The third reason that I would like to improve rather than scrap Dirigo is that the ideals of Dirigo, only recently enacted, have not had the opportunity to work in a strong bi-partisan collective effort focused on fixing the problems encountered by Dirigo and making it better.

I believe that we need to sit down together in a bi-partisan way and almost start at the beginning defining each key term and process in regard to how Dirigo is proposed to work, and - very importantly - measured. They say that when a task seems insurmountable, such as fixing Dirigo may seem to be (and the same principle can be applied to the much much larger monster, DHHS) you have to break things down into smaller units that are more manageable. It's like the principle of when life seems stressful just take it one day or one task at a time. But smaller is not enough. There has to be shared understanding. When each piece is built upon earlier pieces that are well understood and in agreement in a bi-partisan fashion, then you're starting to set a framework by which a system can be built and evolve that is well understood and, critically importantly, enjoys broad support.

A recognition that until we COLLECTIVELY get our arms around Dirigo and healthcare generally we'll just be bickering back and forth and at cross purposes and not using our energies together to make the system better is the beginning of this more productive process occurring.

So, what does Dirigo need? It needs a stable funding source. It needs involvement with the private sector and in a way that is broadened rather than scrapped. Importantly, it needs greater bi-partisan work to sit down and identify and then fix where Dirigo is coming up short relative to its intended purposes and ideals. This should I believe involve an almost from scratch one at a time examination of all components, processes and even terms in Dirigo to develop a consensus in regard to the structure of the system that is being built and how it will operate and continue to be assessed and amended that all or most are strongly in agreement with.

Why has not this meeting of the minds of those involved with Dirigo occurred? While no one party can ever be fully at fault, as a signature effort of his administration I believe, and this is what I hear also from many others, that the Governor has not been willing to truly or meaningfully compromise on Dirigo. It may sound simplistic but I believe that this is the major reason that it has remain stuck or underperforming at this time.

And there is - as the title to this article states - a critically important missing piece. Whether you believe that either government or the corporation should fundamentally control Dirigo, any healthcare system will to my mind never be close to being optimally efficient until you incorporate greater involvement and control by the healthcare consumer him or herself toward targeted ends and program goals. I'll explain what I mean and why it is important.

As a pure consumer of healthcare, it may not matter much to me who is managing the program. I am concerned with my own health and whatever I perceive to be involved with that. When I make

responsible healthcare decisions and am motivated to maximize my good health and do what I can do to insure that, I do so much more through my actions rooted even in selfinterest to improve the profitability of the healthcare system beyond the looking at structural elements and who, for example, might be the better of two program operators.

I see bi-partisan consensus on Dirigo (and all healthcare structures) as Step 1. That's what Maine is focused on now if a bridge around common principles (such as at the workings of Dirigo) can be reached, but its not the end even if we get it right. Step 2, related to Step 1, is how the programs are structured to build and encourage greater consumer accountability, empowerment and responsibility for their own health. Step 3 is when you make the healthcare development and maintenance process going forward more transparent and attractive to consumers such that we're working on this much more together (citizens and government) and feel interested, motivated and responsible for its results.

I'm not talking about, which can be one element but has been highlighted elsewhere in regard to a stronger focus on enacting requirements on access to joining the system (Also, I have been fortunate after my major accident to receive needed benefits, so I don't want to sound like a hypocrite). I'm talking about beginning with an educational component in which we understand as health care consumers to a greater degree how the decisions that we make both impact the system and our own health.

But it is more than education. It's a sense of connection and collaboration - an understanding, trust and invested stake - that we as citizens do or do not have, or have in lesser or greater degree, with our societal systems, whether they be healthcare, education, or in other areas.

This may sound ethereal and difficult to tangibly hold onto, but we're not feeling connected to our government and our systems including healthcare organizations in a way that is more meaningful in our lives. How many would visit a hospital or clinic for educational purposes before they are sick? How many have taken an active role in the actual healthcare policy decisions and discussion of this state? Rather than being engaged, proactive and inclusive, I instead believe that healthcare is in a highly reactive state in our society (generally speaking, not just Maine) which is a shame when you consider the "health is wealth" point of view. "Tough Choices", listening tours, is an attempt by the Governor to engage people in healthcare, but we need to have this become essentially systemic and integrated into our lives rather than event or special event based.

I realize also that incentives are already in place to incentivize healthy behaviors, and to me that is progressive as well. But what I am talking about above as a missing piece is broader and reflects, involved with this but also beyond it, how we interact with our healthcare system and with our government as a whole.

A few more proposed specifics on Dirigo. I am in agreement with Republican candidate for Governor Peter Mills' call to use Dirigo only for the uninsured. He writes "Stop using taxpayer money to steal market share from competing commercial products. Focus instead on Maine's 130,000 uninsured who are most greatly in need." Though I remain open to compromise and all reasonable proposals, I also to this point have not been convinced due to the dangers of cherry picking in regard to notions of high risk pools and abolishment of community rating. I'm also concerned about the potential for cost-shifting as the most sick individuals may be forced increasingly out of the private healthcare market and onto government programs. In regard to health care savings accounts, I am not super knowledgeable about these (so maybe I am missing something) but with American's savings record overall (even our federal government, do you see how they keep raising the debt limit?) I am dubious about their use especially if they serve as any kind of replacement to a current benefit. Yes, I hear they're much cheaper for the state. But why?

It is often reported that Dirigo means "I lead". But is it leading? Not currently. We should take perhaps greater care in identifying our state motto with anything less than our collective best.

I propose that we work together to make a system illustrative of all of Maine's contributions and results -- and worthy of that rich name.

Alex Hammer is an Independent candidate for Governor residing in Bangor. The campaign's website is www.Hammer2006.com.

A Citizen's Responsibility

Excerpt: "I see Democrats and Republicans (not all to be fair - not smart to paint with a too broad a brushstroke - but some) butting heads back and forth. A versus B. A is right, B is wrong. No, B is right, A is wrong. No, I'm telling ya, A is definitely right and B is definitely wrong. Now, there is right and wrong in the world, but I'll tell you this. While we are almost shamelessly beating each other (in) the head in regard to A and B and who is more or less right, the rest of the world, including other states, is becoming more competitive and in danger of cleaning our clocks on the economic stage.

Debate is healthy. The best idea should win, and sometimes honorable (not dishonorable) trade-offs are a way of life. But over-partisanship is a luxury that we as a State really cannot in a major way afford."

A Citizen's Responsibility

March 30, 2006

http://www.magic-city-news.com/Alex_Hammer_88/A_Citizen_s_Responsibility_55655565.shtml

I've written several Op-Eds and focused significant emphasis on what I consider a Governor's responsibility, given that I am running for that office.

But I was leading up to this:

Save for the occasional appointed position, one cannot generally serve in office unless one is elected. And one cannot be elected unless one wins the confidence of the voters.

But what does this involve?

If you notice, there is a lot of criticism of government and public officials, and this is likely intensified during an election cycle. While we should always hold our elected officials accountable, we should, if we are not happy with their performance across the board or in major respects, do a better job at scrutinizing and filtering in regard to who we put into office. As a private employer we would (hopefully) put candidates through a rigorous interview or series of interviews (likely depending upon the type of position) and if we really are concerned about getting the right person we may provide a skills test, do employment personality testing, check references and do a background check.

If we're so concerned about someone making \$12 an hour (as just one example) why don't we have a deeper focus really testing the efficacy of proposed solutions for an individual that would like to work in managing the entire state?

Sometimes the most powerful word in the English language is Why. Or How. I invite you to go out to the websites of each of the candidates, pretend that you are a political reporter or sleuth from 48 Hours, and ask yourself, does this make sense? Is this a superficial answer or does it really explain healthcare, taxes, economic development? Given the complexities of running an entire state, does this person seem like they understand the issues at the level of depth that is required to be successful in that endeavor.

Certainly, the media should be pressing all policy proposals from all candidates to see how well they can be defended and explained and hold up against outside knowledge.

How well do you see this occurring at present? I think that it could be a little bit better.

I did live out of state for a number of years after college, including a decade in and around New York City. They don't play there. People are very dedicated and serious about making money. Now while I don't want to go to that extreme because I believe that there is more to life than money and quality of life factors are also of course critically important, Maine has been immersed in an economic slump for so long, and to such a degree, that we need a collective kick in the pants to shake us out of it.

And that begins with you.

I hope if you wish that you will read my other Op-Eds that are on this site and on our website, www.hammer2006.com. I talk about such things as lowered expectations, nibbling around the edges of failed policies and breaking free from these towards true prosperous economic development in a global economy. What that means and what it involved.

My dad, a retired professor of Psychology at the University of Maine, was discussing with me a theory that people may elect those they best relate to, are most similar to them, and/or to the closest degree share their values. While we certainly want someone that shares our general values in the individuals that we select, we certainly shouldn't be looking to clone ourselves in our political selections. I learned from business that one good rule of hiring is to hire those more knowledgeable and experienced than oneself in their respective area of expertise. And experience also includes wisdom and judgment. We've all most likely heard the expression of the difference between twenty years of experience, and one year of experience repeated twenty times.

They say that if you keep on doing what you've always done then you'll keep on getting what you've always got. I'd like to see people travel more to other states and countries and see for themselves whether they also agree that this type of sentiment is true (not that I am, by any means, the only person that has been away and then come back, but I think too much insularity in general overadapts one to the familiar which is antithetical to being aware of and then utilizing best practices worldwide).

To give my Mom equal billing, I remember she used to have a button that said, "Life. Be in it."

I see Democrats and Republicans (not all to be fair - not smart to paint with a too broad a brushstroke - but some) butting heads back and forth. A versus B. A is right, B is wrong. No, B is right, A is wrong. No, I'm telling ya, A is definitely right and B is definitely wrong. Now, there is right and wrong in the world, but I'll tell you this. While we are (almost shamelessly) beating each other the head in regard to A and B and who is more or less right, the rest of the world (including other states) is becoming more competitive and in danger of cleaning our clocks on the economic stage.

Debate is healthy. The best idea should win, and sometimes honorable (not dishonorable) trade-offs are a way of life.

But over-partisanship is a luxury that we as a State really cannot in a major way afford. And bipartisan efforts need to extend beyond an election year. An effective leader needs a special skill set to appeal to, and draw confidence from, competing interests.

Maybe you feel that we can afford major partisanship. It can be fun to argue for positions and fight to the end for A over B, or B over A. But the point that is too infrequently articulated and I feel too often overlooked, is that we're in this together. When a young person of talent or potential talent leaves the state, many not to return at all or not for many many years, whether this be before or after college, it is easy, though we do certainly recognize it, to still diminish the importance of that loss. Please think about this. That person that has left generally has a family that has stayed. What does that do not only to individual family members but to real families in Maine on the whole. And collectively to communities when enough families are similarly effected.

They say that if we don't change direction, that we may (unfortunately) actually wind up where we are currently headed. Sometimes progress is considered going from A back to B, or from B back to A. I call that a cycle but I don't call that progress. Here's another, if you agree, perhaps better idea. $A + B = C$. From thesis and antithesis can come synthesis. Synthesis, in its highest form, respectfully combines the best of both into a higher whole. And it's more inclusive and unified which makes it stronger. But it takes real leadership and listening and understanding so that there is a merger and not just co-existence. But it can be done, and I'll explain.

If you live in the United States, you are just as much an American whether you live in Massachusetts or Texas or Maine, as much or as little as you may personally resonate to those specific locales. Similarly, we are one Maine. And I don't care whether you live in York County, Washington County, Downeast, Western Maine, or "The County". We have to find a way to make it work in Maine such that we all prosper. And I will.

Now back to citizens. I don't want to hear any more of you complain. Enough. The next time that a politician does something that you don't like, that really really angers you, do whatever is in your power to legally get them out of office (including working for the election of their opponents). Or in many cases better yet, become part of the public effort to bring about the Maine (or part of Maine) that you want to see. It's easy to criticize. Tell me someone that isn't able to do that. But it's only a cop-out if you are unwilling to have any skin in the game.

Many people will tell you how great Maine is. I myself say Maine is, can, will and should be great. And this is true. But at another level we've fallen far short. And I mean that in a collective we, myself as a Mainer included. We need, I believe, to pick ourselves up, look ourselves in the mirror, and talk to ourselves in regard to what each one of us is willing and going to do to personally make things better - for ourselves, for our children, for our families and for our state.

I mean that. If you agree, make a promise to yourself that you will do your part. In an ultimate and philosophical sense, our own actions are truly all we really are guaranteed of controlling in this world.

John Kennedy asked us not to ask what your country could do for us, but instead to ask what we could do for your country.

So I ask you. While you're standing in front of this mirror, I want you to reflect on all the things that are wrong with this state. Mull it over in your mind so that you don't miss or forget anything. And then I want you to stare into the mirror in a determined (even ferocious) glare, and say in a loud voice (or softer if there are other people around) with all the courage that you can muster: "It's your fault".

Alex Hammer is a candidate for Governor residing in Bangor. The campaign's website is www.Hammer2006.com

Reasons Not To Be Governor

Excerpt:

"There are, to my mind, some reasons not to be Governor. They include:

1) Self promotion. The office of Governor is not, it seems to me, about photo opportunities and ceremonial duties. It is instead about managing the solving of Maine problems and governing. Sure, when a milestone or achievement is reached I'm sure that the company or institution involved would like some recognition and presence, but can't this in many if not most cases be aptly done by a representative, or alternatively congratulations offered by video or phone? The Governor's time is too valuable to be the official ribbon cutter of the state, and any Governor that needs to have his picture constantly in the newspaper to convince anyone (perhaps including him or herself) that one is doing a good job, has an incorrect set of priorities if you ask me (which actually nobody specifically did but I am writing this column). Anyone with a powerful agenda will have more than enough to do during their day that is more important in most cases than marking anniversaries or handing out awards. Finally, for this point, politics is a service and not a career. Those that are significantly or predominantly focused on building their political career, as an act of self-promotion, can easily miss this."

Reasons Not To Be Governor

Apr 7, 2006

http://www.magic-city-news.com/Alex_Hammer_88/Reasons_Not_To_Be_Governor_56115611.shtml

There are, to my mind, some reasons not to be Governor. They include: 1) Self promotion. The office of Governor is not, it seems to me, about photo opportunities and ceremonial duties. It is instead about managing the solving of Maine problems and governing. Sure, when a milestone or achievement is reached I'm sure that the company or institution involved would like some recognition and presence, but can't this in many if not most cases be aptly done by a representative, or alternatively congratulations offered by video or phone? The Governor's time is too valuable to be the official ribbon cutter of the state, and any Governor that needs to have his picture constantly in the newspaper to convince anyone (perhaps including him or herself) that one is doing a good job, has an incorrect set of priorities if you ask me (which actually nobody specifically did but I am writing this column). Anyone with a powerful agenda will have more than enough to do during their day that is more important in most cases than marking anniversaries or handing out awards. Finally, for this point, politics is a service and not a career. Those that are significantly or predominantly focused on building their political career, as an act of self-promotion, can easily miss this.

2) Being a "ball-hog". That was a term anyway when I played basketball. Someone who didn't want to pass the ball, but instead liked to shoot all the time themselves. That is, someone who consistently seeks the limelight and doesn't like to share. They (again, whoever "they" are) say good managers share credit for successes to empower others and encourage their contributions. Additionally, unlike poor managers who are very quick to point the finger of blame at others when things start to go wrong, successful managers also assume some responsibility for difficulties and challenges to serve as both an example and source of strength for others (they take on some of the public heat rather than seeking to reflect it, and then go the critical further step of finding solutions). Ball-hogs may either not trust that other people can do the job as well or may have a sense of self-centeredness or entitlement and don't care about getting others involved.

3) Being intellectually lazy. Being physically lazy is easy to recognize. An individual arrives to work

late, leaves early, or isn't very productive during the day. Intellectual laziness is sometimes harder to discern, especially because it is sometimes masked by busy, or even frantic activity. There is an apt and important saying that states "never mistake activity for progress". The intellectually lazy individual takes the easy way out, no matter how busy

they may make themselves or actually appear. For example, they may be precommitted to an idea, and then spend all their energies looking to buttress

their arguments or policies rather than approaching the matter with an open mind (perhaps being highly selective in their picking or reporting of information or data to only that which serves their interests). Or they may consider various sides of an issue, but only superficially rather than in significant depth. It is as though their mind is easily fatigued by rigorous analysis and study, and they just want the easy answer or quick fix. Working on the issues of a state is complex, and to be successful requires a governor of strong (not stubborn) mind. Stubbornness is another form of intellectual laziness, because the answers are pre-determined and then defended.

4) Inability to productively innovate. Tradition can of course be good. But when you are Governor you also have to have, if you want to be successful, what has been referred to as "the vision thing". You have to have some clear sense of where the world and the country seems to be headed, or may likely be headed in key respects, and then know how to work (with others) to strategically position the state within that emerging context. Those without strong vision cannot do this. They do not see what is coming and because of this they cannot truly lead. True managers have their operational skills down cold but also have (in the most positive connotations of the term) aspects of the "visionary". People look to them to see what can be done. Or needs to be done. If you don't know (and if it looks like you may be copying too much the ideas of others in important respects than maybe that's a good sign you don't know) then don't run for the office. It's too important of a job.

5) Overly partisan. Earlier we talked about the "ball-hog" who is obviously not a team player. Some people are excellent team players, but have a narrow or restricted notion of team. Such as: you're on my team if you're in my party or if you share my partisan ideology. While one must stand for something one must also be broad enough such that significant elements of the state do not become disenfranchised. Look at how many people feel separate and removed (and often not in favor of) all levels of their government, not just in Maine but overall. There are additional reasons (such as lack of transparency, lack of opportunities for interactivity and solicited feedback and I'm sure many other reasons as well), but one of the major reasons I believe, for these responses by citizens, is that they feel that their government is only listening to some of them, or at a minimum to some of them much more than others. I'm not saying that everything carries equal weight in the world, of course that is not true. But when you lose significant elements of your state something is wrong. Don't run for Governor if you plan to do that. It is amazing to me how partisan some can be and not care that they've lost a lot of people that otherwise would contribute (and not just via opposition). I hope it's not just me, but I don't find that healthy or productive.

6) People pleaser. In some ways the flip side of #5. How many times have you seen a politician initially hold fast to a position, but then start to cave in (if not completely cave) once the ground starts to move a little bit under his or her feet due to public pressure of some sort.? What kind of message does this send? You want your way, just exert more pressure. Exactly. They say that "it is lonely at the top". You have to do what's right, that is what you believe to be right, because it's right. If someone can point out something that for whatever reason was overlooked or not given full weight that is one thing. But when you cave just to score political points, that doesn't serve the state and hurts it. It's called not having a backbone. Governors should have a backbone.

7) Ill-tempered or power-hungry. It's one thing to be a fighter. That is necessary and very good. But it's another to seek conflict or seek to impose one's will and throw one's weight around behind the power of a position or office. Over time I believe that voters can generally sort out the fighters from the nasty from the power hungry. Initially you might not be able to always tell, because the speech and actions may sometimes seem similar or the same. But it comes down to true motivation and intent. What is really in a person's heart? Are they doing it to help (build up, including holding others appropriately accountable) or to hurt (tear down others and destroy). And because I believe that ultimately character is in fact destiny, I am sure that I am not the only one who has seen that these motivations of the heart become apparent to others over time.

and lastly for this list at this time

8) Incompetence - Maybe this is too strong a word, but some people try really hard and are well intentioned, but just do not possess the necessary skill set to be successful in the magnitude of this position. In sociology they talk about a principle of people being promoted to their level of incompetence (I hope not!), and certainly we all learn and grow and mature, that is true of every

single human being that is alive. But being Governor requires a wide set of skills well honed. And if you don't have them, you hurt more than just yourself in the job.

Alex Hammer is an Independent candidate for Governor residing in Bangor. The campaign's website is www.Hammer2006.com.

The Unseen Force in Life

Excerpt: "I believe that there are two forms of competition. "Healthy competition" encourages through competitive activities each of us to be our best as we push past perceived limits. "Unhealthy competition", by contrast, is a zero-sum game in which I win because you lose, or vice versa."

The Unseen Force in Life

October 18, 2006

http://www.magic-citynews.com/Alex_Hammer_88/The_Unseen_Force_in_Life_68366836.shtml

There is an unseen force in life that guides events. I believe that our life experiences in many respects are like a Rorschach test, bringing back to us -bringing to the surface like a mirror -- our inner beliefs about ourselves and the world. Do we think that the world is friendly and full of opportunities? Or do we think it is full of fear, terror and dread?

Well, I'm just being realistic you might say. But notice how the word realistic contains the base word reality. Perhaps we all think we are being realistic because we believe what we believe.

I am not a fatalist, a determinist, but neither do I believe that events are random. Inside ourselves we know that we control, or partially control, some events but not others, or in differing degrees. We each have our own sphere of influence.

Imagine how beautiful the world will be when we believe that we have more to gain by building each other up rather than tearing each other down. I believe that there are two forms of competition. "Healthy competition" encourages through competitive activities each of us to be our best as we push past perceived limits. "Unhealthy competition", by contrast, is a zero sum game in which I win because you lose, or vice versa.

Fighting over services versus tax rebates (e.g. anti vs pro TABOR) is unhealthy competition, focused on the current pie. Intelligent (ROI-sensitive) economic development in which Maine creates a larger pie by successfully competing against other states and nations is competition taken to a higher, more productive, and healthy form. It's no less competitive at all, only redirected to its most productive good.

Maine is caught in a zero-sum game of partisanship. In partisanship my winning involves your losing. It is an appeal to our lowest instincts of combat in the form of law of the jungle and is less productive than forming working cooperative teams (in this case a state) that evolves the competition from intra-group rivalries to inter-group.

It is when we are better united as a state (never perfect, and respecting of individual needs and differences, just as in harmonious families not all people are clones) that we can best compete against the efforts of other states and countries for our economic well being. So it's a matter fundamental to our economic success, not an academic exercise.

Mainers have not shown en masse that they are ready yet for a candidate like myself that can work with our best qualities to make us most productive. Even our state's leaders have wavered. Real leadership involves results. Oratory, no matter how fluent and encouraging, nor self-promotion are not substitutes.

Shame on us if we don't improve.

Shame on you too.

Alex Hammer is an Independent candidate for Governor residing in Bangor. The campaign's website is www.hammer2006.politicalgateway.com

Examples of Transformational Leadership

Excerpt: "There are two basic types of leadership. Transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership is the ability to direct people, manage resources, and get the job done. But transformational leadership, the most important form of leadership today, is the ability to motivate, inspire, and bring people together to higher levels of performance." -- Brian Tracy, *The 100 Absolutely Unbreakable Laws of Business Success*

**Examples of Transformational Leadership
December 10, 2006**

http://www.magic-city-news.com/Alex_Hammer_88/Examples_of_Transformational_Leadership7160.shtml

"There are two basic types of leadership. Transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership is the ability to direct people, manage resources, and get the job done.

But transformational leadership, the most important form of leadership today, is the ability to motivate, inspire, and bring people together to higher levels of performance."

*-- Brian Tracy, *The 100 Absolutely Unbreakable Laws of Business Success**

Transactional leadership is certainly difficult enough, and provides value. More than competence, it involves setting high goals and, through processes of efficiency, management and skills, achieving results.

But transformational leadership is much more. Ghandi, Churchill, JFK, Martin Luther King. These are classic individuals that we readily identify as transformational leaders as they inspired us to do more and to be more. In the world of sports, it was said that San Francisco 49ers quarterback Joe Montana was so special, some even believe the greatest football player of all time (and the winner, I believe, of four Super Bowl championships), because he elevated the game of everyone around him. In high pressure moments he stayed very calm, focused and confident. His teammates in the huddle said it was infectious. He expected to win, and thus they came to as well. And they did.

Michael Jordan was an athlete of phenomenal physical gifts, accompanied by an inner will to drive himself and his teammates to incredible levels of performance. His team, the Chicago Bulls, also ran at the beginning of his career, won an amazing six NBA championships with Jordan leading the way (and in fact they may have won even more if he hadn't taken a break to quit basketball and take up baseball along the way).

What does it take to be a transformational leader? Would you like to become one? Maybe you are one already.

I certainly do not know all the answers about this area, but there are a few things that I do believe. Transformational leaders exude passion. This is not to be confused with negative qualities such as hyperactivity, restlessness, impulsivity, foolhardiness or bravado. I think of passion, instead, as a steely determination, a centeredness that does not allow one to be truly shaken or seriously altered from one's directions and plans.

Great transformational leaders also demonstrate remarkable flexibility and resourcefulness. They understand that the path to success is rarely a straight line. When A has stopped working, and also B and C and so on down the line, they long since have invented, adapted, adopted or borrowed a way to do what needs to be done.

Not all of us are called in this lifetime to be heads of state (it'd be pretty crowded if we were). Some of us can be transformational leaders as parents, as friends, as spouses, in our careers, or in so many other ways. Anyone who has developed their capabilities to a high level is more able to transform themselves and have others perhaps willing to be transformed. Transformational leadership, like all successes, is a piece by piece, day by day, moment by moment journey that we all can take.

Coming full circle:

"Brian Tracy started at the bottom and worked his way up, one step at a time... He began his adult life uneducated, unskilled, and unemployed, living in his car and working at odd jobs as they came along... Today Brian Tracy is one of the top business consultants in the United States and one of the most popular professional speakers in the world... He speaks to more than 300,000 people each year... has written ten books, some of which have been translated into twelve languages... he has traveled and worked in eighty countries in five

continents."

-- From Brian Tracy, *The 100 Absolutely Unbreakable Laws of Business Success* (About the Author Section)

Alex Hammer in 2006 was an Independent candidate for Governor of Maine, www.hammer2006.politicalgateway.com

Maine 2007

Excerpt: "Maine requires, we all know, meaningful and responsible tax reform, that truly limits property taxes and doesn't unfairly shift the tax burden, etc. Also, now that we as a state seem more committed to economic development investments - which is a necessity for the creation of the good jobs of today and tomorrow - the sad truth also is that we are still not nearly sophisticated enough in regard to how we make those economic development investments, and if we don't improve substantially in that regard we won't get the maximum "bang for the buck" and will waste some money."

Maine 2007

July 9, 2007

http://www.magic-city-news.com/Alex_Hammer_88/Maine_20078307.shtml

I was glad to see some negotiated measure of school administration consolidation go through the legislature, even though I realize that it is controversial, if not unpopular. I do believe that all states must - within parameters that stay true to what in this case makes Maine great - plan for an economically viable future that insures that Mainers can, should they wish to, afford to stay and in fact thrive in Maine.

I believe that Opportunity Maine is an exciting step in that direction, although it appears to be perhaps a seed program at this time, from the little I have been able to find to read about it.

I ran for Governor in 2006, being from Maine and like many others with a great love of this state. Many told me that the Governor in his first term was not one to compromise, even arrogant in his approach. However, also being from Bangor myself, during the campaign many people, especially here, also told me of stories of how Governor Baldacci had been personally helpful to them in a meaningful way over the years.

And pride at seeing a local individual steadily working his way up. I don't believe that one gets far in politics nor in life by being selfish, and even running for Governor (although my campaign was severely limited due to a major traffic accident in which I was hit by a pickup truck while walking) I realized that it is more difficult than one might really imagine. There is a lot to be knowledgeable about, and being involved in managing the affairs of a state in which 1.2 million people reside may not sound like a lot, but when you start to meet these people one by one and in groups, you realize that this is also more than it might appear.

Maine requires, we all know, meaningful and responsible tax reform, that truly limits property taxes and doesn't unfairly shift the tax burden, etc. Also, now that we as a state seem more committed to economic development investments - which is a necessity for the creation of the good jobs of today and tomorrow - the sad truth also is that we are still not nearly sophisticated enough in regard to how we make those economic development investments, and if we don't improve substantially in that regard we won't get the maximum "bang for the buck" and will waste some money.

Gambling, I believe, is so attractive to some as economic development for their area (I discuss previously in Magic City Morning Star why I strongly do not consider gambling economic

development) perhaps because they are not seeing what they consider to be viable alternatives.

Maine, in 2007 as always, is a great state. A great place to live and a great place to be. Let's all get involved, as we are inclined and able, to move things fully and responsibly forward.

Enough

Excerpt: "I think, actually, that Maine politics taking on more of a nasty and self-serving tone of the rest of the country follows from Maine generally moving also on that path. I think it is a matter of economics. Maine, the state that truly has always been "the way that life should be" is slowly becoming, one of my friends joked "the way life used to be".

I hope that that is never true.

No offense to the Garden State (I think it is called), but I don't want Maine to become another New Jersey. Or New York. Or Connecticut. Or MA."

Enough

September 12, 2007

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/09/enough-by-alex-hammer.html>

I've told a significant number of people, but for those of you who don't know - if you want to know - I am the author of this blog, Maine News. The sole author at this point and time.

I love Maine. I was born here. I ran for Governor of Maine as an Independent in 2006.

Link: [This Great State](#)

I'm sick of Maine politicians. Some have been nice to me personally, and most I know work extremely extremely hard. But as a group (and I'm not saying that there aren't exceptions) they are too partisan or self-serving. Too negative.

Too political.

Not Targeted

I am not naming any names and I'm trying not to draw inference to any names in my writing so as not to be accused of playing favorites. I think, actually, that Maine politics taking on more of a nasty and self-serving tone of the rest of the country follows from Maine generally moving also on that path. I think it is a matter of economics. Maine, the state that truly has always been "the way that life should be" is slowly becoming, one of my friends joked "the way life used to be".

I hope that that is never true.

No offense to the Garden State (I think it is called), but I don't want Maine to become another New Jersey. Or New York. Or Connecticut. Or MA. I admit that I do shop at Wal-Mart but these companies of the world -- too often - I believe are economic development for economic development's sake rather than "smart economic development". When you grow willy nilly, without discipline, you get sprawl. When you engage in - I hope this doesn't sound harsh - a "race to the bottom" (as it is termed) as economic development then the identity of Maine - our special place - is very gradually, over time, eroded.

Then gambling as another example, another shortcut:

Link: [Gambling is Like a Tax](#)

also becomes increasingly attractive as "economic development" (and yes I've been to a casino on a few limited number of occasions, not recently and not a big spender).

The Way Life Should Be

Where is the Maine that I grew up with as a vision in my mind? Where is the Maine as it could be? I believe that it starts with true leaders:

Link: [Examples of Transformational Leadership](#)

Leaders in Maine.

Enough of Maine following the rest of the nation. It's time for us - finally - to lead.

I don't know about you, but that's what I am waiting for.

Survival of the Smartest

Excerpt: "I read that in the event of a full-scale nuclear war, that the human race would be extinguished but that the cockroach would survive. And that led me to thinking."

**Survival of the Smartest
September 14, 2007**

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/09/survival-of-smartest-byalexhammer.html>

I read that in the event of a full-scale nuclear war, that the human race would be extinguished but that the cockroach would survive.
And that led me to thinking.

Evolution?

I am no expert on animal behavior, but I do know that ants and bees, etc. engage in cooperative behavior for the entire colony to prosper and survive. In our species, too often (I believe) we're acting in too aggressive a manner, whether it be individual crimes, nations aggressing against other nations, brutal dictators against their own countrymen and women, or even genocide. Against that backdrop, partisan and political "fighting to the death" may seem almost tame.

And then there is terrorism. I know that animals can be aggressive towards each other: kill for food, protect young, fight over mates, food or territory. But do animals have terrorists (the equivalent of strapping on a suicide belt or flying a loaded plane into a building just to cause as much loss of life as possible - including one's own for some desired afterlife or political statement)?

I don't think that they do.

Progress

Humanity comes from the heart, not from wearing a three piece suit, nor from "following the rules" while one "steps over" or ignores the plights of others. Cooperative behavior may not seem to be the norm today, in politics or relations between groups and nations. While there exist every day acts of kindness and positive self-sacrifice, there have always (I guess) been wars and hostilities, so maybe it never was.

They say that technology is neither inherently good or bad, but that rather just people are good and bad in the way that they apply any technology tool (I guess also, if you want to extend that argument to the extreme, "nuclear bombs don't kill people, only people kill people"). Because humans have a will to power -- not always bad, it can be expressed or sublimated as need for positive achievement, etc. -- a rise in technological sophistication without a concomitant rise in social evolution -- or humanness if you will - is fraught with potential dangers.

Scary ones.

"No one is an Island"

There is a famous short story entitled, "The Life you save may be your own". They say also that "a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing".

I read also that we humans - who have much bigger brains than cockroaches - use only 10% of our brain's capacity. If cockroaches will survive when humans won't (if the worst ever occurs) it might beg the question: which of the two is really smartest after all?

The Survival of the Smartest, Part II (The Maine Edition)

Excerpt: "Round and Around the Mountain I do not really believe in shortcuts in life, but I do believe in "long cuts". That is, things not working out as well as they could have if we fail to learn from our experiences and mistakes, and/or use inefficient (or less than optimally efficient) processes. Because there are only 24 hours in a day - and we all have that same amount of time in a globally competitive marketplace - working more per se quickly becomes a disadvantage if others can make as much money in less time, leaving them more time for the rest of life (including family, rest, career planning, training and advancement, etc.)."

The Survival of the Smartest, Part II (The Maine Edition) September 15, 2007
<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/09/survival-of-fittest-part-iimaine>. Html

Governor Baldacci refers to Maine workers at times - I believe - as "the gold standard". When using that term he describes that Mainers are the best workers, the one's that employers want because of our work ethic and how hard we work, etc..

I have very little doubt that this is essentially true. We Mainers do work hard. Very very very very hard.
Maybe too hard.

Round and Around the Mountain

I do not really believe in shortcuts in life, but I do believe in "long cuts". That is, things not working out as well as they could have if we fail to learn from our experiences and mistakes, and/or use inefficient (or less than optimally efficient) processes.

Because there are only 24 hours in a day - and we all have that same amount of time in a globally competitive marketplace - working more per se quickly becomes a disadvantage if others can make as much money in less time, leaving them more time for the rest of life (including family, rest, career planning, training and advancement, etc.).

The Governor often talks about how many jobs are gained. But I very very very rarely hear any discussion in regard to the quality of those jobs. Everybody in Maine knows - and this is nothing new - that we lag the national average in wages. Many Mainers are working two jobs, even three, too often with poor or no benefits, just in an attempt to make ends meet. Too many continue to leave Maine as well.

I am angry because although it was of course my choice to leave Maine after graduating College (I graduated #1 in the College of Arts and Sciences from the University of Maine (Orono) in 1988 where I was also a USAA National Scholar) too many lives and families are disrupted in Maine because of the lack of enough good economic opportunities in our state.

We all know this. So what is the answer? I ran for Governor of Maine in 2006 because I was upset with what those of my generation and continuing had to go through. I outlined a series of principles and steps focused on global competitiveness in Maine for the type of jobs that are based upon Maine's natural strengths and are in high growth markets of the 21st century. I have explained earlier on this blog how this Administration talks a good game in regard to being successful in that 21st century global economy, but some of the important elements that are missing.

I do not claim to have all the answers by any means. To the contrary. I believe that Maine - reflecting the nation - has been mired in too much of a partisan and go it alone (or, don't present me with the other side of the argument, I've already made up my mind) type of approach that we have been stifled from optimally collaborating with each other as "One Maine" (to the degree that this is obtainable) and being open also to best practices from elsewhere in addition to our state.

In a manner that is reflective of our values collectively (obviously not completely homogeneous) as a State.

Excellence and Prosperity

Maine is indeed the gold standard of workers. But we are so, in my view, not simply by working the hardest. That hasn't worked so well thus far. I believe that we combine a strong work ethic with our native intelligence. We Mainers, I trust you would hopefully agree, are very very very smart. Part of

that, I believe, may be self-reliance, some of it may be toughness (strength), some of it may be good study skills, or curiosity, love of the arts and nature, as well as other factors.

I believe very strongly that Maine's best days - our brightest days by far - are still to come. Or can be. We're very smart in Maine. That is our true Gold Standard.

My Interview With William Cohen

Excerpt: "My impressions were of a very warm and engaging individual with a superior intellectual gift accompanied by immense knowledge (I know that sounds like a lot, but it's true)."

**My Interview with William Cohen
October 6, 2007**

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/10/my-interview-with-williamcohenbyalex.html>

My interview should actually be called an "interview", as detailed below. First some press coverage of the day's events:

From the Event Program:

"University of Maine - Tenth Anniversary Celebration - In 1997 the William S. Cohen Papers were donated to the University of Maine and the William S. Cohen Lecture Series was established. - October 5, 2007 - William S. Cohen Center for International Policy & Commerce - William S. Cohen Papers Raymond H. Fogler Library...

William S. Cohen Papers Raymond H. Fogler Library - Presents - Watergate: A Conversation with Secretary William S. Cohen and Journalist Bob Woodward - 2:00 p.m....

William S. Cohen Center for International Policy & Commerce - Presents The 2007 William S. Cohen Lecture - State of Denial: The Inside Story on the War in Iraq - 7:00 p.m....

Introduction of 2007 Cohen Lecturer - Secretary William S. Cohen Lecture - Bob Woodward, Assistant Managing Editor, The Washington Post...

Previous Cohen Lectures

Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen (1998)

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (1999)

Senator John Glenn (2001)

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (2003)

Dan Rather, CBS News (2005)

And here is some of the Maine media press coverage of the events: [Cohen reflects on Nixon, Watergate years](#) - Kennebec Journal

Excerpt:

"Former U.S. Rep. William Cohen of Maine, who played a key role in the impeachment hearings of President Nixon, said he was sitting in Lewiston watching a hockey game when he realized his early years as a congressman would be largely shaped by the Watergate scandal."

[Woodward criticizes Bush in speech at UM](#) - Bangor Daily News Excerpt:

"Acclaimed journalist and Washington insider Bob Woodward targeted the leadership of the Bush Administration on Friday, saying the president and top officials mishandled the lead-up to war and continue to be in denial about the dire situation in Iraq.

Woodward told a packed house at the University of Maine that, based on his hours of interviews with Bush, he believes the president feels a strong idealistic "duty" to spread democracy to other nations and to end tyranny. But Woodward suggested that the president and other top officials have allowed that idealism and zeal to cloud their recognition of the stark realities in Iraq. As a result, President Bush and Vice President Cheney have been unwilling to change course in Iraq."

Introduction:

Friday was my first opportunity hearing former Defense Secretary and Senator William Cohen speak in person, much less to meet him. Of course he is a Maine political legend, as he should be. His comments in the conversation with Bob Woodward were phenomenal. I've heard a fair amount of accomplished and polished public figures and speakers in my life, but not a single one better than him.

My impressions were of a very warm and engaging individual with a superior intellectual gift accompanied by immense knowledge (I know that sounds like a lot, but it's true).

After the afternoon event (and before the evening one) I was fortunate to be at the press conference limited to a small number of journalists. During that event I was personally able to ask Senator Cohen a single question (along with Bob Woodward, who was also present). Trying to touch on the Senator's Maine background I asked him about what today's event meant to him personally in the context of his history and activities in Maine and overall. As my notetaking ability is slower than his ability to answer the question I won't attempt direct quotes but will summarize:

Senator Cohen indicated that he and Bob Woodward have known each other since 1974 and that today's event, and the plane ride to it, provided a unique opportunity for the two of them to review Watergate, that in the past they had always been looking forward and that today now provided the opportunity to look back.

Although brief, it was a lot of fun to meet and pose an interview question to former Defense Secretary and Senator Cohen, and if you're out there Senator Cohen somewhere reading this somewhere, I'm ready for my next question!

Excerpt from the Program:

"Secretary William S. Cohen - For 24 years Secretary Cohen represented Maine in the United States Congress... A three-term U.S. Senator (1979-1997), Secretary of Cohen chaired the Armed Services Committee's oversight of tens of billions of acquisition dollars for naval vessels and U.S. security policy in East Asia, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf...William S. Cohen served as Secretary of Defense during the second Clinton administration. It was the first time in modern U.S. history a president named an elected official from the opposition party to a cabinet position...Currently the Chairman and CEO of The Cohen Group, a Washington-based firm providing international consulting services, Secretary Cohen has served on several national boards and study committees including the Council on Foreign Relations, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Brookings Institute, Empower America, and CBS Corporation. A published author of eleven works of nonfiction, fiction and poetry.."

[William Cohen - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
[William S. Cohen Papers at the Raymond H. Fogler Library](#)
[The Cohen Group SecDef Histories - William Cohen](#)

Life is a Series of Losses, and Gains

Excerpt: "Life is short, but they say if you live it well is long enough."

October 11, 2007

Life is a Series of Losses, and Gains

Beginnings and ends. Life is short, but they say if you live it well is long enough.

I feel that I've lived long enough to feel a little more sweetness, even if days stay essentially the same.

We just cope better.

And we progress.

It's not abnormal to struggle, despite or regardless of one's level of success. As one's success increases, new challenges appear.

Tougher ones.

But one has more experiences, and any skills built, to bring to bear. If life is a mirror, be careful of what face you show to the world!

If you want to live your dreams, then participate in others' in a way that is meaningful to them.

Then - if they wish - maybe they'll let you in. You should be so lucky!

Lance Dutson, The Senator Susan Collins Campaign and Google

Excerpt: "Our advertising policies and political speech - Google Public

Policy Blog Excerpt: "Recently, representatives of Senator Susan Collins' Senate re-election campaign tried to place an ad on Google that included a reference to MoveOn.org, a political group. The text of this ad was rejected by our system because of our trademark policy, not because of its political content.

Under our [trademark policy](#), a registered trademark owner may request that its mark not be used in the text of other parties' ads. Some time ago, MoveOn.org submitted a request to Google that its trademark not be used in any ads, and as a result our advertiser support team offered instructions on how Senator Collins' campaign could edit and resubmit its ad."

Lance Dutson, The Senator Susan Collins Campaign and Google - By Alex Hammer - With Three Updates as Story Developments Continue

<http://www.maine-newsblog.com/2007/10/lance-dutson-senator-susancollins.html>

October 12, 2007

This is an editorial.

First a few notes or disclaimers (explanations, etc.). One, I am not a lawyer. Two, I have placed Internet text ads before (more on Yahoo than Google if memory serves) but I'm no expert in regard to all the rules that apply (who reads the entire text of most agreements most Internet companies make you agree to, generally they're quite long and full of legal information?). I consider Lance Dutson a friend. We're in the same field essentially (Internet Politics) (I ran for Governor of Maine in 2006) and we've corresponded fairly regularly (I was upset with him recently, but that has no bearing on this article). Just before joining the Senator Collins campaign, Lance came close to working on my website [Politics 2.0](#) (PS It's a great site! -- there's my plug). I have offered both Senator Collins (through Lance) and Rep. Tom Allen the opportunity to be interviewed by Maine News if they so desire. Senator Collins met with me individually, at my request, in her Bangor office during my campaign for Governor. She is, from my experience with her, a friendly and extremely professional individual. On a significant number of occasions since then I would send her, or through her office, general thoughts that I feel would be helpful and interesting to her. For a brief period I had an interest in working for her campaign (I was never asked) and if invited it is possible that I may have given up Maine News to be able to do so. As may not be a surprise to many as they are both Republicans, Senator Collins later wound up endorsing one of my opponents, Chandler Woodcock for Governor of Maine in 2006. I was disappointed that following our meeting (which from my perspective went extremely well) I never heard back from the Senator even well before her campaign began. As an Independent, and just because I try to be accessible and appropriately helpful to any or all individuals regardless of their place on the political spectrum, most political figures from Maine I have found, regardless of party, have been willing to meet, generally helpful etc.

In regard to Google, here are excerpts from Lance's post in Maine Web Report entitled [The anti-MoveOn ads Google won't let you see](#) : "This story is currently #1 on the Examiner's 'most popular' list across the country. It has been linked by the [Drudge Report](#), [Instapundit](#), [Michelle Malkin](#), [Right Voices](#), and many other blogs. People have been asking to see the actual ads, so I'm posting them here, along with the text of a support chat I had with a Google representative about their suspension of the ads:"

and

AnnaMarie: Hello Lance. Thanks for contacting Google AdWords. I'm happy to help you.

Lance Dutson: i received a message saying my ads violated trademark

Lance Dutson: and i want to know if you received a specific complaint about them

AnnaMarie: I won't be able to give you that information Lance.

AnnaMarie: You can request permission to use a trademarked term from a trademark owner though.

Lance Dutson: Is there a protocol for appealing a suspended ad through google?

AnnaMarie: No there is not. We do not handle trademark disputes. Lance Dutson: Because the suspension does not seem to meet reasonable trademark standards

Lance Dutson: So if anyone complains, you simply pull the ad?

AnnaMarie: The term MoveOn is a trademarked term.

AnnaMarie: We proactively disapprove ads that have a trademarked term in them, unless the advertiser in question has permission to use the term."

Alex again: Ok, here's my analysis. And keep in mind my initial disclaimer point that I am not a lawyer. What AnnaMarie from Google says above makes sense to me. That doesn't mean it's right, just that it makes sense to me. Lance makes a number of points and approaches continuing in his conversation with AnnaMarie following the excerpt above (which you can follow if interested by going to Lance's post [The anti- MoveOn ads Google won't let you see](#) but none of the things that he raises, to my mind, invalidate the basic point that AnnaMarie is above making. Maybe others will feel differently, maybe there are additional arguments that Lance or the Senator Collins campaign will come up with. One point I do agree with (against Google) is that if Google does indeed weed out such entries on a proactive basis as AnnaMarie above states, then they may have been quite sloppy indeed (as one potential explanation) if it is true that there a significant or large number of trademarked terms that remain in their system. I think there are two larger issues also, that have nothing to do with Google. The first is the issue of money in campaigns. If you look on this Maine News Website we've done a lot of research over the last few days in regard to where money comes from etc. in Maine political campaigns (not only Collins and Allen but many others as well). There are many dimensions to this area. I'm not asserting any thesis (I'm probably not smart enough for that!). As a nation (and therefore probably also as a state) the issues of money and elections has been long discussed.

As a side note, the Maine Clean Election Act is separately an area that I have a lot of thoughts and opinions on and may write about (I did a little during my campaign) if I can organize my thoughts and have time to do so. This next thought is just a total guess but it seems to me that the Collins campaign, as expressed by Lance in Maine Web Report, seems very afraid of the financial contribution raising demonstrated ability for Senator Collins' opponent, Rep. Tom Allen, as indicted by Lance's prior Maine Web Reports, including some excerpts in Maine News.

The second point is my belief, expressed earlier in [Apology? Post From Collins Watch Blog](#), that both Senator Collins and Rep. Tom Allen are focusing too much on the negative (i.e. focused on perceived negative aspects of their respective opponent) rather than detailing what I feel Maine really needs, a clear and compelling vision for our state (and nation) that draws upon also their experience as public servants. Finally, if this sounds like jealousy let me know, but I think that frankly Lance Dutson is receiving too much attention nationally, as opposed to the actual candidate (perhaps it is in conjunction with the candidate) and I have told him so. If you click on a few of the relevant labels on Maine News, you will see that even before the National headlines that this Google issue has brought about, that there has been the press with the tracking issue, back and forth with DailyKos, voting attendance issues, and of course the issues with MoveOn.org have been major and ongoing. I'm not sure whether Lance has cited this or not (I can keep things straight but my head starts to spin in all these claims and counterclaims -- one reason that I would like to see it abated) but I've previously read one or more published pieces for Lance to resign -- something I think is absurd.

But I would recommend a time out to both campaigns.
(Comments from readers welcome if any).

Update:Google responds (from TechRepublican: full post

<http://techrepublican.com/Google-MoveOn-Senator-Collins-Advertising> Excerpt:

"In need of an official clarification, I contacted [Google's](#) Adam Kovacevich for an explanation and he told me:

Google is committed to providing an advertising service with fair and consistent policies that benefit our users, advertisers, partners, and Google. To achieve this goal, we maintain high standards for ads accepted into the AdWords program. All AdWords ads, political or otherwise, must follow our [editorial guidelines](#) and [content policy](#). Google applies policy for political ads equally, regardless of the political views represented by the ads submitted.

Under our [advertising policies](#), companies and organizations that can demonstrate that they own trademark rights can request that their trademarked terms not be used in any ad text. In such cases, we will require that the advertiser remove the trademark from the ad text, although we do not disable keywords in response to a trademark complaint. MoveOn had made such a request. If ads are running on Google that do include trademark terms, this is likely because either the trademark owner has not submitted a complaint, or because the advertiser is authorized to use the trademark. We encourage political candidates and campaigns with questions about these policies to contact our Elections Team at elections@google.com."

Alex: I do believe that Lance jumped the gun when Tom Allen was at a funeral (<http://www.mainewebreport.com/2007/10/02/tom-allen-skips>

[workagain](#)), and in light of this additional information -- I hope that I am not also

jumping the gun because the Collins camp may have a further statement with elaborated or

clarifying details -- but I believe that Lance has essentially jumped the gun again.

Update2 (10-13):

Some new developments and media coverage: Our advertising policies and political speech - Google Public Policy Blog Excerpt:

"Recently, representatives of Senator Susan Collins' Senate re-election campaign tried to place an ad on Google that included a reference to MoveOn.org, a political group. The text of this ad was rejected by our system because of our trademark policy, not because of its political content. Under our [trademark policy](#), a registered trademark owner may request that its mark not be used in the text of other parties' ads. Some time ago, MoveOn.org submitted a request to Google that its trademark not be used in any ads, and as a result our advertiser support team offered instructions on how Senator Collins' campaign could edit and resubmit its ad.

Any company or organization -- regardless of political affiliation -- could do what MoveOn did and thereby prevent advertisers from running ads that include their trademarks in ad texts. And that's very important. The ad in question could have said that MoveOn.org was great, or even just so-so, and our policy would have resulted in the same outcome; Google would have asked the advertiser to drop the trademarked phrase.

Our trademark policy is considered one of the least restrictive in the industry. It strikes a balance among the interests of users, advertisers, and trademark owners by leaving it up to trademark owners to notify us of restrictions on their registered trademarks. Any entity that demonstrates to us that it owns trademark rights can request that its trademarked terms not be used in the text of Google ads. Finally, it was [claimed](#) that "Google routinely permits the unauthorized use of [other] company names...in advocacy ads." In fact, if ads are running on Google that include trademark terms in their text, either the trademark owner has not submitted a complaint, or the advertiser has been authorized to use the trademark."

<http://googlepublicpolicy.blogspot.com/2007/10/our-advertising-policiesandpolitical.html>

From Senator Susan Collins Website: StandUp Against MoveOn.Org MoveOn.org has made Susan Collins their #1 target.

"We've seen the destructive effect of MoveOn.org's dirty politics many times, including their recent outrageous attack on U.S. General David Petraeus in the New York Times.

Now MoveOn.org and other extremists have focused on Susan Collins, and they are using the same ruthless methods they've always used. MoveOn.org has decided that Susan Collins is their number one target for 2008. Your contribution of any size will help send a message to MoveOn.org that their extreme, destructive political tactics will not be accepted. Help Susan Collins stand up to MoveOn.org by making a secure donation today...[Click here to contribute >>](#)"

<http://www.susancollins.com/stand-against-moveon-org>

New Lance Dutson Maine Web Report Post [Google / MoveOn.org issue on Hannity and Colmes](#)

Excerpt:

"Tons of coverage of this story"

<http://www.mainewebreport.com/2007/10/12/google-moveonorg-issueonhannity-and-colmes/>

Reactions in Maine:

As Maine Goes (Forum) [Google Bans Senator Collins Campaign Ads](#)

TurnMaineBlue.com (Blog) [Advertisers: You May Want to Think Twice Before Hiring Lance Dutson to Run Your Ad Campaign](#)

Caution: Language. Alex: I don't like this kind of language, but I nonetheless include a link to the post because it is from a site I see in the Maine political blogosphere pretty frequently.

Collins Watch (Blog) [Moveon Again](#)

Also:

[Google Bans Ads That Criticize Far-Left MoveOn.org - FOX News](#) [Google Banning Anti-MoveOn.org ads?](#) - GigaOm

Update3:10/16/07

MoveOn.org Reverses: Allows Critical Ads on Google - Wired Excerpt:

"The left-leaning political advocacy group, MoveOn.org, is backing down in a flap over the use of its name in online advertisements, permitting an influential Republican senator to criticize the organization in a reelection ad on Google's search engine.

"We don't want to support a policy that denies people freedom of

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expression," says Jennifer Lindenauer, [MoveOn.org's](#) communications director."

<http://www.wired.com/politics/onlinerights/news/2007/10/moveon>

[Thoughts on the Google/MoveOn.org ad suspension - Maine Web Report \(Blog\) - Lance Dutson](#)

Excerpts:

"MoveOn announced earlier today that they were [pulling their trademark filing with Google](#) and - in an unexpected twist - has joined the [chorus of critics](#) against Google's overly broad trademark policy."

and

"The technological advancements Google has made have been nothing short of miraculous. They have profoundly altered and advanced the way information is gathered and distributed, and I believe they have been an astounding force for good in general. Let's hope they are able to re-assess the way they deal with this issue, and get rid of this policy before it causes too many folks to lose faith."

<http://www.mainewebreport.com/2007/10/15/thoughts-on-thegooglemoveonorgad-suspension/>

[MoveOn backs down on Google ad crackdown, but bullying of Cafe ... - by MichelleMalkin](#)

"Do not forget, however, that the [MoveOn thugs have stood by their bullying of Cafe Press shop owners](#) who mocked the left-wing group on t-shirts and mugs defending Gen. David Petraeus. So much for their support of free speech."

<http://michellemalkin.com/2007/10/15/moveon-backs-down-on-googleadcrackdown-but-bullying-of-cafe-press-owners-stands/>

Editorial - Why the silence on Google's censorship? - The Examiner Excerpt:

"Then last week, The Examiner published an oped by Robert Cox, a member of the newspaper's blogger board, that questioned why Google would suppress an ad at the apparent request of MoveOn.org, yet allow ads critical of corporations like ExxonMobil, Wal-Mart and Microsoft. The Cox oped was linked to by the Drudge Report, Instapundit, Slashdot and Michelle Malkin among online media, and by Fox News on cable."

http://www.examiner.com/a-989716~Why_the_silence_on_Google_s_censorship_.html

[One for Lance! MoveOn Backs Down on Google Ads - As Maine Goes \(Forum Thread\)](#)

An Open Letter to University of Maine System Chancellor Richard Pattenau

Excerpt: "There is a book on the history of the University of Maine System that is absolutely fabulous reading for anyone interested in higher education in our state. It is: [Super U: The History and Politics of the University of Maine System](#) This book taught me a lot. While I came away with a renewed appreciation for some accomplishments, I also had some concerns."

[An Open Letter to University of Maine System Chancellor Richard Pattenau](#)

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/10/open-letter-to-university-of-maine.html>

October 13, 2007

I was scheduled to meet with Chancellor Pattenau's predecessor in December of 2005. Very unfortunately for me, I was in a serious auto accident the month before, and was still in the hospital when our scheduled meeting date arrived.

The rescheduling of that initial appointment has been far from easy. I have met with a UMS representative on several occasions since then in regard to meeting with the Chancellor. Why am I interested in meeting with the Chancellor? Well, in addition to running for Governor of Maine in 2006 (the accident occurred about a month after announcing my candidacy and derailed the campaign as it just began) and meeting with leaders across the state, across the political spectrum and outside the political system, as with many I believe that the University system is, can and/or should be an economic driver in Maine. During my campaign I still managed to publish articles on economic development and related topics (e.g. [This Great State](#)).

Growing Up UMaine

I also am a graduate of the University of Maine. My father is a retired faculty member of the University, and I remember being on the Orono campus with him since I was a young child (I liked the earlier Black Bear statue a lot better than the current one, don't you?). I feel that in addition to a great love for the state of Maine as a whole that I bleed "blue" for UMaine as well. I loved it there. So many happy times.

Approaching two years later and numerous delays (I was scheduled in fact to meet with the Chancellor this September, but this was canceled by UMS slightly before the meeting and has yet to be rescheduled) I'd still jump at the opportunity for a meeting. Here are some of the things that I would ask about:

Chancellor Richard Pattenaude

I wouldn't ask this first (and I realize that after writing it here I may not get a chance to ask it at all) as this is the toughest question, but I'd like to find out from the Chancellor directly what occurred at USM over the last few years of his tenure as President there, in regard to the financial difficulties ([USM looks to curb its financial troubles](#)). I've asked around a few places about it already, and would love (if he was willing) a first hand account (BDN article today, in fact, indicates financial difficulties also effecting additional University campuses [3 of 7 UMS campuses reporting ?06 deficits](#)). Related to this, and this may be the second toughest area, I'd like to find out what he feels was learned from the prior reorganization/consolidation proposal (from before his tenure as Chancellor) that based upon a firestorm of opposition had to be withdrawn (in fairness, I haven't followed that super closely and do not know or remember whether the entire proposal was withdrawn or only contentious element(s)). From what I do remember reading, it was the MANNER in which the proposal was launched (lack of sufficient input etc.) that contributed (beyond any proposal objections some people might have) to this firestorm of negative reaction to it. Witnessing Chancellor Pattenaude at a press event while he was being considered for the position of Chancellor, I was impressed with the personable and I felt forthright manner in which he addressed questions (I asked him one myself on economic development of course!). I hope that he continues this now that he is Chancellor such that he will get out front and be accessible in explaining directly to Mainers any difficulties that arise.

That is what I believe true (and most effective) leaders need to do.

UMS Over Time

There is a book on the history of the University of Maine System that is absolutely fabulous reading for anyone interested in higher education in our state. It is: [Super U: The History and Politics of the University of Maine System](#). This book taught me a lot. While I came away with a renewed appreciation for some accomplishments, I also had some concerns. For one, the direction(s) of the University of Maine system seemed to differ substantially from administration to administration, to my mind thus pointing to perhaps being subject too great to political influences (I do think that the University should be subject to some COLLECTIVE political will, in terms of its functions in serving Maine (realize that is not, nor should it be, it's sole calling). I capitalized the word collective, because the even bigger concern that arose is the sense that the University of Maine system structure is such that decisions effecting the entire system can, to too high a degree it seemed to me especially when compared to other states, be made by too small of a collection of people (I do realize that there is, for example, legislative oversight in regard to state funding, and other notable checks and balances on UMS as well I would think (hope!)).

The University of Maine system contains Nationally and Internationally recognized/leading programs. I am very proud to be a graduate of the University of Maine. UMS publishes statistics on its noteworthy economic development results, but the reports that detail this, from the major University personnel I have met with that have supplied me with some, to my mind are less than optimally comprehensive in regard to the topics covered. I'm not saying the results aren't there fully as claimed, only that I'd like to see a greater level (depth and breadth) of examination and coverage.

Economic Development and Jobs

Chancellor Pattenaude, I'd also like to ask you about Maine jobs. In [The Survival of the Smartest, Part II \(The Maine Edition\) - By Alex Hammer](#) I wrote in part:

"The Governor often talks about how many jobs are gained. But I very very very rarely hear any discussion in regard to the quality of those jobs. Everybody in Maine knows - and this is nothing new - that we lag the national average in wages. Many Mainers are working two jobs, even three, too often with poor or no benefits, just in an attempt to make ends meet. Too many continue to leave Maine as well.

I am angry because although it was of course my choice to leave Maine after graduating College (I graduated #1 in the College of Arts and Sciences from the University of Maine (Orono) in 1988 where I was also a USAA National Scholar) too many lives and families are disrupted in Maine because of the lack of enough good economic opportunities in our state."

I'm not really angry. But I am concerned. I read that Maine now has I believe even more immigration than outmigration, so I don't doubt that to be true. But if you read closely the Brookings report, etc. you will see that Maine has lost a very large number of its younger people (we may attract people but we're the oldest state in the nation). Most of my friends from my generation have left Maine and not returned. I doubt that I am really the only one in that situation.

Going Forward

When you're, to at least some degree "the only game in town" where is the impetus to have and maintain open processes? I'll spare the details at this time, because it is not the main point that I want to make, but I have found the University of Maine System (including in its component parts) to be somewhat indifferent personally in its dealings with me, and to exhibit, at times more than anything else to my mind, a kind of take-it-or-leave-it (in addition to shoot the messenger) mentality as well. In addition to finding this a bit surprising I find it sad also as I have, and still do as detailed, so much love the University.

Aside from my personal experience I also believe, just from being a Mainer that reads the news, etc. that there has existed a sort of hunkering down, bunker-type mentality at times, that papers over problems. Even when Westphal left the Chancellor position he got a fat-cat contract and Pattenaude hasn't been available to discuss in media that I've read USM's longstanding financial difficulties either before or after his tenure are but two examples. When I have conversed with legislators too many of them, to my mind, have not seen the value of a Maine University education. Some of this, I believe, is due to legislature-University system differing mindsets (see also above book for historical examination) that I think any successful state must more convincingly bridge; some perhaps to lowered aspirations in our state; traditional Maine workforce sectors (e.g. with the decline of manufacturing a college education becomes even more necessary than ever) and I'm sure additional factors.

Maybe the emphasis on primary vs. secondary education has also played a role.

The Best of the System

Before I ran for Governor I applied for the President's position at the University of Maine. I am glad that I didn't get it. President Kennedy deserved it (I didn't of course know if he or some other candidate would be selected) - by all accounts that I have heard he is doing a phenomenal job in the position.

There are other talented individuals but President Kennedy is to my mind the crown jewel of the group that I have come across.

I have heard good things also about Chancellor Pattenaude. Despite the challenges of today and tomorrow, he may well also be another. Finally, Chancellor Pattenaude, I'd just like to say: I don't speak for the entire state (or for anybody other than myself for that matter), but I believe that collectively we are behind you - we want you to succeed. If you agree that we're in this together, that we have shared and important mutual interests, then I hope that you will - appropriately and always - let us in.

Alex Hammer on: Baldacci: It's Not About Being Comfortable- Morning Sentinel

Excerpt: "Baldacci: First of all let me just say to you, John, Naomi and Eric, I take to heart our editorial board meeting (during the campaign) and the process that I went through during the re-election period, and I think I learned a lot in my first four years."

Alex Hammer on: Baldacci: It's not about being comfortable - Morning Sentinel
<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/10/baldacci-its-not-about-being.html> October 18, 2007

Alex: My comments are identified and interspersed within the excerpts below:

Excerpt:

"John Christie: Can you expand upon what appears to be a different approach from you lately?"

Baldacci: First of all let me just say to you, John, Naomi and Eric, I take to heart our editorial board meeting (during the campaign) and the process that I went through during the re-election period, and I think I learned a lot in my first four years. I was telling David this morning I think when I first became governor of the state of Maine ... I think the tendency sometimes is to think that you're in a china cabinet and you're going to be fragile with what you're handling. We had campaign-type issues coming forward (into the first term) and we wanted to get them implemented, but at the same time I've developed a lot more experience going through the budget, going through the departments and agencies and drilling down on things over that period of time and then I began to feel a lot more comfortable about moving things around. It sort of came home after the re-election, in a sense, that it wasn't really about me being comfortable in the last three years, but really was about doing the work that needs to be done. I can't just sit around here and do nothing ... "

Alex Hammer: I like this answer from the Governor quite a bit. He explains, for example, the motivation behind what he is trying to do. I am a big big believer in direct, from the heart (and mind) transparent communication that levels with people in regard to what is occurring (or needs to occur and why) and I salute Governor Baldacci because I feel that he is doing this here. During my campaign for Governor in 2006 I outlined in one published article my thoughts on [Reasons Not To Be Governor](#), which involves general considerations and is not an indictment regarding the incumbent or any of the other candidates that were running for that matter. Another published piece, which I don't have a link to, in the Ellsworth American, was entitled "A Governor's Responsibility", in which I outlined, from my perspective (and I came a long way from winning I realize) what those responsibilities would be. My general vision for the state (as much as one can do that in one article I suppose, is in [This Great State](#)).

In the excerpt above Governor Baldacci talks about how things have been different since the re-election, in regard to it not being about him being comfortable. 1. I think this is terrific 2. I like it because I think that it implies service 3. And standards. High standards 4. It is only my opinion, but I think that the pointed challenges that the Governor received during the campaign from his opponents in the campaign, as well as his 38% re-election total (if memory serves, if I'm off in that number please correct me!) has given rise to a certain sense of realism, perhaps even humility, that may not have been evidenced previously to this degree.

The excerpt above is only a portion of the Governor's response (hence the ...). I have nothing at all against long responses, especially since I can be at times very prone to providing them also myself (I like simplicity but not things that are simplistic, I hate sound bites unless they are meaningful in regard to what lies behind them).

The final portion of the Governor's same response is excerpted below Excerpt:

"We have the ability to do this but it's like ... Charlie Brown, like the Red Sox, like we're never going to beat the Yankees. There's this underlying thing.

Believe me, I know that a lot of this stuff is tough for people because it changes the way we do things and it's real people, real families and real lives."

Alex: I like this too. Governor Baldacci is a phenomenal speaker (IMHO). I've heard him speak several times, and I am amazed (I am only a moderately skilled public speaker, in my opinion, could be better, Governor Baldacci is much much better than I am at this I feel and I admire this skill that he has). I like what Governor Baldacci says about the Red Sox (all Sox fans can relate from over the years!, 2004 was a blessing) and Charlie Brown, because it is a very important point and is stated in a way that people can relate to. The expectations that we have, and the way that we feel about ourselves, are indeed critically important in regard to the results that we achieve. I address that also in my vision (hope that's not too strong a word) [This Great State](#) I want to say further that is my opinion that Governor Baldacci is a good person (and I believe this is important), by the definition of his having worked hard in the area of seeking to help many many people. Being from, living in (and campaigning in) Bangor during the 2006 campaign, MANY people came up to me and told me how Governor Baldacci had helped them over the years. I was impressed by that.

Last excerpt:

"Baldacci: Actually, I sat with Sue (Gendron, commissioner of education) yesterday ... We went through the issues that she's going through and there are two, the mill-rate issue (some districts may see increases), and one other issue that we're going to be seeking to ... further refine so it doesn't have those kinds of consequences so there ... are some things that she can do administratively.

... I put in a plan to do 26 (school districts, after consolidation), the Legislature and the executive working together came out with this compromise (80 districts), and in doing this found there are things that need to be refined ...

There's those that want to dilute it, those that want to slow it down, those that want to take away incentives or take away the penalties ... I won't support that or will be strongly opposed to those

changes and would seek to veto those kinds of things being done either through line item or all in total." Alex: I'm not up to date on all of the recent school consolidation issues, but it strikes me that there is a great deal of candor in the Governor's response. I like that.

Throughout the remainder of the article also I see a greater level of openness than I remember from the Governor during his first term. I like that too. I like that a lot.

Kudos also to Blethen newspapers for a truly substantive interview. I like the fact that they (apparently, generally) left his answers intact (in regard to thought streams, doesn't read as broken up, etc.). Media from my experience, while very talented and good-natured, occasionally may attempt to play kingmaker: [A Positive Challenge to the Business of Maine Media](#) Not that anyone needs my approval, to be sure, but good job all around!!

Later on in the article Governor Baldacci talks about working with Governors King and McKernan. Kudos to that also. We're all in this together, and we all need to help each other I believe. I just want to make sure, as I believe that he will, that the Governor will extend this down to all levels. Collaboration doesn't make sense only at the top, but needs to integrate widely and be pervasive to be effective (I'm pushing my luck if I mention one additional point, transforming the budget process to make it more transparent and understandable to us, his interview is one small step among many that can be done).

The last thing that I'll say here is that I believe that honesty, enthusiasm and good naturedness are all contagious. I sensed in the article a real level of engagement by the questioners (as opposed to just asking expected questions) which I think reflects, likely, the engagement of the interviewee. Not that it's easy for me, but I've run out of things to say.

<http://morningsentinel.mainetoday.com/view/columns/4358006.html>

Alex Hammer: Quotes on Economic Development in Maine

Excerpt: "No state can afford to waste money. Maine certainly cannot. We must be certain that we are investing in the right areas in the right amounts. By investment I mean spending that financially gives back (yes, over time) more than what was put into it. Otherwise it's only an expense."

[Alex Hammer: Quotes on Economic Development in Maine](#)

<http://www.maineblog.com/2007/10/alex-hammer-quotes-oneconomic.html>

October 19, 2007

More and more often now I hear Maine leaders - and others - talking about economic development in Maine and its critical importance in terms of the economic vitality (and in fact viability) of our state. I am really glad to see this, and in this season in which the critical focus and discussion involves what is and what is not successful economic development, I organize my views on this topic (see links if desired for further examination beyond excerpts).

See also:

[An Open Letter to University of Maine System Chancellor Richard Pattenau - By Alex Hammer](#)

and also:

[Home Phone Number and Money Back Guarantee](#)

Economic development excerpts from [This Great State](#):

"Perhaps most importantly it involves a successful transition in which a significant enough portion of Maine's economic mix profits from (rather than is diminished by) the 21st century information-rich global economy that the world has become. In addition, and this is the critical piece, this success incorporates Maine's quality of life traditions and values. In other columns I address my views regarding building successful bridges generally across common divides for better government (Lewiston Sun Journal November 6, 2005) as well as a beginning detailing of successful economic development in Maine (Bangor Daily News September 15, 2005). Maine can reconcile dimensions that often seem to be at odds, building, supporting, and buttressing each aspect rather than tearing

its opposite down." and (this one is longer):

"The Maine Competitive Council and Maine generally will employ a list of strategies to have us working as smart or smarter than other states, not just as hard. Some ways in which this will be accomplished include:

1. The use of coordinated statewide networks that focus on identified areas in which Maine can be a National and/or International leader in that 21st century economy. Such networks will research, identify and then integrate Maine's unique and difficult to replicate strengths such that they can be more powerfully leveraged and marketed for export to address identified market needs in high growth areas (see the Maine Environmental Science Network detailed in BDN article as one example of this).

2. The use of best practices such that rather than re-creating the wheel Maine is able to profit from the most efficient and effective processes and program elements utilized elsewhere.

3. ROI-sensitive technology investments that increase productivity and profits. This can include business intelligence software that helps to optimize in line with desired goals and parameters projects and project management, schedules, inventory, distribution, vendor relationships etc. By ROI-sensitive in this case I mean that we will be looking at the investments carefully before making them to make sure that they provide real benefits in highly needed areas and that we possess the necessary expertise (or can successfully import it) to insure their success (that includes phasing things in at manageable levels rather than trying to do too much at once and all heck breaking loose).

4. Other ROI-sensitive investments. No state can afford to waste money. Maine certainly cannot. We must be certain that we are investing in the right areas in the right amounts. By investment I mean spending that financially gives back (yes, over time) more than what was put into it. Otherwise it's only an expense. In regard to tax-break advantages - let them earn it. How about less or no money up front until promises are delivered and maintained? I realize that we are in competition with other states, but indiscriminate use of business tax break incentives is simply in my view "buying jobs", which anyone can do if you pay enough for them. This competition, when it goes beyond the point of what makes logical economic sense for a State, is simply, as is termed, "a race to the bottom" that Maine does not need and cannot afford. In addition, I would refrain from giving any tax break considerations to those that do show the proper respect for the health and vitality of the State of Maine by being good corporate citizens, both in their history and continuing forward. And they must respect Maine's environment. Let us reach out as a state, as I have said previously, for Maine to be a beacon for all businesses that are environmentally friendly worldwide, for them to stay, grow and come to Maine and prosper.

To insure that statewide interests do not transgress local concerns, I would like to develop five Regional planning committees: Central Maine, Down East, Northern Maine, Southern Maine, and Western Maine, that would each provide representatives to the Maine Competitive Council to insure that local and regional interests are being adequately addressed. Citizen input is also crucial and I would like to see a substantial percentage of representation on the Competitive Council come from these ranks. Maine is a bright state, and when we bring together the best of what we have, well harnessed and directed, we unleash the full capabilities of what we have to offer." Economic development excerpt from [Why I am the Best Candidate for Governor of Maine](#) (yes, I realize that that title is somewhat flashy/direct, hopefully not too much so):

"Someone who is most qualified to lead this state will recognize the importance of BOTH cost containment and ROI-sensitive but critical investments to foster economic growth. To successfully compete against other states and countries in the hyper-competitive information-rich global economy of the 21st century that the world has become, Maine needs to lighten the burdens on businesses so that they can grow and also leverage strategic business resources and expertise statewide that can most powerfully be coordinated and marketed to meet the highly sophisticated and developed market needs of this global marketplace. A focus on incubator and beginning technologies do not provide the sophistication and critical mass to meaningfully penetrate these advanced markets. As one descriptive (but recognized less than perfect) analogy, your high school (or even college) baseball team, despite additional practice and better equipment is not going to consistently defeat the Boston Red Sox. Our economic development efforts must not be amateurish and overly piecemeal, but instead constitute a highly leveraged and coordinated network of business offerings powerfully marketed. This should be built and developed by Maine business according to market needs with the government providing assistance but only secondarily involved. Under my leadership Maine's economic development guidance and resources will utilize these principles - guided by Maine business - for increased acceptance into lucrative and targeted local, domestic and international markets as we demonstrate that yes we are in and can successfully

compete in this global game."

I'd love to know what you think. Thank you.

Alex

hscpub@aol.com (current email)

We're a Nation of Laws

Excerpt: "Of necessity, I believe, because we are not a nation of hearts. We have to convince people to do the right thing, because (too often) they don't want to. We say that that is human nature."

We're a Nation of Laws

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/10/were-nation-of-laws-byalexhammer.html>

October 23, 2007

Of necessity, I believe, because we are not a nation of hearts.

We have to convince people to do the right thing, because (too often) they don't want to.

We say that that is human nature.

I believe that our mental (and hence technological) evolution has far outpaced our social evolution, the development of our hearts. Someday we will evolve into a species that wants to do the right thing to a much greater degree. Just as our nation outlawed slavery, has had a focus on civil and women's and others rights (and now there is a growing global consciousness in regard to protecting our environment as another example), someday laws will be less a notion of stricture and more a notion of service. We'll move beyond an emphasis in regard to what is lawful to a deeper notion (in flux and collaborative) of what is just. Laws are a component of justice, they are not complete in and of themselves.

If they were, we wouldn't have so many instances of unfairness despite all the laws in the world. Following the law is step one. It's the beginning of the process, not the end.

Those that love the law are legalistic. Those that love humanity, and respect the law, are increasingly focused on being just.

In Star Trek, the crew visits our current human race I believe and one of the crew says "They are barbaric" (or barbarians, forget the exact words) (because we are using surgery, cutting people open, which is not needed in the medicine of their day).

We are barbarians. We are killing each other in Iraq and other places (not trying to make a political statement, only a human one). Additionally, the world is full of strife, and in politics partisanship.

There is too much deceit and lack of kindness in the world. I believe that there is a cover on our collective hearts, a veil, that as we evolve further socially as a species will be increasingly lifted.

The beneficial results of which, no technology, and no collection of laws, could hope to match.

Governor Baldacci Says Time is Right for Alternative Energy - Alex: Definitely, but Also More Than Meets the Eye

Excerpt: "In the larger context, Maine should consider leveraging, as a key area (if not cornerstone) of economic development (focused on high growth 21st century global markets that build upon both Maine's research and commercial strengths and are consistent with Maine's traditional values) environmental science solutions for global export across forestry, climate research, renewable energy, marine science, agricultural science and a host

of other specialty areas towards working to solve the world's environmental challenges (global warming, acid rain, deforestation, lack of clean drinking water, etc.). The United Nations has identified environmental solutions as one of the highest growth areas of the 21st century. It's an incredibly huge business opportunity, one focused by definition on the sustainability of our planet, and consistent with Maine's historical strengths and values."

Governor Baldacci Says Time is Right for Alternative Energy - Alex: Definitely!, but also more than meetstheeye

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/11/governor-baldacci-says-timeisright.html>

November 16, 2007

Excerpt 1:

"Governor John E. Baldacci said today that now is the time for Maine to capitalize on its potential to become a significant producer of renewable energy. Speaking during the opening of the E2-Tech Conference on energy and the environment, the Governor said tidal, wind and solar energy are viable remedies to the country's dependence on foreign oil."

Alex: State leaders are just beginning to come together in regard to a more sophisticated, integrated and comprehensive understanding of how to target and address breakthrough global growth markets such as alternative energy leveraging Maine's traditional strengths and also values.

In (link:) [Maine Round-Up: Maine, Renewable Energy and The World; Governor Baldacci and Trade](#) I share in part:

"In the larger context, Maine should consider leveraging, as a key area (if not cornerstone) of economic development (focused on high growth 21st century global markets that build upon both Maine's research and commercial strengths and are consistent with Maine's traditional values) environmental science solutions for global export across forestry, climate research, renewable energy, marine science, agricultural science and a host of other specialty areas towards working to solve the world's environmental challenges (global warming, acid rain, deforestation, lack of clean drinking water, etc.). The United Nations has identified environmental solutions as one of the highest growth areas of the 21st century.

It's an incredibly huge business opportunity, one focused by definition on the sustainability of our planet, and consistent with Maine's historical strengths and values.

California is in its "second silicon revolution" (solar power) after building incredible Silicon Valley wealth with the first revolution in high tech. Clean Technology and renewable energy is now one of the very hottest areas in the world for venture capital investment, and politicians, cities and governments are tripping over themselves in the race to "go green". It is a no-brainer that Maine can and should play a leading role in helping to create the good jobs that our state so desperately needs through achievement in such leading areas. But having something be easy to recognize does not mean, in any respects, that it is also easy to do. There are a lot of important considerations to doing what I call "smart economic development" or development that is "ROI sensitive".

[Governor Baldacci Says Time is Right for Alternative Energy](#) Excerpt 2: "Governor Baldacci told the group that he created a Windpower Task Force in part to bring together stakeholders in wind power and develop a consensus on how best for the state to move forward. Ultimately, the Governor said, he would like to streamline the process new wind energy projects need for approval."

Alex: I don't know if anyone agrees with me or not, but this is for the people of Maine collectively rather than the Governor individually to decide. **Update relevant for this section: TIF approved for Stetson Mountain project** (wind).

I've given the Governor strong, specific and detailed praise very recently for his recent tendencies to work collaboratively with others (link): [Alex Hammer on: Baldacci: It's not about being comfortable - Morning Sentinel](#)

Only if others agree, but we should, while taking it one step at a time, be thinking about not only renewable energy in Maine but also leveraging our developed and developing renewable energy expertise towards renewable energy science and consulting, etc. for lucrative and critically needed EXPORT to address renewable energy markets and needs WORLDWIDE. I also provide additional

general comments in regard to economic development considerations in Maine in (link:) [Alex Hammer: Quotes on Economic Development in Maine](#)

Finally, additional related recent Maine press/news:
[Maine Receives Recognition for Clean Energy Leadership](#)

Excerpt:

"The Governor joined House Speaker Glenn Cummings, House Majority Leader Hannah Pingree and other environmental leaders at the press conference in asking Congress to develop a national energy policy. The Governor said that efforts in states are important, but a federal energy policy is a necessity for the future."

Alex: I agree. But just as at the Federal level we need good organization, integration (and policy) we must make sure that we are the most sophisticated (i.e. (link:) [This Great State](#)) in our State efforts as well.

[UMaine begins global warming study](#) - Portland Press Herald

[Maine's clean-energy efforts lauded](#) - Bangor Daily News

Only if you agree, I believe that (link:) [It is true that we are all in this together.](#)

What is your thinking on these things?

Alex

hscpub@aol.com

An Open Letter to Lance Dutson, Director of Internet Strategy for Senator Susan Collins' Senatorial Campaign (and owner of Maine Web Report)

Excerpt: " See also: [104 previous stories on Senator Susan Collins](#) and [59 previous stories on the 2008 Maine Senate Race](#) and [16 previous stories on Lance Dutson](#) and [15 previous stories on Maine Web Report.](#)"

An Open Letter to Lance Dutson, Director of Internet Strategy for Senator Susan Collins' Senatorial Campaign (and owner of Maine Web Report)

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/11/open-letter-to-lancedutsondirectorof.html>

November 19, 2007

See also: [104 previous stories on Senator Susan Collins](#) and [59 previous stories on the 2008 Maine Senate Race](#) and [16 previous stories on Lance Dutson](#) and [15 previous stories on Maine Web Report.](#)

Lance's most recent post on Maine Web Report is: [Tom Allen's 'Bill of Wrongs'](#)

An excerpt of his post:

"Jeff Inglis at the Portland Phoenix About Town blog has published "[Tom Allen's Bill of Wrongs](#)", a list of grievances expressed by advocates of impeaching President Bush, some of whom were [escorted by police](#) out of Allen's Portland offices in recent weeks:"

Generally, I am concerned with what I consider the overly negative tone of the 2008 Maine Senate race.

Recently, in [Flag Burning, Maine Web Report](#), and the [Maine Race for U.S. Senate](#) I write in part: "Which brings me to the Maine Senate Race. Maine News has run [56 previous Maine news stories on the 2008 Maine Senate Race](#), [103 on Senator Susan Collins](#) and [101 on Rep. Tom Allen](#). It's a major event and political event in Maine and we've given it significant coverage (by comparison, we've also had [141 stories covering the Internet in Maine](#), [87 covering the Bangor Daily News](#), [64 covering Governor John Baldacci](#) and [58 covering the Maine 2008 Races for Congress](#) as but a few other examples. In the approximately 60 posts in which I have provided commentary or analysis:

[Alex Hammer](#) , among a host of diverse topics one has been my view, detailed from more than one aspect, that what is and/or would be compelling to me in the U.S. Senate race would be well developed and articulated visions for the state of Maine (and the nation) as opposed to attacks, defenses, counterattacks etc. from either camp. While I am all for drawing useful delineations and calling a spade a spade, I believe that any candidate for such an office should very predominantly be detailing, in an integrated and visionary way if they are able, being FOR something (actually a set of somethings) that is clear and in fact comprises a compelling and moving positive vision."

and I say,

"Looking across the political spectrum, I have also had some concerns with Lance Dutson and Maine Web Report. In [Lance Dutson, The Senator Susan Collins Campaign and Google - By Alex Hammer - With Three Updates as Story Developments Continue](#) I say in small part (it's a long post): "Finally, if this sounds like jealousy let me know, but I think that frankly Lance Dutson is receiving too much attention nationally, as opposed to the actual candidate (perhaps it is in conjunction with the candidate) and I have told him so. If you click on a few of the relevant labels on Maine News, you will see that even before the National headlines that this Google issue has brought about, that there has been the press with the tracking issue, back and forth with DailyKos, voting attendance issues, and of course the issues with MoveOn.org have been major and ongoing."

Lance has been very heatedly involved, in a short time, in a host of nationally contested in the press politically intense issues."

I invited comment if any and sent the post to Lance. [After hearing from Lance very regularly in the past during this ongoing Senatorial campaign](#), he has gone silent.

I am not pleased with a negative focus from Rep. Allen's campaign at times as well, but Lance has stood out (to my mind, not sure what others following the race think) as repeatedly attacking the Allen camp and additional related entities as above. I feel that Senator Collins is either sanctioning or overlooking this behavior, neither of which I approve of although I generally hold the Senator [in extremely high regard](#) .

Nobody seems to listen to me when I say (over and over again, maybe I say it too much): Please be positive focused (solutions and vision for our state in these challenging times).

[Politics isn't \(and must never become\) a game.](#)

And I hope that it [never reaches the point of "Reasons Not to be Senator"](#)

Thank you very much.

Alex Hammer hscpub@aol.com

Governor Creates Council on Competitiveness to Foster Maine Economic Development

Excerpt: " The Governor is implementing the basis of the Maine Competitive Council I called for in January 2006: [This Great State](#)"

Governor Creates Council on Competitiveness to Foster Maine Economic Development
<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/11/governor-creates-council-on.html> November 19, 2007

Alex: Yahoo! The Governor is implementing the basis of the Maine Competitive Council I called for in January 2006: [This Great State](#) At that time I wrote:

"The Maine Competitive Council and Maine generally will employ a list of strategies to have us working as smart or smarter than other states, not just as hard. Some ways in which this will be accomplished include:

The use of coordinated statewide networks that focus on identified areas in which Maine can be a National and/or International leader in that 21st century economy. Such networks will research, identify and then integrate Maine's unique and difficult to replicate strengths such that they can be more powerfully leveraged and marketed for export to address identified market needs in high growth areas (see the Maine Environmental Science Network detailed in BDN article as one example of this).

The use of best practices such that rather than re-creating the wheel Maine is able to profit from

the most efficient and effective processes and program elements utilized elsewhere.

ROI-sensitive technology investments that increase productivity and profits. This can include business intelligence software that helps to optimize in line with desired goals and parameters projects and project management, schedules, inventory, distribution, vendor relationships etc. By ROI-sensitive in this case I mean that we will be looking at the investments carefully before making them to make sure that they provide real benefits in highly needed areas and that we possess the necessary expertise (or can successfully import it) to insure their success (that includes phasing things in at manageable levels rather than trying to do too much at once and all heck breaking loose). Other ROI-sensitive investments. No state can afford to waste money. Maine certainly cannot. We must be certain that we are investing in the right areas in the right amounts. By investment I mean spending that financially gives back (yes, over time) more than what was put into it. Otherwise it's only an expense. In regard to tax-break advantages - let them earn it. How about less or no money up front until promises are delivered and maintained? I realize that we are in competition with other states, but indiscriminate use of business tax break incentives is simply in my view "buying jobs", which anyone can do if you pay enough for them. This competition, when it goes beyond the point of what makes logical economic sense for a State, is simply, as is termed, "a race to the bottom" that Maine does not need and cannot afford. In addition, I would refrain from giving any tax break considerations to those that do (not (missing word)) show the proper respect for the health and vitality of the State of Maine by being good corporate citizens, both in their history and continuing forward. And they must respect Maine's environment. Let us reach out as a state, as I have said previously, for Maine to be a beacon for all businesses that are environmentally friendly worldwide, for them to stay, grow and come to Maine and prosper. To insure that statewide interests do not transgress local concerns, I would like to develop five Regional planning committees: Central Maine, Down East, Northern Maine, Southern Maine, and Western Maine, that would each provide representatives to the Maine Competitive Council to insure that local and regional interests are being adequately addressed. Citizen input is also crucial and I would like to see a substantial percentage of representation on the Competitive Council come from these ranks. Maine is a bright state, and when we bring together the best of what we have, well harnessed and directed, we unleash the full capabilities of what we have to offer." I similarly envisioned private-public partnerships on economic development (to be led by the private sector).

See also: [Governor Baldacci Says Time is Right for Alternative Energy Alex: Definitely!, but also more than meets the eye](#)

Maine's initial policy progress is exhilarating, but there is a long long way still to go for sustained success. Processes must be refined and integrated, with the most knowledgeable contributors and best practices involved.

Go Maine!!

<http://www.maine.gov/tools/whatsnew/index.php?topic=Portal+News&id=45567&v=article-2006>

Update: [The Council on Competitiveness\\$- PolitickerME.com](#)

<http://newsformaine.blogspot.com/2007/11/council-on-competitiveness.html>

The Council on Competitiveness\$PolitickerME.com

Excerpt: "Baldacci touts his new council as a non-partisan group of business leaders ready to tackle the issue in new and dynamic ways. Mainers are led to believe that Baldacci scoured the landscape to find the perfect minds to contribute to the cause of economic development in Maine. Does confirming friendlies on various fundraising lists constitute scouring?"

[The Council on Competitiveness\\$- PolitickerME.com](#)

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/11/council-on-competitiveness.html> November 26, 2007

See also: (link):

[Governor Creates Council on Competitiveness to Foster Maine Economic Development](#) which goes into this in significant detail.

Excerpt from PolitickerME.com article:

"The real story here is not the mission of the new Baldacci brain-child, but rather the people who the Governor appointed to it. Baldacci touts his new council as a non-partisan group of business leaders ready to tackle the issue in new and dynamic ways. Mainers are led to believe that Baldacci scoured the landscape to find the perfect minds to contribute to the cause of economic development in Maine. Does confirming friendlies on various fundraising lists constitute scouring?...I don't know about you, but are these people really "non-partisan" ? Great folks, I'm sure, but not exactly non-partisan. And, with reporters confirming that Baldacci will most likely support Clinton for President. I'm sure the combined \$9,200 in Mills and Gorman donations to the Hillary campaign made Baldacci's appointment decisions very easy. Good luck to the Council on Competitiveness and the Economy. Maine will do well with the independent and outside-of-the-box thinking Baldacci has stacked that committee with."

(PolitickerME.com article link is at bottom below).

Alex: We've seen from Hurricane Katrina the terrible damage that can be done by filling critical positions with political appointees (President Bush: "You're doing one heckuva job Brownie").

Of course as a disclaimer I was one of Governor Baldacci's opponents for Governor in 2006, but when I speak with legislators they tell me that the Governor is prone to hire "yes people", or those that will not overly rock the boat. That's the truth.

And I've been very [lavish with praise](#) on the Governor recently as well. Maine is not without significant challenges now ([example 1](#), [example 2](#)) that we can afford to be so business as usual ("business as usual" a charge some level at Hillary Clinton also) as from this PolitickerME.com article (I don't know the appointees read about) it has the appearance of being.

And economic development is [the lifeblood of our state](#). - and [here](#).
Don't play politics with our state.

That's my opinion, what do you think? Alex
hscpub@aol.com

<http://www.politickerme.com/council-competitivene-192#comment-63>

SMART Economic Development(Not Just Economic Development)

Excerpt: "Just as growth at any cost - let us not forget also sprawl! gave rise increasingly to "smart growth" considerations (this still needs to be better coordinated both locally and statewide), there is I believe (I hope!) a similar recognition also that while we definitely need economic development in Maine to provide the good jobs of today and tomorrow in the hypercompetitive global economy of the 21st century in which Maine also resides, that such economic development must also be "smart". That is, not just economic development per se, but economic development that is return-on-investment (ROI) sensitive.

What do I mean?"

SMART Economic Development(not just economic development)
<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/11/smart-economic-developmentnotjust.html>
November 29, 2007

See also: [The Best of Maine News - Maine's Leading Political Figures, Etc.](#) SMART Economic Development (not just economic development) - By Alex Hammer

See also:

[Governor Creates Council on Competitiveness to Foster Maine Economic Development](#)
and

[Governor Baldacci Says Time is Right for Alternative Energy - Alex: Definitely!, but also more than meets the eye](#)

Remember when Maine used to be more fundamentally afraid of looking like MA, CT or (perish the thought, no slight intended) New York. And then we let the big box retailers etc. come in (now becoming en masse) as I guess the reality started to more pervasively sink in that holding to our principles hadn't stemmed the classic "brain drain" and other problems that have plagued Maine (regarding the brain drain/outmigration, Maine may have net immigration but we are the oldest state in the entire nation, so it's very obvious that we have lost many of our young).
It's simple math.

Just as growth at any cost - let us not forget also sprawl! - gave rise increasingly to "smart growth" considerations (this still needs to be better coordinated both locally and statewide), there is I believe (I hope!) a similar recognition also that while we definitely need economic development in Maine to provide the good jobs of today and tomorrow in the hypercompetitive global economy of the 21st century in which Maine also resides, that such economic development must also be "smart". That is, not just economic development per se, but economic development that is returnoninvestment (ROI) sensitive.

What do I mean?

In [This Great State](#) (published in January 2006) I wrote in part: "No state can afford to waste money. Maine certainly cannot. We must be certain that we are investing in the right areas in the right amounts. By investment I mean spending that financially gives back (yes, over time) more than what was put into it. Otherwise it's only an expense."

In that same article I discussed how such efforts tie into the very fabric and values within the challenges that we face as a state, and what that means in regard to smart economic development: "Many Mainers realize, I believe, that we have come (or more precisely remain) at that proverbial and oft-cited crossroads. It is a crossroads, to cite a few dimensions, between economic well-being versus lack, between traditions versus modernized change, between urban (and suburban) versus rural, between globalization versus protectionism or isolationism and between development and environment to name but a few.

In such dichotomies, it is easy to move to and fro, railing against one and then the other, seeking a balance that can seem elusive and ever in flux. What is that balance and where is it to be found? Of course it is multi-faceted and (importantly) multi-voiced, but I believe that it includes the following: Perhaps most importantly it involves a successful transition in which a significant enough portion of Maine's economic mix profits from (rather than is diminished by) the 21st century information-rich global economy that the world has become. In addition, and this is the critical piece, this success incorporates Maine's quality of life traditions and values. In other columns I address my views regarding building successful bridges generally across common divides for better government (Lewiston Sun Journal November 6, 2005) as well as a beginning detailing of successful economic development in Maine (Bangor Daily News September 15, 2005). Maine can reconcile dimensions that often seem to be at odds, building, supporting, and buttressing each aspect rather than tearing its opposite down."

Economic development is not political (it should never be). It's not about who loves Maine and who doesn't (we all like Maine or we wouldn't be here), [nor about who is right and who is wrong](#), nor about the "gold standard" of Maine workers, in regard to which state can or does work the hardest (as it makes little sense to have to work 2-3 jobs to try to earn the wages of other states, and there are only 24 hours in a day (and one can become burnt out and have to sacrifice other areas of life) with which to work) to be economically successful, but instead how Maine can work smart, leveraging that very strong work ethic, to harness the great collective intelligence of our state to - once and for all - not just get by but actually prosper.

In [Governor Baldacci Says Time is Right for Alternative Energy - Alex: Definitely!, but also more than meets the eye](#), I say in part:

"California is in its "second silicon revolution" (solar power) after building incredible Silicon Valley wealth with the first revolution in high tech. Clean Technology and renewable energy is now one of the very hottest areas in the world for venture capital investment, and politicians, cities and governments are tripping over themselves in the race to "go green". It is a no-brainer that Maine can and should play a leading role in helping to create the good jobs that our state so desperately needs through achievement in such leading areas. But having something be easy to recognize does not mean, in any respects, that it is also easy to do. There are a lot of important considerations to doing what I call "smart economic development" or development that is "ROI sensitive".

"...In the larger context, Maine should consider leveraging, as a key area (if not cornerstone) of economic development (focused on high growth 21st century global markets that build upon both Maine's research and commercial strengths and are consistent with Maine's traditional values) environmental science solutions for global export across forestry, climate research, renewable

energy, marine science, agricultural science and a host of other specialty areas towards working to solve the world's environmental challenges (global warming, acid rain, deforestation, lack of clean drinking water, etc.). The United Nations has identified environmental solutions as one of the highest growth areas of the 21st century.

It's an incredibly huge business opportunity, one focused by definition on the sustainability of our planet, and consistent with Maine's historical strengths and values."

The above is just an example of one type of potential approach that Maine could more substantially explore, if others agree, that I have been [discussing in great detail for some time](#).

Do you believe that our best economic days in Maine can be ahead of us? I realize that it can be difficult to believe that with the challenging conditions that we have chronically faced and do face today. However, I believe that "smart" approaches would provide us with real reasons to be increasingly optimistic. I'll end with what I said [in a previous piece](#):

"There is a saying that if you shoot for the stars and miss you may still hit the moon. Maine is a great state. It's future is in our hands. I personally am tired of nibbling around the edges of less productive policies that don't fundamentally solve the problems that we face.

Let us work together and take honest stock of where we are and assess and determine realistically what we need to do, and are able to do, to make real progress. And then let's shoot for the stars."

Maine, LIHEAP, Iraq and \$1 Billion

Excerpt: "There are at least two types of loss: One is a sudden catastrophic loss, such as 9-11."

Maine, LIHEAP, Iraq and \$1 Billion

<http://www.maineblog.com/2007/12/maine-liheap-iraq-and-1-billionbyalex.html>

December 10, 2007

See also:

[Resourcefulness aside, Mainers struggle with rising energy costs as aid is overdue - Bangor Daily News](#)

and

[Press Releases - Maine Congressional Delegation Meets with Governor Baldacci on Maine's Energy Crisis - PolitickerME.com](#)

and

[The Best of Maine News - Maine's Leading Political Figures, Etc.](#)

If we weren't fighting this war in Iraq, we'd have more money for a lot of other things here in America.

Like LIHEAP.

And additional needed homeland security measures.

It comes down, I guess, to the decisions that we've made. And make going forward.

Leadership and Solutions

I don't have all the answers. No one does.

Senator Susan Collins in a Dec. 8 Op-Ed in the Bangor Daily News says in part ([Susan Collins: Now is the time to seek energy independence - Bangor Daily News](#)):

"This fall, I secured \$7.2 million in contingency LIHEAP funds for Maine, and I recently urged the president to release immediately the additional \$20 million that remains in the LIHEAP fund. In addition, Sen. Olympia Snowe and I have asked our colleagues to provide an additional \$1 billion in emergency LIHEAP funds this year."

\$1 billion dollars. It is a lot of money to be sure (who among us wouldn't be happy if we had that amount in our bank account). But in fact, \$1 billion is close to pocket change when compared to the tremendous amounts that we are spending in Iraq (on top of the loss of American lives).

And yet a billion dollars in needed emergency LIHEAP funds - the figure cited by Senator Collins in

her article above - is a staggering amount. (Note: I realize that LIHEAP does not only apply to Maine).

How and why are we so desperately ([Home heating crisis in Maine now 'desperate' - Bangor Daily News](#)) behind the 8-ball in this matter in our state? I'd love for someone to really answer that question for me. **NOT IN TERMS OF BLAME BUT IN TERMS OF REAL SOLUTIONS.**

Sorry for screaming (caps, bold and color).

Public Opinion and Iraq

In regard to Iraq, what is the percentage of Americans that don't (or no longer) want us over there? That is something to very seriously consider. Certainly, some of the Iraqis don't (and haven't) wanted us over there as well, that has been made abundantly clear (insurgents, etc.).

And when you look at Iraq solely in terms of dollars and cents, in addition to the staggering operational military costs, you also have the news about Iraq war money being lost, mismanaged, stolen, etc.

LIHEAP

It is, not to be melodramatic but simply to repeat the BDN headline above, a desperate time in Maine in regard to staying warm this winter.

And it is a financial obstacle that too many Mainers face year after year. It isn't new.

Maine

Maine is one state out of 50 in these United States. America faces increasing financial global economic competitive pressures. As does Maine:

[Governor Creates Council on Competitiveness to Foster Maine Economic Development Smart Economic Development \(not just economic development\)](#)

[The Council on Competitiveness - PolitickerME.com](#)

[Governor Baldacci Says Time is Right for Alternative Energy - Alex: Definitely!, but also more than meets the eye](#)

[Maine's appeal is key to future - MaineToday.com](#)

How are we going to compete (both as a state and as a country) with the rest of the world if we don't have the money to make the critical education, infrastructure and other investments and necessities (such as heat!) that we need to be viable, productive, competitive and secure.

Terrorism

Yes, I am very concerned about terrorism. I am very glad that as a response to 9-11 that we went into Afghanistan to root out Bin Laden, Al-Quida and the Taliban.

Bin Laden has stated that Al-Quida helped to bring down the Soviet Union by bogging them down financially in Afghanistan over a long period. I don't see that ever ever happening to the USA, but we are being stretched thin. Our military forces are stretched thin as one other example.

\$1 billion can be a huge amount or a relatively small amount - depending upon what you spend it on.

What do we want and stand for? We should be staying warm in our state.

And taking care of our needs (including homeland security, catching Bin Laden and finishing the job in Afghanistan) here at home and abroad and preparing ourselves to be globally competitive.

In my opinion.

Two Types of Loss

There are at least two types of loss: One is a sudden catastrophic loss, such as 9-11. That wounded our entire nation. But there is a second type of loss that can be just as or even more devastating, but is much more difficult to see. Because it is so slow moving and incremental. It is the proverbial "death by a thousand cuts". Losing a bit of competitiveness here, a little economic security there, a little quality of life and depressed wages over here, until one day the United States is no longer the only economic superpower in the world.

And is economically at the mercy of other countries to increasing degrees. That scenario creeps up on one slowly. Over years and decades.

While protecting our country against catastrophic loss, we must not become overextended to the point that we become weakened from within, and vulnerable to economic threats from without. Being cold in Maine is a symptom of larger global forces that threaten over time increasingly our

economic freedom and thus our freedom overall as well.

\$1 billion can be a large or small amount.

Right now, in Maine, I think (what do you think, do you agree?) it is a sign of something huge.
Alex Hammer hscpub@aol.com

Governor Baldacci and the "Ultimate Sacrifice"

Excerpt: "But the stakes are so much higher now. We're talking about our young, and our future."

Governor Baldacci and the "Ultimate Sacrifice"

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/12/governor-baldacci-flags-at-halfmast.html>

December 11, 2007

See also: [Governor Orders Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff on December 7](#) - PolitickerME.com

Alex: This is an opinion piece.

Flags at Half-Mast.

I agree, as they say, that "freedom isn't free"

And I believe that defending freedom can be noble. But I believe also that recognizing the fallen is a poor substitute for creating a world in which all of the youth of this country would have, should they elect to choose it over enlisting, [brighter occupational](#) and educational opportunities than the allure of military service for an individual just starting out with the potential promise of their full future in this world.

I'm not going to debate about educational level of enlistees and I'm not trying to stereotype those choosing the military. What I am trying to do is hold our leaders fully accountable to make sure that they bear a greater burden of the sacrifices - live up to the responsibilities and potentially in fact noble calling of public service - to insure the quality of life for those they represent.

And life itself.

For no sacrifice made by another could equal that "ultimate sacrifice". Recognizing that sacrifice, while important, is not the highest honor. Eliminating the need for it in the first place might be.

Leadership in Maine

[Being Governor is never a ceremonial position](#). We have, I believe, a Governor that works his tail off. Constantly. But he is, in my opinion, too eager to get his picture in the paper, showing up for so many photo ops, ceremonial and proclamation type of opportunities across this state.

Governor, the state of Maine needs results.

And the publicity of the appearance of results is - although it is easy at many levels to become confused in this regard - not the same as results themselves (which often come behind the scenes and beyond the spotlight and glare). And anyway, singing our own accomplishments is never as much a telltale sign of true success as when others sing them for us, unprompted and unmotivated by any outside concern.

We need to do much more than [scratch the surface in regard to what is possible](#).

It's not about us being the state that tries the hardest (e.g. has the hardest workers, the "gold standard"). In my opinion it's more about us maximizing our G-d given and developed intelligence (i.e. working smartest in addition to working hard) so that we are producing the maximum results. Creating those opportunities (e.g. for youth) that I mentioned at the beginning of this piece.

[And working together](#).

Things are [definitely improving](#) in that regard, as compared to [what has occurred before](#).

Public Service

Too many people consider politicians below used car salesmen (with no disrespect meant for that profession either) because they believe, perhaps, that in the world of "public service" there is

sometimes too much attention to the first of the two words at the expense of the latter.

And the ironic thing is that the most idealistic in the world, oftentimes, are the young. Like those that (beyond any notions of gain or adventure etc.) will go off to fight a war with conviction under notions of honor and pride. Pride for service. Not pride for self.

It isn't about telling ourselves that we need to look at the world half full. Expectations are important, I've noted that also, but when our glass is full, we will realize that it is full.

We won't have to convince ourselves or anybody else.

Sometimes such self-talk can become a rationalization meant for us to settle and in fact lower our expectations so that we will not feel that we have failed ourselves.

Or that others have failed us.

The Future is Now

I (and others) ran against Governor Baldacci for Governor in 2006. He trounced me and I congratulate him. He's earned that. During the campaign (especially around Bangor where he and I are both from) many individuals came up to me and said that Governor Baldacci at one point and time or another has been personally helpful to them.

I'm sure he has helped many people (and continues to) and has paid his dues. But the stakes are so much higher now.

We're talking about our young, and our future. Maine is a state I believe with a very high rate of military service, and we thus may be subject to paying a high price proportionally in human terms as casualties accrue.

Maybe we've become so accustomed to the "brain drain" over the years (and next time they try to tell you the young haven't been leaving the state ask them why we're the oldest state in the nation) that our collective guilt and/or resignation has slightly dulled our natural protective inclinations (or feelings of efficacy in regard to producing this) for our youth.

It's not fair to ever confuse public with service.
Not to us, and not to them. We're talking about half-mast.

Former Gov. Angus King on Why He's Betting on Wind Power in Maine - MaineBiz Article With Alex Hammer Analysis

Excerpt: "A couple of initial thoughts come to mind from the above excerpt. The first is that to my mind while stability of rates is nice to have, price itself is much more important - the critical element. That is, stability is important, ultimately, only to the degree that it allows, either in the long or short term or both, favorable pricing."

Former Gov. Angus King on why he 's betting on wind power in Maine MaineBiz article with Alex Hammer analysis

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/12/former-gov-angus-king-on-whyhes.html>
December 12, 2007

See also: [The Best of Maine News - Maine's Leading Political Figures, Etc.](#)

Former Gov. Angus King on why he's betting on wind power in Maine MaineBiz article with Alex Hammer analysis

Alex: This is from the Dec. 10 edition of MaineBiz, pp. 1 & 20-22. There is no online link presently so I am typing in by hand.

Disclosures: I like Governor King. He is truly a nice individual. I communicate with him, as I do many in Maine both of name recognition and not. Although he met individually with me during my

campaign for Governor (2006) he made very clear to me (so I'm stressing it here) that he would meet generally as a matter of course with those seeking an audience with him and a meeting represents no kind of endorsement.

Excerpt 1:

"Mainebiz: What was the genesis of Independence Wind?"

Angus King: I have always been interested in wind power, so I went up to Sugarloaf two summers ago to testify in favor of the Redington/Black Nubble project just as a citizen - no interest, no involvement, no official role....The more I thought about it, the more I thought it could make a difference in Maine, in two ways. One is the stability of electric rates. We are now something like 55% or 59% dependent upon natural gas, which strikes me as strategically and economically dangerous...

(Mainebiz:) And wind power is a way to smooth out that volatility? Yeah. It's not correct to say that we will lower electric bills. The capital costs are so huge, you have to pay your mortgage."

Alex: First, I like the name Independence Wind. I'm also an Independent. A couple of initial thoughts come to mind from the above excerpt. The first is that to my mind while stability of rates is nice to have, price itself is much more important - the critical element. That is, stability is important, ultimately, only to the degree that it allows, either in the long or short term or both, favorable pricing.

Maybe I'm missing something there.

I like the fact that here and throughout the interview Governor King strikes me as very tempered in his claims. So many people in life seem to overpromise and underdeliver, it is nice to see straight talk or whatever you want to call it.

The reason that I believe that it is important to focus on the right metric(s), in this case price not just stability of price, is because I believe that it is easy to get thrown off track (not intentionally so). In the dotcom era (not claiming it to be a parallel example, but an example) earnings became much less important to dotcom investors who became convinced that a new, better measure (in the "new economy") was eyeballs, that is web site traffic, regardless of profits (or even sometimes revenues).

Here in Maine - a couple of examples of focusing on the most important metric(s) - I think we've been too concerned with the NUMBER of jobs created rather than also the QUALITY of those jobs (hence more people could be employed but actually "underemployed", not using that as an official term, working longer hours and making less wages, comparatively, and too often insufficient benefits also). Another Maine example is that yes we have a lot of immigration (net immigration I believe or very close). That is given by some as an argument against the classic notion of "brain drain". But Maine is the oldest state in the nation. And that didn't happen just by accident (hint: look at outmigration totals by age range, in terms of who has moved out, not just as a total to compare to immigration numbers). So the importance of metrics right off the bat.

I may be going out on a little limb with this next point (but not too far) as I am definitely not a mindreader and wouldn't claim to be privy to Governor King's thinking, but it strikes me that his testimony for Redington/Black Nubble could or would prove indirectly beneficial to his own wind project to the degree that any input he could provide (and I realize as he stated that he had no official function) might increase or add to the state's favorability in regard to wind projects generally.

Excerpt 2:

"However, the people who say wind is only an intermittent resource are looking for a one-shot solution. And my experience is that there are rarely silver bullets, but there is often silver buckshot. Wind is an adjunct source of energy. Ten percent, 20% can be very significant..."

(Mainebiz:) How much will the wind farm cost?

We used cost figures when we did the tax analysis for the town of about \$100 million to \$150 million. Now that's a wide range, but it depends on some extent to what size turbines we do"

Alex: I remember accessing Governor King's State of the State addresses (and Governor Baldacci's too - learn how your predecessors have approached things if you are going to run for the office!) online (or maybe it was Governor King's Governor website or even his book, I forget which place I found this:) and coming across that really thought provoking sign:PLAN AHE_{AD}

It shows clearly that Governor King well understands about the value, the necessity really, for good planning. "Measure twice, cut once" is the saying that I like (I also came up with my own, "The easiest crisis to deal with is the one that never occurs").

In this vein, any energy project should be measured against a [statewide comprehensive \(and](#)

sound!) energy initiatives and policy that Mainers have

collectively endorsed. While there needs to be some latitude within a market based free enterprise system, the permitting/government approval aspect required of such projects attest to their clear residence within the domain of the public good.

The larger the project, perhaps, the greater that this is so.

This compatibility between individual projects and a cohesive, comprehensive state plan is the very first question that I think anyone (including MaineBiz) should ask in regard to any particular project. To my mind, this is analogous to smart growth initiatives as opposed to just growth, so we don't grow just willy-nilly but with some sense of purpose, benefit and design. If you want to build or change zoning in a municipality, for one example, it has to be (or is supposed to be!) in compliance with the comprehensive city plan.

Governor King is famously I believe (if memory serves in both aspects, please correct me if ever mistaken) known for advocating anti-sprawl and a supporter of Grow Smart Maine (Alan Caron is fantastic!) so he understands this, I'm sure, better than my ability to attempt to explain it. It's the same thing in regard to [smart economic development](#) as opposed to just economic development. It has to be return-on-investment (ROI) sensitive. Maine is not a rich state, and yet the public has been I believe astute enough to recognize that we need economic development investments (for the good jobs of today and tomorrow). If we don't more fully understand how to maximize these critical investments then we indeed do run the risk of wasting money and, as a result, potentially souring the public to investment action which is very much needed and necessary.

In other words PLAN AHEAD, not PLAN AHEAD. And have a great plan that Mainers have worked through and agreed on together.

In regard to financing, others may or may not agree with me but I feel strongly that a significant percentage of the ultimate financing (for any such large project), perhaps a majority of the funds, should come from Maine. Here's why: In regard to sales/trade/exports, etc., in those instances you want to attract out of state dollars. That is the main idea behind being productive, viable and lucrative in a global economy. But it's different when you talk about investment. Because investment brings with it ownership (partial ownership) and with ownership brings control. Who is to say that out-of-state investors/owners will have the same objectives that we have in Maine? What if they start out similar and later diverge? If we talk about supporting Maine (and local) food producers and businesses and those in the creative economy, then what sense does it make to separate our Maine business interests from our Maine capital markets?

Especially in such an important and sensitive area such as energy. If Maine's capital markets cannot currently handle this level of investment, then that tells us something important that we should be addressing and not ignore.

In the same issue of MaineBiz (page 6) is the story "PUC: Maine should leave ISO", which states in part:

"The Maine Public utilities commission recently released a report suggesting the state consider splitting from ISO-New England, the nonprofit corporation that manages electric transmission and generation for the region."

If we believe that Maine can manage it's own electricity needs, then let's apply that also to the financing aspect as well.

Why should we manage something that we do not also own? Overall: My background is as an entrepreneur as well (although in smaller scale, considerably, than this proposed King involved wind initiative). Until you've been in business, it's difficult to really recognize how challenging it can be.

Taking on a project of this size, I think both given his eight year Chief Executive of the State of Maine and prior leading energy and alternative energy background, Governor King is extraordinarily well equipped to do. I can't think of someone who would be more qualified for such an effort. Governor King is someone, to my mind, who lets his actions testify to the leading and personally involved role that he takes in bettering our state. Anybody that wants the best for our state I consider a friend. I applaud his initiative and I sincerely wish him well.

I would end by saying that I know that I sometimes use a lot of words in my explanations, but I try and not be wordy. I believe in being as simple as is possible in making good decisions, but not in being simplistic. We live in a complicated, competitive, integrated and fast-moving global economic marketplace. Maine has to be at the top of our game, collaborative, coordinated (led by the private sector) and of sufficient critical mass for us to effectively compete.

Our economic well being - and future - I believe depends upon it.

UPDATED - Verizon, Maine PUC, Governor Baldacci and Fairpoint

Excerpt: "Verizon CEO, Baldacci meet Central Maine Morning Sentinel (Dec. 7) **Excerpt: "Gov. John Baldacci met with the chief executive officer of Verizon last week at the company's request, just days after a report recommended against allowing Verizon to sell its telephone network to a smaller company, Baldacci's spokesman confirmed Thursday.. Farmer said Seidenberg did not ask Baldacci to take a position, but wanted to discuss with the governor why his company believes the sale is possible."They did not ask him to get involved in the PUC process, and he would not get involved," Farmer said."**

UPDATED - Verizon, Maine PUC, Governor Baldacci and Fairpoint
<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/12/updated-verizon-mainepucgovernor.html>
December 15, 2007

See also: [Verizon Versus Fairpoint - http://verizonvsfairpoint.com/](http://verizonvsfairpoint.com/) **and**
[Verizon angles to keep state business - The Phoenix](#)
and
[NH Regulators Say Fairpoint and Verizon Should Restructure Their Deal](#) **and**
[The Best of Maine News - Maine's Leading Political Figures, Etc.](#) **and**
[Steal Us, It's Free!](#)

UPDATED ON BOTTOM - DETAILED TIMELINE BEFORE RECENT EVENTS:

A timeline:

1. [Report argues against line sale PUC urged to reject deal proposed ...](#) SunJournal.com (Nov. 27)
Excerpt:"A report to Maine utility regulators recommends against the proposed sale of Verizon Communications' landline business in northern New England to FairPoint Communications Inc.A hearing examiner's report to the Public Utilities Commission says the \$2.7 billion deal "subjects both ratepayers and shareholders to substantial risks and harms that are not outweighed by any of the potential benefits of the transaction.""

[PUC advises against Verizon sale to FairPoint](#) - VillageSoup (Dec. 5) Excerpt:"Public Utilities Commission staff in Maine recommended against the sale last week, as did the Public Advocate's Office in October. The full commission is scheduled to meet Thursday, Dec. 13 to make up its mind, but has the option of delaying a vote until later in the month."

2 & 3. [Verizon CEO, Baldacci meet](#) - Central Maine Morning Sentinel (Dec. 7)

Excerpt:"Gov. John Baldacci met with the chief executive officer of Verizon last week at the company's request, just days after a report recommended against allowing Verizon to sell its telephone network to a smaller company, Baldacci's spokesman confirmed Thursday.. Farmer said Seidenberg did not ask Baldacci to take a position, but wanted to discuss with the governor why his company believes the sale is possible."They did not ask him to get involved in the PUC process, and he would not get involved," Farmer said."

[Verizon CEO meets with Guv](#) - Mainebiz Daily (Dec. 7)

Excerpt:"Verizon CEO Ivan Seidenberg requested a meeting with Baldacci after the staff at the Maine Public Utilities Commission recommended the sale of Verizon's 1.5 million landlines in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont to FairPoint be halted. Baldacci has not taken a stand on the deal, but Seidenberg wanted to discuss the company's interest in moving forward with the sale..."

2 & 3. [FairPoint official: PUC report biased](#) - Kennebec Journal (Dec. 8) Excerpt:"A FairPoint Communications executive slammed as unfair, biased and unbalanced a Maine Public Utilities Commission staff report recommending the proposed sale of Verizon's land-line telephone business to FairPoint be rejected.

"I'm disappointed it wasn't a more fair and balanced piece," Walter Leach Jr., executive vice president of corporate development for FairPoint, said of the PUC staff recommendation."

Busy - Signal - FairPoint Reacts to criticism of its proposed deal to buy Verizon's landlines in ME, NH and VT - MaineBiz (Weekly edition, dated

Dec. 10, page 11) ([Note: No onlinelink so typed in by hand](#)) Excerpt: "In early December, after the Maine Public Utilities Commission staff released a 300-page report urging the commission to reject the Maine part of FairPoint Communications' \$2.7 billion bid for Verizon's landlines in Northern New England, FairPoint Executive Vice President of Corporate Development Walter Leach Jr. launched an informal Maine media blitz to convey his company's side of the story."

To the Citizens of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont (a full page ad I believe although I do not see it actually noted as such (letter from FairPoint Communications) in MaineBiz weekly Dec. 10 issue (p. 25) signed by Gene Johnson, CEO) ([Note: No online link, typed in by hand](#))

Excerpt: "FairPoint has held firm to one simple concept since we announced our intention to acquire Verizon's wireless operations in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont some 11 months ago: We Want To Be Your Communications Provider..."

And yet, today we find ourselves in the midst of a very challenging situation. Headlines are suggesting that FairPoint's proposal to acquire Verizon's telephone lines shouldn't happen."

4. Settlement reached on fairpoint-Verizon deal - MaineBiz Daily (today) Excerpt:

"Maine's Office of the Public Advocate and the advocacy staff at the Public Utilities Commission have reached an agreement with Verizon and FairPoint Communications and now support the \$2.7 billion sale of Verizon's landline business to FairPoint..."

The labor unions, however, did not agree to the settlement and still oppose the sale. "The terms of the proposed stipulation would not enable FairPoint to meet reasonable standards of financial fitness," the labor unions say in its PUC filing. "As such, approval of the proposed transaction, even under the terms of the proposed stipulation, would not serve the public good."

PUC delays deliberations on Verizon sale - MaineToday.com (Today) Excerpt: "Key parties in the proposed sale had reached a settlement late Wednesday on terms designed to convince state utility regulators to approve the deal. But other parties, including labor unions, did not sign onto it."

UPDATE: Prior Verizon and/or Fairpoint in Maine:

Senate Telecom Immunity Bill Threatens Maine Privacy Complaint - MCLU

- Tuesday, November 15, 2007

Excerpt: "Today, the Senate Judiciary Committee is debating a telecommunications immunity bill that may put an end to a Maine privacy complaint about warrantless surveillance. The proposed legislation, recently passed by the Senate Intelligence Committee, proposes to extend blanket immunity from investigation or lawsuit to any telecommunications company that conspired with the National Security Agency to conduct warrantless surveillance of the telephone and Internet communications of reportedly millions of Americans..."

In May of 2006, 22 Maine Verizon customers filed a privacy complaint with the Maine Public Utilities Commission. The federal government sued to stop the investigation. That lawsuit is one of dozens of lawsuits against the telephone company that have been consolidated in a single proceeding before a Federal Court in California. Notably, the privacy complaint against Verizon does not contain any request for monetary damages. All of the lawsuits against the telephone companies request a permanent cessation of warrantless surveillance. The Bush Administration has requested that Congress move before any of the lawsuits are decided, although there is nothing that would prevent Congress from waiting to decide the immunity question after the courts have weighed in on the constitutionality of the warrantless spy program."

MCLU Urges PUC to Consider Privacy as Condition of Verizon/FairPoint Sale - MCLU - November 02, 2007

Excerpt: "The MCLU and a group of Verizon telephone customers urged the Maine Public Utilities Commission today to make privacy protections for telephone customers a condition of sale in the transfer of Verizon assets to FairPoint Communications. The MCLU and the consumers also argued that continued jurisdiction in the ongoing case regarding past violations of customer privacy should be a condition of sale."

"Sale of its assets should not mean Verizon is off the hook for violating the privacy rights of its customers," said Shenna Bellows, MCLU Executive Director. "Mainers need to know that their private telephone conversations will be free from surveillance by the government or the phone company."

American Civil Liberties Union : Verizon Admits Turning Over ... - ACLU 10/16/2007

Excerpt:

"Verizon is asserting that the acquisition of its operations by Fairpoint will remove the state's jurisdiction over any privacy violations it may have committed."

[Opponents Of Verizon/Fairpoint Land Line Deal Seek Backing Of Governor Baldacci](#) - MPBN - Date Aired: 9/25/2007

[Maine Argument Stands Up In Domestic Spying Case](#) - MPBN - Date Aired: 7/24/2007

[Financial Woes Facing Fairpoint Communications](#) - MPBN - Date Aired: 6/13/2007

[PUC Not Letting Verizon off Hook](#) - Common Dreams, citing Press Herald January 30, 2007)

Excerpt:"COMPLAINT TIMELINE..."

SEPT. 12, 2006: Maine Attorney General Steven Rowe files a document in U.S. District Court in Bangor, arguing that the federal government's lawsuit is prohibited by the U.S. Constitution and doesn't belong in court."

[AG Vows Strong Defense Of PUC's Right To Investigate Verizon](#) - MPBN Date Aired: 8/22/2006

[U.S. threatens suit if Maine probes Verizon ties to NSA](#) - Press Herald

-August 4, 2006

Excerpt:" The Bush administration is threatening to sue if Maine regulators decide to investigate whether Verizon Communications illegally turned over customer information to the National Security Agency.

Verizon customers in Maine have asked the state's Public Utilities Commission to investigate whether the telecom giant violated privacy laws by cooperating with a domestic surveillance program. The PUC is expected to decide Monday whether to open such a probe."

ALEX: DOES ANYONE KNOW WHERE THE MAINE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION STANDS ON RELEVANT ISSUES? I don't seemuch turning up in a web search.

Senator Collins - I Found the Energy Culprit

Excerpt: "I believe that Senator Collins is a moderate (public campaign support for Rick Santorum and Chandler Woodcock (one of my opponents for Governor in 2006) aside). And I think that she is a good Senator. But unless there are some significant facts that I am not aware of, I think she has done a marked contrast in performance in regard to oversight from Katrina to Iraq."

Senator Collins - I Found The Energy Culprit

<http://www.maineblog.com/2007/12/senator-collins-i-foundenergyculprit.html>

December 17, 2007

See also:[The Best of Maine News - Maine's Leading Political Figures, Etc.](#)

Senator Collins - I Found The Energy Culprit - By Alex Hammer

[Resourcefulness aside, Mainers struggle with rising energy costs as aid is overdue](#) - Bangor Daily News

See also: [Maine, LIHEAP, Iraq and \\$1 Billion](#) - By Alex Hammer **and**

[SENATOR COLLINS QUESTIONS ENERGY EXPERTS ABOUT REASONS FOR RECORD HIGH ENERGY COSTS - PolitickerME.com](#)

Bangor Daily News Excerpt:

"State administrators of the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP, are also worried."I am very concerned about what is going to happen in three weeks," said Jim Baillargeon, director of energy and housing services at the Aroostook County Action Program.

Baillargeon works at one of 11 community action agencies across the state that process applications for the energy assistance program. He said his agency is processing about 60 applications a day.

"The phones are wild," Baillargeon said in a phone interview. Congress has yet to approve money for the program for fiscal year 2008, which began on Oct. 1. **PresidentBush vetoeda bill that contained \$2.4 billion for theprogram a month ago**(bold and color via Maine News) and the House failed to get the votes necessary for an override. **Meanwhile,the program is operating at**

75 percent of the funding level from last year until the new budget is approved. (bold via Maine News) (link to Bangor Daily News article at end of post)

Alex: I have no evidence whatsoever to support this theory - it is totally conjecture - but I believe that the reason (or a reason) Senator Collins may not have held hearings in regard to waste or fraud in Iraq

DailyKos: [Despite requests to investigate abuses, Susan Collins refused to do so](#) and maybe Senator Collins has come out with a statement about this but I haven't seen it,

after doing such a phenomenal job in oversight hearings in regard to abuses arising from Hurricane Katrina (that solidified her reputation in my mind and I'm sure others and provided her with high-profile exposure) is because going against the President to that degree (not that it would in fact be going against the President, but I imagine - again conjecture - that it could be very much viewed as such) could be seen as an act of disloyalty to a degree that there would be political repercussions.

Such as LIHEAP.

But President Bush has shown, to my mind, if nothing else that appeasement with him doesn't work. He just (not that I'm privy to any inside information, just my view from reading the papers etc. like everyone else) in my opinion goes ahead and pretty much (unless directly stopped) does whatever he wants (i.e. he seeks to do that).

I believe that Senator Collins is a moderate (public campaign support for Rick Santorum and Chandler Woodcock (one of my opponents for Governor in 2006) aside). And I think that she is a good Senator. But unless there are some significant facts that I am not aware of, I think she has done a marked contrast in performance in regard to oversight from Katrina to Iraq. It's pretty striking.

[SENATOR COLLINS QUESTIONS ENERGY EXPERTS ABOUT REASONS FOR RECORD HIGH ENERGY COSTS](#) - Dec. 11

-PolitickerME.com

Excerpt:

"The Senate Homeland Security Committee Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations recently held a hearing titled, "Speculation in the Crude Oil Market" to examine whether speculation in energy markets has caused, at least in part, the recent spike in energy prices that has become a financial hardship on families in Maine and throughout the nation.

Senator Collins, who is Ranking Member of the Senate Homeland Security Committee, has called on Congress to pass carefully crafted legislation to help monitor and curb speculation on futures markets that artificially drive up prices. She has also called for a national strategy to pursue the long-term goal of energy independence."

<http://www.politickerme.com/senator-collins-questions-energy-experts-about-reasons-record-high-energy-costs-349>

Also (Update, I just found this): I'm sticking it in at the end as it's from the Maine Democratic Party, obviously no friend of Senator Collins. **The Collins record - big oil before mainers - December 12, 2007** Excerpt:

"In recent media accounts, including an op-ed appearing in the Bangor Daily News last weekend, Senator Susan Collins says she believes "it is absurd to expect taxpayers to continue to subsidize the soaring profits of the oil and gas industry." But when Senator Collins voted for the Cheney energy bill, she helped place the burden of a \$14 billion giveaway to Big Oil and Gas on the backs of hard-working Mainers.

"While taxpayers foot the bill for this windfall, Senator Collins voted against bills to prevent price gouging to protect consumers and stop market manipulation by greedy speculators," said Carol Andrews, communications director for the Maine Democratic Party. "When Senator Collins votes, Big Oil and Gas win while Maine's middle class families and small businesses lose," Andrews said.

In her piece appearing in the BDN on Saturday, Dec. 8, Senator Collins wrote "now is the time to seek energy independence." Yet for 11 years, she rejected several opportunities to assert energy independence by voting for Bush-Cheney giveaways to Big Oil and Gas instead of consumers and freedom from foreign oil. "Senator Collins talks one way in Maine but votes the other way in Washington," Andrews said."

<http://www.mainedems.org/CollinsputsbigoilbeforeMainers.aspx>

And this from DailyKos (obviously no friend of Senator Collins either): **Rep. Tom Allen's bill will look into Wartime Contracting**

Excerpt:

"Susan Collins was the first chair of the Senate's Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, whose duties include oversight of Federal contracting. But despite repeated requests from her colleagues to look into numerous media reports about cost over-runs, graft, theft and mismanagement, [Collins refused](#) to do so. She did not call even one hearing to look into what has cost our Treasury billions (to be fair, neither has Joe Lieberman)." <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2007/12/12/162225/29/813/421260>

Bangor Daily News article link:

<http://www.bangornews.com/news/t/news.aspx?articleid=157799&zoneid=500Alexhscpub@aol.com>

The Legacy of John Baldacci

**Excerpt: "Your Future is Maine's Future
If you agree.**

You've talked about this term being your last of public service (time to cash out and get rich: just kidding). When time is short I do not believe that it is a matter, necessarily, of quickening the pace, but perhaps instead analyzing and if needed slightly (or somewhat) changing tack.

We're not only hard workers in Maine, we are - as are you plenty smart too."

[The Legacy of John Baldacci](#)

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2007/12/governor-baldacci-yourleadershipin.html>

December 19, 2007

See also:

[UPDATED - Verizon, Maine PUC, Governor Baldacci and Fairpoint and Steal Us, It's Free!](#)

The Legacy of John Baldacci By Alex Hammer

Dear Governor Baldacci,

I like [praising you](#), and I hope to be able to do it very regularly.

As you know, Maine needs economic sustainability.

It's no secret that Maine needs proactive measures that bring more good, livable wage jobs of today and tomorrow to our state, as opposed to attempting to metaphorically "keep the ship together" by plugging our fingers into every hole.

The ocean (global competition) is too big to long stop leaks in such an approach.

As some well-known examples:

- Paper and manufacturing jobs consistently imperiled
- LIHEAP funding has become regularly an 11th and 12th hour salvage situation
- military base operations are subject to BRAC decisions and defense contracts subject to volatility
- The "gold standard" emphasis in which Maine is increasingly attractive to service employers reinforces lower wage, reduced benefits and potential sprawl based threats to Maine's significant economic (and livable) asset: quality of place. (hard work is as the expression goes, "a necessary but not sufficient condition" in regard to prosperity (and frankly viability), there's only 24 hours in a day with which to make a living after all)
- Budget cuts as stopgap measures that temporarily lessen the immediate red ink bleeding but which do not significantly address long term fundamentals in regard to Maine being able to be globally competitive.

e.g. (all from the Bangor Daily News)

[Baldacci orders \\$38 million in cuts and \\$13.5M taken from DHHS and Supplemental budget to uphold cuts](#)

- Investments which are not return on investment (ROI) sophisticated enough to promote best results (returns) and which therefore threaten the greatest opportunity that we have to dig ourselves out collectively to be competitive, namely the will of Mainers to make additional sacrifices

allowing investments to be made (i.e. marking resources to build Maine's future). Investments that are done in a less than sophisticated manner and underperform threaten our belief in investment generally in Maine and dash our hopes and spirits that we need to be able to continue to persevere through adversity or challenge.

- Tax break advantages that are not strongly enough tied to Maine's quality of place, in ROI-sensitive areas of investment and reflective of Maine's traditional values can degenerate into a "race to the bottom" that is ill conceived and which Maine cannot afford.

Governor Baldacci - I know you've worked so hard your entire professional life to work to be a leader

and to help Mainers by doing so. And I respect you for it.

However, and this is very important, you have had too much of a tendency to mistake leadership as attempting to force through proposals (budget battle with Republicans and several signature policy initiatives) that others may not share as well as attempting to [put a positive spin](#) on what is occurring in Maine. This circumvents Mainers from knowing more fully where the challenges lie and thus having the opportunity to work together to address them.

Sometimes you work very well across Maine's leadership but it appears to be, as opposed to being proactive before a crisis arises, [more reactionary to a crisis or 11th hour based](#) too often when you do so.

Sometimes your role, while explained, [is not done in sufficient depth](#) to be clear enough in regard to what is the complex history and structure of a major operation and its objectives for the State of Maine.

Sometimes [your sympathies as a leader](#), while quite genuine and I'm sure very heartfelt, are less than optimally productive towards Maine's ultimate greatest success.

And occasionally, as reported by well regarded outlets, your decisions appear to smack of [overly political considerations](#).

If you wish (link:),

[Governor Baldacci - Let others tout your successes](#) (Note: Article is general, NOT in regard to you specifically). They say that it is lonely at the top, but it must be desolate if one does not allow, through refined discernment, for great burdens to be shared. Maine - from my perspective - doesn't need superstars, we just need solutions.

Collaborative-based solutions that we build and execute together. [from whatever quarters they may arise](#).

Your Future is Maine's Future If you agree.

You've talked about this term being your last of public service (time to cash out and get rich: just kidding).

When time is short I do not believe that it is a matter, necessarily, of quickening the pace, but perhaps instead analyzing and if needed slightly (or somewhat) changing tack.

We're not only hard workers in Maine, we are - as are you - plenty smart too. WE LOVE YOU IN MAINE AS ONE OF OUR OWN, I FEEL COMFORTABLE IN SAYING. BUT THERE IS TOO MUCH PAIN IN MAINE.

If this second term will solidify your legacy then the opportunity is sizable indeed.

We're not partisan (I hope),we're Mainers

I've written previously (in a quick search today I couldn't find the link) that more than a couple of Maine leaders (outside your Administration) have told me their experience from working with you (in the global and/or direct sense) that you are less likely to allow dissent/draw top talent from anywhere than might be expected or previously done before your terms. I don't know your Administration members personally in most cases. My guess - and I admit this point is somewhat conjecture but is based upon what I have been told as noted - may be that you may have some quite good people already but that the reins may be on.

Certainly some reins, supervision and guidance are always needed.

In summation - Your legacy is - as it should be - inextricably tied to Maine's Success

The legacy that you save (or build) may indeed be your own.

Note:I was one of Governor Baldacci's opponents for Governor in 2006.

See also:

[The Best of Maine News - Maine's Leading Political Figures, Etc](#)

My Hero, George Mitchell

Excerpt: "I've worked since I was really a very small boy. Everybody in my family held numerous jobs. I delivered newspapers, shoveled snow, washed cars. I myself worked as a janitor all through junior high school and high school, cleaning the local boys' club, the local government office, the unemployment compensation office, other facilities, and my brother and I ran kind of what we'd now call a janitorial service at night...."

My Hero, George Mitchell

Continued Leadership, Dignity, Professionalism and Skill While Having Cancer (Full Recovery Expected) - One Mainer's Extraordinary Record of Exemplary Achievement

By Alex Hammer

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2008/01/my-hero-george-mitchell.html> **January 10, 2008**

George Mitchell's Extraordinary Record of Exemplary Achievement It is difficult to know where to begin in regard to an individual with such a depth of accomplishment. There is his service from 1989 to 1995 as Majority Leader of the United States Senate. The historic peace that he brokered in Northern Ireland as Independent Chairman. His serving as Chairman of the Walt Disney company from 2004 through early 2007. The recent Mitchell report for Major League Baseball, finally a breakthrough in righting the nation's pastime.

We haven't even yet gotten in a listing of accomplishments to the fact that he was offered a position on the U.S. Supreme Court by President Clinton in 1994 (he declined, to continue to lead the charge on healthcare as Majority Leader) and the fact that his 1988 garnering of 81% of the vote in his Senate re-election campaign broke the Maine record for the highest total ever in a contested statewide election.

Also:

"At the request of President Bill Clinton and Israeli and Palestinian leaders, Senator Mitchell served as chairman of an international fact-finding committee on violence in the Middle East. The committee's recommendation, widely known as The Mitchell Report, was endorsed by the Bush Administration, the European Union, and many other governments." And then there are his fantastic post-Senate leading accomplishments in Maine (these in themselves would be a leading legacy):

Mitchell Institute:

"The core mission of the Mitchell Institute is to increase the likelihood that young people from every community in Maine will aspire to, pursue and achieve a college education. Each year, a Mitchell Scholarship is awarded to a graduating senior from every public high school in Maine who will be attending a two-or four-year postsecondary degree program. Selection is based on academic promise, financial need and a history of community service. The Mitchell Scholarship Program has awarded more than \$5 million in financial assistance to more than 1,250 Maine students since 1995."

The site also bears this inspired Mitchell quote:

"No one should be guaranteed success..but everyone should have a fair chance to succeed"

[Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Environmental and Watershed ...](#) "The Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Environmental and Watershed Research has a diverse interdisciplinary mission focusing on environmental research, graduate education and outreach. In all these activities, the Mitchell Center is working to provide Maine's citizens and policy-makers with unbiased and credible information that can enhance efforts to achieve healthy ecosystems, strong communities, and robust economies."

The site also bears this great Mitchell quote:

"We have an obligation to leave for future generations the very basics of human life on earth; clean air, pure water, unpoisoned land."

History

Majority Leader Mitchell was born in Waterville on August 20, 1933 (personal note, the same day of the year as my younger brother David). His father was a day laborer and his mother a textile worker. They were immigrants from Lebanon.

George graduated from Bowdoin College ([George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections & Archives](#)) in 1954 followed by Georgetown Law in 1961.

Mitchell's political rise is impressive.

From 1962-65 Mitchell worked in Washington as a trial attorney for the Antitrust Division of the United States Department of Justice, followed from 1962-65 by serving Senator Edmund S. Muskie as an executive assistant. From 1965-1977 Mitchell practiced law in Portland (In 1971 he was Cumberland County assistant county attorney)

By 1974 Mitchell was a statewide political force, defeating Joseph Brennan for the Democratic nomination for Governor before losing in the general election to the nation's first Independent Governor, James Longley. President Jimmy Carter tabbed Mitchell as US Attorney for Maine in 1977, where he served until he was appointed to the U.S. District Court for Maine in 1979. In 1980, Brennan, then Governor, appointed Mitchell to the U.S. Senate, replacing Edmund Muskie who had resigned to become Secretary of State.

Illustrations of Character

An excerpt from one of Mitchell's published books: "Making Peace - The behind-the-scenes story of the negotiations that culminated in the signing of the Northern Ireland Peace Accord, told by the American Senator who served as Independent Chairman of the talks" provides interesting insight into Mitchell's Senate election in 1982:

Excerpt:

"Throughout 1980 and 1981, Maine's two members of the House of Representatives, both Republicans, jockeyed for position in what was widely perceived as the sure thing of defeating me. In May 1981 one of them, David Emery, released a public opinion poll which showed him trouncing me by 61 to 25 percent - a thirty-six point spread. Not to be outdone, the other House member, Olympia Snowe, announced a poll which had her ahead of me by thirty-three points. Kenneth Curtis, a former governor, then stated that he was considering running against me in the Democratic primary. He cited yet another poll, showing him leading by twenty-two points.

Publication of the polls produced the intended and predictable result: an avalanche of negative news reports and a growing uneasiness among Democrats about the viability of my candidacy. I had been working hard for a year, but the only response to my political problems I could devise was to work even harder.

I had been traveling around the state, speaking at service clubs and high schools and going to bean suppers. But these were random appearances, usually in response to invitations I received. I now began a systematic effort to visit every service club, high school, hospital, garage hall, senior citizens center, and manufacturing facility in the state. Instead of eight to ten public events each weekend I attended twelve to fifteen. I also increased the time I devoted to researching and studying each issue on which the Senate voted... Late in the campaign the tide turned decisively in my favor. In the election I received 61% of the votes."

Wow.

Another example of Mitchell's steely dedication and determination, and also steady head, leading ultimately to great achievement can be found in the same book, detailing an early scene from the historic Northern Ireland peace process negotiation.

In the preface to the book Mitchell writes:

"From February 1995 through May 1998 I spent most of my time going to, coming from, and working in Northern Ireland. It was the most difficult task I have ever undertaken, far more demanding than the six years I served as majority leader of the United States Senate."

On resistance to his being brought in to be Chairman:

"My two colleagues and I were across the hall, in Mayhew's office, listening to the proceedings over a closed broadcasting system. We stayed there for two days, while my role was being discussed...

I told Mayhew and Spring that the peace process was more important than my feelings, and I assured them that I would stay there until the chairmanship was resolved, one way or the other....

I woke up the next morning to a flurry of news reports that I was about to step down. Under the headline "Mitchell's role in doubt after day of protest," the *Irish News* reported that:...

Since I had no intention of stepping down, I read the story with some amusement, but also with apprehension. Then, after two days and nights of haggling and hesitation, the governments decided that they had to act. It was clear that the DUP and the UKUP would not agree to me serving as chairman...If the governments backed down over this issue, a precedent would be established that would give each party a veto over all aspects of the process...So shortly after midnight on Tuesday night, Mayhew told us that we were "going in."...

When I entered the room and walked toward my seat....Dr. Paisley was standing and saying, in a loud voice, "No. No. No. No." He repeated it over and over again, until I was in my seat. Before I could do or say anything, Paisley launched a blistering attack on the governments for "imposing" me as Chairman. He then led his delegates in a walkout. They were immediately followed by McCartney and the UKUP people.

I was extremely uncomfortable. I had a fleeting urge to get up and go home and these contentious people to their feud. But that was quickly overtaken by the realization that I and the peace process were being tested. If I ran away now, I would be a quitter; more importantly, this process might collapse, with all of the dread implications that had for the people of Northern Ireland. As I looked around the room and saw the eyes of all of the delegates on me, I realized I was being measured....

Realizing what was at stake, I tried to remain calm, to avoid betraying the swirling doubts I felt. I slowly made an opening statement. I thanked those present for their support, especially the governments. They had invited me to serve as chairman, and they had stuck with me. I then tried to lift the level of discussion. I reminded the delegates of the huge and important issue which had brought them together: the pursuit of peace and political stability in Northern Ireland. I again pledged to act in a fair and impartial manner and assured them that my only interest was to be helpful to them and to the people of Northern Ireland. I couldn't tell what effect my remarks had on those listening but they helped me to calm down and gave me a few minutes to establish myself.

I felt that it was important that something be accomplished at this first meeting other than my assuming the chair. The governments had required that any party wanting to participate in the negotiations had to pledge compliance with the Mitchell principles of democracy and nonviolence. So I announced that I would ask each party, then and there, to make clear its total and absolute commitment to the principles. I made up a procedure on the spot. I read the principles aloud and then called on each government and party to affirm its commitment. The British secretary of state, the Irish foreign minister, and the leader of each of the seven political parties present did so. The process was underway."

That, if you read the book, was only one of many great challenges in the historic negotiation.

A Man of Courage

[George Mitchell diagnosed with prostate cancer - The Cancer Blog](#) "Posted Aug 16th 2007... Former U.S. Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell [has been diagnosed with prostate cancer](#), according to news reports. However, the 73-year-old, who is leading the investigation into steroid use in Major League Baseball players, is expected to make a full recovery, since the cancer is small, localized and was caught early enough."

I heard Majority Leader Mitchell give a talk at the University of Maine this Fall. I had never heard him speak before.

He was powerful, but in a low-profile way.

My first impression: He strikes me as a Mainer. Which of course he is. No trace of Washingtonism. No trace of any airs despite such a profoundly distinguished career.

My second impression, coupled with the first: Bright, capable, professional, cutting edge sharp. You just get a sense when you are in the presence of greatness.

Another impression: Comfortable in his own skin. Someone who likes other people and likes himself (in a good way, not an ounce of pretentiousness). And a good genuine sense of humor.

I wish I had taken some notes, as my memory is not that great anymore, but I don't believe that he spoke a single word about having cancer. Just a man of service, who I'm sure doesn't want the focus on himself. One strong individual.

Still cleaning up:

Headlines from the Major League Baseball Mitchell Report:

[Over 2,500 Google News Stories Regarding Former Majority Leader and Senator George Mitchell's Baseball Report](#)

Mitchell currently serves as chairman of law firm DLA Piper (http://www.dlapiper.com/george_mitchell/). He also continues his ties to Northern Ireland, where he brokered that historic piece, as Chancellor of the Queen's University in Belfast. [Queen's University Belfast opens new centre for cancer research](#)

Academy of Achievement

George Mitchell Interview

Presidential Medal of Freedom

June 7, 2002 Dublin, Ireland

6 Page Interview with George Mitchell

<http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/mit0int-1>

Excerpts:

My parents were very poor, but we never felt any sense of need or want. It was a very close, loving, tightly-knit family growing up, and I never felt any sense of deprivation or anything like that. I really owe everything to my parents and their devotion and drive to see to it that their children had the education which led to the opportunities that they never were able to have.... I've worked since I was really a very small boy. Everybody in my family held numerous jobs. I delivered newspapers, shoveled snow, washed cars. I myself worked as a janitor all through junior high school and high school, cleaning the local boys' club, the local government office, the unemployment compensation office, other facilities, and my brother and I ran kind of what we'd now call a janitorial service at night....

When I went to college, my goal was to be a college history teacher. I majored in history. And in fact, I made applications to graduate schools to try to get a master's or a Ph.D. in history and get back to a small college like the one I attended, Bowdoin College in Maine, to teach. But then I went into the service. I spent two years in the Army. And my older brother, who was also a great positive influence on me, encouraged me to think about law school, and I said -- well, I didn't have any money....

I was not particularly interested in politics as a young man. All through college and law school, my goal was to return to Maine to practice law. I was born and raised in a small town in Maine, Waterville. I enjoyed living there -- still do -- and my goal in life was a fairly specific and focused one of practicing law in Maine....

Senator Muskie was a truly great man. First: the smartest person I've ever met, in terms of pure intellect. I've never met anyone as intelligent as he was. He was a great senator, a great legislator....

The governor of Maine, Joe Brennan, called me. He was and is a good friend. And to my surprise and to the complete surprise of all the people of Maine, he appointed me to complete Senator Muskie's unexpired term.... In the spring of 1994 I decided not to seek reelection to the Senate. I had made the decision 12 years earlier, Christmas Day of 1982, just after I had been first elected to a full term, that I would do the best I could for a limited time. I didn't want to make it a lifetime thing....

A vacancy occurred on the Supreme Court, and President Clinton told me that he wanted to nominate me to that vacancy. It was very flattering, and under almost any other circumstance, I would have immediately said yes and been thrilled about it. But I told him that I thought we had a real chance to pass health care reform....

As I told Colonel North in the hearings, people admired his patriotism, his courage, and his loyalty, but he cast the argument in religious and patriotic terms... So much later, he asked me to go to Northern Ireland as his representative for a short-term and rather limited mission. As they say, one thing led to another...

I was asked to go to the Middle East by Prime Minister Barak, Chairman Arafat, and President Clinton, and chaired an international commission there. The report which we gave to President Bush just about a year ago is one of the few things that the Israelis and Palestinians agreed on, at least rhetorically. President Bush has adopted it as a basis of U.S. policy in the Middle East....

The power I most enjoyed exercising was when I presided at naturalization ceremonies. They were what we would call citizenship ceremonies, where a group of people who had come from every part of the world, who had gone through the required procedures, gathered before me in a federal courtroom in Maine, and there I administered to them the oath of allegiance to the United States, and by the power vested in me under our Constitution and law, I made them Americans. It was always a very moving ceremony for me, because of my own personal experience, my mother having been an immigrant from Lebanon, and my father being the orphaned son of immigrants from Ireland, and I enjoyed very much those ceremonies. And after them, I made it a point to speak

personally with each of the new citizens, individually or in family groups. I asked them where they came from, how they came, why they came."

His other published books include:

Men of Zeal (with Senator Cohen)

Great American Lighthouses (August 1989)

World on Fire: Saving an Endangered Earth (January 1991) Not For America Alone: The Triumph of Democracy and The Fall of Communism (May 1997)

Other quotes attributed to Majority Leader Mitchell (from Wikipedia):

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_J._Mitchell

"My parents had no education. My mother couldn't read or write English. She worked nights in a textile mill. My father was a janitor at a local college in our hometown."

"Conflicts are created and sustained by human beings. They can be ended by human beings."

Maine has many of great character and achievement. But a greater hero? I can't think of one.

Hillary Clinton at the University of Maine - The view from outside, turned away, in the cold

Excerpt: "People were upset about being turned away. I heard one Mom consoling her daughter, maybe eight years old, telling her "Don't be mad". It was so sad to hear that.

It made me upset at Clinton when I saw the unnecessary pain being caused."

Hillary Clinton at the University of Maine - The view from outside, turned away, in the cold

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2008/02/hillary-clinton-at-universityofmaine.html>

February 9, 2008

Update: Hillary Clinton also appeared in Lewiston.

I am writing this during Hillary's scheduled campaign event at the University of Maine Recreation Center. But I am not inside watching the event.

I, and perhaps 1,000 others, were turned away.

And not politely either.

I'll explain...

I showed up to attend the event at The University of Maine around 8:50. The event was scheduled to begin at 9:30, and already there was a long long line. The line was moving as people were entering, and by around 9:15 there was only around 25 people still ahead of me in line. But around 1,000 behind me and still arriving to line up.

We were all waiting very patiently in the cold. I was excited and looking forward to seeing Senator Clinton in her UMaine campaign event. I'd never seen the Senator before.

And I still haven't.

Around 9:15 -- and it was handled very poorly -- no apology or niceties, no coordinated approach -- just a single burly man (Hillary staffer?, he never identified himself or had any identifying material he was wearing that I could see) walking down the long line - swiftly - saying that the event was "at capacity" and that no one else would be let in.

Very poorly done.

Let's consider for a minute the planning of this event. I realize I suppose that the University of Maine needs to showcase its new elaborate, gorgeous and expensive Recreation Center - but why would Hillary (and the University) schedule an appearance in a building - the Senator's only campaign appearance in the State - in a site with such limited capacity space (and I have no idea

whether admittees inside could sit or were forced to stand, as I never made it in).

It makes no sense. Unless you consider what may be the obvious. Hillary could go anywhere in the entire state (and she could do more than one appearance also). Why would she select such a small venue? Well, I'm not privy to her campaign, but one of the first rules of political events is not to select a site where there will be a lot of empty seats, hence the candidate appears unpopular.

Unfortunately, in this line of thinking, appearances trump consideration. The event becomes about the attendees serving the purposes of the candidate, rather than the candidate serving the people.

My guess, as this UMaine appearance is Hillary's only campaign event anywhere in Maine (as far as I know) is that people likely traveled from all over the state, or at a minimum considerable distance, to be able to attend. How many out of that large group that were so gruffly turned away had traveled some distance to see her? (I had traveled only from Bangor, but had dressed up and been really looking forward to the event).

Perhaps this would be a good time to add that I think I now better understand the term "on the bus" (I've written for The Huffington Post "off the bus" <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alex-hammer>) . After we were told we could not enter, later on the crowd still remaining was dispersed so a large bus could enter. It said "Press" and was given direct access. There's room for all of them (although they arrived long after us), and they don't need to wait at all!!

In regard to the University, my guess is that Alford arena would hold many many more people.

The police were not friendly either from what I witnessed. They, and all the government officials walking around (e.g. TSA on their jackets) all were (I guess) so busy even though none interacted with the large crowd outside that I could see!

I'm part of the press via this site, but I never try and "pull strings" as they say (I didn't mention being a press member to anyone while waiting outside the event). I had RSVP'd to the event, **as Hillary's campaign had asked attendeesto do**(like that really accomplished anything as what happened this morning demonstrates, is the RSVP just a way for them to get more online contacts??) and in my RSVP I had mentioned Maine News and that I was interested in a press credential if that was possible.

Never heard back from the campaign.

I was given press access by the University when former Senator William Cohen came to speak: [My Interview With William Cohen - By Alex Hammer](#) and I appreciated that.

I previously have not been impressed, from personal experience, with Bill and Hillary Clinton: [Bill Clinton, Governor John Baldacci, and Alex Hammer](#) (I never heard back in regard to this either, despite follow-up)

although as mentioned I was highly excited about today's UMaine event (I'm not a Hillary supporter for President but I would very much enjoy seeing the leading candidates).

People were upset about being turned away. I heard one Mom consoling her daughter, maybe eight years old, telling her "Don't be mad".
It was so sad to hear that.

It made me upset at Clinton when I saw the unnecessary pain being caused. About 15 minutes after the crowd was told no entry, about 100 individuals were still waiting, hoping against hope that they would be admitted (that's when I left).

It's pathetic, and it's sad.

Senator Barack Obama's event is this afternoon, at the Bangor Auditorium, a much much larger venue I'm sure (don't know the stats). He is known for drawing large(r) crowds, so we'll see whether he has done an adequate job, on his campaign's part, of forecasting and planning - i.e. whether people will also be turned away from that event or not.

(I do realize that Maine has only so many large facilities. Booking the Bangor Auditorium is about as good, I think, as one could reasonably expect).

This is President of the United States they are campaigning for. Hillary, in the way that this played out today, showed strongly - to my mind - that she is not worthy of that office.

While this is to some perhaps "small stuff", it nonetheless provides a window, perhaps, in regard to how individuals think, how they plan, and what their priorities seem to be.

Maybe she thinks she is too good for Maine. I personally believe we are too good for her.

Nine Page Maine News Interview with U.S. Maine Senate Candidate Tom Ledue

Excerpt: “Maine News: Tom, why are you the best candidate for U.S. Senator from Maine in the 2008 contest? Tom Ledue: I am the best candidate because of the quality and strength of both who I am and of my message, its scope, reach, and ideas. The plans and ideas that I present are fresh and strong, aimed at changing the political status quo, built upon principles that will help us reclaim our greatness as state and as a nation: - The Common Good - The Interdependence of All Americans - Fiscal Responsibility - Partnership with the American People - The Promise of our Ideals”

Nine Page Maine News Interview With U.S. Maine Senate Candidate Tom Ledue

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2008/02/nine-page-maine-news-interview-with-us.html>

February 27, 2008

See also:

91 previous Maine News stories on the 2008 Maine Senate Race and Updated: The Best of Maine News - Maine's Top Political Leaders Etc.

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Maine News: Tom, why are you the best candidate for U.S. Senator from Maine in the 2008 contest?

Tom Ledue: I am the best candidate because of the quality and strength of both who I am and of my message, its scope, reach, and ideas. The plans and ideas that I present are fresh and strong, aimed at changing the political status quo, built upon principles that will help us reclaim our greatness as state and as a nation:

- The Common Good
- The Interdependence of All Americans
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Partnership with the American People
- The Promise of our Ideals

I am bringing forth a broad scope of integrated, consistent and coherent thought. I am not a two, five or seven issue candidate. I am running on multiple ideas and issues that will require assertive, slightly impatient and visionary leadership that demand change; I have not set out to make a marketing plan to get elected. Rather I have asked with my team: “How are we off course as a nation and how can we best set a new course for Maine and the Nation?” I am not playing it safe vying for a hollow political middle. Rather, I seek to bring concrete, common sense issues and solutions to the table that will make a difference. I have brought forth very specific ideas in every policy area.

The reach of my platform is wide. The common sense of Maine that I bring forward will appeal across party lines. There is no aisle to reach across. We are all in this together. My message is based upon the promise of the ideals of our country and not based upon traditional political thinking. Fiscal prudence and social justice are not mutually exclusive - in fact they go hand in hand to build a strong nation and a vigorous economy. Somehow Washington has decided that we need to sacrifice our economic security and national security to fund an economy that relies on corporate imperialism, war, waste, finite reserves of fossil fuels, and the exploitation of people and places around the world economy. I just don't believe that is the best way to maintain healthy capitalism and it certainly is not the best way to invest in the foundation of our people or in the future that puts the American Dream within reach of every American.

Washington is broken - if we do not change the players, the game will remain the same. As a parent

of four young daughters and as an educator who has worked shoulder to shoulder with Maine people for over twenty years I offer a different kind of experience than that of career politicians. I see our problems from the trenches of trying to serve Maine people in our communities and from the perspective of trying to raise a family in these challenging times. I will represent the people of Maine in the United States Senate with a commitment to keep the needs of our people and our great country at the heart of every day and at the heart of every decision, steadfastly immune to the political and corporate pressure that will seek to corrupt that commitment. There is no time for business as usual. **Maine News:**Two of your opponents, including the incumbent, are well known, generally highly regarded, longstanding political figures. In comparing yourself to them, you've stated,

<http://www.fosters.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?>

[AID=/20080214/GJNEWS03/777017923/-1/SANNEWS](http://www.fosters.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080214/GJNEWS03/777017923/-1/SANNEWS), "In an interview with the Sanford News, Ledue said his ideas and framework for making decisions are preferable to Collins' and Allen's styles. Collins is "powerful" when it comes to reacting to issues, he said, but not when it comes to leading the public away from problems before they occur. Allen is a "good man," Ledue added, but he is an "incremental" leader."

Can you provide details in regard to how specifically these differences that you view manifest themselves, providing examples in the context of the duties of a US Senator from Maine?

Also, what are the specific actions, votes or decisions of your opponents that have led you to the above conclusions?

Tom Ledue:A United States Senator must have a clear and transparent vision of the direction that he or she intends to help lead our country. For both of these candidates I see a lack of a clearly defined vision of how we can move forward as a people to capture the promise of our ideals for all people. I do not see either of them as champions of the politics of the possible. Rather I see elected officials who have settled into styles of leadership that either maintain the status quo or inch forward when it is perceived as a good time to do so. Their leadership styles are not transformative. Our Nation is at a critical point in its history. **We need transformative leadership, leadership that is in a hurry to protect and promote the inalienable rights of all Americans.**We are ill served by leadership that fails to invest our tax dollars in our people while serving special interests instead, or leadership that fails to uphold the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

While dealing with problems as they arise is important, dealing with issues before they become national problems is more important. For example, my education platform is based on the goal to find effective ways of offering comprehensive and effective education for everyone. This begins with preschool and sees our students through high school, to college and beyond – as far as they need to go to be as productive as they can be. The size of one's wallet should not determine educational access. Senator Collins makes news when she sponsors legislation to give a \$300.00 tax credit to teachers. While this is great and it helps a lot of people, it is a small gesture. We need leadership that will pursue a substantive vision that will create real change, investment in our people that will support them so that they can support themselves and contribute to the common good.

In a reactionary style, Senator Collins deals with problems as they arise and then offers band-aids or stop gaps to fix them. One example is the energy crisis that we face. This is not a new issue, and we have been aware of the insecurity caused by over reliance on fossil fuels for at least forty years. In recent months Senator Collins has trumpeted her support of LIHEAP. This is an example of managerial leadership applying small bandages when needs become acute enough to get attention. While LIHEAP has served as an important safety net for many Maine families this year, it was only necessary because of the lack of visionary leadership in years prior. Susan Collins has had over eleven years to work towards our energy independence and failed Mainers when she failed to vote for S.AMDT.784 that would have pushed the country to reduce oil imports 40% by 2025. Such a measure in combination would cut worldwide demand significantly, thus dropping prices in the short term. Combined with other efforts to promote wind, solar and geothermal energy it would have done much to provide true security and for our country and our pocketbooks.

In addition to energy security, Senator Collins' work in homeland security has been troubling at times. Her support of the Patriot Act in addition to her introduction of S. 1959, the "Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007" in the Senate makes me think of the Red Scare from the last century. The language of this bill is so vague, that one could argue any politically minded group of citizens with dissenting opinions and a desire for change could be targeted. Combined with her support for the Real ID Act, an unfunded mandate that fails to protect privacy while potentially leading to more identity theft, I fear that we are on a course for a brave new world where people are less secure and have less freedom.

Congressman Allen has filled his role as a Representative in a safe fashion. I am sure that there is reason for doing this in the sometimes-venomous atmosphere of the present day Congress. While I am also sure that the atmosphere in Washington has not beaten the passion for Democracy out of all

of our Congressmen and Congresswomen; I think it has left many of them always looking for the safe ground. I am not sure if this is why Congressman Allen refuses to hold the executive branch accountable and support impeachment hearings. Playing it safe will not safeguard the rights and freedoms that so many of our servicemen, servicewomen and the great leaders of our past gave their energy and in some cases their lives to build and ensure for us. I will fight to restore the vision of our forefathers who wrote the Constitution with insistence upon proper checks and balances of power. I will be more assertive in developing legislation that serves the common good, even if it initially seems that there is not enough support for success. I will use my position as a Senator to bring forth ideas that need to be heard, from redirecting some of our military spending to increase our energy security to redirecting subsidies away from corporate giants and toward our local communities.

Maine News: According to a recent press account in Foster's Daily Democrat, <http://www.fosters.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080201/NEWS0104/217527883>:

"Thomas Ledue, a Sanford Democrat, has raised between \$15,000 and \$20,000 so far, according his campaign manager. Ledue did not file with the FEC until after Dec. 31, so he was not required to file a fundraising report for the last quarter, Doak said." Will you be able to raise an amount of money to be seen as a viable candidate by the media and others, and if so, how will you do so? **Tom Ledue:** Raising money is no easy task. One always hopes to first raise the level of dialogue so that principles and ideas are the substance of the headlines. And it is encouraging that in a recent NY Times poll, it does seem that most people do not want constant reminders of the "horse race" reporting that focuses more on money and the "polls of the day." That said, we do need money and we have formats for doing fundraisers - we will plug in as many as we can each month while getting our message out to as many groups and areas as we need to. Right now the goal is to win the primary and that is our main focus. We will also look to the Internet to raise money but more importantly to raise awareness of issues and the substance that we offer. If people offered us either \$100 or 10 hours of work, we would want the time more than the money. Of course, both would be nice, but spreading the word and getting each person to bring 2 or 3 more people to our campaign would be a huge victory. If our campaign wins with the least amount of dollars spent, we believe that statement would go a long way to restoring the hope of governance by the people instead of government by the people with the most money.

Maine News: Your website, <http://tomledue.com/>, has some nice features. Can you detail some of them?

Tom Ledue: Thank you - that is indeed a compliment coming from someone as experienced with the technology as you appear to be.

"Meet Tom" provides readers with a quick introduction to my life complete with a variety of snapshots of my life that provide context for my candidacy. "Goals and Issues" is the great strength of the site because of the coherence and common sense of the ideas presented within it. All of our policy ideas are packaged into four goals and each goal is supported across all major policy areas.

The principles and framework sections offer a clear vision for the voters to evaluate. This is important. People can read the framework of thought that I am committed to. As good as the site is now, we are still evolving different aspects. One feature that will be live shortly is what we call the Ledue Local button. This will utilize a fairly new Web 2.0 application. We believe this will be the first political campaigns to use such methodology. In some ways it will seem similar to a campaign-centered Facebook or My Space environment. It was built for the educational community and it allows for expansion on ideas. We invite people to contribute their thoughts here; the usual protocol of decorum will be maintained and expected, but we really want people to weigh in on our policy directions. We want them to tell us their stories, compare what is going on in their lives to what we are offering and see if our solution fits or needs adjustments. This is a conversation that we want to begin now and our goal is to keep it going throughout the campaign and beyond.

Maine News (Alex Hammer): On your "Why Tom" page, http://tomledue.com/?page_id=13, you discuss your view in regard to a deterioration of conditions in Maine necessitating an "uncommon vision". A similar concern that Maine's challenges require new vision led me to run for Governor of Maine in 2006: [This Great State](#). On your "Goals / Issues" page, http://tomledue.com/?page_id=7, you state in part:

"Tom Ledue's Campaign is guided by an unrelenting commitment to the common good and will propose policy decisions based upon three guiding principles:

- Interdependence
- Partnership
- The Promise of Our Ideals

We utilize these principles to address four broad policy goals to lead us in a better direction."

and on your "Principles" page, http://tomledue.com/?page_id=8, you write in part:

"A Foundation for Action: The Common Good

Core Principle One: Interdependence

Core Principle Two: Partnership

Core Principle Three: Promise"

Tie this together for us if you would. What should people walk away with to remember? Where does it come from? What is unique?

Tom Ledue:What is unique and what I want people to remember is that there is a framework of thought and a plan presented here for how we can reclaim our greatness as a country.

These thoughts were gathered and forged by a group of ordinary citizens concerned that our country is not headed in the right direction. That work led to my candidacy. Nearly all of this work was created by volunteer effort. No marketing or polling specialists were consulted. We did not concern ourselves with what democrats want to hear. Rather, we asked, "What are the problems? What change needs to be made? How do we get there? What makes sense? " The thoughts we forged and the thoughts upon which I build my candidacy are of national significance.

I want people to take away that there is a large disconnect between the federal government and the people struggling to keep their bills paid. When people ask about why property taxes are going up so fast or why the state has to cut services due to shortfalls, but the federal government has the money to dole out a \$150-200 billion "stimulus package" - no one is shouting about the disconnect. Taxes are used to provide the infrastructure that allows companies to grow and create jobs and make the country strong. When capitalism is allowed to work in its simple form; a need is identified and filled by a supplier who is compensated by a consumer, communities thrive. What we have now is a system that creates false needs to maintain the status quo for those that make the most money from it. **(Start of underline)**If we simply changed our investment priorities as a nation to prioritize investment in our people and communities we would find that we can create a country in which all of us can have the opportunity for the American Dream **(end of underline)**rather than the deep despair felt by a great percentage of our people.

As we talk with people around the state, we know that more and more people are recognizing the insanity - especially since more and more people are falling behind. Maine is not creating the jobs it needs to participate in the global economy. Indeed our nation is lagging behind in the new, clean and green economy that the rest of the world is taking the lead in. Even China refused US cars until US automakers agreed to more fuel-efficient standards. There is a real lack of common sense at our federal level - common sense that says the greed of our system cannot be sustained. Every action or inaction we decide upon has impact on the rest of the planet. By recognizing this interdependence we can build relationships and use best practices in all areas where challenges exist to reduce needless suffering across the street and across the globe. Our society is broken in its foundation to provide for the commonwealth of all citizens. Here, in the words of Adam Smith, author of *The Wealth of Nations*:*No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the greater part of the members are poor and miserable. It is but equity, besides, that they who feed, clothe and lodge the whole body of the people, should have such a share of the produce of their own labour as to be themselves tolerably well fed, clothed and lodged.*"Working together toward a vision that promotes the promise of our ideals for all of our people, we can create a stronger, more secure and more economically sustainable nation.

Maine News:If you were US Senator from Maine, what is the first five things that you would do for the state, and why?

Tom Ledue: 1.I would work to empower Maine people by: Providing health care for all by expansion of the currently available programs or private insurance for those who are happy with it. With a long term (5-7 year) goal of expansion of best practices to create a universal system that emphasizes preventive and primary care relationships for everyone.

2.I would work to strengthen Maine Communities by shifting our national subsidy priorities toward local, small business that are the lifeblood of local economies. In doing so we can support local solutions for critical problems especially through the support of

- Community based agriculture,
- Local clean energy production to begin on our journey toward energy independence,
- And local industry that relies on local resources, adding value to those resources in our home economies.

3+4.I would work to develop a stable and sustainable economy by: Gradually requiring fair labor and green standards for all imports.

- Work to eliminate the exploitation of foreign workers and resources to bring "cheap" goods to our

markets.

- Level the playing field for US manufacturers.
- Assist in reducing our growing trade deficit.

Working to dramatically reduce our dependence on fossil fuels by supporting clean power generation and committing to cut our carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, on pace for 10% in three years.

5. I would work to assert collaborative international leadership by: Working to leave Iraq as quickly as possible while meeting our responsibilities there. We cannot maintain our presence in Iraq indefinitely. We have to withdraw our troops in the near future. We must honor our moral responsibility to help stabilize the country enough so that it will not fall into deeper chaos, violence and potentially genocide once we do leave.

- We must immediately work with the international community to replace any substantial need for American Troops with a multinational force of peacekeeping troops.
- We must make it clear in the international community that we are committed to find a way to stabilize the country (**start of underline**) within a limited time frame and use of resources. (**end of underline**)
- We need the assistance of the international community to create conditions in Iraq in which its people and the region can build a stable and secure future.

Maine News: How should a US Senator be judged?

Tom Ledue: Any elected official should be judged by how well they uphold the charge of their office, The Constitution, and how well they take the lead in issues that effect the people who put them there - by this I mean the voters not the donors. It is important to respond to crises as they arise, but the best leadership is leadership that serves to anticipate pitfalls and problems and acts quickly to prevent the crisis from causing damage. There is much talk about potential crisis' on the horizon - many of these are not news and yet we are left with a crisis of political will to address them head on.

Maine News: In "Tom's Journal", <http://tomledue.com/?cat=9>, you wrote in part in your Jan 23 entry,

"The opposite of Greed is Justice
The opposite of Anger is Compassion
The opposite of Ignorance is Enlightenment
The opposite of Cynicism is Hope
The opposite of Complacency is Action"

Being in the blog business, an important question for me is, will you continue a blog if you are elected US Senator? In a more general sense, how would you structure your communications with your Maine constituents. What would be the intended purpose(s) of your communications?

Tom Ledue: Between our blog and our Ledue Local conversations we hope that the communication never ends. Communicating with our fellow citizens and with the state and local politicians is the only way we can be certain we are addressing the needs that Mainers prioritize. Keeping a Web log is new to me but as long as people find a value in it, we will keep it going.

Maine News: What is the intended purposes, also, of your blog now during the campaign?

Tom Ledue: Democracy depends on active participation in dialogue. The blog and our website is one tool for dialogue. We believe that every conversation has the potential to make our collective intelligence richer; we are all lifelong learners. The role of all of our communication will be to find and share examples of justice, compassion, enlightenment, hope and action that will lead to better answers for all of us.

Maine News: What have been the most surprising, and also the most memorable, campaign experiences so far and why?

Tom Ledue: There have not been many surprises. There have been many great memories. My favorite was talking with a group of old timers in Rangeley when one very stately man looked me in the eye and said, "Imagine what it would be like if we sent someone to Washington that we could really talk to." This tone had been replicated in most places that I have been. There is a huge gap between the people and their government and my candidacy offers a hope of bridging that for people.

Maine News: What else would you like to say to the people of Maine that we have not asked you?

Tom Ledue: Let's redefine homeland security. By focusing on local solutions to local problems, with the help of redirected Federal dollars, we can build warmer homes, local energy supplies, safer food and water supplies, stronger educational systems that better meet local demands, and a healthcare system that keep us all strong. If we expand our thought towards our neighbor, across the street

and across the globe just a little, we can all sleep better at night. I once heard Sen. George Mitchell say - and I paraphrase - that "if a person is able to pick up a paycheck on Friday, they are less likely to pick up a gun." If we are building our economy in the true fashion of capitalism, then we can all share the great wealth of our work. Knowing that all of these things can be accomplished without going into further debt will make us more secure as a nation. In Maine - far too many people are suffering. The chief reason they suffer is because of policies of inaction. Most of these people are from the vulnerable populations - the elderly, the young, and the mentally or physically impaired. The true measure of a society is in how it treats its most vulnerable citizen. **(start of underline)**We need to recognize that we have more than enough wealth to invest in adequate foundations for all of our people and our communities. We simply need to reassess how we use that wealth. We must put away the injustice of inaction and replace it with dignity and compassion. **(end of underline)**

"Water is the New Oil" Maine's Liquid Abundance

Excerpt: "Think about the worldwide economic and geopolitical ramifications of oil, and then realize that oil is not a necessary primary condition for basic life as water is, and then ask yourself which is truly more valuable as a resource.

We cannot be penny wise and multi-millions (at a minimum!) foolish!!!!!"

" Water is the new oil" - Maine's Liquid Abundance

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2008/02/water-is-new-oil-mainesliquid.html>

February 28, 2008

Alex: I've long believe that quote referenced in the title.

Everybody talks about Maine's quality of place as a top asset, but I personally believe that not enough - not even close to nearly enough - has been done in regard to the relationship of Maine's natural resources, sustainable economic growth and development and prosperity, and the maintenance while going forward into that 21st century economy of Maine's traditional values.

Think about the worldwide economic and geopolitical ramifications of oil, and then realize that oil is not a necessary primary condition for basic life as water is, and then ask yourself which is truly more valuable as a resource.

We cannot be penny wise and multi-millions (at a minimum!) foolish!!!!!" [Water: the next big thing](#) - TurnMaineBlue.com

The Washington Post Delves into the Cohen Group (William Cohen) in Five Page (Length Online) Article

Excerpt: "Tyrer, who was Cohen's chief of staff at the Pentagon, added: "It does not strike us as illogical that Secretary Cohen and others at The Cohen Group would continue to be involved in their business careers in issues that they have worked hard on and felt strongly about during their public careers." Tyrer said the firm has been willing "to turn away work that might raise even the faintest ethical or reputational concern.""

The Washington Post Delves into the Cohen Group (William Cohen) in Five Page (Length Online) Article

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2008/03/washington-post-delves-intocohengroup.html>
March 13, 2008

Also:

August 12, 2007, The Washington Post

[What Is This Man Thinking?](#)

By Secretary William Cohen

http://www.cohengroup.net/news/op_ed/op_ed081207.cfm

Alex: This article is from 2006, but I could not find any history of it being covered in the Maine mainstream media (<http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=The+Washington+Post+The+Cohen+Group+William+Cohen&btnG=Google+Search> and <http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=Maine+From+Public+Life+to+Private+Business++washingtonpost.com+William+Cohen+The+Cohen+Group&btnG=Google+Search>) despite it being a page A01 Washington Post (5 pages online) story (perhaps they are no longer indexed or beyond first page of search results).

The Washington Post Delves into the Cohen Group (William Cohen) in Five Page (Length Online) Article

[From Public Life to Private Business - washingtonpost.com - Former Pentagon Chief Cohen's Firm Serves Defense Contractors](#) "Sunday, May 28, 2006; Page A01"

Excerpt:

"After more than 30 years in politics, Defense Secretary William S. Cohen was saddled with credit card debt.

The baker's son from Bangor, Maine, was never wealthy, and his government salary went only so far. When the motorcades and military escorts ended in January 2001, his final financial disclosure form listed tens of thousands of dollars of charge-account debts at interest rates as high as about 25 percent. Within weeks of leaving office, he was living in a \$3.5 million McLean mansion with a swimming pool, a cabana and a carriage house. Cohen's career had entered a classic final phase: the monetizing of the public man.

Instead of returning to Maine, which he had represented in the House and Senate for more than two decades, Cohen followed legions of government officials into the business of consulting and lobbying. Trading on an insider's knowledge, contacts and personal cachet, the former defense secretary created his own Washington firm, [the Cohen Group](#), which works for some of the biggest companies in the defense industry...

Tyrer, who was Cohen's chief of staff at the Pentagon, added: "It does not strike us as illogical that Secretary Cohen and others at The Cohen Group would continue to be involved in their business careers in issues that they have worked hard on and felt strongly about during their public careers." Tyrer said the firm has been willing "to turn away work that might raise even the faintest ethical or reputational concern."

Tyrer and other members of the firm generally declined to discuss their activities in detail because, they said, clients wanted confidentiality... "There is a competitive spirit in my soul," the former college basketball player said. "And I've been competing, it seems, almost from time immemorial.

"There are times I say, why am I doing this, at this pace, and yet, that's just who I am."... Nonetheless, there is overlap between Cohen's government and business careers.

In December 2000, shortly before Cohen left office, the Pentagon awarded Iridium Satellite LLC [a \\$72 million contract](#), without competitive bidding, that helped save the company's communications satellites from destruction. David R. Oliver Jr., who was a senior procurement official at the time, said that he and Cohen were the Pentagon's principal advocates for the Iridium deal.

Over the past two years, Iridium has paid the Cohen Group about \$400,000 to lobby the House, Senate and Department of Defense, according to lobbying disclosure statements.

"Several months after Secretary Cohen left office, The Cohen Group was contacted by the Chairman of Iridium to assist with marketing to several government agencies including DoD, as well as foreign governments," Tyrer said in writing. "Obviously, we had no such discussions while in office."... Though Cohen co-sponsored the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, which said "responsible representative Government requires public awareness of the efforts of paid lobbyists to influence the public decisionmaking process," [the firm's lobbying disclosures](#) are sometimes vague.

For example, the firm has lobbied the Defense Department and the now dismantled Coalition

Provisional Authority on behalf of Nour USA Ltd., a local company that has won contracts potentially worth hundreds of millions of dollars to provide security and to equip forces in Iraq. The National Journal quoted a Nour executive as saying the Cohen Group "introduced us to people in the U.S. government who were involved in oil-industry security."

Where the government disclosure form asks it to identify "Specific lobbying issues," the Cohen Group's filings on Nour say: "Exploring overseas business opportunities.""

An Alliance Between William Cohen and George Mitchell

Excerpt: "<http://www.cohengroup.net/expertise/index.cfm> "The Cohen Group opened its doors in January 2001 with the objective of helping multinational clients explore opportunities overseas as well as solve problems that may develop. The Cohen Group has the unique ability to provide our clients with truly comprehensive tools for understanding and shaping their business, political, legal, regulatory, and media environments. A strategic alliance with [DLA Piper](#), global law firm specializing in business, real estate and technology, enhances our capabilities."

http://www.dlapiper.com/george_mitchell/ "George J. Mitchell Partner Chairman of the Global Board of DLA Piper"

An Alliance Between William Cohen and George Mitchell
<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2008/03/alliance-between-williamcohenand.html>
March 25, 2008

See also:

[The Washington Post Delves into the Cohen Group \(William Cohen\) in Five Page \(Length Online\) Article](#)

and

[My Hero, George Mitchell](#)

and

[My Interview With William Cohen - By Alex Hammer](#)

and

Regularly Updated: [The Best of Maine News - Maine's Top Political Leaders Etc.](#)

Then:

"Men of zeal : a candid inside story of the Iran-Contra hearings / William S. Cohen, George J. Mitchell (Hardcover)

Publisher: New York, N.Y., U.S.A. : Viking (1988)"

[http://www.amazon.com/Men-zeal-Iran-Contra-hearings-Mitchell/dp/B000VZP5N6/ref=sr_1_3?](http://www.amazon.com/Men-zeal-Iran-Contra-hearings-Mitchell/dp/B000VZP5N6/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1206458161&sr=1-3)

[http://www.amazon.com/Men-zeal-Iran-Contra-hearings-Mitchell/dp/B000VZP5N6/ref=sr_1_3?](http://www.amazon.com/Men-zeal-Iran-Contra-hearings-Mitchell/dp/B000VZP5N6/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1206458161&sr=1-3)

[ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1206458161&sr=1-3](http://www.amazon.com/Men-zeal-Iran-Contra-hearings-Mitchell/dp/B000VZP5N6/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1206458161&sr=1-3)

Now:

<http://www.cohengroup.net/expertise/index.cfm>

"The Cohen Group opened its doors in January 2001 with the objective of helping multinational clients explore opportunities overseas as well as solve problems that may develop. The Cohen Group has the unique ability to provide our clients with truly comprehensive tools for understanding and shaping their business, political, legal, regulatory, and media environments. A strategic alliance with [DLA Piper](#), global law firm specializing in business, real estate and technology, enhances our capabilities." http://www.dlapiper.com/george_mitchell/

"George J. Mitchell

Partner Chairman of the Global Board of DLA Piper george.mitchell@dlapiper.com

1251 Avenue of the Americas

180

New York, New York 10020-1104 United States T: (212) 335-4600F: (212) 335-4605"

Google Search:

<http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=The+Cohen+Group+William+Cohen+DLA+Piper+George+Mitchell>

e.g. From [DLA Piper News Richard Gephardt joins international law firm ...](#) (2005)

Excerpt:

"DLA Piper's alliance with The Cohen Group, an international strategic business consulting firm, adds further depth to the firm's legal and business intelligence and consulting services. The group includes former Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen"

Alliance - Wikipedia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alliance>

Excerpt:

"An alliance is an agreement between two or more parties, made in order to advance common goals and to secure common interests."

Updated: Bob Tyrer, Susan Collins and William Cohen

Excerpt:

["LONGTIME COHEN STRATEGIST TO MANAGE COLLINS ' CAMPAIGN](#)

Portland Press Herald - NewsBank - Sep 29, 1996 Excerpt: "Most people in Maine don't know Bob Tyrer. But he is about to make his mark on the U.S. Senate race in Maine. For more than 20 years, Tyrer has worked quietly behind the scenes for retiring Sen. William Cohen. The 39-year-old Michigan native has served as Cohen's chief of staff and his top political strategist. He has set Cohen's agenda, managed his seven offices in Maine and Washington, influenced his key decisions..."

Updated: Bob Tyrer, Susan Collins and William Cohen

<http://www.mainenewsblog.com/2008/03/bob-tyrer-susan-collinsandwilliam.html>

March 31, 2008

[LONGTIME COHEN STRATEGIST TO MANAGE COLLINS ' CAMPAIGN](#)

Portland Press Herald - NewsBank - Sep 29, 1996

Excerpt:

"Most people in Maine don't know Bob Tyrer. But he is about to make his mark on the U.S. Senate race in Maine. For more than 20 years, Tyrer has mark on the U.S. Senate race in Maine. For more than 20 years, Tyrer has year-old Michigan native has served as Cohen's chief of staff and his top political strategist. He has set Cohen's agenda, managed his seven offices in Maine and Washington, influenced his key decisions..."

[NO PROOF OFFERED THAT RIVALS SOUGHT 'DIRT' ON COLLINS A...](#)

Portland Press Herald - NewsBank - Oct 15, 1996

Excerpt:

"Over the weekend, Collins complained that the Democratic Party hired a researcher to ``dig up dirt'' on her in the waning days of her close campaign against Joseph Brennan, her Democratic rival. But on Monday, Collins' campaign manager, Bob Tyrer..."

See also:

[FAMILIAR BACKER FUNDS TRIP TO MALAYSIA BY COHEN , COLLINS](#)

Portland Press Herald - NewsBank - Nov 24, 1996

Excerpt:

"Topping the political news: Inquiring minds have asked, so inquiring minds shall know: Who footed the bill to send retiring Sen. William Cohen and Sen.-elect Susan Collins to Malaysia last week? The answer: A private group in Washington called the Asia Pacific Policy Center."

See also:

[United States Senator Susan M. Collins :: About Senator Collins](#)

<http://collins.senate.gov/public/continue.cfm?>

FuseAction=AboutSenatorCollins.Biography

Excerpt:

"After working for 12 years on the Capitol Hill staff of Maine Senator William Cohen..."

FORMER STAFF MEMBERS FOLLOWING COHEN TO THE PENTAGON

Portland Press Herald - NewsBank - Dec 22, 1996

Excerpt:

"Assuming Cohen wins confirmation by the Senate, Bob Tyrer will serve as his chief of staff. The 39-year-old Tyrer has worked with Cohen for more than 20 years. A native of Ohio, he graduated from the University of Maine in 1987. Since 1989, he has served as Cohen's chief of staff in the Senate."

The Washington Post Delves into theCohen Group (William Cohen) in Five Page (Length Online) Article

Excerpt:

"Tyrer, who was Cohen's chief of staff at the Pentagon, added: "It does not strike us as illogical that Secretary Cohen and others at The Cohen Group would continue to be involved in their business careers in issues that they have worked hard on and felt strongly about during their public careers." Tyrer said the firm has been willing "to turn away work that might raise even the faintest ethical or reputational concern.""

G oogle News: Bob Tyrer Susan Collins William Cohen http://news.google.com/archivesearch?q=Bob+Tyrer+Susan+Collins+William+Cohen&btnG=Search+Archives&hl=en&ned=us&as_ldate=1995&as_hdate=2008

