

A Primary Election Primer

By Jill Goldthwait

When 42 percent of likely voters cannot name one of the 11 candidates in the gubernatorial primaries a month before the election, a civics lesson might be timely. Not for you, dear readers, but perhaps you could cut this out and stick

it under the nose of one of the 42 percent. We will start from the beginning and go slowly.

There is a primary election being held on June 8. It is the occasion where

any registered political party may nominate a candidate to run in the general election in November. Maine has three registered parties with "ballot status": Democrats, Republicans and Green Independents. Green candidates need the same number of signatures (2,000) to put a candidate on the primary ballot as do Democrats and Republicans, but a much smaller voter base means that is a far tougher assignment for Greens. This year, Green candidate Lynne Williams failed in her attempt to qualify for the ballot, so only the Democrats and Republicans have primaries. The Republi-

cans have seven candidates, the Democrats four.

Let us not forget that there are many Maine voters who are not enrolled in any political party. Officially designated "unenrolled," these voters are usually referred to as "independents." In fact, more registered voters are independents (38 percent) than Democrats (31 percent) or Republicans (28 percent). There are no primaries for unenrolled candidates. Anyone who can qualify for the general election ballot may do so.

This means that candidates for the November 2010 general election will include one Republican and one Democrat (the winners of their respective primaries), the nine independents who qualified and remain in the race, and one Democrat who is now a write-in candidate. That is a field of 12, a lot of candidates but nothing like the 29 that have been in the race at one time or another.

Though one wants to treat all qualified candidates with due respect, the truth is that, of the 12 who will be slated for the general election, only the most generous of analysts could possibly make a case for there being more than three serious contenders. They would be

the nominated Democrat and Republican and independent candidate Eliot Cutler. Pay attention to the newspapers after the primary and memorize the winners' names in the event you are polled.

Now — who can vote? You must be a U.S. citizen, live in Maine and be 18 years old by the date of the November election. To vote for a party nominee you must be enrolled in that party. You can register to vote right up to (and including) election day. Likewise, if you are registered "unenrolled" and want to designate a party affiliation. If you want to switch from one party to another, you'd better hurry. You need to do so by Monday, May 24. See the Maine Voter Guide at maine.gov for more details.

The gubernatorial primaries are not the only items on the June ballot. The entire state legislature is elected every two years, and this year is one of them. All party candidates for the state Senate and House of Representatives will be on the primary ballot. Many have no opposition, but a number of primary races will be contested.

Here in Hancock County, Senate District 28 covers most of the territory.

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mselves or obtain from human beings. What be healed of cancer or find that they are not find them sinful and have a genetically based ay engraved by natural

unconstitutional. Recent studies also reveal that the young people in our nation are moving rapidly away from formalized religion and its structured myths and artificiality to a more reasonable form of spirituality. Perhaps we will see some positive change.

Richard E. Faust
Surry

Banking Reform Needed

well as others created in order to bundle them mortgages and slice the " which they then paid as "triple A" so they ment grade securities. is, for an investment security from one's bro- immediately sell it at vailing, to investors or funds, who anticipated of housing and hous- and other investment price of these securities, sub-prime mortgages, precipitously because ut these mortgages had an income to sustain the security reached a the investment banker rrowed security at the ce. These "short sales" l by Congress, but the ending a million dollars

a day lobbying our legislators not to make short selling illegal. Derivatives such as credit default swaps are especially disgusting because mortgage agencies were encouraged to use aggressive sales techniques to persuade low-income people to buy sub-prime mortgages,

Minority families were especially targeted. The whole idea was (and still is) to create mortgages that would default, making the securities made out of these mortgages fall to a lovely, low price. The investment banking industry, including, but not limited to Goldman Sachs, has made huge profits by this clever, but sleazy scheme. If we want to avoid another recession and taxpayer bailout, we should persuade our senators and representatives to vote for the current banking-reform bill, but insist on the reinstatement of the Glass-Steagall Act, too. It seems to me that the taxpaying public and ordinary average-income and low-income people are being taken advantage of constantly, and I include the credit card industry in these schemes too.

Nancy Kandutsch
Surry

world.

6. The Tea Party is
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receiving Social Secur

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Sen. Dennis Damon is term-limited and there are four party candidates for the seat: two Democrats, a Republican and the aforementioned Green Independent, Lynne Williams, who, having failed to qualify for the gubernatorial election, is getting into the Senate race. The contested Senate primary is between Democrats Jim Schatz, the current representative from Blue Hill, and Lawrence (Skip) Greenlaw, a former legislator and the pointy end of the spear for last year's attempt to repeal Maine's school consolidation law. Republican Brian Langley is leaving his House seat to run for the Senate, with no primary opposition.

Senate District 31 also covers a portion of Hancock County up Bucksport way. The primaries there are uncontested.

House District 20 (Dedham) has two Republicans competing for the chance to unseat incumbent Ben Marriner of Eddington. House District 34 (eastern Hancock County from Lamaine to Gouldsboro) has two Republicans vying for a general election slot against incumbent Rep. Rob Eaton.

House District 37, the seat being vacated by Blue Hill's Jim Schatz, has both a Democratic and a Republican primary. The House District 38 seat being vacated by Rep. Langley has a Republican primary that pits a soon-to-be-former District Attorney Mike Povich against Matt Boucher. The winner of that contest will run against a novice politician but no stranger to running, Democrat Louie Luchini. In House District 40 (Bucksport), three-term Rep. Kim Rosen is being challenged for the Republican nomination. Other primaries in the county are uncontested.

A People's Veto also will appear on the June 8 ballot asking if Maine voters want to "reject the new law that lowers Maine's income tax and replaces that revenue by making changes to the sales tax." And rounding out the ballot will be four bond issues totaling \$108.3 million, along with whatever local issues may be coming to your neck of the woods. Don't try to call yourself a revolutionary if you don't know all this.

State of Maine