

WHY ARE THESE PEOPLE SMILING?



A month ago I visited Governor's Restaurant in Lewiston for a Board of Directors Meeting of Maine Taxpayers United. If you ever go there, you will see a wall displaying the official portraits of all our state's governors.

Look closely and you won't see a single smile for 120 years. William King doesn't smile. Neither does Joshua Chamberlain. Nor Percy Baxter. Then in the 1950s the smiles begin, getting broader and broader until we reach our present incumbent, displaying a slash of dental enamel resembling the White Cliffs

of Dover.

Check the currency in your wallet – If Governor Grin has left you any – and see for yourself. Not a smile to be seen on the face of a single founding father. Then think of Jimmy Carter, a man with a grin as stiff and fixed as cheerful village idiot. There's a lesson here.

It's easy to understand why incumbent congressmen are always smiling. They get re-elected about 98% of the time, pull down salaries of \$165,000 a year, are allowed to use \$75,000 of their staff salaries for their official expense accounts, get a minimum travel allowance of \$9,500 per year and are legally entitled to a pension of more than \$50,000 after five years service. No reason is this to smile back at them.

Now, I'm not making an argument against smiling in general, but I am arguing that smiles on the faces of politicians are as threatening as those on the faces of salesmen trying to sell you a gilded widgeit, shares in the Kennebec Bridge or insurance against UFO abduction.

With the public's approval of Congress hanging between 11% and 22%, it would be more appropriate if they wore expressions of anxiety or outright fear.

If the voters knock off a hack like Mike Michaud from time to time just on general principles, the survivors would smile a lot less. This would be a good thing.

Paid for and authorized by Professor John Frary
355 Red Schoolhouse Rd., Farmington, ME 04938
207-778-6685 • email: jfrary8070@aol.com

Professor John Frary

www.fraryforcongress.com