



## MPBN's Susan Sharon *Deputy News Director*

**Experience touched base with Susan Sharon, MPBN's Deputy News Director and one of the driving forces behind the MPBN news team.**

***Was there some point in time when you set your sights on a career in journalism? Was there some triggering event or experience?***

I always loved to write, and I knew from a young age that I would be a writer of some kind. We didn't have a student newspaper in high school so I took public speaking instead. My teacher encouraged me to consider broadcast journalism as a college major. At about the same time, a couple of my friends and I were asked to discuss teenagers' attitudes about sex on a radio talk show. It was a lively discussion, and I realized how much I wanted to be figuring out the questions instead of the answers. Once I got to college, I was forever hooked.

***Do you recall the first story that you covered as the lead reporter? Looking back, would you cover that story the same way today?***

I recall being assigned to cover a congressional race in which there were several primary candidates. I was determined not to miss anything, to do some in-depth profiles, delve into the candidates' differences and prove myself on the political beat. Then I got scooped by a newspaper columnist who learned that one of the candidates had been charged with domestic violence. When I called the candidate to confirm everything, I asked if he had anything else on his record. He reluctantly told me he'd been convicted for manslaughter in another state. That was the end of his race and a huge lesson for me about the need for background checks.

***You've worked as a reporter in different parts of the country. Is news the same everywhere?***

Challenges facing state and local government are similar. There never seems to be enough money. But other issues are regional. Crime is worse in other places. Environmental challenges are a symptom of geography and population pressures. And the people who make the news, the personalities and political leaders are certainly different. I do find when I travel to other parts of the country that there is more corruption than there is here in Maine.

***What news stories appeal most to Susan Sharon? What issues are you passionate about?***

The ones that haven't yet been told are the stories that most appeal to me. I'm passionate about issues that get overlooked.

***What do you feel distinguishes a good journalist from a great journalist?***

Courage. Persistence. Wits.

***How do you feel news carried on MPBN radio differs from news heard elsewhere on the dial?***

It's accessible almost everywhere you travel in the state. And in terms of radio news, we are extremely fortunate to have a local, half-hour, weekday news magazine show, **Maine Things Considered**. In addition, the stories you hear on **Morning Edition**, **Midday**, **Maine Calling** and **Maine Things Considered** tend to be more in-depth than most other radio news stories you hear on the dial. Sometimes, when I listen to our news and public affairs programs, I feel like my brain just opened another filing cabinet.

***Thank you Susan!***