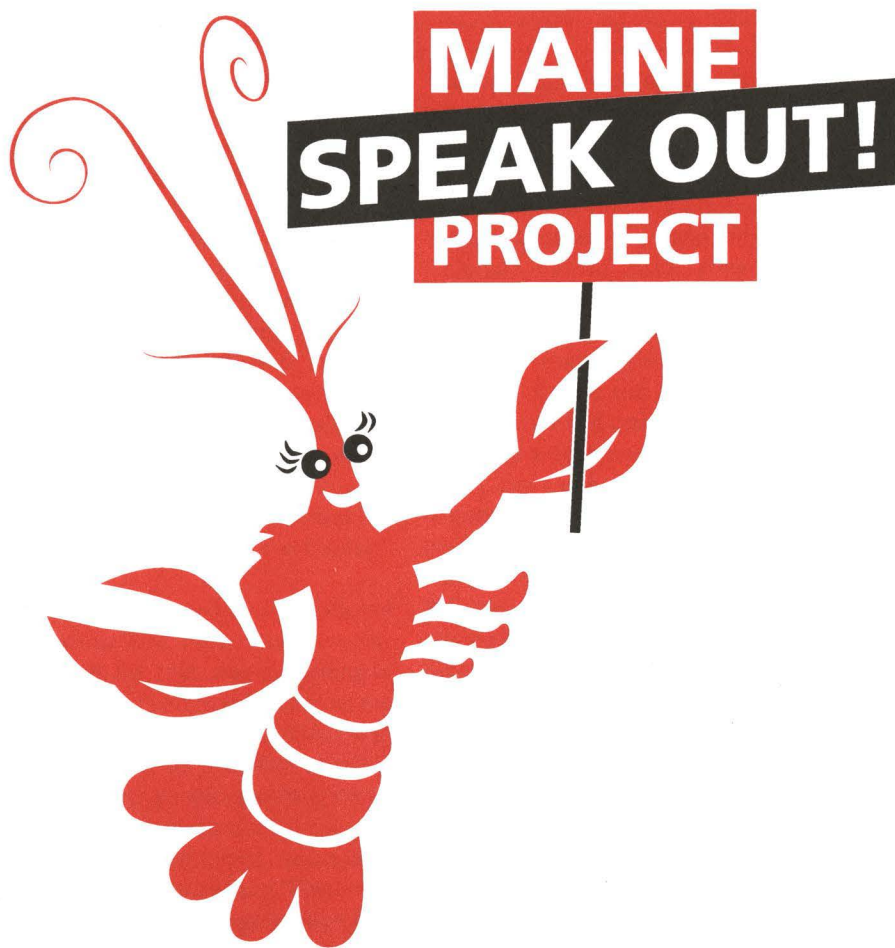


MSOP NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1998



Box 15303, Portland, ME 04112-5303 • 207-879-0480 • MSOPProject@aol.com

The mission of the Maine Speakout Project is to promote respect and understanding among persons of differing sexual orientations. To accomplish this mission, MSOP trains and empowers volunteers to share their personal experiences and perspectives with individuals and community groups.

WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE?

"Creating Change Conference: My View"

Gerry Clement, Falmouth, Cumberland County

"Think Up" I muttered as our plane roared into the Portland sky, its nose pointed toward Pittsburgh and the eleventh annual "Creating Change" conference. The drama of any plane roaring into any sky (or dropping out of it, for that matter) always gets me; I was psyched! However, Jonathan Lee, on my left, was reading (calmly). Tom Antonik, across the aisle on my right, was sleeping (apparently). And Louise Tate and Eilean Mackenzie, down the row, were chatting, seemingly oblivious to the heady mix of plane, conference, and Speakout workshops to come. "I am so up for this," I thought. "**Speakout** and now **America Speaks Out**. Creating change. You betcha!"

The conference, convened by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force from November 11th through the 15th, was happening in the Westin William Penn Hotel, and from the moment we checked in, I loved it. There was the huge lobby with its excellent chatting spots, drinking spots, people-watching spots. There were a zillion conference rooms with helpful people whisking tables, mikes, and flip charts in and out upon request. There was the banquet table laden with great food just outside our conference room door (even though we eventually discovered that it was designated for someones other than us).

Day one, Thursday, was our big day. Speakout presented its institute, "Stand Up! Speak Out!...and Listen." After Jonathan's introduction, Louise, Eilean, Tom and I put our twenty some enrollees through a typical, day-long Speakout training, complete with ner-

vousness tips, demo speakouts by Tom and me, the "how-tos" of creating and presenting a story, effective question answering, and more. The people who came to our session were very diverse - a minister, a social worker, a student . . . and from all over - Colorado, Florida, Texas, New Jersey, New York . . . Their participation was vigorous, their stories, fascinating, and their enthusiasm, while ample at the start, seemed to grow and grow. By the end of the day, the five of us felt that we had really created some change and made a difference, perhaps now nationally. I can share with you that one of my memorable moments came at the end when one man (boy, to me!) said, "I wish my mom was as COOL as Gerry." I could have hugged that thought to me forever, if Jonathan (and others) hadn't muttered "Cool, Cool," every time I came near them.

Friday was a day when we could attend other workshops before our own on Saturday. With twenty-two or so choices for each of five sessions, it wasn't easy to focus in on one. In my usual mental wobble, I decided to tag along with Eilean and Louise to an "impressionistic film about butches, butchness and butch as a state of being." Being unaware of the "butch vs fem" concept, it was all news and an eye opener to me, but they assured me that it was wonderful, and I really did enjoy it. Next, I picked up "Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics: How to Fight Back," basically how to respond to and use statistics in fighting the Right. Well done; kinda boring. "All grist for the mill," I thought. But then - "Exposing the 'Ex-gay'

Movement: What Do They Want?" Gripping. Informative. Presented by two women who had researched and infiltrated "ex-gay" organizations and the Christian Right. Very powerful.

Saturday brought two Speakout workshops: "Working with Local Media," which Jonathan presented with Cathy Renna from GLAAD, and "How to Organize and Sustain a Statewide Speakout Project," presented by Jonathan and Eilean, with some participation by the rest of us.

For the first workshop, Jonathan described and illustrated from a jam packed press kit Speakout's successful work with local media. Then Cathy followed with a nuts-and-bolts discussion of working with the media - how, where, and when to do it. All in all, a really fascinating discussion, inspiring me (and I'm sure others) to project mentally, "I could write that," "Why not call about...?"

Our final workshop saw the return of several people from our Thursday institute, as well as a few new ones. Of course, this was the core of our conference attendance: promoting the formation of grassroots, statewide

chapters in other states. Tom and I did our demo speakouts, Eilean described how she started our Washington County chapter, and Jonathan discussed the why, the who, the what of starting and sustaining chapters in other states, "America Speaks Out!" Some were interested in incorporating our ideas into existing organizations, others were enthusiastic and eager to start chapters in their own states. By the end of the session (and of the conference), we were looking forward to possible future trainings in Arizona, Florida, and Georgia! Not bad for an initial attempt!

"And not bad for you, Cool Mom," I thought, as we winged our way back to Maine. "You've been to a great sexual minorities conference for 2,000 people, you can now distinguish butch from fem, you can trounce M.D. Harmon in a discussion of "ex-gay" ministries any old time, you've toasted the conference (with a margarita) at its conclusion with four friends (the greatest!). But best of all, you've helped to introduce Speakout to the rest of the country. As it says in our history, "...if you simply tell your story, a miracle will happen. You will change the world."

MSOP COUNTY COORDINATORS

For information on MSOP activities in your county, please contact one of the county coordinators listed below or the MSOP office @879-0480 / MSOPProject@aol.com.

Androscoggin - Andie Locke @998-2890 / alocke@pivot.net

Arroostook - Cathy Bohls @768-3056 / cbohls@acap-me.org.

Cumberland - MSOP office

Franklin - Geoff Miller @778-7488 / gmiller@maine.maine.edu

Hancock - Tamara Duff @667-5621

Kennebec - MSOP office

Knox - Lucie Bauer @236-4734 / lbak@mint.net

Oxford - Paul Alpert @925-1034 / pralpert@landmarknet.net

Penobscot - Fern Stearns @827-3609 / Stearns@maine.maine.edu

Piscataquis - Cindy Liefner @564-0852 / cml@kynd.net

Waldo - Debbie Hockensmith @338-6677

Washington - Eilean Mackenzie @733-5537 / eilean@juno.com

York - Rosemary Guptill @324-4071

Tom Cathcart, Portland, Cumberland County

My work toward promoting inclusivity in our church (Immanuel Baptist) a few years back was driven by two passions. The first was the civil rights/human rights issue: the church was one more institution that had discriminated against gay men and lesbians. But the second, and probably the stronger, was my fury at the distortion of the gospel portrait of Jesus by the Christian right. Martin Luther King used to say that the black civil rights struggle was needed to save the souls of white men and women as much as to liberate black men and women, and I felt that way about the largely heterosexual church. As long as it followed a narrow-minded distortion of Jesus, it would never experience the love and inclusivity and acceptance of the real Jesus.

So, when Jonathan gave me a book called "Stealing Jesus: How Fundamentalism Betrays Christianity" and proposed a conference called Reclaiming Our Faith, he struck a nerve. The conference did not disappoint. Sally Lowe Whitehead spoke movingly of her loving marriage to a gay man and her fundamentalist church's distorted attempt to "save" them. I felt at home among the scores of Christians, Jews, Buddhists, agnostics, atheists, and pagans gathered in Lewiston on September 19th to reclaim their faith in love as the ultimate power and principle in the world. It mattered little to the crowd that Bruce Bawer, the author of "Stealing Jesus," was kept away by illness. We were happy to be there, saying no to those who would have us believe that the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus is a homophobe.

Fern Stearns, Milford, Penobscot County

At Somesville on September 20th, I told basically the same story as I have told at other Speakouts about my gradual conversion from being barely tolerant to being a MSOP volunteer.

The trigger for the conversion, which took years, was the coming out of my husband's and my youngest of four at age 25. Prior to his coming out, the thought had never even crossed my mind that one of my offspring might be gay. After all, we had "raised him right." My stunned response to his announcement was, "Well, umm, I'll keep loving you but I won't change my mind."

Fortunately the closet into which my husband and I then retreated had some books and a light, and the good news is that after months of thinking, reading, praying, and listening, I did change my mind. I now consider it symbolic that our son came out to us on a Winter Solstice day, a time when the world turns from increasing darkness toward more light. My story ends with "I once was blind, but now I see. Thanks be to God."

At one point while speaking at Somesville I mentioned that ever since I'd become a Speakout volunteer I'd been unable - until recently - to understand why anyone would want to listen to me; after all, I am a mere Johnny-Come-Lately compared to the many who've been supportive and affirming for years and years. But then just a week before the Somesville event the homily at my church in Old Town focused on the story about the lost sheep: people rejoice greatly when what once was lost gets found and the father of the prodigal son throws a big party when the son returns home.

So, I'm finally home, but aware that there is still room for improvement even when one is home.

At St. James Episcopal Church in Bangor, Jim Day and I, both members of the church, talked to the leadership group of some ten people. (Jim is not a trained MSOP speaker but the group requested that he and I be the speakers.) Jim, who only recently came out publicly, told about what it was like growing up gay in Old Town and about a sudden feel-

ing of fear that came over him one day last summer while walking across a bridge in Monmouth where groups of teenagers had gathered.

Following the Somesville event, my husband Bill and I were invited to speak at a pre-Sunday service adult forum at the Hammond St. Congregational Church in Bangor. Dan Williams attended the forum, and largely as a result of it he later attended a Speakers Training and is now an official MSOP speaker.

George Dugovic, Alfred, York County

"Reclaiming Our Faith" in Somesville spoke to us deeply and in a variety of formats: distinguished speakers including Sally Lowe Whitehead and sociologist Alan Wolfe; small group break-out sessions; individual stories. Through these we each learned new facts, but more significantly, we deepened our commitment to human rights within our faith.

As one of the story-tellers, my expectation was different than before my previous tellings. This time, I expected unconditional support and acceptance. I experienced no less. Previously, I expected hostility, closed minds and barbed questions. I haven't experienced those challenges before in talks. Not expecting what I fear made it a completely pleasant happening. Sometimes I create drama within myself. This was more fun!

Chris Hurtubise, Portland, Cumberland County

Marguerite asked me, all 41 years, to be on a TEEN radio talk show. Right! At least the audience has no idea how old I am! Frank, the other guest, was already there when I arrived. Our hosts were running around like, well, kids on too much Mellow Yellow. When show-time arrived the host proved to be very hospitable and mature, regardless of how many colors were in one host's hair. Talking on the radio was easier in some respects, such as the feeling that your talking one-on-one

and not to some large group with a gazillion eyeballs staring at you.

The talk was hosted on the eve of last November's election. Timing was perfect as the topic was "homophobia." The host asked Frank and I a lot of good questions, though at times they seemed lost as to what was next. Frank and I each told a bit about ourselves and we fielded the questions quite easily, and provided different perspectives on the specific topic being discussed. After intermission, the talk revolved mostly around the flier inserted into the Portland Press Herald, "The Gay Agenda." From the questions asked, it was easy to see how teens are vulnerable to such garbage, as teens seem to have less experience recognizing the hate that such rags are perpetuating and that just because something is in print doesn't make it fact.

The number of calls we received were few but good. The fact that it was a teen talk show is important. I feel that teens are a good group to focus on, so they have more information about homosexuals than just what they read or see on television.

Dee Boughner, Addison, Washington County: "Then and Now"

My story began with a discussion of what life was like for gays and lesbians in the '50s, '60s and '70s and the ways things have and have not changed for the homosexual community in the '90s. When I first came out, the word "gay" was not even spoken. Things like that were whispered about but never talked about openly. It was almost implied that if you talked about it you were "queer," the word most often used at that time. Things were so closeted that in a class of 70 health and physical education majors none of us knew anyone else was gay even though about one third of us were. It was not until we graduated that we began to run into one another at various events. Can you imagine the fun we might have had?

Once I began to teach, I was very careful not to let anyone know that I was gay. I went out of my way to be as circumspect as possible and to appear as feminine as possible. It was drummed into all PE majors to dress and act a certain way. We weren't allowed to wear slacks on front campus, had to wear skirts to class, little round collar blouses, jewelry, etc. After I had taught a few years, I met my current partner of almost 29 years when she applied for a job in a school where I was the Department Chair. She was hired, of course, and we taught in the same department for eighteen years. Although we lived together, attended all school functions together, etc., we were the epitome of the present day military policy of "don't ask, don't tell." If we had to chaperone a school dance, we got two gay guys who were good friends of ours to go with us. When there were faculty parties, and we even had a lot of them at our house, we participated in the sexist jokes, danced with the guys, etc. I don't think we were fooling anyone, but it seemed to make things more acceptable for everyone. If we had been open - believe me, we would have been long gone!

The major problem with that scenario is that by living in that kind of hypocrisy we must have made it very confusing to the children we were teaching who were having problems with their own sexual identity. Instead of being a good positive gay role models for them, we were chameleons. We were still good role models (at least I think so), but not totally honest ones. Some of those kids were acting out in all sorts of ways in an attempt to find out who they were and to get someone to talk to them about it. Some ex-

perimented with drugs, drank, were sexually promiscuous, or were serious discipline problems. We couldn't talk to them - it just wasn't possible. It is the one and only thing I regret about the years I taught.

And what is it like today? Well, I'm retired, out of the workplace and the world is a different place, it's true. We have come a long way. You can hardly pick up the newspaper, listen to the news, watch a TV show or a movie that doesn't have at least one gay character. And I do feel free to do things like attend a speakout, a civil rights rally, or a gay pride parade, etc. But would I feel any freer to be myself if I were teaching today? Hardly. Would I talk to a student who I knew was having problems with their sexual identity? I doubt it. You see, I would be just as vulnerable in the workplace as I ever was and in all probability, I would be fired or certainly not hired if it were known that I was gay.

And teaching isn't the only place that is true. Several years ago, I was the Public Relations officer for a local bank. Accordingly, I dressed to the nines in business suits, heels, jewelry, etc. I hated it but it was part and parcel of the job. I can tell you that I certainly didn't put pictures of my partner on my desk, although I did put pictures of my dogs there. And any bank functions like picnics, dinners, etc. I attended alone. I am very certain that if it were known that the Public Relations officer was a lesbian - Oh my God! what a commotion that would have caused in the good old boy network. I am sure I would have been fired on the spot. Why a lesbian couldn't develop just as good a promotional ad, or conduct a community liai-

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GOOD VOLUNTEERS TO KEEP IT OPEN ON SATURDAYS
AND WEEKDAY EVENINGS.
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son campaign, I couldn't tell you but I know that my job would have been in jeopardy and I would have had no legal recourse if I had been fired.

In addition to the job situation, my partner and I face the same legal issues confronted by all gays. If one of us was seriously ill and in critical care, it is conceivable that we would not be allowed in to see the other because we are not legally "family." We have tried to circumvent that by giving one another power of attorney, but there are hospitals that will not honor that and would deny entry or certainly decision making in regard to care. I was once even denied the opportunity to name my partner as my beneficiary on a life insurance policy because it had to be a family member. Also, if we did not have a will specifying that everything we own is to go to the other, it is conceivable that 'family' could throw the remaining partner out of the home which we built together and have lived in for over thirteen years.

So are we better off today? Yes and No! Do we need legal assurance to be guaranteed the same rights everyone else enjoys? Yes! We don't need or want special rights, but as Attorney General Andrew Ketterer put it, special intervention in the law is needed to ensure us the same rights everyone else enjoys under the law.

Cindy Lieffer, Dover-Foxcroft, Piscataquis County

Piscataquis County is finally forming a MSOP chapter! In this part of the state, it has been difficult to generate a lot of enthusiasm for the project but a small and growing number of gay and lesbian people, parents, and other allies have expressed interest in taking the speaker training, finding speaking engagements, and participating in speakouts.

On October 24, our first speaker training was held at the UU church in Sangerville, and

was attended by five residents of Piscataquis County along with three people from Penobscot County. Participants ranged in age from their teens to their eighties and the day was informative, entertaining, and memorable. The trainers were very skilled at helping us choose and develop our stories. Since then, a number of other people in the area have been interested in taking the training, and we are hoping to hold another one in January or February.

Although we haven't held any speakouts here yet, we have tentative invitations to the Penquis Region Domestic Violence Task Force meeting in the spring and one of the Mayo Regional Hospital monthly medical staff meetings. Our current goals include developing a larger core group of trained speakers by early spring, and soliciting more invitations so that we can begin doing speakouts as soon as possible. If you know anyone in our county who wants to be involved in MSOP, please contact me at 564-0852 or Ron Hersom at 941-0969.

Dick Harrison, New Sweden, Aroostook County

I participated in a Speakout at the University of Maine at the Presque Isle campus. It was billed as part of a slide presentation program of photos from the early 20th century - gay people from the Philadelphia area who summered in Maine. About 15 people attended. Vance Muse, the slide presenter, was first. I enjoyed that very much. Then Donald and I told our stories.

The difference between this Speakout and others that I've participated in was that the discussion seemed to focus not on our presentation but on other issues. We really didn't field questions about being gay in Aroostook County, but talked more about violence (This was shortly after Matthew Shepherd's murder). I think the focus also became broader in scope due to the slide presentation. Though it may tend to draw more people when add-

ing a second part to the Speakout presentation, I think it's better that we keep our talks as originally designed and focused.

Debbie Hockensmith & Carol Good, Belfast, Waldo County

On Saturday, October 31, the Maine Speakout Project sponsored its first "Speak Out Training" in Waldo County. Twenty-two people attended the day-long session at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Belfast. Participants came from near and far to engage in the 7-hour training program. By day's end, all agreed that it was a day well spent! In fact, the group bonded so well that a reunion brunch is planned for January 16, 1999, in Belfast!

While several of the attendees were from Belfast and the surrounding area, many traveled from other communities — including Bangor, Bucksport, Camden, Deer Isle, Blue Hill, Orrington and Steuben. In addition to the geographic diversity, the attendees represented a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and motivations. Facilitators Sharon Pree and Lisa Kushner remarked that the three family groups participating were an interesting difference from previous trainings with which they had been involved.

It was rewarding to see the stories develop and the individuals' commitment to speaking out grow as the day progressed. One participant said "After being involved in this training, I am convinced that the 'Speak Out' approach — that of respectful, non-confrontational dialogue where people share their personal stories — is definitely the most effective means to dispelling the stereotypes, myths, and prejudice toward gay, lesbian, and bisexual people."

Several of the participants are willing to coordinate a Waldo County chapter and further activity in our area is expected. We are

grateful to Speakout, the trainers, and to St. Margaret's for a valuable experience.

Michel Brown, Gray, Cumberland County

My life is a faded, frayed sofa. I know the history of every stain... the lumps, no longer a surprise, are quite avoidable, the flowered upholstery...what was I thinking? And sitting beside me, close enough to feel its heat, is my secret. It is steeped deep within me, its dark, rich color vibrating its presence.

I enter the room with its neon glow, college students and familiar classroom desks. They are all sitting in place like paper dolls. I look into their eyes to breathe stories into them...and know that I'm not even a paper doll to them. I'm a chapter in a book, an article in a magazine.

My Speakout partner and I tell our stories and then we ask if there are any questions. They never break from their classroom demeanor... their questions are measured and pedestrian. The neon hum presses down on all of us as they blink at the sight of a soft, round-edged sofa appearing in front of them as if from nowhere. Then it's over...nothing more to say, to understand.

As I get into my car, wondering what I have spent 40 some years being afraid of, I feel I must do this again and again and again. Like a worker ant who has placed her first brick into a foundation, I want to scurry back with another and place it in this magnificent structure. What will it look like when it's done? I don't know: it is far too big for my eyes to take in!

Andie Locke, Poland, Androscoggin County

On Wednesday, September 9, Lew Alessio and I attended a Speakout for the court-appointed advocates for children. Only one person in addition to the host/head of the group attended. She speculated on the poor

turnout, wondering if it was the subject being discussed that day. At any rate, they were friendly and seemed eager so we proceeded with our stories. They listened carefully, obviously trying to understand what we were saying. Later, by their questions, we could tell they didn't always "get it" but I certainly gave them credit for trying.

Do you ever, after a Speakout wish you'd answered their questions differently or worded something differently? I found myself driving home with a lot of these "should haves" in my mind. Then I decided not to berate myself but to remember that the ones who showed up were the ones that needed to be there, perhaps the only ones that were ready to hear us from that particular group. And that somehow, with every Speakout we participate in, we really are slowly changing the world we live in. Who knows what seeds were planted that day? How, perhaps, a questioning young person will be helped? I'm grateful I was there.

Mary Hillas, Falmouth, Cumberland County:

"Reclaiming Our Faith" Conferences
Enhearten Participants

Maine Speakout Project and the Maine Council of Churches sponsored two conferences in late September for Lesbians, Gays

and their friends, families, and allies. The focus was on a Christianity that is inclusive and affirming, in sharp contrast to the Christianity of the Christian Civic League of Maine and the Maine chapter of the Christian Coalition, the groups that were prime players in last winter's turndown of basic civil rights for all of us.

Located in Lewiston and Somesville, the conferences attracted 160 participants who had the opportunity to hear Dr. Alan Wolfe, visiting professor, Boston University School of Theology, and Sally Lowe Whitehead, author of "The Truth Shall Set You Free: A Family's Passage from Fundamentalism to a New Understanding of Faith, Love and Sexual Identity." Sally Whitehead gripped the audience with her personal account of learning, after years of marriage and six children, that her husband was gay. The journey to healing for the family meant leaving their fundamentalist church where both she and her husband experienced spiritual abuse.

The speakers answered questions, and MSOP members Paul Alpert, Marcia Berman, Tom Cathcart, and Gerry Clement told their stories. Seated at round tables there was much sharing and learning between participants in a space that felt safe and nurturing — just what MSOP does well.



AMERICA SPEAKS OUT!

Maine Speakout has just launched an initiative to encourage the creation of statewide Speakout Projects in other states. Called **America Speaks Out**, this project will provide initial training and technical support to help create a network of self-supporting projects based on the model we're still developing in Maine.

We are excited about helping to seed Speakout Projects in other states because we are convinced that our approach can make a significant contribution towards reducing prejudice and discrimination. With 1999 trainings likely in Tucson, Atlanta, and Florida, we look forward to the challenges of helping others to organize sustainable statewide speakout projects.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



As you can read for yourself in the assorted speakers' reports in this newsletter, MSOP volunteers continue speaking out — and listening, too — in a wide variety of venues throughout the state. A few recent highlights are summarized below:

Reclaiming Our Faith

We held two lively conferences in Lewiston and Somesville this past September: Sally Lowe Whitehead from Atlanta spoke movingly of her personal experiences as a former fundamentalist who learned that her husband was gay many years into their marriage. Alan Wolfe shared his sociological findings about the persistently uncomfortable feelings shared by many middle-class Americans towards gay people; and the Maine Council of Churches, led by its executive director Tom Ewell, helped create a supportive atmosphere in which individuals felt comfortable sharing their personal experiences as persons of faith. Special thanks to St. Mary's Episcopal Church of Falmouth and the Open Society Institute/George Soros Fund for substantially underwriting the **Reclaiming Our Faith** events and to Rev. David and Dottie Kay Stillman of the Somesville Union Meeting House for hosting us.

Darthe Jennings Sings Out in Blue Hill

On Sunday, September 20 at the Blue Hill Farm Country Inn, Darthe Jennings from Columbia Falls, Washington County, charmed an enthusiastic group of about forty people with a performance of her songs. Sponsored by novelist Robert Taylor (author of *The Innocent*, which we put at the top of our "must-read" list) and friends, the event brought together individuals who seemed ready to support and participate in Speakout activities in the Blue Hill area. Special thanks to innkeepers Marcia & Jim Schatz for be-

ing fine hosts in a lovely setting. (For information about the Inn, call 374-5126).

Darthe Jennings has received such enthusiastic responses from audiences in Blue Hill, Portland, Bangor, Machias, and Augusta where she's performed at Speakout events, that we've decided to record her on CD on the *Speakout* label as soon as we can raise \$3,000 to cover production costs. On January 23, 1999 at the UU Church in Bangor, Darthe will present a concert to raise money for the CD. Please join us if you can — or send a contribution to MSOP/Darthe's CD.

George Mitchell Speaks Out in Northeast Harbor

We were very pleased to have former Senator George Mitchell as our guest speaker at a fundraising reception at a private home in Northeast Harbor in August. He was eloquent and unequivocal in his support for MSOP and we were honored by his words. Thanks to Barbara Rosenthal, Ira Levy, Stan Gurell, Tom Coxe, and Richard Estes for sponsoring this important event.

Veterans Speak Out in Bangor

On Saturday, November 7 in Bangor, three gay veterans, John Buie, Robert Taylor, and Paul Jordan, spoke of the injustices they witnessed and that continue today as the US military services target gay and lesbian members for dismissal based solely upon the fact that theirs is a minority sexual orientation. MSOP will be sponsoring Veterans Speakouts in other towns in the coming

months. We encourage both gay and non-gay veterans to participate.

Charlie Howard Memorial Library Dedication

On Monday, September 28, we dedicated the new Charlie Howard Memorial Library at our Portland office. The library remembers Charlie Howard, a young man who, because he was gay, was thrown over a bridge and drowned in Bangor in 1984 by a group of teenaged boys. Charlie's mother attended the dedication, which meant a great deal to all of us. Gerry Clement, Dr. Charlie Mitchell, Tom Ewell, Marguerite Roosen, and Kathleen Roberts each spoke briefly about Charlie Howard and our hopes for the library.

We've begun building the collection with donations of books on gay topics as well as a diverse and unsystematic mix of other good books; we're receiving daily and weekly papers from Maine and other places; and we're inviting community groups to use our space for gatherings and special programs. The library is seeking volunteers to keep it open

on Saturdays and one evening a week. We also need donations of good books. For more information, call the Speakout office.

New Speaker Trainings in Sangerville, Belfast, South Portland

In Dover-Foxcroft, Piscataquis County, **Cindy Lieffer** and in Belfast, Waldo County, **Debbie Hockensmith** successfully pulled together enough people to hold trainings on October 24 in Sangerville and October 31 in Belfast and begin MSOP chapters in their respective counties. And on November 21, we held our first South Portland training, broadening our reach in Cumberland County, the most populous part of the state.

Transitions

I was very sorry to learn that we'll soon be losing MSOP volunteer and board member **Tom Cathcart** to the Windy City of Chicago. He and his wife Eloise will be moving there in early 1999. Tom has been a wonderful presence in Speakout from our early days. We thank him for all he has given and wish he and Eloise the best of luck.

I am pleased, however, to announce that we have some fine new recruits to the MSOP Board of Directors. Joining us at our first Board meeting of 1999 will be **Donna Brunstad**, **Neva Cram**, and **Dr. Charlie Mitchell**. We welcome them and appreciate their willingness to serve. And congratulations **John Buie**, who succeeds **Mike Klaus** as President of the MSOP board.

Other very good news: **Ron Hersom** of Bangor has joined our staff as half-time coordinator for northern Maine. Ron, a principal organizer of the Civil Rights March & Rally held on October 10 in Bangor, will provide support to eight MSOP county chapters, particularly in the area of generating speaking engagements. Ron can be reached at 941-0969 or at RHersom@aol.com. Welcome, Ron!

NEWS FLASH!!!

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY
MSOP SPONSORS
"THIRD TUESDAY"
SPEAKER DEVELOPMENT
EVENINGS
BEGINNING ON JANUARY 19th!**

Join other MSOP volunteers from 5:30-7:30 for a three-part series to help you become a more effective and confident speaker. Improve your personal stories, practice the really difficult questions, speak extemporaneously on hot button topics. And... meet other volunteers, have some munchies, and use the Charlie Howard Library.

**First session: 1/19; second: 2/16;
third:3/16**

UPCOMING EVENTS



7 Dana Street
Portland, Maine 04101
Tel. (207) 879-0480

DECEMBER 17

- ➡ Thursday, 7 Dana Street, Portland, **Charlie Howard Memorial Library Holiday Reception**, 5-7 pm

JANUARY 4

- ➡ Monday, Kennebunk UU Church, **York County MSOP monthly meeting**, 5:30-7 pm

JANUARY 19

- ➡ Tuesday, Portland, Charlie Howard Library, **Third Tuesday Speaker Development Evening**, 5:30-7:30 pm

JANUARY 23

- ➡ Saturday, UU Church/Bangor, 120 Park Street, **Darthe Jennings Concert**, 7 pm

FEBRUARY 2

- ➡ Tuesday, MSOP office, **Speakout Board of Directors meeting**, 5:30-7 pm

FEBRUARY 16

- ➡ Tuesday, Portland, Charlie Howard Library, **Third Tuesday Speaker Development Evening**, 5:30-7:30 pm

FEBRUARY 27

- ➡ Saturday, York County (location tbd), **Speaker Training**, 9 am-4 pm

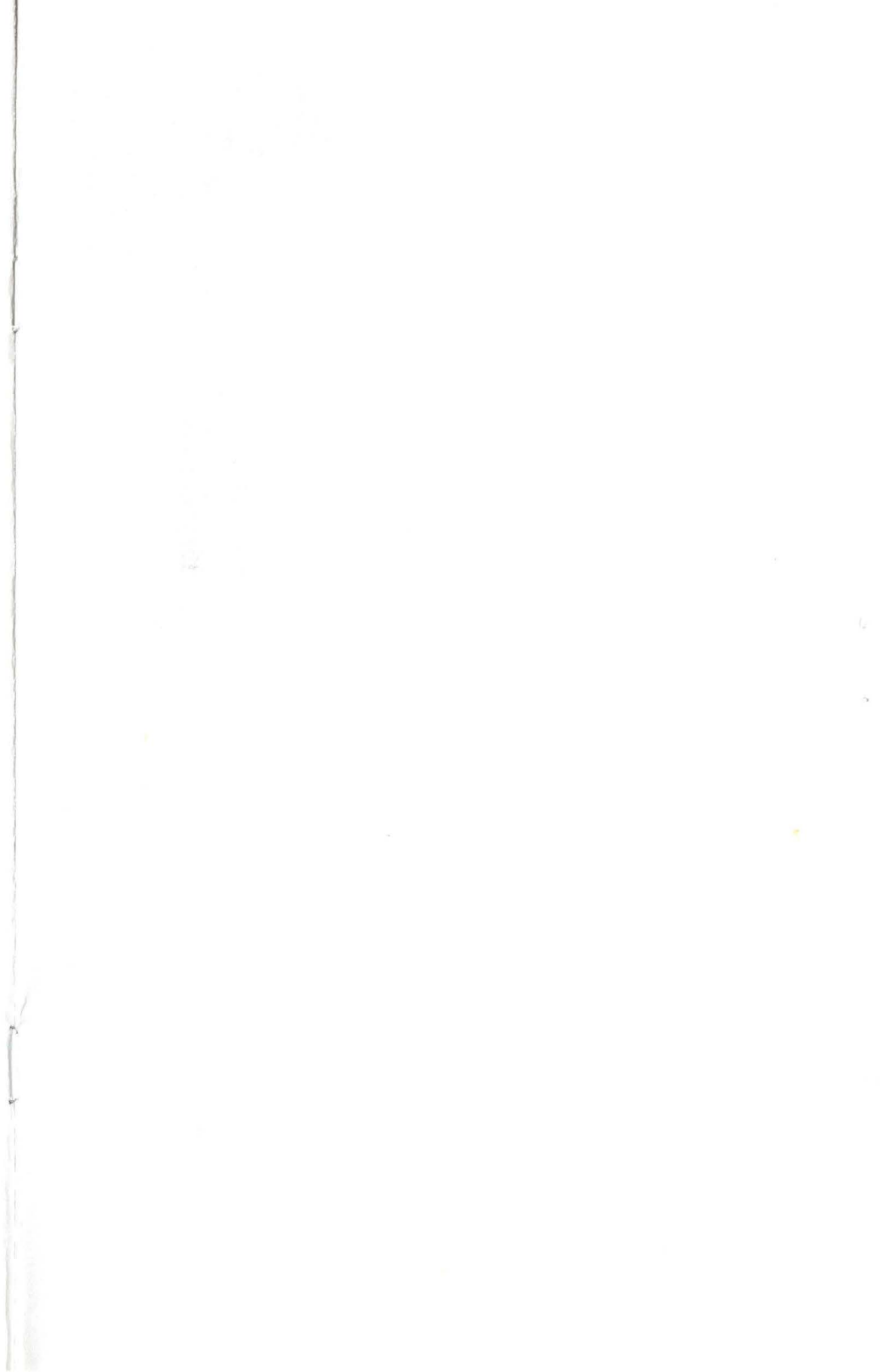
MARCH 16

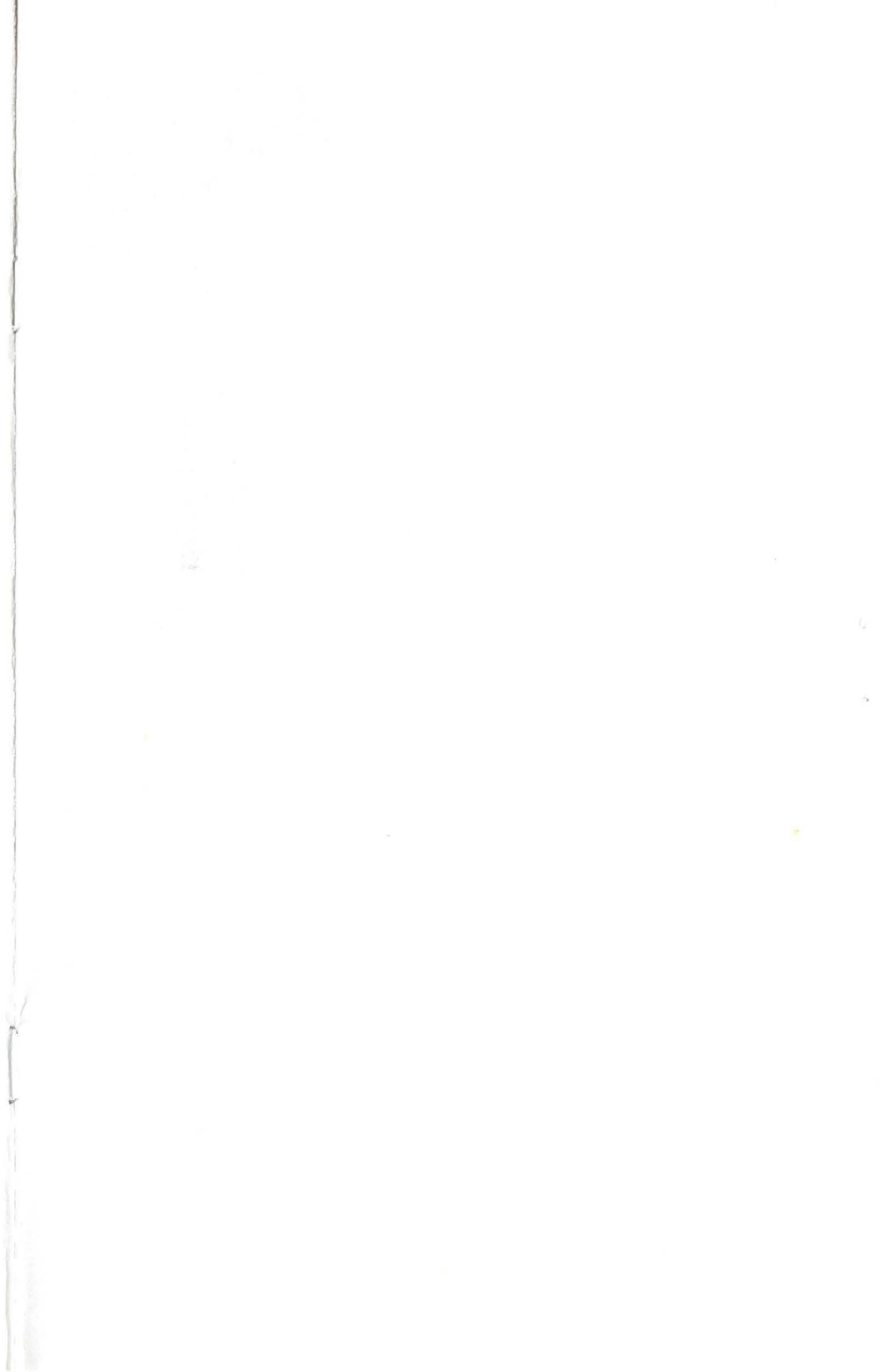
- ➡ Tuesday, Portland, Charlie Howard Library, **Third Tuesday Speaker Development Evening**, 5:30-7:30 pm

APRIL 13

- ➡ Tuesday, Portland, **Chamber Music Benefit Recital** at the Silverman's, 5:30 pm

*Don't miss these upcoming events...
tear this out and keep it near your calendar!*







Maine Speakout Project
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