**Reach Out**  
the newsletter of  
Maine Speakout Project

Summer 2005 • 343 Forest Avenue • Portland, ME 04101 • 207.874.1030 • tty 207.874.1043

Maine Speakout Project is a Program of Community Counseling Center

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**Out of Our Pantries**  
A cookbook to benefit Maine Speakout Project will be hitting bookshelves soon!

*The cookbook will feature over 150 diverse recipes and will be sold for $14.95. The cookbook will include appetizers, soups & salads, main dishes, vegetables & side dishes, desserts & accoutrements from the pantries of MSOP volunteers and supporters. Stay tuned for more info on buying a copy!*

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**Special thanks to all who have contributed to the Out of Our Pantries cookbook, including members of the Cookbook Sub-Committee, all those who submitted recipes and stories, and Abby Carter-Levin for designing the beautiful artwork throughout the entire cookbook.**

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**MSOP Seeking Donations for Out of Our Closets Yard Sale and eBay Auction**

As you go about your spring cleaning, be on the lookout for items that you may no longer need! MSOP is collecting items for its second annual Out of Our Closets yard sale, which will be held on Saturday, June 25, 2005 (rain date: June 26th) from 9:00am - 1:00pm in the Community Counseling Center parking lot (343 Forest Avenue). We're looking for everything from clothes to music to furniture.

MSOP is also seeking donations of unwanted valuables as part of its first ever Out of Our Closets eBay auction. Items such as antiques, cameras, cell phones, collectibles, computers, designer handbags, jewelry, luggage, musical instruments and sports equipment will be accepted and sold by NextWorth Solutions, a Wellesley, MA based consulting service specializing in helping nonprofits fundraise by converting in-kind donations into operating capital. These items will be auctioned off on eBay in the beginning of July with the proceeds going to MSOP.

*Items will be accepted at Maine Speakout Project's offices until June 24th. Call Pam at 207.874.1030 for more information. For a list of the types of items we are accepting for the eBay fundraiser, please visit www.mainepeakout.org/images/ItemsWeAccept.pdf. Or, contact NextWorth directly at 781.239.3994 or sales@nextworth.com.*

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**All Things Just Keep Getting Better**

As June and Pride Month begin amid the rain and fog, it is a little difficult to focus on the theme of the 2005 PRIDE Festivities for Southern Maine PRIDE. However, as I stop to consider the past year, the message rings true like never before. The past year has brought the passage of LD-1196 and a state registry for domestic partnerships in Maine. June marks the first anniversary of same-sex marriage in our neighbor Massachusetts, and the Connecticut legislature quietly passed a law that allows for same-sex domestic partnership independently of any activist action or advocacy. There is much to be excited about in New England, and Southern Maine PRIDE has planned an exciting week of events in celebration.

For the second year in a row Maine Speakout Project is hosting the kick-off event for Southern Maine PRIDE's activities. Walk With the Ones You Love, our annual event, held Sunday, June 12th from 3:00pm - 5:00pm, promotes the vision of a Maine where all families and couples are equally safe to walk in public. The Portland walk will start near the parking lot across from Hannaford's on Baxter Boulevard, and the event is being sponsored in part by 93.1 WMGX. Bring kids, dogs, grandparents and partners to celebrate and affirm all families in Maine.

Other walks will be held in Kennebunk on Sunday, June 5th at the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church of Kennebunk and in Bangor on Sunday, June 19th on Father's Day at Pickering Square at 12:30pm. These events are free and all are welcomed.

On Saturday June 25th, MSOP will hold its second annual Out of Our Closets fundraiser (rain date: June 26th). This event will feature clothes, books, furniture, knick-knacks and small appliances. All gently used and priced at a bargain. The event will be held from 9:00am - 1:00pm in the parking lot of Community Counseling Center at 343 Forest Avenue (across from Pier 1 Imports). A special feature of this year's sale is our newly added eBay component. Donated items of greater value, such as fine china, personal digital equipment, laptops, designer shoes and handbags will be available at an on-line eBay auction to benefit MSOP sometime in July. Be sure to bid early and bid often to capture these great deals.

Lastly, the Out of Our Pantries cookbook will be available for advance sales at PRIDE in the Park and at Out of Our Closets. Our cookbook features original artwork by noted artist Abby Carter-Levin, over 150 delicious recipes and stories from volunteers. We will be launching Out of Our Pantries this summer with a kick-off party and tasting.

MSOP is moving forward and expanding its services throughout Maine. We recently received a $2,500 grant from the Maine Women's Fund funding the Transgender Day of Remembrance, a $5,000 grant from the Sam L. Cohen foundation to help with operating expenses, trained over 12 volunteers to speak and have already completed over 50 Speakouts since January. I hope to see you at these exciting summer events. Please stop by and introduce yourself.

With care,
Pam McCann
Maine Speakout Project Advisory Committee

Richard Bilodeau, Co-chair
Bob Carter, Co-chair
Eric Baxter
Elliott Cherry
Leslie Clark Brancato
David Cohan
Laura Gottfried
Tara Healy
Holly Howard
Connie Howe
Natasha Johnson
Lonnie (Lawrence) Leeman
Daniel Pelletier
Everett R. Perlman

How to Give

Contributions can be sent to:
Maine Speakout Project
343 Forest Avenue
Portland, Maine 04101-2006

Or, use the contribution envelope in this newsletter.

How to Volunteer

Help us to get our speakers invited to your club, church, school committee or workplace lunch-and-learn. Get trained to become a speaker. Volunteer to work an event. There is so much you can do to help!

For more information, call Pam McCann at 207.874.1030 or send an email to pmccann@commcc.org.

MSOP Mission

The mission of Maine Speakout Project is to create a society that is inclusive and respectful of people of differing sexual and gender orientations by providing opportunities for non-divisive dialogue.

MSOP Receives Grants

The Maine Women’s Fund has awarded MSOP $2,500 to fund the second annual Transgender Day of Remembrance. This event, held nationally for the past six years, commemorates the life of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was brutally murdered for openly expressing her gender orientation. This year, the event will address gender and sexual violence by continuing to raise awareness and offer comfort and support to a community that is constantly threatened with violence. It will be expanded to include a morning training seminar for service providers specifically geared toward violence against the transgender community.

MSOP also received a grant from the Sam L. Cohen foundation in the amount of $5,000 to help pay for expenses associated with our speakers’ bureau.

Congratulations to our newly trained Speakout volunteers!

Kyle Wright, Chanel Romney, Judy Eyercr, Melissa Lowell, Bev Blaisdell, Sherry Oliver, Rox French, Sharon Southwick, Julia Miller, Judith Simpson, Kara Shea, Jayson Bryant and Joseph Sargent.

Letter to the Editor sent to Bangor Daily News by Dan Williams, MSOP Volunteer

Dear Editor,

In reading the article, "Avoiding special rights" (BDN, April 25) I would like to clarify the meaning of "special rights." As the law is written now, a heterosexual can get fired from his/her work, but does not, because of their sexuality. A homosexual can and does. A heterosexual can be denied credit, but is not, and a homosexual can and is often denied. A heterosexual can be denied public accommodations, but is not, while a homosexual can and is often denied. A heterosexual can be evicted from their apartment or living arrangements because of their sexuality, but is not, and a homosexual can and is often evicted.

So, who has "special rights?" If you are in doubt about the law the Governor signed and how it is written, call the Human Rights Commission in Hallowell and they will tell you just how it is written, how it can be interpreted and who has what recourse. It's an enlightening phone call! Perhaps if everyone had made that call, we would not be debating this issue. It seems the only ones who have an issue with the new law are the ones who do not have a clear understanding of what is humanly right for everyone.

Sincerely,
Dan Williams
Wednesday, March 23rd, 2005 marked the day the committee considering LD1196, Governor Baldacci's Anti-Discrimination Bill, opened its doors to get the public's reaction to this important piece of legislation. For those of you who may not follow what goes on in Augusta that closely, LD1196 will extend existing civil rights protections to members of the LGBT community of this state.

Organized by Equality Maine, the hearings were held in the statehouse office building. The large crowd of supporters and detractors took every available seat. A second, sound-only, room was opened to accommodate the numbers. Judging by the various buttons people were wearing, supporters of the bill outnumbered opponents by about 4 to 1. EqualityKnocks Coordinator and MSOP volunteer Darlene Huntress greeted us as we entered and offered us a neon-bright sticker that read LD-1196 = EQUALITY.

CCC vice president of program services Laura Gottfried, MSOP program coordinator Pam McCann and MSOP volunteers Debbie McBride, Jamie Gibson, Natasha Johnson, Willow Femmehild, Lucie Bauer, Annie Kiernan, Peter Rees and yours truly were on hand to lend any support that we could. Apologies to other volunteers whose presence I missed. Debbie McBride gave a very emotional presentation detailing her experience transitioning, which led to her dismissal from her college teaching position. The emotional delivery and content of her story noticeably impacted several committee members, as did the many tales of discrimination that would follow that afternoon. It soon became apparent to the committee that it was a very successful day for the supporters of LD1196, with the vote of 12 for and 1 against.

When time was given to those people who opposed the bill, they immediately went on the attack. When they weren’t threatening a person’s veto or the collapse of private businesses, one speaker after another hit the same old talking point, passage of this bill would eventually lead to legalizing gay marriage in Maine. This recurring theme seemed orchestrated, and it was apparent to this observer that the committee members were feeling the same way too.

The entire process took 4 hours and even though there were many more people, almost all exclusively pro LD1196, who wished to speak, it was mutually decided to adjourn this public forum and call it a day. It was a very successful day for the supporters of equal rights in Maine to say the least. This became evident when just 2 days later, the committee elected to move the bill forward for debate in the legislature by a vote of 12 for and 1 against.

Was it worth it to "Take the drive on 95," as the TV commercial states? By all means it was! Not only to see the legislative process in action but to be a part of it was a wonderful experience. Hopefully, this third time will be the charm as they say, and Maine will be able to join the rest of New England and a growing number of other states in the U.S. who believe in equality for all of their citizens.
The mission of the Maine Speakout Project is to create a respectful society that is inclusive of people of different orientations by providing opportunities for non-discrimination. The Maine Speakout Project is to provide a society that is respectful to dialogue. The mission of the Maine Speakout Project is to provide a society that is respectful to dialogue. The mission of the Maine Speakout Project is to provide a society that is respectful to dialogue.

Upcoming Events

June 5th, Walk With the Ones You Love First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, Kennebunk (10:30am)

June 12th, Walk With the Ones You Love Back Cove, Portland (3:00pm - 5:00pm)

June 15th, PRIDE Reception USM Glikman Family Library, 4th Floor, Portland (5:00pm)

June 15th, PRIDE Lights Tommy's Park and Congress Square, Portland (dusk)

June 18th, PRIDE Comedy Night Comedy Connection, Portland

June 19th, PRIDE Parade, PRIDE in the Park & Pier Dance, Portland

June 19th, Walk With the Ones You Love Pickering Square, Bangor (12:30pm)

June 19th, PRIDE Events Ogunquit

June 25th, Out of Our Closets Yard Sale Community Counseling Center parking lot, Portland (rain date: June 26th)

Out of Our Pantries Cookbook Available for Pre-Sale Purchase

MSOP Offices Moving

The Maine Speakout Project offices will be moving to 43 Baxter Boulevard in Portland at the end of June. Our mailing address and phone numbers will remain the same.