

# MAINE SPEAKOUT COMMUNIQUE

Vol. 1, No. 1



October 1995

## GREETINGS, MAINE SPEAKOUT PARTICIPANTS!

Welcome to the first issue of *the Communique*. Much has happened in the last few months. The big news is that we have begun our speaking engagements. The first one was on September 12 at St. Mary's Church in Falmouth.

The list of speaking engagements keeps growing, so don't worry, you'll get your chance to try out your finely-honed stories on a real audience. The following is a list of speaking engagements:

**October 1**, Belfast Library, Belfast, 9am (Clark Phinney and Janet May)

**October 1**, St. Bartholomew's Church, Yarmouth, 7pm (Will Sanstead and Janice Tyderle)

**October 8**, Allen Avenue UU Church, 524 Allen Avenue, Portland, 9am (Nina Mollicone and Paula Stockholm)

**October 10**, Write Journal, WMPG, Portland, 8pm (Naomi Falcone and Madeleine Winter)

**October 10**, Lewiston/Auburn Jaycees, Ramada Inn 490 Pleasant St., Lewiston, 7pm (Courtney Cramer and Bob Hobbs)

**October 11**, Sanford Kiwanis Club, Sanford, 12 noon (George Dugovic and Mary Ellen Foley)

**October 11**, Central Maine Power, Lewiston, 11am (Karen Geraghty and Jim Lester)

**October 11**, Maine Businesses for Social Responsibility, Portland (Jonathan Lee)

**October 11**, Inter-Fraternity and Pan-Hellenic Council, Orono, 5:45pm

**October 12**, Williston West Church, Portland, 7pm (Michael Klaus and Gracia Woodward)

**October 12**, Central Maine Power, Portland, 11am (Karen Geraghty and Jim Estes)

**October 12**, Bangor High School Senior Social Studies Class, 8:30am (Judy Harrison)

**October 13**, Central Maine Power, Augusta, 11:30am (Janie Matrisciano and Jim Estes)

**October 14**, Metropolitan Community Church, Portland, 4pm (Stacy Parady)

**October 15**, Fairbanks Union Church, Farmington, 8:50am (Meg Ahlquist and Paul Harrison)

**October 15**, New Portland Church, 11am (Meg Ahlquist and Paul Harrison)

**October 15**, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, Biddeford, 11am (Naomi Falcone and Bob Philbrook)

**October 17**, Merrymeeting Seniors of Topsham, noon (Marlene Barter and Jim Lester)

**October 17**, Lion's Club, The Auburn Inn, 1777 Washington Ave., Auburn, 6:30pm (Norma Kraus Eule and Bob Philbrook)

**October 19**, State Street Church, Portland, 5:30pm (Madeleine Winter and Chris Hurtubise)

**October 19**, Kiwanis Breakfast Club, Bangor, 7am (Todd Greenquist and Judy Harrison)

**October 19**, The Wilson Center, UM/Orono, 5:30pm (Will Steele and Judy Harrison)

**October 21**, UU Church, Sanford, 7:30 (Lois Reckitt)

**October 22**, Chestnut Street Church, Portland, 11:30am (Richard Waitzkin and Susan Comyns)

**October 22**, Thornton Heights United Methodist Church, So. Portland, 11am (Maddy Akeley and Cobie Smith)

**October 25**, United Church of Christ, Bath, 7pm (Jonathan Lee)

**October 25**, Open Forum at USM sponsored by Faculty and Professional Union, Ampitheatre, Campus Center, Portland, noon (Tony Pezet and Tom Cathcart)



**October 26**, Bangor Rotary Breakfast, Brewer, 7:15am (Todd Greenquist)

**October 29**, St. Ann's Episcopal Church, North Windham, 8:50am and 10:45am (Madeleine Winter)

**October 31**, Houlton Seniors, Houlton Senior Citizen's Center, 11:30am (Sheila Everett and Terry White)

**October 31**, Write Journal, WMPG, Portland, 8pm (Naomi Falcone and Madeleine Winter)

**November 1**, Residents on Campus, U Maine Orono, 5:30pm

**November 5**, St. Luke's Church, Portland, 10am (Rev. Marvin Ellison)

**November 5**, Congregational Church of Cumberland, noon (Cobie Smith and Chris Newcomb)

**November 5**, Immanuel Church, 156 High St., Portland, 11am (Kathy Wilson)

**November 6**, Maine Health Educators' Conference, Samoset Inn, Rockland, 10:15am

**November 9**, Eastern Maine HR Association, Bangor, 12:20pm (Judy Harrison)

**November 16**, Windham Rotary Club, 12:15pm

**November 17**, AARP/Augusta, Sand Dollar Restaurant, 272 Water St. (Rt. 201), Hallowell, 1pm

**November 21**, Waterville Lion's Club, 6pm

**November 28**, Women in Construction, Scarborough

**November 28**, Kiwanis Club Orono, Old Town

**January 4**, Business and Professional Women of Augusta, 5:30pm

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*We're asking speakers to please write a short summary of their speaking experiences. Reading about your experiences is helpful to both those who have spoken and those who are considering doing it. Please send your contributions to Jonathan Lee, 123 Congress St., #1, Portland, ME 04101. Here are the first ones we've received.*

The first speakout I participated in was a singularly affirming experience. My co-speaker was great to work with, and the audience was interested in our stories and concerned about homophobia. It wasn't a tough crowd (the social concerns committee of a church) so there were none of the kinds of hostile questions/comments that had come up as possibilities during the training sessions, but they did have some good questions for us to field. All in all a terrific way to begin actually speaking out. It has me eager to do more speakouts, including the tougher ones.

Janis Tyderle

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I spoke (with Janis) to the Social Concerns Committee of Woodfords Congregational Church. They were a very receptive, liberal group and very easy to interact with. In spite of this, I feel that it was educational because they had not had the experience of speaking to people who are openly gay before. I also feel that it was worthwhile because I believe that the receptive group (you know, that 15% on our

side) will ultimately convince the 70% in the middle that this is an important issue. Speaking to the "converted" will also change their understanding from theory to something tangible.

I also found it interesting that the common ground I had with the group I spoke to was in an understanding of what it means to live in denial. This impacted them in some ways more than anything I said about being gay.

Chris Newcomb

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On September 12th, I went with Joe Majeau and Jonathan Lee to speak with the Social Outreach Committee at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Falmouth. This group was already very supportive of us, but I think it was still useful for us to be there. We helped them understand the wording and the implications of the referendum. And we asked them to help us find further speaking engagements in their



larger church community and in any service or community organizations they might have contacts with. We'll see what comes of that.

Gracia Woodward

*"Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities." - Voltaire*

I was pleased, as was Gracia, to learn we were the first to go on an assignment, after the training. I cannot speak for Gracia, but I was not for some strange reason nervous. Maybe it's because I operated from a prepared text.

Whatever, it was a good feeling moment - to encounter the unknown and participate in the unexpected. As it turned out, most of the Social Action Committee of this church were sympathetic to our presentations and agree with our position - that this was not about special rights, but fundamental rights.

I'm sure that facing other groups might generate more concern, but getting my feet wet, and doing what I consider my civic and American duty, did add pride and interest to my life.

I'm looking forward to the election results, that Maine won't discriminate, and feeling in my heart and soul that maybe - just maybe - I contributed.

Joe Majeau

My first speaking engagement was at the Bangor Lion's Club. Their scheduled speaker from the Sportsman's Alliance had canceled only two days before the engagement.

The speech itself went well enough. My topic was that equal rights are a basic cornerstone of our democratic society and we as civic, business and community leaders have a right to work for equality. That went over fairly well. Then came the questions. "If this Question 1 passes won't I as a business owner have to hire a man who wants to wear a dress to work or else it will be discrimination?" "Won't this Question mean that all the gays and others who want special rights will be able to sue (with taxpayer supported lawyers) us business owners who don't want them working for us and we will have to hire our own lawyers and it is just going to cost more money to us and to the state?" It was an US (i.e., me) VS. THEM crowd.

Ignorance is not bliss - it's dangerous.

Thankfully, only a few days later I had a second shot at redemption when I was a co-speaker at the Belfast UUC. It was forum Sunday and the topic was the referendum and the issues surrounding it. The small group of about 20 was a good mix of age, gender, orientation, etc. We told our stories, answered questions and collectively looked for solutions with the group. We sang a Holly Near song to close the session. The discussion continued after the service at the local coffee shop. Once again, the tone was one of support and searching for solutions.

Clark Phinney

## CLASSIFIED

I'm working on a project to collect stories and experiences from Speakout participants, both the stories they tell and what brought them to Speakout initially. Only first names will be used as credits or you may remain anonymous. This project will hopefully become a fundraiser for Maine Speakout. For more information or to submit a story, please contact Clark Phinney, c/o Speakout Stories, POB 417, Bucksport, ME 04416.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

There will be a debriefing meeting Sunday, Oct. 22 at 3pm in Portland for anyone who wants to talk about their speaking engagement or who is interested in hearing other speakers' experiences. Please call 642-2015 (Naomi) if you want to attend.

### Post Election Potlucks!

**North:** Tues., Nov. 14 at 7pm at the Peace and Justice Center, Main St., Bangor. For more information, please call 942-1545 (Judy).

**South:** Sun., Nov. 12 at 4pm on lovely Bonny Eagle Pond in Standish. For more information and to RSVP, please call 642-2015 (Madeleine or Naomi).

### SPEAKOUT GATHERING/AWARDS CEREMONY

All Speakout participants are warmly encouraged to attend the ceremony and the 11am service on Sun., Nov. 19, at the UU Church in Augusta. Ceremony is at 12:15pm. Simple lunch provided.

