

# MAINE SPEAKOUT COMMUNIQUE

Vol. 1, No. 4



Fall 1996

## *Recent Speaking Invitations*

Our invitations to speak keep growing. Here are our summer/fall engagements for this year (so far!).

**August 14**, Diversified Communications, Portland, 12 noon; Speakers: Jim Estes and Gerry Clement

**September 10**, Kiwanis, Thornton Oaks Dining Room, Brunswick, 7:30am, Speakers: Bob Hobbs and Toni Rees

**September 14 & 15**, Social Justice Fair, St. Phillip's Church, Auburn, 12-6 on Sat. and 8-12 on Sun. We will be staffing a table at this event.

**October 6**, First Congregational Church, North Yarmouth, 5:30-7pm; Speakers: Chris Milliken & Janis Tyderle

**October 17**, City of Portland Public Health Division Medical Panel, City Hall, Portland, 8-10am

**October 21**, Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick 7-9pm; sponsored by the Curtis Memorial Library, Pejeboscot Historical Society and Maine Speakout.

**October 23**, Freeport Community Education, Freeport High School, Freeport, 6-7pm; Speakers: Willow Femmechild and Tom Cathcart

**November 12**, Newcastle/Damariscotta Rotary, Back Street Landing Damariscotta, 7:15am; Speakers: Debbie Matson

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## *Upcoming Trainings*

The following Saturday dates have been set up for this fall's trainings. All trainings are from 9am to 5pm. If you have not yet been to a training or if you know people who would like to attend, please call the Speakout office at 879-0480. Trainings are \$10 for non-members, free for members and no one will be turned away due to lack of funds. Please bring your lunch.

September 14	-	Aroostook Co./ Presque Isle
September 21	-	Hancock Co./Mt. Desert
September 28	-	Oxford/Androscoggin Co./Norway UU Church
October 19	-	Penobscot Co./Bangor
October 19	-	Cumberland Co./Portland
October 26	-	Kennebec Co./UUCC/Augusta

Be sure to bring your friends, relatives, strangers off the street. We want to train everybody!

## *Puppetone Auditions*

The Maine Speakout Project Traveling Puppet Theater is looking for volunteers to be puppeteers, character voices, stage/company managers. There will be three sets of auditions for the 1996-97 season of the Puppetones, a touring puppet theater presenting scripts on discrimination and civil rights throughout Maine. Professional experience not necessary, just free time and interest in learning new skills. Auditions will be held on Sunday 9/8, Wednesday 9/11 and Sunday 9/15, 6-9pm, at Williston West Church, 42 Thomas St., Portland. FMI ☎ 655-7179.





## ***The Maine Speakout Puppetones***

People who work in the professional theatre as I do don't always have the chance to use their talents to support their convictions. The high point of a year's work could well be the directing of a dinner theatre production of *Natalie Needs a Nightie* or the filming of a hemorrhoids commercial.

Touring with the Puppetones this summer has been for me a great opportunity to use my theatre background in service of ideas I believe in.

Our present puppet troupe ranges from gay to straight, from experienced to totally inexperienced and from young to... well, let's say "older."

*Bob Hobbs*



## ***What's Happening Out There?***

*We're asking speakers to write short summaries 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 Madeleine Winter, 51 Shore Rd., Standish, ME 04084.*

### ***Caribou Historical Society***

On June 18, Dick Harrison and I spoke at a meeting of the Caribou Historical Society. There were 30-50 people present. We were very well received. Roy Doak introduced us, first explaining about having been contacted by Maine Speakout, but he didn't identify our topic. However, everyone was very receptive to our message.

When Dick and I finished our stories, which we linked to the broader theme of tolerance and nondiscrimination for all people, members of the audience started sharing their stories. Some of them involved blacks, Catholics, Native Americans, Jews, etc. When someone said that things are getting better, others remembered the "gay bashings" in the rest area off route 89 (by-pass). We talked about the increase in hate crimes and someone asked "What can we do?" That was a perfect segue to "Just what we're doing here tonight: speaking out and letting others know we find intolerance and discrimination offensive and intolerable."

*Cindy Hebert*



### ***Diversified Communications, August...***

"This is the kind of company where I can be emphatically out with no problems," Jennifer Goldman explained as she led Jim Estes and me to the conference room where we would be speaking to a noon time "Eat and Learn" group at Diversified

Communications. Jennifer, a Speakout member, arranged for our appearance on 8/14 and even though she wondered if many would attend, had obviously done a great PR job, since over 50 people showed up. They did indeed prove to be that "kind of company" and more, and Jim and I were tremendously gratified at the response we received. He spoke first about coming out to his parents and I followed with a story about my gay son and the effect on me of an encounter with homophobia. At the end we were bombarded with many questions and observations from an audience which was fairly young and obviously intelligent, aware and empathetic. They congratulated us on our presentations and our participation in Speakout and one included kudos for their company for fostering such an event. I felt very rewarded when one woman confessed "You know, I have changed my mind about several things just as I sat here listening to you." After the question period, a smaller group remained for more discussion. At one point, the talk turned to the problem of when to fight the good fight, so to speak. I remember wondering aloud when to pick up on a discriminatory remark and when to let it slide and one man set me straight by saying emphatically, "I don't think there is ever a time when one should not make an issue of an offensive homophobic remark. How else will people learn?"

Altogether, a thoroughly rewarding experience.

*Gerry Clement*





## Coordinator's Update

Alas, another beautiful Maine summer disappearing from our embrace just as we begin to get acquainted. But it's been a good summer, much busier than I had imagined, and I am looking forward to a Fall that will be just as busy.

### MSOP in the Counties

We've been reaching out to become more visible in the counties. In Penobscot (Winterport) Jeanine Crockett and C.R. Peck hosted an open house in July that included a performance by our traveling puppet theater, the MSOP Puppetones. In Kennebec County (Augusta), Stefanie Barley and Cheryl Ring and friends had an open house in August. And in early September, Gracia Woodward and Theresa Turgeon will open their home in Bowdoinham (Sagadahoc County) and Lucie Bauer and her partner will do the same in Rockport (Knox County).

These are low budget events that a handful of friends can put on together: cheese and crackers, cookies and cider, the Puppetones, and you're on! MSOP helps defray the cost of postcard invitations and postage. This is a great way to help us to involve more people and to find more venues for our dialogues. Don't be shy: give me a call and we'll help you to organize an open house.

### Fundraising

Thanks to Shep and Candice Lee and their co-hosts for their August 4th barbecue in Cape Elizabeth. We had a good turnout of folks new to the project and took in about \$1,300. Special thanks to *Sweet Alternatives* (Naomi Falcone) for catering the event. The food was delicious.

Thursday, September 5th at 5:30 pm and Friday, September 6th at 7 pm, MSOP will host a world premiere of a new video by Ellen Spiro, *Roam Sweet Home* as a benefit for the project. We're also showing an earlier video, *Greetings From Out Here*, an amusing documentary about gay and lesbian people in the rural South. Ellen Spiro will attend the screenings at USM/Portland (Luther Bonney Hall Auditorium) and at the Thursday pre-screening reception, the Puppetones will present a special performance of their show. Tickets are \$25 for Thursday, \$10 for Friday and are available at Drop Me A Line on Congress Street or at the door. FMI: 879-0480.

So far, we've raised \$57,000 in 1996 and still need \$24,000 to reach our budget of \$81,000. Contributions are always welcome.

### MSOP Leadership Council

Many thanks to the members of the Leadership Council who've been meeting monthly since the group formed in May 1996. They've created three subcommittees (Structure, Fundraising, and Program) and are working to help put MSOP on a firm foundation for the coming year(s). Significantly, we are now taking steps to become an independent 501(C)(3) not-for-profit organization in 1997, with the full blessings of our current sponsor, the Unitarian Universalist Community Church in Augusta.

### Speakout '97: The Maine Speakout Project 1997 Calendar

Don't buy any calendars for 1997 because we're producing one with photographs contributed by professional gay/lesbian photographers from southern Maine. Designed by Aaron Cheever, a talented student at Maine College of Art, the calendar will be both beautiful and practical, with adequate space for keeping track of appointments. It should sell for about \$10 plus shipping costs and I'm hoping that MSOP members will compete furiously with each other to sell as many as possible. More calendar information to follow shortly.

Jonathan



*This space is always available for reports from any county group. Reports can be sent anytime and will appear in the next edition of the newsletter.*

## Androscoggin County

*In response to the recent hate crimes in Augusta and the resulting demonstration, the Androscoggin County Group decided to "speakout." The following letter appeared in the Lewiston Auburn Sun-Journal on July 6, 1996:*

To the editor:

As a member of the Androscoggin County Chapter of the Maine Speakout Project for Equal Rights, I am writing to express the chapter's outrage over the recent cross-burning and other acts of racism in Augusta.



As an organization which combats prejudice by sending speakers into the community to talk about the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and about multiple forms of discrimination in Maine, the Speakout Project stands against racism and in solidarity with people fighting racism in Augusta and elsewhere.

We recognize that the cross-burning is not an isolated incident. Evidence of racism and other forms of prejudice are visible around Maine and around the country: in the wave of church burnings, in daily acts and words and in institutional policies that deny equal access for all to civil rights, economic security, safety and social justice. We also realize that recognizing the problems is not enough, and we encourage everyone to get involved in the work against racism and hate in our communities.

Erica Rand  
Lewiston

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## Cumberland County

A few weeks ago, Speakout held a phone bank night at which five of us volunteered for two hours to do telephoning to obtain new Speakout engagements. We went to Diversified Communications in downtown Portland where Speakout member Jennifer Goldman is employed. The company lent us the "telephone bank" facilities - several offices with a desk and telephone in each.

We were given lists of some 10 or so people/organizations to telephone and a "script" to use as a guide. Some calls were "cold calling" and some had been prepared to receive our phone calls by the receipt of a letter. If I imagined that I'd complete my telephoning during the two hours and return home, I was certainly wrong. I was unable to get through directly to any of the people on my lists. Sometimes I spoke with a spouse to set up a later telephone call; sometimes I left messages on an answering machine to say I'd call again; sometimes I noted in my records "no answer." The real work happened over the following weeks when, at home, I followed up on the many contacts by doing additional telephoning.

The follow-up calls were an interesting experience. When I reached the person who headed the civic organization or church (my categories) I usually sensed some reluctance or caution on their part. ("Are you trying to sell me vinyl siding?") I'd use the

sample script to guide the phone from a somewhat formal transaction into a friendly conversation. It was fun to see the attitude change from caution to friendliness; in some cases I succeeded in setting up Speakout engagements. Some people apologized for being unable to help until their organization started up again in the fall. In two cases the people I reached became so friendly that they even gave me additional names and organizations that they felt would be receptive to Speakout engagements.

The original evening was enjoyable and the follow-up weeks have been instructive. The phone bank night enabled me to get to know some fellow Speakout members better and the pizza party during our break was great! All of it has resulted in getting future Speakout dates.

Bob Hobbs

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Howdy Pardner! Just back from that rip-roaring good time - the Wild West Bonfire (yup, it's true, it's just about as far west as you can go in Maine, without hitting New Hampshire).

There were, near as I could tell, 20 barbecue chomping, ice tea swilling compadres on Chris' and Paula's high meadow hacienda.

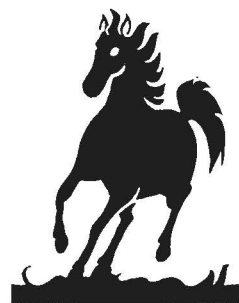
After the vittles, we were treated to a couple of Speakout tales that made us guffaw and brought tears to our eyes.

Then we staggered under the weight of our emotions (and the food) down to the bonfire where we bayed at the moon, rotisserieed marshmallows, and talked by the fire into the wee hours...

So thanks to the Clearwater clan, Speakout, and the good folks from the surrounding hills, we had a great time being formally introduced to the idea of homos and friends saying howdy to our neighbors.

So what in tarnation are you waiting for, far-east Maine?

Ghost Rider





## CALENDAR

### Thursday 9/5

A film premiere to benefit Maine Speakout, *Roam Sweet Home and Greetings from Out Here* by Ellen Spiro. Reception/Screening/Dialogue with Ellen Spiro; special performance by MSOP Puppetones - \$25. 5:30pm, USM Campus Center Amphitheater, Bedford St., Portland. Tix: 879-0480 or at Drop Me a Line.

### Friday 9/6

A film premiere to benefit Maine Speakout, *Roam Sweet Home and Greetings from Out Here* by Ellen Spiro. Second screening and dialogue with filmmaker - \$10. 7-9:30 pm, USM, Luther Bonney Hall Aud., Bedford St., Portland. Tix: 879-0480 or at Drop Me a Line.

### Saturday 9/7

Open house in Rockport at home of Lucie Bauer. 4-6pm. FMI ☎ 236-4734.

### Sunday 9/8

The Maine Speakout Project Traveling Puppet Theater is looking for volunteers to be puppeteers, character voices, stage/company managers. This will be the first of three auditions for the 1996-97 season of the Puppetones (2nd on Wed., 9/11; 3rd Sun., 9/15). Professional experience not necessary, just free time and interest in learning new skills. 6-9pm, Williston West Church, 42 Thomas St., Portland. FMI ☎ 655-7179.

### Tuesday 9/10

Open house at Bowdoinham at home of Gracia Woodward and Theresa Turgeon. 5-7pm. FMI ☎ 666-8147.

### Thursday 9/12

Safe Schools Coalition of Maine meeting. 6:30-8pm, Chestnut St. Church, Portland.

### Wednesday 9/18

Cumberland County Group meeting, 7pm, YWCA, Spring St., Portland. We'll now meet 3rd Wed. of each month, same time/location.

### Tuesday 10/1

Public Dialogue on Same Gender Marriage. 7-9pm, Luther Bonney Hall Aud., USM, Portland. Free. Sponsored by the Freedom to Marry Roundtable.

### Tuesday 10/15

Public Dialogue on Same Gender Marriage. 7-9pm, Bangor Theological Seminary, Bangor. Free. Sponsored by the Freedom to Marry Roundtable.

### Monday 10/21

Author Vance Muse will discuss his historical research on the Bailey Island community of 1910-14, to be followed by a Speakout dialogue presented by volunteers from the Brunswick area. Program sponsored by Curtis Memorial Library, the Pejeboscot Historical Society and Maine Speakout at Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick, 7-9 pm.

### Notice from Maine Equity Fund

Over the next two years, as much as \$120,000 will become available for grants to meet the needs of Maine's gay, lesbian, bi, transgender communities and to address issues of diversity and discrimination shared with other minority communities, through a new initiative of the Maine Community Foundation.

With the help of a challenge grant from The National Lesbian and Gay Community Funding Partnership, one of the 16 made to date nation-

ally, the Maine Community Fund has created the *Maine Equity Fund*. MCF will receive up to \$30,000 per year for two years, to be matched by an equal amount of money raised locally to provide a \$120,000 funding pool.

The Maine Equity Fund is conducting a needs assessment to inform our ultimate grantmaking strategy and priorities. Our needs assessment process will involve surveying as broad as possible a sample of G/L/B/T individuals, as well as a wide variety of service providers and community organizations serving these communities. This survey data, followed by some target focus groups, will establish what needs and issues community members perceive to be most significant, what resources currently exist to meet those needs, what approaches are currently working and what programs most need our support.

*We need your help!* We will do our best to get these surveys into the right hands, but we know that many important points of view are likely to go unheard unless we get a great deal of help in distributing the surveys widely and in making sure that the surveys are actually going to be returned to us.

We know that you all have busy lives, so we will do our best to make these surveys concise, and to make sure that the survey results are put to good use.

If you haven't received the survey and if there is any chance that we'll overlook you (or your more hard-to-find friends/colleagues), or if you have suggestions or energy to offer, please call Marjorie Love, the coordinator of the needs assessment, at 773-6164, or write c/o The Maine Community Foundation/*Maine Equity Fund*, POB 148, Ellsworth, ME 04605.





## ***Puppetone Performance Schedule***

Saturday, 6/15	Portland Pride Festival, Deering Oaks Park
Saturday, 7/13	Winterport, Penobscot Cty., home of Jeanine Crockett & C.R. Peck
Sunday, 8/4	Maine Festival Brunswick
Sunday, 8/4	Barbecue Fundraiser, Cape Elizabeth, home of Shep Lee
Saturday, 8/17	Symposium, College of the Atlantic, Bar Harbor
Sunday, 8/25	Kennebec County Open House, Augusta
Thursday, 9/5	Film Benefit, Amphitheater, USM Campus Center, Portland
Saturday, 9/7	Knox Cty Open House, Rockport - mid afternoon
Tuesday, 9/10	Bowdoinham Open House, Gracia Woodward home - 5-7pm
Thursday, 9/26	Matlovich Society, Portland -7:30pm
Thursday, 10/24	AGAPE, Congress St., Portland -7:30pm

### ***Same Gender Marriage Information Available***

With increasing frequency, we are getting asked questions about same gender marriage at our Speakout dialogs. To help our speakers to prepare for these questions, Speakout has several publications available that have been provided to us courtesy of GLAD. Due to duplication and mailing costs, we are asking for \$2 for each information packet. They may be obtained by sending a check or money order to Maine Speakout, 123 Congress St., #1, Portland, ME 04101.

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***We'd love to hear from you! Please note that deadline for submissions for the winter edition of the Speakout newsletter is November 22.***