

# MAINE SPEAKOUT COMMUNIQUE

Maine Speakout Project, 123 Congress St., #1, Portland, ME, (207) 879-0480 ▼ E-Mail: MSOProject@AOL.COM

Vol. 1, No. 5



Year End 1996

## Recent Speaking Invitations

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

**December 3**, UM/PI, Ethnicity and Multiculture class, Presque Isle, 3:05pm (Dick Harrison, Sheila Everett)

**December 5**, Maine Businesses for Social Responsibility, Portland, 7:45am (Cobie Smith, Mike Klaus, John Buie)

**December 30**, Rumford Rotary, Rumford, 11:45am (Lou Alessio, Nina Mollicone)

**January 15**, Standish Kiwanis, Standish, 6:30pm (Mike Bendzela, Andie Locke)

**January 21**, Bethel Rotary, Bethel Inn, 7:30am (Nancy Wood, Brian Grennan)

**January 26**, Windham Hill UCC, Windham, 11am (speakers to be determined)

**January 28**, Presque Isle Kiwanis, Presque Isle, 12pm (speakers to be determined)

**February 9**, Calvary United Methodist Church, Lewiston, 9am (Tom Cathcart)

**February 11**, Business and Professional Women, Presque Isle, 6pm (speakers to be determined)

**February 24**, Bridgeton Lions, Bridgeton, 6:30pm (Paul Alpert and Gerry Clement)

**February 24**, Sexual Assault Crisis Center Board, Lewiston, 6:30pm (Donna Dolham)

**April 2**, St. Mary's Church, Bath, 8pm (speakers to be determined)

**April 6**, UCC/New Gloucester, 7pm (speakers to be determined)

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## What's Happening Out There?

*We continue 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.*

### Portland Rotary - November 8

In attendance were approximately 120 Rotarians. The reception Charles Rimmel and I received was excellent. After the minister said a prayer about love and diversity, we sat down to lunch and to watch their meeting. We began speaking a little after 1pm. Charles spoke first, speaking briefly about Maine Speakout and about his daughter, who is a lesbian. Then I spoke. Then we opened the floor up for questions. We got 4 or 5 of those.

The only question that was maybe a little prejudiced was from one man who asked me about the affect on my daughter of growing up without a father since everyone knows that in order to estab-

lish healthy relationships with men, she needs a father figure. I gently, yet firmly, pointed out the hundreds of thousands of children being raised in single parent households, usually with mothers who grow up just fine. Then I proceeded to tell him what we've done to provide good role models for Melissa.

The other questions were just fine - how my parents felt about my coming out? (I had forgotten to mention them in my story). How is the general climate in Maine, compared to the rest of the country, for gay people? Followed by a few more questions.

After a big round of applause and a mass exodus at 1:30 pm, I had about 12 people standing in line to shake my hand and thank me for sharing. A few



mentioned how brave I was. One man asked me if I'd speak to his organization. Then Charles and I walked out together while talking to several Rotarians.

All in all, it went really super. I'm looking forward to the next Speakout!!

Andie Locke



***Kiwanis Breakfast -  
Brunswick, September 10, 1996***

Bob Hobbs and I spoke to about 20 business and professional people at their weekly breakfast meeting, which was held at a retirement home in Brunswick. This was my first Speakout, so I was nervous. Beforehand I had checked out both what kind of organization Kiwanis were and the facility (to make sure I knew where the bathrooms were! I organized my talk to include information about my community service, in order to make a connection with Kiwanis.

The Speakout morning arrived. Bob and I entered the dining room and introduced ourselves to the Kiwanis organizer. He told us the format of a breakfast meeting and it sounded as if we might be able to squeeze a few words in, between club business. I had naively imagined that people would sit, paying quiet attention to me during a Speakout and not be filing through a buffet line, clattering knives and forks while we talked! Instead we were invited to go through the line first and almost immediately afterwards we made our presentations.

I asked people to raise their hands if they had relatives or friends who were gay men or lesbians. Many hands went up and I was pleasantly surprised that so many people knew they had gay connections and were willing to say so. We asked people to inform others that Maine Speakout presenters were available by calling the number on the handout we distributed. Much to my surprise the experience of "speaking out" was enjoyable! Though I am still nervous about public speaking, I will make myself do more Speakouts to help build self-esteem and develop much needed allies in the larger community.

Toni Rees



***"Making Ourselves Known" - North Windham  
Kiwanis Club***

This was the kind of engagement I have both longed for and dreaded; Kiwanians epitomize the

audience we hope to reach, definitely not "preaching to the converted." The "Speakout from hell" at the Portland Kiwanis Club was not far from my consciousness; therefore, I brought a false set of expectations to the group, which they, to my delight, refused to live up to. (Ah, the wonder of seeing stereotypes evaporate on all sides!)

In the restaurant in whose parking lot a young man was beaten last summer "for being perceived as" gay, Gerry Clement and I found ourselves at a long table with 14 men, at least 10 of whom were from the World War Two generation. I was not unusually nervous, for whenever I enter a room in which I am about to speak I immediately go into a sort of dream state.

We had dinner, sat through their (brief) business meeting and chatted with some men nearby. When one gentleman turned out to be a science teacher interested in Richard Dawkins, one of my favorite writers on the subject of evolutionary biology, I breathed a great (but inaudible) sigh of relief. I thought my speech went well, though I lost a paragraph somewhere, which is normal for me. I put a bag over my head (it was Halloween night, by the way) to illustrate the absurdity of remaining anonymous before a Kiwanis Club, whose native American moniker is roughly translated as "to make oneself known." I'm told the bag is effective but wearing it is not something I relish. I have to say, Gerry Clement is a superb and moving speaker. It was the second time I'd heard her and I still found myself gagging back tears. To have "mom" at the podium with you is the ultimate antidote for the special sort of stage fright that Project speakers may bring to an engagement.

The question-and-answer period knocked me out; at the other gatherings, questions are usually brief. Rotarians, for example, usually have a much more structured meeting and you're lucky to receive about five questions and comments. But the relaxed atmosphere of the Kiwanis dinner, coupled with the sheer energy and curiosity of these older men, made for a transformative experience (at least for me, anyway). A few men prefaced their questions with apologies; they didn't want to appear as offensive; that they would even express concern about my feelings was tribute enough for me of their generosity of spirit. Some samples of the dozen or so questions: What causes someone to choose that lifestyle? What was your relationship with your father like? You often see these gay pride parades on television; why do they have to flaunt it so? There were many more -



the meeting went on much longer than they'd hoped it would - and Gerry, I think, fielded the questions well.

Ben (Gerry's gay son) would be so proud of her! I'm already scheduled to speak before the Kiwan-

ians in my adopted town of Standish in January and I can hardly wait.

Mike Bendzela



*What's Happening is continued on p. 6*

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*This article was solicited by the Communique as part of a focus on same gender marriage. In the Speakout tradition, other opinions are always welcome.*

## ***First Principles and Gay Marriage***

by John Buie

I dropped into the Barnes and Noble bookstore, in Augusta, the other day to pick up a newspaper. I was somewhat taken aback when my search for pennies turned out to be for naught - there was no sales tax. Being relatively new to Maine I had to think about it for a minute. Then it came to me, "Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom... of the press..." Wow I thought, I'm in a place that actually respects a constitutional first principle (a far, far cry from my once noble Virginia)! More important, I suddenly had crystallized for me my discomfort with the current discussion about gay and lesbian rights - the discussion of marriage in particular.

I think I've heard almost every argument. Gay: "Why do we want to imitate a failed heterosexual institution?" Moralist: "How can gay people possibly compare their sodomy to my marriage?" Lesbian: "Marriage is a violent institution that perpetuates the notion of people as property." Straight: "Homosexuals can make whatever arrangements they want to by just making a contract - they don't need us endorsing their lifestyle by allowing them to marry."

Chorus: "Society isn't ready for gay and lesbian marriage."

For my friends who want nothing to do with marriage, I have considerable sympathy. It may help, though, to understand that most of the popular

history of marriage is garbage. First, marriage hasn't been the foundation of anything for thousands of years, let alone "Civilization As We Know It." Marriage emerged just two millennia ago and then only as a property relationship (contract) and then only for the most wealthy people, i.e. , people who had enough wealth to worry about it's disposition after death.

Marriage did not emerge as a spiritual institution, a religiously sponsored and supported bonding of two souls, until much later. And when it did, we

### ***Speakout Appointment Book for 1997***

Hot off the press! Be the first one on your block to own this wonderful, 2-week-at-a-glance, large format calendar with lots of interesting photos by five local lesbian/gay photographers. Only \$10! Makes a great holiday gift. FMI ☎ 879-0480 or send a check for \$10 to Maine Speakout Project 123 Congress St., #1, Portland, ME 04101.

### ***Same Gender Marriage Workshop***

Speakout is planning a training for anyone interested in preparing themselves for questions on same gender marriage. Please call the Speakout office at 879-0480 if you are interested. Date and location to be announced.

***There will be a Trainer Meeting  
January 12, 1997 from 11-4 at the  
home of Gerry Clement, 10 Kilborn  
Way, Falmouth. 781-2980.***

*Please bring your lunch*



have very good evidence that such relationships between members of the same sex were actually supported and celebrated by the church. It was only several hundred years ago that the demonization of gay people came into vogue and disreputable scholars began mistranslating the bible. This is not an appropriate venue to have this discussion but if you don't know it you should be aware that the old testament prohibitions against homosexual acts are on a par with the laws requiring that people keep kosher and don't wear cotton and wool at the same time. For Christians, St. Paul's admonitions on sexuality, now used to attack gay people, were admonitions against idolatry. Jesus said nothing on the subject.

But where does this leave us in the discussion of first principles as relates to lesbian and gay marriage? I think there are several reasons why marriage should be accessible to anyone who chooses it.

First, it is our right under the constitution. Totalitarian laws like the Defense of Marriage Act notwithstanding, the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution says, "No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States..., nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." From the perspective of the government, marriage is a legal contractual relationship (see the First Amendment on whether the government can care about the spiritual dimension). It is clearly unconstitutional for me to be denied the right to enter into such a contract, and reap its benefits when other citizens can. For me, that ends the discussion.

But second, and this is aimed at my gay and

lesbian friends for whom marriage is not a priority, or who agree that we should not be allowed to get married, I say this is a question of liberty. In the same way that I do not insist that heterosexual people engage in homosexual acts, or insist that they abstain from what many may consider "distasteful" sex acts, I will not insist that my homosexual sisters and brothers join me in marriage. Why do I not share the liberty of heterosexual Americans to choose marriage? Why would you conspire with others to deprive me of this liberty?

Third, from a spiritual perspective I think that, rather than denigrating marriage by our use of the institution, gays and lesbians would strengthen it. In fact, we would help others to see the higher order calling of marriage, "to be spiritually one." Marriage is, and should not be, simply a property relationship.

But those are my "principled" reasons. Like the gay rights tacticians who say, "Not now!" I too have a pragmatic view on marriage. But not just for myself (I've been married to my wonderful husband for almost 20 years and my relationship needs nothing from either the law or from society, thanks - and I'll deal with the stupid insurance regulations). I will not, however, any longer stand silently by while society eviscerates and tortures our gay and lesbian kids. Marriage offers one more way to role model for our kids. To offer them the alternative of valuing fidelity. To offer them a visible repudiation of the lie that homosexual people cannot achieve happiness, security or companionship for life. Forty percent of suicides under the age of 25 are lesbian and gay. The time has come for this to stop. Now.

And that is my most important principle.▼

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## **National Gay/Lesbian Task Force 9th Annual Creating Change Conference -**

*Washington D.C. (actually Alexandria, VA), November 6th -10th, 1996 — Naomi Falcone*

This was my first Creating Change Conference. Along with about half the conferees, I was known as a Creating Change virgin. I had gone to represent Speakout, sell some Speakout calendars, and immerse myself in activist culture.

The first two days were composed of institutes - day long, in depth workshops. I chose the *Race is the Issue* institute the first day. It focused on redistribution of power within one's organization as well as

diversifying the composition of the organization on all levels. The second day I went to the *Common Ground* institute which focused on the commonality between race, class and gender. It began with a lecture on economics in the U.S. since World War II, because money is something we all have in common and the decline of the economy has been a real factor in the rise of the radical right. The two days of institutes served to remind me of my creeping feeling





that if we don't work together across race, class and gender lines we will end up having a movement that again only really benefits the privileged amongst us.

Friday, Saturday and a little bit of Sunday were filled with 1½ hour workshops that ranged from: *How to Fight the Right; Freedom to Marry; Organizing: The Lost Art - to Digital Queers; Leather, and Let's talk about Sex, Babies...* So many workshops and so little time.

When I wasn't at the workshops I was busy selling Speakout calendars, luring people over to the table Speakout was sharing with GLAD from Boston. If I could make eye contact, I could usually get them over to the table. Then I would really rivet them by telling them how Speakout goes all over Maine talking about homophobia in little, tiny towns. This almost always resulted in a calendar sale.

Barney Frank opened the conference Thursday night, talking about the power of coalition building. He said that many Congresspeople voted with him, on gay issues, based on the trust they had developed when he worked with them on their legislation. He also talked about Congresspeople who wanted to support pro-gay legislation and who would have if they had heard from anyone who supported that position, but were unable to when they only heard from people who we're opposed to the legislation. He implored us to get involved.

The best part of the Barney Frank speech was the introduction given by the out-going director of NGLTF, Melinda Paras. She reminded us that Virginia is for a select group of "lovers" and that sodomy laws are still in place there. She suggested that we become test cases to challenge the sodomy laws. Lest we have any doubt about how to proceed, she gave us the legal definition of sodomy so that we would know what kind of sex qualified as a felony.

By far the best part of the conference was the speech that Carmen Vazquez gave the last night of the conference. Her talk, "Wounded Attachments," was powerful and uncompromising. She emphasized that: *"Normal within the context of a sick society is not enough."* and explained why we must work together across class, race and gender lines. I wish I could include the entire content of her speech, but I'll have to settle for a few excerpts.

*"We can't have queer liberation without a commitment to social justice. Without demanding an end to racism, without staking out our opposition to the public policy stupidity of ever expanding poverty in the richest nation on earth. We can't have queer liberation without a demand for the healing and preservation of our environment. We can't have queer liberation without a demand that the immigrants who serve this nation be treated with some measure of respect and with the resources necessary to preserve their health and educate their children.*

*We can't have queer liberation or even a law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation that would mean freedom for all queers, for all queers... and you know why we can't? Because we are all those people. We are immigrants arriving in America with hopes of a better life. We walk upon the earth and breathe its air. We are people of color visited daily by the violence of racism and the pain of poverty. We are families dependent on public assistance. To abandon those 'other causes*

*and other people' is to abandon ourselves."*

Carmen ended her talk by saying:

*"I want to ask that you remember that snowflakes don't really die when they fall on the ground. They melt and evaporate and come back again in a spring rain or a summer storm. So do we return in the life of a two-spirit people - in the men and women who fought fascism in a military that rejected them and still does. In the life of UPS drivers who press their uniforms everyday and come out just a little at a time. In the lives of queer African-Americans who stood up to the dogs, water hoses and gunfire for racial equality even as their ministers railed against the abomination of homosexuality. We return in the lives of young queers today who demand and deserve a life of joy and dignity in an inter-generational community. We will return until we are all free. It is time for us to be not just out but powerfully out, to move from being people seeking tolerance and acceptance to become a people seeking celebration of who we are and our many, many gifts to the human spirit. ... Go home and work your butts off for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender rights, but remember, remember that individual freedoms are worthless without a commitment to secure them for all.*

*Never, never settle for anything less than freedom for yourselves and the magnificent diversity of our abnormal, atypical, anomalous, aberrant, preternatural family in this queer and in this queer movement."*

*Carmen Vasquez was a founder of the San Francisco Women's Building, worked for the Outfund, and was a member of CUAV (Community United Against Violence) just to name a few of her accomplishments. ▼*





Continued from p. 3

### Windham Kiwanis, October 31st

Halloween night, goblins and ghosts and shades of the dreaded Portland Kiwanis, which Nina and Elliot had described so well last December (otherwise known as the "Speakout from hell"). "How bad can it be?" I said to my co-speaker, Mike Bendzela, as we sat in my car before the Kiwanis dinner meeting and our talk at Charlie Biegg's restaurant in Windham. "We're nice people and furthermore, really fascinating speakers. It'll be fine" And it was...

While we ate a super dinner, Mike and I talked with a man who taught in one of the Portland elementary schools - a very interesting discussion of education, which put us at ease and set the tone for later. Mike spoke first, a funny down-to-earth talk, complete with a paper bag mask prop - very effective. During my part, I noticed that all of the men (elderly, with a couple of exceptions) were most attentive and a few nodding their heads as I spoke - a good sign. And then came the questions and comments. Although some attitudes were stereotypical and traditional ("Why do they make that choice?" "Why do they flaunt it?"). It was all said in good humor and friendliness and, I felt, with a desire to hear our answers and with an open mind concerning them. "We never used to hear about this subject or these people," one said, somewhat plaintively. I did feel that this was the perfect Speakout opportunity, for while the men seemed often to express the myths and misconceptions of their day, they were somewhat confused about them and eager to embrace what we were saying. For example, when I reminded them that the same behavior labeled "flaunting" when done by gay men, either wouldn't be noticed, or would be noticed approvingly when done by a straight couple, the audience members quickly agreed. After we all had said how much we enjoyed the evening, Mike and I floated euphorically downstairs to the restaurant where other Speakout people - Madeleine, Chris, Paula, and Naomi were waiting to hear, discuss and drink coffee. Nothing like Naomi to make one feel even better than one already does. Not a scary Halloween, after all!

Gerry Clement



### M.C.C. Church, Portland

On 11/16, Peg Smith and I spoke at the M.C.C. church in Portland. For both of us it was our first Speakout engagement.

Peg spoke first about the eldest of her four children coming out as a lesbian. At first she had some trouble dealing with her daughter's sexual orientation, now she appears more comfortable with it. Her daughter and her companion recently bought a house (congratulations!) and Peg wishes the best for them.

I spoke about how I came out to one of my co-workers at B.I.W. during the height of the "No on 1" campaign. After I did, he no longer told anti-gay remarks and seems to respect me more. The point was made that by coming out to one person at a time, the ice slowly melts, the hate ceases and a human face is put on the issue.

The discussion afterwards included the genetics of homosexuality and religious values involving gays and lesbians (not surprising considering this was a religious group).

This was an ideal Speakout for Peg and I to "get our feet wet."

Jim Michaud



### UCC Church, Falmouth

The Speakout at the United Congregational Church on Sunday, 11/17 went well. Donna and I made an effective team, I feel, as our stories give quite different perspectives on discrimination. The size of the audience was somewhat disappointing (just six) but they were enthusiastic and discussed the issues freely after our presentations. "Powerful" was the term the audience echoed after the presentation.

The audience expressed disappointment that more people were not there. Donna and I asked them to act as advocates in finding more Speakout opportunities in clubs and organizations to which they belonged. I believe this should be instituted as standard practice.

I was pleased with my first Speakout and encouraged to seek more events.

Lew Alessio





### Damariscotta/Newcastle Rotary

Debbie Matson and I spoke to the Damariscotta/Newcastle Rotary on November 12th. We received a warm welcome and the Speakout lasted half an hour. The audience was in general passive and only three of the estimated forty+ attendees participated. It was like pulling teeth!

I'm glad Debbie and I practiced asking each other questions. I asked the audience: "Have any of you had to stifle your expression of love for someone out of fear of personal harm?" A brief, positive discussion ensued that I'm sure planted some valuable seeds.

Elliott Cherry

*Editors note: We rarely get any feedback from organizations that host speaking engagements but Bob Laird who was the contact person for this event called the next day to say how glad they were that we had come!*



### MCC Church, Portland

On Saturday 11/16, Jim Michaud and I met with members of the Metropolitan Community Church, a church group for gays and lesbians. We met at the Immanuel Baptist Church on High street in Portland. Our host was Mike Adams.

As it was the first speaking engagement for either Jim or me, we were relieved to find ourselves speaking to a small informal gathering. There were nine people present. To add to the relaxed atmosphere, coffee and doughnuts were served as we sat around a large rectangular table.

Because of our friendly audience, I think the meeting went well. After Jim and I had given our program, we had a very good discussion with just about everyone participating. We talked about choice, religion and relationships between homosexuals and their families. Hearing their views was particularly helpful to me, a heterosexual. I feel that I learned more from them than they did from me and I was grateful for the experience.

Peggy Smith

## Coordinator's Update

The *Portland Press Herald* headline could have read "Speakout Delegation Attacked by Sound-bite at Editorial Board Meeting." But since it didn't and this is an experience that shouldn't remain hidden from history, here is a brief recounting.

On 11/19, two MSOP volunteers, Gerry Clement and John Buie, Esduardo Mariscal, Mexican Choreographer (and my partner) and Deb Panish, one of his performers, were visiting the PPH board at one of their daily meetings, to suggest an editorial about MSOP and the benefit performance that Esduardo Mariscal Dance-Theater was doing for us on 11/23. Two editorial writers, George Neavoll and Nancy Grape, listened respectfully to John and Gerry tell their personal stories. But the third, M.D. Harmon, would not even wait for Gerry to finish her story before he went on automatic pilot, rudely interrupting and lighting into her - and us - with a denuncia-

tion of "your politics" and "your morality" and the suggestion that we follow the example of "friends" who went through Exodus Ministries and changed themselves from gay to straight.

I tried to respond to Mr. Harmon by telling him that at our Speakout dialogues we don't get into debates but speak about our personal experiences and try to listen to each other. At the word "listen" he went off again, interrupting me with more of his vitriol. He seemed not to be a person but rather an anti-gay sound-bite nipping at us from behind his rigid stereotypes.

This encounter was disturbing to all of us because, as members of the public, we expected to be treated with respect and to be allowed to say our say. It's one thing to have editorialists with a range of views. It's another to have one of them making bigoted verbal attacks. Would the PPH tolerate an editorial writer who told a Jew com-

plaining of anti-Semitism in the community that s/he should convert to Christianity and stop complaining? Or an African-American that s/he should bleach his/ her skin as the best response to racial prejudice? I don't think so.

That the PPH did publish a good editorial about MSOP on 11/22 is to their credit and I thank them for it. But that it allows M.D. Harmon to insult the public on company time as a part of his job I find difficult to understand.

The 10/16 *St. John Valley Times* in Aroostook County had an article with the headline "Video of rural gays and lesbians to be shown at UMFK; discussion follows" that announced a screening of Ellen Spiro's "Greetings From Out Here" which I attended. The following week, an angry reader placed a paid ad in the same paper criticizing MSOP for trying to "recruit at UMFK." She denounced MSOP because "They would have us think





that a gay lifestyle is normal for some" and she warned ominously that "rats don't nest when we're up and active, they work when we're sleeping. So we had better wake up." She held out an olive branch of sorts, albeit a thorny one, by concluding the "God hates sins. But He loves sinners."

Shocking? No. Troubling? Yes. And to my mind fresh evidence that we need to keep reaching out to people in our towns who will listen and talk with us so that we can continue to "promote respect and understanding between persons of differing sexual orientations," to quote from our mission statement.

It gave me special pleasure though to see the beaming faces of MSOP volunteer Elliott Cherry and his partner (and former Puppetone) Chris Chenard on the front page of the 12/5 PPH in the article "Gay-marriage ruling fuels heated debate across Maine." Elliott was featured in the quote of the day ("We don't want to be treated like second-class citizens anymore.") and he and

Chris spoke with dignity and power about why they want the right to marry. Thank you Elliott and Chris and Aloha!

A special thanks to the photographers who donated their great photos to the MSOP 1997 Appointment book: Tom Antonik, Robert Diamante, Annette Dragon, Rose Marasco and Martha Mickles; to Aaron Cheever Maine College of Art senior who designed it; and to June Fitzpatrick for showing the photos at her gallery at 112 High St., Portland, where you can see them through December 24 (and they're for sale!)

I also want to thank Madeleine Winter & Naomi Falcone for putting out the MSOP *Communique* and a special nod to Naomi for representing us at the "Creating Change Conference" in November.

Volunteers are the life-blood of MSOP and I want to present gold stars of appreciation to Chris Chenard, Elliott Cherry, Gerry Clement, Bob Hobbs, Jennifer Goldman, Sherry McCullough, Nina Mollicone,

Linda Parker, Janis Tyderle and to the members of the MSOP Leadership Council.

We will be scheduling a statewide Speakout gathering some weekend this spring so that we can share experiences, provide additional training, and focus on how to make our project work better. More information to follow soon.

Please remember MSOP in your holiday giving. We are in cash-flow crunchville right now and need to begin 1997 with some moneys in reserve. WE NEED YOUR HELP NOW!

So, have good holidays and a happy new year! -- Jonathan

#### **HOLIDAY READING SUGGESTION**

MSOP Advisory Committee member and co-chair of the Religious Coalition Against Discrimination Rev. Marvin Ellison has just published a book that you may want to read: *Erotic Justice: A Liberating Ethic of Sexuality*. You can call 1-800-227-2872 to order it for \$17.

### ***Volunteers Needed!***

Speakout is in need of volunteers for mailings & other office tasks, including data entry on the Mac. Flexible hours! If you can spare any time call Jonathan at 879-0480.

***We'd love to hear from you!  
Please note that the deadline  
for submissions for the Spring  
edition of the Communique is  
March 10, 1997.***

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Portland, ME 04101