



MSOP Newsletter

Spring 2001

Executive Director's Report

Like the groundhog coming up to look for its shadow, we are after a long hiatus getting out a newsletter.... and impatiently looking for spring to spring! We've been very busy at Speakout on a number of fronts. Here's a brief summary.

Defeat of Question 6 & Speakout

Losing our nondiscrimination bill by 1% in the November election was very disheartening and a great disappointment to many, many Mainers. I don't for a minute believe it means that the majority of voters are diehard homophobes but it does tell us we have more work to do.

MSOP was organized six years ago during an earlier civil rights ballot initiative because we believed that if we, the gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgender (gltb) people who live in every town in Maine, would come forward to share our personal experiences with our nongay peers where we lived, worked, and worshipped, that we could break the ice on talking about "gay issues"; that by sharing our personal stories we could help dissolve the inherited prejudice (homophobia), fear, and sheer lack of awareness that prevent us from full and equal participation in our communities.

We still stand by this approach, so our response to losing Question 6 is to rededicate our organization to training more speakers and getting them out for dialogues *in the towns in which the majority voted against the civil rights bill*. It's a safe bet that there's ice that needs breaking in these towns and we intend to do our best to break it! Our goal is to do 130 speakouts this year and with the good work that our new venues coordinator Doris Ortiz is doing to generate these invitations, I fully expect we will reach our goal.

If we don't ask, we won't get!

Reflecting negatively on our electoral loss and positively on the success of last June's *Walks with the One You Love* (Walks in 10 Maine towns with the enthusiastic participation of nongay people in organizing every one of them), I'm convinced that we need to ask more of the nongay people in our lives for whom the ice has already broken and who are basically with us. We need to ask them to stand with us, to speak out with us, to make it known that they won't accept second-class citizenship for their glbt friends, relatives, and coworkers.

How can we win our civil rights struggle unless we bring many nongay people out to support us? Let's take seriously the old fundraising adage: "If you don't ask, you don't get." We need to find opportunities to ask for support *so we can build a civil rights movement that actually moves us to where we want to go!*

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Walking With The Ones You Love: Bringing Gay & Nongay Together

Walk With The Ones You Love is now a statewide project that brings gay and nongay people together to make a public statement of solidarity, support, and commitment to making our communities and our schools safe places for all of us. It is an event that we are using to talk about all of the issues that concern us: the importance of recognizing our relationships and our families, ending harassment and discrimination of glbt students in schools, the need for civil rights protections from discrimination. And the Walks are one way of asking the many nongay people in our lives to come out and support us.

This June 17, we are promoting Walk With The Ones You Love in every county in Maine. If you are interested in participating in a Walk in your town or county, please return the tear-off form in the newsletter and we'll plug you in to ongoing organizing efforts or work with you to get a Walk going in your town.

We are also leading an effort to encourage people in other states to organize local Walks. Working with the National Gay

and Lesbian Task Force as our national launch-the-Walks partner, we are preparing an "Organizer's Guide" to assist other states & communities. We are pleased to report the Walks have been endorsed by the following national or regional organizations:

- Dignity USA
- GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network)
- GLAD (Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders)
- GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation)
- National Alliance for Choice In Giving
- National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)
- PFLAG (Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays)
- Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
- Unitarian Universalist Association Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns
- United Church of Christ Coalition of LGBT Concerns
- *The Advocate*

Bangor Daily News leads the way into the 21st century

In December the Bangor Daily News made history for becoming the first paper in Maine to begin publishing announcements of same sex unions. The BDN made this decision after being approached by Penobscot County Speakout coordinator Fern Stearns whose son Alan and his partner Austin celebrated their ceremony of commitment last summer at a chapel in Boothbay Harbor.

Here's an excerpt from my thank you letter to BDN publisher Rick Warren:

...For me it's all about love and the most basic needs of every human being to love another person and make a family. And I really think that the only way for nongay people to come to understand this and accept us is by seeing and hearing about real gay people — their neighbors, workmates, relatives — who are making families together. Thus, to me, the great value of publishing announcements of our commitments in the local paper.

I also believe that such normalizing and publicizing of our relationships can bring very positive benefits for our young people, gay and nongay. Gay teens in Maine — and in other states as well — attempt suicide at twice the number of their nongay peers. They feel isolated with their "secret," often feeling there is no one they can talk to, not parents, not teachers, no one about a part of themselves that is so basic and so important. To look in the local papers and not see our

commitments publicly acknowledged reinforces a teen's hopeless feeling that "my love has no future." I just ask you to think how you would feel if growing up you saw that the love you felt was not recognized or even talked about in public or private.

This is why I think the BDN has made an important contribution towards accepting gay people on an equal footing as part of the community. That no other paper in Maine has yet, to my knowledge, taken this step commends you all the more."

How can you help move other papers to follow the BDN into the 21st century? Ask a couple of nongay allies to go with you to meet with your local paper to ask them to begin publishing announcements of our commitments or anniversaries. Bring them an announcement with a picture. Tell them why it matters to you. We are hoping that the week before this year's Walk with the Ones You Love that other Maine papers will publish editorials announcing their willingness to begin publishing same sex union announcements. Let's make it a campaign!

In appreciation...

...we are honoring the *Bangor Daily News* and Fern Stearns at a fundraiser for MSOP at the home of Carol and Joe Wishcamper in Freeport on Sunday, May 20th. For more information, or to receive an invitation, please call the office.

Thank You Norma Marin & Friends: Art Auction a Success!

A very special thanks goes to Norma Marin and the 74 other artists who responded to her call by donating work to an art auction to benefit MSOP. More than a year ago, Norma approached me to offer a work by her late father-in-law, the modern master John Marin, for us to sell at auction to support Speakout. Norma's appeal to other artists brought us 75 works, which we put up for auction on eBay in early December. With a one day show at the Alexander and Bonin Gallery in Chelsea, New York City (thank you, Carolyn Alexander & Ted Bonin!), we sold 25 of the pieces, netted \$25,000 and entered the new year in the black!

Norma's generosity is deeply appreciated and it is with pleasure that I report that she will be honored at the Blaine House by Maine's First Lady Mary J. Herman on Monday, June 11th for her good works for the cause of equal rights in Maine.

Apropos our remaining 50 works of art, we will be holding a live auction in Maine later this summer where we hope to sell everything! More to follow on this soon.

We really need your support!

This year our budget is \$255,000 and we are counting on raising these funds from many individuals, a few foundations, some special events, and our *Walk With The Ones You Love* program book. This is a time when we really need your support. We can't do our important work without your help. Thank you.

April 2, 2001

In the past five years, the Maine Council of Churches has worked closely with Maine SpeakOut in their efforts to engage people throughout Maine in conversation and questions about issues of sexual orientation. We have found storytelling to be an exceptionally effective way to build understanding and empathy, and we have been very pleased to be affiliated with the SpeakOut Project.

An extension of the SpeakOut work for the past three years has been a SpeakOut sponsored "Walk With The Ones You Love" held in the spring. These events provide the opportunity for gay and non-gay people to witness their presence and solidarity with their gay and lesbian friends and neighbors. Please consider joining one of these walks, which will be held throughout Maine on June 17th. For more information, please contact the SpeakOut office.

Sincerely,

Tom Ewell
Executive Director
Maine Council of Churches



As Maine Goes... America Speaks Out!

A couple of years ago we began *America Speaks Out*, a project to train people from other states to develop Speakout programs based on our Maine model. We provided trainings and consultation to groups in Atlanta, Tucson, St. Petersburg, and at the "Creating Change" conference in Pittsburgh.

Last summer, we held our first *America Speaks Out National Training Institute* in South Portland during the summer. Twenty-two people from Arkansas, Texas, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine attended this three-day training. This July 26-29, again in South Portland, we are holding our second ASO Institute and we are working to attract a diverse class of trainees from organizations in other states and regions. The goal and purpose of the ASO Institute is to disseminate a template, an approach that can be effective if adapted and incorporated by already existing organizations whose mission is to advance the cause of safe communities and full equality for glbt Americans.

Register by May 15, 2001 by calling AMERICA SPEAKS OUT NATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE toll-free at 1-866-879-6767 or fill out our registration form on our web-site: www.mainespeakout.org

America Speaks Out Goes to New York City!

To sustain our ongoing educational efforts in Maine and to support the development of our ASO National Institute, we have just opened a small office in the New York City headquarters of the Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund, 120 Wall Street. I now spend one week a month in New York where I am meeting potential donors, foundation staff, and working to increase our out of state financial support.

To give ASO a visible and credible national identity, we have been organizing an advisory board called the ASO National Council. While still in formation, its present members are:

- Bruce Bawer, author, *Stealing Jesus: How Fundamentalism Betrays Christianity*
- Kevin Cathcart, Executive Director, Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund
- James Dale, plaintiff in "Dale vs. Boy Scouts of America"
- Michael Denny, Senior Editor, St. Martin's Press
- E.J. Graff, author, *What Is Marriage For?*
- Dr. Mathilde Krim, American Foundation for AIDS Research
- Norma Marin, executor - John Marin estate
- Ned Rorem, composer and writer
- Robert Taylor, author, *The Innocent*
- Alan Wolfe, author, *Moral Freedom*
- Philip Yenawine, art educator

Quotes from the past year:

"What this vote tells me is not that this is over, but that we have some work to do with peoples' hearts in the state of Maine... This is just another step in the important journey to improve the quality of life for everybody in Maine."

—**Gov. Angus King, Augusta Statehouse SpeakOut!**

Dec. 6, 2000

"SAME SEX UNION: IT'S TIME TO SAY YES... Deep reflection by this editorial board included careful listening to young adults of the next generation of the Blethen family, which owns controlling interest of this newspaper. Their views were clear and unanimous: Discrimination in any form should not be tolerated, and they hoped their newspaper's editorial page would step up and say so."

—**Seattle Times editorial**, July 23, 2000. [Note: the Blethen family also controls the *Portland Press Herald* and *Maine Sunday Telegram*, which still refuse to run same sex announcements]

"What it came down to was two people wanting to announce their commitment to one another. We ran it on the same page as all the other wedding and engagement announcements... We did give it a lot of thought, but, at this moment, it is socially significant that there is a greater tolerance of differences."

—**Mark Woodward** (editor of the *Bangor Daily News*), *Portland Phoenix*, Jan. 2001 [Note: the BDN ran the Stearns/Brown Civil Ceremony announcement on Dec. 30, 2000]

"I wouldn't have challenged the Boy Scouts on this if I hadn't been one for so long... This is not a case of me wanting to join a group that doesn't want me. I WAS THE BOY SCOUTS."

—**James Dale**, USM-Portland SpeakOut!, Oct. 14, 2000

"What hatred there is in any community is just fueled when that kind of programming is allowed... As parents of a gay child, we want to create a more calming climate for all young gays and lesbians and this won't help."

—**David Ripley** (PFLAG), *Portland Press Herald*, Sept. 7, 2000 [Note: Dr. Laura Show article in response to a planned SpeakOut! at WMGE-Channel 13 on 9/11/00]

MSOP County Contacts

Please consider being our contact in your county if its not listed below. Call the office for more information, or fill out & send us the form provided in this newsletter. Thank you.

Androscoggin

Martha Palmer, 353-6847

Aroostook

Cathy Bohls, 473-0062;

cbohls@acap-me.org

Cumberland

Contact Doris Ortiz at our Portland office:

MSOPProject@gwi.net

Hancock

Tamara Duff, 667-5621;

tamara@panax.com

Knox

Lucie Bauer, 925-1034;

ibak@mint.net

Penobscot

Fern Stearns, 827-3609;

stearns@maine.maine.edu

Waldo

Debbie Hockensmith, 338-1704;

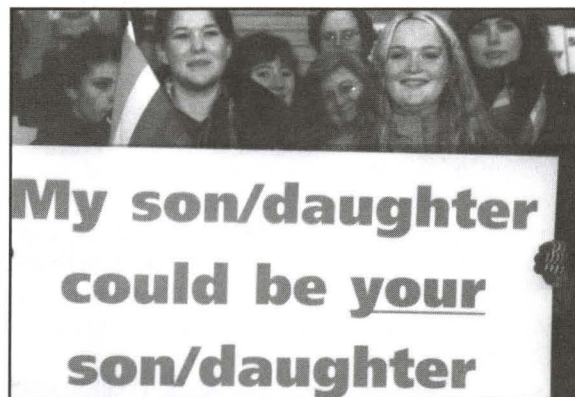
dhockensmith@mossinc.com

York

Rosemary Guptill, 985-2748

Barbara McAllister, 207-282-1024;

dlridley@ime.net



Deering HS Rainbow Alliance: (l to r) Sara Webber, Kaley Young, Betsy Parsons, Sarah Carnahan, Lindsay Keller



Approximately 200 attendees and media at the Augusta SpeakOut! Rally - Dec. 6, 2000

There are many ways to support MSOP:

- Hosting a House Party
- Volunteering at Events
- Volunteering at Our Offices
- Donating Office Furniture & Equipment
- Transferring Appreciated Stock
- Sponsoring an Event
- Making an Annual Pledge to MSOP
- Becoming a Trained Speaker

For more information on how you can help support MSOP, please contact our offices at: 1-866-879-6767 (toll free) or email us at: MSOPProject@gwi.net.

To become a MSOP County Contact, please fill out this form and return it to MSOP.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

County: _____

Home #: _____ Work #: _____

Email: _____

SAVE THE DATE... September 15, 2001!

MaineShare's
Meet at the
Mountain



fundraising
HIKE & BIKE

Bradbury Mountain State Park in Downal, Maine

For more information, contact MaineShare at
207-622-0105 or visit our website www.maineshare.org

Wish List

If you have any office furniture or equipment, or any of the items below, please consider making an in-kind, tax deductible donation to MSOP.

Art Work	Floor Lamps
Bookshelves	Office Supplies
Brochure Rack	Photocopier Paper
Cleaning Supplies	Plants
Desk	Step Ladder
Desk Chair (w/ wheels)	Wall Clock
Filing Cabinets	Window Treatments

A Special Thank You...

To all of our volunteers, county coordinators, and speakers:

We could not do the important work that we do statewide if not for you and your tireless efforts! Thank you for giving of yourselves so selflessly!

Sincerely,
MSOP Staff & Board

Upcoming Events

April 28

Saturday, 9–5 PM

Speaker Training, Univ. of New England, Biddeford Campus
Please call the MSOP office to register for this training or visit our web site.

May 12

Saturday, 9–5 PM

Speaker Training, University of Maine – Orono Campus
Please call the MSOP office to register for this training or visit our web site.

May 20

Sunday, 5–7 PM

Join us for a fundraiser at the home of the Wishcampers in Freeport to honor the *Bangor Daily News* and Fern Stearns. Call the office for more information or to receive an invitation.

June 10

Sunday, 3–5 PM

Join us for a fundraiser at the beautiful home of Hedy and Michael Cohen in Cape Elizabeth, featuring the classical vocalist Christina Astrachan. Call the office for more information or to receive an invitation to this fabulous summer event.

June 11

Monday, 2:30–4 PM

A celebration at the Blaine House Governor's Mansion to honor resident philanthropist Norma Marin. Call the office for more information or to receive an invitation.

June 17

Sunday (Father's Day)

WALK WITH THE ONES YOU LOVE in a town near you — and the national launching of the WALK WITH THE ONES YOU LOVE in other states! Contact the office for more information or visit our web site.

July 26–29

Thursday–Sunday

America Speaks Out National Institute at SMTCC Campus in So. Portland. For more information or to volunteer, please call the office or visit our web site.

We'd Appreciate your Appreciated Stock!

With the stock markets more unpredictable, you may be thinking of selling some stock to lock in some of the gains you've made. If you sell appreciated securities you may be hit with tax liabilities on the value of the stock that exceeds your initial purchase price.

Donating these same stocks to MSOP{a 501(c)(3) nonprofit} provides you an opportunity to:

- Make a larger donation at a significantly reduced cost to you;
- Eliminate Federal and State taxes on the appreciated value (if you transfer instead of sell the stocks); and
- Secure a significant tax deduction.

Please consider the donation of stocks...it would be greatly appreciated! Contact: A.G. Edwards Brokerage Gift Account at 1-800-424-4452 (Account # 210-260064).
Thank you!

Volunteer Diaries

"I experienced a holy embrace"

Betsy Parsons

On a snowy Sunday morning in February, Jim Estes and I spoke to a hardy gathering of souls at the Wiscasset United Church of Christ. Arriving early for an after-church forum, I slipped into a back pew for the last portion of the worship service, enjoying part of the sermon, the final hymn, and the organ postlude. I liked being with this community in their worship before joining them for the Speakout.

As a lifetime UCC member who felt compelled to leave this denomination several years ago because I could not be "out" there (in spite of official nondiscrimination policies of the national UCC), I was home again. There, among this unknown church community, I found the familiar and the beloved in music and words, the sadness of having had to give up on a church family I loved, frustration with the slowness of change, joy in knowing my old church later voted to become an Open and Affirming Church (in UCC parlance, fully accepting of GLBT people in community and in leadership), and fascination with watching another church begin that study process.

There is something sacred about watching ordinary people struggle with the challenges of their faith. I felt honored to be present with UCC members engaging in those critical small acts of courage which create a sacred space for listening and learning together.

Perhaps thirty people stayed for the forum, in spite of the intensifying storm. Jim introduced us and set everyone at ease with his gentle humor and helpful explanations. He chose to tell the story of coming out to his parents. I told the story of being a longtime UCC "insider" who had to become an outsider.

Our audience was very welcoming and receptive. They asked with concern about our families and our workplace experiences (for Jim, Fairchild Semiconductor; for me, Portland and Deering High Schools). They wanted to know what they could do to prevent the exile of GLBT people and family members from their own congregation. They were very concerned about educational issues for their young people. They asked about the effects of exclusionary language in their worship life.

Our session went past the appointed time. I was grateful for the warmth of this group and the presence of at least one youth, as well as middle-aged and older people. The telling of my story to a surrogate church family was a healing experience for me. In the consternation on their faces and the sincerity of their questions around the circle, I experienced a holy embrace.

Authentically living a faith can be very hard, perhaps especially for those of us who have lived a long time with unexamined privilege (I count myself in that group as a well-educated white American of primarily English descent). I was grateful to be in the presence of these UCC folks as they try, in fact, to be the whole people of God.

"Speaking to young people is ...very rewarding" - Dan Paris

I have been on several speakers bureaus and thought I was doing a good job until I took the Maine Speak Out Project Speaker Training. This training was much harder than I expected. The training made me sharpen up my presentation, set a time limit, and try for a hook. This information and practice made me a better speaker.

Since I took the training I have only spoken to several 9th grade health ed. classes concerning being a parent of a lesbian. Also on the panel were members of Outright. I very much enjoy speaking to these young people, as I feel that this age group or even younger groups are hopefully going to be able to change the homophobia that exists today, and fully accept and embrace diversity.

Having spoken to the health ed. classes over the last four or five years, I feel a more interested and compassionate attitude of the students. I must admit the students are more interested in what the Outright young people have to say, but they are attentive to my part of the program as a parent. I know they are listening as they ask pertinent questions. Speaking to young people is much needed and very rewarding experience for me.

"Lifetime commitment ceremony ... says it all"

Fern & Bill Stearns

In early spring, 2000, our son and his partner told friends and family that they had scheduled a commitment ceremony for July 2. I mentioned their plans to some friends, then found myself thinking that there must be a more efficient way to spread the news. The newspaper - of course! But alas, many newspapers offer this efficiency only to opposite sex partners.

Although I had heard people talk about efforts in southern Maine to persuade newspapers to print announcements about same-sex ceremonies, I hadn't given any thought to the Bangor Daily News' policy on the matter. However, as my rejoicing about the commitment grew, so did my desire to see a public announcement about it. Seeing nothing on the BDN's Album page about policies regarding such announcements, I phoned the Album editor. Surprise! He said that no one had ever asked him. At his suggestion, I phoned his supervising editor. Same surprise! I phoned the managing editor. His response was that the BDN does not - would not - print such announcements, for basically the same reasons given by other Maine newspapers: same-sex ceremonies are not legal entities; conservative businesses might stop advertising in the paper.

As I mulled his response, it kept coming to mind that two BDN editorial writers were/are, to my perception, very supportive of gays. And I knew that the publisher himself had been publicly supportive on more than one occasion. Encouraged by these thoughts, I asked for and received permission (with some guidelines) from our son and his partner to pursue the matter. I then wrote to the publisher of the BDN and asked if he would give serious thought to changing the paper's policy. He quickly wrote back saying that he was "not unsympathetic" and indeed would think about it, pointing out however that time was needed to pursue the matter. I hadn't told him that it was my son's upcoming ceremony that had triggered my query;

perhaps he read between the lines: he asked for a sample announcement.

Our son and his partner wrote a sample of the announcement they planned to submit after their "lifetime commitment ceremony," which phrase (except for secular legalities) says it all - no need to use the words "marriage" or "wedding." In early June I mailed the sample to the publisher with a brief cover letter in which I said that printing the announcement near the start of 2001 would be a great way to kick off the REAL first year of the new millennium.

July 2nd's scheduled joyous ceremony took place without a hitch. As months passed with no word from the BDN, I became impatient and asked our son and his partner whether I should do anything to try and hurry things up. "Not until after November 7," they advised. Finally, at the November 5 prayer vigil at St. Mary's Church in Bangor, a woman informed us that an editor told her at a previous meeting that the editorial staff had decided to allow Album announcements of same-sex ceremonies.

Our son and his partner quickly submitted an announcement to the Album editor of the Bangor Daily News, which published it on December 29, 2000, the REAL last weekend of the old millennium.

"I am afraid of what you might do to my son" **Gracia Woodward**

Last spring Jim Fotter and I did a speakout at Mt Ararat Middle School in Brunswick. We were speaking to seventh and eighth graders, the youngest group we'd ever worked with. Mt. Ararat is the school my son will be attending next year, so this was important to me.

The occasion was their Diversity Day, organized by their civil rights team (I think). It was a delight. We were ushered into the library where coffee and muffins and other interesting speakers awaited us. Students escorted us to each of our speaking engagements. In the midst of each session, other students showed up with cups of water for us. It was definitely the best-organized and most welcoming event I had ever spoken at.

Best of all was the audience. The students were attentive and courteous. Their questions were right on - "Are your children ashamed of you?" "What happened when you told your parents?" All the stuff I love to talk about.

I had decided to focus on my concerns for my own children. I said to the group, "I usually introduce myself by giving my first and last name, but today I'm only telling you my first name. That's because my son will be coming to this school in a few years, and I am afraid of what you might do to him. I am afraid you might harass him for having gay parents, and that's why I'm doing this program." They had been listening before, but now their silence became absolute.

We were fortunate to have the principal of the school, Bette Manchester, attend one of our sessions that day. She liked what she saw and invited us back to talk with the faculty. Jim was able to do that last fall.

All in all, a very satisfactory event. It made me feel very hopeful about the community in which I live.

March Retreat Diary - Martha Palmer

I decided to sign up for the training in Stockton Springs given by Maine Speakout Project on how to organize for this year's

WALK WITH THE ONES YOU LOVE scheduled for June 17. Friday afternoon I picked up Michel B. at Delorme Maps. We headed north to Stockton Springs keeping an eye on the sky hoping to beat the incoming storm. It was very handy to have a passenger who works for a map company, especially since I'm "directions impaired." We made it to the cabin as the first flakes began to fall. Jonathan had the wood stove going to warm the cabin. He also had all the fire alarms going as well! Liz volunteered to take over wood stove duties for the rest of the weekend. The cabin had indoor plumbing for those of you who were curious (and it was clean thanks to Michel B.).

Once we all arrived Friday evening, Jonathan, David, Doris and Liz began preparing snacks for us to munch on while we got to know each other and they prepared dinner. Besides Michel and myself, there were two other students, Rosemary and Ralph. Saturday morning Bill and Fern braved the storm and drove down from Bangor to join us, making six. Weather concerns unfortunately caused a number of other attendees to cancel. We settled down with various colored wines, excellent food (Doris taught me how to fold a burrito) and good talk while the storm began in earnest outside. All four hosts waited on us, cooking and cleaning. We guests were occasionally successful in our attempts to help. I fought to cut some strawberries (fresh!) and wash dishes once! There was a glorious view of the ocean and islands that we discovered on Sunday after the storm finally stopped and the sun emerged. Liz, bless her, shoveled the driveway while we worked on the last section of the training.

The training was excellent, very well organized and effective. Jonathan encouraged us and kept us on task. He also supplied me repeatedly with names, as I'm also "name impaired." David got us started and organized and consolidated our thoughts. The training encouraged me to start thinking differently about who and what I knew and how and why to tap into those assets. Previously I had always felt safer to approach only my known allies. After this weekend's training I have begun to think more about the Archie Bunkers and Boy Scout organizations in my life. I'm trying to remember that these are the people and organizations that we not only should reach out to but can reach with our message.

It was a wonderful weekend that I feel has changed my thinking a great deal. I will long remember the good food, bountiful wine (thanks to David and his new 4-wheel drive) wonderful friends and a back seat full of snow.

"A long journey toward a new understanding" **Susan & Peter Misner**

Many years ago, when our son "came out" to us, we started on a long journey toward a new understanding of what it means to be homosexual. We became members of PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) and found a wonderful group of people dedicated to educating the general public in this area.

They were the foundation for our becoming members of Maine Speak Out Project, and going out into the community to talk with any group who asked us to come. The experiences have been varied and eye-opening.

We have spoken to seminary students, church groups, women's groups, and high school students. We are always a little anxious going in, but have found that if we don't try to push an agenda, people are generally very kind. While some in the groups may not have wanted to hear what we had to say, they listened, and one can only hope that some seed of

Maine Speakout Project
P.O. Box 15303
Portland, Maine 04112-5303

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U.S. Postage
PAID
Portland, ME
Permit #508



■ www.mainespeakout.org

WALK WITH THE ONES YOU **LOVE**

**June 17, 2001 is Father's Day and
the national launching of the annual
WALK WITH THE ONES YOU LOVE.**

WALK organizing meetings are happening in your area; to participate, call the office for meeting information or to request a "GUIDE TO ORGANIZING A WALK" and add your town to this list:

Augusta • Bangor/Brewer • Belfast • Brunswick •
Dover-Foxcroft • Ellsworth/Bar Harbor • Kennebunk
• Lewiston/Auburn • Peak's Island • Portland •
Caribou/Presque Isle • Rockland/Rockport • South
Portland • Yarmouth



**For more information, please contact us at:
Maine Speakout – America Speaks Out**

PO Box 15303, Portland, ME 04112-5303
1-866-879-MSOP (6767); fax: (207)775-4903
www.mainespeakout.org

- ☐ Yes, I want to organize a Walk in my town,
_____, on June 17, 2001.
- ☐ Yes, I will ask our town councilors to declare
June 17, 2001 and all subsequent Father's Days
as "Walk With The Ones You Love" Day.
- ☐ Yes, I will ask our state representatives to de-
clare June 17, 2001 and all subsequent Father's
Days as "Walk With The Ones You Love" Day.