

Free

Perceptions

Saginaw Valley

www.PerceptionsSV.org

Serving the Tri-City area LGBT Community



July 2008

PERCEPTIONS SUMMER

Kay Sural

Summer. A time for rest, relaxation and fun! Your Perceptions Board is working to make that happen within your Perceptions family. Our summer events are going to be outdoor, family friendly events.

Another outdoor picnic is planned, this time at Garn and Vicky's on July 15th. The garden party, a joint event with PFlag, will take place at the home of Rick Rios on Saturday, July 19th, from 7 to 10pm.

Of course, indoor events will happen as well. The July Meet & Greet in Freeland, at the always fun and friendly Riverside Restaurant on July 9th. If you have never been to the Freeland event, you must come, if not for the great company, come for the great pie! Extra whipped cream for Doug, of course! The board is also planning for Fall events

like the [Respect Fest](#) at the Temple Theater in September and the October 18th wine tasting event at the Saginaw Board of Realtors. Opperman's will provide the wine and Perceptions member Eric Prebay and his singing partner Lee Perry will provide music again this year.



We also want to give a big shout out to our newest Perceptions Advisor, Leo Romo. Leo as you know, has been a long time Perceptions member who served on the board for several years. He finally "retired" from the board, took a long,

long vacation this winter and now has agreed to be a part of our family on a part-time basis. We are extremely fortunate to have Leo, one of the most informed, connected men on LGBT issues in the state.

See you this summer!

Perceptions Saginaw Valley

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Mid-Michigan's leading resource for enriching and empowering GLBT individuals and their community

Perceptions is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. Your contributions to Perceptions which exceed the minimum amount to qualify for membership are tax deductible.

Mission statement: Our mission is to provide superior educational programs, networking opportunities and services for the well being of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender individuals and their community.

Pride

Kathy VanBuskirk



June was pride month. I am hoping that you all feel the pride in yourselves that you are deserving of. You are a beautiful creation of a loving creator. Each of us was created just as we were meant to be. Each and every one of us is an heir to mighty possibilities and creative energy. We are perfect as we are created.

Do not doubt yourself or any other person. Never be ashamed or accept anyone belittling you as truth. Each one of us contributes to life's glow. Shine brightly and never loose your self respect or sense of worth.

You are worth a lot to this world and to each and every one of us. You are a creator of love and good times and prosperity for yourself and others. Be proud and enjoy who you are, where you have been and where you are going. You are filled with potential and possibilities. Set your goals, strive towards them and be proud along the way.

Anyone having questions feel free to submit them for future articles. Contact her at rev_kathyv@yahoo.com or 989-752-9227 www.divinelightinterfaithministry.com

What the L!

Joy D Clark



L is for Labels. Why do we feel the need to affix labels to people? There are racial labels, nationality labels, sexual orientation labels, gender identity labels, and income level labels. Labels are attached to political leanings, teaching styles, and marketing techniques. We even give labels to people based upon what type of sport they are interested in and what type of car they drive.

The truth is we give labels to people so we can understand how to communicate with them effectively, sell things to them successfully, teach them efficiently, and interact with them respectfully. The problem comes from stereotyping people based on these labels. For example, I happen to be a lesbian – some may even call me a dyke, a gay woman, or some derogatory name - but I do not wear flannel, my wife and I dated for 18 months before we moved in together, and until last year, I was a card carrying Republican. Ooooo, there's another label – I may have registered as a Republican, but that does not mean I supported Pro-life agendas or fought against the LGBT equality movement. Many of you know me and you know that I am fun-loving, I love my family, and I try to treat ALL people with respect – no matter the label.

So let's continue to demonstrate to the world that the LGBT community is NOT made up of a bunch of labels and pre-defined personalities, but the LGBT community is just like the rest of society: made up of individuals who are, too, pursuing life, liberty, and the American Dream.



Life After Death: **This Doug's Life**

Douglas Solosky

I lost my partner about 4 years ago. In the time since, I have been looking for companionship, a friend, someone to hang out with, a new partner. At first, the going was very slow. I was inept to say the least and had not a clue as to what to do.

Since then, I have made friends and found the Internet. I was pulled kicking and screaming into the 21st century. I'm glad I have been pulled in and am learning about human nature.

In the last year or so, I have learned about "dating sites." You know the ones I mean: women looking for men, men looking for women, women for women and my favorite, men looking for men.

I joined several and found 3 that I liked. Oh - glorious day! Maybe there will be someone for me here.

Due to my age and preferences, I was able to narrow them down to a handful. (There are over 200,000 profiles on the various sites and fortunately, a way to filter out the ones you do not want.)

I made several contacts, had a few encounters and was becoming more selective. Ultimately, I settled on one. He was a black man from New Zealand, well built, into antiques like I was, traveled between New Zealand, Australia, England and North Africa buying and selling African Art.

We instant messaged for a couple of months and developed a rapport. He was inviting, seemingly gentle and intelligent. He said he was going to buy a place in Northern Michigan near his niece.

Things were beginning to sound interesting and appealing. I asked him for some pictures of himself in addition to his profile picture. The new ones showed a man who appeared to be drunk at a party and much heavier (out of shape) than what he had

on his profile. I became suspicious and wondered if there might be more to this than he was telling me.

Then a "shoe" dropped.

He asked if he could redirect his mail from his niece's address to mine, stating that she was going on a sabbatical and would not be home. I asked him why he wished to forward his mail to my address when mail can be sent anywhere in the world and that he could simply have it sent to his new address.

At the time, he claimed to be traveling between England and North Africa.

A couple of weeks later, I received 2 Master Card Bank Card checks for \$500 each from him with no explanation. We had

talked about leasing my garage to store some of his African art work. I wondered if the \$1000 was in lieu of rent. If it was, it was way too high.

Then the second "shoe" dropped.

I took the checks to the bank and asked if they were real. The bank ran them for clarification and found them to be bogus, fake. I was asked if I wanted to leave them for the Police or if I wanted them. I took them. I already knew that something of this nature is almost never solved by the police. The size of the alleged crime was just too small for them to bother with.

Had I deposited the checks there would have been a hold put on them. When they proved to be fake, I would have had to pay a penalty to the bank.

Now, for the rest of the story.

I emailed my "friend" thanking him for the generous "gift." A few days later he phoned and instant messaged me saying that the checks were in payment for a sale he had made and asked that I keep the money safe. I explained that they were fake and I hoped he had not lost too much money on the transaction.

See Doug on next page

I already knew that something of this nature is almost never solved by the police.



Independence

Tana Michaels

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal . . .



that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights,



that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

-The Declaration of Independence

On July 4th our nation celebrates its independence. As members of the LGBT community we too can join in the celebration. Our community has always been independent of the laws and benefits concerning marriage. Although we now have some states in which marriage, or civil unions are legalized, most of us are still without legal recognition as couples. That fact has made us more independent. We have suffered for it, but we have also gained.

When we build a relationship, we know that no law will hold it together. We know that we may lose our tools, our new leather chair, and the new boat that we swore we'd pay for together even though it was purchased in just one name.

Someone will move out and take everything, or simply try to escape taking nothing. Someone will keep the hot tub and even the dog that was yours when you moved in. The house we've shared and both paid for since the beginning will no longer be co-owned. The fact that the mortgage can't be paid by only one of us no longer matters to the other.

When we build a relationship, we know that no law will provide visitation rights when the person we've had a loving relationship with for the last twenty years is in the hospital hurt, or dying. We know we may lose our lover, our best friend, our confidante and never have a chance to see them again to say goodbye, to say, "I'm sorry I forgot to pick up the tube of toothpaste you wanted at the store when I was there last," or anything again. Ever.

We will know how they wanted their last days to be, or how far they wanted treatment to go, but we'll be unable to say anything while we watch helplessly from a legally imposed distance outside of the 'next-of-kin' title.

We will watch them buried instead of cremated. See the cherished heirloom given to an unfavored Aunt instead of a well-loved nephew. We will lose our tools, our new leather chair, and our house while the new legal owners take over.

But none of that stops us from making our own marriages and commitment ceremonies in front of God, or mother nature, or the sofa in our living rooms. We promise in the face of all that is against us that we will commit to our love, much as other Americans have done when they Jumped the Broom. We are independent of the special treatment of government sanctioned couples. Our love is that strong. This we celebrate!

Doug *Continued from page 3*

His attitude changed from the money being his for the artwork he sold to a client, to the idea that I could've gotten into a lot of trouble. Duh!

The bank explained that this is a common scam. Someone, my friend in England, befriends me, sends "money" ostensibly in good faith. Later, before the checks have had a chance to clear, asks for a portion of the money to be sent to him allowing me to keep some of it for helping him out.

Had I done that, not only would I be out the money sent to him but also I would have been charged a processing fee by the bank.

Let my experience be a warning to those who find something that seems too good to be true because it usually is.



Current Events

July 2, Wed - Saginaw Meet & Greet

CANCELLED

Regularly scheduled Saginaw Meet & Greets will resume in September.

July 3, Thurs - Womyn's Circle CANCELLED

See July 17. This program provides support and socialization to Tri-County lesbian women and facilitates community awareness projects in partnership with Perceptions and PFLAG. It provides safety, socialization, and help to women and their families experiencing hostility and isolation.

July 4, Friday Night Dinner CANCELLED because of the 4th of July Holiday Join us next Friday at El Mexicano in Bay City..

July 5, Saturday - Fireworks Viewing Party

Mike & Greg host their [annual party](#) at 503 S. Henry St., Bay City, beginning at 3:00 pm. They've extended an open invitation to all Perceptions members and friends.

July 9, Wednesday - Freeland Meet & Greet

7:00 - 9:00 pm. Riverside Restaurant, [8295 Midland Road](#) (M-47), Freeland. This event will repeat on the 2nd Wed. of each month.

July 9, Wednesday - Perceptions

Transgender Group 6:00 - 8:00 pm.

Meeting at The Mixx/Metro Grille, [115 N. Hamilton St.](#), Saginaw. The group offers an informal gathering, taking a more 'light-hearted' approach to allow transgenders in the Tri-City area an opportunity to connect with one another for socializing and support. If you have any questions, contact Rebecca at Rebecca@perceptionsSV.org. This event will repeat on the second Wednesday of each month.

July 11, Friday Night Dinner 7pm

Join us at El Mexicano, 1822 Broadway, Bay City. If you plan to attend, please reply to Jim@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday.

July 15, Tues - Summer Potluck Picnic

6:00 pm. Garnet & Vicky's in Freeland at [9599 Carter Rd.](#) Bring a dish to pass. Grilled chicken and brats, table service and non-alcoholic beverages will be provided. All are welcome!

July 17, Thurs - Womyn's Circle

5:30 - 7:00 pm. Support for Tri-County lesbians. The free, confidential support group sessions meet at the YWCA, [3405 Midland Rd.](#) in Bay City. 989-686-4800.

July 18, Friday Night Dinner 7pm

Fuzzy's, 1924 Court St., Saginaw.

Join Perceptions members and friends this week. If you plan to attend, please reply to Jim@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday.

July 19, Perceptions/PFLAG Garden Party

7 - 10pm, [503 S. Jefferson](#), Saginaw. Hosted by Rick Rios in his beautifully restored 121-year-old Queen Anne style 4100-sq ft manse and adjoining gardens. Snacks and refreshments served. Free will donation.

July 23, Wed. - Bay City Meet & Greet

7:00 - 9:00 pm. Buoy 18, [960 E. Midland St.](#), Bay City (by Liberty Harbor Marina). Perceptions members and friends will enjoy ice cream at 7:00 pm. At 8:00 pm, join the group in a game of putt-putt golf or a walk along the river.

July 25, Friday Night Dinner 7pm

Rattlesnake Rick's, 708 Saginaw St. Bay City. Join Perceptions members and friends this week. If you plan to attend, please reply to Jim@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday.

July 25 - 27 Camp Out Michigan Bike Tour

A weekend of biking, canoeing and outdoor fun for GLBT people and their friends! Visit www.CampOutMichigan.org for more info. Register by July 18th.

JULY 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																												
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6	7	8	9  Freeland Meet & Greet Riverside Restaurant 8295 Midland Road 7:00 - 9:00 PM Transgender Support Group The Mixx 7:00 - 9:00 PM	10	11  Friday Night Dinner El Mexicano 1822 Broadway Ave. Bay City 7:00 PM	12																																																																																												
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Charity Yard Sale Raises \$431

Tim

Chas & Mike hosted our annual charity yard sale on Thurs & Fri., June 12 & 13. We brought in \$431 that has been earmarked for our sponsorship of [AIDS Walk Bay City/Midland/Saginaw](#) that will be held on Sept 27 in Bay City's Wenonah Park.



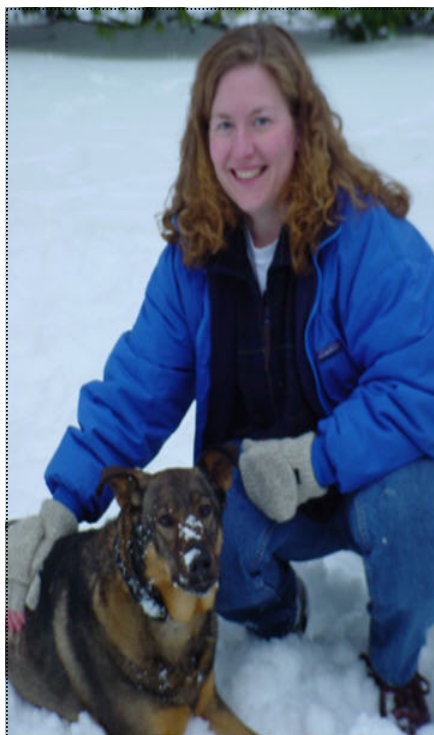
We would like to thank everyone who donated items, volunteered to work at the sale, and who came out to shop.



Special thanks to:
Chas, Mike, Randy,
Rick, Doug, Don and
John for their contributions
of their time and talents
as well as merchandise.

Furnished Room for Rent
3004 S. Poseyville Rd.,
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Douglas Solosky 989-835-7483
email: DouglasSolosky@yahoo.com.



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However Glamorous or Natural you want to look...

Camp Out Michigan

Bike Tour 2008

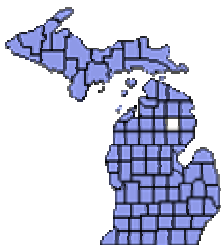
July 25th to 27th

Join Camp Out Michigan for the 17th annual weekend of camping, biking, and outdoor fun for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals and their friends in Northern Michigan.

The event is a fund raiser for Michigan GLBT causes. Each year we will select one or two charities who will benefit from Bike Tour proceeds. Our charities for 2008 are [Michigan Equality](#) and the Perceptions Scholarship Fund.

In 2007, we had over 70 participants who came from all over Michigan as well as Indiana, Illinois, Ohio and Ontario. We hope to exceed that number this year. [Click here](#) to see where our participants come from.

We have secured a new location for 2008. We've found a location in Oscoda County that is well suited for our group and the type of event that participants have come to expect. The campground is heavily wooded and has small clearings for group camping areas and our big top tent that will serve as the headquarters for our group activities, including catered dinner on Friday and Saturday nights and a continental breakfast served on Saturday and Sunday mornings.



Just a short walk away from the campground there are a few motel rooms and cabins that may be rented by those who don't care to stay in a tent. Camp Out Michigan has reserved all of the motel rooms. [Contact us](#) for availability.

Bike routes are designed for every skill level, or you need not bike at all and still fully enjoy the atmosphere of support and friendship. You can choose to

take part in some or all of the scheduled activities.



The bike routes are scenic and enjoyable. You'll travel through jack pine forest that is home to the rare Kirkland Warbler, along the banks of the Au Sable River, and through Amish farm country. There will be plenty of opportunities to stop along the route at restaurants, shops, scenic overlooks, a swimming spot, an awesome Amish bakery, and even a 1/4 scale passenger railroad where you can take an 18-minute ride through the Huron National Forest.

New this year! We're offering a special route for street legal scooters and mopeds. We'll provide maps and road support in case of any mechanical difficulties.

You are sure to enjoy a weekend filled with friends, camaraderie, camping, bike touring, site-seeing, kayaking, canoeing, team activities, group meals, and lively campfires.



Bike Tour registration fees include two nights of camping (tents and RVs are welcome), continental breakfast two mornings, a map for your choice of two marked bike routes or the scooter route on Saturday, SAG vehicle support (road-side assistance, first aid and refreshments while riding), an event T-shirt, a light dinner on Friday and a catered dinner on Saturday evening.



The canoe/kayak trip on Sunday is an optional activity. You may rent a canoe or kayak from the campground or bring your own and pay a fee to have it transported to the launch site. You may add additional nights of camping on Thursday or Sunday and those fees will be paid directly to the campground.

Visit the Camp Out Michigan web site at www.campoutmichigan.org for additional information or to sign up for the Camp Out Michigan mailing list. Contact them by email at BikeTour@campoutmichigan.org