

Perceptions Saginaw Valley

www.PerceptionsSV.org



Serving the Tri-City area LGBT Community

August 2008

Perceptions at Pride *Kay Sural*

A sunny, breezy day greeted the thousands who turned out for Michigan Pride in Lansing on June 28th. As we have had for many years, Perceptions had a booth at Pride. It was held at Riverfront Park in



An open air bar next to the performance stage was the place to be to enjoy the many performers all afternoon.

downtown Lansing. Our booth was manned by Tom, who came down from Mt. Pleasant to help out, Kay, Al, Tim and Doug. Others who gave their time were

Leo, Randy, Rick, Chas and Mike.

and friends march behind the Perceptions banner all the way to the State Capital. Many people stopped to say hello, sign up for the mailing list and share with us their stories. Another wonderful LGBT event that makes me happy and proud to be a Perceptions member.



There were many non profit organizations

that were represented as well as vendors for items including jewelry, clothing, art, music and even Pride outfits for your pet. There were also food vendors, and the Jamaican jerk chicken was delicious!



Perceptions Saginaw Valley

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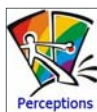
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Mid-Michigan's leading resource for enriching and empowering GLBT individuals and their community

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.

What the L!

Joy D Clark

L is for love. There are many different degrees of love, but it all comes back to basic respect and affection for our neighbors. We can feel love more strongly as we do for family members and our life partners, or we can love less personally by showing courtesy to a passer-by in the form of a smile or wave. To love others, it has been said, that we must first love ourselves. To love oneself implies that we accept and treasure our lives and all they have to offer. When we use the term unconditional love, we imply that the object of our love and cherishing can do the



most hideous of acts and we will still extend our love and affection to that individual. Doesn't it make sense that we set the example for the rest of the world by loving EVERYONE unconditionally? To love one person unconditionally is easy, but is it as easy to love everyone we come in contact with?

The most extraordinary examples of unconditional love were shown to me last month during a trip to Arkansas, of all places. My sister's husband was killed while riding his motorcycle down a winding road. He was in his lane negotiating a curve, when a 20-year-old woman in a Ford Explorer reached into the back seat to return a pacifier to her baby's mouth and crossed the centerline killing my brother-in-law instantly. Becky and I rushed out to Eureka Springs, Arkansas to be with my sister and the rest of my family. At the memorial service, the funeral, the interment, and at every other opportunity, my sister stood up with a smile on her face and prayed for the woman who killed her husband. ". . . so she may see our unconditional love for her and allow her to feel our forgiveness," was my sister's plea with God. My initial reaction was shock. How could my sister forgive this careless woman so soon? I was angry, wasn't everyone in the room angry too? How could anyone forgive this woman not even a week after she killed my brother-in-law?

Then that it came to me: Treat everyone as you want to be treated. Love everyone as you want to be loved. Anger and hatred won't bring back my brother-in-law, or stop Fred Phelps, or change the marriage laws. The only thing we can do is love everyone we meet. Love them with forgiveness, love them with a smile and a wave, love them with a "Hello," or love them with kindness - just love them!



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

Douglas Solosky

Friends: When my partner and I met, we had some friends not many, but some. Mine were primarily at work and Don's were also from his job but narrowed down to one in particular. She was a charting secretary at the Hospital where he worked. I have remained friends with her and her daughter for a span of almost 40 years now.

Friends. How do we define them? For me it is as simple as a sixth grader, when the teacher asked her student, "What is a friend?" A beautiful answer came forth. "A friend is someone I like," a simple and all encompassing definition.

We had very few friends outside of our families. Gertrude, the lady with whom Don worked and her daughter are the two oldest. As our antique business progressed, we made friends with fellow antique dealers and a couple of customers.

Our relationship was such that we were whole within ourselves. I know that may sound odd but that is the way it was.

After our 36 year relationship ended with his death over 4 years ago, I was left with little direction. The friends that I had were well meaning but did not have a clue as to what I could do to put my life back together.

Time passed. I joined Perceptions. I healed. Although you wouldn't know it today, I was an introvert back then. To this day, I still get nervous when I'm by myself in social outings.

Along the way, I have made a number of friends through Perceptions.

The first and probably the most important one greeted me at my first General Meeting with a hug.

For me, it was wonderful. We have developed a close and abiding friendship. Thanks to him and another man my age I entered the 21st century kicking and screaming when the older man said, "You should get a computer. You're letting the world pass you by." and the "greeter" phoned me one evening and said, "Bring your bank card you are going to buy a computer." "I am, am I?" and I did. Thanks to these two friends I have discovered the world of the

Internet with all its joys and frustrations.

A few months later at a Meet and Greet in Bay City a fellow antique dealer, whom I'd never met before, asked if he may sit with me. I had seen him as he came in and was intrigued. My answer was, "If you don't, I'll break your legs." We talked antiques and yes now he is one of my best friends.



The author with one of his friends at a Lansing Pride booth. Notice the "gaylo" around his head!

When Don and I were together we had almost no outside friends, and now I can safely say I have at least 40 and counting. The worth of these multiple friends has been incalculable. They have given me direction in my life and helped me make major decisions, advising me to sell my huge house and move to a new location, discovering a new life and living it for all that it's worth, seeking a new partner, and not feeling sorry for myself.

One of the major decisions that is solidifying in my head is not moving out of state. The longer I contemplate it and the more friends I make, the less I think I want to relocate. Of course, circumstances alter situations and only time will tell where I'll finally end up.

After a long struggle, I have found peace within myself. I am reminded of the lyrics to a song I used to sing years ago. "When you're worried and you can't sleep, count your blessings instead of sheep and you'll go to sleep counting your blessings." Don't make me sing it for you.

We're discriminated against, judged by everyone, and we have to overcome just being ourselves. All of those things make us transgender people better leaders, more empathetic.



... In all the things that we've gone through, we acquire certain skills, and most importantly we are more willing to take risks."

—Cecilia Chung, deputy director of the Transgender Law Center in San Francisco

Adopt-a-Highway

Rick F.



Sunday, July 13th would have been the perfect day for us to clean up the highway...unfortunately our day was Saturday, July 12th! It was humid and overcast with rain predicted, but I went to the rest area anyway and found others had gathered as well. The group were real troopers and wanted to move ahead with the cleanup! Of course it did rain, but it was very light with no lightning or thunder.

We could have picked up both sides of the highway, but the person who was in charge of bags forgot to bring the two extra boxes. (Hmmm, I wonder who that was?) We had just enough bags for each person to get one (a few had two) and we were able to pick up the whole west side of the highway, with all bags stuffed to the max! We had to call it quits due to inclement weather (yeah, right) and went to go enjoy our cookout.

We had coney cheese dogs, hot dogs, tuna noodle salad and cream cheese grape salad. Fun was had by all! We had time to laugh, joke around and just be friends. I really appreciate the hard work and dedication from all of you to make this a

success. I would like to thank Bob for his financial support, and Brian and his partner who would have been there if not for the rain (Brian has been a big help with great advice) and Randy, Mike, Chas, Tim, Alan, Dave, Darrell, and Doug. See all of you again for our next big adventure Saturday September 13th for the highway cleanup or Sunday September 14 which is the rain date. If you missed this one, be sure to join us for the next one!

**Your Heart Pounds...
Your Breath Quickens...
And You Haven't Hit the Dance Floor yet...**





Current Events

August 1, Friday Night Dinner

Levi's, 5800 Brockway, Saginaw. Join Perceptions members and friends this week. If you plan to attend, please reply to Jim@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday.

August 6, Wed - Saginaw Meet & Greet **CANCELLED**

Regularly scheduled Saginaw Meet & Greets will resume in September.

August 7, Thurs - Womyn's Circle

5:30 - 7:00 pm. 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. The free and confidential group sessions are held at the YWCA, [3405 Midland Rd.](#) in Bay City. (989) 686-4800

August 8, Friday Night Dinner

BBQ & Steak House, 2945 Bay Rd., Saginaw. Join Perceptions members and friends this week. If you plan to attend, please reply to Jim@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday.

August 9, Saturday - Doug's Annual Picnic & Party

6 pm - until ? Soft drinks, hot dogs, brats, and the fixings will be provided. Bring a dish to pass. You may BYOB if desired. Rain or shine. Located 6 miles west of Freeland at [3004 Poseyville Rd.,](#) Midland. All are welcome. Contact Doug for more information.

August 13, 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. Questions? Contact Rebecca at Rebecca@perceptionsSV.org. This event will repeat on the second Wednesday of each month.

August 13, 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.

August 15, Friday Night Dinner 7pm

Lone Star, 2255 Tittabawassee Rd., Saginaw. Join Perceptions members and friends this week. If you plan to attend, please reply to Jim@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday.

August 19, Tues - Men's Discussion Group

7:00 - 8:30 pm. Zael Memorial Library, 3100 Center Rd., Saginaw. Discussion and informal support for gay and bisexual men. The group will be facilitated by Thomas Brubaker. You may contact him at Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org

August 20, Wednesday - AbbaMania

Adults \$8. Concert starts at 7:00 pm, Admission Gates open at 5:30 pm.
[Wenonah Park,](#) Downtown Bay City.

August 21, 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.

August 22, Friday Night Dinner 7pm

Sunshine Cones, 6907 West Side Saginaw Rd., 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.

August 29, Friday Night Dinner 7pm









G's Pizzeria & Deli, 1005 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.

Be informed about upcoming events

Simply send a blank email to:

PerceptionsSV-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

AUGUST 2008

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June 2008 Marks Turning Point for Transgenders

Rebecca Dunn

On June 16, 2008 the American Medical Association passed a resolution at its annual conference in Chicago calling for “public and private health insurance coverage for treatment of gender identity disorder (GID) as recommended by the patient’s physician.” The resolution clearly states that the AMA recognizes the body of medical research that demonstrates the effectiveness and medical necessity of established treatments, such as hormone therapy and surgery, and rejects the myth that these treatments are “cosmetic” or “experimental.”

The AMA also stated that they oppose limitations placed on patient care by third-party payers when that care is based on sound scientific evidence and medical opinion, especially when those same forms of therapy are covered by insurance when used to treat other conditions. Many transgenders are denied access to proper care and treatment because they are cost-prohibitive. Hormones, electrolysis, and a variety of reconstructive surgeries can potentially add up to tens of thousands of dollars.

“America’s physicians,” says Mara Keisling, Executive Director of the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), “are saying that transgender people, like all others, deserve competent medical care based on what individual doctors and their patients determine is healthiest for each person. Doctors and patients, not insurance companies, should be making those choices.”

Transgenders are also being heard in Washington. On June 26, 2008 the Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor held a hearing on “An Ex-



amination of Discrimination Against Transgender Americans in the Workplace.”

Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Rob Andrews (D-NJ) said in his opening statement that the purpose of this historic hearing was to “educate Congress and the public about the discrimination transgender Americans face particularly in the workplace absent a federal law to protect them.”

“Workplace discrimination against a particular group of people is morally unacceptable and conflicts with the values we hold sacred in our society. Furthermore, workplace discrimination, unchecked, harms our economy both domestically and globally,” said Andrews.

Workplace discrimination against a particular group of people is morally unacceptable and conflicts with the values we hold sacred in our society.

Approximately 700,000 to 3,000,000 transgenders in America run the risk of being fired, demoted, or turned

away from employment because of their transgender identity. Witnesses at the hearing included a retired U.S. Army colonel and a top aeronautics engineer who faced employment discrimination because of their transgender status.

Today, there are 12 states, along with the District of Columbia, that have transgender employment protections in place. Many companies have also adopted these policies. Despite this, says Rep. Andrews, “studies and surveys reveal high rates of unemployment and low-income status among transgender Americans.”

You can watch the archived hearing online at <http://edwork.edgeboss.net/wmedia/edwork/help/help062608.wvx>

Attend the Summit August 2nd

Through collaborative efforts, the Association for Michigan LGBT & Ally Organizations have presented their plan for their efforts towards unification and learning about our common goals. Now they need your assistance to implement the Association Summit to be held at Central Michigan University's Bovee University Center in Mt. Pleasant on Saturday, August 2, 2008 from 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Your input and participation are highly valued and appreciated!

REGISTER NOW!

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=sh4kdkz0aglcESOKQyIX8A_3d_3d

Perceptions mailing list on [Yahoo Groups](#) has 500 subscribers!
Don't be left out. Subscribe now!
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Pioneering GLBT Activist Retires from U of M
James Toy, Diversity Coordinator for the University of Michigan's Office of Institutional Equity, retired on July 1, 2008. A campus-wide celebration of Jim's historic career is being planned for this fall. Jim started his career at U of M as the Co-Founder and Co-Coordinator of Michigan's Lesbian, Gay Male Bisexual Programs Office (now the Spectrum Center) in 1971. Jim served in that capacity for twenty-three years before joining what is now known as the Office of Institutional Equity in 1994. During Jim's incredible thirty-seven year tenure at Michigan, he served on countless committees, including more recently Voices of the Staff and the Health System's Pride Network. He is a founding member of several community groups and has served on many associations, including City of Ann Arbor HIV/AIDS Task Force (1993-1997); AFSC Inclusive Justice Program Committee (2000); Washtenaw HIV/AIDS Coalition (2004); and the Washtenaw Faith Action Network (2004), just to name a few. His contributions include work on a variety of boards during his long and distinguished career, including service as a Delegate & Alternate, State Board of Directors, American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan (1985-1994); and member, National LGBT Concerns Committee, National Association of Social Workers (2006). Through Jim's tireless efforts and dedication, the University, our state and the nation are more welcoming and supportive for everyone. Jim has been a long-time friend of Perceptions and his work has been greatly appreciated.



Come to Becky Goche's Coming Out Party

As a Mary Kay Independent Beauty Consultant

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Product Demonstrations

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Open House Wed. August 13, 2008

6:00 pm-8:30 pm

Entrepreneur Training Center **Light Snacks**

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(Next to Westside Decorating)

Provided
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For More Info: (989)928-7882 beckyg@marykay.com www.marykay.com/beckyg

