

Perceptions

Saginaw Valley

www.PerceptionsSV.org

Serving the Tri-City area LGBT Community



March 2009

Perceptions/PFLAG Annual Chocolate Party

March 14th By Tim A.

The Annual Perceptions & PFLAG Chocolate Party will be held on Saturday evening, March 14th at the historic Wolfarth House, [1000 Hoyt Street](#), Saginaw. Our hosts for the evening, Kevin & Bill, will welcome guests to this beautifully restored 1893 Queen Anne Victorian home from 6:00 until 9:00 pm. The kitchen and dining room will be filled with a variety of delicious chocolate treats and a few non-chocolate sweets.



Meander from room to room and admire the attention to detail of the home's restoration which includes combination electric and gas light fixtures and several working fireplaces. Mingle with

old friends and meet some new ones as we all gather to support our two organizations.

The treats will be supplied by the Board members of Perceptions Saginaw Valley and PFLAG Tri-Cities. However, if you enjoy baking and would like to contribute a dish, it would be very much welcomed and appreciated. Please contact Tim@PerceptionsSV.org if you plan to bring a dish so we know what to expect.



The Wolfarth House

Plenty of off-street parking is available in the parking lot of Central Middle School, located adjacent to the home. A free will donation will support the programs of Perceptions & PFLAG.

For more information about the history of the house, visit www.wolfarthhouse.org

Scholarship Committee Essay Readers Needed



The Scholarship Committee would like to find one or two volunteers to review and score the essays written by applicants for our 2009 Scholarship that will be awarded through the Saginaw Community Foundation in May. Volunteers must disqualify themselves if they know an applicant.

Please contact Tim@PerceptionsSV.org if you'd like to volunteer.

Perceptions Saginaw Valley

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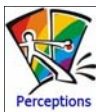
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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SUBMISSIONS are always welcome. Write to:
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Subscriptions: Get your copy of the newsletter free upon request with your paid membership to Perceptions. The newsletter always free to view online.

For more information visit
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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.

Perceptions Officers Elected

*Some tried and true
Some fresh and new*

Jim Kleinsorge



The February Perceptions Board meeting is traditionally the time officers are elected for the organization. This year was no exception. On Feb. 5th, the board held its annual elections for the positions of Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. The results of those elections are as follows:

Chair – Alan Shinaver
(Alan@PerceptionsSV.org)

Vice Chair – Kay Sural
(Kay@PerceptionsSV.org)

Treasurer – Jeff Illig
(Jeff@PerceptionsSV.org)

Secretary – Jim Kleinsorge
(Jim@PerceptionsSV.org)

Advisor positions were also renewed or appointed. Leo Romo and Tana Michaels have renewed their commitment to Perceptions by agreeing to maintain their status as advisors. Leo does so much for Perceptions in so many capacities, it defies description. He is our lifeblood. Tana brings us the Perceptions newsletter with style and flair each month. Joy D. Clark, who served tirelessly for 3 years as Vice Chair has accepted an advisor position. Joy is our #1 cheerleader and is a great asset to Perceptions. Thomas Brubaker has also agreed to serve in the role of advisor. Thomas is the facilitator of the Men's Discussion Group, which has been thriving for the past 2 years.

In addition, we have a new Volunteer Coordinator, Nathan Brown. Nathan is the guy that can match up your skills with something that will benefit both Perceptions and you. Perceptions will benefit by knowing its members care about where the organization is going and that they are willing to help it get there. You will benefit in the knowledge you are helping your community become a more accepting and welcoming place for all LGBT people. Besides that, its FUN! You may even get to meet some people you ordinarily might not meet otherwise. It's a win/win situation for everyone.

Nathan can be contacted at Nathan@PerceptionsSV.org, should you be inspired to volunteer some of your time or talents.

Drag Show

The 2nd annual Charity Drag Show, hosted by Saginaw Valley State University's GSA, will be held on Wednesday, March 4th, 2009 in the Richard Thompson Student Activities Room (MPR, same place as last year) from 8pm until midnight.

Mark your calendars!



For the Bible Tells Me So

Tim A.

For the March General Meeting, Perceptions plans to offer a screening of the award-winning documentary, "*For the Bible Tells Me So*."

Offering healing, clarity and understanding to anyone caught in the crosshairs of scripture and sexual identity, this landmark film "boldly takes on a loaded topic and examines it both intellectually and emotionally; the result may well leave you blinking away a few tears."

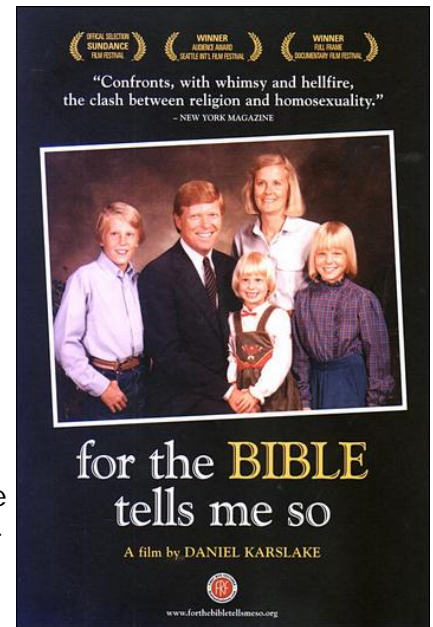
- *Seattle Times*

Through the experiences of five very normal, very Christian, very American families -- including those of former House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt and Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson -- we discover how insightful people of faith handle the realization of having a gay child. Informed by such respected voices as Bishop Desmond Tutu, Harvard's Peter Gomes, Orthodox Rabbi Steve Greenberg and Reverend Jimmy Creech, *For the Bible Tells Me So* brilliantly reconciles homosexuality and Biblical scripture.

We think you'll find the film both provocative and entertaining. NPR described it as "an incredibly powerful film everybody should see." Its honors include Audience Award of Best Documentary at the Provincetown International Film Festival, Outfest Los Angeles, Seattle International Film Festival, and Milwaukee International Film Festival. It was also nominated for the 2007 Sundance Film Festival's Grand Jury Prize.

Our meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month. So we hope to see you on Thursday, March 19th when we will meet in the Community Room of St John's Episcopal Church, 123 N. Michigan Ave., Saginaw at 7:00 pm. Light snacks and refreshments will be served. The film has a run time of approximately 90 minutes.

The trailer for the film may be viewed online at http://firstrunfeatures.com/trailers_forthebible.html



New Perceptions Facebook Group

Nathan Brown



Perceptions now has a group site on Facebook.

Facebook is a social networking website. I believe this site will allow friends and members of Perceptions to share ideas and keep in touch more easily and allow those who can't make it to our monthly meetings to share their ideas as well. If you have a Facebook account, you can find our group by just searching for Perceptions under groups.

If you do not already have a Facebook account but would like to create one, you can do so by going to www.facebook.com.

Friday Night Dinners

See if you can find many of our regular Friday Night Dinner venues.

For Web users: To print out the puzzle, right click on it, select Print, then in the box that comes up, click on 'Current Page', then 'OK'

Have Fun!

S S S D C Q B B G N I J I E B
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- Beijing BBQ
- Black Forest
- Cafe American
- China Palace
- El Mexicano
- Fuzzys
- Gs Pizzeria
- Levis
- Lonestar
- Los Cuatros Amigos
- Marios
- Mixx
- Pasongs
- Pat and Jerrys
- Rattlesnake Ricks
- Savoy
- Stockpot
- Sunshine Conneys
- Super Buffet

To contact our board with thoughts or suggestions, send an email to PBoard@PerceptionsSV.org and let us know what you're thinking.

Perceptions mailing list on [Yahoo Groups](#) has 500 subscribers!
 Don't be left out. Subscribe now!
PerceptionsSV-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Gospel of Jesus Christ Metropolitan Community Church
*Sundays at the United Church of Christ,
 4100 Chestnut Hill Dr., Midland, MI,
 4:30pm. MCC is a Christian Church established to provide special outreach to the GLBT community.*





Current Events

March 4, Wed - Saginaw Meet & Greet

7:00 - 9:00 pm. *New location!* **Magic Bean Cafe, 5789 State Street, Saginaw.** An informal gathering for the Tri-Cities' GLBT community. All are welcome. Meet your old friends and make some new ones. Enjoys hot and cold drinks in a non-smoking environment.

March 4, Wed - Charity Drag Show

8:00 - Midnight The [Gay-Straight Alliance](#) at SVSU presents its Second Annual Charity Drag Show to benefit AIDS Walk Michigan. Richard Thompson Student Activities Room on the campus of SVSU, 7400 Bay Rd., University Center, MI 48710. Admission \$2 at the door. (Show your Perceptions Membership Card for free admission.) Bring your dollar bills to "vote" for your favorite performer.

March 6, Friday Night Dinner 7pm

Panda House, 1010 N. Niagara 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.

March 11, Wed. - Freeland Meet & Greet

6:00 to 8:00 pm. Riverside Restaurant, 8295 Midland Road (M-47), Freeland. Private room. Famous homemade pies. This event will repeat on the second Wednesday of each month.

March 11, Wed. - Perceptions Transgender Group 6:00 pm. 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.

March 13, Friday Night Dinner 7pm

El Mexicano, 3593 Center Ave., Essexville. Join Perceptions members and friends this week. If you plan to attend, please reply to Jim@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday.

March 14, Sat - Annual Perceptions/PFLAG Chocolate Party,

Wolforth House, [1000 Hoyt Av.](#), Saginaw. Our hosts, Kevin & Bill, will welcome visitors to this beautifully restored 1893 Queen Anne Victorian home. Mingle with friends old and new and enjoy a selection of chocolate treats. Free will donations will benefit the programs of Perceptions and PFLAG Tri-Cities.

March 19, Thursday - Perceptions General Membership Meeting 7 - 9pm.

St. John Episcopal Church, [123 N. Michigan Ave.](#), Saginaw. See a screening of the award-winning documentary, "*For the Bible Tells Me So.*" See page 3. Light refreshments will be provided. All are welcome!

March 20, Friday Night Dinner 7pm

Mario's, 7467 Gratiot 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.

March 24, Tues - Perceptions Men's Discussion Group

7:00 - 8:30 pm. Zael Memorial Library, 3100 N. 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

March 27, Friday Night Dinner 7pm

The Savoy, 127 S. Franklin 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.

Be informed about upcoming events

Simply send an email to:

PerceptionsSV-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

MARCH 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
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Pride Dinner

Leo Romo



A Saginaw Valley PRIDE Dinner is planned for June, 2009....probably the first time ever locally. The specific date and location will be decided soon.

June is PRIDE month; a memory of the Stonewall Riots in 1969.

Saginaw Valley will celebrate PRIDE with a dinner, program and recognizing local LGBT and allies who have served our community.

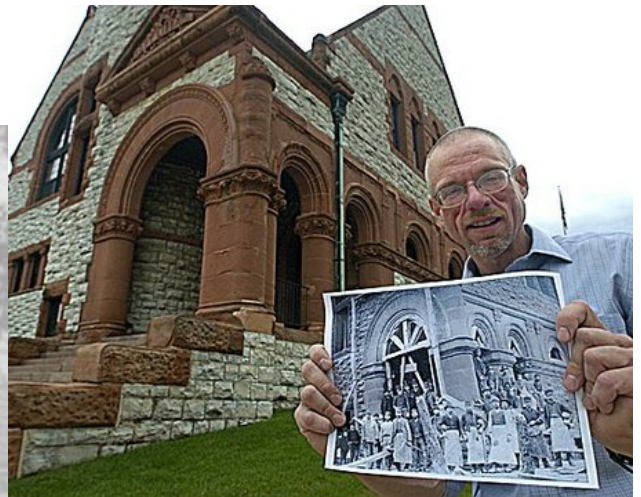
The second Saginaw Valley Planning Meeting is Monday, March 2 at Saginaw's Zauel Library, [3100 N Center Rd.](#) at 7:00 p.m. At this meeting we will form a Nominee Selection Committee for potential honorees. Do plan to celebrate with us!

For questions/suggestions contact Leo Romo at Leo@PerceptionsSV.org or 989.798.6660.

Saginaw's Historic Homes

Jim Kleinsorge

If you want to know anything about the history of Saginaw's South Jefferson Avenue district, Tom Trombley is the guy to ask. At our February meeting, Tom presented us with a detailed history of the area and of Saginaw itself, noting that Saginaw was originally 2 separate cities, Saginaw and East Saginaw, which were consolidated as one in 1889. In fact, at one time, Saginaw was Michigan's 3rd largest city.



It was wonderful to see photographs of some of Saginaw's historic homes as they were when they were first constructed. While the details of each home Tom described cannot be done justice in this small space, if you go to www.saginawlibrary.org/jeffersonavenue, you can see first-hand some of the historic homes that were detailed for us. Tom had many stories of the era during which these houses were constructed and how they evolved over time into what they are today. Slides accompanied his description of many of the structures on South Jefferson and it was interesting to see and hear about the homes many of us pass by every day without really knowing the stories behind them.

It seems a natural extension of Tom's talk that perhaps someone would be interested in organizing a walking tour of the South Jefferson Avenue district once nicer weather makes an appearance. If you would be interested in organizing such a tour, contact Volunteer@PerceptionsSV.org and we can help you make it happen.

Corvino/Stanton Debate Gay Marriage at SVSU

Leo Romo



John Corvino, gay Wayne State philosophy professor, and Glen Stanton, conservative analyst from Focus on the Family, discussed, "Same-Sex Marriage: A Civil Debate," before 150 people at Saginaw Valley State University on Feb. 3rd. SVSU hosted the first Corvino/Stanton debate in 2004 - many of us were there.

Corvino and Stanton addressed issues other than gay marriage: same-sex parents, gay adoption, discrimination, domestic benefits, marriage as a civil rights issue and more. While they disagree passionately about most issues, over five years they have formed an interesting - maybe bizarre - friendship.

Stanton says gay marriage is just a cultural experiment and "no gay-gay relationship is deserving the same as heterosexuals." It is unequivocally wrong; children need a mom and dad, he said.

Corvino has become a same-sex marriage advocate nationally and argues that same-sex marriages would "promote happy, stable and loving relationships." Locally, Michigan's same-sex public employees and children have lost health insurance through Michigan's 2004 one-man and one-woman marriage amendment. These are unhappy, unstable and unloving realities for same-sex families. It is wrong.

Most in the audience were pro-Corvino, especially in the in the questions and answers session. He probably resonates the future in same-sex marriage in society.

Transgenders Meet with SVSU, GSA Group

Erin R. Moers

On January 28th, volunteers from Perceptions spoke with students of the [Gay-Straight Alliance](#) at Saginaw Valley State University. Speakers Erin Moers and Terri Jackson held an open discussion with students to further understanding of what it is to be Transgendered.



Moers and Jackson explained that transgenderism is not based on sexual orientation as is the common misconception, but rather the desire to have one's body match how they perceive themselves to be. In this desire there are many degrees of transition which can occur, solely dependent upon the individual. Transition is when one changes their outward appearance to be consistent with who they are. This is done to not only "look like" either a male or female, but to be perceived and recognized by others for who they truly are. Transition can occur at any age, but nearly all transgendered people know there is something wrong at a very young age.

Issues between transgendered persons, main-stream society, and even the various groups within their own community were discussed. The intent of this meeting was to inform and educate others in the community of who transgendered people are. Feedback from the GSA members was quite positive overall.

Life After Death:

This Doug's Life

Douglas Solosky



I am the youngest of five sons born to second generation Americans Hazel and Leo Solosky. When my grandparents came to America from Europe, they like so many, entered America by way of Ellis Island. Our name was originally spelled, Szalkowski. His wife was Ida Clump. Grandpa Ignatius was Polish and grandma was German.

The men doing the processing were little more educated than the immigrants entering the county. Thus our name was shortened to: Soloski. My father never liked the "i" and arbitrarily changed it to a "y." The whole family followed his lead. I learned many years later, the change was made because Pa thought the "i" meant we were Jewish and as it turned out to my chagrin, he was prejudice not only against Jews but also against Blacks.

This fact was brought home to me one day when my father spoke some derogatory epithets about Jews. My mother scolded him and said, "Leo, don't say that in front of the kids."

Perceptions has been a God send.

My childhood was typical. I played with my twin and my older, by two years, brother. My oldest brothers, Bill and Richard, 15 and 11 years older than I, were busy with their lives and paid little attention to me.

My twin and I learned to play the piano. I also took voice lessons and played the alto saxophone. To this day, I take great solace in my music. I still play the piano several times a week and listen to classical music almost daily. They are a great way for me to release pent up emotions.

I am a sober alcoholic. I started drinking on a regular basis when I was eleven. My father owned a grocery store and with 5 sons, it was not uncommon to have beer in the refrigerator. I averaged 2 bottles of beer a week and by the time I was a senior in High School, I was drinking a case of beer a weekly. This led to great consternation for my mother.

I hit bottom in my early thirties after experiencing

D.T's (Delirium-Tremors). I was lying in bed. I thought I was awake. As I looked up, I could see what looked like the blades of a ceiling fan descending toward me. The 'sky' was lite yellow. As I watched in fascination, I could hear the sound of the blades as they kept coming closer and closer. I was mesmerized. Closer and closer they came. I became frightened and tried to move, but couldn't. I was becoming scared. I began to panic. I could not move! I remember crying out. That woke me. It was afternoon and the sun was shining. I had sweat the outline of my body into the bed. Shortly after that, I voluntarily admitted myself into Saint Luke's Hospital, Ward A (for alcoholics) for 10 days.

I was also in A.A. for about 5 years but did not stop drinking until I was 34. That is when I met Don. To this day, I am unclear how that came to pass. I surmise that my faulty memory is

due to a form of alcoholic black out. Somewhere in the recesses of my mind I faintly remember a judge being involved. I was sent, for what reason I don't know, to

his house. I spent the night and the next morning when I left for work, I saw him watching me as I backed out of his driveway. His expression was that of gentleness and need. That is when I fell in love with him. We were together for the next 36 years.

I have often heard the question, "When did you know you were gay?" I have pondered it for years and concluded that I don't know. I was just me. When I was a kid, the word "gay" meant happy.

I must have suspected there was something different about me when as a teenager my mother said, "Boy you kids (my twin and I) are queer." I remember being scared. As a teen, I had been 'experimenting'. I thought, "Oh God, I've been discovered." I felt so guilty.

Actually, she only meant we were different.

I have always been attracted to males but for the most part was too afraid to do anything about it.

Continued on the back cover

Life After Death:

This Doug's Life

Douglas



Continued: I only dated once. She was with my brother's sister-in-law. She was good looking and I think tried to get me to be 'frisky'. I didn't have clue as to what she was doing. The date was pleasant but did absolutely nothing for me.

When I graduated from High School, I didn't even go to my senior prom. Instead, I drove around in my used 1951 Pontiac and drank beer.

The only time I was with a man was when I'd pick up a hitch hiker. It is said, "God protects idiots, fools and drunks." Of the numerous men I picked up, I had no bad experiences and the number of times I drove while drunk are legion.

I remember driving on what I thought was the road. It was at night. I had blacked out and was in fact driving on the median that separates the road lanes. I was first on my side and then on the other side which was the wrong way on a one way. Cars were blowing their horns and flashing their lights in anger. I came out of my stupor, realized what I was doing. "Oh shit!" and tore ass out of there. At the time, I didn't equate that with, "Dumb ass, you need help!"

My life with Don came to a tragic end on January 12, 2004, when I found him dead on the dining room floor. My world had come to an end. He had been suffering from strokes and heart problems for 6 years. I had gone to the eye doctor and stopped on my way home to buy some coffee creamer. Something told me to get home. I thought it won't take long. The floor fell out of my life.

I asked our doctor if my presence would have made any difference. He said no, Don's health was such that nothing could have been done.

Perceptions has been a God send.

You can't change unless you want to. I wanted to. I have entered the 21st century kicking and screaming. I now have a computer and dish T.V. Both new learning curves.

There will never be another Don. Although I have gotten used to his passing, I still remember our life together

and sometimes cry a little.

Four years ago, I was a sad introspective man. Our relationship was our life. Now I'm out more, accepting life as new and looking forward to tomorrow.

Strange how things change. After Don died, I tried to do as he and I had always done: maintain the house, yard, business, keeping in touch with his relatives and seeing to my 'children,' the cats.

That is when I realized how much he really did. The business became too much for me and the yard got completely out of hand. I closed down the business and had the yard redone. By doing that, I have more free time and the yard work has been cut in half.

Although I have my place up for sale, the truth is I'd much rather stay here. It's not meant to be. The upkeep is too high.

**Don't forget to renew
your Perceptions
membership for 2009!**

Be a member and enjoy all the benefits, such as \$5 discounts for all Perceptions events, for last year's same low price of \$25.00 for an individual, (only \$15 if you're a college student), \$40 for the whole family, or a lifetime membership for \$250. Get yours today! http://www.perceptionssv.org/member_registration_form.html

or call 989-891-1GAY