

Free

# Perceptions Saginaw Valley

Serving the Tri-City area LGBT Community

January 2010

*Happy New year!*



**Perceptions Saginaw Valley**

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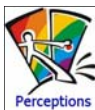
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*Mid-Michigan's leading  
resource for enriching and  
empowering GLBT individuals  
and their community*

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

# Perceptions Thanks You!

*Perceptions would like to thank the following individuals and businesses for supporting our annual Holiday Party benefitting Perceptions' scholarship fund.*

Alan Shinaver  
[A Walk in the Woods](#)  
[Abele Greenhouse](#)  
Ann Sage  
Baltic Treasures  
Barry Rindhage  
[Bay City Tees](#)  
[Bay Valley Resort & Conference Center](#)

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Don Kephart &  
John Rolando

Doug Barron & Brian Goff  
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Red Eye Café  
Riverside Restaurant  
Scotty Jordan  
at [Salon Decadence](#)

[Soy Candles by Phebes](#)  
[Starbuck's](#)

[Tasty Jewelry by Diane](#)  
[The Temple Theatre](#)

Terri Jackson & Erin Moers  
The Image  
[The Mixx Nightclub](#)

The Savoy Grill  
Tim Atkinson  
Tina Saycosie, CMT  
Tom (aka [Ramble Redhead](#))  
[The Triangle Foundation](#)



# Perceptions Holiday Party

by [Kay Sural](#)

The Eight Annual Perceptions Holiday Party was a sell out! The lucky Perceptions members and friends enjoyed a beautiful evening at the Bay Valley Resort and Conference Center on Saturday, December 12. The room was decorated with holiday trees, glittering lights and candles. A beautiful buffet of London Broil, Baked Ham, Roasted Potatoes, Mixed Vegetables, Spring Salad and a delicious array of desserts was served.

Perceptions was very fortunate to have the music provided by the duo Modus Rock—and rock they did. They are an up-and-coming local duo who wowed the crowd for listening and dancing until Midnight.

If we weren't dancing or eating, we were browsing the over 70 silent auction items up for bid. Beautiful gift baskets full of goodies; a stoneware pasta bowl from Poland; gift certificates for massages, theater tickets, and local restaurants; antiques and collectables and then there were the live auction items. The auctioneer was Marty Wegener and he was not only a great auctioneer but very entertaining. Live auction items included a 21-speed bike, a helicopter ride, and a golf package and lodging from Bay Valley.

Thank you to all who donated, volunteered, and supported Perceptions to make this an evening to remember!



# Perceptions Offers Much

by Brent Theisen

As we celebrate the passing of another year and the beginning of a new one, it is once again time to renew, or perhaps begin, your membership in Perceptions. Maybe you have only attended a couple of functions in the past year and are unsure about continuing your support, or perhaps you have supported us for years and are trying to decide if now is the time to cut back on a few of the organizations to whom you have generously donated in the past. But take a moment to think about that person who may be picking up this newsletter for the first time or is just now discovering [www.PerceptionsSV.org](http://www.PerceptionsSV.org) and looking at what the organization has to offer, trying to decide if they should take that first frightening step out of the closet, and attend a function. This newsletter, and so much more, is only possible because of generous people like you.

If you ask anyone in Perceptions what brought them to the organization and why they kept coming back, you will hear similar stories of what Perceptions means to them, but it all comes down to the same basic factors: making friends, forming a "family," and being there for others.

But every story is different. Some of us had already established a support network of LGBT friends and allies in the Tri-Cities when we came to Perceptions, while others, like me, had not.

I found my first LGBT "family" at CMU, back in the early nineties and formed another while living in Washington, D.C., for three years after college. But when I came back to my hometown of Mt. Pleasant, thirteen years ago, I had trouble finding a new network of friends. I was older than most of the LGBT students in college and there wasn't much in the way of gay support for the general population. Then, a few years back, a friend mentioned Perceptions.

I was hesitant, at first, to drive to the Tri-Cities, just to make a few friends, but decided to try out a General Meeting scheduled for Midland. I can't imagine where I would be today, if I hadn't. I was overwhelmed by the friendliness of the members and their encouragement to come back. I was literally welcomed with open arms, as there are many huggers in the group. One of the board members at the meeting recommended the Men's Discussion Group, which offers support for gay and bisexual men. I now attend regularly.

There is also a Transgender Group, monthly Meet & Greets in two different cities, and a weekly dinner every Friday at a large variety of restaurants throughout the Tri-Cities. Members donate their time in numerous ways and everyone is encouraged to get involved. Every year, Perceptions volunteers to clean up a stretch of highway, collects food from members at the Thanksgiving Potluck to help the needy, and puts on great annual events like the Holiday Party, the Chocolate Party (with PFLAG), the Summer Picnic and many others. We also get the word out about other groups in the area, such as PFLAG, the Disabled LGBT Support Group, Womyn's Room II and more.

None of this can happen without the support of people like you. Please start a membership today or continue your current one. You can even become a lifetime member.

Go to [http://www.perceptionssv.org/member\\_registration\\_form.html](http://www.perceptionssv.org/member_registration_form.html) now.

Thank you so much for your past and future support!



## Current Events

**Jan 1, Friday Night Dinner 7:00 pm.** Join Perceptions members and friends this week at **China Palace, 1908 S. Saginaw Rd.**, Midland. If you plan to attend, please reply to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

**Jan 6, Wed - Saginaw Meet & Greet 7:00 pm. 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. Enjoy hot and cold drinks in a non-smoking environment.

**Jan 7, Thur - D.L.I.M. Men's Friendship Room 7:00 pm.** Men's Friendship Room is designed as a safe place for Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender men, who are out or not, to come for support and socialization. It meets at David Younk's home in Saginaw. For more info. contact David Younk at 989-771-9721 or [DavidY513@hotmail.com](mailto:DavidY513@hotmail.com). The group is sponsored by Divine Light Interfaith Ministry but is not a religious gathering. This event repeats on the 1st Thursday of each month.

**Jan 8, Friday Night Dinner 7:00 pm.** Join Perceptions members and friends this week at **Maria's, 6090 State St.**, Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please reply to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

**Jan 10, Sun - Genessee County PFLAG Meeting 2:00 - 4:30pm.** They will review 2009 accomplishments and set goals for 2010. The meeting takes place at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Flint, [2474 S. Ballenger Hwy.](http://www.ballengerhwy.com)

**Jan 12, Tue - Isabella Area LGBT Community Group 7:00 pm.** St. John's Episcopal Church, [206 W. Maple St.](http://www.maplestreet.com), Mount Pleasant. The group is being established for the purpose of connecting, networking, and social support for the entire LGBT Community. All are welcome. For more information contact Erin Moers (989-317-0811 or [erin.moers@yahoo.com](mailto:erin.moers@yahoo.com)) or Rev. Wayne Nicholson (989-773-7448).

**Jan 13, 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](mailto:Rebecca@PerceptionsSV.org). This event will repeat on the second Wednesday of each month.

**Jan 13, Wed - Freeland Meet & Greet 6:00 pm (NOTE EARLIER TIME).** **Riverside Restaurant, 8295 Midland Rd.** (M-47), Freeland. Private room. Famous homemade pies. This event will repeat on the second Wednesday of each month.

**Jan 14 & 28, Thur - GLBTs with Disabilities Group 6:30 - 8:30 pm.** The group is facilitated by Rev. Kathy VanBuskirk and Carm Audas and sponsored by Divine Light Interfaith Ministries. It is open to anyone who has a disability. For meeting location or questions, contact [Rev\\_KathyV@yahoo.com](mailto:Rev_KathyV@yahoo.com) or 989-493-6866.

**Jan 15, Friday Night Dinner 7:00 pm.** Join Perceptions members and friends at **The Mixx, 115 N. Hamilton St.**, Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please reply to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

**Jan 19, Tues - Perceptions Men's Discussion Group 7:00 - 8:30 pm. Zael 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](mailto:Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org)

**Jan 20, Wed - D.L.I.M. Women's Room II 6:00 pm.** Women's Room II is designed as a safe place for Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender women, who are out or not, to come for support and socialization. It meets at Rev Kathy and Annie's home in Saginaw. For more info. contact Rev. Kathy 989-493-6866 or [Rev\\_KathyV@yahoo.com](mailto:Rev_KathyV@yahoo.com). The Group is sponsored by Divine Light Interfaith Ministry, but it is not a religious gathering.

**Jan 21, Thur - Perceptions Annual Membership Meeting 7:00 pm.** Election of the Board of Trustees, "State of the Organization" reports. St. John's Episcopal Church, [123 N. Michigan Ave.](http://www.michiganave.com), Saginaw. All are welcome.

**Jan 22, Friday Night Dinner 7:00 pm.** Join Perceptions members and friends at **Gulino's, 1406 N. Henry St.**, Bay City. If you plan to attend, please reply to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

**Jan 22 to 31 - "Five Women Wearing the Same Dress" Pit & Balcony Theatre** presents this comedy by Alan Ball. Fri & Sat at 8:00 pm, Sun at 3:00 pm. Tickets \$18.

**Jan 25, Sun. PFLAG Meeting 2:00 pm.** UU Fellowship of Midland, [6220 Jefferson Ave.](http://www.jeffersonave.com)

**Jan 28, Thur - GLBTs with Disabilities Group 6:30 - 8:30pm.** For meeting location or if you have any questions, contact [Rev\\_KathyV@yahoo.com](mailto:Rev_KathyV@yahoo.com).

**Jan 29, Friday Night Dinner 7:00 pm.** Join Perceptions members and friends this week at **Levi's Food & Spirits, 5800 Brockway Rd.**, Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please reply to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

**Be informed about upcoming events**  
Simply send a blank email to:  
[PerceptionsSV-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:PerceptionsSV-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

**Calendar page**



# This Doug's Life: Old Dog

by [Douglas Solosky](#)



It is said, “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks”. *Welllll* - that’s not all together true.

Most of the time, I lead a reclusive life. Don and I were whole within ourselves. We lived for each other, visited friends (mostly of his choosing), and never went to a movie; seldom to a restaurant, in short, we stayed home. He did all the financial stuff: banking, deciding what to buy in the line of household goods, repairs around the place and when and how to spend our money. He also maintained the Antique Shop while I was working at Giant Super Market in Mt. Pleasant.

All and all it was an idyllic life.

As a result I really did not know what it was to handle the mundane things when it came to simply living.

After he died, I was rudely awakened. Now, I had to handle the banking, decide what groceries to buy, maintain the yard and the shop, etc. At first, I did O.K. but it finally overwhelmed me.

One night about 5 years ago a friend called and said, “Come on over and bring your bankcard.” He told me I was going to buy a computer. That marked the beginning of my ‘new’ life. Little did I know that that also was the beginning of this ‘old dog learning new tricks.’

Gradually, inexorably, I’ve begun to kind of master the damned thing.

I’ve become more at ease with myself. At first, after Don died, I was reclusive, shy and ill at ease in public. That has pretty much gone by the way side. I’ve been getting out there and experiencing life. I’ve learned that I can be self-reliant.

I feel that I’ve changed significantly over the past 5 years. I’m not dependant on someone else making decision for me. That can be either a good or bad thing. Only time will tell.

Two years ago I visited a friend, Aaron, in Mississippi. I had not flown since the early 1960s. To say I was a little nervous is an understatement. With the help of my friends, I was able to get my ticket on-line. But, getting to the airport, to the right check-in counter and then to the right embarkation line was totally new to me. My friend Chas was a Godsend. For him it was easy. For me, it was a nightmare. The weather was terrible: heavy snow, slush and 30 degrees. By the time we reached

Detroit, the roads had improved. We were running late. Anxiety was filling my very soul.

All went well and I enjoyed my vacation with Aaron.

I visited him again in September. This time, with the encouragement of friends, I went solo. I did the entire trip by myself. Instead of leaving from Detroit, I flew out of Bishop in Flint.

My mini vacation with Aaron was wonderful. I was only gone 4 days. The weather in Mississippi was hot and humid: 85 to 95 degrees with high humidity. That didn’t really matter. I went from an air-conditioned house to an air-conditioned car to an air-conditioned restaurant. What could be easier?

When I left the plane, I assumed I was on the right level. I took the escalator down, looking for the parking lot. I saw 4 airplanes. I thought, “I must be in the wrong spot.” So, I went to the other side of that room, more airplanes. I took the escalator back up. Just then I saw the pilots who flew us into Flint. “Where is the parking lot?” I asked. One of them pointed in a direction. The other one said, “Not that way, this way.” Had I gone in the pointed direction I would have gone through the line where passengers are screened before getting on the plane.

By then, it was 11:30 pm. I was sure when I came back to Michigan the weather would be cold. I was wearing an undershirt, long sleeve shirt and a light jacket. I bundled up. On leaving the terminal, I was hit with 75 degrees and high humidity.

Sweating, I looked for the car. Being the type who gets lost leaving his house, finding the car had become a challenge. I walked 3 lines of cars. Mine was not there. I said, “Ya know, stupid, you have a key that turns on the lights when you activate it.” Soooo, I kept pushing the key. Voila! There it was. I paid my bill. The nice lady said, “I see you were having a hard time finding your car.” I thought to myself, “Ya think?” We both chuckled about my predicament.

The experience I had going “solo” has taught me a lot about myself. I now know I can travel on my own. Deal with getting to the airport, through customs, handling the stress of it all. I find the more I do, the easier life is.

# Spotlight on a Youth Member

We received the following letter from one of our youth members. While the Perceptions organization cannot make a cash contribution to sponsor her on this school field trip, we wanted to find another way to help. If anyone reading this announcement would like to help send DJ to Washington, DC, Perceptions will collect donations until January 19th. At the end of our collection period, we'll tally the donations received and write a check to DJ's school. If you would like to help DJ directly, you may contact her through her mother, Joy Clark at [jclark@askjdl.com](mailto:jclark@askjdl.com)

Dear Perceptions,

Some of you may already know me. My name is Donna "DJ" Bull and I'm an eighth grade student at the Saginaw Arts and Science Academy. I am a current member of Perceptions [family membership] and am involved in GLBT educational programs. For example, I helped organize the [National Day of Silence](#) activities at my school, was a guest speaker at Saginaw Valley State University's GSA meeting, performed at Respect Fest, and have participated in a panel discussion at your meetings.

My school is offering an eighth grade field trip this spring to Washington, DC. In order to go on this trip, I need to raise \$800. I am hoping that you will consider sponsoring me for this trip. Any dollar amount is welcome! In return, I will be happy to provide a presentation at one of your monthly meetings following the trip. This presentation will focus on what I learned on my trip in Washington, DC, and what life is like for an only child to grow up in a home of two lesbian parents.

My goal is to someday serve on the Perceptions Board. I want to become a Board member because my parents and their Perceptions friends have given me so much, and I want to help in the community and raise awareness of GLBT issues. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

*Donna J. Bull*



# Perceptions Year in Review

by [Alan Shinaver](#)  
*Chairman of the Board*



As the new year approaches it is time to review; to take the time to look back and evaluate all that the past year has produced, and form a general judgment. There are so many details, so many events, that it is difficult to gather all of it together. It has been a busy year.

Garage sales, Friday dinners, Wednesday Meet and Greet, General Membership Meetings, Chocolate and Garden parties, the A.I.D.S. Walk, the Wine Tasting, the Holiday Party, The Perceptions Scholarship Award, the monthly newsletters, weekly messages, summer picnics, highway clean up, and planning meetings; there is always so much going on with Perceptions that I tend to just take it for granted that these will always be a part of Perceptions. In retrospect, I know better.

Each of these events requires the time and dedication of at least one member. Countless hours have been generously donated to the membership of this organization by members who hold a belief in what Perceptions is all about: Our membership's needs. I am lucky to have the privilege of working side by side with so many of these volunteers who give their time, energy and sometimes even their cash, to make an event available, affordable and enjoyable for the membership and friends of Perceptions.

This organization has accomplished a lot in 2009, just as it had in years past with the hard work of its volunteers. Will 2010 be a continuation of this selfless service to our community? I can't say, but can only assume that there will be new volunteers to step in and lend their expertise, new insights into our community, and new needs to be met.

Although many of us who volunteer to keep Perceptions up and running already have jobs, we view our job at Perceptions as something we must do to keep this organization alive and well for another season, another year. I must admit, I am growing weary of having so much to do, but it becomes obvious during the yearly review how important this job really is, and how much this organization serves, informs, comforts, and embraces the needs of our community.

For every one who has donated, served, volunteered, attended, or even spoke favorably of Perceptions this past year, I offer my heartfelt thanks and gratitude. Perceptions can not exist without each and every one of you and your contributions.



