



# Perceptions

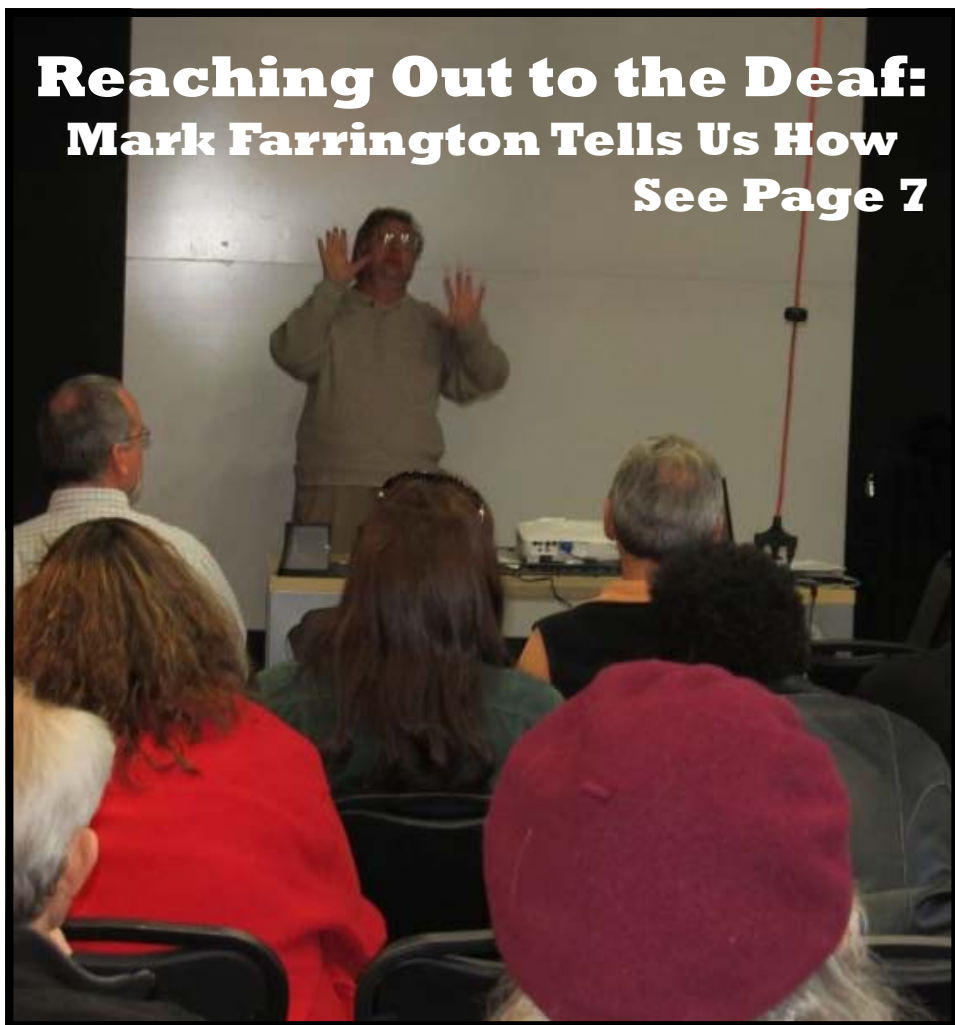
## SAGINAW VALLEY

Serving the Tri-City Area LGBT Community

**October 2011**

[www.PerceptionsSV.org](http://www.PerceptionsSV.org)

**Free**



**Reaching Out to the Deaf:  
Mark Farrington Tells Us How  
See Page 7**

**National  
Coming  
Out  
Day**

Tuesday  
October 11th

A Message From the Chair  
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Free Eric Himan  
Concert in Saginaw  
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Perceptions Coming Out  
Panel  
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Perceptions  
Saginaw Valley  
P.O. Box 1525  
Midland, MI 48641  
989-891-1429  
[www.PerceptionsSV.org](http://www.PerceptionsSV.org)

EDITOR  
Brent Theisen  
[Editor@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Editor@PerceptionsSV.org)

AD SALES  
[Tim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Tim@PerceptionsSV.org)

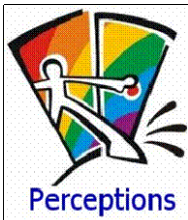
Print Distribution  
Jim Kleinsorge  
[Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org)

Webmaster  
[Tim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Tim@PerceptionsSV.org)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR  
[Editor@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Editor@PerceptionsSV.org)

SUBMISSIONS are always  
welcome. Write to:  
[Editor@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Editor@PerceptionsSV.org)

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Mid-Michigan's leading  
resource for  
enriching and  
empowering LGBT  
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.

## A National Coming Out Day Message From the Chair

*Tim Atkinson*

Perceptions has two events planned for October to commemorate National Coming Out Day. Every October 11<sup>th</sup>, thousands of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and allies celebrate NCOD by holding events aimed at showing the public that LGBT people are everywhere. October 11<sup>th</sup> is the anniversary of the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights which featured the first display of the NAMES Project Quilt, remembering those who died from AIDS. Today, NCOD has grown to an internationally observed civil awareness day for coming out and for discussions about LGBT people and related issues. Outside the United States, countries that observe NCOD include Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom, German, Croatia, Poland and the Netherlands.

We encourage LGBT individuals and our staunch allies to attend these events so they may share common experiences, feel part of a community, and receive a message of being proud of who they are. These events may have a profound impact on those who are at an early stage in their own coming out process. Equally as important is that we

all use this opportunity to reach out to our potential allies and to those known as the "movable middle." The movable middle can be described as those who don't have a clear understanding of LGBT issues, those who don't hold particularly strong opinions on either side; and those who can be persuaded to support LGBT equality once they understand the impact of discrimination.

We hope that these events will improve understanding of LGBT people by ordinary residents of the Tri Cities. We aim to change hearts and minds by giving them a better understanding of the damaging impact of cultural and legal discrimination against LGBT people. We believe that public support for LGBT equality will grow as the movable middle pushes for change.

The October 11<sup>th</sup> concert will have very broad appeal. The October 20<sup>th</sup> panel discussion will be informative and moving. Both of our October events may be attended free of charge, so invite members of your family, extended family, co-workers, neighbors, classmates (whether you're a student or you graduated 40 years ago), and members of your church.

**Are you LGBT and Looking For A Place to Find Support and Information on LGBT Issues?**

**Do you Want a Place Where Your Straight Family & Friends Will Feel Comfortable?**



**PFLAG's Mission Is Threefold:**

**SUPPORT** for LGBT People, Parents, Family & Friends

**EDUCATION** on the Issues That Affect You

**ADVOCACY** Opportunities to Make Positive Changes

**Meetings Are the 3rd Sunday of Every Month**

**Next Meeting Is October 16th at 2pm**

**Location Is Our Saviour Lutheran Church**

**2525 Hemmeter Road, Saginaw**

**\*\*\* FREE CONCERT \*\*\***



Perceptions Saginaw Valley presents  
**An Evening with Eric Himan**

in commemoration of  
**National Coming Out Day**  
Saginaw's Pit & Balcony Theatre  
805 N. Hamilton St., Saginaw  
**Tuesday, October 11th, 2011**

Proudly independent and fiercely grassroots, Eric has built a solid coast-to-coast following. With his loyal fan base always at his side, Eric has proven that an artist with something to say and a humble approach can redefine what a successful musician looks like in this viral day and age. His unique sound transgresses genres; he has penned songs that dabble in Blues, Folk, Pop, Blue Grass, Country, and Rock, all served up with a pinch of wit and charm.



**Free  
General  
Admission  
Seating At  
6:45 PM**



## Program

- 6:00 pm **Meet & Greet**—Admission includes VIP seating for the concert. Tickets are \$15 General Admission / \$10 for Perceptions Members.
- 6:45 pm **Doors Open for General Admission Seating**  
If you do not have a ticket for the Meet & Greet, you will not be able to enter the building prior to 6:45 pm.
- 7:00 pm **Concert**  
General admission seating is free of charge.
- 8:30 pm **Question & Answer Session**

### Sponsorship Opportunities

- **Gold** (\$25 - \$49)  
Listing on Web Site  
Listing in Program (name only)  
1 M&G Admission & 1 VIP Ticket
- **Platinum** (\$50 - \$99)  
Listing on Web Site  
Listing in Program (name only)  
2 M&G Admissions & 2 VIP Tickets
- **Multi-Platinum** (\$100 - \$199)  
Listing on Web Site  
Display Ad in Program  
4 M&G Admissions & 4 VIP Tickets  
Acknowledged in Oct and/or Nov Newsletter (text only)
- **Diamond** (\$200 or more)  
Listing on Web Site  
Display Ad in Program  
Display Table in lobby during M&G and before/after show  
4 M&G Admissions & 4 VIP Tickets  
Acknowledged during Introduction  
Acknowledged in Oct and/or Nov Newsletter with display ad up to ¼ page



For more information, email [info@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:info@PerceptionsSV.org) or call 989-891-1429.

## A Fun Time at the Renaissance Festival

*Rick Farrand*

This month's activity took us out of this world and into a fun filled fantasy of dragon slayers and damsels in distress! The Renaissance Fair was where we headed and thanks to David and Deanna, who let us know in advance, that if you brought in non perishable food items, the tickets were buy one get one free! Imagine our surprise when it was bring in the food for Hidden Harvest and get in totally free! Win win for both. We were expecting 7 people for this journey and that dwindled down to 4 the morning of. It looked like rain was in the forecast, but as we headed south, it did clear up and we were able to enjoy a fun filled day.

There were sights and sounds abounding everywhere, and the wonderful aroma of food wafting through the air, that made you hungry before you even knew it. You had bosoms pushed up to the sky with corsets pulled tight and scantily clad warriors ready to defend a fair maiden's hand! You could browse all the shops and find something you wanted from all the craftsman's designs. People in costumes were everywhere and you could see the detail and workmanship in all the fine wares.

The shows were amazing and for a little more you could have your friends be a part of the show!! Joel, Kelly, and Randy were all arrested, 'cause they were bad, and made to perform, so they could get out of jail, such nice guys too. I laughed and laughed, it was very funny!! They'll know better next time to be on their best behavior!!! If you haven't been to the Renaissance Fair, you should really make it a point to go next year, you can even enjoy in the fun and dress up!! Fun was had by all and this is definitely a must do!!!

## Become a Facebook Fan of Perception

*Tim Atkinson*

Perceptions has had a presence on Facebook in the form of a Group for nearly three years and recently we've added a Page. Having the two options has caused some confusion for users. The Page, sometimes called a Fan Page, is where Perceptions will post official information. The Page has a shortcut address that allows people to access it easily. Find our Page at [www.facebook.com/PerceptionsSV](http://www.facebook.com/PerceptionsSV). You become a "fan" of Perceptions by clicking "Like" on our Page. Once you Like our Page, you'll have the option to follow our postings and receive notifications when there is new activity. You can offer feedback on any of our postings by clicking Like or leaving a comment. Other posts by fans are somewhat restricted on the Page; its primary function is to get information about Perceptions news and events to our fans.

Facebook continues to make changes to the features that are available in the Group, but its primary function is to allow Group members to interact with each other. For example, if you wanted to let other group members know about a local event, you could post it in the Group but not on the Fan Page. There are currently 138 Group members. You can leave the Facebook Group at any time by clicking "Leave Group."

We would like to increase our number of fans on our Page so that our posts are seen by more people. We sometimes cross-post information to the Fan Page and Group so that everyone will see it. It would be nice to eliminate the need for redundancy. If you are not already a fan of Perceptions Saginaw Valley, please go to [www.facebook.com/PerceptionsSV](http://www.facebook.com/PerceptionsSV) and click "Like." If you're already a fan, you can invite your other Facebook friends to become fans by clicking the "Invite Friends" link. Help us surpass 100 fans by National Coming Out Day!

**Perceptions Has the Cure for the  
End of Summer Blues.**

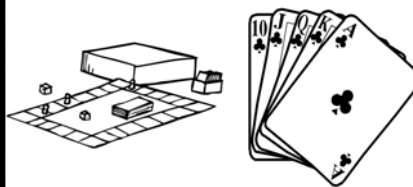
**It's the Return of**

**Perceptions Saginaw  
Meet & Greet  
Game Night  
at the Mixx**

**Wednesday, October 26th  
from 7 - 9 pm!**

**Card Games! Board Games!  
Prizes! Drink Specials!**

Then stick around for Karaoke at 10!



**The Mixx** 115 N. Hamilton St  
Saginaw

If you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts or behavior, call  
**866-4-U-TREVOR**  
**(866-488-7386)**  
or visit the website at  
[www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

**The Trevor Project**  
SAVING YOUNG LIVES

# CURRENT EVENTS

**October 6th, Thurs. - Domestic Violence Candlelight Vigil** 5:30 - 6:30 pm. Honoring Saginaw County's victims of domestic violence and the family & friends who survive them. Music and light refreshments. Hopevale Church, 4873 N. Center Rd., Saginaw. Presented by [Underground Railroad](#) as part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

**October 6th, Thurs. - Lunafest** 7:00—9:00 pm. [LUNAFEST](#) is a traveling film festival of award-winning short films by, for and about woman. Suggest \$10 donation to benefit [Underground Railroad](#). Hopevale Church, 4873 N. Center Rd., Saginaw.

▼ **October 7th - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions at **Los Cabos**, [7467 Gratiot Rd](#), Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please respond to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

**October 8th, Saturday - Feel the Heat Bonfire** 8:00 pm - 1:00 am. [3123 W. Wilson Rd](#), Clio, MI 48420. Bring your own snacks and drinks, lawn chairs, musical instruments and poetry. For more information, contact [pflagflint@yahoo.com](mailto:pflagflint@yahoo.com).

**October 9th, Sunday. - Genesee County PFLAG Meeting** 2:00 - 4:30 pm. Jay Kaplan of ACLU Michigan will talk about Legal Concerns for the LGBT Community. **UU Church** of Flint, [2474 S. Ballenger Hwy](#). For more info, contact [pflagflint@yahoo.com](mailto:pflagflint@yahoo.com).

**October 9th - Sunday, DLIM LGBT Movie Night** 7:00 pm at **301 Cass St.**, Saginaw. Recurring monthly on the 2nd Sunday. Suggestions for movies welcome.

▼ **October 11th, Thurs. - Free Concert by Eric Himan** Perceptions is proud to present a **free concert** by nationally renowned indie-rocker, **Eric Himan**, to celebrate National Coming Out Day. Eric is an independent artist who, rather than hide who he is, began his career as an out gay musician in 2000 and hasn't looked back. The evening begins with an intimate Meet the Artist Reception at 6:00 pm. Tickets to the Reception are sold out. General admission to the concert is free. Doors open at 6:45 pm. Pit & Balcony Theatre, Saginaw. For additional info, please visit [PerceptionsSV.org/NCOD](http://PerceptionsSV.org/NCOD).

▼ **October 12th, Wednesday - Freeland Meet & Greet** 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Join us at **Riverside Restaurant**, [8295 Midland Rd](#) (M-47), Freeland. Private room. Famous homemade pies.

**October 12th, Wednesday - Open Hearts** 6:00 pm. Positive thinking group for disabled members of the LGBT community. Discussion, speakers and support. Meets at **Butman Fish Library** in Saginaw. For info call Rev. Kathy VanBuskirk at 989-755-2618.

▼ **October 14th - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions at **Sullivan's**, [5235 Gratiot Rd](#), Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please respond to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Fri.

**October 16th, Sunday - PFLAG Meeting** 2:00 - 4:30 pm. Meeting at **Our Saviour Lutheran Church**, [2525 Hemmeter Road](#) in Saginaw. Election of the 2011-12 board members will be held.

▼ **October 18th, Tuesday - Men's Discussion Group** 7:00 to 8:30 pm. **The Alderton**, [301 Cass St.](#), Saginaw. This gathering is intended as a discussion and informal support group for gay and bisexual men. The group will be facilitated by Thomas Brubaker. Contact him at [Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org) for additional information or to let him know you'll attend. Light snacks will be provided.

**October 19th, Wednesday - Womyn's Room II** 6:00 pm. Designed as a safe place for Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender women, who are out or not, to come for support and socialization. The group meets at **Butman Fish Library** in Saginaw. For more info contact Rev. Kathy at 989-755-2618 or [Rev\\_KathyV@yahoo.com](mailto:Rev_KathyV@yahoo.com).

**October 19th, Wednesday - Men's Friendship Room** 7:00 pm. Designed as a safe place for Gay, Bisexual and Transgender men, who are out or not, to come for support and socialization. Meets at David Younk's home in Saginaw. Contact David at 989-771-9721 or [DavidY513@hotmail.com](mailto:DavidY513@hotmail.com) for more information.

▼ **October 20th, Thurs. - Perceptions General Meeting** 7:00 pm. [301 Cass St.](#), Saginaw. Perceptions Presents: "Telling Our Stories—A Coming Out Panel. All are welcome. See p. 8.

▼ **October 21st, Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends at **Fuzzy's**, [1924 Court St.](#), Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please respond to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

▼ **October 24th, Monday - Perceptions Transgender Group** 6:00 to 7:30 pm. Meeting at the **Magic Bean Café**, [5789 State Street](#), Saginaw, the group offers an informal gathering, taking a more lighthearted approach to allow transgenders in the Tri-City area an opportunity to connect with one another for socializing and support. Contact Rachel Prenzler : [Rachel@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Rachel@PerceptionsSV.org).

▼ **October 26th, Wednesday - Game Night At the Mixx** A monthly Meet & Greet at **The Mixx**, [115 N. Hamilton St.](#), Saginaw. We'll be there from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. The kitchen is open and The Mixx also offers a full bar with drink specials during our Meet & Greet. Join us just for the company and conversation or participate in a game of Euchre, a board game, or other activity.

▼ **October 28th, Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions at **Z Cafe**, [730 S. Main St.](#), Frankenmuth. If you plan to attend, please respond to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

▼ Denotes a Perceptions sponsored event

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

# OCTOBER 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
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23	24  Transgender Group The Magic Bean 5789 State St. 6:00 - 7:30 PM	25	26  Saginaw Meet & Greet The Mixx 115 N. Hamilton Saginaw 7:00 - 9:00 PM	27	28  Friday Night Dinner Z Café 730 S. Main St. Frankenmuth 7:00 PM	29																																																																																				
30	31 Halloween	<b>September 2011</b> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>Th</th> <th>F</th> <th>Sa</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> <td>30</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		<b>November 2011</b> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>Th</th> <th>F</th> <th>Sa</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> <td>17</td> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> <td>30</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30				<b>Notes:</b> <b>18 - Note new location for Men's Discussion Group</b> <b>24 - Transgender Group meets one week earlier than usual due to Halloween.</b>
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## Mark Farrington Speaks to Perceptions: “There Are 30,000 People In the State We Aren’t Reaching Out To.”

*Brent Theisen*



Our first General Meeting at the new location, the Alderton in Old Town Saginaw, was a very eye opening one. Saginaw native Mark Farrington (above, left) gave an informative talk on reaching out to the deaf LGBT community, through his interpreter, Edwin “Padre” Yates (above, right.)

Mark has been deaf since very early childhood, but his parents thought at first his inability to respond was just “stubbornness.” When he didn’t respond to noises on television and didn’t respond to his parents, they would yell at him. He was taken to a physician, when his mother realized something was wrong and he was finally determined to be deaf. A specialist confirmed that it was due to a case of measles. Mark says that the doctor told his mother that she was going to have to get used to the fact that he was completely deaf. His mother was shocked, but accepted it. Deafness and how it was caused was something that most people didn’t know about.

He was later sent to an oral school for the deaf in the area, so he wouldn’t have to go to Flint, where the schools did teach oral communication skills. His mother and step father (his father had passed away) wanted to be able to communicate with him. He learned to lip read the hearing children.

When he was grown and on his own, people started asking him why he was always with men, never women. He asked his mother why she thought that was. She was uncomfortable, so he didn’t really talk to his parents about the subject. There wasn’t as much technology then, so you didn’t read about being gay much. It wasn’t until he was in his early twenties and talked with a gay

friend that he began to understand the terminology for what he was.

Now he can talk with other LGBT people over the internet and encourages his friends to learn about being LGBT from places like Deaf Clubs, because it’s not something they can really learn from the hearing community. It’s difficult for deaf people who are LGBT to be left out of the LGBT community because they are already isolated from the hearing community. Some people don’t understand that Deaf Sign Language (DSL) is like any other language that’s foreign to people and talking to a deaf person is the same as talking to someone with a different verbal language. It’s also difficult for a non hearing person to lip read and catch the meaning of everything they are saying, because they only see the words but do not hear the sounds. Mark has become skilled at compensating for the disparity, but not all deaf people are. If you don’t lip read for a while, your skills become rusty.

Hearing people sometimes have the misconception that they need to talk louder to the deaf or that deaf people are dumb, but that’s not the case. They have a device now called a cochlear implant that provides a sense of sound to a non hearing person. Some deaf people, like Mark, don’t want the device because they don’t need it. It’s expensive to get and some people decide after getting it that they don’t like it. They feel that if you’re born deaf, you should stay that way, because it doesn’t matter. You should just learn to communicate in whatever way you can.

Going to church has been important to him since he was around twenty seven. He likes to feel connected to the community and doesn’t mind if he can’t understand everything

going on around him there. He is now active in the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) in Flint.

Mark says it is important to include the deaf in groups like Perceptions, because they will then support the group and bring others in. He says that LGBT groups need all the support they can get and to remember, “there are almost 30,000 people in the state we are not reaching out to.” It’s not easy to reach them, but Mark is lucky to have an interpreter that is part of the community.

Padre Yates has twenty years experience interpreting for the deaf. He talked about the difference between being qualified and certified. He is qualified to interpret, but because he does not have the paper to show, he cannot be on call for emergency situations, such as if a deaf person entered a hospital. That is dangerous, in his opinion, because a life could be at stake if a certified interpreter cannot be found and he is not called, so he is now an activist for changing this.

Padre and Mark met recently at the MCC in Flint. Like other LGBT organizations, it is struggling from lack of financial support and low attendance due to less support of religion in general. It began as an LGBT church, but is now just a church for people of all kinds. His mother is a member in Florida. MCC Flint now has an afternoon service, so that people can travel there from other places. They are especially trying to reach out to the transgender community.

If you would like to learn more about deaf culture and how you can reach out, please visit: [www.michdbh.org](http://www.michdbh.org)

### SOME OF OUR SPONSORS FOR THE ERIC HIMAN CONCERT:

#### Multi-Platinum sponsors:

The Dow Chemical Company Midland GLAD Network  
Garnet Lewis & Vicky Cobb  
Leo Romo  
The Gourmet Cupcake Shoppe

#### Diamond sponsors:

PFLAG Tri-Cities  
Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Services  
(Please look at their ads in this month’s issue)

## Please Join Us In Supporting Our New Perceptions Facility

Tom Brubaker  
Facilities Chairman

Now that Perceptions has held its first monthly meeting in our new facility (Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>), the facilities committee is turning its attention to raising funds to support use of The Alderton Building and seeking donations of equipment/supplies by printing a monthly "wish list" of items needed to support our meetings and activities in the facility.

After nine years of using several different locations to hold our meetings and equipment, as well as storing Perceptions equipment and other materials at the homes of several members; it is exciting to know that we have a "home" of our own.

In the weeks ahead, materials will be created and available to give us all an opportunity to support our new facility. These materials will be available in print format, as well as electronically. The facilities committee will also be planning a special evening fundraiser, publish equipment and supply needs in our monthly newsletter, along with recognizing those individuals and businesses who make donations; and research grant opportunities to support Perceptions' long-term facility needs.

Some of the equipment donations Perceptions is currently seeking are:

A portable lectern

Portable speaker system

Library cart so that a lending library can be created

We hope that you share in the excitement of having the use of a new facility thanks to the generosity and kindness of Bill Giorgis & Russ Inman. We need your financial and volunteer support as we move forward and Perceptions continues to grow in its presence in the community, as well as program offerings.

We need your support as Perceptions nears its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of serving the LGBT community!

# Telling Our Stories: A Coming Out Panel

Leo Romo

Rather than a speaker, Perceptions will offer a "Coming Out" panel on Thursday, Oct. 20 at 7:00 p.m. for the General Meeting. Area LGBT people will share their "coming out" stories as part of the National Coming Out Day that is celebrated on Oct. 11. Refreshments will be offered along with some social time for people to mix and mingle.



The panel will include Jeni: a 25 yr. old bisexual female, Jeff: an 18 yr. old high school gay male, Lauren: a 26 yr. old M-to-F transgender person, TJ: a 22 yr. old F-to-M transgender person and Angela: a 35 yr. old lesbian. Coming Out stories will be followed by Q & A and discussion. Leo Romo will be the moderator.

## FROM THE EDITOR

I visited 5 countries in Europe, back in 1985. I was struck by the fact that you could show women's breasts and anyone's behind on a giant billboard advertisement in Paris. When Janet Jackson accidentally exposed a nipple on live TV some years back, the FCC slapped a fine on CBS that was by far the biggest fine against a TV network in history. See: [www.cbsnews.com](http://www.cbsnews.com). Meanwhile, a large portion of Europe has passed gay marriage or civil union legislation in the past 10 years. I decided to surf the internet the other day to find out what it is like to live in a country where sex is less taboo and whether those countries have more LGBT equality.

Well, in the Netherlands, the first country ever to legalize gay marriage, nudity is acceptable on beaches, in your garden, and at the gym. Whether you agree with that or not, they have sex education at all levels of age, as part of the general curriculum, not a separate class. They also have a teen pregnancy rate that is less than 1/4 of what it is in the United States, as well as far less abortion and HIV infection, according to [www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org). Forbes recently ranked the Netherlands above the United States as one of its "10

Happiest Countries." See: [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com) But, my research also found that religion and politics have little influence on health related policy making and that national health insurance allows all teens to access inexpensive contraception. The government is controlled by multiple political parties, leading to less of a tug of war, between right and left. So, there are many factors that have helped reduce certain social problems related to sex, not just one.

Furthermore, the Netherlands is just one example I looked at. I spent less time on other countries, but I did learn that the United States has a teen pregnancy rate that is twice that of any other industrialized nation, according to [www.overpopulation.org](http://www.overpopulation.org) My conclusion was that if America were more comfortable talking about sex, especially to children, they might help alleviate a lot of social problems, not just discrimination against LGBT people. Maybe that's an oversimplification, but from personal experience I can tell you that a lot of kids know about sex before their parents or teachers explain it. They might as well have "good information," as opposed to misinformation.

—Brent Theisen



## Holiday Party: Save the Date

*Tim Atkinson*

Perceptions will host its tenth annual Holiday Party & Charity Auction on Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. We'll be at Bay Valley Resort, conveniently located in the center of the Tri Cities. The evening will feature a full dinner served from a bountiful buffet and a cash bar. A live band, *Acquiring Satellites*, will provide music and the opportunity to dance. The band is new but features the familiar face and voice of Anthony Cottingham, formerly of *Modus Rock*. And of course, there will be a variety of items available for bids in silent and live auctions.

The auction is an important source of revenue for Perceptions and will provide funds for our Facilities Fund and our Scholarship Fund at Saginaw Community Foundation. If you can donate an item for the auction or if you can help us contact others who may donate, please contact any member of our Board of Trustees or send an email to [info@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:info@PerceptionsSV.org).

Tickets will cost the same as last year: \$30 in advance for general admission and \$20 for students. Perceptions members may request a \$5 refund on general admission advance tickets, which will be paid at the door. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. We look forward to seeing you there!

## CLASSIFIEDS

For sale:

Two story business with living quarters, 3200 sq. ft. for \$99,900, located at 3004 S. Poseyville Rd., Midland. Phone: 989-835-7483 or email [DouglasSlosky@yahoo.com](mailto:DouglasSlosky@yahoo.com)

Send Classifieds to [Editor@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Editor@PerceptionsSV.org)  
(A \$5 donation is encouraged for those without a Perceptions Membership.)

## IN BRIEF

Newshound **Joel Payne** is surfing the net, each month, to find us interesting stories. Thanks, Joel.

**Openly Gay Presidential Candidate Shut Out of Debate:** Openly gay Fred Karger is running for the Presidential nomination as a Republican. Though he doesn't expect to win, he wants others out there like him to know that not only is it okay to be gay, but that you can still dream big. He was hoping to get into the debates to raise LGBT awareness. Karger met all of the criteria to be included in the August 11<sup>th</sup> Debate sponsored by the Fox News Channel. This included getting an average of 1% in five national polls. He met this requirement and even received 2% in one such poll. Other candidates with similar numbers were allowed to debate. Karger has filed an 82 page complaint under the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971. The Federal Election Commission is looking into it. Source: [us1.campaign-archive2.com](http://us1.campaign-archive2.com/articles.latimes.com) and [articles.latimes.com](http://articles.latimes.com)

**American Family Association Spokesman Wants to Criminalize Homosexuality:** Bryan Fischer, a spokesman for the American Family Association (AFA,) said on his radio show this week that "there is no reason why (sodomy) cannot be a criminal offense once again, absolutely none." He earlier blamed the Holocaust on "homosexual thugs." This may not surprise anyone, but it must be noted that the AFA is very

influential within the Republican Party and a leading candidate for the Presidential nomination, Rick Perry, headlined a massive prayer rally that the group sponsored, prior to announcing his candidacy. Other candidates have appeared on his show as well. Other quotes by Fischer include "We're the ones telling the truth about the link between homosexuality and pedophilia;" "Active participation in the homosexual lifestyle will deprive a male of anywhere between 8 and 20 years of his life expectancy;" and "there is no such thing as a monogamous homosexual relationship." The Southern Poverty Law Center classifies the AFA as a hate group. Source: [www.gaypolitics.com](http://www.gaypolitics.com) and [pamshouseblend.firedoglake.com](http://pamshouseblend.firedoglake.com)

**Monogamy on the Rise for Same-Sex Couples:** A study comparing data from 1975 to data from 2000 found that all couples became more monogamous over the 25 year period. The number of straight men and straight women who reported cheating dropped by over half to 10% or less. Lesbians reported the least amount of cheating of all, and while gay men reported the most, their cheating dropped 24 percentage points. Researcher Robert-Jay Green, a psychology professor at Alliant International University in San Francisco, suggests that fear of HIV is probably a large factor, but also points to the greater acceptance of homosexual relationships. Source: [yourlife.usatoday.com](http://yourlife.usatoday.com)

## October Bike Ride

*Rick Farrand*

Perceptions is going to do one last Bike Ride, before the cold weather sets in so keep your calendar opened for Saturday, Oct. 15th at 2:00 pm. We will do the bike ride in Saginaw at the Stroebel Rd entrance to the Saginaw Valley Rail Trail. We will ride from Saginaw to St. Charles and stop at Tony's Restaurant for lunch. Remember we can go at your pace, we don't have to go fast, it's not a race, as long as you have a bike come and

join us. The ride is about 19 miles total round trip. Dress appropriately for the weather and remember to bring your water bottle, if it does rain, the ride will be cancelled. I hope it all works out and I hope to see you there. Any questions or concerns call Rick at 989-799-3034. Perceptions Activity committee will also be planning another Christmas Shopping Trip to Detroit. So watch for up coming details in The Perceptions Newsletter!!!



## AIDS Walk 2011: 696 Walkers Show Their Support

The 2011 AIDS Walk took place on Saturday, September 24th in Wenonah Park in downtown Bay City. Perceptions was there with a Walk Team that had done their best to raise funds for Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center. In addition to the money raised by individual walkers, Perceptions was a proud sponsor of the event, having raised money through Jim and Shawn's rummage sale, last Spring.

Plenty of others were there to show their support as well. Other

organizations, businesses, churches and people of every shape and size participated. Almost 700 walkers in total, were treated to free coffee from Starbucks, a light breakfast from the Mixx, a deejay from WIOG, and free handouts from Walgreens. Other business and organizations who got involved include Dow, Malicky's Pub, the Savoy, PFLAG Tri-Cities, Citizens Bank, Chemical Bank, NBC 25, the Midland Daily News and Bay Regional Medical Center. The list goes on and on.

There was entertainment, as well. From an inspirational puppet show to a sequence of dance performances by some talented young ladies. But we were there to raise awareness too, which involved two or three laps of walking through the downtown area. At the end of the day, the total raised was given as \$48,699, but that number will continue to grow some after the walk.

I wish I could credit everyone who contributed to this event, but there's just too many to name. Thanks to all of you, and to everyone who walked!

### Sacred Heart Proudly Supports the LGBT Community

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