



# PERCEPTIONS

## SAGINAW VALLEY

Serving the Tri-City Area's LGBT Community

July 2012

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

**Free**

### Second Annual Tri-Cities Pride



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#### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Get your copy of the Newsletter sent to you free with your paid membership. The Newsletter is always free to view online. For more information visit [www.PerceptionsSV.org](http://www.PerceptionsSV.org)

Perceptions Saginaw Valley is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your contributions are deductible as charitable donations for federal income tax purposes.

**Perceptions is Mid-Michigan's leading resource for enriching and empowering LGBT individuals and their community.**

#### MISSION STATEMENT

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

# Pride Award Winners

## Rick Farrand

If you were not able to make it to the Pride Awards Banquet, let me be the first to say, I am so proud to be able to announce this years winners!

### Life Achievement Award:

\* Barbara Klimaszewski, Saginaw attorney

### Political Pride Award:

\* Kyle Bostwick works for the Michigan House of Representatives and assigned to legislative and constituent work for the 96th district.

### Business Awards:

\*The Gourmet Cupcake Shoppe (Midland/Saginaw), Owner Carrie Fisher  
\*Court Street Grill (Saginaw), Owner Eric Philips

## Pride Awards :

\*Tana Michaels, Saginaw singer, writer for Between the Lines and former Perceptions newsletter editor

\*Leo Romo, Saginaw LGBT activist, Advisor to Perceptions and president of PFLAG Tri-Cities  
\*Class of 2012 at Sacred Heart Academy (Mt. Pleasant) For standing up and organizing an inclusive graduation ceremony, "Live Through Love"

I would like to thank last year's winners, who were part of the committee to select the winners for this year. It was a lot of hard work, and it would not have been possible without the help of everyone involved, including all of you who submitted a nomination. Thank you very much, I appreciate all that you do!

## Mark your calendars Saturday July 21, 2012 Highway Clean-Up 10:00am

## Rick Farrand

We will meet at the [rest area](#), south of M-84 on I-75. We will discuss the dos and don'ts of the clean-up, and we will, pick out our just off the run-way, fabulous safety vest (Milan has nothing on us!) Sound like fun yet? ...there's still more! We will have donuts to munch on, and if all goes well, we'll even have food after. Depending on how many people show up, it just might be easier to

go out to eat, instead of a cook out. We will see, so you better be good, cause fun is just around the corner, at the rest area on I-75! Dress appropriately and don't forget the sun block! Any questions or comments call Rick at 989-799-3034. If it rains, and I mean cats and dogs rain, it will be cancelled. If a light drizzle, man up, or women up, and just show up. Thanks for your support!!!

# Motor City Pride 2012

## Tim Atkinson

Motor City Pride was held on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> at Hart Plaza in downtown Detroit. I volunteered to work a couple of shifts in the [Equality Michigan](#) booth, so Alan and I decided to spend the whole weekend in Detroit.

I've lived nearly my whole life in Michigan, but this was the first time that I've ever spent the night in Detroit. I've gone many times for a sporting event or a show, but it has always involved going directly to the destination and then right home. This weekend turned out to be a very pleasant experience.

This was the second year for Motor City Pride being held at Hart Plaza, relocating from Ferndale. It seems like the move has been well received and the venue works very well for the event. It is estimated that over 40,000 people attended, making it the largest LGBT event in Michigan. Detroiters seemed to welcome the festival. I only witnessed one unpleasant scene. There was one sidewalk preacher standing on a soapbox and using a megaphone to condemn all homosexuals to eternal hell. He had three or four supporters with him. Some of the attendees felt

compelled to engage in a counter-protest for a while, but when everyone stopped paying attention to him, he packed up and went home.

One indication of the welcome being extended was seeing the Ren Cen lit up in rainbow colors and "Welcome Motor City Pride" on their digital marquee. The *Detroit Free Press* published very positive articles about the event, including some great personal stories of attendees.

The festival included three stages of entertainment, an underground dance floor, food vendors, a river front patio with tables to enjoy a beverage or snack, merchandise vendors, information booths for a wide variety of organizations and services, and a parade on Sunday. I found it humorous that festival organizers had placed a LGBT-friendly church next to the organization of LGBT atheists who were passing out bottles of "Unholy Water." The two groups managed to get along amicably. Entertainment ranged from drag queens and kings, to dance troupes, to singers and other musicians of note. The host for the weekend was [Josey Greenwell](#), a singer-songwriter and model who was released from a

country record label in 2008 based on his sexuality.

While Perceptions had no official activity at Motor City Pride, I did recognize at least 25 people from the Tri-City region, including two car loads of Perceptions members who organized their own car pool.

Before driving home on Sunday afternoon, we joined a few friends to head over to Greek-town for a meal. In Greek-town, we recognized several other festival-goers who found their way over there including a group from the Equality Band out of Lansing.

One of the highlights of the weekend for us was getting to have a conversation with Wade Davis at a reception. Wade played professional football for the Tennessee Titans, Seattle Seahawks, and Washington Redskins. Wade came out as gay after leaving the game and has written editorials on being gay in the NFL for publications such as The Huffington Post. He was at Motor City Pride because of his role in Obama for America and the [Out for Obama](#) project.

I'm looking forward to next year's Motor City Pride and perhaps another trip to Detroit to take in some of the city's sights and attractions that I haven't experienced.

# Don't Change Yourself Change the Law

Tim Atkinson

In Michigan and 28 other states, you can be fired for being gay, or even for being perceived to be gay or transgender. While nondiscrimination laws are on the books to protect workers on the basis of race, gender, religion, age, height, weight, and marital status, no such protections exist for employees who are singled out for their sexual orientation or gender identity. Michigan laws need to be changed so that all hardworking Michiganders have the chance to earn a living and provide for their families without fear of being unfairly fired for reasons that have nothing to do with their job performance.

The Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act is Michigan's workplace anti-discrimination law. To end employment discrimination against hard-working gay and transgender people in our state, we need to amend the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include protections for sexual orientation and gender identity.

Perceptions and several other LGBT Centers across the state are collecting signatures on a petition to ask House Speaker Jase Bolger to change the law to protect all Michiganders. This signature gathering effort is part of a larger campaign called "[Don't Changer Yourself, Change the Law.](#)" We have only one month remaining to gather as many signatures as possible. We've been circulating the petitions at events including our monthly meetings, The Laramie Project play at MCFTA, Michigan Pride and Tri-City Pride. If you haven't signed, please contact Tim, Daphne, Leo or one of the other volunteers who are gathering signatures. We'd really like to identify several other volunteers who are willing to collect signatures from their friends, family, neighbors and coworkers. Please contact us, even if you can only fill up one page (22 signatures) or less. Completed petitions must be returned to us by July 30<sup>th</sup>.

In addition to the signature gathering initiative, there are other actions you can take to help change the law. First, get the facts you need to become an advocate for change. Contact Perceptions for a toolkit or visit [dontchangeyourself.com](http://dontchangeyourself.com). Write a Letter to the Editor or your local newspaper or submit an Op Ed. We can provide tips for writing letters that you can use to be an opinion leader in your local community. Meet with your elected officials or write them a letter. We can provide advice on how to have an effective and productive meeting with your elected official and how to write an effective, attention-grabbing letter. Finally, ask a few friends, relatives, or neighbors to call their state legislators and ask them to support amending the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include protections for sexual orientation and gender identity.

For more information, contact [Tim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Tim@PerceptionsSV.org) or [Daphne@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Daphne@PerceptionsSV.org)



## Current Events

events.PerceptionsSV.org

### ▼ July 6th - Friday Night Dinner

7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends this week at **Pat & Jerry's**, [963 W. Midland Rd.](#), Auburn. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

### Sunday, July 8th - Genesee

County PFLAG Meeting 2:00 - 4:30 pm. Annual Cook "OUT." Genesee County PFLAG will provide hot-dogs, hamburgers, veggie burgers, lemonade and table service. Please bring a dish to pass, if possible. Please RSVP with number attending and choice of hot dog, hamburger or veggie burger. The meeting takes place at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Flint, [2474 S. Ballenger Hwy.](#) For more information, contact [pflagflint@yahoo.com](mailto:pflagflint@yahoo.com).

### Wednesday, July 11th - 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.

### ▼ July 13th - Friday Night Dinner

7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends this week at **Mandarin House**, [3000 Center Ave.](#), Essexville. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

### ▼ Saturday, July 14th - Perceptions & PFLAG Garden Party

6:00 pm. Annual fundraiser for PFLAG Tri-Cities and Perceptions. **Lisik Gardens**, [1445 N. Iva Road](#), Hemlock. Free will donations.

### Sunday, July 15th - PFLAG Meeting

2:00 - 4:30 pm. The meeting takes place at Our Saviour Lutheran Church, [2525 Hemmeter Rd.](#), Saginaw. For more information contact [pflag@pflag-mbs.org](mailto:pflag@pflag-mbs.org) or 989-941-1458.

### Sunday, July 15th - Metra Magazine's Annual Picnic

10:00 am - 8:00 pm. Salt River Park, 62000 Gratiot Ave., Lenox Twp. [Tickets](#) are \$15.

### Wednesday, July 18th - Womyn's

Room II 6:00 pm. This women's group is designed as a safe place for Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender women, who are out or not, to come for support and socialization. For more info. contact Rev. Kathy VanBuskirk at 989-755-2618.

### Wednesday, July 18th - Men's

Friendship Room 7:00 pm. Men's Friendship Room is designed as a safe place for Gay, Bisexual 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 information, contact David Younk at 989-771-9721 or [DavidY513@hotmail.com](mailto:DavidY513@hotmail.com) or Rev. Kathy VanBuskirk at 989-755-2618.

### ▼ July 20th - Friday Night Dinner

7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends this week at **Riverside Restaurant**, [8295 Midland Rd.](#), Freeland. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

### ▼ Saturday, July 21st - Adopt-A-Highway Clean Up

10:00 am. Meet at the [rest area](#) on Southbound

I-75, just south of M-84 / Westside Saginaw Road. Rick will prepare a cook out lunch at his home for all volunteers. For more information, contact [Rick@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Rick@PerceptionsSV.org)

### ▼ Monday, July 23rd - Perceptions Transgender Group

6:00 pm. Meeting at The Alderton Building, [301 Cass 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 Rachel at [Rachel@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Rachel@PerceptionsSV.org).

### July 24th to 29th - Hotter Than

July KICK - The Agency for LGBT African Americans and Black Pride Society, the producers of the third oldest black LGBT pride celebration in the United States have joined forces in 2012 to produce the seventeenth installment of Detroit's [Hotter Than July!](#)

### ▼ July 27th - Friday Night Dinner

7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends this week at **Court Street Grill**, [101 Michigan Ave.](#), Saginaw. Court Street Grill won the 2012 Saginaw Valley LGBT & Allies Business Award. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

▼ Event sponsored or endorsed by Perceptions.

To be informed about upcoming events, simply send a blank email to: [PerceptionsSV-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:PerceptionsSV-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

# JULY 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
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8  Genesee Co. PFLAG Meeting UU Church of Flint 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy, Flint 2:00 - 4:30 PM	9	10	11	12	13  Friday Night Dinner Mandarin House 3000 W. Center Rd. Essexville 7:00 PM	14  Percpetions/PFLAG Garden Party  1145 N. Iva Rd. Hemlock 6:00 - 8:30 PM																																																																																				
15  Tri-Cities PFLAG Meeting Our Savior Lutheran Church 2525 Hemmeter, Saginaw 2:00 - 4:30 PM	16	17	18	19	20  Friday Night Dinner Riverside Restaurant 8295 Midland Rd. Freeland 7:00 PM	21  Percepttions Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup Day 10:00 AM I-75 Rest Area at M-84																																																																																				
22 Parents' Day	23  Transgender Group The Alderton 301 Cass, Saginaw 6:00 - 7:30 PM	24	25	26	27  Friday Night Dinner Court Street Grill 101 Michigan Ave. Saginaw 7:00 PM	28																																																																																				
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## Perceptions Transgender Group Finds New Home

The Perceptions Transgender Group has found a new home in the The Loft at the Alderton Building in Old Town Saginaw. (This is the same space where Perceptions holds its monthly meetings.) The group will be co-facilitated by Rev. Rebecca Dunn and [Rachel Prenzler](#). Rebecca founded the group in March, 2008, as a Perceptions board member. Rachel, an MSW and therapist, has been facilitating the group since February 2010.

The group will meet on the fourth Monday of each month from 6:00 - 7:30 pm on the second floor of the Alderton Building, [301 Cass Street](#) in Saginaw, just behind The Stable sporting goods store.

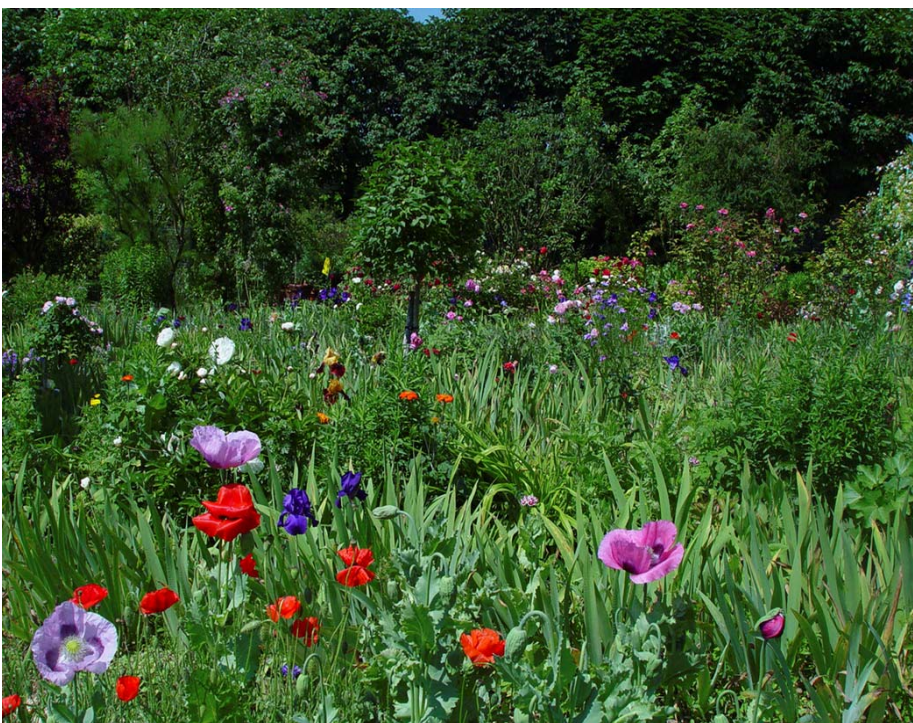
This group offers an informal gathering, taking a more light-hearted approach to allow transgenders in the Tri-City area an opportunity to connect with one another for socializing and support.

The next meetings will be July 23rd and August 27th. Please spread the word to those you think might benefit from connecting with the group.

.....WENT TO A GARDEN PARTY.....

to reminisce with my old friends..

Of course this was long before the age of cell phones, when TMI is the more likely event. I digress. However, if you would like to join us on **Saturday, July 14, 2012 from 6:00 to 8:30 at 1445 N. Iva Road, Hemlock, MI** for a garden party at Ginger and Phil Lisiks's home, hosted by PFLAG & Perceptions, you won't want to miss it.



There will be beverages and snacks provided. There will be beautiful surroundings provided. There will be beautiful people provided, who are in their new summer clothes and new summer tans.

If you are like most of us, all your June Saturdays are already done or filled, and most of July's too. So put this down now, July 14th, a garden party, you won't regret it.

P.S. Check your cell phones at the garden gate...

## All Work and No Play Make Jack and Jill a Dull Gay

David DePeal, PSV Columnist

If you missed all the Pride Festivities here in Michigan or just need a quick summer getaway where you can connect with others of similar mind and/or body, Michigan has a multitude of close-by opportunities and places available for your entertainment and amusement! You just got to know where to look. A list of gay-friendly options follows. A word of warning though: **ALWAYS call or email ahead of time.** Any information here is provided third hand and is not to say that you will not find valuable and accurate information. However, PerceptionsSV.org **cannot guarantee** the validity of all the information found here. The content of any given entry may recently have been changed or be outdated and Perceptions SV, its board, members and associates cannot be held responsible for any loss suffered by the following of this information. With the legalese out of the way, here's the list:

**Saugatuck** (and its neighboring community of Douglas) have been called "the gayest places on earth," and rivals gay hotspots like Fire Island and P-town for tourism. Think of it as the San Francisco of the Midwest. There is a list of things to do from A-Z including making your own beer,

incredible beaches with amazing sunsets, boating, dining out, theatre, sightseeing, hiking and climbing, and not one but two HUGE gay bars and dance clubs. It has just about everything one could ask for in a tourist trap. Just don't forget your swimsuit and your wallet (preferably with lots and lots of cash or a credit card with a very high limit). For more info., please go to the website [www.gaysaugatuckdouglas.com](http://www.gaysaugatuckdouglas.com)

If you are the outdoor type, think **Campit!** Also located near Saugatuck, Michigan, **Campit Outdoor Resort** is a 25-acre, private, membership, adult-only campground for RVs and tents in a country setting, 3 wooded tenting areas and a pond, seasonal sites, electric and water, some full hookups, restrooms with private showers and a gang shower for men. Gay/Lesbian swimming pool, clothing optional areas, store, laundromat, nature trails. For those who "don't camp" it also offers a Bed and Breakfast. Family owned and operated. For more info., please call Saugatuck Weekends (269) 543-4335 or go to their website above.

The **Michigan Womyn's Fest** is held outdoors in tents near Hart, Michigan in Oceana County straight (or not so straight) across from the Tri-Cities on the west

coast of Michigan. Begun in 1975 and one of the longest-running women's events in the world, the phenomenally popular festival is held mid-August (**Aug. 19-26, 2012**). As the name suggests, music is the common bond that draws thousands of attendees to a secluded 650-acre private site in the pristine [Manistee National Forest](#). Performances here range from acoustic folk crooners to rocking grrl bands. The event runs like a well-oiled machine. Participants set up their own tents, volunteer for one or two four-hour work shifts (depending on whether they attend the festival for just a couple of days or its entire duration), and are provided three meals (all vegetarian) per day. Services include a shuttle and assistance for attendees with disabilities, and daytime camps for toddlers, boys 5 to 10 years old, and girls 5 and up. The festival's FAQ webpage is extremely helpful [for first-timers](#) and answers just about every question imaginable. Call today though. Hurry! The best spots to camp are filled up quickly.

Not for everyone, but still an option is the **Michigan Gay Rodeo** from **July 26-28, 2012** at the Wayne County Fairgrounds outside Detroit. Michigan International Gay



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## Travel Cont'd

Rodeo Association (MIGRA) is a member association that works to raise money for local charities through the production of the Greater Motown International Gay Rodeo and to promote the country-western-rural lifestyle. Chosen royalty/entertainers raise money for local charities through benefit shows. MIGRA is an IRS 501(c)(3) Corporation. For more information, go to their website at <http://www.michiganrodeo.org>

Have kids and need a little “me” time? Consider sending them to camp for the week. Located at Camp McDougall in Thessalon, Ontario, Canada, (about fifteen minutes east of the Canadian Sault Ste. Marie) **Rainbow Camp** is a unique opportunity for LGBT and/or questioning and allied youth ages 13-17. Committed to developing a community which honors creativity, individual choice, and social justice, through traditional programming. The five-day camp costs \$275 per camper (some funding available) and runs from 4:00 PM, Sun. Aug. 5, 2012 – 4:00 PM, Fri., Aug. 10, 2012. One thing to remember, however, is that Canada now requires a passport to cross the border. If you and the kids don't have one yet, better hurry! A U.S. passport can take six weeks to get. For more info. go to <http://www.welcomefriend.ca/events/rainbow-camp>.

If you're a womyn who lives to camp in style, think **Windover Resort**, a private, membership, vacation resort for women on the Pigeon River in the farm country of Michigan's thumb area. A wooded resort with rustic and modern facilities for tents and RVs, large grassy campsites, 30/50 amp electric, water hook-ups, restrooms with showers and rental trailers. Women only, 18 and over, pool, clubhouse, store, pond, nature trails, scheduled events, fishing and nearby golf, boating and water recreation sports. Open mid April through mid Oct. Family owned and operated. **Windover Resort**, 3596 Blakely Road, Owendale, MI 48754, Phone: (989) 375-2586 Winter (586) 574-1759

Want to have fun and support the HIV community at the same time without completely roughing it? **Wings Over the Lake** located at 2927 South Lakeshore Road in Applegate, Michigan offers eight (8 ) quaint vacation cabins located on Lake Huron, between Port Sanilac and Lexington, MI. The cabins sleep between 2 and 8 people. The property is open to the public and is owned and operated by **Wings** HIV support group of Detroit, a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization. Significant discounts are available to the HIV community. All proceeds benefit the HIV community. Email [info@wingsoverthelake.com](mailto:info@wingsoverthelake.com) or call Tom Russo at 810-359-2800 for more information.

Time, money or distance an issue? Think gay-friendly Ferndale and Royal Oak for those unusual but entertaining events like Drag Queen Bingo, Gay Classic Car Shows, and casual low-commitments like great gay-friendly book stores, restaurants, dance clubs and bars. For specific dates, times or events, check out PRIDESOURCE's Between the Lines Gay Newspaper's CoolCities Webpage. <http://www.pridesource.com/citypages.html>. For Lambda Car Club meeting dates, go to <http://www.lccdetroit.org>. To make reservations, call Pronto! Restaurant & Video Bar, 608 S. Washington Ave., Royal Oak, MI 48067, 248-544-7900

My thanks and apologies to [http://www.pridenet.com/mi\\_camp.html](http://www.pridenet.com/mi_camp.html), and PSV's own **Rainbow Referrals** along with Andrew Collins to whom I have plagiarized liberally and extensively here. To read Mr. Collins articles or to get more ideas on gay travel, please go to <http://gaytravel.about.com>.

## “JOE”, IF YOU ARE READING THIS, I’M SORRY

David DePeal, PSV Columnist

**The views and opinions expressed in this article/ website are that of my own and do not necessarily reflect that of Perceptions SV, its board members, or that of the larger gay community. Sex for pay is illegal in Michigan and is actively enforced by its Law Enforcement Officers.**

For my next article for the Perceptions SV Newsletter, I wanted to do an Interview with a “local” Gay Male Escort. Why? You ask. Well, besides dreams of a Pulitzer, in my own drawn out way, I was going to make a point about the diversity of the LGBT community and the fact that we, as a whole, often shun parts of our own “Family” in efforts to mainstream into the straight world for the pursuit of equality: Lipsticks vs. Butch; Drag Queens vs. Leathermen; Everyone vs. Bisexuals. You get the idea.

Division in the LGBT ranks –all to be one of them “with stars upon thars” --and in the process, we give up a unique part of ourselves like the nerd who eventually finds her/himself “dissing” geeky friends to hang out with the “cool” kids in the ABC After School special.

Anyway, back to the male escort. I actually did a \*lot\* of work! I tracked down a source, contacted him, be it after a slightly embarrassing email to someone who was NOT an escort, (thanks for being so cool about it Juan), finally located a local escort willing to grant me an interview (surprisingly difficult), wrote up all the interview questions, emailed the Editor of Perceptions a few dozen times making sure that Perceptions would print the article (after all, you can’t get a Pulitzer if it don’t go to print), and then I emailed my source a few half-dozen times revising the questions. All was going smoothly. It looked like my Pulitzer was in the bag, but then as I am apt to do, I got neurotic.

I noticed that my source posted his cell phone number on his online escort ad. Ooh! Bad move. To a trained information miner like me, that’s pure gold. So under the guise that I was checking to see if my source was credible, I got out my little pickax (laptop) and I began to chip away. After about an hour, I could tell you pretty much everything about him except what he ate for breakfast. (Cheerios, probably).

I rationalized that I was just checking out my sources for veracity like, say, Rush Limbaugh would do if he were a professional. But in truth I was snooping. And everything WOULD have been fine there, but for two things: 1) I have a conscience 2) I don’t always keep my mouth shut for the sake of my own good. And so I blabbed to my source that he needed to be careful because unscrupulous people (unlike ME) with just his phone number and the information given on his website advertisement could track him down, which was, if nothing, a huge understatement on my part. Cheerios. Definitely, Cheerios.

As a result, my source became more than a little weary of going on record. Naturally, I was surprised by this. Why would it be freaky when people you have never met can tell you your whole sorted life story? However, I reassured him repeatedly that his secret was safe with me, that I am a firm believer in Freedom of the Press, and that I, if need be, would go to jail before revealing his identity, all of which was 100% true. Like all good members of the press, there is a strange morality behind my unscrupulousness. It’s the Hippocratic Oath of sorts for reporters: Do NO Harm—to your sources.

And I sincerely meant “Joe”- not his real name-- my male escort source, no harm. The more I learned about Joe, the more I liked him. He is kind, charitable, patient, and a good-hearted man, who due to circumstances beyond his control, found he needed extra money to keep his business afloat and a roof over his and his family’s heads. Furthermore, apparently from his reviews, he was good at making his customers comfortable, happy and satisfied, which I think is pretty much the goal if you hire an escort. In that respect, Joe was a professional and took his job serious --- whether or not it is legal in Michigan.

Which brings me to my next point: Why is sex between two (or more) consenting adults illegal if money (or something of value) is exchanged? Does that mean that every person that every bought dinner and/or drinks for another person and then ended up having sex with that person is then a “john” and the person who benefitted a “prostitute”? How does whether someone benefitted financially from engaging in sexual acts change the fact that they were both adults and that the act was consensual?

And, YES, I understand that many pimps exploit their prostitutes through the use of violence, abuse and drugs, and that HIV rates among intravenous drug using prostitutes is horrifically high, and that SHOULD be illegal. But, as far as I know, Joe has no pimp, isn’t a drug abuser and practices SAFER sex (Sorry, folks, there is no such thing as SAFE sex-- any sex between individuals always involves SOME risk).

While prostitution is illegal in many countries worldwide, most countries are a lot more embracing of adult nudity and sexuality.

Why then in America is sex “Bad” but violence “Good”? Why are consensual acts of physical passion wrong and shameful, but non-consensual acts of murder and violence venerable? What does it say about us as a people if we condemn sex workers as being sub-human because of the nature of their job (especially when taking a passive role), but we uplift fighters and soldiers and the violence and killing that goes along with their careers? Just because someone puts on a uniform to harm or kill someone else doesn't make the violence any less tragic or brutal.

In this respect, the average sex worker does far less harm to our hallowed society than the average soldier- provided, of course, that they are using safer sex techniques. But even if they AREN'T, in the tragic history of the AIDS pandemic it has still taken far few lives than the history of human war (30,000,000 deaths versus 250,000,000 people since 1,000 AD conservatively). Still sex for pay is illegal.

However, I am not naïve. I understand that there are those out there that would deny me my freedoms, (Believe me, as a gay man, I really DO get that), and I am truly thankful for those individuals that serve to protect this great country of ours from those that would do me harm and deny me and all other citizens their rights PROVIDED THAT THOSE RIGHTS DO NOT INFRINGE UPON MINE. Yet, under certain circumstances in which individuals do trample my rights and freedoms, I, as a citizen of the U. S of A., can personally take up arms and harm them physically to the point of death legally, (morally is another whole different conversation). However, under current law, apparently, I cannot “sex” them to death, especially if there is pay involved. Seems to me the latter would be the better way to go!

Which brings us back, Dear Reader, to the subject of “Joe.” In my own self-serving pursuit of a perfect sensational article about group ostracizing, I have violated my own sacred oath: I HAVE CAUSED HARM. Joe never did meet with me or do the interview, and has stopped responding to my emails because he didn't want to cause those he loves any embarrassment or harm, and while he may/may not have been doing anything illegal anyway (he never admitted to sex for money in any of our emails, and all our emails have been deleted as I promised). Moreover, because I scared him into removing his escort ad, Joe no longer has his escort earnings. So, in the future if he loses his business or home due to the loss of that income, I am partially to blame. And for that, Joe, I am **truly sorry**.

## Tri-City LGBT Pride Festival

by Kathy Lloyd

An estimated crowd of 4, 000 people attended the second annual LGBT pride celebration on Ojibway Island on Saturday, June 23rd. You couldn't ask for a more beautiful June summer day, than what Mother Nature provided for us, on the island.

The first bright spot of the day was a warm welcome from Mayor Greg Branch, the mayor of Saginaw, who proclaimed June 23, 2012, the official LGBT Pride Day in Saginaw. Speakers included Dan Kildee who is running in the primary for Michigan's 5th District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, and he was introduced by Barb Mausolf, the Saginaw County Treasurer, who will be running for election in the primary in August. Take Note, and Vote in the primary!

Sue Machelski, did a fantastic job, at filling in at the last possible minute, for Alicia Silkman who could not attend. Sue gave a rousing and supportive speech. Kudos to Sue.

The crowds were entertained by several local and non-local bands such as, Drag King Rebellion, The Fundamentalists, Tana Michaels, James T. Taylor, Jr. and the Banana Convention who some said was the hit of the day. As the 4:00 hour approached, Alicia Boom Boom More began to MC, and got the crowd on its feet with her hysterical, some might even say sneaky, bigger than life stage presence. What can I say? The young kids I was around were mesmerized. They kept moving

closer and closer to the stage. She introduced Miss Mixx 2012, Ace Deville, as well as Asia Avian and Miss Cocoa Commotion and others. It was a blast!!

There were over 40 vendors and little you couldn't find at this celebration. Many different groups including PFLAG of Tri-Cities and Flint, the V.A. for gay and lesbian service people, [Transgender Michigan](#), jewelry to buy, massages to get, free rainbow beads and the list goes on. And the food. There was food galore provided by Pasong's, Court Street Grill, The Gourmet Cupcake Shoppe, and El Rancho Grande.

Security for this event was organized by Jamie Capitan, who did a great job of making sure we were all safe on this day. The Mixx provided much in the way of support and help. They opened their bar at 4:00 for the people who wanted to carry the party over their way. They also most graciously skipped the cover charge for people working the pride event.

None of this would have been possible without the continuing vision of Kathy VanBursick and her partner, Annie White. Their contribution of time, energy and just plain hard work, has made this a reality for us all. Like Kathy said in her closing speech, “next year it will be bigger and better, and the people will stretch from the main stage to the main gate.”

# MOTOR CITY PRIDE 2012

