



# PERCEPTIONS

## SAGINAW VALLEY

Serving the Tri-City Area's LGBT Community

August 2012

www.PerceptionsSV.org

Free

### Pride Banquet 2012



*Clockwise from top left: Tana Michaels, Pride Award recipient; Rick Farrand, Pride Awards Cmte Chair; Attendees at the reception in the rose garden. Photos by Alan Shinaver*

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### Garden Party 2012



*Photos by John Rolando*



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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.

## Dann's "Thank you"

After Bobby passed away, someone asked me, "How are you holding up?" I was fast to say, "It's my friends from Perceptions that's holding me up!"

All along in the past four and a half to five years, whether I was at a Perceptions activity or just out with a few of them, some would always ask "How's Bobby doing?" They sincerely cared. And during his last five days in the hospital, someone orchestrated a schedule to where one or two of you would be with me while I stayed morning, noon and night at Bobby's bedside. He scheduled them like, ... you be there from 9 to noon, you be there from noon to 3, you be there from 3 to 6 and so on. And when things were turning to the worse, some were coming through the night. I would fall asleep and be surprised to find one of my Perceptions friends in the room with us.

And when the inevitable was about to happen (at 5 am) I called Chris and Greg to let them know, (for they told me to call, no matter what time it was) and within minutes, there were two or three of my friends from Perceptions to be with me in the last few minutes of Bobby's life.

During this hard time, whether you called or sent an email to inquire how things were going, gave me a hug and sent one home to Bobby, made me take a break and went out to eat with me, spent hours with me in his hospital room, let me literally cry on your shoulder, or helped with providing a beautiful memorial service, I can't find the words to thank you enough. I only hope I am able to help you sometime in the future. Some people thought I didn't have "family" there, but they didn't know about Perceptions. They are my family. Bobby was always happy to know that I was spending time with Perceptions. He knew that I was in good hands and that I would have a good time.

Thanks again,  
Dann Federico

# GARDEN PARTY 2012

By Kathy Lloyd

The PFLAG & Perceptions Garden Party was held on July 14, 2012 at the beautiful Lisik Gardens owned by Phil and Ginger Lisik in Hemlock. Despite the over 90 degree temperature it was well worth the visit. When you pulled off the road, a long, green driveway lead you up to a magnificent view. The house was beautiful, but what really caught your eye, was a huge old oak tree that is estimated to be over 200 years old. If you are like me, you could feel the energy and wisdom in that old tree. It seemed that everyone who came up the driveway, had a idea for a tree house, swing or just something to spend more time in that tree. Other people just stared in amazement and patted it as they went by.

All of this, before we even saw the gardens! The Lisik's specialize in flowers such as Hostas, Daylilies and other unique flowers. The Daylilies brought me to a dead stop. Colors such as oranges, mixed with magenta, purple and wine filled the yards. There were ponds, bridges and just such a feeling of peace, that you wanted to stay there forever. Phil Lisik took visitors through a guided tour of the property that was informative and much enjoyed.

Then there was the food. Everyone went overboard to bring all the kinds of foods that you enjoy on a hot day. There were different salads to choose from. There was a huge fruit plate, many different dips and cookies and pie for dessert. There was wine and homemade raspberry lemonade, made with hand picked raspberries; it was a great treat.

The hot weather probably kept some people away this year as attendance was down. However there were breezes that definitely made it cooler than some places that evening. Our thanks to the Lisik's both for their vision and their hard work and their generosity in providing us this unique gift and opportunity. Hopefully we will see more of you next year.

Perceptions and PFLAG would like to thank the people who were not able to attend but still sent donations to support the programs of both organizations. Special appreciation is extended to everyone who attended and donated cash, supplies, or refreshments.

In Memory of

Robert "Bob Reno" Romagnoli

(1932 - 2012).

A gift has been given to

The Perceptions Saginaw Valley Scholarship Fund

by Robert Enszer.

The [Perceptions Saginaw Valley Scholarship](#) is administered by

The Saginaw Community Foundation.

## Save the Date: Saturday Sept. 29, 2012 at 10:00 am Highway Clean Up

This will be our last clean up for the season and this will also be my last time for chairing this operation. I want to thank all of you who have shown up for this, but this will still go on, we just need someone new to head this up. So as before, we will meet at the rest area on south bound I-75, south of the M-84 exit at 10 am. We will meet on the semi-truck side and go over rules and safety procedures while enjoying fresh donuts. There will be nice cold bottled water to stay hydrated as well. Dress appropriately for the weather. Wear a hat and sun-block. I will have sun-block available, if you need it. We will then have a cook out afterward, where we can enjoy some hot dogs on the grill and other great food as well.

I just want to thank all of you for showing up and showing support during my adventure with this. I had some big shoes to fill, and I want to thank Brian Hampshire for teaching me the ropes! So if you want to get involved and do some community service then show up on Saturday. If you think you would like to take over as chair for this endeavor, then speak to any Board Member of Perceptions It has been a great 5 years, (2 of which we could always clean the whole stretch, due to construction, which made it easier ). If you have any questions or need more info. call me at 989-799-3034. In case of heavy rain, it will be cancelled. Thanks for all you do!!! - Rick Farrand

## Pride Lansing – 2012: HOT TIME IN THE CITY!

diedra knox

HOT was a good word for this fest. The Pride Parade, the Wedding Ceremony, and all of the booths were set up in +90° weather. It stayed that way until closing. The crowd, the colors, the music, the food was all that and more. Some say not as many people showed up this year. Personally, I think more people showed, they just didn't stay long! Oh, and keep in mind that the warm weather brings out a unique fashion sense for all who are watching whomever go by!



It was great to see the crowd made up of LGBT and their ALLIES. Families came out to support friends and family members or just to show support for the event. Despite the heat and not-so-new venue, it was very well attended.

If you weren't able to attend, take a few minutes and put yourself square in the middle of this event. Walk around with me and see so many community organizations, religious/spiritual organizations, services groups, including the Lansing Sheriff Department and Michigan Conservation.

See if you felt, like I did, supported by a community. I couldn't help but notice how fluid and free the younger generation accepts who they are. I'm willing to bet that at its base, is the growing support around them. We will not leave without faithfully acknowledging the efforts of those LGBT who courageously moved on with their lives without such widespread support.

Note: Information on the source of the photo is available.

## Current Events

events.PerceptionsSV.org

▼ **Friday, August 3rd - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm.  
Join Perceptions friends this week at **Harvey's Grill & Bar**, [3055 Tittabawassee Rd.](#), Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

**Saturday, August 4th - Transgender Pride in the Park**  
Noon - 6:00 pm. Presented by [Transgender Michigan](#). Free food, fun, and great friends celebrating 15 years of Transgender Michigan. All trans-people and allies welcome. Hot dogs and fixings provided. Please bring a side dish to share if you're able. Volunteers needed. Contact Rachel at 517-420-1544 or [register online](#). **Geary Park, 1198 Earl Blvd.**, Ferndale.

**Wednesday, August 8th - 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.

▼ **Friday, August 10th - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm.  
Join Perceptions friends this week at **Brooklyn Boyz Pizza**, [507 E. Midland St.](#), Bay City. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

**Sunday, August 12th - Genesee County PFLAG Meeting**  
2:00 - 4:30 pm. 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, August 15th - Womyn's Room II** 6:00 pm.  
Women's group designed as a safe place for Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender women, to come for support and socialization. Contact Rev. Kathy VanBuskirk at 989-755-2618.

**Wednesday, July 15th - 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.

▼ **Friday, August 17th - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm.  
Join Perceptions friends this week at Diamond Jim's, [101 E. Main St.](#), Midland. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

**Sunday, August 19th - 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.

▼ **Tuesday, August 21st - Men's Discussion Group** 7:00 to 8:30 pm. **The Alderton Bldg, 301 Cass St.**, Old Town

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. You may 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.

▼ **Friday, August 24th - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm.  
Join Perceptions friends this week at **Macy's Lakeshore Grill**, [4750 Fashion Square Mall](#) (second floor), Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

▼ **Monday, August 27th - 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).

▼ **Friday, August 31st - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm.  
Join Perceptions friends this week at **Duece's Char House**, [432 N. Tuscola Rd.](#), Bay City. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

▼ **Saturday, September 22 - AIDS Walk Bay City / Midland / Saginaw** Wenonah Park, Downtown Bay City. 9:30 am Registration begins; 10:30 am Rally, 11:00 am Walk Time. Free food, music, entertainment, and awards/trophies to the top individual fundraisers and walk teams. This event is the annual fundraiser which supports services for the clients of Sacred Heart's HIV/AIDS Care Program serving a 10-County region, as well as free and confidential HIV/AIDS prevention education and testing at 10 locations throughout the Saginaw Valley Region and Genesee County. To join the Perceptions Walk Team contact Team Captain, Shawn Nicholes, at [nicholes911@hotmail.com](mailto:nicholes911@hotmail.com) or visit [www.aidswalkmichigan.org](http://www.aidswalkmichigan.org)






▼ **Tuesday, October 16th - Bullycide Project** The **Bullycide Project** is based on the book *Bullycide in America*, compiled by Brenda High and written by mothers who have lost a child to suicide due to excessive bullying. Performances at Delta College, Main Lecture Theater, 2:00 pm and SVSU, evening performance, time and location TBA.

▼ **Saturday, December 8th - Holiday Gala** Perceptions 11th Annual Holiday Party will be at The [Saginaw Art Museum](#). Dinner, entertainment and charity auction.

▼ 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)

# AUGUST 2012

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# Perception Sponsored Activities?



Only if you think it's a good thing. All you Bikers, Hikers, Kayakers, Cross Country Skiers, Walkers, Runners, are you getting that "let's do something together" feeling? I hope so! Perceptions would like to plan place and time for these events with your participation in mind.



Send a text [Note: Must have [Text Plus](#). Download free app so you won't have to waste minutes] to 580-559-7511, email [diedra@perceptionsSV.org](mailto:diedra@perceptionsSV.org), or call 989-372-1365 to let me know if you're even the tiniest bit interested.



Suggest some times/days that will work for you and we'll all decide what works best. The events will be listed on the [Perceptions' Calendar!](#)



I went kayaking the Cass River last Thursday. Had a great time and it's great for beginners



## Saginaw Valley LGBT & Allies Pride Awards Banquet 2012 Sponsors

### Patrons (\$10—\$24)

In Memory of Allan M. Corrion, 1962 - 2012  
 In Memory of Timothy S. Fishell, 1966 - 2011  
 In Honor of Dominic Sheahan-Stahl  
 In Memory of Clayton F. Diebold, 1951 - 2011  
 Fred Eland  
 Rick Farrand  
 In Memory of Bob (Reno) Romagnoli, 1932 - 2012

### Advocates (\$25—\$49)

Rev. Rebecca Dunn  
 Leo R. Romo

### Ellen DeGeneres (\$50—\$99)

Floyd Andrick  
 Kay Sural & Janis Russell  
 Barb Mausolf  
 Tom Brubaker & Marc Cesere

### Harvey Milk (\$100 or more)

Tom Burkey  
 PFLAG Tri-Cities  
 Michael Mercer & Chas Laundra  
 Garnet Lewis & Vicky Cobb  
 The Gourmet Cupcake Shoppe  
 In Honor of Dignity Tri-Cities, 1984-1991  
 Mike's Wrecker Service  
 William Giorgis & Russell Inman

In support of all the queer kids in the Thumb that now have a place to go. Zachary D. Bauer, Executive Director, Kalamazoo Gay Lesbian Resource Center - Who was once one of those queer kids from Vassar, Michigan.

*We are grateful to these generous individuals and organizations who sponsored this year's event. Sponsorships help defray the cost of the Banquet.*

## Saginaw Valley LGBT & Allies Pride Awards Banquet

The fourth annual Saginaw Valley LGBT & Allies Pride Banquet began with a reception in the rose garden of The Andersen Enrichment Center. The beautiful weather allowed attendees to mingle with honorees, dignitaries, supporters and other guests. Hors d'oeuvres, wine and other cold beverages were served.



*Perceptions Chair, Tim Atkinson, speaks with honoree, Willi Sheahan-Stahl, and his family during the reception.*

The reception was followed by a delicious dinner featuring Roasted Pork and Grilled Chicken Breast in Mushroom Wine Sauce, catered by The Savoy Grill. A scrumptious dessert bar was served by [The Gourmet Cupcake Shoppe](#).

After the meal, everyone gathered in The Garden Room for the program. Elected leaders and honored guests were recognized. These individuals included Tyler Bradley, winner of the 2012 [Perceptions Saginaw Valley Scholarship](#); Tim Atkinson, Perceptions Chair; Annie Boensch, Saginaw City Council member; Representative Stacy Erwin Oakes, 95<sup>th</sup> district State Representative; Barb Mausolf, Saginaw County Treasurer; Judi Lincoln, candidate for 94<sup>th</sup> district State Representative; Jen Judd, former SVSU GSA officer and staff person for Senator Debbie Stabenow; Rosa Morales, Saginaw Latina activist and editor of *Mi Gente*; and Pat Horton, co-chair of the [Michigan Fairness Forum](#).

Dr. Charissa Urbano served as Mistress of Ceremonies once again. Her program this year featured the various organizations that have served the LGBT and Allies Community in the Saginaw Valley Region over the years. Among the groups mentioned were Perceptions, PFLAG, Dignity, and the organizations based at SVSU and Delta College. This led up to a promotion of a joint project of several organizations coming together to bring The Bullycide Project to the area in October. [The Bullycide Project](#) is a powerful stage play based on the book *Bullycide in America*, written by mothers who have lost a child to suicide due to excessive bullying. There will be performance

at both Delta College and SVSU.

Charissa then introduced our keynote speaker for the evening, [Michelle Elizabeth Brown](#). Michelle is an out African American lesbian, author, public speaker, and activist who was born and raised in Detroit. Michelle's talk outlines her five-point plan for helping the LGBT community leave behind the chains of discrimination and homophobia that bind us and reach the unfulfilled promise that "all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The five things that we each can do are 1) Be OUT by talking to neighbors, at community meetings, in church, and at work; 2) Touch five people and ask them to be warriors for your equality. They can help shut down the bigotry by not sitting silently when someone makes a homophobic or ignorant remark about our lives. 3) Vote at every election. Those who want to take away our rights show up at each and every election. 4) Be self-sufficient. Support gay-owned and gay-friendly businesses, support our organizations, and invest our time, talent and treasures in our own. And 5) Teach the Children! Children aren't born with hate. Teach the children the value of each and every person and the beauty of diversity.

The main event of the evening was the presentation of the Awards. Two businesses received awards this year, both of which received a large number of nominations. The Court Street Café, owned by Eric Philips received an award because of their support of the LGBT community, especially through their contributions to the Tri-City LGBT Pride Festival. Eric was unable to accept the award in person due to a family medical emergency. The Gourmet Cupcake Shoppe and owner Carrie Fisher were recognized because of their contributions to local groups like Perceptions, PFLAG, and Dow's GLAD Network. Carrie has also used her voice and business to promote pro-equality projects such as The Laramie Project at MCFTA and subtly included photos of commitment ceremonies and same-sex wedding cake toppers in displays at her shop.

The Political Award was given to Kyle Bostwick of Saginaw. Kyle has been an active member of the Saginaw County Democratic Party since he was in high school. He has worked and managed local and state campaigns and currently is the Legislative Aide for State Rep. Charlie Brunner (96<sup>th</sup> district). As a political professional in Lansing and locally, Kyle will continue to work on the civil rights for all people. Kyle is a great role model to young individuals who aspire to a career in politics.

Tana Michaels, former Perceptions Newsletter editor, received an award for her contributions in journalism and music. Tana is a contributor to [Between the Lines](#) magazine and has shared her musical talents at Tri-City LGBT Pride, Perceptions and PFLAG events including our Wine Tastings and RespectFest 2007. When receiving her



## PRIDE BANQUET Continued

award, Tana commented, "I've been out for so long that I sometimes forget how difficult it can be to come out; but I just talked to my mother and was reminded."

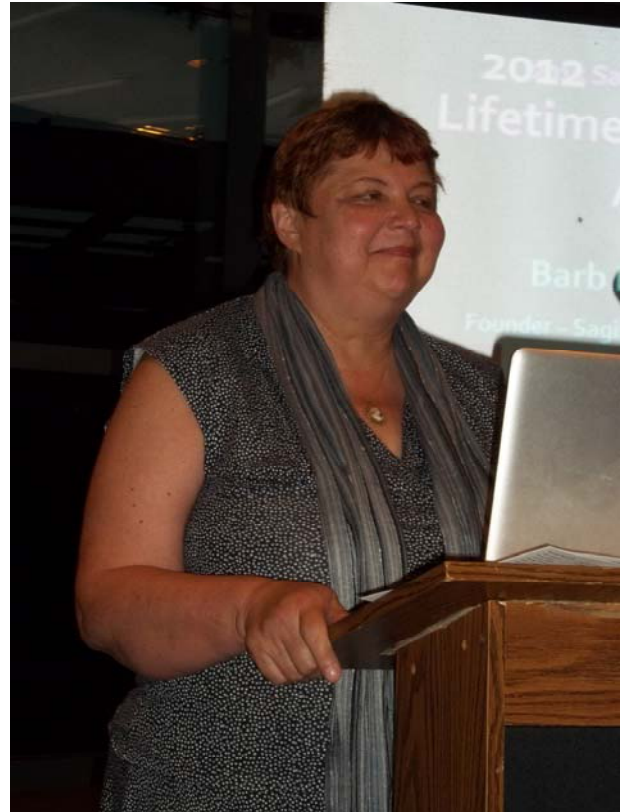
The first standing ovation of the evening went to Willi Sheahan-Stahl, who accepted an award on behalf of the Mt Pleasant Sacred Heart Academy Class of 2012. Sacred Heart had invited Willi's older brother, Dominic Sheahan-Stahl, to deliver the commencement address. Dominic is a graduate of Sacred Heart who is now an actor in New York. When the school learned that Dominic was gay, his invitation was rescinded by the Saginaw Catholic Diocese and Bishop Cistone. The students launched a national campaign called [Let Dominic Speak](#) and when it became evident that the Diocese would not back down, they organized an inclusive graduation event called [Live Through Love](#) which was attended by about 800 community members. The actions of these students sparked a national discussion about young Christians standing up for the values they believe in.

A thunderous standing ovation was given when Leo Romo's name was announced. Leo is a tireless activist and, among many other accomplishments, was the creator of the Saginaw Valley LGBT Pride Awards Banquet. In a touching acceptance speech, Leo thanked his family who supported him by being there to see him accept his award but was saddened by the other family members who could not bring themselves to attend or acknowledge his accomplishments because of their bigotry.



*Pride Award Recipient, Leo Romo*

Our highest honor of the evening, the Lifetime Achievement Award, was presented to Barbara Klimaszewski. The crowd rose to their feet one more time to show their appreciation of Barb's long history of fighting for the equality and civil rights of all people. Barb is a Saginaw criminal and civil rights attorney. When members of the LGBT community had no one to stand up for them, Klimaszewski provided representation. In 1976, Barb was a founding member of the [Underground Railroad](#), a place where battered women and their children could escape.



*Lifetime Achievement Award Winner, Barb Klimaszewski, during her acceptance speech.*

The final business of the evening was to draw the winner of our 50/50 drawing. We are very grateful to the winner, Dave S., who donated the jackpot of \$102 back to Perceptions. We are also grateful to our faithful volunteer, Fred, for coordinating the raffle and selling tickets.

We need to acknowledge this year's Pride Awards Committee Chairman, Rick Farrand for all of his hard work to pull this together. He was lucky to have Leo Romo, as his mentor. There were many other supporters and volunteers whose efforts made this evening possible, enlightening and enjoyable. We especially want to thank our sponsors whose generous donations defrayed the cost of the Banquet and kept the ticket price affordable. The 2012 sponsors are listed on page 7. We are pleased that we were able to honor these local businesses and individuals who have worked to improve the LGBT and greater community, and at the same time, celebrate the 43rd anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, the beginning of the modern LGBT equality movement.

## The New Face of Gay Culture

By David DePeal, *PSV Columnist*

At the Tri-Cities Pride Fest, I ran into some friends and asked them out for a drink or two since I owed them one from our last outing. We agreed to meet later at a gay-friendly bar on Bay City's South side. As I pulled into the bar's parking lot, I was somewhat surprised (it being Pride and all) that they weren't busier, but it was early yet so I didn't give it much more thought. Later as Tim, Alan and I sat and talked about the turnout at Tri-Cities Pride and the state of gay community in general, Tim mentioned many gay bars and night clubs are closing. I, too, had noticed similar phenomena in Kalamazoo from where I once hailed. In its heyday, Kalamazoo once had three gay bars and two gay bookstores, all of which are now closed. Our discussion reminded me of an article I once read by gay British author and conservative Andrew Sullivan who incites followers to nod in agreement observing, "Slowly but unmistakably, gay culture is ending." ("End of Gay Culture", Oct. 24, 2005, [The New Republic](#)) and I began to wonder, *Could Sullivan be right? Is Gay Culture \*really\* ending?*

Sullivan's argument is based on noticed changes in gay microcosms such as Cape Cod's Provincetown and San Francisco's Castro District as forecasters for broader changes in the nation's gay culture. His article maps the rise and decline of gay culture as an identity status in America's post-AIDS epidemic era. Sullivan states that although mass discrimination of the 1970s and 1980s make the LGBT culture vulnerable, issues such as AIDS and mass discrimination were a cohesive glue unifying the LGBT community. However, as the gay community has diversified into sub-cultures, this unity no longer exists.

Sullivan explains as gay America has changed, so, too, have gay microcosms like Provincetown and Key West. "What is happening across this country is its culture is changing. It is becoming a world of which homosexuals have long dreamed. Nevertheless...it is a threat in the way that all loss is a threat. For many of us who grew up fighting a world of now-inconceivable silence and shame, distinctive gayness became an integral part of who we are. It helped define us not only to the world but also to ourselves. Letting that go is as hard as it is liberating, as saddening as it is invigorating."

In this respect, gay culture is a victim of its own success. Huge strides have been made in terms of gay rights, freedoms and opportunities. Yet, this progress comes with a cost, and that cost is the fixtures of our past. Gay communities are changing worldwide in light of several key factors, including Internet dating and achievement of civil rights. Entities such as gay community centers, clubs, bars, events and neighborhoods will have to either adapt or perish according to new University of Minnesota research.

Simon Rosser, Ph.D., principal investigator on the University of Minnesota study and professor in the School of Public Health's Division of Epidemiology and Community Health says, "With the exception of London and possibly New York, gay bars and culture are changing. On almost all measures, we're seeing the same trend: decreasing number of gay bars/clubs, decreased attendance at gay events, less volunteerism in gay or HIV/AIDS organizations and, less gay media, resulting in an overall decline in gay visibility. The biggest reason for

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these changes, we think, is the Internet. Traditional gay communities have become much quieter now that most gay men are online. It's really a worldwide trend.”

These findings echo the work of Harvard Sociology, Robert D. Putnam, who in 1995 penned the article “Bowling Alone,” later to become a national best-selling novel of the same name. In a nutshell, Putnam argues that civil society is breaking down as Americans became more disconnected from their families, neighbors, communities, and the republic itself and the fraying of organizations that gave democracy life. Putnam attributes the Internet and television, two-career families, suburban sprawl and generational changes in values have meant that fewer and fewer of us find that formal organizations and even friends fit the way we have come to live. Putnam goes on to say that growing social-capital deficit threatens educational performance, safe neighborhoods, equitable tax collection, democratic responsiveness, everyday honesty, and even our health and happiness.

It seems People-Who-Need-People really *\*are\** the luckiest people in the world. Studies on internet usage and depression would seem to confirm Putnam’s findings. Putnam also references, *The Great Good Place*, by Ray Oldenburg (1989, 1991), and the importance of “third places” to our well-being. In his book, Oldenburg argues that “third places” are important for civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and establishing feelings of a sense of place.

Third places, then, are “anchors” of community life and facilitate and foster broader, more creative interaction. All societies already have informal meeting places; what is new in modern times is the intentionality of seeking them out as vital to current societal needs. Oldenburg suggests these hallmarks of a true “third place:” free or inexpensive; food and drink, while not essential, are important; highly accessible: proximate for many (walking distance); involve regulars – those who habitually congregate there; welcoming and comfortable; both new friends and old should be found there. “Third places” - where people can gather, put aside the concerns of home and work, and hang out simply for the pleasures of good company and lively conversation - are the heart of a community's social vitality and the grassroots of democracy. Think one’s own CHEERS or Whistle Stop Café, if you will.

Putnam addresses issues related to the need for third place in *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital* (1995, 2000) and sums it up best: “Nothing will stop this [need], since it is occurring in the psyches and souls of a new generation: a new consciousness that is immune to any law and propelled by the momentum of human freedom itself. While we should treasure the past, there is no recovering it. The futures--and they will be multiple--are just beginning.”

Thus, it appears regardless of whatever things may come, we need always to strike a balanced between our technology and our humanity. While modern technology such as cell phones and the internet in many ways is a godsend, it cannot and *should not*, replace personal human interaction. A study published in the Journal of Consumer Research on noise found that people do their best thinking in situations of moderate noise (similar to that of a roadside diner or a noisy mall).

# Get Out the Vote!

By diedra knox

Perceptions is a 501(c)(3) organization and cannot endorse, support, or work for candidates in any election. That said, this is **NOT** an article to tell you how or who to vote for. It **IS**, however, a call to action. Change is only going to occur if we assist that change. I know it is sooo easy to become complacent. So many promises and little follow-through from some of our elected officials, it's easy to say, "Shut the Front Door!" I'm here because I don't want you to do that. I want you to vote and then hold your officials responsible for what they should be doing for you.

I recently read the Brennan Report (Taken from: [wisconsinwave.org](http://wisconsinwave.org).) and it lists the number of ways voting rights are being challenged. These efforts are being legislated in a growing number of states. You may be thinking "well, they haven't bothered me yet" or "that doesn't apply to me", but you'd be wrong to find comfort in that.

Do me a favor, please. As you read this growing lists of efforts to make it harder for citizens to vote, I'd like you to ask yourself the question, 'How can this be turned on the LGBT community?'. Whether you agree or not can certainly be another discussion. I'm asking you to consider this: when one person is blocked from voting, the door for who is ineligible to vote is a lot easier to open.

1. In keeping with the Immigration discussion, 12 states have introduced legislation that would require documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote.
2. Photo ID laws have been introduced in 34 states. Seven of those of those have signed it into law.
3. Pushing legislation to regulate and restrict community based voter registration drives. Florida has imposed a set of new restrictions on third party voter registration resulting in the League of Women Voters to put a moratorium on all voter registration work. This group

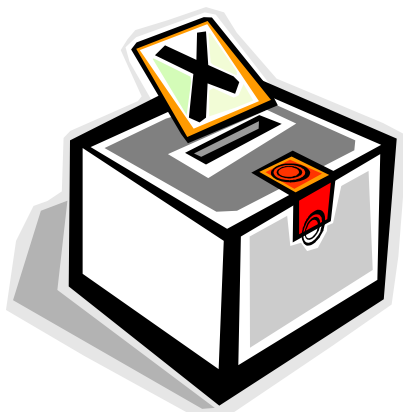


is an icon of voter registration! This will surely restrict participation in the voting process and who can help them.

4. Eliminating same-day registration. The reason given is that it “invites” those who are not eligible to vote.
5. Eliminating Early In-Person voting. This was certainly a convenient way to avoid the crush of voters on election day.

Eliminating Mail-In Absentee Voting.

In short, voting rights are being attacked. Regardless of your political stance, I invite and urge you to **make sure to vote!** As important, I invite and urge you to **be part of the effort that helps others to Get out and Vote.** I'd like to see Perceptions form car pools to get people to the Poll, speak to civic and community groups about voting, encourage family and friends to vote, help put up signs/flyers, and any other positive efforts. Please don't take this lightly. Download [TextPlus](#) (free) and text me at 580-559-7511. I have a Community where we can share ideas and plan meetings to make this a viable Perceptions effort



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Authors of the study conclude “Moderate background noise induces distraction which encourages individuals to think at a higher, abstract level, and consequently exhibit higher creativity. For individuals looking for creative solutions to daily problems, instead of burying oneself in a quiet room trying to figure out a solution, walking out of one's comfort zone and getting into a relatively noisy environment may trigger the brain to think abstractly, and thus generate creative ideas. A moderate level of noise not only enhances creativity ...,” write the authors.

It seems regardless of sexual orientation, we human beings are social creatures and need to connect with one other to be at our happiest and our best. We only need to look at solitary confinement to see this is so. As we have seen from hard lessons of history like the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima in World War II, we must *never* forget this and let our technology surpass our humanity. There is too much is at stake.

## Perceptions Yard Sale for AIDS Walk Another Success!

Perceptions members Shawn Nicoles and Jim Kleinsorge led this year's Perceptions' Charity Yard Sale on Friday and Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> at their home in Bay City. The yard sale was another success with \$530 raised which will go toward Perceptions' sponsorship of AIDS Walk Great Lakes Bay Region on Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> in Downtown Bay City. All of the funds raised support services for nearly 180 clients living with HIV/AIDS through Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center.

"This year's yard sale was successful thanks to the volunteers who staffed the yard sale and all of the people who donated items," Shawn says. "Despite the hot temperatures, were able to raise over \$500 to help people in need right here in our community." Shawn Nicoles and Perceptions Treasurer Daphne Barkley are members of the 2012 AIDS Walk Planning Committee.

**THANK YOU** to the following people who volunteered and/or made donations: Alan, Chas, Daphne, Dave, David, Douglas, Floyd, Fred, Greg, Jim, Kathy, Mike, Randy, Rick, Shawn, Steve, Roger, Tana, Tim and Tom.



"We are so impressed by the hard work, concern, and outpouring support from Shawn and the members and friends of Perceptions," said Tom Brubaker, AIDS Walk Coordinator and Perceptions

board member. "Perceptions has held the annual yard sale since the [AIDS Walk](#) began in 2005. The thousands of dollars Perceptions has raised has helped hundreds of people through the food pantry, client emergency fund, support groups, and free HIV testing and prevention education at several locations in the Great Lakes Bay Region. Thank you to all of you who volunteered, donated items, and purchased things at the yard sale," Brubaker says. "We would not be able to provide our clients with support services without your generosity."

