



PERCEPTIONS SAGINAW VALLEY

Serving the Tri-City Area's LGBT Community

December 2012

www.PerceptionsSV.org

Free



Perceptions Trustee Sally Mims with the fagbug

INSIDE:

- Perceptions Annual Mtg 2
- Perceptions Thanksgiving 3
- News for the Holidays 3
- Voters Want Equality..... 4
- Calendar 5
- Current Events 6
- Valentine's Day Dance 7
- Holiday Party Donors 8
- Bullycide Project 9
- Fagbug 10
- HRC Corp. Equality Index..... 11
- Images from Bullycide 12



Erin Davies, owner of fagbug and Sally Mims, Perceptions Trustee



Model of the fagbug car

Perceptions
Saginaw Valley
PO Box 1525
Midland, MI 48641
989-891-1429

www.PerceptionsSV.org

GUEST EDITOR

Daphne Barkley
Daphne@PerceptionsSV.org

AD SALES

Tim@PerceptionsSV.org

PRINT DISTRIBUTION

Jim Kleinsorge
Jim@PerceptionsSV.org

ELECTRONIC DISTRIBUTION

Tim@PerceptionsSV.org

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor@PerceptionsSV.org

SUBMISSIONS are always
welcome. Write to:

Editor@PerceptionsSV.org

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

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.

Perceptions Annual Meeting To Be Held Thursday, January 17th, 7pm

Tim Atkinson

In accordance with the [ByLaws](#) that govern Perceptions, the Board of Trustees has designated the January meeting as the Annual Meeting of the corporation. This meeting will be held at 7:00 pm on Thursday, January 17th at The Alderton Building, 301 Cass St., Saginaw.

New trustees will be elected to the Board in January. All members are entitled to vote. By tradition, both 2012 and 2013 members will be given a ballot. The slate of nominees has not yet been finalized. If you are interested in serving on the Board or would like to nominate someone else, please contact Tom Brubaker (Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org) or Tim Atkinson (Tim@PerceptionsSV.org) for additional information.

The Annual Meeting is also a time for the Board of Trustees to report the State of the Organization to the membership. These reports will include a financial report from the Treasurer and an overview of the organization's accomplishments over the past 12 months. This is also a time for members to ask questions from our volunteer leadership and to offer suggestions for improvements or potential new programs for the upcoming year.

We hope that you'll participate in the Annual Meeting of your community organization. Your inputs are always welcome; this is a chance to share your thoughts with the entire Board and other members. This is a great opportunity to come out and show your gratitude for the trustees who are stepping down from the Board and especially to show your support for the new volunteers who will be stepping forward to lead this organization into its second decade.

REMINDER:

THE DECEMBER MEETING
DATE FOR THE MEN'S
DISCUSSION GROUP WILL
BE CHANGED FROM
TUES., DECEMBER 11TH TO
TUES., DECEMBER 18TH



Perceptions Thanksgiving Event

Kathy Lloyd

Once again, St. John's Episcopal Church, graciously offered us their space, to have our annual Perceptions Thanksgiving Potluck. This event was held on Thursday, November 15, 2012, and was attended by approximately 30 people. There were several traditional Thanksgiving dishes such as turkey, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, corn, squash as well as some new dishes that were wonderful. My favorite new dish was pasta with a cream sauce that had walnuts in it, as well as a cooked vegetable medley covered in a brown sauce. And then the desserts! There were all kinds of pies, a chocolate cool whip dessert as well as a crème cake that, what can I say, took the cake. I was able to eek out the last piece, which I had to divide with someone, and quickly was able to see why. For a sweet tooth like myself, it was heaven. I even saw someone taking a picture of it!!

All of us who attended, were encouraged to bring canned goods, non-perishables and toiletries to donate to Innerlink of Saginaw. Innerlink is a program that provides temporary shelter, medicine, food and transportation for runaway youth, both males and females who are between the ages of 10 and seventeen. As many of us know, LGBT children are kicked out of their homes at a much higher rate than other children, and so this is a particularly worthy cause for our community.

So if you missed "our" Thanksgiving this year, please try and remember it for next. It was great to be able to share this meal with our LGBT families. I was filled with gratitude, to share a meal with my comrades who are older, grayer but still pushing on, however slowly it sometimes seems, in this march toward equality and equal rights.

Happy Holidays to Everyone and God Bless Us All.

News for the Holidays

Sally Mims



The holidays can be a very stressful time of year for many people. This is also the time of year when more people are feeling lonely or blue. For anyone who has lost their partner, had a partner diagnosed with an incurable disease, lost their job, their home, their pet, their own personal health, or their income security this time is especially painful and worrisome. It is at this time that we need to reach out to individuals who may need a phone call to cheer them up or even a hand written note instead of a bill in the mail. This season is the time when more people commit suicide. An LGBT teen is 4 times more likely than a heterosexual teen to commit suicide. As a community we need to reach out to people who may be vulnerable and who may need a little help making it from Thanksgiving to Valentines Day.

Voters Want Equality Nationally; Not in Michigan yet

by Leo R. Romo

Overall, November 6, 2012, was a historical equality landslide. As the [Victory Fund](#) noted “Hundreds of openly lesbian, gay and bisexual candidates won election to public offices across America, including the nation's first openly gay U.S. Senator, six openly gay members of the U.S. House, and seven who will make history as the first or only out lawmakers serving in their state legislatures.”



President Obama, the most LGBT-equality president in history, was re-elected. He endorses marriage equality, does not support DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act); will sign the Employment Non-Discrimination Act if Congress passes it (ENDA prohibits hiring and firing on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity) and has appointed transgender Amanda Simpson as a senior technical advisor to the Department of Commerce. These examples predict equality with the Obama administration for the next four years.

In Congress, Tammy Baldwin was elected senator of Wisconsin, becoming the nation's first openly gay senator. Six openly gay individuals were elected to the U.S. House of Representatives: Mark Pocan (D-WI) replacing Tammy Baldwin's House seat, Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) first openly bisexual; Mark Takana (D-CA) first openly gay person of color in Congress; Jared Polis (D-CO), David Cicilline (D-RI) and Patrick Maloney (D-NY).

Voters wanted equality on Nov. 6th. Minnesota voters rejected a proposal to amend the state constitution to define marriage as between a man and a woman. Maine, Maryland, and Washington approved same-sex marriage. New Hampshire voters elected their first openly transgender lawmaker, Stacie Laughton and Silverton, Oregon re-elected openly transgender mayor Stu Rasmussen for a fifth term. Iowa voters retained Justice David Wiggins in the Iowa Supreme Court who voted with the majority that found a law banning marriage equality unconstitutional in 2009. And finally, Janice Daniels, mayor of Troy, Michigan, was recalled because she crudely criticized New York on Facebook for legalizing marriage equality.

What about equality in Michigan?

In Michigan there four openly gay candidates on the ballot on Nov. 6th ballot and one won. Carol Kuhnke was elected as Circuit Court Judge in Washtenaw County, making her the first openly LGBT judge elected by the people in Michigan. The three other candidates were defeated: Kevin Howley for Oakland County Executive, Ken Ross for Circuit Court Judge in Ingham County, and Todd Heywood for a seat on the Lansing Community College Board of Trustees.

Other than the election of openly gay Carol Kuhnke as Washtenaw Co. judge, Michigan's government will remain the same: The Supreme Court will remain with a 4-3 conservative majority and the State House of Representatives and Senate will remain in Republican control.

Unfortunately, Michigan is not an equality leader: civil marriage and civil unions were banned under Michigan's constitution for gay and lesbian couples in 2004. In Michigan, gays can be legally discriminated against in employment, housing or public accommodations unless a local ordinance offers protection. Domestic partner health care coverage was eliminated for Michigan public employers in 2011 and same-sex couples have been denied second parent adoptions since 2004.

Commenting on Michigan's Nov. 6th results, Garnett Lewis, Director of the Joint Legislative Campaign of the Michigan Democratic Party, said, “Attitudes are evolving all across the nation (but) the Republican majorities

Cont'd on Page 7

Current Events

events.PerceptionsSV.org

▼ **Sat., December 1st - Perceptions Holiday Gala** Our annual holiday party will be at **Apple Mountain** in Freeland. Entertainment, hors d'oeuvres, dinner, silent and live auctions. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door for \$40.

Tues., December 4th - A Classical Christmas Returns 7:30 pm. **Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra** presents a journey through time, as we hear traditional Christmas favorites and some more contemporary seasonal works composed over five centuries and all over the world. It promises to be an exciting ride, as we explore how musical, religious and folk traditions from all over the world have come to be part of the melodic voyage we call "Christmas." **The Temple Theatre**, 201 N. Washington Ave., Saginaw.

▼ **December 7th - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends at **Sullivan's Food & Spirits**, **5235 Gratiot Rd.**, Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm on Friday.

Sun., December 9th - Genesee County PFLAG Meeting 2:00 - 4:30 pm. Annual Winter Celebration Potluck. PFLAG Friend of the Year will be honored. The meeting begins with support groups at 2:00 followed by the potluck. Unitarian Universalist Church of Flint, 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy. For more information, contact pflagflint@yahoo.com.

Wed., December 12th - 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 989-392-6874.

▼ **Thurs., December 13th - Card Players Club** 1:00 to 3:00 pm. **The Alderton Bldg.**, **301 Cass St.**, Saginaw. The group will decide the games depending on the crowd. Bring your favorite beverage and/or snack. Some refreshments will be provided. Join us for a fun afternoon of fellowship. Repeats on the second Thursday of the month. Please direct questions and suggestions to Mike Mercer.

▼ **December 14th - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends at **Diamond Jim's**, **101 E. Main St.**, Midland. If you plan to attend, please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm on Friday.

Fri., December 14th - West Michigan Gay Men's Chorus Holiday Concert 8:00 pm. **WMGMC** presents its 5th annual holiday concert, "It's a Colorful Season," a festive evening of theatre and song with special guest Diane Penning, Soprano. East Grand Rapids Performing Arts Center, 2211 Lake Drive SE. Tickets \$20.

Sat., December 15th - Detroit Together Men's Chorus Holiday Concert 7:30 pm. DTMC 30th Anniversary Holiday

Concert: "Sparkly, Jolly, Twinkly, Jingly." Lamphere High School Auditorium, 610 W. Thirteen Mile Rd., Madison Heights. \$18 advance tickets; \$15 student & senior tickets. Tickets available at www.dtmc.org or 248-544-3872.

Sat., December 15th - A World of Carols 2 3:00 pm. **Saginaw Choral Society** with special guests *Ah Tempo!* journey through the holiday traditions of England, Germany, Russia, and the USA. Glen Thomas Rideout, Artist Director. **Temple Theatre**, 201 N. Washington Ave., Saginaw. Tickets starting at \$10. Special concert prelude - Art Promenade in the Leopard Lounge at 2:00 pm. Enjoy dinner at the Temple Theatre following the concert. \$45 ticket package includes concert ticket with dinner. Call 989-754-7469 for reservations.

December 15th & 16th - LanSINGout Holiday Concert 7:00 pm Saturday & 3:00 pm Sunday. LanSINGout Gay Men's Chorus presents "Holiday Lights: More Christmas Than You Can Stand." First Presbyterian Church of Lansing (corner of Ottawa & Pine Streets). Tickets are \$12 to \$20. www.holidayoflights.org

Sun., December 16th - 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 or 989-941-1458.

▼ **Tues., December 18th - 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. Contact him at Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org for additional information or to let him know you'll attend. Light snacks will be provided.

Wed., December 19th - 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 989-392-6874.

▼ **December 21st - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends this week at **Fuzzy's Restaurant**, **1924 Court St.**, Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm on Friday.

▼ **Thurs., December 27th - Saginaw Meet & Greet** 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends each month at **The Mixx**, **115 N. Hamilton Street**, Old Town Saginaw.

▼ **December 28th - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends this week at **Duce's Char House**, **432 N. Tuscola Rd.**, Bay City. If you plan to attend, please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm on Friday.

▼ **Event Sponsored or Endorsed by Perceptions.**

DECEMBER 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
						1 World AIDS Day  Perceptions Holiday Gala & Charity Auction Apple Mountain, Freeland 6:00 PM																																																																																				
2	3	4	5	6	 Friday Night Dinner Sullivan's 5235 Gratiot Saginaw 7:00 PM	8																																																																																				
9  Genesee Co. PFLAG Meeting UU Church of Flint 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy 2:00 - 4:30 PM	10	11	12	 Perceptions Card Player's Club The Alderton 301 Cass St., Saginaw 1:00 - 3:00 PM	 Friday Night Dinner Diamond Jim's 101 E. Main St. Midland 7:00 PM	15																																																																																				
16  Tri-Cities PFLAG Meeting Our Savior Lutheran Church 2525 Hemmeter, Saginaw 2:00 - 4:30 PM	17	 Perceptions Men's Discussion Group 301 Cass St., Saginaw 7:00 - 8:30 PM	19	20	 Friday Night Dinner Fuzzy's 1924 Court St. Saginaw 7:00 PM	22																																																																																				
23	24	25 Christmas Day	26	 Perceptions Saginaw Meet & Greet The Mixx 115 N. Hamilton 7:00 - 9:00 PM	 Friday Night Dinner Duece's Char House 734 N. Tuscola Rd. Bay City 7:00 PM	29																																																																																				
30	31 New Year's Eve	November 2012 <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		January 2013 <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>31</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	31			Notes: No Friends & Members meeting this month No Transgender Group meeting this month
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																																																																																					
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	31																																																																																						

Voters Wanted Equality-Cont'd from page 4

in the Michigan House and Senate are incredibly hostile not just to LGBT equality, but gender equality, as well. Michigan can and will move forward on marriage equality, but we first need to focus on continuing our progress in the state legislature." Source: *[Between the Lines](#)*

While equality seemed a watershed nationally, this not true for Michigan yet. Two recent results may reflect Michigan's future regarding marriage equality and non-discrimination...at least, we hope. A Michigan State University survey found that 56% of Michigan residents favor same-sex marriage while only 39% opposed it. And Unity Michigan lists at least 70 Michigan elected leaders who had signed their names in support of non-discrimination protections for gay and transgender residents. Hopefully these results reflect a developing trend that will effect equality as a reality in the state of Michigan. We are on the road to equality but still have quite a journey ahead.

Valentine's Day Party

diedra knox

What . . . ? Christmas Party December 1st and a mention of Valentine's Day in the same Newsletter?
What calendar was this writer looking at?

I know these and thousand other questions enter into your head, but the purpose here is not to announce a Valentine's Day Party, but to plan one! Yes, plan one and we need help, help, and more help. Be on the lookout for more information to be forthcoming in the weekly message. We'd like your input on all of the following :

1. Venue? (total cost, cash bar, etc, parking)
2. DJ (cost)
3. Food
4. Decoration (I remember we did the first 2 events as a group)
5. Tickets (prices – remember we have to cover costs)
6. Invites
7. Allies
8. Advertisement
9. Miscellaneous

Are you a designer, graphic artist, party planner, budgeter, etc?. Can you see you in the picture? Then help us put on a great event for Valentine's Day!

Please contact any Perceptions board member or email info@PerceptionsSV.org with your ideas and suggestions!!

Holiday Party Donors

Help put on a spectacular Gala

Our Tenth Anniversary Celebration & Holiday Gala could not have been done without the generosity of many in the community that donated auction items, time, and monetary donations. We wanted to recognize those donors who contributed to the giving societies in the December issue of this newsletter. Be on the look out for a comprehensive donor list next month in the January issue.

Equality Contributor (\$300-\$499)

Fogelsonger Pet Cremation Service

The Rainbow Society (\$100-\$299)

Sacred Heart Rehabilitation

Ieuter Insurance

Greg Gwaltney via The Dow Chemical Company

Gus Rojas via The Dow Chemical Company

Beth Sibray via The Dow Chemical Company

PFLAG Tri-Cities (Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians & Gays)

GLAD (Gays, Lesbians, and Allies At Dow)

Dr. Carlos Uribe, DDS

Holiday Patron (under \$100)

Elizabeth Loose

The Bullycide Project – Collaborative Anti-Bullying Program

Sally Mims

The Bullycide Project is a theatrical ensemble showcasing the events of ten people who were bullied and whom later committed suicide because of their bullying. The play was written by Artistic Director Lori Thompson and the [Trust Theater Ensemble](#). Delta College, Saginaw Valley State University, PFLAG Tri-Cities and Perceptions Saginaw Valley sponsored the event. Charissa Urbano worked tirelessly to get the funding for this project to be shown here in the Saginaw area.

The Bullycide Project is based on the book [Bullycide in America](#), compiled by Brenda High and written by mothers whose children had committed suicide due to excessive bullying. The Artistic Director was introduced to the book by the parents of Matt Epling, a Lansing student whom committed suicide after an unusually cruel day of bullying by upper classman at his school.

The cast themselves actually did face-to-face interviewing, online-messaging, and phone interviews with several family members to collect facts and stories about the individuals written about in the book. This process helped the actors bring to light the real-life history of each bullied suicide victim portrayed. The parents' input provided the actors with real life moments of how their child was bullied. After each performance the actors stated the teen's cause of death and the day they died.

This performance was powerful in many ways and very thought provoking. It showed the many ways teenagers are being bullied in our schools and in our communities. From cyber bullying, to physical bullying, to verbal bullying, and by gang bullying children are escaping the tormentors by committing suicide. These teens are from all walks of life and all social-economic backgrounds. They are both beauty queens and kings and perhaps the ones some see as nerdy.

I was especially taken aback and disturbed with the story of Matt Epling whose friend was a by-stander while he was being bullied. The Phoebe Prince story also was quite disturbing. Phoebe had come to Massachusetts with her mother and siblings from Ireland. Upon entering school she was immediately targeted for bullying. She was a very pretty girl with a gentle trusting personality. After her death the bullies put on her Facebook page, "mission accomplished."

As a result of their son's tragic death Matt and Tammy Epling worked hard and long with the Michigan State Legislature to come up with an anti-bullying law. Michigan was one of the last three states to enact an anti bullying law. Matt's Safe School Law was signed into law as an effort to combat bullying in Michigan. There is a major obstacle passing the law. Republicans, at the eleventh hour of signing the law, included an amendment that persons could not be held responsible for bullying if it was based on their religious beliefs, essentially giving them a license to bully. Only after their actions brought national attention did they back down. LGBT students are not a specifically protected class under Matt's Safe School Law. The Eplings have been working with gay rights groups to add LGBT to anti-bullying legislation.

Fagbug Visit “Drives a Controversial Conversation at SVSU”

Sally Mims

One day Erin Davies came out to her blue VW Beetle to find she had been the victim of a hate crime. Because she had displayed a rainbow sticker on the back of her car, the word "FAG" was spray painted across the driver side window and "U R Gay" across the hood of her. She jokingly told the audience of about 100 people that the person who spray painted her car was only telling her what she had already known since she was seventeen and that was, “that she was a lesbian” and that the person just assumed it was a male driving the car or didn’t know what a lesbian was.

If it hadn’t been for her insurance company the Fagbug might never have come to be realized. The insurance company was backed up so therefore Erin Davies was forced leave her car parked until it could be fixed.

Upon passing her parked car one day Davies realized that people were stopping to look at the car and some people were even leaving notes on the car stating that it was wrong who ever had done this. A few people even left her money in envelopes to help get her car repaired.

The university police soon asked her to move her car because it was upsetting people. “Instead of being upset with who did this to my car, they were upset with me,” Davies said. It was after having to move it that she decided to start driving it around. “In that very moment, it was like an inner voice telling me what to do”, she said. “So I didn’t question it.”

One of her friends suggested continuing to drive it around to record others’ reactions and make a [documentary](#) out of it. Davies then left on a 58 day journey chronicling her road trip and interviewing people about their responses to the graffitist. Because she had only four hundred dollars she had no idea of how she was going to fund this long 48 state trip. Davies was helped by ordinary people offering to pay for hotel rooms and dinners.

Fagbug has since been sponsored by Volkswagen and repainted in rainbow colors with the graffiti removed from it. Davies said she was glad she left the graffiti on and even went on to state that, “every time you wipe something like this off, you’re just encouraging it,” she said. An audience member asked her how long she intended to drive the car around and she said, “as long as bigotry and homophobia are a problem there will be a need to continue this dialogue.

The Fagbug presentation was organized by Speaking Out Loud and sponsored by Student Association, PFLAG and Perceptions Saginaw Valley. It was a funny, entertaining, yet insightful presentation. Davies herself has a great sense of humor and tells the story of homophobia and bigotry with a graceful flow of both sarcasm and satire for people who are homophobic.

Cont’d on page 11

Cont'd from Page 10

After the presentation I spoke to Davies and asked her if she was ever afraid to drive her car looking like this and she said, "More hate crimes are acted out toward homosexual men than Lesbians." Davies even said a male friend tried an experiment where he drove the car for about an hour to see what peoples' responses would be. The responses weren't helpful and nice like Davies had received. People were a lot more relaxed about the graffiti and didn't really see him as a victim. I then asked her if she felt it would be different if the graffiti had lesbian slurs and she again said, "NO!" I told her I wouldn't really feel safe driving the car and definitely wouldn't want it for my only means of transportation. Davies said that in the ten years she has been doing this she has had only one really nasty encounter. In parting, I wished her well on her journey as she intends to have her car shipped to Hawaii. That will leave her with only Alaska to finish her 50 state dialogues. It was great being able to meet and talk with her.

Human Rights Campaign Releases 2013 Corporate Equality Index

The LGBT community got another indication of our accelerating progress from the newly-released 11th edition of the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index. Despite the fact that people can be legally denied a job or fired simply for their sexual orientation in 29 states and their gender identity in 34, our corporate allies have surged well ahead of lagging legislation to afford these protections. As the Wall Street Journal reported, a record 252 businesses achieved the top rating of 100 percent. As a point of comparison, only 13 businesses earned a 100 percent in the inaugural Corporate Equality Index 11 years ago.

Over the past 11 years, the CEI has become the gold standard for corporate policies and practices related to LGBT employees and their families. The policies, benefits and practices businesses must implement to earn a perfect score are best-in-class demonstrations of corporate commitments to LGBT workers. As a testament to how equality is being embraced by all of corporate America, the top rated businesses span across industries, geographies, and size.

These pro-equality corporations are making their voices heard. In all four states where marriage equality was on the ballot this November, consumer-facing brands like Starbucks, Nike, Amazon and General Mills stepped up to support full equality for lesbian and gay couples. In fact, a record 74 major businesses and law firms publicly supported pro-equality legislation and ballot measures at the state and federal levels.

A few more of the findings from this year's CEI:

- The 2013 CEI saw the largest growth in the survey's history with 54 new businesses participating, bringing the total number of rated companies to 688, an increase of 116 percent since the CEI began.

- For the first time, a majority of Fortune 500 companies have nondiscrimination policies that cover gender identity (from 50 percent to 57 percent), while an astonishing 84 percent of overall CEI participants cover gender identity.
- And transgender-inclusive healthcare coverage continues to rise: 42 percent of participating companies offer comprehensive healthcare coverage to their transgender workers, up from 33 percent last year.

The entire report can be found online at www.hrc.org/CEI

A sample of the scores, you'll find in the full report follows:

Retail & Consumer Products

Barnes & Nobel Inc.	100
Best Buy Co.	100
Nordstrom Inc	100
S.C. Johnson & Son	100
Sears	100
Target Corp	100
J.C. Penney Co.	95
Walmart Stores	60
Meijer Inc.	25
Kohl's Corp.	15

Gas & Oil

Chevron Corp.	100
Shell Oil	95
BP America	90
ConocoPhillips	55
Marathon Oil	15
Exxon Mobil Corp.	-25



IMAGES FROM BULLYCIDE

