



PERCEPTIONS

SAGINAW VALLEY

Serving the Tri-City Area's LGBT Community

July/August 2014

www.PerceptionsSV.org

Free



Celebrate Equality at Mid-Michigan LGBT Pride
Saturday, August 16, Noon – 9:00 p.m. in Saginaw

SAGINAW, MI – Gates open at noon on Saturday, August 16 for Mid-Michigan LGBT Pride. With dozens of vendors on hand and a full slate of speakers and entertainment on two stages, this year's Mid-Michigan LGBT Pride on Ojibway Island in Saginaw offers something for everyone. Located on the Saginaw River in the heart of Saginaw's Downtown and Old Town districts, scenic Ojibway Island offers everyone, including allies and families, the chance to express their LGBT Pride in a pleasant park-like atmosphere.

"Pride Month is becoming Pride Summer and Mid-Michigan LGBT Pride offers those who couldn't celebrate in June, or would just like to keep the celebration going a little longer, another chance to express their pride," says Tim Price, Mid-Michigan Pride Co-Chair and Festival Director. "It's also a great opportunity for those who live in the more northern parts of Michigan to be part of a world-class Pride Event."

The Main Stage will feature speakers and live local and national entertainment, beginning at Noon. The dance floor inside the Mid-Michigan LGBT Dance Club (Tent) is going to be in thumping, thanks to a collective of world-renowned DJs and live musical performers from Detroit.

Festival goers will find plenty to eat and drink, especially at the 'Taste of Tri-Cities' section, which will feature a number of local restaurants and shops. A beer tent (must be 21 and older with ID to enter) will give festival-goers a variety of micro-brews, wines, and international brews, thanks to Oppermann Cork-N-Ale, of Saginaw.

At the 'Pride Pavilion,' those who just love to shop will find more than a dozen vendors, including local and national retailers. Also at the 'Pride Pavilion,' several local, state and national non-profit and community-based organizations will set up shop. There will even be a secured and chaperoned play area for children!

"There is so much excitement about what is happening that we're still getting calls from vendors and entertainers who want to know if they can get in," says Mid-Michigan Pride Co-Chair Alberto Jiminez. "Even though we're adjusting the program every day, we tell them, 'Yes, but you better hurry!' There is so much positive energy here right now, that Saginaw is definitely the place to be."

INSIDE:

- Men's Support Group..... 2
- Highway Cleanup..... 3
- Health & Wellness 4
- Transgender Lobby Day..... 5
- Current Events 7
- Calendar 8
- Miss Mixx 10
- AIDS Walk..... 12
- View from the Chair 14
- Pride Banquet..... 16



An Interview with Alexa Vogel, Miss Mixx 2014

Page 10

With a donation of \$5,000 to the newly created Mid-Michigan Pride Inc., Perceptions Saginaw Valley became the Title Sponsor of this year's Mid-Michigan LGBT Pride event and joined the ranks of other top tier sponsors who are helping to celebrate diversity throughout the Saginaw Valley region.

Perceptions
Saginaw Valley
PO Box 1525

Midland, MI 48641
989-891-1429

www.PerceptionsSV.org

EDITOR

Brent Theisen

Editor@PerceptionsSV.org

AD SALES

Tim@PerceptionsSV.org

PRINT DISTRIBUTION

Randy Hasso

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 inclusive: education, networking, and advocacy programs for our diverse Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender individuals, allies and organizations in the community.

Men's Support Group News

by Chris Lauckner

The summer break is over!!!

We took our annual 'month of July break' and the Men's Group will begin to meet again. A meeting will take place on Tuesday, August 5 @ 7:00 p.m. at St. John's Episcopal Church, corner of Court Street & Michigan Ave., Saginaw.

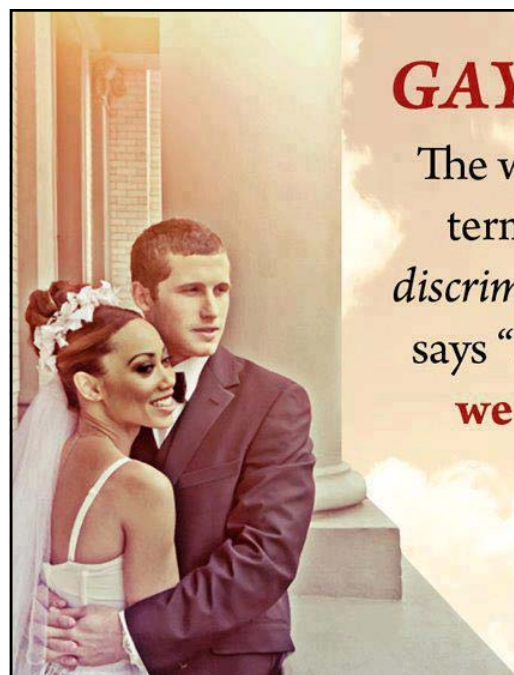
What you can expect –

A confidential setting to share, listen, and offer input to whatever issue you and other guys bring to the group ...

A facilitated experience where there is no 'right' or 'wrong' questions or answers and is a great place just to 'check in' and talk about life in general.

Come & Join Us ... Young, Middle Aged, Elder Men (18+ years of age).

What do we have in common? LIFE ... lived as MEN!



GAY MARRIAGE

The widespread use of the term *is in itself a sign of discrimination*. After all, who says "I have an **interracial wedding** on Sunday" anymore?

Highway Cleanup

by Randy Hasso

The July highway cleanup had only 5 participants but we accomplished our agenda. We were able to clean both sides of I-75 in less than 3 hours. We produced 37 bags of trash. No weird finds this time out. We all enjoyed a nice picnic lunch at the rest area afterward and then some of us went to Bob E's for a swim.

Thank you to Rick F, Bob E, Dave S, and Mike M, who helped me with this July effort. Our next and last cleanup of 2014 will be held Saturday, September 27th. There will be no make up rain day. Please consider helping



out with this last cleanup of the season. It really is a time of laughter and enjoying one another's company. There will be a picnic on site afterward. If you have ever considered helping, please do. We need to see an uptick in interest with our Perception friends, members, and allies.

Remember the date, September 27th at 9:30 am. You truly will not regret making the effort to beautify a part of our Michigan.



Open, Affirming,
Inclusive

Bodhi Mind Zen
A Taego Zen Buddhist Sangha

Rev Bup Ahn Brian
Guiding Teacher

Meditation, Teaching, Pastoral Services

1015 Court St

Saginaw MI 48602

989 574-8097

bupahn@yahoo.com

Friday Night Dinner Request

Our Friday night dinners are more popular than ever! Please remember to RSVP for all dinners by 3:00 pm on Friday. We want to make sure we have a seat for you to enjoy the evening.

The LGBTQ Health & Wellness Assessment - an Update

Chris Lauckner

It was reported in the last issue of the Perceptions Newsletter that Perceptions Saginaw Valley received a mini-grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health [MDCH] to assist in gathering health information from **LGBTQ individuals and allies** who reside within the Perceptions service area: The Great Lakes Bay Region [Bay, Isabella, Midland, and Saginaw counties] and the thumb area, as well as counties north.

As of the end of July there were approximately **120** electronic responses that were received. That is a very good response; however, we are in need of a total response number of: **600**. Thus, we are in need of an additional **480** completed health assessments.

I urge all Perceptions members, allies, and friends to share the following information with as many individuals as possible, who live in our area, to complete the assessment.

GO TO YOUR CONTACT LISTS AND HELP US DRIVE UP OUR NUMBERS!

Ways to complete the LGBTQ Health & Wellness Assessment:

■ Go to: www.perceptionsSV.orgnear bottom of the page and click on "Take the Survey"

■ Go to:
www.surveymonkey.com/s/MIPerceptions

■ Scan the QR Code and complete the assessment:



You might be asking yourself the question:

What does the LGBTQ Community gain from the LGBTQ Health & Wellness Assessment?

Knowledge . There will be a report prepared that will offer specific information regarding health and wellness related issues concerning LGBTQ individuals living within the Perceptions service area. Again, the report will be based on the responses received from the LGBTQ Health & Wellness Assessment. The report will be made public prior to the year's end.

Funding. With having the knowledge, the **proof** that there are health related needs within the LGBTQ community, funding can be requested to address the existing and any newly identified health related needs of our community. Also the reverse could be true; without proof of need, our community runs the risk of losing existing federal and state dollars that pertain directly to LGBTQ health initiatives.

Your help is needed!

Thanks to Kay Sural for volunteering; Kay assisted with HIV Testing Day, June 27 with Hearth Home staff and offered information about the LGBTQ Health & Wellness Assessment to individuals testing that day. Way to go Kay!

Transgender Lobby Day 2014: Equality and Justice

by Charin Hudson Davenport

With controversy over the religious exemption written into the Employment Non-Discrimination Act swirling around in Washington, D.C., more than 200 supporters and activists for transgender rights from across the country descended on the nation's capital for Transgender Lobby Day 2014. The focus leading up to the lobbying effort had been in support of ENDA, which had already passed the U.S. Senate, but now sits in a state of limbo as House Speaker John Boehner refuses to introduce it to the floor for consideration.

Concern over the religious exemption arose after the U.S. Supreme Court's recent ruling in the "Hobby Lobby" case, in which justices ruled that a deeply held religious conviction may be enough reason for a company to be exempt from complying with certain aspects of the U.S. Civil Rights Act, such as Title IX, as well as EEOC guidelines.

Thanks to a fundraising effort that covered almost all of their expenses, six of the volunteer transgender activists making the sojourn to the nation's capital were from Michigan, including: team leader and organizer Charin Davenport, Bay City; Racquelle "Shorty" Trammell, Detroit; Linnea Grace, Kalamazoo; Charley Lombardi, Shelby Township; Kaitlyn (last name withheld), Jackson; and Madisona Avedian, Sterling Heights.

Hard data is difficult, if not impossible to come by when discrimination is not against the law. There simply is no mechanism to accurately collect the information with sufficient regularity to produce reliable data. Consequently, the 200 transgender lobbyist brought with them their own stories and the stories of those who could not make the journey. Every member of the Michigan team had either lost jobs after beginning their transition or were in fear of losing their jobs because there are no laws in Michigan and the United States to protect against gender identity and sexual orientation discrimination. Two of the team members are military veterans. Some of the members have experienced homelessness and violence.

The annual event is spearheaded by the [National Center for Transgender Equality](#) and is actually spread across two days, starting Monday, July 14, with a welcome from NCTE's founding Executive Director Mara Keisling. In her opening remarks, Keisling received a round of applause when she stressed that "The current draft of ENDA that is in the House of Representatives is unacceptable with the religious exemptions in place." It was clear that most of those at the opening of Transgender Lobby Day 2014 were opposed to ENDA because they felt the religious exemption was too broad.

Senators Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin

After another round of workshops on Tuesday morning, July 15, the group headed off for the afternoon to Capitol Hill. Michigan's team of activists met with Senator Debbie Stabenow's Senior Policy Advisor, Douglas Messana, and then with Senator Carl Levin's Legislative Assistant Ben Brenner. While the group expressed their gratitude for Stabenow's and Levin's support of ENDA, they also asked that both senators continue to advocate for LGBT rights in their meetings with colleagues, especially those in the House of Representatives.

However, the staff for both senators did not offer full support for transgender military personnel serving openly. They were also hesitant to express support for the expansion of transgender veterans health care to include surgery. When it was pointed out that President Barack Obama had already signed an executive order allowing for Medicare to cover transgender-related surgery because it was deemed to be medically necessary, both Messana and Brenner said these are issues for which there is not much support in either house and are not top priorities.

"Senator Stabenow has been a supporter of LGBT rights for a long time," Messana said. "Right now, her focus in regard to LGBT rights

Continues on Next Page

is on ENDA and finding a way to close the loophole created by the Hobby Lobby case.”

Representative Dan Kildee, MI-5th Congressional District

The most important lobbying efforts were in the House off Representatives, where ENDA sits in a state of limbo, waiting for House Speaker John Boehner to bring it to the floor for consideration. Lobbyists urged their Representatives to support ENDA, but only if the religious exemption was removed and replaced with the same language in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It does not appear likely that Boehner is ready to make a move any time soon.

We are fortunate, here in the 5th District, to have Rep. Kildee as our representative. Not only is he supportive of ENDA, but his entire staff is LGBT friendly. In addition to meeting with Kildee, I was able to spend time with Legislative Assistant Alison Share and Communications Director Mitchell Rivard. Ms. Share pointed out that she and her wife were keenly aware that not everyone in the United States has the same rights and privileges that same sex couples enjoy in Washington, D.C. Rivard, a graduate of Western High School in Auburn, MI, is the Vice President of the LGBT Congressional Staff Association.

Representative Kildee assured me that the “T” will not be dropped from any version of ENDA that will pass through Congress.

“I will not support a bill that does not include the same protections for transgender people that others enjoy. It just isn’t going to happen,” Kildee said.

Additionally, in expressing his dismay about the Hobby Lobby case and its potential to serve as a precedence that could weaken civil rights laws and the reproductive rights of women, Kildee pointed out that he co-sponsored legislation to overturn the Hobby Lobby ruling by the Supreme Court.

“When ENDA makes it to the House floor, which it will eventually, it will not include any language that would allow anything like the Hobby Lobby case to happen again,” he said. “The language should reflect the same language that is in the Civil Rights Act, Title VII.”

Other members of Congress lobbied by the Michigan team included John Conyers, an avid supporter of transgender rights, as well as Candace Miller, who has said she is considering the issue of LGBT rights in the workplace. However,

other Representatives are not nearly as open to ENDA and transgender rights. Dave Camp, for instance, of Midland, did not meet with any of the lobbyists, while representatives Tim Walberg, Fred Upton and Mike Rogers expressed their unwillingness to consider passing ENDA.

Moving Forward

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is the federal law that prohibits discrimination in the workplace. Title VII bans discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, and religion; however, no federal law prohibits discrimination in private employment based on gender identity and sexual orientation. Approximately 28 million employees of the federal government and federal contractors are protected from this type of discrimination by an executive order signed by President Barack Obama on Monday, July 21.

ENDA, on the other hand, would be an amendment to Title VII, so it would apply to the same employers and employees that law covers. In other words, ENDA would cover not only federal, state, and local government employers, but private employers with at least 15 employees, as well.

The controversy over religious exemption centers on additional language that would release religious organizations from having to comply, which would be unique to all of the protected groups identified in the existing Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Michigan is one of 29 states that do not provide statewide protections from sexual orientation discrimination, and one of 32 states where there are no statewide protections for gender identity discrimination in the workplace or anywhere else. In Michigan, several organizations are actively speaking out in support of adding sexual orientation and gender identity protection from discrimination in the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act.

In the coming months, key members of Congress will continue to be asked to support ENDA without the religious exemption. But, in Michigan, a concerted effort to add prohibitions to sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination to the Elliott-Larsen Act will begin to pick up steam. The key components in the effort will be the combination of businesses and business leaders adding their voices in support backed by hard data, as well as the stories of people who have been and continue to be discriminated against.

Current Events

PerceptionsSV.org/events

▼ **August 1st - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends this week at **Vinny's Stock Pot Diner**, 1007 Washington Ave., Bay City. If you plan to attend, please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Fri.

▼ **Sat., August 2nd - "For the Bible Tells Me So"** 4:00 pm. For the Bible Tells Me So is a 2007 documentary film about homosexuality and its perceived conflict with Christianity, as well as various interpretations of what the Bible says about same-sex sexuality. It includes lengthy interview segments with several sets of religious parents regarding their personal experiences raising homosexual children, and also interviews with those (adult) children. **Bradley House Theatre**, Saginaw.

▼ **Tues., August 5th - Men's Discussion Group** 7:00 to 8:30 pm. This gathering is intended as a discussion and informal support group for gay and bisexual men. The group will be facilitated by Chris Lauckner. You may contact him at Chris@PerceptionsSV.org for additional information or to let him know you'll attend. Light snacks provided. **St. John's Episcopal Church**, 123 N. Michigan Ave., Saginaw.

Tues., August 5th - Michigan Primary Election Visit the Secretary of State's Voter Information Center at michigan.gov/vote to see a sample ballot, find your polling location, or confirm that you're registered. Confused about the statewide Proposition 1? This article from Michigan Radio provides some good information. michiganradio.org/post/proposal-1-asks-michigan-voters-weigh-complex-tax-issue

▼ **Thurs., Aug 7th - Perceptions Transgender Group** 7:00 to 8:30 pm. **Populace Coffee**, 1003 Washington Ave., Bay City. The group offers an informal gathering, taking a more 'light-hearted' approach to allow transgender individuals in the Tri-City area an opportunity to connect with one another for socializing and support. Contact AmyCMU@yahoo.com if you have any questions.

▼ **August 8th - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends this week at **La Señorita Mexican Restaurant**, 1516 S. Mission St., Mt Pleasant. If you plan to attend, please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Fri.

August 8th to 10th - Windsor Essex Pride Fest Riverfront Festival Plaza, Downtown Windsor. www.wepridefest.com

Sat., August 9th -- Transgender Pride in the Park Noon to 6:00 pm. Celebrating Transgender Michigan's 17th anniversary. All trans* people and allies welcome. Hot dogs & fixings provided; please bring a dish to share if you're able. **Geary Park**, Earle Blvd @ Pinecrest Dr., Ferndale. www.transgendermichigan.org/events/pride.html

August 9th to 16th - Gay Games 9 The 2014 Gay Games is one of the biggest sports & cultural festivals in the world and will be located in Cleveland and Akron, OH. The Games are open to all adults - regardless of sexual orientation or athletic ability. With more than 35 sports (from darts to triathlon, bowling to softball) and 2 cultural events (band and chorus), there's something for everybody. Games Week is about more than sport with spectacular ceremonies, Festival Village, parties and more. www.gg9cle.com

Sun., August 10th - PFLAG Genesee County Support groups at 2:00 pm followed by refreshments and presentation. For more info, contact pflagflint@yahoo.com. The meeting takes place at the **UU Church of Flint**, 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy.

▼ **August 15th - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends at **Riverside Family Restaurant**, 8295 Midland Rd. (M-47), Freeland. If you plan to attend, please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Fri.

▼ **Sat., August 16th - Mid Michigan LGBT Pride** Noon - 9:00 pm. **Ojibway Island**, Saginaw. Perceptions Saginaw Valley is proud to be the Title Sponsor.

Sun., August 17th - PFLAG Tri-Cities Meeting 2:00 pm at **Our Saviour Lutheran Church**, 2525 Hemmeter Rd., Saginaw. PFLAG offers support, education and advocacy for families, friends and LGBT individuals.

Sun., August 17th - Cadillac LGBT Pride 10:00 am - 9:00 pm. Cadillac City Park & Rotary Pavillion, Cadillac.

▼ **August 22nd - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends at **Panda House**, 1010 N. Niagara St., Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Fri.

Sat., August 23rd - Michigan Pride. 25th Anniversary Statewide Pride. Pride March, Rally at the Capitol, Festival in Old Town. Lansing. www.michiganpride.org

Sat., August 23rd - Detroit to Ann Arbor Equality Ride Bike riders across the state will gather for this day long ride from Detroit to Ann Arbor. Spread this message of equality, love and support by becoming a rider, volunteer or fund raiser today (equalityride.causevox.com). Registration for the ride is \$45 and includes lunch and after party. To find out more contact Lisa Ross, Event Coordinator at 248-677-7215.

▼ **August 29th - Friday Night Dinner** 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends this week at **Teppanyaki Grill**, 3210 Bay Rd., Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please reply to RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Fri.

▼ **Tues., September 2nd - Men's Discussion Group** 7:00 to 8:30 pm. This gathering is intended as a discussion and informal support group for gay and bisexual men. The group will be facilitated by Chris Lauckner. You may contact him at Chris@PerceptionsSV.org for additional information or to let him know you'll attend. Light snacks will be provided. **St. John's Episcopal**, 123 N. Michigan Ave., Saginaw.













▼ **Sat., September 20th - AIDS Walk Great Lakes Bay Region** This annual event provides financial support to Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center's HIV/AIDS Care Program. For over 25 years, Sacred Heart has provided care services to hundreds of men, women, and children living with HIV/AIDS. For walk materials and more information, contact AIDS Walk Coordinator Tom Brubaker at 989-776-6000 x7514 or tbrubaker@sacredheartcenter.com This year's walk will be held at **Saginaw Valley State University**, President's Courtyard, 7400 Bay Road, University Center. 9:30 a.m. Registration; 10:30 a.m. Walk Rally; 11 a.m. Walk Time

▼ **Sat., December 6th - Perceptions Holiday Party & Charity Auction** Great Hall Banquet & Convention Center, 5121 Bay City Road, Midland.

▼ **Event sponsored or endorsed by Perceptions.**

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

AUGUST 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
					1  Friday Night Dinner Vinny's Stock Pot 1007 Wasington Ave. Bay City 7:00 PM	2 "For the Bible Tells Me So" Bradley House Theatre 403 S. Jefferson Ave. Saginaw 4:00 PM																																																																																				
3	4	5 Michigan Primary Election michigan.gov/vote Men's Group  St. John's Episcopal Saginaw, 7:00 PM	6	7  Perceptions Transgender Group Populace Coffee 1003 Washington Ave. Bay City, 7:00 PM	8  Friday Night Dinner La Señorita 1516 S. Mission St. Mt. Pleasant 7:00 PM	9  Transgender Pride In The Park Geary Park Earle Blvd @ Pinecrest Dr. Ferndale, Noon																																																																																				
10  Genesee County PFLAG Meeting UU Church of Flint 2474 S. Ballenger Hwy Flint, 2:00 - 4:30 PM	11	12	13	14	15  Friday Night Dinner Riverside 8295 Midland Rd. (M-47) Freeland 7:00 PM	16  Mid-Michigan Pride Ojibway Island Saginaw Noon																																																																																				
17  PFLAG Tri-Cities Meeting Our Saviour Lutheran 2525 Hemmeter Rd. Saginaw, 2:00 - 4:30 PM	18	19 Aviation Day	20	21	22  Friday Night Dinner Panda House 1010 N. Niagara St. Saginaw 7:00 PM	23  Michigan Pride michiganpride.org Capitol Bldg & Old Town Lansing Noon																																																																																				
24	25	26	27	28	29  Friday Night Dinner Teppanyaki Grill 3210 Bay Rd. Saginaw 7:00 PM	30																																																																																				
31		July 2014 <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			September 2014 <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>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> <td>17</td> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> <td>30</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30					Notes:
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																																																																																						
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																																																																																								

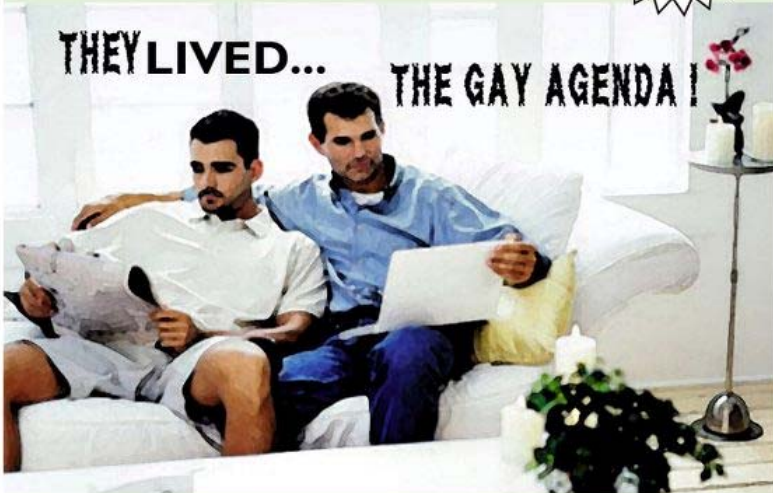
COMING SOON!

THE GAY AGENDA!

**THEY WORKED AT THEIR JOBS!
THEY SHOPPED FOR GROCERIES!
THEY EVEN WENT TO THE MOVIES!**

**A TRUE
HORROR
OF OUR
TIMES!**

THEY LIVED... THE GAY AGENDA!



SEE them do their laundry!
HEAR them order take-out!
FEEL your spine tingle as they watch TV!

**RATED
PG**
(PLEASE, GET OVER IT.)

A Poem

by Emily Elizabeth Dickinson

The bee is not afraid of me,
I know the butterfly;
The pretty people in the woods
Receive me cordially.

The brooks laugh louder when I come,
The breezes madder play.
Wherefore, mine eyes, thy silver mists?
Wherefore, O summer's day?



Thine Om Self
Massage Healing & Meditation

Scott A. Jordan, C.M.T.
Owner/Massage Therapist
Level III Reiki Practitioner/Trainer
(989)249-1495
www.thineomself.com

1620 Court St.
Saginaw MI 48602

An Interview with Miss Mixx 2014-2015: Alexa Vogel

by Dylan Moorehead

Dylan- I had a moment today to sit down with and interview your new Miss Mixx, Alexa Vogel, along with her manager, friend, and confidant, Tone Fields.

Alexa- Tone is my designer, and manager and well, my everything to me.

Tone- I am glad she finally admitted that. We have this conversation all the time. Did you get that, is that written down?

Dylan- Yes, I got that.

Alexa- You're welcome.

Tone- Thank you

Dylan- So Alexa, what was it like to run for and win Miss Mixx this year?

Alexa- It was truly a mind-blowing experience. We made the decision to run... I had come in second last year. But, you only live once. The competition was really stiff. Kylee Starr, a good friend of mine was in the running. So the whole night, I was thinking I lost...and that was okay. But there was this one question, that I thought if they ask me, I will be sincere... And they did "Alexa, what does being Miss Mixx mean to you?"

It means more to me because being a hometown girl, being here at the Mixx, is really like being home and being the head queen and just supporting everyone is such a wonderful feeling.

The whole time, I was thinking Kylee Star, Kylee Star. We held hands. We said I love you to each other. And then when they said "Al..." I dropped to my knees. There is video from that night that no one will ever see.

Dylan- Tone how do you think she is doing so far?

Tone- I have- I believe Alexa is doing a great job. Hit the ground running, free shows, Hearth Home and Status Matter, pageant judging, her work with Garnet Lewis, and travel. As her manager and friend I have already seen growth in Alexa.

Alexa- It was a very good experience, and one of her better moments. Just raising awareness and helping people get tested. It made me feel really good that I was a part of that.

Dylan-Alexa, Dalylah Desmond. She performed last year for the Perceptions Holiday Gala. I know that the two of you are good friends and have worked together for a long time now. It must have been a good feeling having her crown you. Can you expand on your relationship?



Alexa- Drag Sisters in the true form. We have the same drag mom, Natalie Cole, the legendary. From Detroit Michigan. I tell you what was really fun though, she crowned me Miss Mixx, and I crowned her the First Escape just last Saturday. Full circle, you know?

Tone- She's a wretched Saginaw girl through and through...
Alexa- And you love it!

Dylan- How long have you been working?

Alexa-I did first booking at Bambi's. I started out so rough. Black nose, black cheek contour, crazy hats, and you think you're fish. I have been performing since November 11th 2001.

The control top panty hose sucked me in so much that I almost passed out dancing to Destiny's Child. And from then, became a part of the BAD Bitches. Brittney, Leigh, Alexa, and Dalylah. From there it is history. What was funny, we went in the succession the way our names are spelled out.; We were so lucky, we started together, went through Bambi's together. And when they moved, (Brittney and Dalylah) I went through a dark time. It really took until last year I was showing around old pictures and realized then it was time to put up or shut up. I went to Power Divas and did a show in January

and then he was like, there is another one in February... I was hey, let's do it, that's my birthday. And I was back.

Dylan- And what does Tone do with all this?

Alexa- Tone gets the girl into the gig, but if it weren't for Bradley I wouldn't have had the opportunities I have had. It has been a roller coaster. I love it though. I have to say that.

Tone- Alexa is the first girl in the Tri-Cities to take home Miss Mixx. Also the first black girl. History, her story, drag-story.

Dylan- Alexa, so what are your plans for the rest of your reign?

Alexa- That's a good question. I hope to work with Perceptions Holiday Gala. I won't be missing that. I hope to make this reign about helping others. HIV and Gay Rights. And I want to be there to help all those others who are new, and I have been there. I really wanted to win this to be able to give back to all those who have given to me. I want to be the first one to do AIDS walk in full drag and heels this year. Hey, and I have eight inch heels.

But I also get to do really cool things. West Michigan Pride, Tri Cities Pride. THEN the next day to Cadillac Pride and Miss Gay Cadillac. These opportunities allow me to be blessed and loved. And I have to thank Rob for giving me the opportunity to do all these things. I love that.

Dylan- So do you find it hard to juggle all this?

Alexa- Yes, it is a struggle. Nothing I can't handle, but when my manager has... see...Tone gets mouthy, and he doesn't want to have something my way. I know he has other clients to sew for, but I have stuck by him the longest and I am first. Who comes first? And I always get my way (laughter)

Tone- I will give her that. I do tend to spoil her... a little lavishly.

Alexa- ... and I am a morning person, and you can't do drag in the morning. So I have my 24 hour nap... and maybe some moscato... unless I drank too much the night before... just being honest with the kids.

Dylan- Tone, what is it like working for Alexa?

Tone- (laughter) PAINSTAKING. It is never a dull moment. She makes me laugh, she works my nerves, she is very demanding. Luckily to me, I just shout to her assistant. BUT she is a handful. What people don't see is the part I get. Very nice in public, and then all Beyoncé fish kicking me in the elevator. WAIT until that video comes out and IT WILL COME OUT. But she keeps me young. She is very reliable, I will say that.

Dylan- So, Alexa, the inner BEYONCE?

Alexa- I tend to be... okay...this is the thing... when I am in the public, I have to be a certain way... wild crazy, but I have to represent The Mixx. Poised and collected I have to be ready to be photographed and seen with the kids. I may have thrown a few things at his face... but hey, Ike beat Tina LOL.

But I can be difficult, but only with Tone. And I only yell when warranted. Wait, don't print that I said that.

Dylan- So, what is the toughest thing you've had to do, that we can print WINK WINK?

Alexa- Fight off people's preconceived notions of me. That wasn't easy. Some people think I have a little Miss Attitude. But that is the drama people want to see on stage. People see that, and think that is me all the time. When actually, I am just a nice sweet girl from Saginaw, Michigan, and I just happen to be fabulous. I have to say that's it, yeah.

Tone- I do. I also think she has to fight off the whole... she's a tramp... a slut... or doing drugs because she might know people who do drugs. I am proud of her for overcoming all those demons long ago. PERIOD. I don't want to be crying since this isn't Sally Jesse or Donahue. No sir!

Dylan- Tone, what's the hardest thing you have ever had to do for Alexa?

Tone- I once had to make her a dress in ten minutes when I had other people's things to do. Personally, the hardest thing I had to do... was honestly, to allow her to be herself, and to accept her for the being what she is. Yes, that's it.

Alexa- Thank you Tone

Tone- Well I love ya, kinda.

Dylan- What does Alexa do in her free time?

Alexa- Well, I do have a lot of gentlemen callers, but I has made the decision to abstain. The real housewives, a glass of moscato, and getting ready for the next show. I have been lucky enough to have a full slate. Usually before a show, I give myself two days to get ready. Lots of work and keep a little busy. And of course, there is always porn. So ya, I keep myself occupied.

Dylan- What's the best number you've done, Alexa?

Alexa- Okay, this has gotta be a two-parter- for that question - my best, my favorite- ohhhh bitch... you are coming for me today.

Dylan- Pick one!

Alexa- Okay, for Rob (Wiersum) at the Mixx, I did Tina Turner, Proud Mary. I got two encores, and Rob came to me and said that is the kind of performing I want in my club. To have an owner come to you and say that is just awesome... then of course, Partition by Beyoncé. I could do that anywhere, any bar, anytime. It brings out the inner stripper... I was gonna say hoe, and PUT stripper, not hooker. And Don't be changing my words.

Dylan- Anything else you'd like to add today?

Alexa- I would like to say to everyone in the Tri Cities, thank you for your support. And I would like to say this reign is going to be truly, truly, outrageous, and thank you for your support. And this reign is about giving back and love. EVERYBODY say LOVE.

SVSU To Host 2014 AIDS Walk Great Lakes Bay Region by Ben Dowd

Saginaw Valley State University, 7400 Bay Road, will serve as the site for Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center's annual AIDS Walk. [AIDS Walk Great Lakes Bay Region](#) will hold its walk on Saturday, September 20th with registration beginning at 9:30 a.m., a 10:30 a.m. walk rally, and the official walk at 11:00 a.m. The annual community event benefits Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center's AIDS Care Program, with offices including Bay City, Flint and Saginaw. Sacred Heart provides free, confidential care services, including care case management, housing assistance, prescription and dental assistance, and patient navigation services, as well as free HIV testing and prevention education. The event is free and open to the public.

"The funds raised from the walk help provide client support services, including monthly client education meetings, client emergency fund, personal care items, and HIV testing and prevention education to help stop the spread of the disease," says Tom Brubaker, AIDS Walk Great Lakes Bay Region. "This will be our tenth walk this year. Our slogan is: *"10 years...10 walks... 1,000s Helped."* Sacred Heart has provided HIV/AIDS care services in the Great Lakes Bay Region for over 25 years. Sacred Heart is a non-profit, non-denominational agency providing addictions disorder treatment, including HIV/AIDS services.

Sacred Heart began offering free, confidential

HIV testing and prevention education in October 2008 for students at Saginaw Valley State University in the Health and Wellness Department located in the Doan Center throughout the academic year. Sacred Heart also offers prevention education and testing Services at Delta College.

Perceptions is a Sponsor once again of the AIDS Walk, and will be putting together a walk team. In the past we have had a wonderful turn out, and a great time during the walk. With this year's event being at a new venue, it will prove to be an even more exciting day. Please consider joining Perceptions Walk team and help us show our support to the community. If you are able to support Perceptions in this event, please email ben@perceptionsSV.org.

HIV/AIDS Statistics:

Over 20,000 Michigan residents are living with HIV/AIDS.

Saginaw County ranks number 10 out of 83 Michigan counties in the number of HIV/AIDS cases.

50% of new HIV infections in the United States are among young people under the age of 25 years.



POP

Prevention Options for Positives

WHAT IS POP?

POP is a fun and empowering retreat style program that brings HIV positive gay/bisexual men together. Through six sessions of group meetings, participants discuss and learn about a variety of topics surrounding healthy living and HIV.

Topics Include:

- the latest medical advancements
- stronger intimate relationships
- disclosing status to others
- substance use and health
- hotter sex with less risk
- 1-on-1 counseling is also offered

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality is extremely important to us. We choose locations that can afford us with as much privacy as possible for our participants. Confidentiality agreements are signed by the participants as well as the staff/facilitators to ensure that everyone's privacy is protected.

The program itself, meals, and group activities are **FREE** of charge! No spending money is needed unless participants choose/plan to shop on their free time.

Choose A Camp That Fits Your Schedule

Format 1 - 6 Days/5 nights

Sunday-Friday

- Arrive Sunday afternoon/Depart Friday afternoon
- Each day there will be a group session and a group activity.

Accommodations

- Rooms/cabins, 3 meals a day, snacks, and group activities.

Activities

- Group activities are chosen by the group.
- In the past, we've done trips to Lake Michigan/Huron, horseback riding, bowling, kayaking, movies, etc.

Format 2 - 3 Days/Week for 2 Weeks

Weekends

- Held on weekends (Fri, Sat, Sun) or (Sat, Sun, Mon).
- The days will not change from week to week.

Meetings

Each day, we will meet for around 2 hours to accomplish session goals and dedicate time to dinner and bonding.

Incentives

We offer \$100 gift cards to participants who complete all six sessions for the 2 weekend format.

MI. Locations: Kalamazoo, Saugatuck Area, Port Huron Area, Detroit, Lansing, Grand Rapids & More

For more info & dates please contact:

Brandon Harris or Aric Schramm

BHarris@CARESswm.org / ASchramm@CARESswm.org

(269)381-2437 ex.26/ex.15





View from the Chair

by Chris Lauckner

The view from the chair is being written on the front porch of the farm where my partner, Greg, grew up. His parents live in central Indiana.

The corn stalks in the fields are as high as many folks' ceilings are in their homes or apartments! The beans, and other cash crops, are looking great; and then there are the fields where tall blades of wheat once stood as they have already been harvested. The breeze out of the south is calm, allowing the wind chimes to offer various light tones that could lull you into taking a nap. Birds are singing in the maple tree and in the garden, vegetables grow in the warm soil. All seems right with the world.

My hope for you, as we move through these days of summer, is that you have experienced some quality time enjoying the company of friends and family. For many folks, there have been the weddings, graduations, and anniversary celebration(s). There have been the numerous PRIDE events throughout the state that you may have enjoyed as well as the many opportunities to visit ethnic, themed, and various church festivals and firework displays. There are those popular "destinations:" Niagra Falls, a romantic place and beautiful place to visit and - perhaps - exchange wedding vows; Provincetown, and of course Michigan's Saugatuck-Douglas area and "Camp It" that all take on special meaning and can create cherished memories for a lifetime.

Reflecting on summer events, I need to mention the Pride Awards Banquet that took place Tuesday, June 24 at the Andersen Enrichment Center, Saginaw. What a great evening! A positive energy was in the air and those people who attended had a great time. Thanks to Leo Romo and so many others who made the event totally awesome. I'd also like to thank the many sponsors who supported the event; without your assistance the banquet could not have been

possible.

This year there were over 20 nominees, individuals and businesses, deserving of recognition. It was an honor to be a part of the selection process. What was so powerful for me was the collective experience of all the nominees and how each of them have moved the lives of so many LGBT, allies, and friends; they have added value to educating the general population regarding a host of LGBT related issues through their life experience, championing movement in changing discriminatory laws and practices, have been willing to literally "step out" to make a difference in our lives. For that, I am grateful. For that, WE are a grateful community!

At this year's banquet, it was my privilege - on behalf of the Perceptions Board of Trustees - to acknowledge Perceptions sponsorship of this year's PRIDE event with a check for \$5,000 given to newly created Mid-Michigan Pride, Inc. As the long standing LGBT organization in the Great Lakes Bay Region, it is our mission to provide inclusive educational, networking and advocacy programs for the diverse Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender individuals, allies and organizations in the community. We believe that through events such as PRIDE, we can come together to celebrate our diversity. Plan to join us in participating in this year's PRIDE celebration, Saturday, August 16 at Ojibway Island, Saginaw.

As an organization, Perceptions Saginaw Valley continues to strive to reach out to the community, to partner with others, to listen - intently - to how it can make a difference in the Great Lakes Bay Region, the thumb area and northern Michigan.

Your voice is always welcome and needed ... step out, make a difference!

See you at PRIDE!



Tuesday, August 5th

michigan.gov/vote



SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, December 6

PERCEPTIONS
HOLIDAY
GALA



THE GREAT
HALL
MIDLAND, MI

**Beth Sibray, Vice Chair of Perceptions
will be championing the event this year.**

**A committee has been formed to
Organize the Perceptions
Holiday Gala - 2014.**

Overnight Accommodations
Available @ Best Western
At Reduced Rates

Nightlife Tri-Cities with Jeff Henning, owner and DJ will be "getting people on the dance floor" this year!

nightlife
entertainment
music for all occasions

*Memorable Times call
for Music for All Occasions.*

989.781.5700
Reserve yours Today.



2014 Saginaw Valley LGBT & Allies Pride Awards Banquet Held by Leo Romo

Perceptions had a successful 6th Annual Saginaw Valley LGBT & Allies Pride Awards Banquet at the Andersen Enrichment Center on Tuesday, June 24, 2014. Attendees enjoyed a garden reception, dinner catered by The Savoy Grill and a pride award ceremony emceed by Charis Urbano, a professor at Delta College. The ceremony honored Dow Chemical Company, SVSU's Living Proud, and five individuals as examples to the public with their support and dedication for equality.

The 2014 Pride Award Recipients:

Business Pride Award

Dow Chemical Co. - accepted by *Mindy Theis and Diane Dittenhafer*. The company received a perfect score through The Human Rights Campaign Foundation for fair treatment towards LGBT employees in the workplace and has been an active sponsor of local events such as the AIDS Walk, Perceptions' Holiday Gala, Pride Festival, and providing funding for scholarships through the National PFLAG organization.

Rising Star Award

Charin Hudson Davenport is a professor at Delta College and Saginaw Valley State University and a transgender activist. Davenport has spoken at nearly every public meeting in Bay County and Saginaw in regards to anti-discrimination ordinances. She serves as a board member and communications director for Transgender Michigan and advisor for the Perceptions Board of Trustees and works with several organizations including Equality Michigan, the Human Rights Campaign and the National Center for Transgender Education.

Champion of Pride Awards

Rev. Jeff Liebmann is a minister of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland. After arriving in Midland in 2011, he testified before the state House and Senate committees on LGBT issues such as marriage and reproductive justice and has contributing to the *Midland Daily News* about LGBT issues from a faith perspective. He is currently

working to start a nondiscrimination ordinance in Midland

SVSU Living Proud - accepted by *Shane Shepherd and Mecca Hughey*. Living Proud is a student-run LGBT and allies organization at Saginaw Valley State University that provides resources, education on LGBT issues, and networking and socializing opportunities to LGBT students and allies on campus. They strive to be inclusive of all identities, and welcome students, staff, faculty, and individuals from the surrounding communities.

Monika Sciba is a former registrar and academic adviser at SVSU and serves as the special assistant in the Dean's Office of the College of Health & Human Services. Sciba is working to create an LGBTQI healthcare simulation program to help students enrolled in health care programs be sensitive and knowledgeable of their patients' needs.

Political Pride Award

Don Tilley is a high school political science and government teacher at Bay City Central High School and serves on the Bay County Board of Commissioners. In January 2014, he proposed a Human Rights Ordinance in Bay County that would ban LGBT and gender identity discrimination in all county government services. Though the ordinance wasn't approved, a policy to protect county employees from discrimination based on their gender identity and sexual orientation was.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Douglas D. Solosky, 80, known as "Little Doug," is a Midland native who lived as an openly gay man during a time when it wasn't accepted. In 1968, he went on a blind date with a man named Don who became his partner until his death in 2004, after 36 years together. Together they owned D&D's Antiques for 19 years outside Midland.

The Pride Award recipients have been local models for equality. Chris Lauckner, chair of Perceptions Saginaw Valley, and Leo Romo, the Pride Awards Banquet organizer, were happy with the positive energy in the evening.