

Perceptions Newsletter

Perceptions Inc. P.O. Box 1525, Midland, MI 48641 989.891.1429

Sean Kosofsky to Speak to Perceptions

Sean Kosofsky, Director of Policy of the Triangle Foundation, will speak at the February 24th Perceptions meeting. The Triangle Foundation is Michigan's largest civil rights advocate for the GLBT and allied communities. Sean will discuss the Elliott-Larsen Act and why we must amend it. After the passage of Proposal 2, GLBT and ally leaders recognized that our community must fight legal discrimination at work, in housing and with accommodations in Michigan. The Elliott-Larsen Act prohibits discrimination "based upon religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, height, weight, familial status or marital status. The words "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" must be added to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to protect the GLBT community. Sean describes the needed information to change the act. Sean Kosofsky is a sought-after GLBT speaker and trainer for leaders. He lucidly explains lobbying, grassroots activism and working with the media and local elected leaders. He will tell us how we can create change.



Annual Chocolate Party in March

Ooooooooooooooh, Chocolate! Prepare your taste buds, and mark your calendars now for Perceptions/PFLAG's Annual Chocolate Party, Saturday March 5th, 7-10 pm, at Terry Zajac's historic Bay City home. Imagine Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory in a lovely Victorian Era mansion complete with period antiques. As Eliza Doolittle says, "Lots o' choc'late for me to eat ... O wouldn't it be lovely?" Lovely ambience, lovely people, lovely setting, lovely conversation --who could ask for more?

Please remember that the chocolate party is a shared fundraiser for PFLAG Tri-cities as well as Perceptions, so donations will be collected at the door. For more information or directions, call Perceptions at 989.891.1429 or e-mail info@perceptionssv.org.



Opening doors for the Mid-Michigan GLBT Community

Calendar Highlights:

- Friday, February 11th - "Friday Night Dinner"
7pm
- Saturday, February 12th - Perceptions Valentine's Day Dance
7:30 pm to Midnight.
- Sunday, February 13th - Perceptions Indoor Co-Ed Volleyball 3:30 - 5:30 pm
- Tuesday, February 15th - Womyn's Circle
7:30 - 9:00 pm
- Tuesday, February 15th - Perceptions Indoor Co-Ed Volleyball
6:30 - 8:30 pm
- Wednesday, February 16th - Bay City Meet & Greet 7:00 - 9:00 pm
- Friday, February 18th - "Friday Night Dinner"
7:00 pm
- Sunday, February 20th - Perceptions Indoor Co-Ed Volleyball 3:30 - 5:30 pm
- Monday, February 21st - GLBT Support Group
7:00 - 8:30 pm
- Thursday, February 24th - Monthly Membership Meeting
7:00 pm

To receive email alerting about upcoming events, send your email address to PerceptionsSV-owner@yahoogroups.com

Letter from the Chair

The Journey

My friends, we are two-thirds of the way in transitioning the new board in and coming up to speed with our designated responsibilities. I can't express what joy it brings to see such a strong, energetic, charismatic and focused board forming to represent the community. It was last August when Mindy, Jeff and I began drafting plans and preparing for the journey of identifying potential board members, nominations and ultimately the election. We have moved forward in a brilliant direction and the future could not be brighter.

The new board sacrificed our first somewhat warm Saturday on February 5th to participate in a Team Building Workshop. The entire board plus Tim Atkinson, and Dave Stickles were in attendance. The workshop was facilitated by myself and covered the topics of Getting to Know Each Other, Why Teams, Valuing Individuals Differences, and Creating Positive Team Dynamics followed by group activities and exercises. In the end, three teams were formed, and each team was assigned an Ultimate Team Challenge. The objective of the task is to address specific challenges Perceptions faces as an organization. A project manager was assigned to each team and an outline of the challenge was reviewed. These teams are charged with successfully developing and implementing specific solutions to their challenge. This is going to require team meetings and working with others in the organization for support. Everyone was excited to get started on the challenges and we ended the day with many fresh ideas.

These ideas are a great prelude to the planned Strategy Meeting on February 19th. At the Strategy Meeting we will focus more on the goals and objectives of the organization for this and the coming years. If you have not yet turned in the 2005 Annual Survey, time is running out. We would like your input for consideration at the strategy meeting.

I am certain you will come to be fond of the new board and their ambitions. Each board member adds their individual contribution and that's what makes us strongest as a team.

Thank you for your continued support,

Shelterhouse Presentation

On January 25th, I had the pleasure of representing Perceptions in front of the Shelterhouse Board of Directors. Shelterhouse is the benefactor of Perceptions' 2004 Holiday Party & Silent Auction. As I introduced myself I stated that I was with Perceptions, the local gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community organization. I explained how we came about selecting Shelterhouse as this year's benefactor and presented a check to the board president for seven hundred fifty dollars on behalf of the local GLBT community. The board was overjoyed with the donation and provided verbal reinforcement to the good work that Perceptions is doing and encouraged us to continue with our mission.

We spoke of situations when a GLBT person is in need of shelter resources and the possibility of Perceptions' Speakers' Bureau educating their staff so they are oriented and comfortable when providing support for those in our community.

At the end of my visit, Executive Director, Sharon Mortensen, presented a tour of the home. Sharon was grateful for being this year's benefactor and mentioned other partnering opportunities in the future. Shelterhouse maintains a pantry for its residents and is always in need of special items for the home.

Thank to you everyone who contributed to the 2004 Holiday Party & Silent Auction. I was honored to be the representative for the organization.

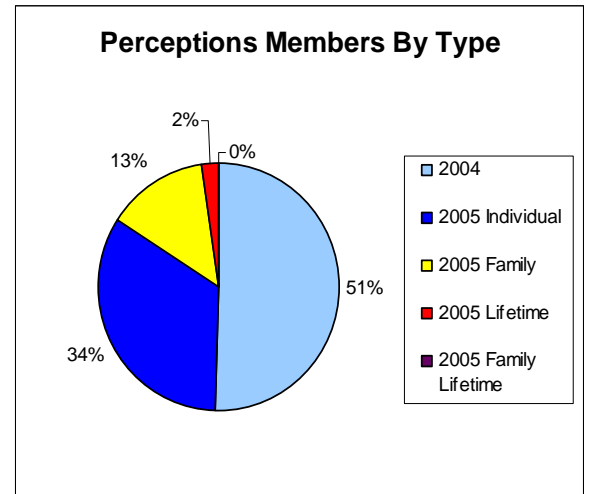
Charles Lisee

2005 Membership Drive Update



Thank you to all who have joined Perceptions as members. This year we are working hard to reach out to all of our contacts and ask for their support. So far, we've had 38 people join as members who were not members last year.

If you've seen the 2005 membership form, you have probably noticed there are several types of memberships from which to choose. **Family** memberships are a way to simplify communications to a household. **Lifetime** memberships are a great way to ensure your membership will always be



active. Members are taking advantage of these options as shown in the pie chart at the right.

You'll notice 2004 memberships are shown in the chart. These memberships expire one year from the date they were purchased as per the conditions of membership at the time. 2005 memberships expire December 31st, 2005. This simplifies the maintenance of membership information. In addition, it encourages members to renew their memberships earlier in the year and allow better budget planning.

So what's in store for the next phase of the 2005 Membership Drive? We need volunteers to make phone calls to Friends and encourage their support of the organization. If you'd like to help, send an e-mail to Kevin@PerceptionsSV.org or leave a message at 989-891-1GAY (1429) with your contact information.



Perceptions

P.O. Box 1525
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Phone:
989.891.1429

And the Board Is...

At the January 27th general meeting of Perceptions, the proposed slate of board members was presented to the membership for a vote. By an overwhelming majority, this slate was approved. Immediately after the vote, the returning board members and the newly elected met to establish roles within Perceptions. The list below shows our current board and their responsibilities.



Kevin Appold – Membership Coordinator, Database Administrator
Rob Cummings – Treasurer
Paul Hayes – Communications Coordinator
diedra knox – Speakers Bureau Coordinator
Charles Lisee – Chair, Development Director
Vanessa Marr – Business Liaison, Social Coordinator
Beth Rakestraw – Co-Chair, Communications Director, Spokesperson
Troy Rhyan – Social Coordinator
Leo Romo – Programming Coordinator
Alan Shinaver – Social Coordinator
Craig Windt – Secretary, Volunteer Coordinator

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The board is always open to hearing from members. You can reach any board member by simply putting his or her first name in front of @perceptionsSV.org. The new board is excited at the possibilities that lay ahead this year and looks forward to serving Perceptions.

SPEAKER'S BUREAU READY TO BEGIN

The GLBT community was stunned by Michigan's YES vote on Proposal II. However, we aren't planning to roll over and play dead. One of Perceptions' responses to the voter initiative is an assertive redevelopment of its Speaker's Bureau. Growing questions about GLBT issues are coming from our allies in the greater community, and debates still rage about our values. Perceptions wants to be on the "left" side of the answer and on the "left" side of the table as we address the issue. We believe we can do that best by providing effective speakers. Consider being a part of this commitment by participating in our two-part training effort.

The first part will introduce the elements of speaking. This segment will be added very soon, but is awaiting confirmation by the instructor. The focus here will be development and delivery of the topic. Participants will be asked to consider grammar, style, tone, and eye contact.

The second part will introduce a method called Listen, Affirm, Respond, Act (LARA). David Bailey, a Biology Instructor at Delta College, has offered to provide leadership for this effort. The method focuses on reducing conflict when facing an opinion different from your own.

David has extensive experience in this method. He has used it a number of years to present the topic of homosexuality to his classes. Nursing, Sociology and Biology Divisions will often ask him to present this topic as part of their sensitivity training for their students. He has had opportunity to introduce the technique to other groups outside of Delta.

The trainers have asked that we limit the training class to 5-10 participants at a time, but that's no reason to wait. We hope to offer the training every 3 months. Stop to consider if maybe you want to just develop your technique and skills but wait before speaking, or perhaps you feel you're ready to speak and only want the LARA method. Take both parts or take one part! Contact diedra@perceptionssv.org to register. Take advantage of the chance to become an effective speaker for Perceptions' effort to Open Doors for the Mid-Michigan GLBT Community.

Perceptions Highlighted at Leadership Meeting

Chris Brennan was attending her Vision 20/20 Saginaw Leadership meeting on February 3rd and saw an opportunity to talk about Perceptions. She focused her 15 minute talk on what Perceptions has to offer and left a few brochures at the end.

Her presentation had an impact. A business owner took the presentation to heart and asked for more information. She has committed to a window sticker and wants to include her listing in our Rainbow Referrals.

The Speaker's Bureau will be very interested in using some of Chris' material as a closing statement for speakers in its training sessions. The Bureau may also use some of this information for preparing speakers for a 5-15 minute presentation to other such conferences and businesses along with its training of speakers for GLBT issues.

One step and speaking opportunity at a time! Thanks Chris for this giant step for Perceptions.

diedra



Be a Contributor!

If you have an article written by you or an idea for an article, please, submit them to:
paul@PerceptionsSV.org or

Perceptions
P.O. Box 1525
Midland, MI 48641

Articles are subject to fact-checking and approval. We would love to hear from you!

~Paul

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DO YOU HAVE AN EVENT YOU'D LIKE ADDED TO PERCEPTIONS CALENDAR OF EVENTS?

Submit your event to calendar@perceptionssv.org

Saturday, February 12th - Perceptions Valentine's Day Dance 7:30 pm to Midnight. Sheraton Four Points Hotel, Saginaw. Tickets are \$25.00 at Perceptions events, [\\$26.06 online](#) or \$30 at the door. Your ticket includes draught beer, well drinks (*Proper ID required to be served alcohol*), soda, coffee, water and a wide array delectable hors d'oeuvres. Go to <http://valentine.PerceptionsSV.org> for more information. When booking a room people should call 989-790-5050 and ask for the hotel. State that you are with "Perceptions" to get the discount rate. Last day to book a room at the discounted rate is February 6th.

Tuesday, February 15th – Womyn's Circle 7:30 - 9:00 pm. This program provides support to Tri-County lesbian women and facilitates community awareness projects in partnership with Perceptions and PFLAG. It has provided safety and help to many women and their families experiencing hostility, abuse and isolation. The free, confidential support group sessions are facilitated by Mary Jo Hall, MSW, CSW, ACSW. Meets at the YWCA located at 3405 Midland Rd. in Bay City.

Wednesday, February 16th - Bay City Meet & Greet 7:00 - 9:00 pm. An informal gathering of the Tri-Cities' GLBT community. All are welcome in this smoke-free environment. Located at 810 Saginaw Street (between Center and Fifth Aves.), the Bay City Coffee and Tea offers a variety of delicious drinks, sandwiches and desserts.

Thursday, February 17 - Open Forum regarding ELCA's Sexuality Task Force report 7:00 pm. Now that the Sexuality Task Force has made its recommendation to this summer's churchwide assembly, its time again for conversation. The Bishop will hold an open forum meeting for any one in our area interested talking about the report. It will be at Zion Lutheran Church in Freeland (off M-47 by the supermarket). Everyone interested should attend. Pastor Kirk Havel will be there representing the ELCA Church Council, and churchwide assembly delegates are invited to be there.

Monday, February 21st - GLBT Support Group 7:00 - 8:30 pm in Bay City. This group discussion focuses on issues the GLBT community face on a day-to-day basis. Whether you're coming out, dealing with grief or looking at an exciting new future, come express your views, support others and share in the experience. Contact info@perceptionsSV.org or call 989-891-1429 for meeting location or more information.

Thursday, February 24th - Monthly Membership Meeting 7:00 pm. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland, 6220 Jefferson Ave. Sean Kosofsky. For more information, contact [Perceptions](#).

Sunday, February 27th - PFLAG Meeting 2:00 - 4:30 pm. Located at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6220 Jefferson, Midland.

Tuesday, March 1st – Womyn's Circle 7:30 - 9:00 pm. This program provides support to Tri-County lesbian women and facilitates community awareness projects in partnership with Perceptions and PFLAG. It has provided safety and help to many women and their families experiencing hostility, abuse and isolation. The free, confidential support group sessions are facilitated by Mary Jo Hall, MSW, CSW, ACSW. Meets at the YWCA located at 3405 Midland Rd. in Bay City.

Wednesday, March 2nd - Saginaw Meet & Greet 7-9 pm. An informal gathering for the Tri-Cities' GLBT community. All are welcome. Meet your old friends and make some new ones while eating fantastic baked goods. Enjoys hot and cold drinks in a non-smoking environment! Crumbs Gourmet Cookie Cafe is located at 4882 Gratiot just east of Center Road and behind Edward's Men's Shop. tel: 989-498-4010

Saturday, March 5th - Chocolate Party 7 to 10:00 pm. [PFLAG](#) and Perceptions Annual Fundraiser will be hosted by Terry Zajac in his historic Bay City home. Donations accepted at the door. For more information contact PFLAG at jcrane@chartermi.net or 989-895-8993 or contact Perceptions at info@perceptionsSV.org or 989-891-1429. View or print the [flyer](#) for this event.

Monday, March 7th - GLBT Support Group 7:00 - 8:30 pm in Bay City. This group discussion focuses on issues the GLBT community face on a day-to-day basis. Whether you're coming out, dealing with grief or looking at an exciting new future, come express your views, support others and share in the experience. Contact info@perceptionsSV.org or call 989-891-1429 for meeting location or more information.

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