

Perceptions Newsletter

Perceptions Inc. P.O. Box 1525, Midland, MI 48641 (989) 891-1429

Speaker Presentation

April 2004

Local Attorney Gives Tips on Building a Solid Partnership

Barb Klimaszewski, of KLIMASZEWSKI & STREET, provided some very pertinent information to help committed couples protect the relationship, each other, and children in that relationship. Barb notes that these documents may not be legally binding. Since marriage is not an option for GLBT, she points out that having them as a part of the union may be the next best thing. She was quick to note that the courts are very interested in minimizing conflict, so the more you have to protect yourself, the greater the chance of avoiding trouble.

Here are the 4 documents Barb Klimaszewski suggested with some considerations

1. **Financial Agreement** – be sure to make it just an agreement. Avoid words like ‘partner’, ‘significant other’, etc. Treat it as a contract. The courts will treat it that way. Include a clause that enforces arbitration to settle disputes. In this way, you could avoid court. That minimizes the public foray that could ensue. Be sure to list those terms that best protect your assets. You can also use this document to remove a person’s name from a deed or other property. This is important because it becomes very difficult to remove that name in court. This is a document signed by both of you, and each of you should have a copy.
2. **Durable Power of Attorney** – This document provides your partner the right to make legal decisions in case you’re incapacitated or handle your estate in the event of your death. Each person has to have their own signed document. Each of you should leave a copy with your partner and an attorney.
3. **Medical Power of Attorney** – Your partner can have some say in your treatment as per your wishes, in the event of a serious illness where you cannot make your wishes known. Be sure to include a clause that makes your partner, in the eyes of the document, a member of your immediate family. While it may be challenged, most hospitals and courts are willing to carry out the wishes of the deceased. You should each have a copy of each other’s document, and have both on file with your respective physicians.

See Solid Partnership on page 2

May’s Speaker

Hey! Are you ready to shake those winter blues and pounds? Are you ready to get that tone back and on track? Well, Peggy Crawford, Associate Professor at Delta College, will be here to give tips on how to use things in your home for strength training. Plan on moving the chairs and getting involved on this presentation.



Opening doors for the Mid-Michigan GLBT Community

Calendar Highlights:

- Wednesday, May 19th
Bay City Meet & Greet 7-9 pm
- Thursday, May 20th
Perceptions General Meeting 7-9 pm
- Saturday, May 22nd
"Together in Faith: Journey into Inclusiveness"
- Sunday, May 23rd
PFLAG Meeting 2-4:30 pm
- Wednesday, June 2nd
Saginaw Meet & Greet 7-9p
- Sunday, June 6th -
Motor City Pride
Noon to 7:00 pm
- Saturday, June 12th -
Michigan Pride

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

From the Desk of the Chair Mindy Pennington

Vanessa Marr Named Volunteer Coordinator

Please welcome Vanessa Marr as the new Volunteer Coordinator for Perceptions. Vanessa is a mother of two, a new college instructor, and a grad student! She will graduate this May from the University of Michigan-Flint with a Masters in American Culture.

She is so excited that she has a role in Perceptions. She said, "I am so honored to be a part of an organization that is dedicated to two of my strongest passions: LGBT advocacy and community involvement. Perceptions' commitment to educating the general population and challenging prejudices is something I take seriously and personally. My hope is that I can use my new role as a means to further promote the cause. I've rolled up my sleeves and am ready to work!"

Vanessa will be the point of contact for any members who want to volunteer for an event. There are several advantages of having Vanessa in this position:

- She can maintain a list of regular volunteers for recruiting (and find new people!);
- There will be ONE phone number or email for members, not a different contact person for each event;
- She will train new volunteers for various tasks;
- She will maintain the schedule of where people will be and what their task(s) are, and
- For recognition purposes, Perceptions will have a record of everyone who volunteers for the organization.

Because we are an all-volunteer run organization, it is *critical* that Perceptions has a Volunteer Coordinator. Most non-profit organizations are sustained by the work that their volunteers do.

The Board is very excited about Vanessa and I hope many members will have an opportunity to work side-by-side with Vanessa. Her energy, enthusiasm, and humor are infectious!

Perceptions has many upcoming events for which we need volunteers to greet members at the monthly meeting, staff the Perceptions booth, work on the Lansing Pride float, work the Motor City Pride booth, help with mailings or press kits, and other tasks. To contact Vanessa about becoming a volunteer, please email her at vmarr@netzero.net or call her at 989-793-2521.

Best Regards,
Mindy Pennington, Chairperson
for the Perceptions Board

Solid Partnership, continued from page 1

4. **Last Will and Testament** - Each person should make out his or her own will making sure to designate all property and wishes. You could use this as a document to take care of children and/or to set money aside for children. If there is no biological parent, Ms Klimaszewski suggested you put your partner's name as the conservator to care for those children. There is nothing to keep the biological parent from taking the children, but if you did not want money you willed to the children to go with that parent, you can make your partner a conservator of money. You can assign the money or you can give the conservator some flexibility for its use. Barb suggests that you do not leave money to children age 19 and younger.

There are lots of such details that an attorney can suggest to protect you in these anti-GLBT times. Perhaps marriage will be a reality real soon, but don't take things for granted. Commitment, Integrity, and Communication are all important skills for long lasting relationships, but all sorts of things occur to unravel even the best intentions. For additional information and/or structuring these documents, give Barbara Klimaszewski a call at 989-752-5406 or email at barbklim@sbcglobal.net





Michigan Pride 2004

As I sit at my computer and try to figure out how to motivate and increase attendance for Perceptions at the Michigan Pride Event, I continue to see small snow flakes falling to the ground, and it is April 27, 2004.

So, my first thoughts are of the warm summer sun hitting my face as I ride the float down Michigan Avenue toward our State Capitol on June 12, 2004.

My first Pride event was June 2002. Perceptions was in its first year and we wanted to make a big statement for our Tri-Cities community. There was a group of 15 people that put together the plans for our first float, and the following week it was built. I found it to be a very gratifying experience to plan and build an idea with a group of people from all walks of life. This unity is what my goals are for the group and why it is so important for us to come together in Lansing and show support for the GLBT community. If you are not visible then we as a whole become invisible.

We ask once again that you join us on Saturday, June 12, 2004, and either ride or walk along the side of the Perceptions float and show your support for our organization and community.

Please note that we have registered a booth at the Motor City Pride and Lansing. If you are interested in staffing the booths, please contact the Perceptions board at info@perceptionssv.org at your earliest convenience.

Please see our website for further information: www.perceptionssv.org.

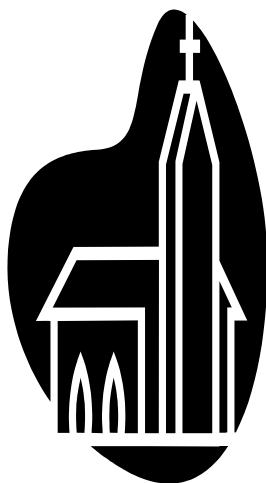
Perceptions

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Regards,
Douglas Barron
Events Coordinator

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Interfaith Conference "Together in Faith: Journey into Inclusiveness" Eastern Michigan University May 21-22, 2004



The American Friends Service Committee, an international Quaker organization founded on principles of justice and equality, is hosting a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender-affirming Interfaith conference at Eastern Michigan University May 22. The conference, "Together in Faith: Journey into Inclusiveness," will bring together many races, ages, genders, sexualities and walks of life.

"Together in Faith" is in response to recent church questioning of whether or not to ordain and whether or not to accept LGBT people into church communities. There will be nationally renowned, local, and activist speakers presenting at the conference. There will also be two dramatic performances, movies playing throughout the day, and a resource fair.

More information on how to register, volunteer or contribute to the conference is available online at www.togetherinfaith.com.

Contact:

Conference Coordinator, Amanda Sharrai, 734.260.0517, conference@afsc-fan.org
Conference Intern, Casey Frazee, 734.904.5757, conference@afsc-fan.org, for volunteering opportunities.



Women's Issues

Lesbians and Depression

Information taken from <http://www.suite101.com/profile.cfm/dlstang>

Author Debra L. Stang, a medical social worker who specializes in crisis intervention, has cautiously explored the issue of "Depressed Dykes". She introduces the topic with clear symptoms of depression, such as

- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Sleeping too much or not enough

And a list of things that cause depression, such as

- Self destructive or negative thought patterns such as thinking in absolutes (I always screw up")
- Genetic factors
- Stress

Ms Stang points to statistics that show women at a greater risk for depression than men and heterosexual women less likely to be depressed than lesbians. You may ask why, and Debra Stang does pose the question "Why is depression a Lesbian Issue?" She answers that question by pointing to the normal stressors for women which include: multi-tasking in job and family, expectations of women to be responsible for societal morality, expectations of dress, manner, and decorum and minimal outlets for women to express anger and dissatisfaction. Add to that living in the closet or "playing straight" to protect job and family, keeping children once you partner with a woman, disdain for the GLBT way of life, violence against women which may escalate if she is lesbian. She does an excellent job of handling the topic as a non-professional. This interpretation can be helpful to someone you love, or yourself, to take a look at their present activities to see if they may be seriously depressed. It is a non-threatening approach. She suggests some steps to help with a strong emphasis on using profession resources.

If you think you're depressed link to [NYU Depression Screening](#) or [Depression Screening](#). These provide you with a self survey, but professional assessment is a much better approach. Depression robs you of both your best self and the warmth of family and or friends. Don't take it lightly. Find someone to talk to and follow through with some of the safe and effective ways to deal with this common result of life's stressors. Take care of YOU!

This section is designed to voice issues and concerns of women. It offers a space for women's voices. Do you have an opinion, expertise, or essay that helps in the growth and empowerment of women? Please submit your one page entry. The selection will be based on appropriateness of the article.

I support the following: Angry at the system? Strong rhetoric on the issues? Expert input on various topics in Health, Sexuality, Business, Science, etc.? I offer no apologies for banning mean spirited submissions.

dmknox

WWW.PERCEPTIONSSV.ORG

The Coalition for a Fair Michigan



The Coalition for a Fair Michigan (CFM or CF) is a group of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender organizations and individuals who come together to defeat an attempt to restrict civil marriage through the ballot in Michigan.

CFM is a ballot question committee. We work to defeat an attempt to amend our state constitution around civil marriage.

Fair Michigan is a public education, outreach and announcement mechanism for the Coalition for a Fair Michigan. We share information about the Coalition, news and events about proposed ballot issues and same-sex marriage in Michigan. Fair Michigan is part of Yahoo Mailing system.

Please join us in **Fair Michigan**.

Subscribe Fair Michigan at FairMichigan-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Read more about Fair Michigan at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FairMichigan/>

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Perceptions' Health Fair

Perceptions' first ever Health Fair was an overall success. The eighty-degree weather was a factor in lower-than-expected attendance, as it was the nicest day we had in a very long time. The participating organizations took advantage of the Health Fair to network and learn more about other organizations. Perceptions is pleased that we could harbor this environment for these organizations to cross reference resources and services. We would like to send a big thanks to all of those involved, especially the volunteers who made it happen.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Submit your event to info@perceptionssv.org

[Friday, May 14th - Perceptions Co-ed Indoor Volleyball](#) 7:00 - 9:00 pm. YWCA of Bay County, 3405 Midland Rd., Bay City. Open to all. Donations accepted to cover the cost of the gym.

[Wednesday, May 19th - Bay City Meet & Greet](#) 7-9 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, May 20th - Perceptions General Meeting](#) 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Located at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6220 Jefferson, Midland. Our guest speaker, Peggy Crawford, Associate Professor at Delta College, will give us tips on in-your-home strength training and fitness. Please join us!

[Thursday, May 20th – Sunday, May 30th - Toronto GLBT Film Festival](#) For information, check out <http://www.insideout.on.ca/14Annual/index.cfm>

[Friday, May 21st - Perceptions Co-ed Indoor Volleyball](#) 7:00 - 9:00 pm. YWCA of Bay County, 3405 Midland Rd., Bay City. Open to all. Donations accepted to cover the cost of the gym.

[Saturday, May 22nd "Together in Faith: Journey into Inclusiveness"](#) Michigan's first national LGBT Spiritual Conference bringing LGBT and Ally spiritual leaders to Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, MI. Attendees will leave new information, tools and networks to help them create LGBT-affirming cities and faith communities. Rev. Mel White, John Corvino, Jim Toy and local/national spiritual leaders will speak. Cost until March 14, 2004 is \$75, including breakfast, lunch and dinner. Late registration after the 14th is \$125. Read more details and register at www.togetherinfaith.com Local contacts are Leo Romo at leoromo@yahoo.com and Jeff Illig at michmoshbc@aol.com

[Sunday, May 23rd - PFLAG Meeting](#) 2-4:30 pm. Located at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6220 Jefferson, Midland.

[Sunday, June 6th - Motor City Pride](#) Noon to 7:00 pm. An open street festival in downtown Ferndale, MI. For more information visit MotorCityPride.com or see the [Perceptions Pride Page](#).

[Saturday, June 12th - Michigan Pride](#) 16th annual statewide GLBT Pride events in Lansing, including Michigan Pride March, Rally, & Festival. For more information visit MichiganPride.org or see the [Perceptions Pride Page](#).

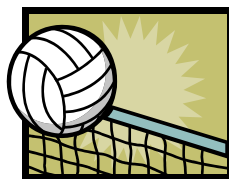
[Thursday July 23rd – Sunday July 25th - Thirteenth Annual Friends North Bike Tour](#) This year, Friends North is partnering with the Triangle Foundation to sponsor the annual bike tour in Benzie County. Funds raised will benefit both organizations. This is a weekend of camping, biking, canoeing/kayaking, and fun for GLBT individuals and their friends. Register at www.perceptionssv.org prior to June 1st for discount.

On-Going Programs

HIV+/AIDS support group meets every Tuesday in Bay City from 5:30 pm to 7 pm. Contact Tim Neal at 989.894.2991 for locations for the meetings.

Anonymous and confidential HIV testing is available at The Hearth Home in Saginaw. Gay men who participate will receive a Meijer's gift certificate if they choose to test. Contact Ricardo Bowden or Ric Nelson at 989.753.9011 for further information.

Perceptions' **Volleyball** continues Friday evenings in May from 7-9p at the YWCA on Midland Road, Bay City.



WWW.PERCEPTIONSSV.ORG