

Perceptions Newsletter

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

Our Most Pressing Issue

Mindy Pennington

We had a very exciting weekend in Bay City two weeks ago. Our Fireworks Festival is a three-day event with a carnival, concerts, entertainment and (we think) the best fireworks in the state. It was marred, however, by the invasion of the “marriage protection” petitioners.

Perceptions found out Thursday, July 1st about the American Family Association’s attempt to use the festival to gather signatures for the “one man, one woman” marriage petition. Volunteers from PFLAG and Perceptions gathered to talk to festival-goers on Friday and Saturday about why they should “Decline to Sign.” We did stop many people from signing, but many **DID** sign the petition. Of course, these signatures have to be validated in Lansing before they are counted toward the 317,000 that these anti-gay petitioners need to get an amendment on the November ballot in Michigan.

We’ve heard from the Coalition for a Fair Michigan that the sponsoring organization has reported that they have plenty of valid signatures and they will easily get the amendment on the ballot. Some petitioners were paid \$2.50 per signature they gathered and they weren’t very honest about what they had people sign. I also witnessed a petitioner in Bay City who never asked a single person if they were a registered voter before he had them sign their name. That’s good, because signatures of people who are not registered voters will be invalidated.

Next on our agenda will be to educate people on what this amendment will really do to the citizens of this state. Many people signed this petition without a full understanding that if it passes, it will limit rights and benefits for unmarried heterosexual couples, not just GLBT couples.



Opening doors for the Mid-Michigan GLBT Community

Calendar Highlights:

- [Tuesday, July 20th - Perceptions Co-Ed Volleyball](#) 7pm Auburn Park
- [Wednesday, July 21st Bay City Meet & Greet](#) 7-9 pm
- [Friday, July 23th - Perceptions Co-Ed Volleyball](#) 7pm. Vet's Park in Bay City
- [Sunday, July 25th PFLAG Meeting](#) 2-4:30 pm
- [Friday, July 30th - Perceptions Co-Ed Volleyball](#) 7pm. Vet's Park in Bay City
- [Saturday, July 31st - Perceptions/PFLAG Garden Party](#) 6-9pm
- [Wednesday, August 4th Saginaw Meet & Greet](#) 7-9p
- [Friday, August 6th - Perceptions Co-Ed Volleyball](#) 7pm. Vet's Park in Bay City

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

From the Desk of the Chair

Mindy Pennington

You and I have to talk to our neighbors, friends, colleagues, and co-workers about this issue when it comes up. Ask someone if they have a gay or lesbian family member and whether they would vote to take away that person's health benefits--because this amendment will do just that. Read the language of the amendment, below:

"To secure and preserve the benefits of marriage for our society and for future generations of children, the union of one man and one woman in marriage shall be the only agreement recognized as a marriage or similar union for any purpose."

The amendment language states, "marriage or similar union." Yes, that includes civil unions, domestic partnerships and domestic partner benefits that some unmarried couples get through their state or local employer. For example, if you are an unmarried couple that gets domestic partner health benefits through your state employer (like University of Michigan); ***you would no longer be able to have that benefit.***

Now is the time to take action and start telling people how this restricts civil rights for GLBT and heterosexual couples. Here are a four points for you to communicate:

- Michigan already has **two** laws on the books to ban same-sex marriage; the Federal Government also has **two** laws banning it. ***Should more taxpayer dollars be spent to make additional laws?***
- This amendment would **eliminate** domestic partner benefits through state universities, which give health care and other crucial benefits to same-sex and opposite sex partners of employees.
- The Michigan constitution should not be changed to **limit citizen's rights**--it would set a dangerous precedent of using our constitution to restrict the rights of one group of people for the first time in our history.
- Michiganders have **other issues that are more pressing**--is the same-sex marriage issue just a smokescreen for you to forget about the economy, Iraq, and the lack of health insurance for Americans?

Finally, remember that *IF* this passes in November, it would take another Michigan constitutional amendment to remove it.

Keep talking to people. Write letters to the editor. Connect with your straight friends so they can enlighten their friends as well. Explain the wording of the amendment. Start now for the November election.

Mindy





6th ANNUAL WEST SHORE PRIDE PICNIC SET FOR JULY 25

(Ludington, Michigan) -- The West Shore Pride Committee of Ludington, Michigan, has announced plans for its 6th Annual Pride Picnic. The event will be held Sunday, July 25, 2004, from 1:00 to 5:00pm at Memorial Tree Park, 1599 N. Washington Ave., Ludington, Michigan.

Now in its 6th year, West Shore Pride Committee founder and events coordinator, David Hawley, says the picnic is a potluck. Those attending should bring a dish to pass, beverage, and table service. Entertainment will be provided.

The West Shore Pride Committee began the picnic in 1999 to celebrate and bring together Michigan's West Shore GLBT community. Hawley is encouraging all GLBT community members throughout the state to come to Ludington on Sunday, July 25th, and help us celebrate GLBT pride in west central Michigan.

Those wishing to attend the picnic can get further details and directions at the West Shore Pride Committee's web site: <http://community.webtv.net/dahawley/TheresUNITYin/> .

Perceptions

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Garden Party to Be Hosted in an 1880 Saginaw Home



The PFLAG/Perceptions Garden Party will be in Saginaw on July 31, 2004 from 6:00-9:00 pm. Rick Rios, the current owner of 614 Sheridan Avenue, purchased his home in 1980. Rick owns 614 Sheridan and the house next door, providing partygoers two backyards to play in! Rick has formal and informal gardens in the back and side of the 1880 home. Rick has worked diligently to restore the home. It was a popular site in Neighborhoods Renewals Service's first Cathedral District Tour of Historic Homes in 1990, and his garden was featured in the 1992 tour. In 1998, over 800 people toured his home and garden during the Saginaw Art Museum Garden Tour.

Board Members from PFLAG Tri-Cities and Perceptions will provide the food and drink and your donations will be accepted at the door. Come tour Rick's beautiful home and garden-- on the same street where the Mayor of Saginaw lives!

614 Sheridan Avenue, Saginaw, July 31st, 2004, 6:00-9:00 pm

WWW.PERCEPTIONSSV.ORG

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

Submit your event to board@perceptionssv.org

Wednesday, July 21st - Bay City Meet & Greet 7-9pm. 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, July 22nd - Sunday, July 25th - 30th Annual National Women's Music Festival, Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio The Main stage performers include Ubaka Hill, Alix Olson, Ember Swift, Lisa Koch, Tret Fure, Margie Adam, Wishing Chair with Kara Barnard, Suzanne Westenhoefer, Cris Williamson, Jamie Anderson, Zoe Lewis with Rozanne Layton, and Vickie Shaw. More information and registration at <http://wiaonline.org/nwmf/index.shtml> *Columbus is only 300 miles from Bay City by car!*

Friday, 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.

Sunday, July 25th - PFLAG Meeting 2-4:30 pm. Located at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6220 Jefferson, Midland

Friday, July 30th - Sunday, August 1st - 5th Annual Greater Motown International Rodeo, sponsored by the Michigan International Gay Rodeo Association, Wayne County Fairgrounds (Belleville, MI). www.migraonline.com

Saturday, July 31st - PFLAG/Perceptions Garden Party 6-9 pm. This year's annual Garden Party will be held at Rick Rios' exquisite gardens and home in Saginaw. Please plan to support the good work that Perceptions and PFLAG have accomplished and will continue to accomplish with your monetary contribution. Beverages and light appetizers will be served compliments of the PFLAG and Perceptions boards. More details to follow. [\[Picture 1\]](#) [\[Picture 2\]](#) [\[Picture 3\]](#) [\[Picture 4\]](#)

Wednesday, August 4th - Saginaw Meet & Greet 7-9 pm Enjoy 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

Thursday, September 30th - Perceptions General Meeting 7 - 9pm. Located at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6220 Jefferson, Midland. Please join us!

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 Fridays 7pm. Vet's Park in Bay City. The nets are across from the Bay County Community Center (800 John F. Kennedy Dr.), south of the ball diamonds. In the event of rain, the event will be moved to the YWCA on Midland Rd., Bay City. Also join us Tuesdays at 7pm at Auburn Park on 9 Mile and US 10. In the event of rain, the event will be cancelled. Bring a friend and join us for some fun, casual volleyball excitement.



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