



PERCEPTIONS Newsletter

September 2005

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PO Box 1525, Midland, MI 48641

989-891-1429

Summer Rewind

As the warm days continue to shorten, let us take a fond look back at a few of the many summer activities in which Perceptions members took part:

Motor City Pride and Michigan Pride: Although the festivals were respectively scheduled at the beginning and end of June, both days were identical: *hazy, HOT and humid!* Despite the weather, booth volunteers and visitors came out in full force to support LGBT folk. The Pride Parade in Lansing was a hit thanks to Aaron Brown standing proud as Lady Liberty!

Fourth of July Potluck and Fireworks Viewing in Bay City: Jeff Illig served as host at what is quickly becoming a summer tradition! The lightshow viewed amongst friends made the night even brighter.

Perceptions/PFLAG Garden Party: This popular fundraiser at Terry Zajac's exquisite home was another success—each organization raised about \$350! The festive foods were just as luscious as the gardens.

Second Annual Together in Faith Conference: The first

weekend in August brought hundreds of progressive spiritual activists together at Eastern Michigan University to celebrate faith and facilitate lasting change. Participants returned home with a renewed passion to transform their local communities.

Summer Picnic in Midland: Doug Solosky hosted a delightful potluck at his newly-landscaped home. Guests enjoyed delicious barbeque, conversations around the bonfire, and generous discounts at Doug's antique store!

Adams to Speak at September 29 Meeting

Midland author Lawrence P. Adams will share from his first book, *Lost Son? A Bastard Child's Journey of Hope, Search, Discovery & Healing*, during the September 29 Perceptions meeting at Midland's Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Social gathering begins at 7 p.m., followed by Adams' presentation at 7:30 p.m.

Lost Son? is the true story of a child born to a nineteen-year-old unwed mother. Placed lovingly for adoption, he is instead thrust into the quagmire of the Michigan foster care system.

"Stability" would be a word found in a dictionary, not in daily life, as he is moved fourteen times in eleven years. He is finally rescued and given a "home" at Boys Town. Growing into adulthood, he searches for his birth parents, an unknown heritage, and sexual identity. Discovery of "true self"

enables him to confront and overcome brutal and emotionally damaging realities from childhood which can no longer stay buried deep within his memory. This is the story of his difficult life battle, but more importantly, his ultimate victory...healing!

Adams has also authored a second book entitled *A Voice from the Voiceless & Forgotten*. He will have his first book available for sale after the presentation at the cost of \$20.



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Fall LGBT Film Series at UUFoM



Please join Rev. Jane Thickstun and Jackie Anderson at the Unitarian Universalist

Fellowship of Midland for an LGBT-themed film series this fall! Each viewing will be followed by a general discussion. Popcorn and beverages will be provided.

Sunday, Sept. 25 at 7 p.m.:
Normal A wonderful mix of humor, drama and tenderness as

a seemingly “normal” Midwestern factory worker stuns his family and community by revealing he wants sex reassignment surgery.

Sunday, Oct. 2 at 7 p.m.: **Dorian Blues** Dorian is a sassy, introspective young man on the brink of going to college, when he comes out of the closet. Confronted with some absurd and awkward situations, dealing with an overbearing, right-wing father and finding support with a few people, he stumbles toward a life-enhancing realization that he does have a chance at happiness.

Sunday, Oct. 16 at 7 p.m.: **Boys Don't Cry** Based on a true story.

Brandon Teena is the popular new guy in a tiny Nebraska town. He hangs out with the fellas—drinking, cussing, and bumper surfing—and charms the young women who've never met a more sensitive and considerate young man. But Brandon was actually born anatomically female, and his life takes a series of tragic turns as the truth comes out. This award-winning film is widely regarded as one of the most poignant contemporary mainstream movies that addresses transgender issues, especially the far-reaching effects of transphobia in repressive communities.

Make a Statement with Our NEW Perceptions T-shirts

Rob Cummings

Maybe you saw them at Pride or around town - Perceptions has totally *new* t-shirts for 2005. The new shirts are emblazoned with the Perceptions logo on the front and “Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness are **not** Special Rights!” on the back. The t-shirts come in

White or Light Grey and are available in sizes small through XL.

Show your support for Perceptions and for *equal* rights for GLBT individuals. The shirts will be available for \$20 at every general meeting until supplies run out!

Do you have a great story idea, a desire to write, or a suggestion to make this newsletter even better?

DON'T HOLD BACK!!

Contact Vanessa Marr, editor
at
Vanessa@PerceptionsSV.org

Volunteer Time = PBuck\$

Rob Cummings



As a thank you to our hard-working volunteers, the Perceptions Board created PBuck\$. Beginning September 1, 2005, you'll get a PBuck for every event you volunteer at least an hour of your time. PBuck\$ will accumulate in your name throughout the year and can be redeemed on auction items at the 2005 Holiday Party to be

held on December 16 at the Montague Inn. Imagine the satisfaction of using PBuck\$ to outbid someone for that one auction item you have been watching all night. So, go ahead and volunteer for Adopt-a-Highway, or Day of Caring, or AIDS Walk and watch those PBuck\$ accumulate.

We'll even keep track of how many PBuck\$ you have! All you have to do is volunteer

your time and leave the paperwork to us. At the Holiday Party you will receive a voucher for the amount of PBuck\$ you have accumulated.

PBuck\$ may be approved for other purposes beyond the annual Holiday Party auction at the discretion of the Perceptions Board. Sorry, but no PBuck\$ will be awarded for volunteer time before September 1, 2005. PBuck\$

are not transferable and can only be used by the individual who volunteered the time. Board members are not eligible to accumulate PBuck\$. PBucks\$ expire one year after their issue date. The PBuck\$ program is approved by the Perceptions Board and may be amended, modified or discontinued at the Board's discretion.



Volunteer Spotlight: Neil Wolicki

Vanessa Marr

If you recently traveled along I-75 and passed by our lovely Perceptions marker, you could easily read between its lines that “Neil Wolicki Was Here.”

In fact, Neil is virtually everywhere whenever volunteers are needed. Not

only has he lead the seasonal Adopt-A-Highway crews, he also helped decorate our Pride Parade float and is currently recruiting Perceptions team members for the Oct. 1 AIDS/HIV Walk in Bay City (see notice on this

page). In addition to his “day job” as an information analyst, Neil coordinates the Friday night volleyball games at Vet’s Park. He says he began volunteering “as a means to get out of the house” and meet supportive friends. *Kudos!*

Walkers are needed
for the Tri-Cities
AIDS/HIV Walk

Saturday, Oct. 1
Vet’s Park, Bay City

For more
information, e-mail
Neil at
Neil@PerceptionsSV.org

Treasurer’s Report

Rob Cummings

The organization’s finances resulted in an actual year-to-date loss of \$188 compared to a budgeted year-to-date loss of \$2,773 – a favorable budget to actual variance of over \$2,500. Favorable revenues offset by lower expenses than in previous years resulted in the positive variance. In short, we are doing better financially than we expected. Perceptions summarized financial activity is as follows:

REVENUE:

Memberships	\$ 2,181
Events & Projects	\$ 3,069
Merchandise Sales	\$ 315
Rainbow Referrals	\$ 50
Donations	<u>\$ 789</u>
Total revenues	\$ 6,404

EXPENSES:

Events & Projects	\$ 3,444
General expenses	<u>\$ 3,148</u>
Total expenses	<u>\$ 6,592</u>

Net expenses over revenues \$ (188)

It’s worthy to note that during the summer the board authorized a \$500 sponsorship of AIDS Walk Michigan. The cost of this sponsorship was entirely offset by a special fundraising event. Also, Perceptions sponsored a booth at Motor City Pride and a booth and float at Michigan Pride in Lansing.

Financial information will be updated quarterly and final, year-end financial information will be presented at the Annual Meeting in January.

Remember Perceptions during United Way Campaign

Rob Cummings



It’s hard to believe fall is here. And along with back to school and the start of football season, it’s also time for the United Way 2005 Fund Drive.

Did you know that as a registered not-for-profit

entity Perceptions is eligible to receive charitable contributions through the United Way? During the 2004 Fund Drive, our members and friends donated over \$650 to Perceptions through the United Way.

It’s easy to designate some (or all!) of your

United Way contribution to Perceptions. Simply indicate on your United Way Fund Drive form that you wish Perceptions to benefit from your gift to United Way. Our official contact information is:

Saginaw Valley GLBT Group, Inc.
(d/b/a Perceptions –

Saginaw Valley)
P.O. Box 1525
Midland, MI 48641
(989) 891-1429

Please consider Perceptions when completing your 2005 United Way Fund Drive donation card. And, thank you again to the members and friends who donated in the past.

Notes from the Chair: Volunteers are the Lifeblood of Perceptions

Beth Rakestraw

Yahooo!!!! We have a newsletter again. Vanessa Marr has volunteered to nag various individuals for articles, edit this document and mail it out to Perceptions people who do not receive e-mail. Prior to this summer, Paul Hayes took on the task, until his work schedule created difficulties for him, and prior to Paul it was Craig Windt ... and I don't know who it was before Craig.

Vanessa, Paul and Craig are only a handful of Perceptions volunteers. We have a number of volunteer board members who spend an incredible number of hours for this organization.

Why do we have wonderful speakers at our educational meetings and at other venues, like Rudy Serra who is coming to speak for us in October? Because Leo Romo recruits and organizes them. diedra knox did that before he did. Why do we have Friday night dinners? Because Alan Shinaver and a few others arrange them. Why are we going to have a Holiday Party at the stately Montague Inn? Because Troy Rhyan has determined it will be the best one ever. Why do we have a budding youth group? Because Ariana Sawyer is determined to make it happen, with some help from a few other volunteer friends. Who's working to improve Perceptions' ability to advocate for the GLBT and allied population? Aaron Brown, whom we also convinced to dress in patriotic drag as the Statue of Liberty for the Perceptions' float at Michigan Pride.

Why are we as an organization able to meet the requirements of our charter as a 501 (c) 3, non-profit organization eligible to receive tax deductible donations? Because we have a Executive Board that ensures our

compliance: me as your Chair; Kevin Appold as Vice Chair, who doubles as Membership Coordinator and has set up and moderates various Yahoo Groups which enable us to function; Rob Cummings as Treasurer, who sees to it that we operate within our budget as well as devising sound financial policies for our fledgling organization; and Craig Windt, who as Secretary keeps our official records and minutes.



Fortunately, we also have a number of dedicated non-board volunteers. Tim Atkinson designs and updates our website. Neil Wolicki organizes our Adopt-A-Highway clean ups on Perceptions' stretch of I-75 and has most recently set up "Perceptions Team A" for the upcoming AIDS/HIV walk in the Tri-Cities Area. Many Perceptions people also organize social events for our community: Jeff Illig usually has a 4th of July Party, Doug Solosky hosted a picnic at his home, and you can think of others.

Most of these folks do many other things besides what I have mentioned, and—please forgive me for not naming all of you—there are others who have volunteered through the three years or so of our existence and continue to

volunteer for us. I'd hate to think what our organization would be like today without them.


Considering that Perceptions has no paid staff and no office space, we accomplish an incredible amount of activity to benefit the GLBTA population in this area. But we are able to do so only because of so many people who volunteer their time for this organization. Why do we do it? Because Mid-Michigan GLBTA people deserve to have a group which advocates for us, which opens all kinds of doors for us.

You can be a part of making this organization a "happenin' place" which makes a significantly positive difference in the lives of countless individuals. How? You might start by helping at our monthly meetings that will reconvene this month. We are always in need of greeters to welcome members and guests! Or you could sign up for that October 1 AIDS/HIV Walk and raise money for this worthy cause. By participating, you will not only assist BASIS in helping local HIV-positive individuals to survive and thrive but you will reap some health benefits as well!

The reality is that we need you in order to accomplish our mission of enriching and empowering GLBT individuals and this community. I hope you will consider how you can be more involved in Perceptions to accomplish such an important goal. To borrow from John F. Kennedy, "*Ask not what Perceptions can do for you...*"

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, September 14th - Midland Meet & Greet 7:00 pm. Espresso Milano, 137 Ashman, downtown Midland. 989-832-3222. This event will repeat on the second Wednesday of each month.

 **Friday, September 16th - "Friday Night Dinner"** 7:00 pm. This week's dinner will be at Fuzzy's Restaurant, 1924 Court Street in Saginaw. Preview the [menu](#) online. Join Perceptions members and friends for food, fun and conversation. Read about previous dinners in the [Online Forum](#). If you're a registered Forum user you can also offer your review of a dinner or post suggestions for future venues.

Friday, September 16th – Perceptions Outdoor Co-Ed Volleyball 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Playing at courts in Veteran's Memorial Park in Bay City, near the [Community Center](#). Contact volleyball@perceptionsSV.org for additional information. For last minute announcements visit the [Perceptions Volleyball Forum](#).

Sunday, September 18th – Third Annual Unity Picnic Celebrating Diversity in Our Community. 2:00 - 5:00 pm in Bay City's Wenonah Park. This year's Unity Picnic will feature entertainment including the NAACP ACT-SO Brass Ensemble, Xochiquetzal Mexican Dancers, and Sister of the Shamrock! The Stock Pot will provide a FREE picnic lunch while supplies last! For those with children, kids' crafts and activities will be on site--winner of our poster contest will receive a \$50 savings bond. Sponsored by the YWCA of Bay County. Perceptions will have a booth.

Tuesday, September 20th – 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, September 21st - 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. Gypsies, located at 510 Third Street offers a variety of delicious drinks, sandwiches and desserts. If attendees are interested in having a reading done, please contact Marianna at Gypsies, 892-5105, by noon the Tuesday before. If attendees are interested in having food ready for them at Gypsies from Jack's Deli, they may call Jack's at 893-6931 by 4:00 pm Wednesday. Jack's will have their food will be ready for pick up at Gypsies. *Have an opinion about a location for the Bay City Meet & Greet?* Use the [Online Forum](#) to weigh in.

Friday, September 23rd - "Friday Night Dinner" 7:00 pm. We'll be dining at Tommy V's this week. Tommy V's specializes in Italian cuisine and is located at 310 E. Midland St. in Bay City. RSVP to Alan@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday if you plan to attend. Read about previous dinners in the [Online Forum](#). If you're a registered Forum user you can also offer your review of a dinner or post suggestions for future venues. Sign up for our email list on [Yahoo Groups](#) to receive notification of other dinner venues.

Friday, September 23rd – Perceptions Outdoor Co-Ed Volleyball 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Playing at courts in Veteran's Memorial Park in Bay City, near the [Community Center](#). Contact volleyball@perceptionsSV.org for additional information. For last minute announcements visit the [Perceptions Volleyball Forum](#).

Saturday, September 24th - PFLAG Tri-Cities 15th Anniversary Dinner & Program 6:00 pm. State, regional and national PFLAG leaders, Mike & Jan Neubecker will speak. Founders of PFLAG Tri-Cities will be honored. Bay Valley. Cost is \$25. For more information, view the August newsletter at www.pflag-mbs.org or contact [Leo Romo](#) (989-798-6660) or Jay Crane (jcrane@chartermi.net).

Sunday, September 25th - PFLAG Meeting 2:00 - 4:30 pm. Located at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6220 Jefferson, Midland.

Thursday, September 29th - Perceptions Monthly Membership Meeting 7:00 pm. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland, 6220 Jefferson Ave. For more information, contact [Perceptions](#).

Friday, September 30th - "Friday Night Dinner" 7:00 pm. This week's dinner will be at the Savoy Grill, 127 S. Franklin St., Saginaw. RSVP to Alan by 3:00 pm Friday if you plan to attend. Read about previous dinners in the [Online Forum](#). If you're a registered Forum user you can also offer your review of a dinner or post suggestions for future venues. Sign up for our email list on [Yahoo Groups](#) to receive notification of other dinner venues.

Friday, September 30th – Perceptions Outdoor Co-Ed Volleyball 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Playing at courts in Veteran's Memorial Park in Bay City, near the [Community Center](#). Contact volleyball@perceptionsSV.org for additional information. For last minute announcements visit the [Perceptions Volleyball Forum](#).

Saturday, October 1st - AIDS Walk Sponsored by [BASIS](#), the first annual [Bay City/Saginaw/Midland AIDS Walk](#) will raise funds for HIV/AIDS programs in Midland, Bay, Saginaw, Huron, Sanilac and Tuscola Counties. The event will be held in Bay City's Veteran's Memorial Park.

Tuesday, October 4th – 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, October 5th - 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.

Friday, October 7th – Perceptions Outdoor Co-Ed Volleyball 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Playing at courts in Veteran's Memorial Park in Bay City, near the [Community Center](#). Contact volleyball@perceptionsSV.org for additional information. For last minute announcements visit the [Perceptions Volleyball Forum](#).

Friday, October 7th - "Friday Night Dinner" 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends on Friday nights for dinner at a local eatery. Each week we meet at a different restaurant for food, fun and conversation. An email is sent through our Yahoo Group every week to announce the week's venue. Read about previous dinners in the [Online Forum](#). If you're a registered Forum user you can also offer your review of a dinner or post suggestions for future venues. Sign up for our email list on [Yahoo Groups](#), email info@PerceptionsSV.org or call 989-891-1GAY.

Sunday, October 9th - Menopause the Musical 3:00 & 7:00 pm. [The Temple Theatre](#), Saginaw. The Underground Railroad is sponsoring a fundraiser performance of this wonderful, witty show. Ticket prices range from \$25 to \$100. Contact diedra@PerceptionsSV.org if you're interested in participating in any group social activity to coincide with the show.

Tuesday, October 11th - National Coming Out Day Every Oct. 11, thousands of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and allies celebrate [National Coming Out Day](#). They hold workshops, speak-outs, rallies and other kinds of events all aimed at showing the public that GLBT people are everywhere. The date marks the anniversary of the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights when half a million people participated in the the second such demonstration in our nation's capital.



Contact Us!

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