



PERCEPTIONS Newsletter

January/February 2006 Volume 5, Issue 1 PO Box 1525, Midland, MI 48641 989-891-1429

Judy Shepard to Visit SVSU in February

Vanessa Marr



Judy Shepard, one of the most visible activists of the post-Stonewall era, will present "Tragedy and The Consequences of Hate" at **7 p.m. Feb. 1 at Saginaw Valley State University's**

Performing Arts Theatre (inside Curtis Hall/ Groening Commons). Admission is free and open to the public.

The event is co-sponsored by the SVSU Gay-Straight Alliance and Perceptions.

Although Shepard never planned to become a champion of LGBT rights, fate placed her on the front lines in 1998 after her 21-year-old son, Matthew, was murdered in Laramie, Wyo. because he was gay. Shortly after the tragedy, Judy and her husband Dennis founded the Matthew Shepard Foundation, an

advocacy organization whose goal is to "replace hate with understanding, compassion and acceptance."

Through Judy's Eyes (From the Matthew Shepard Foundation Website):

"Matthew had an interest in politics and current news events. He was quite adept at understanding complex issues and was equally adept at expressing his opinions on these issues. He had such hopes for the future, his future. He was always anxious for the next step - the next stage of his life to begin. Every new step meant new challenges, new friends and new experiences. He knew that judging people before knowing them was the loss of an opportunity. He never understood why everyone didn't think that way. Matthew felt there could be nothing better on this earth than another friend."

January Membership Meeting Notes

This will be our Annual Meeting and will include the Election of Perceptions Board Members and the Financial Report presented by Treasurer Rob Cummings. It is scheduled for **Thursday, Jan. 26 at 7:00 pm.** at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland, 6220 Jefferson Avenue.

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Holiday Party and Auction Deemed a Success!

More than 130 guests gathered at the Montague Inn in Saginaw last month to not only celebrate the season, but also to raise money for a worthy cause: the 2006 AIDS Walk in Bay City. The evening's festivities were highlighted by a string quartet, raffle, silent auction, and energized live auction by Marty Wegner. The event generated over \$4,800.



Board members Beth Rakestraw and Rob Cummings enticing bidders during the live auction at the Montague Inn Dec. 16 (Photo courtesy of Jan Stevenson of *Between the Lines*).

Fourth Annual Valentine's Dance Set for Feb. 11

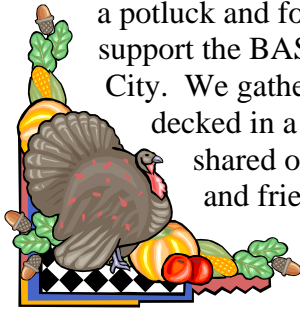
Don't forget to mark your calendars for this popular event. DJ Karla will return to make this another unforgettable night! The event is from 7:00 p.m. until midnight at the [Black Forest Brew Haus and Grill](#) (Meyer Room, lower level), 281 Heinlein Strasse, in lovely Frankenmuth. Tickets are only **\$20 for members / \$25 for non-members** and can be purchased from board members at Perceptions events or [online using Pay Pal or Credit Card](#).



Thanksgiving Potluck, Food Drive Foster Spirit of Gratitude

Kevin Appold

In November, roughly 25 Perceptions Members and Friends came together for a potluck and food drive to help support the BASIS pantry in Bay City. We gathered around tables decked in a fall motif and shared our favorite dishes and friendly conversation.



As is often tradition at

Thanksgiving among families, we took the opportunity to reflect on what we are thankful for.

Tom Brubaker stated, “The generosity of the organization toward the BASIS HIV/AIDS care clients because I get to see firsthand how much your generosity helps them!” We were all delighted to make a few trips out to Tom’s car to fill his trunk with items for the BASIS pantry.

One of our transgender friends stated, “I am thankful for people who have been accepting me for who I am instead of what they think I should be.” We learn so much from each other. We realize how strong we are by having transgender friends to help us all understand the struggles people face to gain acceptance, even among our GLBT community.

One member reminded us of the unique bonds many of us share from past relationships that have withstood the coming out process: “My daughters, my family & former wife & her husband.” What fantastic opportunities fate has dealt us to make connections outside of our GLBT community.

Family. Friends. Loved ones. This organization. Nothing defines a person better than understanding what they are thankful for.

2006 Membership Drive Update

Kevin Appold

The 2006 Membership Drive needs your help. Our goal this year is to have 30% more members than last year as the chart shows. However, we have only 17 people so far that have renewed their memberships for 2006. Look for membership forms in the mail and get them in before the January 26th meeting to take advantage of member voting privileges. Also, members get \$5 off the price of their ticket for our upcoming Valentine’s Dance. So help support your local GLBT organization by renewing your membership today.



PBuck\$ Program Expanded

Rob Cummings

The Board created PBuck\$ to recognize the significant contributions our members and friends make to the organization. In 2005, individuals received PBuck\$ for each board-designated activity in which they volunteered their time. PBuck\$ could be redeemed at the Holiday Party on auction items. Several members used their PBuck\$ to be top bidder on some really terrific auction items.

For 2006, the Board designated several more opportunities to earn and use PBuck\$. There will be three Adopt-a-Highway cleanups, two United Way Days of Caring, and the 2006 AIDS Walk, to name a few opportunities to earn some PBuck\$. And, PBuck\$ are no longer just for Holiday Party auction items, now PBuck\$ can be redeemed for discounts on Perceptions event tickets and t-shirts.

Also, you don't have to wait to get your PBuck\$! After each designated event, a Board member or event organizer will hand you the PBuck\$ you earned right then and there. You can redeem them whenever you want for Perceptions events and merchandise.

For those with a current PBuck\$ balance, you will receive a certificate via email or snail mail if we don't have your email address for your balance.

So, c'mon and spend some time volunteering for Perceptions! Not only will it make you feel good – you'll also earn some well-deserved discounts.



Details, details, details...

- *PBuck\$ are valid for one year after issue.*
- *Expired PBuck\$ will not be honored. PBuck\$ are not redeemable for cash, have no cash value and may only be redeemed by the individual named on the PBuck\$.*
- *PBuck\$ are not transferable and may only be redeemed by the individual named on the certificate for his/her own benefit.*
- *Perceptions Board members are not eligible to earn PBuck\$ but may redeem PBuck\$ accrued before assuming a board role.*
- *PBuck\$ are not redeemable for discounts on memberships.*
- *The PBuck\$ program continues at the discretion of the Board and may be rescinded or modified by said Board.*
- *The Perceptions Board reserves the right to designate which events PBuck\$ may be earned and which events and merchandise for which PBuck\$ may be redeemed.*
- *Perceptions will not record or track PBuck\$ issued, so the risk of loss is on the recipient. Sorry, but lost PBuck\$ will not be replaced.*

January Planning Session Highlights Goals for 2006

Beth Rakestraw

The Perceptions Board of Trustees met for a planning meeting Saturday January 8 at Zauel Memorial Library. Because of the success of our fundraising efforts at the Montague Holiday Party, we were able to revise our 2006 budget in a positive direction, which will be among the financial reports presented to members and friends at the January General Meeting.

Trustees also set the dates for most of our events through the year, adding a

few more community service-oriented events. The board interviewed a candidate who is interested in pursuing a business liaison role and who will be presented to the membership for a vote at the January General Meeting.

Finally, we discussed the review of Perceptions' 501 (c) 3 tax-exempt status by the IRS that will take place in 2007 and what the organization should do in order to ensure we maintain our status.

Perceptions Wish List: Help Us Make Each One Come True!

Beth Rakestraw



If the Perceptions Board of Trustees could fill up its own hope chest, this is what we would desire from the entire

Perceptions community:

- Informational brochures about subjects of interest to the GLBT community that can be shared with our constituents and help us fulfill our role as an educational organization
- Informational brochures about the GLBT community that can be used to educate others about GLBT lives and experiences
- Two volunteer hosts, one for the Saginaw Meet N Greet, one for the Bay City Meet N Greet, who would serve as contact people for the event and help people keep informed
- Books of interest to the GLBT community for the beginnings of a library [and a Librarian --and storage space for the books!]
- A Pride Coordinator and volunteers for Pride events
- Hosts for Fourth of July, Halloween and other holiday parties

Calendar of Events

January 14 through April 2 - The AIDS Memorial Quilt Show 10 Sections (80 panels) will be on display in the galleries of the [Alden B. Dow Museum of Science and Art](#), Midland. Exhibit hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Sunday 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Admission: \$5.

Sunday, January 22nd - PFLAG Meeting 2:00 - 4:30 pm. Located at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6220 Jefferson, Midland. Guest speaker is Charles Lisee, who will present "The AIDS Memorial Quilt—A Local Perspective."

Thursday, January 26th - Perceptions Monthly Membership Meeting 7:00 pm. This will be our Annual Meeting and will include the Election of Perceptions Board Members and a Financial Report. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland, 6220 Jefferson Ave. For more information, contact [Perceptions](#).

Friday, January 27th and February 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th - 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](#) to be notified of future venues. If you don't have email access, call 989-891-1GAY.

Wednesday, February 1st - Judy Shepard 7:00 pm. Listen to [Judy Shepard's](#) *Tragedy and The Consequences of Hate* at [SVSU's](#) Performing Arts Theatre inside Curtis Hall / Groening Commons, 3400 Bay Rd, University Center, MI. Free Admission.

Wednesday, February 1st – Saginaw Meet & Greet CANCELLED Please join us at the Judy Shepard event at SVSU...Hope to see you there!

Thursday, February 2nd - The Hidden Reality of HIV/AIDS in Mid Michigan

7:00 pm. The Alden B. Dow Museum of Science & Art. A panel discussion including Dr. Joseph Inungu (CMU School of Health Sciences), Dr. Wendy Biggs (Midland Family Practice & Asst. Prof. at MSU College of Human Medicine), Tom Brubaker (HIV/AIDS Care Program Outreach Coordinator for BASIS), Q&A, and refreshments. Free Admission. Take time to view the AIDS quilt. Sponsored by the Midland County Medical Society.

Tuesday, February 7th – 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 8th - 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.

Saturday, February 11th - Perceptions Valentine's Dance 7:00 pm until Midnight. Our 4th Annual GLBT Valentine's Dance will be at the [Black Forest Brew Haus and Grill](#) in the Meyer Room on the lower level, 281 Heinlein Strasse, Frankenmuth. This is a smoke-free facility. Fabulous hors d'oeuvres will be served and a cash bar will be available. Tickets are only **\$20 for members / \$25 for non-members** and can be purchased from board members at Perceptions events or [online using Pay Pal or Credit Card](#). The number of tickets is limited so advanced purchases are strongly recommended.

Wednesday, February 15th - Bay City Meet & Greet 7:00 to 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. Quarter sandwiches and salads will be available; if attendees are interested in having additional 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.

Thursday, February 16th - John Corvino v. Glenn Stanton 7 p.m. Bovee University Center Auditorium at Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant. "Same-Sex Marriage - A Civil Debate" John Corvino of Wayne State University and Glen Stanton of Focus on the Family, two of the nation's leading and opposing voices on this issue, bring clarity and civility to this otherwise divisive topic. Free Admission.

Tuesday, February 21st – 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.

Saturday, February 25th – Perceptions & PFLAG Annual Chocolate Party 7:00 - 10:00 pm. 1609 5th St., Bay City. Donations accepted at the door. All proceeds from this fundraiser will benefit both organizations.

Mission statement:

Our mission is to provide superior educational programs, networking opportunities and services for the well being of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender individuals and their community.

Vision statement:

Perceptions is mid-Michigan's leading resource for enriching and empowering Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender individuals and their community.

Contact Us!



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