

Perceptions News

September/October 2006

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The 5th Annual Perceptions Holiday Party is Around the Corner!

--Rob Cummings

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Get your tickets because they are going fast! The Holiday Party will be Saturday, December 16, 2006 at the Black Forest Brew Haus in Frankenmuth. The event will feature a buffet dinner, live and silent auctions, and dancing. Tickets are \$25 in advance and can be purchased at Perceptions events or online at our website www.perceptionssv.org. Advanced tickets must be purchased prior to December 3. A limited amount of tickets will be available at the door for \$30. As a member benefit, members who paid 2006 dues prior to September 21, 2006 may request a \$10 refund on their ticket price at the door.

Why not make a weekend of it? When the dinner, auction and dancing are done you don't have to leave. Perceptions arranged with the Frankenmuth Motel and the Drury Inn to offer blocks of rooms at discounted rates. **The discounted rooms must be booked between October 16, and November 16.** To reserve your room, call:

Frankenmuth Motel
989-652-6171
www.frankenmuthmotel.com
Block is reserved under
"Perceptions"

Drury Inn
1-800-DRURY-INN
www.druryhotels.com
Block is reserved under
"Perceptions" or Joseph Nuncio

We have also arranged for the Frankenmuth Coach Company to provide shuttle service from the Black Forest to the hotels or to downtown Frankenmuth. Shuttle service fees are \$5 per person or \$10 for a group of three.

Keep checking the web site for updates including a list of donated auction items that will be available. We look forward to another great Holiday Party and hope to see you there!

Between The Lines Launches Online Voters Guide, www.PrideSourceVotes.com

With the November 7 election a little more than FIVE WEEKS away, Between The Lines has launched www.pridesourcevotes.com. The site is a comprehensive, easy to use tool, where you can download your ballot and take it to the polls on Election Day. It is now available online in an easy to download format. A simple zip-code entry at Pridesourcevotes.com takes you directly and quickly to your respective ballot choices. The entire print version of the guide is also available for download. BTL believes that this election is critical in helping us achieve full equality sooner than later here in our great state of Michigan and they are urging you to make every effort to immediately share this with as many friends as possible. Take a few minutes right now and let everyone you can know about this. Urge them to use this tool. Your personal efforts can make a difference between an important win and an all-to-narrow defeat. Our future depends upon our concerted efforts.

Holiday Party to Benefit Innerlink

--Rob Cummings

A portion of the auction proceeds will be used to benefit Innerlink, a program which provides emergency shelter care, crisis assessment, food and clothing, medical assistance and many, many other services to runaway and homeless youths in the area.

Since its inception in 1973, Innerlink has provided emergency shelter and crisis counseling for thousands of runaway youths. Today, Innerlink is one of only 29 programs in the state of Michigan providing services for runaway and homeless youth.

At the September general meeting, Johnnie Gibson, Director of Innerlink, provided these astonishing statistics from their 2005 fiscal year:

- 99% of the youth involved in the Innerlink emergency shelter were diverted from the juvenile justice system.
- The emergency shelter received nearly 2,000 crisis calls resulting in 824 families receiving direct case management intervention.
- 98% of the youths served remained in stable housing after 90 days.
- Innerlink provided 1,724 childcare days and 49 childcare days for infants.
- 73% of their clients are under 16 years old.

In addition to crisis intervention, Innerlink provides transitional housing to teens and teen mothers and their infants. Transitional housing provides teens with the skills they need to "make it on their own" and the teens can stay for up to two years while learning to be self-sufficient. Innerlink is one of only 13 programs to provide this service in Michigan 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Thank you for the Donations!

These people have donated goods or services for the Holiday Party so far:

1. Mary Philopulos; from Curl up and Dye, located at 4110 Wilder Road in Bay City. 686-2345
2. Stacey Christopherson; from Curl up and Dye located at 4110 Wilder Road in Bay City. 686-2345
3. Leah Miller; from Bambi's bottoms up located at 1742 East Genesee Avenue, Saginaw. 752-9679

Please help Perceptions thank these wonderful people by patronizing these businesses!

Thanks, Joe Nuncio

Deb Price Speaks at SVSU

Perceptions, PFLAG, YWCA of Bay County, and the SVSU Gay Straight Alliance worked together to sponsor a special National Coming Out Day event. They brought nationally syndicated columnist, Deb Price, to SVSU on October 7th to host "Turn the Anti-Gay Tide! - A 10-year plan to repeal Michigan's gay marriage ban." Funding for the event was provided by a grant from [The Arcus Foundation](#).

"This is going to be an historic night," Price said in her opening comments. She shared innovative ideas - including television commercials, billboards and newspaper ads to overcome the anti-gay tide. The audience felt her energy.



L to R: Eric Skibbe (SVSU GSA), Bob Malosh (PFLAG), Anita Bowden (YWCA), Leo Romo (event organizer), Deb Price, Alan Shinaver (Perceptions)

Perceptions Receives Cash Grants From GM's LGBT Employee Group and From Friends North

---Rob Cummings

The General Motors LGBT employee group, GM PLUS, has generously awarded a \$800 grant to Perceptions. We will use the grant to continue to bring educational and informative speakers to our general meetings and to fund special speaker events. In 2006, Perceptions will have hosted eight general meeting speakers. Recent special event speakers we sponsored include Deb Price, a nationally-regarded LGBT columnist; Judge Rudy Serra, a gay judge in Michigan court system; and Judy Shepard, founder of the Matthew Shepard Foundation.

Tom Hitchman from GM PLUS will present the award to the organization at a future meeting. We look forward to presenting even more great speakers in 2007 and we thank General Motors and its LGBT employees for supporting us.

In September, Perceptions also received a cash award of \$650 from Friends North. Friends North requested \$500 from the grant to be used to establish the Scholarship Fund (see article p.4) and the remaining \$150 earmarked for the general operations of the organization.

Thanks to GM PLUS and Friends North for contributing to the success of our organization.

Pat Perceptions

Dear Pat,

First, I would like to say thank you --it's nice to have our own gay version of Dear Abby. I am curious about what to do in a work situation. Recently a co-worker from another area started what I consider flirting. When I take a break and she comes out for a break at the same time, she makes comments like, "I got lucky and finally get to share my break with you". I am not sure if she's flirting, nor do I know if she is gay. I hate to stereotype and say she has short fingernails, so she must be. I am out to some at work, but I'm not on a gay bandwagon. How I should handle this situation?

Thanks,
Clueless in Saginaw

Dear Clueless,

These situations come up often. That's why I'm a fan of wearing your colors, or tattooing the fact that you're gay across your forehead, but that would get you a seat on the bandwagon. Until that day comes there are things that can help. In the course of conversation there are clues that you can look for from her. If her pronouns consist of "them" and "they" when she's talking about her current or ex-lover, she might be gay. If she's wearing sensible shoes, she might be gay. If there's a U-Haul in the parking lot, she might be gay. And yes, if she has short fingernails, she might be gay. (As a disclaimer, I must say that none of these things could be true and she still might be gay.)

You could try talking about everyday things to see if you'd like her even if she weren't gay. If you don't like her as a person anyway, there's no point in going further. It does seem like she's at least curious. Why not be direct and come out to her and see what happens? Just be friendly about it. You're representing lesbians everywhere! Who knows? You could get a brand new toaster!

Pat Perceptions is here to answer your life questions. Contact Pat by email at Pat@PerceptionsSV.org (This advice column is intended for entertainment purposes only.)





What is the Rainbow House Project?

Rainbow House, a Habitat for Humanity of Huron Valley project, works to develop strong and supportive relationships within the diverse communities in Washtenaw County. They work together to provide a low-income family with affordable, quality housing. The lesbian, gay,



bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) community along with their friends and families finance and construct homes in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity of Huron Valley.

Building on this project began in June. When finished, the house will be home to a single mother with four children. Currently, interior work is stalled due to a funding shortfall: almost \$14,000 more is needed to reach the target goal of \$75,000.

For more information, to volunteer or to make a donation, visit www.rainbowhouseproject.org.

This is the 1st LGBT Habitat House to be built in Michigan and only the 2nd one in the country!

Perceptions Scholarship Fund

At the June and July membership meetings, there was some discussion about Perceptions establishing a scholarship fund. The idea of a scholarship fund was originally brought up as a possible beneficiary of our annual Charity Auction. While investigating community organizations that we could help support with the Charity Auction, the Charitable Giving Committee and your Board of Trustees came to the conclusion that the Scholarship Fund was a worthy endeavor but should not be the principle beneficiary of the Charity Auction. It should be treated as a separate, long-term project.

At the August Board Meeting, the Board of Trustees authorized the formation of a Scholarship Committee to explore fund-raising options and help to determine the best way to administer the fund. At the same time the Board authorized creation of an account to hold any donations we receive that are designated for the Scholarship Fund.

On behalf of Perceptions, Tim Atkinson wrote a grant application to the Board of Friends North, a GLBT organization that has served the Grand Traverse area for over 20 years. Friends North was in the process of dissolving and had announced plans to disburse its assets to other Michigan Not-For-Profit organizations serving the GLBT population. They were especially interested in providing "seed money" to help start new projects.

The Board of Friends North awarded Perceptions a total of \$650, with \$500 designated towards our new Scholarship Fund and an additional gift of \$150 for our general fund. Friends North made additional grants to The Thomas Judd Care Center (provides assistance to HIV patients in Traverse City), the Risk to Resilience Outreach Program (AIDS prevention services in Traverse City), and The Triangle Foundation. The Friends North Board also made arrangements to help another organization continue their Annual Bike Tour, which has provided a weekend of camping and outdoor activities for GLBT individuals and their straight friends for the last 15 years. Many thanks to the Board of Friends North (Gretchen, Harry, Nancy and Rosemary) for their generous support.

The Scholarship Committee will make recommendations to the Perceptions Board of Trustees for how we should determine eligibility for the scholarship, how the fund should be administered (establish an endowed fund at a community foundation versus paying cash to awardees from our own account), and what funding sources we should explore. After obtaining the Board's authorization of its recommendations, some Scholarship Committee members will also be needed to engage in fund raising. If you are interested in serving on the Scholarship Committee, send an email to Tim@PerceptionsSV.org with your available times to set up an initial committee meeting. The Scholarship Committee will also collect member input and provide updates via the Online Forum.

Perceptions Calendar Of Events

Tuesday, October 17th – 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 18th - 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.

Friday, October 20th - "Friday Night Dinner" 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends this week for a special Friends & Allies Friday Night Dinner at [Sullivan's Black Forest Brew Haus & Grill](#), 281 Heinlein Strasse, Frankenmuth. Perceptions Members are encouraged to invite an ally to dinner to show your appreciation for their support. If you plan to attend, please reply to Jim@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday. Sign up for our email list on [Yahoo Groups](#) to be notified of future venues.

Thursday, October 26th - Perceptions Monthly Membership Meeting 7:00 pm. The Perceptions speakers series is underwritten by a grant from the **General Motors LGBT Employee Resource Group**. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland, 6220 Jefferson Ave. For more information, contact [Perceptions](#).

Friday, October 27th - "Friday Night Dinner" 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends this week at **Mountain View Lounge** in Freeland. Follow dinner with a visit to the "*Village of the Living Dead*" Haunted House in St. Charles, if you dare. If you plan to attend, please reply to Jim@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday. Sign up for our email list to be notified of future venues.

Friday, October 27th - "Maestro & Martinis" 6:30 to 10:00 pm. The Mixx hosts a live & silent auction fundraiser for the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra at the Metro Grill/Mixx Nightclub, 115 N. Hamilton in Old Saginaw City...."it's a come-as-you-are-party - no dress code." Cost: \$25. Buy tickets at Macy's in Fashion Square Mall, the orchestra office at 901 S. Washington, the Metro Grill/Mixx and the Red Eye Coffeehouse.

Saturday, October 28th - Greg & Mike's Halloween Masquerade Party Again this year, Greg and Mike would like to invite all Perceptions Members & Friends to their annual Halloween Party at [503 S. Henry Street](#) in **Bay City**. 7:00 pm til ?? Wear a costume and bring a snack or dish to share. Donations to cover the cost of beer and cocktails are appreciated. If you plan to attend, [RSVP to Mike & Greg](#). If you need additional information, email them at BayCityBearCub@yahoo.com

Wednesday, November 1st - Saginaw Meet & Greet 7:00 - 9:00 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. [Bambi's](#) by Java Dave's, 4632 State Street, in the Green Acres Plaza.

Friday, November 3rd - "Friday Night Dinner" 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends each week at a different venue. Sign up for our email list to be notified of future venues.

Tuesday, November 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.

Tuesday, November 14th – Men's Discussion Group 7:00 to 8:30 pm. Zauel Memorial Library, 3100 Center Road, Saginaw Township. This gathering is intended as a discussion and informal support group for gay and bisexual men. The group will be facilitated by Thomas Brubaker. You may contact him at Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org for additional information or to let him know you'll attend. Light snacks will be provided. You may bring your own beverage into the library as long as the container has a cover or cap.

State-wide Events of Note



Saturday, October 21st - HRC Michigan Gala Dinner The 17th Annual Human Rights Campaign Michigan Gala dinner featuring **Alec Mapa**, Canadian actor & author will be held at the Royal Park Hotel, Grand Ballroom, 600 E. University Dr., Rochester, MI. VIP Reception at 5:30, Women's Reception featuring singer, **Barbara Payton**, at 5:30 pm. General Reception & Silent Auction at 6:30 pm. Dinner & Program at 7:30 pm. Regular Ticket \$175, VIP Reception & Ticket \$250. Tickets are on sale now at www.boxofficetickets.com/hrc

Saturday, October 21st - "The Death of Little Isben" This dynamic show, created and produced by [WakkaWakka Productions](http://WakkaWakkaProductions.com), is coming to Bay City direct from New York City as part of their international tour. *The Death of Little Isben* is a dark comedy about the poet and playwright Henrik Ibsen's life and inner turmoil, told through puppetry. The puppets are imaginative and unexpected works of art and their puppeteers blend their own acting to create an extraordinary theatrical experience. Tickets are \$25. Students \$20. There is an afterglow with the artists after the performance. Purchase tickets by calling the State Theater's box office at 989-892-2660 or online StateTheatreBayCity.com.

Saturday, October 21st - The Community's Halloween Party 9:00 pm. Members of [The Community](http://TheCommunity.org) invite you to a Halloween Party held at Arbors at Eagle Crest Club House, 5100 North Eagle Crest, Mount Pleasant. Come dressed as a celebrity. **21 and over only**. See www.thecommunitywebsite.org for more information.

Sunday, October 22nd - PFLAG Meeting 2:00 - 4:30 pm. Located at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6220 Jefferson, Midland.

Tuesday, November 7th - General Election As Americans go to the polls this November, we have our best opportunity in years to replace the worst of the anti-GLBT Congressional leadership with a fair-minded majority.



Friday, December 1st - World AIDS Day Started in 1988, [World AIDS Day](http://WorldAIDS.org) is not just about raising money, but also about increasing awareness, education and fighting prejudice. World AIDS Day is important in reminding people that HIV has not gone away, and that there are many things still to be done. The theme this year is **Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise**. "Keep the Promise" is an appeal to governments and policy makers to ensure they meet the targets they have agreed to in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

Note that anonymous and confidential HIV testing is available at The Hearth Home in Saginaw. Men who participate will receive a Meijer's gift certificate if they choose to be tested. Contact Ricardo Bowden at 989.753.9011 for further information.

Perceptions Website Update:

Many of you are aware that our website was hacked during the first week of October, taking out our web pages and PerceptionsSV.org email addresses. Most of the damage to the site has been repaired and most of its files have been restored. Our webmaster is seizing this opportunity to make some necessary improvements to build a better website, such as replacing the lost Forum content with a different kind of discussion space that is more spam proof and more resilient to online attack. Work is still in progress but please notify webmaster@PerceptionsSV.org of unresolved website or email issues.