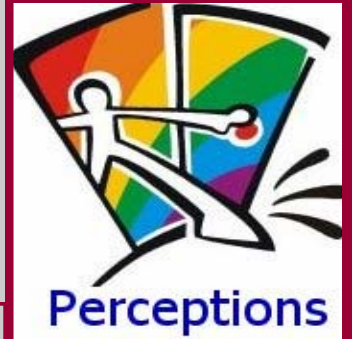


Perceptions Newsletter

January

Volume 7

Issue 1



Holiday Party a Great Success!

By Rob Cummings

A record crowd of 149 guests turned



Some of the live auction items on display.

out for the 5th annual Holiday Party. Guests browsed over 80 auction items and enjoyed a buffet dinner followed by a live auction and then danced until midnight with DJ Alias. As always, the

Black Forest and it's staff out did themselves. The event raised over \$2,300 for Perceptions and Innerlink.

Plans are already on the way for the 2007 party.

We'll be happy to put your holiday picture in the newsletter. Contact editor@perceptionssv.org and let us know!



This centerpiece was available for bid at Perceptions annual Holiday



Al and Tim looking good at the Holiday Party

2007 Membership Drive Continues -

Click [here](#) or go to our website www.perceptionssv.org and click on "Membership" at the left. Complete the on-line registration and then pay thru Pay Pal or send in your check.

Trustees to be Elected at January Meeting

Some members of the board desperately need a break and some terms have expired, so there are openings on the board. As a card carrying member of Perceptions, you have the honor of voting for the trustees at the January meeting held on the 25th, which is the typical 3rd Thursday. Meetings are from 7-9pm at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland located at 6220 Jefferson Avenue.



Plan now for the Valentines Day party!

This year's Valentines Day party will be held on Saturday, February 10th at The Mixx, located in Saginaw. Our private party will blend with the Mixx's Pink Party later in the evening, so there's sure to be a lot of people.

Whether you're single or not, the night is sure to be fun. Plan for dinner and dancing. The tickets will be available from board members for \$25.00 each with a \$5 discount for paid members. The discounts will be available by request at the event.

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What is dying? *I am standing on the sea shore. A ship sails to the morning breeze and starts for the ocean. She is an object of beauty and I stand watching her until at last she fades on the horizon, and someone at my side says, 'She is gone' Gone where? Gone from my sight, that is all. She is just as large in the masts, hull and spars as she was when I saw her, and just as able to bear her load of living freight to its destination. The diminished size and total loss of sight is in me, not in her. And just at the moment when someone at my side says, 'she is gone' there are others who are watching her coming, and other voices take up the glad shout, 'there she comes' - that is dying.* *Bishop Brent*

Ford was asked by lesbian columnist Deb Price if gay couples should receive equal benefits and replied, "I think they ought to be treated equally. Period."



"When people know better, they will do better"
Maya Angelou

TRIANGLE

Triangle Foundation to Open Office in Western Michigan

DETROIT – Michigan's largest GLBT anti-violence and advocacy organization is about to get bigger. The Triangle Foundation will expand its organizing, education and coalition building efforts to western Michigan with the opening of a Western Michigan Field Office in the Spring of 2007. The expansion is supported by a new grant from the Kalamazoo, Michigan-based Arcus Foundation.

"Unfortunately, anti-gay bias and discrimination don't end at the city limits of metro Detroit, nor is it confined within the walls of our state's Capitol. Anti-gay hate crimes, bias, harassment and discrimination are problems all over Michigan. With the help and generous support of our many individual donors around the state and the support of the Arcus Foundation, we are opening this office as our first step in meeting and fighting anti-GLBT actions where they happen - all over the state," said Jeffrey Montgomery, Triangle Foundation's executive director.

Lansing Human Rights Ordinance Passes

Michigan Equality's Board of Directors, the states largest member-based LGBT organization, proudly applauds the City of Lansing on the passage of the Lansing Human Rights ordinance.

"The time has come for Lansing to stand up and take its rightful place as a leader for Civil Rights in the region," says Derek Smiertka, Executive Director for Michigan Equality. "Our 37,000 members were excited to see the City of Ferndale voters overwhelmingly pass a similar measure this year, we are ecstatic that the City of Lansing has done the same through their council."

Recognizing the need for basic civil protections for all residents, Michigan Equality is proud to stand by other local organizations to defend the freedom of all Lansing citizens. Doug Meeks, President of Michigan Equality adds "freedom for a select few is not what this country was founded on." Meeks adds, "All citizens in Lansing and throughout the state of Michigan have a right not to be discriminated against; Michigan Equality is prepared to stand with the Lansing City Council and other local organizations fighting to ensure equality for all citizens in Lansing."

Second Date U-Haul (a series)

By Tana Michaels

When a friend of mine announced recently that a woman she had met in person only once, was going to be moving here from Florida, I thought she must be joking. After all, everyone knows



that on page 416 of the Lesbian Manual, the reference to the second-date-U-Haul was only jokingly referring to the speed at which lesbian women can pair up. It's near the

section that tells us that break-ups happen in the spring and coupling happens in the winter. We've all seen that the number of couples increase in direct relation to the drop in temperatures. I've often wondered how that worked in southern climates, but I digress.

It began, as these things do, as a chat meeting. Let's call them Starstruck and Dazzling. They both chatted in the same chat room and liked what each other had to type. The dialogue is immediate and there are others in the room typing away as well. They spent some time innocently reading one another site unseen, voice unheard, mannerisms unviewed, morning breath unsnorked, kids unknown....KIDS! wait, that's later.

Following this innocence comes the Private Message (PM). PM is where someone can type to you while in a chat room, but no one else can see what the two of you are typing. Without other eyes reading, all kinds of knowledge can be imparted upon your PM recipient, including your real name, that you wouldn't necessarily want everyone in the room to read.

The PM is usually where vital statistics are exchanged. Your name is one of them. Also on the list might be how long you've been single, or

coupled, what your living situation is and generally getting to know one another on a more personal level. Pictures are usually exchanged via the email address that you just garnered from your interaction. If you haven't lost all interest in the person, because of some fatal flaw like they're a brain in a jar, wired for thought transfer, to the keyboard while their Dr Frankenstein decides which chat rooms they are allowed into, the next obvious step for the hopeful is to exchange phone numbers.

Now the interested parties are on the phone with one another marveling about how the voices don't match what was attributed to them when they were unheard. The same happened when pictures were exchanged and will be discussed again now. It's at this stage that they discover they have many things in common. Their bond deepens as they discover they're both lesbians, they both love animals, hate snakes and blue is their favorite color. They have been looking for each other and have finally found one another. Thank goodness there are computers and chat rooms in cyber space, or they would've gone on with their lives never having known one another!

Soon, like the beginning of all love relationships, Starstruck and Dazzling can't get enough of one another and can't get off the phone. Marathon phone calls ensue where they learn even more intimate details of one another and enjoy the understanding and empathy of someone who truly understands. Starstruck and Dazzling are in love. (Continued on page10)

From The Saginaw News, Dec 8, 2006

A 49-year old Jackson man was sentenced to between 16 months and 90 months in prison for attacking his former wife and stomping her kittens to death in a drunken rage.

(Editor's note: Shouldn't it also be newsworthy that she had kittens? Of course he was angry. She'd been stepping out with Tabby behind his back!)

Chocolate Party Cancelled?



Your help is needed this year to host the chocolate party. Contact Joe@perceptionsSV.org and volunteer to have the party this year!

Special Note!

Change in venue for the Midland M & G

Midland Meet & Greet will be held Wednesday, February 14, at the Riverside in Freeland, from 6:30–8:30.

And they don't want us to marry...

Updated: 11:15 p.m. ET Dec 5, 2006

ST. LOUIS - A St. Louis woman shot her husband to death after he gave her a can of warm beer, police said.

The shooting happened Sunday. Names have not been released. The woman was taken into custody.

The wife allegedly admitted shooting her husband, who was about 70 years old, in the kitchen of their home. The man was shot four or five times in the chest after giving his wife a can of warm Stag beer.

NY Bd Of Health Rejects Transsexual ID Proposal

by 365Gay.com News center Staff Posted: December 5, 2006 5:00 pm ET

(New York City) The New York City Board of Health voted Tuesday to turn down a measure that would have allowed transgender men and women to amend their birth certificates without requiring that they undergo sex reassignment surgery.

The unanimous vote came despite a strong recommendation from its own staff and four years of consultation by an eight-member panel of transgender experts and vital records offices across the country.

Under the proposal a person requesting the change in documentation would have to provide affidavits from a doctor and a mental health professional documenting the reason for the change and asserting that the proposed change would be permanent. Applicants also would have to have changed their name and be able to prove that they had lived in their corrected gender for at least two years.

In rejecting the plan transsexuals will continue to have completed gender reassignment surgery before their birth certificates could be altered.

The city's health commissioner says officials need to look more carefully at the issue. One concern is whether it would conflict with federal identity document rules being developed.

Transgender people are estimated to number in the tens of thousands in New York City and face severe and pervasive discrimination as a result of their inability to obtain identification, including birth certificates, that matches the gender in which they live said Michael Silverman, Executive Director of the Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund.

Silverman said that efforts to secure employment, travel and even do mundane tasks like enter office buildings are fraught with difficulty for transgender people whose identification does not match their gender presentation.

"The proposal recognized the reality of transgender people's lives and the severe and pervasive discrimination that they experience on a day-to-day basis," said Silverman.

"For many transgender people, sex reassignment surgery is a financial impossibility. For others, it's medically inappropriate. And still others choose not to undergo surgery for a variety of personal reasons"

Silverman said his organization will press forward with the trans community's demand "for a sensible birth certificate policy that allows all transgender people – and not just those who can afford to access expensive health care – to obtain birth certificates that reflect who they are."



News Headlines

POLITICS

<http://365gay.com/Newscon06/12/122506calif.htm>

Gay Marriage Supporters Vow To Defeat Mass. Marriage Ban Amendment

(Boston, Massachusetts) Supporters of same-sex marriage handed a defeat in the legislature Tuesday vowed on Wednesday that they are far from throwing in the towel - and helping lead the attack on a proposed amendment to ban gay weddings is the state's new governor. <http://365gay.com/Newscon07/01/010307massfolo.htm>

New Jersey lawmakers pass transgender rights bill

SUMMARY: The New Jersey state Assembly on Thursday passed a bill that is poised to make the Garden State the ninth in the nation to outlaw discrimination based on gender identity or expression. the state will join California, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, New Mexico and Rhode Island in legislating statewide transgender-inclusive nondiscrimination protections.

New Jersey Civil Unions Bill Signed Into Law

(Trenton, New Jersey) Same-sex couples in New Jersey will be able to enter civil unions beginning Feb. 19 under legislation signed Thursday by Gov. Jon Corzine. It offers couples who register most state benefits and protections currently available to opposite-sex couples, including the right to health insurance through a partner's employer, but it does not provide any of the benefits of marriage under federal law, and it still could cost same-sex couples more than marriage couples for health insurance.

Brownback: Re-question judge on gay marriage

SUMMARY: Sen. Sam Brownback, who wants to champion social conservatives in the presidential race, said Tuesday he wants a Senate panel to re-question a judicial nominee who attended a same-sex union ceremony.

Story: <http://www.planetout.com/news/article/html/2006/12/19/3>

Governor's Panel Calls For Civil Unions In Oregon

(Washington) A task force appointed by Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski (D) is recommending the state allow same-sex couples to have civil unions and calls for the passage of legislation to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation.

8 New LGBT Laws Go Into Effect Next Week In Calif.

(Sacramento California) A record eight new laws affecting California's LGBT community will go into effect on January first, including one that requires companies contracting with the state to provide employees with domestic partners the same benefits given to employees with spouses.

Former Defense Secretary Joins Call For End To DADT

(Washington) Former Secretary of Defense William Cohen is the latest high profile person to call for an end to the ban on gays serving openly in the military. <http://365gay.com/Newscon07/01/010307military.htm>

RELIGION



Pope: Gay Relationships 'Dismal' During the Christmas speech to priests in Rome, the Pope said that those who support gay unions endorse "dismal theories" that strip all relevance from the masculinity and femininity of the human being as though it were a purely biological issue."

Gay Sex Wrong, Gay Rabbis, Commitment Ceremonies OK Conservative Jews Decide

(New York City) Conservative Judaism has decided to permit the ordination of openly gay rabbis and allow congregations to hold commitment ceremonies for same-sex couples, but at the same time upheld the traditional belief that homosexuality is wrong.

Haggard's Church Begins Hunt For Other 'Wrongdoers'

(Colorado Springs, Colorado) The church of disgraced pastor Ted Haggard is encouraging its members to blow the whistle on others in the mega church who have committed 'sexual indiscretions' or other misdeeds. <http://365gay.com:80/Newscon06/12/121806haggard.htm>

Another Colorado Anti-Gay Pastor Outed

(Denver, Colorado) The senior pastor of a second Colorado mega church has resigned following a phone call to the church outing him. Barnes preached that homosexuality is a sin, but unlike Haggard neither he nor his church took a stand on a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage that was approved by voters last month. ...one of the biggest churches in the state. Barnes said he became a Christian at age 17 and felt it would help him give up homosexuality, but the feelings never went away.

"I have struggled with homosexuality since I was a 5-year-old boy," Barnes said in the video according to the Denver Post which was allowed to view the tape.

".. I can't tell you the number of nights I have cried myself to sleep, begging God to take this away."

Christian Coalition

Tuesday, November 28, 2006



The president-elect of the Christian Coalition of America has declined the job, saying the organization wouldn't let him expand its agenda beyond opposing abortion and same-sex marriage. The Rev. Joel Hunter, who was scheduled to take over the socially conservative group in January from Roberta Combs, said he had hoped to focus on issues such as poverty and the environment.

"These are issues that Jesus would want us to care about," said Hunter, a senior pastor at Northland Church in Longwood, Fla.

Hunter announced his decision not to take the job during an organization board meeting Nov. 21. A statement issued by the group said Hunter left because of "differences in philosophy and vision." Hunter said he was not asked to leave.

"They pretty much said, 'These issues are fine, but they're not our issues, that's not our base,'"

Hunter said.

His resignation is the latest setback for the once-powerful group.

The Christian Coalition, founded in 1989 by religious broadcaster Pat Robertson, became one of the nation's most powerful conservative groups during the 1990s, but it has faced complaints in recent years about its finances, leadership and plans to veer into nontraditional policy areas. The group claims more than 2 million members. (AP)

World News

South Africa legalizes gay marriage

SUMMARY: With the signing of a new law, South Africa on Thursday became the first country in Africa and the fifth in the world to legalize same-sex marriages.

Nigeria considers same-sex marriage ban By Katharine Houeild

AGOS, Nigeria -- Lawmakers in Nigeria are debating a bill that would ban same-sex marriage and any form of association among gays, even sharing a meal at a restaurant.

Engaging in homosexual acts is already illegal in Nigeria, with those convicted facing jail terms in the mainly Christian south and execution in the mainly Muslim north.

Other activities prohibited under the proposed law include belonging to gay clubs or reading books, watching films or accessing Internet sites that "promote" homosexuality.

South Africa legalized gay marriages last month in fiercely debated legislation, making it the only country on the continent to do so. But the impetus was more a desire to stamp out all forms of discrimination in a reaction to apartheid than tolerance of gays, who are subject to prejudice and violence in South Africa.

Administration Gets Failing Grade In World AIDS Day Report Card

(Washington) The Bush administration and the Republican-controlled Congress for the third year in a row have received a failing grade from an LGBT civil rights organization in the government's response to the global HIV/AIDS pandemic.

HRC graded the administration and Congress in four key areas: prevention, care and treatment, research and global AIDS. This year the report card included a new category evaluating efforts to combat AIDS-related discrimination.

The 2006 report card gives the government and F for prevention, a D for care and treatment, F for research, C for its global response and an F for ending AIDS related discrimination. Story: <http://365gay.com/Newscon06/11/113006aidsDay.htm>

Vatican Blasts Italian Government Over Civil Partner Plan by 365Gay.com

(Vatican City) Italy's left is seeking to "eradicate" the traditional family with its plan for a law that would give unmarried couples, including gays, some of the same rights as married couples, the Vatican newspaper said on the weekend.

Israel's Supreme Court ordered the government Tuesday to recognize same-sex marriages performed abroad.



Dazzling flies from Florida to Michigan to spend 2 days and 1 night with Starstruck... that's a long first date!

Midland Meet & Greet Venue has changed.

We'll begin meeting at the Riverside on Midland Rd. in Freeland from 6:30-8:30.

Close enough for Saginaw folks to join in also.

2nd Date U-Haul *continued from page 5*

The next obvious step is to meet. Obviously. They've been chatting in the same rooms off and on for 3 years. They've begun to feel something different about each other for a bit over a month. It's time to see what it'll be like in the same room together. In r/l. That's real life.

Dazzling flies from Florida to Michigan to spend 2 days and 1 night with Starstruck. Eureka! It all fits! Good thing, because that's a long first date. They are truly lucky lesbians. "It's as if a missing piece to my puzzle was there in her. All my fears left me and the only thing that was important was being with her." said Starstruck.

Four days later Dazzling decides to move to Michigan. When she arrives, it'll literally be their second date.

Dazzling brings with her 3 of her 4 children, the family dog, all the furniture and of course, the U-Haul. She leaves behind her 4th child, who'll stay with relatives, 2 grandchildren, a 2500 square foot house and 3 ferrets.

Finances don't permit Dazzling and Starstruck to live apart. Dazzling will move in with Starstruck and start a new life here. Starstruck has lived alone for a few years with her fish that don't make much noise, so they don't interfere with her third shift sleeping schedule. She knows the 3 girls might be a bit noisier than her tropical fish. She's willing to sacrifice to have Dazzling with her. She moved out her living room furniture to her mother's and cleaned out all the closets in the rooms where the girls will now live. The only thing left to do is to fly down to Florida, load up the truck and drive her new family back to Michigan.

This column will be a series. We'll keep up with the transition as Dazzling and Starstruck get used to being with each other in r/l (real life). We'll follow their adjustments in upcoming newsletters. Stay tuned...

Current Events

Tuesday, January 16th – 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, January 17th - 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, . 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 ready for pick up at Gypsies.

Current Events *continued*

Wednesday, January 17th - "Menopause the Musical" After a string of sold-out shows at the Temple in 2005, *Menopause The Musical* returns for another run with live performances at 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$26, \$32, and \$40, and are expected to sell out quickly, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting the Underground Railroad. Tickets can be purchased online at <http://www.templetheatre.com/pages/tickets.html>, by calling 877-754-SHOW, or at the Temple Theatre Box Office.

Friday, January 19th - "Friday Night Dinner" 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends each week at a different venue. Sign up for our email list on [Yahoo Groups](#) to be notified of future venues.

Thursday, January 25th - Perceptions Monthly Membership Meeting 7:00 pm. Annual election of candidates for the Board of Trustees. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland, 6220 Jefferson Ave. For more information, contact [Perceptions](#).

Friday, January 26th - "Friday Night Dinner" 7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends each week at a different venue. Sign up for our email list on [Yahoo Groups](#) to be notified of future venues.

Ongoing Programs:

Saginaw Meet & Greet - 1st Wednesday of every month.

Bay City Meet & Greet 3rd Wednesday of every month.

Friday Night Dinner.

The **Womyn's Circle** meets 7:30-9:00PM on the first and third Tuesday of each month at the YWCA located at 3405 Midland Rd. in Bay City.

Friday, January 26th - Melissa Ferrick Concert Out lesbian songwriter and rocker, [Melissa Ferrick](#), performs at [Club Pink](#), 19910 Hoover, Detroit, 313-521-8433. Doors open at 8:00 pm, show starts at 10:00 pm. Tickets are on sale now. Download or print [flyer](#).

January 26th & 27th - "And the Winner



Is..." [Out Loud Chorus](#), Washtenaw

County's Gay Mixed Chorus, presents "And the Winner Is... A Review of Oscar's Best" in the Towsley Auditorium, Morris Lawrence Building, Washtenaw Community College at 8:00 pm both evenings. Tickets are \$12 in advance or \$15 at the door. Tickets may be purchased [online](#) or at Common Language Bookstore.

Sunday, January 28th - PFLAG Meeting 2:00 -



4:30 pm. The meeting takes place at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, [6220](#)

[Jefferson Ave.](#), Midland.

Tuesday, January 30th – Men's Discussion Group

7:00 to 8:30 pm. Zael 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.

*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

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*Mid-Michigan's leading resource
for enriching and empowering
GLBT individuals and their
community*

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Classifieds

Help Wanted

Reporters Wanted

No experience necessary.
Contact: editor@perceptionsSV.org

Columnists Wanted

Pick your topic, or have one assigned.
No experience necessary.
Contact: editor@perceptionsSV.org

Interviewers Wanted

Someone needed to do profiles.
No experience necessary.
Contact: editor@perceptionsSV.org

Opinionated People Wanted

Let your thoughts be known. Tell
us what you think.
Contact: editor@perceptionsSV.org

Entertainment Editor Wanted

No experience necessary.
Contact: editor@perceptionsSV.org

Humor Editor Wanted

So, you think you're funny?
Good! We need you.
Contact: editor@perceptionsSV.org

Assistant Editor Wanted

Contact: editor@perceptionsSV.org

Poet Wanted

Contact: editor@perceptionsSV.org

From the Editor's Desk

A new year and a new beginning for the newsletter. Last year, the membership and board got together and decided to be a more member driven organization. I would like the newsletter to reflect this as well.

If you have an idea, an article, a poem, just something on your mind, Consider sending it to the newsletter to share with the community.

We all have different perceptions about what is happening around us and how we are affected as members of the GLBT community. What are yours?

I'd also like your opinions about what you'd like to see in future Newsletters. The 'Dear Pat' column has been popular and hopefully will return soon. Write to Pat at, Pat@PerceptionsSV.org. Ideally, every entry in the newsletter will come from the membership.

There aren't any long term obligations. If you want to submit every month, or just once it's up to you. Feel free to write anytime regarding ideas, and submissions, or bypass everything and just send me your submissions. I'll try to publish as many as I can.

It's up to you whether you want to use your real name, a pseudonym, or write as the famous author, Anonymous.

I wish everyone love, friendship, and support for their journeys in the new year!

Tana
Editor Perceptions Newsletter

You may write to me at:
editor@perceptionsSV.org