

Perceptions

Saginaw Valley

www.PerceptionsSV.org

Serving the Tri-City area LGBT Community



February 2009

“...the God-Given Promise That All are Equal” - President Barack Obama



One need only look at the website of our new president,

www.whitehouse.gov/agenda/civil_rights/, to

know that there's a new sheriff in town. The webpage

contains the

heading, "Support for the LGBT community," and has a list of actions toward that end. It includes an earlier quote from Obama that specifically speaks to the LGBT community, "While we have come a long way since the Stonewall riots in 1969, we still have a lot of work to do. Too often, the issue of LGBT rights is exploited by those seeking to divide us. But at its core, this issue is about who we are as Americans. It's about whether this nation is going to live up to its founding promise of equality by treating all its citizens with dignity and respect." -- Barack Obama, June 1, 2007

President Obama plans to expand hate crime statutes; fight workplace discriminations that include sexual orientation and gender identity. He supports "full civil unions and federal rights for LGBT couples." *Federal rights.* He's going to

work with military leaders to repeal Don't Ask-Don't Tell. Finally, he'll promote AIDS prevention.

His cabinet choices also reflect a more friendly attitude toward the LGBT community. He reportedly has chosen more openly gay and lesbian people than any other president, nine at last count. You can read their names and appointments here:

<http://hopeandpolitics.blogspot.com/2009/01/obamas-lesbian-and-gay-scorecard.html>

This president is not afraid of the word, "gay."

As Obama stated in his victory speech, "It's the answer spoken by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, black, white, Latino, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and not disabled - Americans who sent a message to the world that we have never been a collection of Red States and Blue States: we are, and always will be, the United States of America."

The President's inaugural address spoke again of unity. "On this day," he said, "we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord."

Unity? Equality? Yes we can? We have hope!

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

Perceptions is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. Your contributions to Perceptions which exceed the minimum amount to qualify for membership are tax deductible.

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.

Robinson's Inaugural Prayer Unseen



The first openly gay Bishop of the Episcopal Church and the Washington Gay Men's Chorus were included in the opening concert for Obama's inauguration, but they likely will be largely unnoticed by most Americans.

The Reverend Gene Robinson's invocation was delivered minutes before HBO began a live broadcast of the "We Are One" concert from the Lincoln Memorial. Problems with microphones and speakers rendered his speech mostly inaudible to much of the live audience.

The Washington DC Gay Men's Chorus backed up Josh Groban and Heather Headley when they sang "My Country Tis of Thee." The Chorus was not announced when they took the stage and were not credited on screen in the HBO broadcast.

Obama did specifically mention gay Americans in his remarks. "What gives me the greatest hope of all is ... you — Americans of every race and region and station who came here because you believe in what this country can be and because you want to help us get there. It is the same thing that gave me hope from the day we began this campaign for the presidency nearly two years ago; a belief that if we could just recognize ourselves in one another and bring everybody together — Democrats, Republicans and Independents; Latino, Asian and Native American; black and white, gay and straight, disabled and not — then not only would we restore hope and opportunity in places that yearned for both, but maybe, just maybe, we might perfect our union in the process."

Watch the prayer here: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/01/19/exclusion-of-gay-bishop-f_n_159114.html

LGBT Band at the Inauguration

For those of you who wanted to see a clip of the history making LGBT band at President Obama's inauguration, click on the link below. The video was captured from C-Span. Network stations either cut to commercial, or chatted over their performance.

Nearly 1,400 bands applied to appear in the parade and fewer than 50 were selected.

This is the first time that an LGBT group was represented in a Presidential Inaugural Parade.

http://www.tippytopple.com/LGBA_Inauguration.mp4



2009 Letter from the Chair

Alan Shinaver



As we move forward into the new year we can look forward to changes: a new leader for our country, new goals and outlooks; a new focus. As an organization Perceptions has accomplished much in 2008, and will, with a renewed vision, accomplish more in 2009. Over the years we have explored and developed the tried and true, we challenged ourselves to give more, offer more, accomplish more, and have strived to meet the varied and changing needs of our members. As a relatively small organization with a large constituency it is impossible to address everyone's desires, each individual's view of what we should be, or to even completely envision what the common needs of the community we serve are. At times it has been a daunting and exhausting task, but always worth the effort and time should even one member find benefit.

The Board of Trustees for the 2009 year has five newly elected members who will undoubtedly bring new energy, enthusiasm, caring and vigor to the organization. For those who have relinquished or served out their term, I express my deepest gratitude and admiration for a job well done. Serving this community has called for a generosity of self, manifesting in the forms of time, energy, patience and finance; all of which are precious gifts not to be taken for granted.

I eagerly look forward to what is to come; both to our country and to our organization. President Obama's platform promises to usher in a new era of hope for America with his vision of equality, of service to one another, and of strength of community. In his inaugural speech he spoke of the need for taking responsibility for ourselves, our ideas and our world community. As members of Perceptions we also need to realize our responsibility to one another in order to promote and nurture growth, health, and vitality of our whole community. We owe one another the decency of caring about, and for, one another. As an organization, Perceptions has consistently been here for its members. We may not have been able to address each individual's desire or need, but have and will continue to strive to do our best to address the needs of the community. Your gifts, whatever they may be, are valuable to this organization and its vitality. Volunteer, serve, donate, or participate. Perceptions is your organization.

Corvino/Stanton Debate Gay Marriage at SVSU



Wayne State University philosophy professor, John Corvino, will debate Focus on the Family's Glenn Stanton at SVSU's Malcolm Field Auditorium, February 3, at 7pm. These two have met before, having debated the issue for years, never changing each other's minds, but perhaps changing minds of the hundreds, or thousands who have seen them traverse the battle ground of whether gay marriage should be part of our society.

Corvino has released a DVD, "What's Morally Wrong with Homosexuality," (www.gaymoralist.com) filmed during one of his lectures. He has lectured and written extensively about LGBT rights since the early 1990's.

Stanton is the research fellow for global family formation at Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs. He has written many books including, "Why Marriage Matters: Reasons to believe in marriage in postmodern society."

This should be an interesting and informative debate.

Perceptions Board of Trustees

See if you can find all our board members.

For Web users: To print out the puzzle, right click on it, select Print, then in the box that comes up, click on 'Current Page', then 'OK'

Have Fun!

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To contact our board with thoughts or suggestions, send an email to PBoard@PerceptionsSV.org and let us know what you're thinking.

Perceptions mailing list on [Yahoo Groups](#) has 500 subscribers!
 Don't be left out. Subscribe now!
PerceptionsSV-subscribe@yahoogroups.com





Current Events

February 4, Wed - Saginaw Meet & Greet
7:00 - 9:00 pm. *New location!* **Magic Bean Cafe, 5789 State Street, Saginaw.** An informal gathering for the Tri-Cities' GLBT community. All are welcome. Meet your old friends and make some new ones. Enjoys hot and cold drinks in a non-smoking environment.

February 6, Friday Night Dinner
Fuzzy's, 1924 Court St., Saginaw. Join Perceptions members and friends this week. If you plan to attend, please reply to Jim@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday.

February 11, Wed. - Freeland Meet & Greet
6:00 to 8:00 pm. Riverside Restaurant, 8295 Midland Road (M-47), Freeland. Private room. Famous homemade pies. This event will repeat on the second Wednesday of each month.

February 11, Wed. - Perceptions Transgender Group 6:00 pm. The Mixx / Metro Grille, 115 N. Hamilton St., Saginaw, the group offers an informal gathering, taking a more 'light-hearted' approach to allow transgenders in the Tri-City area an opportunity to connect with one another for socializing and support. If you have any questions, contact Rebecca at Rebecca@PerceptionsSV.org. This event will repeat on the second Wednesday of each month.

February 13, Friday Night Dinner
Café American, 1525 Washington St., Midland. Join Perceptions members and friends this week. If you plan to attend, please reply to Jim@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday.

February 17, Tues - Men's Discussion Group
7:00 - 8:30 pm. Zael Memorial Library, 3100 N. Center Rd., Saginaw. Discussion and informal support for gay and bisexual men. The group will be facilitated by Thomas Brubaker. You may contact him at Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org

February 19, Thursday - Perceptions General Membership Meeting 7 - 9pm. St. John Episcopal Church, 123 N. Michigan Ave., Saginaw. **Tom Trombley** to speak. See page 8. All are welcome!

February 20, Friday Night Dinner 7pm. Rattlesnake Rick's, 708 Saginaw St., Bay City. Join Perceptions members and friends this week. If you plan to attend, please reply to Jim@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday

February 27, Friday Night Dinner 7pm
Levi's, 5800 Brockway Rd., Saginaw. Join Perceptions members and friends this week. If you plan to attend, please reply to Jim@PerceptionsSV.org by 3:00 pm Friday.

Be informed about upcoming events
Simply send a blank email to:
PerceptionsSV-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Calendar page



Scholarship Endowed

Tim A



The scholarship committee is very pleased to announce that we have met the requirement of raising \$10,000 to have our scholarship fully endowed at the [Saginaw Community Foundation](#). Under current tax laws, once a fund is opened, scholarship organizers are allowed 3 years to contribute a minimum of \$10,000. We opened our endowment fund late in 2007 so that donors could take advantage of tax incentives for the 2007 tax year. A total of \$3,400 was deposited the first year, including accumulated money that Perceptions had earmarked for the Scholarship. In 2008, a total of \$6,448 was deposited. The 2008 deposits include funds raised at both the 2007 and 2008 Holiday Party & Charity Auctions plus individual contributions. And pushing us over the \$10,000 mark in 2009 is the 3-to-1 matching funds that were authorized by the Board for individual donations made between October 1 and December 31, 2008. The fund received more than \$1,000 from individual donors during that period, maxing out our \$3,000 in matching funds that were available.

We would like to acknowledge all of the donors who contributed directly to the Scholarship Fund in 2008:

Anonymous Donors
Camp Out Michigan
Carl Ilbrink
PFLAG Tri-Cities
Darrell Sheets
Kristi Turner

Floyd Andrick
Jay & Leisa Crane
Charles F. Laundra
David Pilon
Alan L. Shinaver

Tim Atkinson
Paul Hayes
Mike Mercer
Gretchen Sauvage
Kay Sural

We hope that we are able to continue to build the scholarship's endowment fund so that larger scholarships, or even multiple scholarships, can be awarded in future years. But we are very happy to have reached this milestone so quickly (only 15 months!). The clock is no longer running and our organization can focus its resources on other projects as needed.

The deadline for applying for the 2009 Scholarship is February 1st. The scholarship committee could use a couple of volunteers to help determine this year's winner. Members of our committee are asked to score the essay that each applicant must submit. Our scores are combined with scores from the Saginaw Community Foundation's committee to determine the winner. The scholarship will be presented to the winner at an awards ceremony in May. For more information about the scholarship, please contact Tim@PerceptionsSV.org or call 989-891-1429.

A Spot of Light from [Rev. Kathy VanBuskirk](#)

February is known as the month of celebrating love. I think the greatest love and the love that is truly required for us all to be happy is widespread unconditional love. I believe that this love does not judge. It sees beauty in all and admires and searches to understand differences while not criticizing them. This, I think, is what people of all ethnicities require. It is my belief that we all need to be loved unconditionally for who we truly are and not asked to be anything different than who or what we truly are.



In my opinion, our creator put the ability for this unconditional love within each and everyone of us. It is there. We need to look beyond the differences and not merely tolerate them, but truly see the beauty in those differences and enjoy this wonderful rainbow that exists in the diversity of the people of the world.

I challenge you not only to seek acceptance for yourself but to offer that acceptance to everyone you meet on a day to day basis. I love each of you unconditionally...and really hope you pay it forward!

Saginaw's S. Jefferson Street Architecture Explored

Saginaw historian, Thomas Trombley, will educate and entertain us with a talk and slide show focusing on the architecture and history of South Jefferson Avenue, part of the cathedral district, in Saginaw. Trombley will give his lecture as part of Perceptions general membership meeting, February 19, at 7pm. The meeting will be held at St. John's Episcopal church located on Michigan Avenue at the corner of Court St., in Saginaw.



Since the early 1850s, South Jefferson Avenue has been an important and vital center of the community - a place of outstanding architecture and vibrant institutions. Hoyt Library, the Castle Museum and churches are joined by residences and businesses to form a uniquely urban place. Chronicling Saginaw's history, the buildings include works by locally prominent and nationally important designers.

Thomas Trombley has a long-standing interest in local architecture and history. He has made numerous presentations on topics of local and architectural history to local and state-wide groups, including The Michigan Academy of Arts, Science and Letters, The Saarinen (Michigan) Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians, The Michigan Preservation Network, The Saginaw Humanities Series and numerous organizations.

He is a Construction Specialist for Neighborhood Renewal Services of Saginaw, Inc. (NRS). His work has included coordinating five Cathedral District Tours of Historic Homes and working on the design and publication of two promotional posters, Windows of the Cathedral District and Fireplaces of the Cathedral District. He is active in the research and restoration of the Saginaw Art Museum's formal garden. He was Curator of Collections for the Historical Society of Saginaw County for eight years.

Transgender Group Announces Online Discussion for All



The Perceptions SV Transgender Group is opening up its Yahoo Group to anyone who wishes to join whether TG, friend, family, ally, or simply those who desire to learn more about TG issues. Those who want to join can do so at

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PSVTG/>

The Perceptions Transgender Group's Yahoo Group began as a way of continuing the conversation from our monthly meetings. Previously, membership was limited to those who attended those meetings. After some discussion, we decided to open up the Yahoo Group to anyone who wishes to join whether transgender, friend, family, ally, or simply those who desire to learn more about transgender issues. Please join us!

Lansing, MI, January 19, 2009: Michigan Equality, a leading Michigan civil rights organization, announced the appointment of Michelle E. Brown and Dr. Julie Nemecek as co-directors for Michigan Equality.



Gospel of Jesus Christ Metropolitan Community Church

*meets Sundays at the United Church of Christ,
4100 Chestnut Hill Dr., Midland, MI, 4:30pm.
MCC is a Christian Church established to provide
special outreach to the GLBT community.*

CMU Researchers Recruiting GLBT Couples for Study

Dr. Brad van Eeden-Moorefield and Dr. Tara Saathoff-Wells, faculty in Human Development and Family Studies at Central Michigan University, are requesting your assistance in a research project that examines how work influences family life and vice versa. They think it is extremely important for GLBT individuals to be represented in research and are trying, specifically, to recruit couples who are in current romantic relationships of at least 3 months to participate in this study. They are asking people to complete an anonymous survey on the Internet. For completing the survey, participants will select one of three national charities (National AIDS Foundation, Special Olympics, or The American Cancer Society) and a donation of \$2 will be made on their behalf. Additionally, they will be entered into a drawing for 1 of 36 online gift cards to Target™ in the amount of \$50. To participate or find out more, email couples@cmich.edu or call 989-774-1146 or 989-774-6436.

*Life After Death:***This Doug's Life***Douglas Solosky*

Friends: To paraphrase Ernest Hemingway: The most perfect thing in nature is a true friend.

In the last four years, I have been evolving from a semi-reclusive lifestyle to being more 'out there.' I joined Perceptions about four years ago. I was scared, alone, emotionally lost, in great need of companionship. Companionship of the sort that friends could provide.

It was at my first meeting in Midland that I learned how much I missed something as simple as an earnest hug. That is how I was greeted and I've never forgotten how wonderful it felt. The man who gave me that hug is one of my closest and dearest friends to this day.

He will be moving out of the area soon and I'll probably only see him occasionally. That thought saddens me but the memory of that hug will live on forever.

My partner was adverse to hugging in the last 6 years of his life.

His fear was that hugging would reduce him to tears and he would not be able to stop crying. (He had suffered a series of strokes.) I've learned a great deal about people and relationships from other friends too. Another close friend of mine, now living in the Southeastern part of the country, has been a boon when it comes to learning about myself and ways to think about 'getting involved with someone new'.

His advice has helped me see myself in a new light. I used to think all I wanted was another partner. I singularly set my mind on that goal. Gradually, I learned I had to give up some of my attitudes from the past and accept new ways of thinking. Even though I would like a LTR (long term relationship), I realize that life is too short to doggedly resist change.

On numerous occasions, he pointed out the futility of that kind of thinking. He coached me many times to open my horizons to new and different experiences with people of different backgrounds and ages. I learned that if I were to find someone, I had to change.

His advice has helped my to traverse a 36 year relationship to my 'new life'.

I have a most mercurial friend. At the drop of a hat, so to speak, he is off to God knows where. His life is footloose and fancy free. If he gets the whim to do something, go somewhere, be with someone, he's there. I sincerely admire his spunk.

What have I learned from him? Slow down and smell the roses. Plan before you leap. Think things through. Realize your own financial limitations. (Mine, not his.) Enjoy life for all it's worth and most of all, be yourself.

I have written some 19 articles about my life, myself and my life after death (Don's). Along the way, I apparently have touched the lives of others. One in particular comes to mind. She is outgoing, friendly, gregarious, well spoken, thoughtful and generous of heart.

I was stunned to learn that she is depressed. A fact she brought to my attention after reading an article I had written on the subject. She told me that it had touched and helped her. I wrote her a follow up email telling her more of how I handled depression in the past. This, too, she said was helpful.

I have learned how important it is to view the glass as half full and not half empty. Just thinking in this way imbues an attitude of optimism.

That lesson was learned by way of an excellent retired school teacher in our group. Like all of us, he has some faults but being a good teacher is not one of them.

In the past few years, I've acquired a number of good friends, learning from their experiences, their outlooks on life, the way they see themselves, their foibles, eccentricities. In short, who they perceive they are and conversely who I am becoming.

I hope in some way I have engendered a positive influence in their lives as well.

His fear was that hugging would reduce him to tears and he would not be able to stop crying.

2009 Brings Changes to Perceptions Board

Jim Kleinsorge



Pictured from L-R: Roger Majeske, Rebecca Dunn, Joy D. Clark, Tim Atkinson, Kay Sural, Jim Kleinsorge, Nathan Brown, Gary Knight, Terri Jackson. Foreground: Alan Shinaver

Elections for the Perceptions Board of Trustees were held at the Annual Meeting which took place on January 15th at St. John's Episcopal Church in Saginaw. The slate was made up of 5 candidates. 3 of the candidates are new to the board, 1 is a returning board member, and 1 is an incumbent. New board members Roger Majeske, Terri Jackson, Nathan Brown were all elected to 3 year terms. Jeff Illig, who has been a valued board member in the past, was also elected to a 3 year term. Doug Solosky will continue on in his role as trustee for an additional 2 years.

The board would also like to thank our outgoing Trustees for their service. Vice-Chair Joy Clark, Treasurer Rob Cummings, and Trustees Rebecca Dunn and Joe Nuncio will all be greatly missed in their positions on the board and we wish them great success in all their future endeavors.

Here is a little background on our newly elected Trustees. When you see them, please join us in congratulating them on their new positions.

Terri Jackson: I am MTF Transsexual. I came out three years ago. I am quite familiar with the issues and needs of those in our community, most of which are shared throughout as a whole. I believe I can bring a unique and fresh perspective to PerceptionsSV and the activities we engage in as a group. With a great desire to facilitate out-reach and understanding with others in the community, and "mainstream" society. I feel our group can make a difference in eliminating misunderstanding, stigma, and distrust among all of society's facets to create a more peaceful, equal, and just world for all. My work experience has afforded me with many years of experience in communicating with employees and the public in the performance of the various duties associated with my positions held. Conversing and coordinating both activities and ideas between various groups of employees and management have been the highlight of my work history. Work experience includes 12 years as a Shop Supervisor and also 18 years as a Fleet Manger and 3 years as a Union Steward. As head of household and father, I seemed to never have time to engage in social activities and groups which did not revolve around my children who have always been my highest priority.

My name is **Roger Majeske**. I'm 49 years old and a "lifer" in the Bay City area and love it. I've lived in Essexville MI since 1996 and prior to that, resided in Bay City my entire life. I've been employed in a custodial position for 31 years. I have not been as involved as I could/should have in Perceptions and look forward to changing that. I've mentioned that my computer skills are not that great, but I would be glad to help out with anything else that needs to be done.

Jeff Illig...Demographically speaking, I'm a gay male, single, 54 years old. I live in Midland. My professional life as a Human Resource Manager for a manufacturing firm keeps me pretty busy. I received my BBA from SVSU in 2000 and my MBA from Northwood University in 2008. I have been a member of Perceptions since its 2nd year of existence, serving on the board from 2001 - 2004. While working on my MBA for the past 2½ years, I wasn't able to fully participate with Perceptions. I missed it and I am anxious to get back to it. I feel I can bring experience, dedication, business acumen, a familiar face, and humor to the board. My goal would be to broaden our scope more fully by promoting activities designed to attract more women and youth members, while fulfilling our mandate as an educational and representative organization for our community and its allies.

Hello my name is **Nathan Brown**. I am a sophomore at Saginaw Valley State University with a Major in History. Since moving to Saginaw for school I have been very involved with the **Gay-Straight Alliance** on campus and have served as both Vice-President and treasurer within the organization. This year I decided that it was time to get involved in more off campus organizations so I started to get involved with PFLAG and Perceptions. I hope that by being a Board member I would be bringing some new perspectives to the board.