

# Perceptions

Saginaw Valley

[www.PerceptionsSV.org](http://www.PerceptionsSV.org)

Serving the Tri-City Area LGBT Community



Free

March 2010

*Perceptions/PFLAG*  
**CHOCOLATE  
PARTY**  
**Saturday  
March 13, 2010**  
**See PAGE 3  
for Details**

The 2010 Perceptions/PFLAG Chocolate Party Will be held at the [Wolfarth House](#) at [1000 Hoyt Ave.](#) in Saginaw, from 6pm-9pm on March 13th

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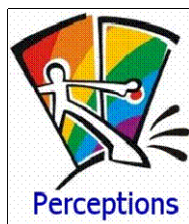
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*Mid-Michigan's  
leading  
resource for  
enriching and  
empowering  
GLBT individuals  
and their  
community*

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.

## FROM THE EDITOR



The snow will be gone soon and Spring won't be far behind. Perceptions has a whole lot planned for the coming months, but it takes a great deal of planning and coordination on the part of many to pull it off. There are a number of ways that you can help make this our most exciting year yet.

If you haven't renewed your membership, now's the time. Keep all the yearly events, weekly dinners and monthly support groups coming. Already paid? Stop by a General Meeting and check out one of our many interesting speakers this year. Watch the newsletter to find out who you missed in February and who's up next. We welcome feedback on who you liked and who you didn't. Contact [Leo@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Leo@PerceptionsSV.org) and tell us what you thought. If you are already attending the meetings, we are always looking for new faces to greet at the door or pick up the snacks, for which you will be reimbursed. Sign up sheets are always by the door.

It's not too late to donate your favorite chocolate dish to the Chocolate Party. There's no such thing as too much. Contact [Kay@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Kay@PerceptionsSV.org) Every party takes food, supplies and people to work them, if you want to get involved behind the scenes of any function, you can always contact [Volunteer@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Volunteer@PerceptionsSV.org) This year, we hope to bring you another Pride Banquet, Summer Picnic, Garden Party, Wine Tasting—we're even thinking ahead to the next Holiday Party. Find out how you can help.

Part of Perceptions' mission is to project a positive image to the entire community, so help us at the next highway cleanup on April 17th. Contact [Rick@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Rick@PerceptionsSV.org) if you're free that day. It's always a fun time. We'll be announcing more cleanup dates as we know them. We're also looking forward to Michigan Pride in Lansing on June 12. If we can get the interest, we'll have a presence there this year. If you'd like to help man a booth, decorate a truck or ride in the parade, contact [Brent@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Brent@PerceptionsSV.org)

Finally, we've all got things we'd like to get rid of and here's your chance. Perceptions is already collecting things and storing them for a Rummage Sale in May. If you'd like to donate your unwanted items to the sale, find out how. Write [Randy@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Randy@PerceptionsSV.org)

There are many small ways we can all help to make it another great year for Perceptions!

“Everybody's journey is individual. If you fall in love with a boy, you fall in love with a boy. The fact that many Americans consider it a disease says more about them than it does about homosexuality.”

—James Baldwin



## It's Chocolate Time Again!

[Kay Sural](#)

Chocolate Cherry Cake, Chocolate Mint Cookies, Chocolate Cheesecake, Belgium Chocolate Truffles. Yes, all that and more can be found at the Perceptions/PFLAG Chocolate Party. Please join us Saturday, March 13th at the beautiful [Wolfarth House, 1000 Hoyt Avenue](#), Saginaw. This 1893 Queen Anne Victorian home is the perfect place to enjoy everything chocolate, wonderful conversations and meeting old and new friends. Hosts Kevin and Bill always make sure it will be a night to remember as you stroll from room to room discovering not only new chocolates but the beautiful restorations of this wonderful home.

A free will donation will help support the programs of Perceptions and PFLAG. Board members of Perceptions and PFLAG will be supplying the treats but if you enjoy baking and would like to contribute, please contact [Kay@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Kay@PerceptionsSV.org) if you plan to bring a dish.

Plenty of off street parking will be available in the parking lot of Central Middle School, located adjacent to the Wolfarth House. Please come and bring family and friends for a delicious evening.

## Highway Cleanup

[Rick Farrand](#)

Keep this date in mind: Saturday, April 17th, 2010, will be our 1st highway pickup day. Rain day will be Sunday April 18th. As usual meet at the rest stop on I-75 going south off the Saginaw Rd (M-84) exit. Time to meet will be 10am and coffee and donuts will be served along with a quick safety, rules & regulations pep talk. There will also be a fun-filled picnic following at my house, with great food, conversation, and friends. Remember to dress in layers and to have water-proof foot wear. So don't miss out on this opportunity to be an active member of Perceptions and in the community. It is always fun and I just hope to see you there. Any questions feel free to call me at 989-799-3034. Remember I'm counting on you! Thank You.

## Perceptions Rummage Sale

A rummage sale will be held in May at Randy Hasso's home in Saginaw. All proceeds will benefit AIDS Walk Bay City Midland Saginaw. Please start looking for items you would like to donate. Randy would like to receive donations early and will store everything at his house starting now. Call Randy at 989-793-6532 or email him at [Randy@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Randy@PerceptionsSV.org). The more donated, the better the sale will be.

"If God had wanted me otherwise, He would have created me otherwise."

—Johann von Goethe

## MARCH SPEAKER: Judge Stephen Borrello

Leo Romo

The Honorable Judge Stephen L. Borrello will discuss "**The Role of the Judiciary as Guardians of the Constitution**" on Thursday, March 18, 2010 at the Perceptions General Meeting, St. John's Episcopal Church, 123 N. Michigan, Saginaw at 7 p.m..

Judge Borrello was born in Saginaw, Michigan; received his B.A. from Albion College in 1981, and his Juris Doctorate from the Detroit College of Law in 1984. He attended Michigan State University where he was a graduate assistant and lecturer in the Department of History, working on post graduate degrees in American Intellectual History.

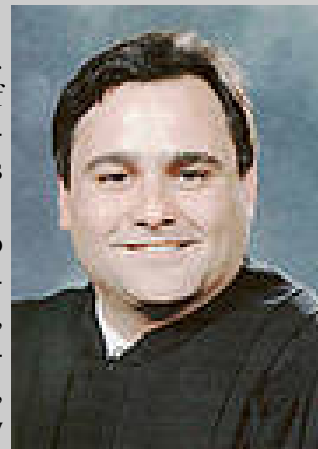
Prior to his appointment to the Michigan Court of Appeals, Judge Borrello was an assistant prosecuting attorney in Saginaw County before becoming a shareholder in the law firm of Gilbert, Smith & Borrello, P.C. As a private practitioner, Judge Borrello specialized in labor law serving as general counsel to numerous labor and governmental organizations. During his tenure as a private practitioner, Judge Borrello authored numerous articles and two books on construction labor law issues. Judge Borrello was also a member of the Michigan Board of Canvassers, and a member of the 1996 Electoral College.

Judge Borrello was Governor Granholm's first appointment to the Michigan Court of Appeals on June 9, 2003 and he was elected to that position in November of 2004 and re-elected in November of 2006. He is a frequent lecturer on issues of jurisprudence and trial and appellate court advocacy at the Michigan State University School of Law, Thomas M. Cooley School of Law, and The Walter and Mary Reuther UAW compound at Black Lake. Judge Borrello is currently an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Criminal Justice at Saginaw Valley State University where he teaches Criminal Procedure and Evidence.

Judge Borrello and his wife Nancy reside on a small farm in Thomas Township assuming the role of primary caregivers for a vast array of animals.

Judge Borrello is no stranger with the LGBT community. He has a long time friendship with Doug Ireland, a journalist and blogger who writes about politics, media and gay issues for the New York City's *Gay City News*, the largest LGBT weekly newspaper in the U.S., and his blog DIRELAND.

<http://direland.typepad.com/>



## Bernadette Brown of the Triangle Foundation Speaks

Kay Sural

Perceptions hosted Bernadette Brown, Policy Director for the [Triangle Foundation](#) on Thursday, February 18th. Bernadette gave a smart, informative and entertaining interactive talk to a large circle of Perceptions members. She shared a history of the Triangle Foundation and explained the new merging of Triangle and Michigan Equality.

On the legislative front, Bernadette explained that even though Triangle is working at the State level to change laws to include protection in housing and employment, small community bills like the one recently passed in Kalamazoo, are a good way to advance LGBT rights. Also a second parent adoptions bill has currently passed committee and this bill is worded "two unmarried persons", with no reference to sex.

On the judicial front, Bernadette reminded us that two State Supreme Court seats will be up for vote this November and stressed the importance of educating yourself on all the candidates.

Questions were asked, ideas were shared and Perceptions was very fortunate to have Bernadette share her knowledge with us. This was a fun and enjoyable meeting. Thank you Bernadette.

# Changes Ahead for the Perceptions Transgender Group

As the second anniversary of the Perceptions Saginaw Valley Transgender Group (PSVTG) approaches, we have some changes to announce. Rev. Rebecca Dunn, who started the group, will be turning her attention to focus on ministry. Rebecca will continue to act as a moderator for the PSVTG email list hosted by Yahoo Groups (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PSVTG>) and she will attend meetings from time to time. We thank Rebecca for getting the group up and running. This is a resource that was greatly needed in the Saginaw Valley region and Perceptions is proud to make it available to the transgender community.

Jolene, who has worked with Rebecca from the beginning as the group's counselor and facilitator, is getting ready to move to Los Angeles. Jolene's departure makes it necessary to bring in another professional person who would be available for counseling, if needed. **Rachel Prenzler** will be taking over this role and will also serve as the group's point of contact. You can email her at [Rachel@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Rachel@PerceptionsSV.org)

Rachel is not a stranger to PSVTG, as she has attended several meetings in the past. Rachel has a Masters in Social Work and is an adult outpatient therapist with the MPA Group in Bay City. She is a huge advocate for the LGBT population and strongly believes in making more resources available to people in the Tri-Cities who are transgender.

Because of Rachel's work schedule, it is necessary to move the meetings to another night. Starting in March, PSVTG will meet on the last Monday of each month. Because The Mixx and Metro Grille are not open on Mondays, we also had to find a new venue. The March 29th meeting will be at the [Magic Bean Cafe, 5789 State Street](#), Saginaw at 6:00 pm. Perceptions and PSVTG members would like to thank Robb Wiersum and the staff at The Mixx for hosting the group for the past two years. The Mixx opened early on the second Wednesday of the month for the group to meet and they also hosted a wonderful dinner last May to celebrate the group's first anniversary.

The group's mission has not changed. PSVTG will continue to offer an informal monthly gathering, taking a more "light-hearted" approach to allow transgenders in the Tri-Cities to connect with one another for socializing and support. Erin Moers and Terri Jackson ([Terri@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Terri@PerceptionsSV.org)) will continue their leadership roles within the group.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

The **SVSU Drag Show** has been scheduled for March 19th in the Student Activities Room. The show will benefit the **Tri-Cities' 6th Annual AIDS Walk** on September 25. The time was not final at time of publication. Please check <http://events.PerceptionsSV.org> for updates or contact [Brent@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Brent@PerceptionsSV.org)

# American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) & the LGBT Project: Fighting Discrimination for the LGBT Community

Leo Romo

“Equality rights for LGBT people are essential in a democratic society, in which it should be easy to be free and safe to be yourself.”  
- American Civil Liberties Union.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Michigan initiated the **LGBT Project** in 2000; the ACLU has worked on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression issues in Michigan since 1966. The LGBT Project fights discrimination in the courts and legislature and moves public opinion on LGBT rights through public education. The mission of the LGBT Project is to foster a society in which everyone enjoys the basic rights of equality, privacy, personal autonomy, and freedom of expression and association. **The LGBT Project is the only legal program in Michigan that fights for the rights of LGBT people and their families.** *Note: the ACLU of Michigan has a full-time lobbyist in Lansing who works on pro-LGBT legislation and opposes anti-LGBT policies and legislation.*

The LGBT Project addresses issues unique to the LGBT community: marriage equality; domestic partner benefits; estate planning and other legal rights; discrimination in housing, employment, health care, public school, and other services; same-sex parent adoption and custody; HIV/AIDS discrimination and confidentiality; protection against hate crimes and bullying; equality access in public accommodations; and respect for GLBT seniors.

Read more information about the LGBT Project in the ACLU of Michigan’s website: [www.aclumich.org](http://www.aclumich.org) or write to the ACLU of Michigan, 2966 Woodward Ave., Detroit, MI 48201 ph. 313-578-6800

If people have legal issues based on sexual orientation or gender/expression contact the LGBT Project attorney, Jay Kaplan - 313-578-6800 or [kaplan@aclumich.org](mailto:kaplan@aclumich.org)

## PFLAG Statewide Meeting April 17th

The PFLAG statewide meeting is set for Saturday, April 17th at the Bella Notte Ristorante Ballroom, [137 W Michigan Ave](#), in Jackson. The theme this year is “Chapter Tune-Up: Keeping PFLAG Running and Relevant” and will run from 9am to 4pm. The cost is \$30 for individuals, \$55 for couples, and \$20 for students, and includes breakfast and lunch. Reduced fees or assistance is available. The speakers will be Andy Wolber of [NPower Michigan](#) on “Leveraging Technology,” Dr. Julie Nemecek of Michigan Equality on “Forefront of Transgender Equality,” as well as Regional Director Mike Neubecker, Brooke Smith and more. See <http://PerceptionsSV.org/PFLAG.pdf> or contact Lorraine Hampton at 517-750-3045.

# CURRENT EVENTS PAGE

## **March 3rd, Wednesday - Saginaw Meet & Greet**

**7:00 - 9:00 pm.** An informal gathering for the Tri-Cities' GLBT community. Join us at the **Magic Bean Cafe**, [5789 State Street](#). All are welcome. Meet your old friends and make some new ones. Enjoy hot and cold drinks in a non-smoking environment.

**March 5th- Friday Night Dinner** **7:00 pm.** Join Perceptions members and friends at **Stock Pot Diner**, [1007 Washington Ave.](#), Bay City. If you plan to attend, please respond to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

## **March 9th, Tuesday - Isabella Area LGBT Community Group**

**7:00 pm.** The group is established for the purpose of connecting, networking, and social support for the entire LGBT Community. All are welcome. St. John's Episcopal Church, [206 W. Maple St.](#), Mt Pleasant. For more information contact Erin Moers (989-317-0811 or [erin.moers@yahoo.com](mailto:erin.moers@yahoo.com)) or Rev. Wayne Nicholson (989-773-7448). Repeats on the 2nd Tues of each month.

## **March 10th, Wednesday - Freeland Meet & Greet**

**6:00 to 8:00 pm.** Join us at **Riverside Restaurant**, [8295 Midland Road](#) (M-47), Freeland. Private room. Famous homemade pies.

## **March 10th, Wednesday - GLBT Co-ed Support Group**

**7:00 pm.** Sponsored by Divine Light Interfaith Ministry. For more info, contact David Younk at 989-771-9721 or [DavidY513@hotmail.com](mailto:DavidY513@hotmail.com).

**March 12th - Friday Night Dinner** **7:00 pm.** Join us at **Panda House**, [1010 N. Niagara St.](#), Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please respond to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

## **March 13th, Saturday - Perceptions & PFLAG Chocolate Party**

**6:00 - 9:00 pm.** Free will donation collected at the door to support the programs of Perceptions & PFLAG Tri-Cities. [Wolfarth House](#), [1000 Hoyt Ave.](#), Saginaw. See article on page 3.

**March 13th, Saturday - Michigan Lesbian & Gay ComedyFest** Two shows 6 & 9:30 pm. [comedyfest.org](http://comedyfest.org)

## **March 14th, Sunday. - Genessee Co. PFLAG Meeting**

**2:00 - 4:30 pm.** The meeting takes place at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Flint, [2474 S. Ballenger Hwy.](#) Lesbian Attorney Kimberly Hornik will speak. See page 9 for more info. or contact [pflagflint@yahoo.com](mailto:pflagflint@yahoo.com).

## **March 16th, Tues - Men's Discussion Group**

**7:00 - 8:30 pm.** Zauel Memorial Library, [3100 N. Center Road](#), Saginaw Township. This gathering is facilitated by Thomas Brubaker and intended as a discussion and informal support group for gay and bisexual men. Contact Tom at [Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org) for additional information. Light snacks will be provided. You may bring your own beverage into the library as long as the container has a cover or cap.

## **March 17th, Wednesday - DLIM's Women's**

**Group 6:00 pm.** **Womyn's Room II** is designed as a safe place for Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender women, who are out or not, to come for support and socialization. It meets at the **Magic Bean Cafe**, 5789 State Street, Saginaw, in a private room. For more info. contact Rev. Kathy 989-401-2348 or [Rev\\_KathyV@yahoo.com](mailto:Rev_KathyV@yahoo.com). It is sponsored by Divine Light Interfaith Ministry but is not a religious gathering.

## **March 17th, Wednesday - Men's Friendship Room**

**7:00 pm.** Designed as a safe place for Gay, Bisexual and Transgender men, who are out or not, to come for support and socialization, Men's Friendship Room meets at David Younk's home in Saginaw. For more info. contact David at 989-771-9721 or [DavidY513@hotmail.com](mailto:DavidY513@hotmail.com). The group is sponsored by Divine Light Interfaith Ministry but is not a religious gathering.

## **March 18th, Thursday - Perceptions General**

**Membership Meeting 7:00 to 9:00 pm.** St. John's Episcopal Church, [123 N. Michigan Ave.](#), Saginaw. All are welcome. See page 4 for speaker info.

## **March 19th- Friday Night Dinner**

**7:00 pm.** Join Perceptions members and friends at **G's Pizzeria**, [1005 Saginaw St.](#), Bay City. If you plan to attend, please respond to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

## **March 24th, Wednesday - Disabled LGBT Support**

**Group 6:00 pm.** Divine Light Interfaith Ministry sponsors this support group for disabled members of the LGBT Community. Partners are also welcome. The group will be facilitated by Rev. Kathy VanBuskirk and Carm Audas. It meets at the **Magic Bean Cafe**, 5789 State St., Saginaw, in a private room. For more info contact Rev. Kathy at 989-401-2348 or [Rev\\_KathyV@yahoo.com](mailto:Rev_KathyV@yahoo.com).

## **March 26th - Friday Night Dinner**

**7:00 pm.** Join us at **Pat & Jerry's**, [963 W. Midland Rd.](#), Auburn. If you plan to attend, please respond to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

## **March 28th, Sunday - PFLAG Meeting**

**2:00 - 4:30 pm.** The meeting takes place at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, [6220 Jefferson Ave.](#), Midland.

## **March 29th, Monday - Perceptions**

**Transgender Group 6:00 pm.** Meeting at the **Magic Bean Cafe**, [5789 State Street](#), Saginaw, the group offers an informal gathering, taking a more lighthearted 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 Rachel Prenzler at [Rachel@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Rachel@PerceptionsSV.org).

## **Be informed about upcoming events**

**Simply send a blank email to:**

[PerceptionsSV-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:PerceptionsSV-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

INSERT  
CALENDAR  
HERE



Dustin Lance Black first heard the story of slain civil rights leader Harvey Milk after his family moved to California at age 13. He says it gave him hope that he could one day live his life openly. When he saw the documentary, "The Times of Harvey Milk" during his college days in the 1990's, he longed to do something with the story, in hopes of inspiring the younger generations. After researching the project for 3 years, he wrote a script, which was turned into the 2008 film "Milk," and won an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay. He has also written and directed "The Journey of Jared Price," a gay romance film, and the short film, "Something Close to Heaven." He is currently a writer and co-producer of "Big Love," an HBO dramatic series. He spoke at the Equality March on October 11, 2009 in Washington D.C.



## Dustin Lance Black

Academy Award-winning writer of *Milk* discusses

### Activism and the Creative Class: The Art Of Building Inclusive Communities

**Wednesday, March 10, 2010**

VIP Reception - 6 p.m.  
General Reception - 6:30 p.m.  
Program - 7:30 p.m.

**Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit**  
[4454 Woodward Avenue](http://www.mca-detroit.org)  
Detroit, MI

\$15 students - includes ACLU membership

\$30 ACLU members    \$40 non-members

\$100 VIP - includes premium seating and VIP Gathering

Tickets & Info: [www.aclumich.org](http://www.aclumich.org) or 313-578-6827.

## GENESSEE COUNTY PFLAG

**Kimberly Hornik**, a lesbian attorney in Grand Blanc, who recently spoke at a Perceptions General Meeting, will be at the March 14th **Genesee County PFLAG**. If you missed her before or would like to see her again, she will be speaking about "The Legal Ramifications that Same-Sex Couples Face Due to Lack of Marriage Equality." These issues affect us all, whether we are part of a couple or one day expect to be, so don't miss it. The meeting will be from 2-4:30 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Flint at [2474 S. Ballenger Hwy](http://www.flintuuc.org), Flint 48507-1301.

There will also be a **Out & Proud LGBT and Ally Dance** at the same Unitarian Universalist Hall from 7 - 11pm on April 10, 2010, sponsored by the Alliance. Tickets are cheaper in advance, so see the flier on the back page for details.



## THIS DOUG'S LIFE

by Doug Solosky

### “Articulating My Thoughts” PART II

My partner Don and I were whole within ourselves. Our relationship was such that when either of us was emotionally down the other one would pick him up. We never argued. Don handled the household and I earned the money. We never had gone to a movie, the theater, or a bar. It wasn't until late in our relationship that a friend and antique dealer got us to go on shopping trips for antiques to sell and thus to restaurants. Don came “kicking and screaming,” so to speak. He was very shy.

We had very few friends outside of fellow dealers and some customers. Our families were who we saw the most.

Don's family has history of plaque, a heart condition. He developed heart problems. Several health procedures later he had a base stem stroke. He was 54. The next 6 years were harrowing. Then my world came to an end. On January 12, 2004, I found him dead on the dining room floor.

I was lost. My reason for living was gone.

I ran the shop for about a year after his death. I frantically kept myself busy. One day, a couple of men came into the shop. We had a wonderful conversation. They stayed for at least an hour. When they left, I thought, “Well that was nice,” and went on with my day. That night the younger of the two called and asked if it would be all right for him to come over. It took me completely by surprise. I stammered, “How about tomorrow?” He came, we had a good time and he left. I kept looking out of the upstairs bathroom window for the next couple of weeks hoping he'd return. He didn't.

That was about 6 months after Dons death.

I decided that I had to do something or I would surely go stark raving mad! I looked in every telephone book I had. (When you're in business, you get them by the pound.) The last book, Saginaw, had a phone number for gays and lesbians. I called. “All calls will be answered within 24 hours.” I waited. Twenty-three and ½ hours later the phone rang. “How'd you get the number?” asked a man named Charles in a gruff voice.” I said, “Out of the Saginaw phone book.” I told him, “I'm gay and want to come out.” He told me there was a meeting at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Midland the next day. (I found

out later that Charles' gruffness was predicated on protecting Perceptions against those who would want to harm us.)

I was filled with mixed emotions. On one hand, I was relieved that maybe I had found an avenue of hope. On the other, I was scared to death. What was I letting myself in for? I had lived a life of relative love and protection and now I was going to face a ‘new world,’ a world that I had only heard about.

That evening, I went to the meeting. I was so scared that my hands were visibly shaking. “Ah! I don't want to do this!” “You are going to do it!” I took a deep breath, nervous and physically shaking, I reluctantly went in. The room was filled with people. I walked up to the table and was greeted by a friendly man. He handed me a stick-on label on which to write my name. I did. I was so nervous that I could not peel it apart. I handed it to one of them and said, “Here, you peel this damned thing off.”

“Where's Charles?” (The only person I knew by name.) “Oh, he's around here somewhere. There he is, now.” In comes this tall blonde with an enormous cardboard box. It had almost nothing in it. My first thought was, “Why didn't he just use a sack?”

My stomach was churning. I introduced myself, reminding him that we had spoken on the phone. He gave me the warmest hug. It wasn't until then that I realized how much I missed human contact.

I was out of it. Socially inept, my first words were, “I don't like your glasses and I don't like your goatee.” He said, “I do!” and that was that.

I thought, “Oh shit! I screwed up that one.” R.G. was standing beside me. I asked what happens now? He told me and I turned and left. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see that my abruptness had hurt his feelings. “Well, you did it again,” I thought.

The meeting turned out to be about exercising. I hate to exercise! “You are going to exercise! You wanted to come out, so do it!”

At the end of the session, we were asked to turn to a friend and let them know a year later how we were doing. I knew no one. I went up to Charles, “You are the only one I know. What's your last name and address?”

Thus began a lasting friendship. Charles has easily

become one of my best friends, helping me in more ways than I can count.

This was also my introduction to Perceptions, an organization of great worth and value.

I was in my early 70's when I started my "new life." I didn't have a clue as to what to do. I started attending general meetings, going to our Friday night meals, and to social events. Ever so gradually becoming more relaxed and comfortable with myself. It has taken over 3 years and much psychological pushing on my part. I had to get over the fear of new situations, learning who and who not to trust.

The 'trek' has been good for me. I am able to go into new situations without fear, consider moving into a different home even to a different state. I've even gained some social graces. I now try to think before I speak. Life is good. I have almost always seen the glass half full and not half empty.

But, there has been the occasional down side. I have suffered minor depression. When I realized it, I concluded that depression is only a state of mind so "Stop it!" I focused on the good things I have, on the future - in short, I offset my mind with a purpose and forethought, thoughts of Don, my new life and other pleasant things.

Life is too short to wallow in self-pity. Live it! As Roselyn Russell said in Auntie Mame, "Life is a banquet and most poor suckers are starving."

Now, as a gay senior I find myself in a unique position. I am old with a youthful attitude, still looking for that someone special knowing if it doesn't happen, that's life, not caring if someone knows I'm gay, giving my knowledge and experiences in life freely, contributing where I feel I'm able to furthering our cause, looking forward to the future positively.

Don was my world; now I have a new one.

## Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center-BASIS Relocates to New Bay City Facility; Saginaw Office Expands

Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center-BASIS is reaffirming its commitment to providing substance use disorder treatment and HIV/AIDS prevention and care services to residents in the Great Lakes Bay Region with the relocation of its Bay City office and the expansion of its AIDS care program in Downtown Saginaw. Sacred Heart-BASIS will relocate to a newly-remodeled facility at 1106 Washington Avenue and move its Saginaw offices into a larger suite in the Commerce Center at 301 East Genesee effective Monday, March 1<sup>st</sup>.

"Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center-BASIS has a rich, 40+ - year history of providing substance abuse treatment services in the Great Lakes Bay Region," said Grady Wilkinson, president and CEO of Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center.

"Relocating our Bay City office is a reflection of our continued commitment to the region," Wilkinson said. "This new facility is more attractive, functional and convenient for our clients."

Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center's Saginaw office will relocate to a larger suite on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Commerce Center at 301 East Genesee in Saginaw. "This expansion allows our staff to more efficiently serve our Saginaw clients in our HIV/AIDS Care program," Wilkinson said. This location is very convenient for our clients as it is located near local hospitals, health clinics, and the Department of Human Services, and offers easy access to public transportation," Wilkinson added.

"The motivation for our relocation and expansion is to provide the best possible service to our clients, as well as position ourselves for future growth in our services to the region," Wilkinson said.

Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center, Inc. provides residential substance use treatment services, women and children's specialty services, medication-assisted detoxification services, outpatient treatment services, substance use prevention services, and HIV/AIDS prevention and care services.

In addition to its Memphis, Bay City and Saginaw locations, [Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center](#) also has offices in Algonac, Detroit, Flint, New Haven, Port Huron, and Warren, Michigan. Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center will hold community open houses for both locations this coming Spring.

# Out & Proud

## LGBT & Ally Dance



**April 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**7-11pm**



**Unitarian Universalist Church Hall**  
**2474 S. Ballenger Hwy Flint, MI 48507**

<p><u>Ticket Cost</u></p> <p>Single: \$3 (\$10 @ door) Couple: \$5 (\$15 @ door)</p>	<p><u>Tickets Sold</u></p> <p><b>The Good Beans Café</b> 328 North Grand Traverse Flint, Michigan 48503</p> <p>or By Phone: <b>(810) 496-8302</b> Leave Name, Phone #, # of tickets requesting</p>
<p>Music, Refreshments, Friends &amp; FUN!!!</p>	

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