



# PERCEPTIONS

## SAGINAW VALLEY

Serving the Tri-City Area's LGBT Community

**February 2012**

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

**Free**

### Annual Meeting

Brent Theisen

On Thursday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, Perceptions members gathered to elect new members to the Board of Trustees and hear a presentation on the state of the organization. Jim Kleinsorge updated us on membership statistics for 2011 and Daphne Barkley went over the financials. Tim Atkinson took us through our accomplishments for the past twelve months, most notably moving into the new facility.

All of the candidates running for the board were approved. Rick Farrand was re-elected for a new term and will join four newly elected board members and six others whose terms had not expired. New board members are Diedra Knox, Kathy Lloyd, Sally Mims and Joel Payne. They will bring new experiences and skills

to the board. They join Tim Atkinson, Jim Kleinsorge, Daphne Barkley, Kay Sural, Tom Brubaker and Dann Federico. The board will meet in early February to elect the officer positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

Not seeking re-election after finishing their terms were Randy Hasso and Roger Majeske. They will, however, remain active in the organization.

Learn more about our new trustees in the story on page 7.



**2012 Board of Trustees** (left to right): Dann Federico, Tom Brubaker, Kathy Lloyd, Jim Kleinsorge, Kay Sural, Diedra Knox, Rick Farrand, Leo Romo (Advisor), Tim Atkinson, Daphne Barkley, Joel Payne, and Sally Mims.

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**SUBMISSIONS** are always  
welcome. Write to:

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#### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Get your copy of the Newsletter sent to you free with your paid membership. The Newsletter is always free to view online. For more information visit [www.PerceptionsSV.org](http://www.PerceptionsSV.org)

Perceptions Saginaw Valley is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your contributions are deductible as charitable donations for federal income tax purposes.

**Perceptions is Mid-Michigan's leading resource for enriching and empowering LGBT individuals and their community.**

#### MISSION STATEMENT

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

## Perceptions Romances

Roger M.

Every February 14th, across the United States and in other places around the world, candy, flowers, cards, and gifts are exchanged between loved ones, all in the name of St. Valentine. The day is named after one or more early Christian martyrs named Saint Valentine, and was established by Pope Gelasius in 496 A.D.

With Valentine's day coming up this month, how appropriate then to make mention of several couples who have met through Perceptions events/functions. Tim and Alan had their first date following a Perceptions 4th of July party at Jeff's home in Bay City in 2003. Chris and Greg met at the Perceptions 2007 Thanksgiving Potluck at St. John's in Saginaw. Chas and Mike met at a Perceptions Friday night dinner at Maria's in Saginaw in 2007. Jim and Shawn met at a Perceptions Friday night dinner at Café American in Midland in 2009 and started dating later that year. Roger and Greg met at the Perceptions 2010 Holiday Party at Bay Valley.

When contacting everyone to make sure I had places and dates

correct, how heartwarming it was to hear these comments: "We both agree that meeting was the best thing that's happened for either of us. Had it not been for Perceptions, I doubt our paths would have ever crossed"... and "We are grateful for the programs Perceptions provides our community."

Yes, indeed... I feel we are all very fortunate to have this organization. It's a great way to socialize and meet some wonderful people... and going by all the couples listed above, sometimes that "special someone" can come into our lives when we least expect it!



*Editor's Note: In honor of Valentine's Day, our February issue will have a theme of love, romance, and relationships. We also want to present an underlying message that our relationships deserve recognition and respect.*

## Love is in the 404 Error?

David DePeal, guest columnist

February, with Valentine's Day and the nearing end of winter and the beginning of spring, brings a certain promise of love and romance for those in relationships and often a longing for romance for those that aren't. While heterosexuals have the advantage of being able to seek out love and romance nearly anywhere and at any time, sadly, the same cannot be said for their LGBT counterparts, who often must weigh in the risk of homophobia, exposure and the need to be discreet. Making a gay romantic pass at the wrong person in front of the wrong people at the wrong time can lead to disaster, possibly even violence or death in a few extreme cases. This is a sad reality that every LGBT individual has come to realize.

It is not surprising, then, that the new generation of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender individuals are turning to technology to find their romantic interests. Indeed, the internet has been a godsend to many lonely individuals, both gay and straight, in finding people with similar hobbies, interests and tastes as well as filling a niche to enable individuals to express their sexual interest with a certain amount of distance and anonymity. As such, personal dating websites have sprung up by the hundreds, if not thousands. It seems like there is a website for every color, creed, age and sexual orientation and lifestyle out there and all you have to do is Google it to find it. Many of these sites post happy stories of how soul mates are now reunited and how love has bloomed. Some sites even offer beneficial informational blogs and services, such as travel, health and safer sex information. Few of these dating web-

sites, however, offer valuable information on how to detect a scam or worse - a violent predator.

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PLEASE TRY AGAIN LATER



Ironically, it is often the website itself or one of its hired financial accounting management agencies that are behind a scam by either automatically billing you for services still within a "trial" period (which may take many months to resolve - all the while you are still being billed) or by not honoring a guarantee for "money back if not satisfied" scenario. While this is frustrating, embarrassing and inconvenient, most of these scams can be resolved by canceling credit or debit cards and a few well-placed phone calls and letters from legal authorities. Much more serious, however, is when these online hookups lead to dangerous and violent encounters. Adam4Adam.com is one example.

Rated as a leading gay personal website, second only to gay.com, adam4adam.com has millions of

subscribers. In October 2006, New York area media including *The New York Times* and WCBS-TV reported that Adam4Adam was the focus of a conspiracy to find gay men online to rob. A number of men in New York City used the site to lure a Brooklyn man to a remote area where he was robbed and murdered. The men were found when one user was identified via his screen name.

Many news sources reported similar occurrences in the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area. A high-profile April 2010 murder investigation in the Washington, D.C., area revealed that the victim, a high school principal, met his assailants through adam4adam.com. In discussing the case of a perpetrator of multiple robberies in that region, a Washington, D.C. police officer from that police force's Gay & Lesbian Liaison Unit said "We've definitely seen an increase in online dating crimes in the past five years" and added that victims of internet dating crimes are "overwhelmingly men cruising for sex." The same police officer also noted that these criminals are often technologically savvy

***Continued on page 4***

Daphne Barkley, CPA  
Licensed in VA & DC

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## LOVE continued

and create profiles using fake information and other people's photos from cyber cafés or public libraries, making them difficult to trace. (See <http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam4Adam>)

While Adam4Adam.com's troubles are well-publicized, it is not the only website with these unsettling dangers. Likewise, it is not just like major cities in which these sexual predators hunt. In Iraq, technological savvy Jihadists pursue LGBTs online through dating sites. As a result, one Islamic group claims to have killed more than 120 LGBT Iraqi individuals for the purity of Islam since 2008. Similar situations have been reported in Trinidad and Tobago where gay dating websites have been linked to robberies, beatings, extortion and kidnappings.

**It is important to note: This article is not meant to scare anyone or deter individuals from using online services to meet others. Many online dating sites are legitimate ways to meet other people outside one's social network and offer individuals unmatched means to socialize in a safe way IF certain precautions are taken and common sense is followed.**

**If you are thinking of signing up for such a service, have fun, but play safe. Check into the website's reputation and note any serious complaints or concerns. Good websites should offer a variety of services and tips to protect its clients, including client verification of pictures and email addresses. Remember, though, regardless of how safe a website and its profiles seems, what you see is not always what you get. For more info, Google key words such as 'online dating safety' or see <http://newsinteractive.match.com/Help/Safety.aspx>**

## Gay Families Matter Rally Staged in Lansing

Leo Romo

Before Christmas, Gov. Snyder signed HB 4770 into law, banning domestic partner benefits, like health insurance, for Michigan public employees. University employees were exempted from the ban. A coalition of Michigan LGBT centers, like Perceptions, held a Gay Families Matter rally to protest the benefits ban. Leo Romo and Tim Atkinson, Perceptions Chair, attended with about 150 people.

The January 18th Rally marked the first time that LGBT Community Centers from across the state had come together to organize such an event. Perceptions participated with [Affirmations](#), [The Jim Toy Community Center](#), [Kalamazoo Gay & Lesbian Resource Center](#), [KICK](#), [Out Center](#) of Benton Harbor, [Ruth Ellis Center](#), and [The LGBT Network](#)

[of Western Michigan](#). Equality Michigan and the ACLU of Michigan were also involved.

The ACLU has filed suit against the State of Michigan and Gov. Rick Snyder in an attempt to overturn the controversial law.

Unfortunately, the state legislature currently has 3 other pending bills targeting the LGBT community, including HB 5039 which would strip away local human rights ordinances in communities that offer LGBT protections. SB 518 would force state universities to allow students in counseling and psychology programs to refuse services to LGBT clients. And HB 4889 restricts access to medically necessary sex reassignment surgery for people in some state programs.



## Current Events

events.PerceptionsSV.org

### **Friday, February 3rd - Michigan SOGI**

**Education Conference** 8:30 am - 3:30 pm. Michigan's first state-wide conference on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) issues in education will be held at **Oakland University** in Rochester. For more information, visit [www.oakland.edu/sogi](http://www.oakland.edu/sogi)

### **▼ February 3rd - Friday Night Dinner**

7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends this week at **Diamond Jim's**, [101 E. Main St.](#), Midland. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Fri.

### **Saturday, February 4th - Antiques Roadshow-Style Appraise-a-thon**

10:00 am to 3:00 pm. [Saginaw Art Museum](#), 1126 N. Michigan Ave. Presented by Adomaitis Antiques. Verbal fair market estimates are \$5 per item for non-members and \$4 for SAM members. No books, coins, stamps or weapons.

### **Tuesday, February 7th - National Black**

**HIV/AIDS Awareness Day** Two Saginaw organizations are shining a light on the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the African-American community throughout the month of February. Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Center's HIV/AIDS Care Program and the NAACP Saginaw Branch, both located at 301 East Genesee in Saginaw, are stressing the message to "get educated, get tested, and get treatment when it comes to HIV/AIDS." For more information visit [www.nationalblackaidsday.org](http://www.nationalblackaidsday.org)

### **▼ Wednesday, February 8th - Freeland Meet & Greet**

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

### **▼ February 10th - Friday Night Dinner**

7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends this week at **Forbidden City**, [4024 Bay Road](#), Saginaw. Please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday, if you plan to attend.

### **▼ Sat., February 11th - Valentines Dance**

Beginning at 7:00 pm. We will serve desserts, snacks and light refreshments so you are encouraged to make a night of it and visit one of the eateries in the surrounding area beforehand. There will be lots of mingling, dancing and fun activities

in a Mardi Gras fashion. Admission is free, but donations will be accepted. The Alderton, [301 Cass St.](#), Saginaw. See article on page 8. For more info, contact [Daphne@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Daphne@PerceptionsSV.org).

### **Sun., February 12th - Genesee County**

**PFLAG Meeting** 2:00 - 4:30 pm. The meeting takes place at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Flint, [2474 S. Ballenger Hwy.](#) For more information, contact [pflagflint@yahoo.com](mailto:pflagflint@yahoo.com).

### **Wed., February 15th - Womyn's Room II**

6:00 pm. This women's group is designed as a safe place for Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender women, who are out or not, to come for support and socialization. For more info. contact Rev. Kathy VanBuskirk at 989-755-2618.

### **Wed., February 15th - Men's Friendship**

**Room** 7:00 pm. Men's Friendship Room is designed as a safe place for Gay, Bisexual and Transgender men, who are out or not, to come for support and socialization. It meets at David Younk's home in Saginaw. For more information, contact David Younk at 989-771-9721 or [DavidY513@hotmail.com](mailto:DavidY513@hotmail.com) or Rev. Kathy VanBuskirk at 989-755-2618.

### **▼ Thursday, February 16th - Perceptions General Meeting**

7:00 pm. Guest speaker, Ann Sage of Northwestern Mutual, will discuss the special needs of the LGBT community for financial and retirement planning. All are welcome. The Alderton, [301 Cass St.](#), Old Town Saginaw.

### **▼ February 17th - Friday Night Dinner**

7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends this week at **El Mexicano**, [3593 Center Ave.](#), Essexville. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

### **Sunday, February 19th - PFLAG Meeting**

2:00 - 4:30 pm. The meeting takes place at Our Saviour Lutheran Church, [2525 Hemmeter Rd.](#), Saginaw. For more information contact [pflag@pflag-mbs.org](mailto:pflag@pflag-mbs.org) or 989-941-1458.

### **▼ Tues, February 21st - Men's Discussion**

**Group** 7:00 to 8:30 pm. The Alderton, [301 Cass St.](#), Old Town Saginaw. 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](mailto:Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org) for additional information or to let him know you'll attend. Light snacks will be provided.

### **▼ Thurs., February 23rd - Saginaw Meet & Greet**

7:00 pm. Join Perceptions friends at **The Mixx**, [115 N. Hamilton St.](#), Saginaw, for food and conversation and perhaps try your luck at a board game or cards.

### **▼ February 24th - Friday Night Dinner**

7:00 pm. Join Perceptions members and friends this week at **Macy's Lakeshore Grill**, [4750 Fashion Square Blvd.](#), Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please reply to [RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:RSVP@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Fri.

### **▼ Monday, February 27th - Perceptions Transgender Group**

6:00 pm. Meeting at **Magic Bean Café**, [5789 State Street](#), 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 Rachel at [Rachel@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Rachel@PerceptionsSV.org).

### **Thurs., March 1st—Cheeseburgers in**

**Margaritaville** 6:00—9:00 pm. [Saginaw Art Museum](#). Live music, art, cheeseburgers and margaritas. Tickets \$35 in advance or \$45 at the door. See ad on page 11.

### **Fri., March 2nd - POP-U-Larity**

7:00 pm. A comedic mockumentary about finding your 15 minutes of fame. Written and produced by J. C. (John) Peterson, former Essexville resident, and Michelle Ehlen. \$5 per person. **State Theatre**, 913 Washington Ave., Bay City. Note: In 2003, John Peterson co-edited "A Face in the Crowd: Expressions of Gay Life in America" with Martin Bedogne in partnership with Judy Shepard to support the educational mission of the Matthew Shepard Foundation.

▼ Event sponsored or endorsed by Perceptions.

To be informed about upcoming events, simply send a blank email to: [PerceptionsSV-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:PerceptionsSV-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

# FEBRUARY 2012

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## February Speaker to Discuss Investment and Retirement Planning for LGBT People

Kay Sural

Join Perceptions members and friends on Thursday, February 16th to hear Ann Sage, Financial Representative with [Northwestern Mutual Financial Network](#). Ann will bring her expertise from over 20 years of investment and financial planning. Her talk will focus on the special needs of the LGBT community.

Ann practices a holistic approach to investment and retirement planning. Ann has many LGBT clients and will be able to explain not only investments but also how a single event could impact your financial security.

Northwestern Mutual offers insurance and investment products, asset & income protection, and planning services for retirement, investment, estates and trusts.

Ann has been a long-time supporter of Perceptions, so write down your questions and we will see you at The Alderton, [301 Cass St.](#), Old Town Saginaw, on Thursday, February 16 at 7:00 p.m.



## Introducing Four New Members of our Board of Trustees

### Sally Mims

I'm 53 and just graduated with my second degree, receiving a Bachelor's of Clinical Social Work. My first degree was from CMU and is in Psychology, Sociology, and English. I wanted to work in counseling upon graduating from CMU but, in the early 80s there were few jobs and little pay in Michigan in that field. I was working for Hudson's in sales and took a job that afforded me the opportunity to move to Oklahoma; from there I went to Texas, then California, then ending up in NJ for 12 years. I lived in openly gay communities. It wasn't until I came back to Michigan in 2005 (my grandmother was ill), and witnessed gay unions voted down and healthcare taken away that I realized, Michigan is not a friend to the LGBT community and that we, as a minority, can not afford to lose any more rights. I joined Perceptions to work with community outreach and teachings on AIDS and teen suicide. I would like to help bridge the gap of communication between heterosexuals and homosexuals in any way that I can.

Perceptions Saginaw Meet & Greet:

## Game Night at The Mixx



The kitchen at The Metro Grille will be open and serving up sandwiches and snacks. In addition to coffee and soft drinks, The Mixx offers a full bar with drink specials during our Meet & Greet.

Join us just for the company and conversation or participate in a game of Euchre, a board game, or other activity.

Thursday, February 23rd

7:00 - 9:00 pm



*Continued on page 9*

## Valentines Dance

Daphne Barkley

Take a dash of cupid, a pinch of the color red, add a splash of Mardi Gras green and you have the Perceptions Valentine's Dance. The dance will be held at The Alderton Building located at [301 Cass Street](#) in Saginaw on Saturday, February 11 at 7:00pm.

Our goal is to provide an event that is affordable and fun for everyone. Admission is free but donations will be accepted.

We will serve desserts, snacks and light refreshments so you are encouraged to make a night of it and visit one of the eateries in the surrounding area for dinner beforehand. There will be lots of mingling, dancing, and fun activities in a Mardi Gras fashion. And remember, this event is not just for couples! So grab your dancing shoes and come on down for a fun time.

Nearby restaurants include:

**Jake's Old City Grill** (0.1 miles)

100 S. Hamilton St.

989-797-8325

**The Junction** (0.1 miles)

410 Mackinaw St.

989-793-5829

**Pasong's Café** (0.2 miles)

114 N. Michigan Ave.

989-791-5008



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**Court Street Café** (0.2 miles)

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989-401-4004

**Zorba's Greek Cuisine** (0.3 miles)

617 S. Harrison St.

989-792-1959

**Tony's Original** (0.6 miles)

1029 Gratiot Ave.

989-792-1113

**The Panda House** (0.7 miles)

1010 N. Niagara St.

989-755-5394

## TRUSTEES continued

I welcome the chance to work with others to bring to another vote same-sex unions in Michigan.

### Kathy Lloyd

I'm 55 and was born in Detroit. I have lived in the Tri-City area since I was 20. I work as a legal assistant for Klimaszewski & Street and have for over 20 years. I was part of starting Awakening Sisters, a lesbian group in Midland in the 90s. I helped with the GLBT Pride celebration last year at Ojibway Island and will continue to do so. I wrote a column called Lesbian Daze for the Perceptions Newsletter when Tana Michaels was the editor. I am single. I identify as a feminist lesbian.

### Joel Payne

I have been attending various Perceptions gatherings for about two years now. And have always felt welcomed and informed. I am currently retired. In the past, I have been what some would call a jack of all trades and master of none. I was born and raised in Bay City and graduated from Bay City Central. After holding down a few dead end jobs, I joined and served our country in the United States Navy. After 10 years of service, I returned home

to Bay City. After about 1 year into my stint with the USN, I married. From that marriage I have two children, Joshua, born in 85, and Heather, born in 87. And thanks to my daughter, I have a beautiful granddaughter, Frankie Layne. I, as many of my peers, have always known I was different than most, i.e., gay. And after approximately 9 years of marriage I knew I could no longer continue the lie and had to be true to my self. I divorced and started to rediscover my inner being. And now more than ever my heart is with all GLBT individuals as we continue to work toward full equality for all Americans. That is why I look forward to working with Perceptions, and other organizations, to hopefully see full equality in my lifetime.

### diedra knox

We can't actually call diedra "new" to the Perceptions board. She was a founding member of Perceptions back in 2002, and she served on the Board of Trustees for several years. Originally from Baton Rouge, LA, diedra lives in Saginaw. She has worked as an Associate Professor of Biology at Delta College but is now easing into retirement. She was involved with the Delta Prism Alliance, a group of LGBT faculty and staff and their straight allies. She also has a long involvement with PFLAG Tri-Cities.

## Save These Dates

### Saturday, March 24th Chocolate Party

This annual fundraiser, sponsored jointly by PFLAG Tri-Cities and Perceptions, will take place in Terry Zajac's 1887 Queen Anne Victorian home on Bay City's east side.

Mix and mingle with members, friends and supporters of the two organizations while you sample a decadent assortment of chocolate deserts and other sweets. We will accept free will donations at the door.

### Saturday, December 8th Holiday Party

The Annual Holiday Party & Charity Auction is moving to a new venue. Our 2012 Festivities will take place in the [Saginaw Art Museum](#), 1126 North Michigan Avenue.

The museum is comprised of the Ring Family Mansion, a 1903 Georgian Revival style home, flanked by award-winning modern wings. One of the wings houses a 4,000 sq ft gallery and event space that will give us ample room for dining, displaying our auction items, and enjoying our entertainment. The rest of the museum will be open to browse the art work and displays.

## Diamond Anniversary Celebrated

On Sunday, January 15th, people from across the state gathered in Southfield to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the love and partnership between Dr. Henry Messer and Carl House. Henry and Carl achieved a milestone that few couples ever reach, regardless of their sexual orientation.

In her tribute to the couple, Denise Brogan-Kator, Executive Director of [Equality Michigan](#) wrote: "Stop for a moment and think about the obstacles that these two men had to overcome to reach this point. In 1951, when Henry and Carl met, it was not a particularly rosy time to be gay in America. Their relationship is a model for what we all aspire to, what we all ultimately hope to have: a loving, committed relationship that stands the test of time."

Dr. Messer was an early member of the Mattachine Society, one of the earliest organizations to advocate for gays. In those days of McCarthyism, it was a tremendous risk to a member of the medical profession to be identified as gay and potentially labeled as a "Communist." He later helped to form The Triangle Foundation.

Today, in Michigan where our progress seems to be eroding away and LGBT people face repeated attacks from a hostile legislature, we need more people like Henry and Carl with the vision and strength of conviction to step up and support the movement for full LGBT equality in our state.



## The Fight for Marriage Equality Continues

Brent Theisen

At least four states are in the spotlight right now, as they attempt to pass or (in one case) repeal same-sex marriage or civil union rights.

The state of Washington could vote soon to allow gay marriage. In the Senate, a previously undecided Democrat said she would be the 25th and deciding vote in support of the measure, all but ensuring its passage. The state House has already secured enough votes to pass the bill and Gov. Chris Gregoire publicly endorsed the proposal earlier in January. Opponents of same-sex marriage have already promised a referendum battle at the ballot if the Legislature passes the bill and it's signed into law. Source: [www.seattlepi.com](http://www.seattlepi.com)

Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper has called on the state legislature to pass a civil unions bill. Polling shows strong support for civil unions, by a 3-1 margin. He said in his State of the State address: "As we strive to make Colorado healthier, we believe in equal rights for all regardless of race, creed, gender or sexual orientation. We don't believe we should legislate what happens inside a church or place of worship, but government should treat all people equally. It's time to pass civil unions." Source: [coloradoindependent.com](http://coloradoindependent.com)

Maryland's Senate President, Thomas V. Mike Miller, has been speaking out against efforts by the legislature to legalize same sex marriage, calling it an "attack on traditional families." Governor Martin O'Malley supports the marriage bill. A marriage equality bill passed the senate last year, but didn't have enough support in the House for a vote. Source: [washingtonblade.com](http://washingtonblade.com)

On the downside, efforts are underway in New Hampshire to repeal the state's marriage equality law. Governor John Lynch has said he would veto the measure, which is likely to pass. Polling found that 62% of the state's residents support the marriage equality law that is currently in place. Source: [edgenewengland.com](http://edgenewengland.com)

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*ComedyFest is an annual benefit for Equality Michigan, which works to achieve full equality and respect for all people in Michigan regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.*

## Perceptions Unveils “New Home” with Open House & Fundraiser

Tom Brubaker

Excitement was in the air as Perceptions opened its new facility to the community on Saturday evening, January 21<sup>st</sup> with an open house and fundraiser at The Alderton building, 301 Cass Street in Old Town Saginaw. Approximately 75 people attended the two-hour event which featured hearty hors d'oeuvres and beverages, as well as a special presentation to recognize local businessmen, Bill Giorgis and Russ Inman, for their generous support of the LGBT community and their donation of The Alderton Building facility space.

“We are very excited to be able to present our “new home” to the community during Perceptions’ 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year,” says Tom Brubaker, Perceptions facilities chair and trustee. “Tonight’s event was also an opportunity to seek the financial and volunteer support from our members, friends, and allies for equipment, furnishings, and supplies which will be vital to our operation at The Alderton building.” Tom also thanked Shawna Davidson, of Davidson Design, also located in The Alderton, for being so welcoming to our group and for helping to make everything look so attractive for our event.

During an informal presentation, Perceptions Board Chair, Tim Atkinson, addressed the crowd by reviewing the important services of the organization, including social events and activities, educational programs, support groups, advocacy, and the organization’s fundraisers for other non-profits in the Saginaw Valley Region. Atkinson also spoke about the new facility as an important step in the growth and development of Perceptions. He noted that this would not have been possible without the generous gift from Bill Giorgis and Russ Inman.

Atkinson and Brubaker presented a plaque of appreciation to Bill Giorgis as a token of Perceptions’ appreciation. Bill Giorgis spoke of the various causes in the community which he and his business have supported and the importance of giving back to the community. Giorgis stated that he envisions Perceptions moving into The Alderton Building as

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the beginning of developing it into a Community Center in the future.

During the evening open house and fundraiser, \$500 was raised with more donations expected in the days and weeks ahead. Brubaker distributed donor brochures for the facilities fundraiser and explained how donors can make monetary donations, or choose an item from a “wish list” containing various items Perceptions will need to operate in its new home. Perceptions will create a visual display to be viewed at The Alderton which will contain the names of all of the donors to the facilities campaign.

Donors can send their donation and form from the brochure to Perceptions address, P.O. Box 1525, Midland, MI 48641 or go to Perceptions donor page at [www.PerceptionsSV.org/donate](http://www.PerceptionsSV.org/donate).

# Open House Photographs



Charissa & Jeff



Tom, Bill & Tim



Armando & Spencer



Janis & Kay



Current Trustees & Alumni