Lansing Association for Human Rights

August 2009 | Volume 30 | Issue 10

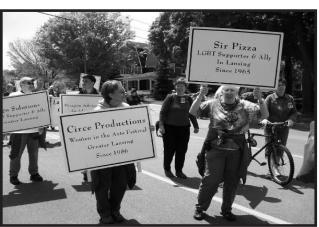
## LGBT Community Unites for Lansing's Anniversary



by Bill Beachler, Publisher

In one of the greatest networking achievements in the history of LAHR, President Penny

Gardner's vision for the Lansing 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade became a reality. Penny's vision was to have LGBT



organizations, businesses, groups, and supporters all join together behind standard signs (see picture), one after another, like the nations of the world entering the Olympic stadium, demonstrating their support and service to the City of Lansing. What a site it was – the largest contingent of 240 contingents participating in the parade.

The achievement was made possible by the partnering of LAHR and Suits and the City - Monique Goch and Penny Gardner working together to contact potential organizations and businesses, raise funds,

organize workers, plan the activities and promote the participation. The LGBT contingent began with the huge Unity Banner of LAHR and Suits. This was followed by an expanded Great Lakes Pride Band (see picture), who was helped by 15 members of the Chicago Lakeside Pride Band who made the trip to Lansing.

(Continued on page 4)





#### **Birthday Party Reminder**

LAHR is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. LAHR began on August 23, 1979. On Sunday, August 23, 2009, LAHR is having a Birthday Party at the Chrome Cat in Old Town from 4 to 6.

Please join the party!!!

#### Michigan Pride - Another Success

by Bill Beachler, Publisher

For those of you who attended one of the many events and activities during the June 12-14, 2009, weekend, you already know that Michigan Pride 2009 was another big success. From The White Party on Friday night; to the parade/march, rally and festival on Saturday; and ending with the brunch, tea dance and show on Sunday; Michigan Pride had something fun for everyone.

Included within the newsletter you will find a few pictures which we hope will bring back some positive memories or will encourage you to mark your calendar for next year!! LAHR again, as we have every year, supported Michigan Pride and had many visitors at our table. This year we shared our table with both LAHR-PAC and LAAN, which encouraged even more people to stop by and say hello. Also, the Great Lakes Pride Band participated in the parade and at the rally – everyone always enjoys hearing the band play "Jesus Loves Me" to the protesters.







## Letter from the Prez

by Penny Gardner, LAHR President



Dear Reader,

We are something else! The Lansing 150th Anniversary Parade is behind us and we made a fantastic showing. We were 40 groups, organizations, and individuals marching behind the LAHR and Suits Banner. I was the drum major! (No need to picture it.....) We were quite astonishing, all 500 of us, led by the Great Lakes Pride Band, and at the rear, if you forgive the expression, was the Chrome Cat float and refreshment stand. Please know that the sign Capitan was Sandy Cooklass, for whom I am forever grateful! What a fine job we all did. Thanks for your support of LAHR and Suits that made it all happen.

Time to move on to our next excitement! LAHR is celebrating an anniversary, a big one! 30 years in Lansing, supporting Lesbians, Gay Men, Bisexual and Transgender Women and Men, in our wonderful city. You'll be getting an anniversary fundraising letter in the mail soon. Please consider as generous a donation as you can manage. We are suggesting a dollar for each year. That would be \$30.00 should you wish to not stop and figure.

Something on my mind just now, are Old lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender women and men. I am a commissioner on the Commission on Services to the Aging. Although, as a part of policy, sexual orientation and gender identity is written into the non-discrimination of our work, I don't hear much about our lives as a part of the whole of our aging population. What I do know as an old lesbian, is that when I visit a long term care facility, or providers of services for the elderly, I don't see anything that says welcome to me. And it is a default, for those of us who are LGBT, that if there are no signs/symbols, words, recognition, of our whole beings, we are fearful that we are not welcome and therefore not safe. I am working with the commission to provide leadership in adding sexual orientation and gender identity to its cultural competency issues. Want to help? I want to know more about our lives as aging LGBT women and men. Please let me know how your lives are shaping up. What are your fears as you anticipate the next couple of decades of your life?

And on the other end of the spectrum of age is the protection of our children. HB 4131 is the current Second Parent Adoption Bill in the State House of Representatives. It will amend the adoption code to provide our children two legal parents whether those parents are married or not. Only married parents can co-adopt as the code is interpreted now.

Please go to <u>www.secondparentadoption.org</u> for more information. And if you would like to help CARE: Coalition for Adoption Rights Equality, move this bill to a full vote of The House, please contact me.

Thanks,

#### Penny

#### **Greater Lansing Gay Men's Chorus**

"Rehearsals for our Fall 2009 season begin Tuesday, August 18. Open enrollment continues through Tuesday, August 25, only. Join us at 6:45 p.m. in the Molly Grove Chapel on the campus of First Presbyterian Church downtown Lansing. We welcome all veteran (past and present) singers as well as new male voices within the LGBT and LGBT supportive community. We look forward to seeing you in August!"

Dave Wiseman, Artistic Director, 2009-2010 Concert Season

#### LAHR • Email: President@lahronline.org • On the Web: www.LAHRonline.org

#### **LGBT News**

Lansing Association for Human Rights P.O. Box 6565 East Lansing, MI 48826



Bill Beachler: LGBT News Publisher 337-1419 or beachlerb@sbcglobal.net Melissa Cogswell: Layout Editor

599-7061 or Melissa@focusmediagroup.com

**LAHR Board of Directors** 

Penny Gardner, President

484-4512 or marydpenny@yahoo.com

Cindy Redman, Vice President 643-0956 or redmancj@yahoo.com Joseph Marutiak, Treasurer 485-6697 or jmarutial@juno.com Nancy VanHoozier, Secretary

484-6704 or nvanhoozier@olivetcollege.edu

Members At-Large ------

Bill Beachler - 337-1419 or beachlerb@sbcglobal.net Jillian Pastoor - 614-8466/jillannedawn@yahoo.com Nancy English - 482-2668 or english2003@yahoo.com Lisa Haston - haston@lcc.edu

Mike Carlson - 332-0167 ext. 43/mikecarlson@hotmail.com Kirk Taskila, Paul Levandowski, Judy Bohms, Brian Winters, Phil Bachinski, Pam Allen

#### Website

Melissa Cogswell

599-7061 or Melissa@focusmediagroup.com

Story Contributors -

Nancy English: variety - englishn2003@yahoo.com
Pam Sisson: A Matter of Law - 484-4300
Jacob A. Distel, Jr.: Positively Speaking - disteljake@hotmail.com
Pastor Paul S. Downie: 332-2326/pastorpaul@voyager.net
Mary Boudreau: Our Families - boudrea1@msu.edu
Bill Castellani: OurWashington/HRC Connection - wcastellan@aol.com
Brian Winters: Smart Money - brian@7advice.com

Contents of the LGBT News should not be construed to represent the beliefs of the LAHR organization as a whole.

#### **Letter to the Editor**

Dear Editor of the LGBT News:

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity and space to urge everyone connected to Lansing's LGBT community to come out strong on August 20, to wish Kathie Dunbar a very happy birthday and to show her our community's support for her re-election this fall.

Kathie Dunbar decided, all on her own, following her election to the Lansing City Council that it was wrong that Lansing did not have a human rights ordinance, and what is more important for us is that she strongly believed that ordinance should include lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered persons. Kathie did this because in her mind it was the right thing to do.

We owe Kathie Dunbar our gratitude for what she did three years ago for the Lansing lgbt community. Each and everyone of you who live, work and recreate within the city limits of Lansing need to let her know how much your protection from discrimination means to you - show your support through yard signs, going door to door for Kathie, donating volunteer time, donating money and showing up at her birthday party August 20 at Chrome Cat between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m.

Let's make it a birthday party she will not forget for a very long time!

Dennis Hall

#### **Washington Responds**

Senator Debbie Stabenow Responds to a LAHR Member:

Subject: Immigration

Thank you . . . for contacting me regarding your support for immigration rights for samesex couples. I understand your concerns.

Throughout my career, I have fought for equal rights for all Americans. In the past, I have cosponsored the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, the Matthew Shepard Hate Crimes Prevention Act, and I voted against the so-called "Federal Marriage Amendment." I believe that we must respect the rights of those in committed relationships - rights most of us take for granted, like visiting a critically-ill loved one in the hospital or shared property protections.

As you may know, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont) has introduced the Uniting American Families Act. This bill, introduced on May 8 2007, would amend immigration laws to include permanent partners as qualified individuals. Currently this legislation is pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee, of which I am not a member. However, I will keep your views in mind should it come before me for a vote.

Thank you again for contacting me. Please continue to keep me informed about issues of concern to you and your family.

Sincerely, Debbie Stabenow, United States Senator

(Publisher' Note — I have now received many emails from people, including my own, from U. S. governmental officials on a variety of subjects. Beginning in May, I am going to include one letter per month entitled "Washington Responds." I hope these letters provide you a better understanding of where our elected officials stand on important LGBT issues and a better understanding of the issue. If you receive responses, please email them to me. Thank You!)

## Support Group For Women Who Love Women

If you have recently realized that you are attracted to women, or you have known for some time and are just now able to deal with the realization, this group is for you.

If you sensed as a young girl a difference between yourself and your peers but had no words to describe it... Or...if you knew exactly what you were sensing but were well aware that society disapproved, and so you conformed - you married and had children... Or...maybe you knew what a lesbian is, did not deny your attraction for women, and have been involved with

women, but thought you were just different....Or...maybe you have believed you were heterosexual until you fell in love with a woman.

Some of the issues that will be discussed:

Sexuality - What is it?
What do all these letters mean--LGBTQ?
What is "Coming Out"? Is it something
you want to or need to do?
Coming out to husbands, children, family,
friends, co-workers
Managing the roller coaster of emotions grief, loss, exhilaration of your newfound
self, finding a support system, how to date

Group started June 15th, Mondays 6:00pm-8:00pm

Women's Center of Greater Lansing, 1712 E. Michigan Ave. Call 517.372.9163 for more information and to register

Cindie Alwood, M.A., CRC, LLPC Co-Director Women's Center of Greater Lansing, Inc. 1710-1712 E. Michigan Avenue Lansing, MI 48912-2825 (517) 372-9163 phone (517) 372-7981 fax www.womenscenterofg reaterlansing. org

in the same sex world.

#### **Anniversary**

(Continued from page 1)

Following the band, just as Penny visioned it, were the signs and approximately 500 people representing 40 organizations, businesses, and groups. The LGBT contingent took up a whole city block.

Penny commented, "What a power we exhibited. We got good vibes throughout the parade. Lansing Association for Human Rights---advocates for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender people rang from all the microphones the entire route of the parade. How marvelous to hear it, in a "mainstream" venue."

The following is the sign list, organized by "The Sign Capitan"---Sandy Cook-Lass, of organizations, businesses and groups that networked together to demonstrate the unity and strength of the LGBT community in providing service and support to the City of Lansing:

- 1. Lesbian Coffee gathering in Lansing since 2007
- CEI-CMH Community Mental Health-CEI Diversity Advisory Council Clinton, Eaton and Ingham Counties since 1964
- 3. Goldenrod Music Distribution serving Lansing since 1975
- MSU GLBT Alumni Association serving Lansing since 2004
- 5. The Crusaders Softball Team playing softball in Lansing since 1999
- American Friends Service Committee-Inclusive Justice Program / Faith Action Network in Ingham County since 2001
- 7. Local 459, OPEIU serving Lansing's working families since 1973
- 8. Edgewood United Church, UCC, open and affirming in Greater Lansing since 1998
- Voices for Women on Campus for Social Equality, Justice and Women's Issues at MSU
- 10. CIRCE Productions Women In The Arts Festival in greater Lansing since 1986
- 11. First Church of the Brethren continuing the work of Jesus since 1928
- 12. Unitarian Universalist Church of greater Lansing open and affirming since the 1990's
- 13. MSU LGBT Students serving, supporting & educating MSU and Lansing Community since 1969
- 14. Michigan Equality promoting equality & eliminating discrimination since 1999
- Paragon Blue Bluebooth Advertising serving Lansing since 1999
- 16. Paragon Advisory Group an advertising firm serving Lansing since 2005
- 17. Lansing Area Aids Network (LAAN) meeting the needs of those living with HIV/AIDS since 1985
- 18. Esquire Bar serving & supporting the LGBT community in Lansing since 1994
- 19. Spiral Video & Dance Bar serving & supporting the LGBT community in Lansing since 1998
- 20. Sir Pizza an LGBT supporter & ally in Lansing since 1965

- 21. Michigan Pride, Inc. organizing Annual Pride Festivals in Lansing since 1988
- 22. Grand Café supporting the LGBT community & serving Lansing since 2001
- 23. Gay Men's Chorus musical expression & empowerment serving greater Lansing since 1988
- Sistrum Lansing Women's Chorus singing in Lansing since 1986
- 25. Chrome Cat @ Rendevous on the Grand serving and supporting the LGBT community in Lansing since 2009
- 26. Suits and the City an LGBT Business Networking Organization in Lansing since 2004
- 27. Great Lakes Pride Band performing @ LGBT community events since 2006
- 28. Gone Wired Café an LGBT supporter & ally serving Lansing since 2004
- 29. Citadel 97.5 FM an LGBT supporter & ally serving Lansing & Michigan since 2006
- 30. LCC Gay Straight Alliance a safe place to discuss LGBT issues since 1999
- 31. RJF Photography serving greater Lansing since 2008
- 32. GMT Strategies, Inc. political consulting & direct mail firm in Lansing since 1998
- 33. GLNAWI Working Together for Peace and Justice in greater Lansing since 2001
- Red Cedar Friends Quaker Meeting in Lansing area since 1960
- 35. First Fridays in Lansing since 1979
- 36. ACLU MI Lansing Area Branch since 1957
- 37. GLFSA MSU's LGBT Faculty, Staff & Graduate Student Assoc. since 1990
- 38. Sign Solutions thank you for making the signs for the Parade
- 39. Lansing Association for Human Rights serving Lansing since 1979







#### YOU ARE INVITED

TO CELEBRATE

KATHIE DUNBAR'S

BIRTHDAY ON AUGUST 20, 2009

AT THE



FROM 5:30 P.M. TO 7:30 P.M.

COME OUT AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR KATHIE'S RE-ELECTION TO THE LANSING CITY COUNCIL.

A \$10.00 DONATION AT THE DOOR, MORE IF YOU CAN, LESS IF YOU CAN'T!

Sponsored by: Ehsan Ahmed, Marilyn Bowen, Bill Beachler, Penny Gardner, Monique Goch, Dennis Hall, Brian Huggler, Sergi Kvitko and James McClurken



#### Some Good News From Washington

(Publisher's Note – Penny Gardner, LAHR President, forwarded this article and thought this good news should be shared in the Newsletter.)

The State Department will offer equal benefits and protections to same-sex partners of American diplomats, according to an internal memorandum Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton sent to an association of gay and lesbian Foreign Service officers.

Mrs. Clinton said the policy change addressed an inequity in the treatment of domestic partners and would help the State Department recruit diplomats, since many international employers already offered such benefits.

"Like all families, our Foreign Service families come in different configurations; all are part of the common fabric of our post communities abroad," Mrs. Clinton said in the memorandum, a copy of which was provided to The New York Times by a member of the gay and lesbian association.

She said, "the department will provide these benefits for both opposite-sex and same-sex partners because it is the right thing to do." A senior State Department official confirmed the new policy, though he did not say when it would take effect.

Among the benefits are diplomatic passports, use of medical facilities at overseas posts, medical and other emergency evacuation, transportation between posts, and training in security and languages.

Gay and lesbian diplomats have lobbied the State Department for these benefits for several years. Under current policy, they note, diplomats with domestic partners could be evacuated from a hazardous country by the American government while their partners were left behind.

The State Department had declined to provide some benefits to the partners of diplomats, invoking the Defense of Marriage Act, which limited federal recognition of same-sex unions.

Mrs. Clinton was asked about the issue in February at her first town-hall-style meeting with department employees. "I view this as an issue of workplace fairness, employee retention, and the safety and effectiveness of our embassy communities worldwide," she said, to applause.

Influential lawmakers also pushed for the changes — even drafting legislation requiring the State Department to offer these benefits — until Mrs. Clinton assured them that she would address the issue. At a recent hearing on financing for the State Department, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative Howard L. Berman, welcomed news of the planned change in policy. Mr. Berman, Democrat of California, introduced a former ambassador to Romania, Michael Guest, who left the Foreign Service in 2007, citing unfair treatment of his partner, Alex Nevarez

Mrs. Clinton's husband, former President Bill Clinton, appointed the nation's first openly gay ambassador, James C. Hormel, to serve in Luxembourg. Opposition by Republican senators blocked a vote on the appointment, leading Mr. Clinton to appoint him eventually during a Congressional recess in 1999.





Everybody Reads exists to empower the underrepresented individuals and families in the tri-county area through a comprehensive community bookstore and neighborhood resource center.

#### Visit us at:

2019 E. Michigan Ave. Lansing, MI 48912 or call us at: (517) 346-9900

www.becauseeverybodyreads.com Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. & Sunday 9:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.

#### Out. Helping You.

If you have been a victim of anti-gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender violence, harassment or discrimination, call us.

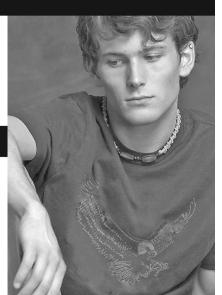
We're here to help you.

1-877-787-4264

or email: report@tri.org



Offices in Grand Rapids and Detroit





#### Nancy English & Elaine Pogoncheff

July 14th - 15 years

Legally married for one year on July 2nd in Santa Rosa, CA (Our marriage is still legal in CA - we are one of the approximately 18,000 lesbian or gay couples that were grandfathered in).

#### Tim Knight and John Griffith

August 19th 32 years !!!!

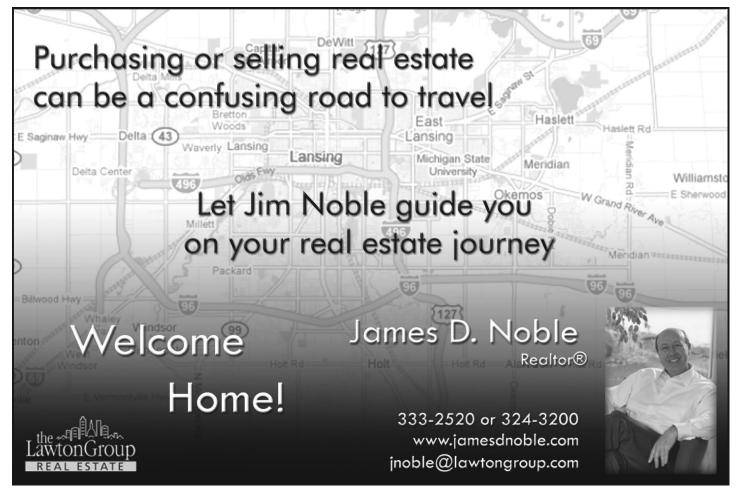
#### Congratulations!

#### **MSU Alumni & Friends Party**

by Bill Beachler

Save the date!!! The GLBT Alumni of MSU hosts the annual Homecoming Party 2009 for alumni and friends. The party will be at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, October 16 – the night before the Northwestern Homecoming football game. More information will be provided as the date approaches.

Check out the association's excellent web site, where you will find out about the organization, can read the bios of the Board members, can have your email address added to the data base for news and information postings, and can read the latest news about GLBT MSU happenings and people. The web site is <a href="www.msu.edu/~glbtalum/">www.msu.edu/~glbtalum/</a>



February 2007

#### BUNGLE IN THE JUNGLE



by Nancy English, LAHR Board

On Wednesday, July 1st I attended the Lansing City Council Public Safety Committee meeting along with LAHR

President Penny Gardner. I was there for the discussion regarding the recent "sex sting" conducted by the Lansing Police Department at Fenner Nature Center.

This was quite a long meeting as there was a lot to discuss. Councilmember Sandy Allen chaired the meeting with Councilmembers Carol Wood and Eric Hewitt also in attendance: these three Councilmembers make up the Public Safety committee.

We began the "Discussion on Fenner Nature Center" portion of the meeting discussing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request regarding Lansing Police Department documents of the arrest of the individuals involved in the sex sting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. What a nightmare - Lansing City Attorney Brigham Smith appeared so confused in talking about this issue, and actually every issue in this matter that one really had to question his competence. Early in the FOIA discussion it was discovered that he had not given the Council-members the correct documents

for this discussion and had to call one of his staff to get them. This was just the beginning. There was confusion around which department, if any, was going to charge these individuals with a crime, then it came out that Prosecutor Stuart Dunnings did charge the accused persons with indecent exposure. What was heartening about all of Smith's bumbling is that he was called on it by the Councilmembers. Councilmember Wood was particularly adamant in questioning Smith, trying to get answers and also trying to find out why this matter was handled so poorly by Smith and his department.

When asked to legally define entrapment so those of us at the meeting would be able to understand if the Lansing Police did entrap the arrested individuals, Smith was so incoherent we were unable to determine if entrapment was used. Smith stated that entrapment is a confusing concept. I did some research about entrapment and according to law.jrank. org there are two types of entrapment, subjective and objective. Michigan uses the objective standard that "imposes responsible limitations on the actions of government agents in investigating and prosecuting criminal behavior. With this test, the courts scrutinize the level of government involvement in the criminal actions to determine if the officers acted in such a way that they would, in a usual case, affirmatively create crime where none would have existed without their actions."

This website also writes that in the objective test used by the courts, "the key question is whether the behavior of the government has demonstrated the need for the application of a strong public policy to deter instigation of crime by the government in order to get a conviction." It also writes that States that have adopted the objective test are more concerned with the government's participation in the alleged criminal matter instead of the actions, motivations or state of mind of the accused: "The test used is whether the government action would have caused 'a normally law-abiding person to commit the offense."

So did the undercover officers involved in the sex sting on May 22<sup>nd</sup> use entrapment? According to the objective test used in the State of Michigan, it appears possible - if the accused would have gone to trial, a judge or jury would have made that determination. In one of the two incidents, the undercover officer approached the accused, initiated a conversation with him and asked him if he wanted to go for a walk while looking at the accused person's groin. They walked a short distance into the woods and after a few minutes the accused man touched his groin area on the outside of his clothing. Only after the undercover officer asked the man, "Can I see it?" did the accused man expose himself. It is also noted in the report that when observing other people approaching

(Continued on page 10)

## 'HY PLAN WITH GUARDIAN?

Guardian Protect Invest Financial Planning, LLC



Brian Winters, MA, AAMS President and Financial Planner (888) 7-ADVICE brian@7advice.com

GLBT-Friendly Registered Investment Advisor & Licensed Insurance Agency

Expert Tax and Financial Planning for Same-Sex Couples

5% of Profits Donated to HRC

Specializing in Financial Issues Facing the GLBT Community

Low Fees and Extended Hours

#### Smart Money



Tag Team the Taxman (and Taxwoman)

by Brian Winters, MA, AAMS, Financial Planner

The time to think about taxes is not April 15th. By then it's too late. You're stuck with the consequences of last year's financial activity. Now is the time to make next April a less bitter pill to swallow.

The key to paying the minimum on next year's taxes is making sure the person in your couple who makes the most takes most of the tax deductions and credits. Why? Because the percentage of income given to the IRS increases up as someone makes more.

If you make \$30,000 you tax bracket is 15%. So every \$1 of tax deduction is worth about \$0.15 in reduced taxes. But if you made \$150,000 then your tax rate is 28% and every \$1 of deduction is worth \$0.28 in reduced taxes, nearly double! By making sure the person in the higher tax bracket in a same-sex couple gets most of the tax deductions you can reduce the couple's overall tax bill.

This is another of those Band-Aid type strategies where we fight social and tax unfairness by using the system's discrimination against it. But truly, marriage equality is the only real solution.

#### **Going Green**

The Obama administration has instituted some very nice tax credits for those who upgrade to energy-efficient doors/ windows, add insulation, and do really green things like add solar panels or wind turbines. The credits also apply to tankless and efficient water heaters and furnaces/air conditioners.

These credits are great, so remember to have the higher-earning partner actually purchase the equipment because doing so creates the greatest tax benefit for the couple.

#### Charity

Assuming both partners itemize deductions, having the person with the highest tax rate make the couple's gifts to charity is generally a good way to minimize taxes.

#### Mortgage

If you're paying a mortgage it makes sense to have the highest-earning member of the couple pay the interest, property taxes and PMI because all of these expenses are tax deductible. Remember, having the highest-earning member of a couple take most of the deductions lowers the couple's overall tax bill.

Who pays the mortgage has estate planning and ownership consequences. It's best to talk with an estate planning attorney before putting this strategy into practice.

Taxes are seldom simple, and these strategies are no exception. It's always a good idea to seek advice either from the IRS or from your tax advisor before implementing any tax strategy.

Brian Winters is President and Financial Planner at Guardian Financial Planning, LLC, an independent Registered Investment Advisor serving the planning and investment needs of the LGBT community throughout Lansing, Jackson and Ann Arbor. He can be reached at brian@7advice.com.

Subscribe to

GLBT News
and receive a

FREE T-Shirt!

## LCC GSA INFORMATION

The public is welcome to attend our meetings but you have to be a Lansing Community College student taking at least one credit to vote in elections and go on trips.

LCC GSA meetings are held on Mondays in student personal service room 211 on LCC's main campus 4:30 to 6:00 pm!

For more information please contact Jennifer Spenny (spennyj@lcc.edu) or Gina Beaudry (beaudrg@lcc.edu)



#### **Bungle**

(Continued from page 8)

on the foot path, the man zipped up his pants, covering himself. The accused man also did not initiate sex with the undercover officer in the park but asked the undercover officer if he lived nearby. When the officer replied that he did and asked the accused man if he wanted to go to his home, the accused man said he would follow the officer there. The undercover officer and another detective followed the accused man's vehicle and arrested him outside of Fenner Nature Center for indecent exposure.

In the other arrest, the undercover officer wrote in his report, "I then looked toward the accused's waistline and nodded my head. I know from experience in working sex crimes, when a person is close by and makes a gesture, such as nodding your head, it suggests to the person to expose themselves." After the officer made the gesture to the accused man, only then did this man expose himself to the officer. This man was also arrested outside of the park after the undercover officer made arrangements to meet him in the officer's apartment.

Lansing Police Department Captain Ray Hall was also at the meeting. He said that

the police had been monitoring Fenner Nature Center, patrolling through the park in their vehicles and also walking through the center without seeing any sexual activity. So then they decided to conduct the sex sting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. The way the Friends of Fenner Nature Center and some other folks at the meeting talked about sex at the center, it sounded like you could just walk into the parking lot and see people "doing it" all over the place. I kept hearing how people (meaning gay men) have been having sex at Fenner for years and that children and families come to the park and isn't it awful that they have to be subjected to this. It was also written in both police reports that buses of school children were in the park while the undercover officers were conducting their sting. But neither of the men arrested were accused of exposing themselves to anyone but the undercover officer and they were nowhere near the children who were in the park.

In my mind, this sex sting was a discriminatory act against gay men. Don't get me wrong, I don't condone people having sex in public places — either homosexual or heterosexual. But in all of the years that I have known about heterosexual couples having sex in their cars or in a public place, I have never heard of any straight couples getting arrested for it. You see it in the movies and on television; you can hear dialogue such as, "and then we made passionate love

underneath the maple tree at our favorite picnic spot." There is no great outcry or talk about children seeing straight couples engaged in such activity.

Lansing Police Department Lt. Larry Krause wrote in an e-mail on May 20th, "I'd also like to get Police Commissioner, Jan Kolp off my back and help out Lt. Nosotti. Apparently the fellas are out in full force at Fenner looking for some male love. I'd like to set up some surveillance and see if we can catch a couple of them servicing one another, so they can be charged with Gross Indecency." Jan Kolp, who was appointed to the Police Commissioners Board of Directors, contacted the police several times about men having sex with men at Fenner which resulted in the May 22nd sex sting.

(Continued on page 14)





## Free Legal Documents to GLBT Families

from Rainbow Law

Rainbow Law is pleased to announce the addition of a Last Will and Testament and Deed to our FREE Legal Document Package. This offer is intended to help the LGBT Community protect their rights and property during the current economic crisis.

Since 2003, Rainbow Law has been providing free Advance Directives (Living Will, Medical Power of Attorney for Health Care and Durable Financial Power of Attorney) to any LGBT person who fills out the Free Advance Directives order form.

Recently the organization's co-founders, Carrie and Elisia Ross-Stone, made a decision to add a free Last Will and Testament and Deed because these two documents are powerful tools that can be used to extend inheritance and property rights to partners and children who are not legally recognized family members.

"More and more people are requesting free documents but Advance Directives alone do not go far enough," said Elisia Ross-Stone. She added, "Right now people need a way to protect their assets – especially their home and a Last Will and a deed will help to do that."

Elisia and Carrie explained that they just want to provide a bit of positive news to struggling LGBT families. Unlike other legal document services, Rainbow Law's free documents are not generic blank forms. The organization creates state specific, personalized documents that are drafted by Elisia and Carrie and delivered ready to sign. And, their free documents really are free!

In addition to legal documents, Rainbow Law offers a free Estate Planning Workbook, loads of information about legal and civil rights, they make available to sign a Marriage Equality petition to send to the President and Congress, they blog on political and legal issues that affect LGBT community, publish an

online LGBT Newsletter, speak at LGBT events and more.

Elisia and Carrie are married (in Canada , 2003) lesbian life partners, mothers of 3 grown children and grandmothers to Jareth, age 6 and Eowyn, age 4. These two amazing women have spent their adult lives advocating for marriage equality long before it seemed remotely possible. In 2003 and 2004, they rode their bicycles coast-to-coast to speak out about the need for LGBT legal and civil rights. 'Lesbian Grandmothers from Mars' is a featurelength documentary about the 2004 ride which was filmed by Keith Wilson of Wall-Eye Productions. Currently Carrie and Elisia are building their own recycled house in rural West Virginia.

Katie McGrath-Keating Communications Manager Phone: (304) 796-4245 <u>info@rainbowlaw.com</u> www.RainbowLaw.com



# LAAN Lansing Area AIDS Network IN MEMORY & IN HOPE

Young's Landing

511 E Grand River Old Town Walk-In Wednesdays 6pm-9pm **Listening Ear** 

313 w. Grand River East Lansing Appointments Only Thursdays 6pm-9pm **LAAN Office** 

913 W. Holmes Rd Lansing Appointments Only 1st & 3rd Tuesdays 3pm-9pm

#### FREE ANONYMOUS HIV ANTIBODY TESTING

Care Coordination: Since 1986 LAAN has been providing Care Coordination Services to HIV infected men, women, and children. To date, over 900 individuals and their families have been provided care assistance and support by Client Services Coordinators under the direction of a Clinical Director. The Clinical Team assesses need and develops individualized care plans for each client served. These plans focus on the coordination of core medical services as well as various support services. LAAN operates a Food Pantry for HIV infected individuals and their families. LAAN can offer limited emergency assistance for clients meeting eligibility criteria. Emergency financial assistance can be provided to assist with medical, mental health and dental costs as well as with housing and utilities. Transportation assistance, nutritional supplements, adherence supplies, and a broad range of support services are provided to each client based on individual need. LAAN offers a Hott Topix Series for HIV infected persons as well as a Positively Aware Series for the newly diagnosed. The agency routinely coordinates services with a broad range of other community partners.

**HIV Prevention & Early Intervention Services:** LAAN provides HIV Prevention Programs under the guidance of the Prevention Coordinator. Since 1996, the LAAN prevention program has provided services to thousands of individuals in the Greater Lansing Area. These services have included HIV Counseling, Testing, and Referral Services, Skills Building Workshops and Education Workshops designed to reduce the risk of HIV infection, Outreach, and Information and Referral tables at community events and health fairs. The LAAN Early Intervention Program (EIP), as guided by the EIP Coordinator, provides services to clients in substance abuse treatment programs and others whose drug and alcohol use contribute to risk behaviors for HIV infection and/or transmission. EIP clients are offered free, anonymous HIV counseling, testing, and referral services, communicable disease education, and skill building workshops. The Early Intervention Program also provides required communicable disease education to substance abuse treatment providers as well as related technical assistance to agencies funded by the Mid South Substance Abuse Commission.

Volunteer Program: Many volunteer opportunities are available at LAAN. These opportunities include; general office and front desk support, client transportation, staffing and assisting with various community events such as AIDS Walk Lansing and World AIDS Day, as well as providing much needed volunteer staffing for prevention efforts including; HIV Counseling, Testing, and Referral Services, community education, needs assessment, Outreach, and cofacilitation of various Skills Building Workshops. Two of the more significant volunteer opportunities are the Buddy Program and the LAAN Food Pantry. The Buddy Program links volunteers with persons living with HIV to provide both practical and emotional support. The Food Pantry provides food and nutritional supplements to persons living with HIV and their families. Under the direction of the Auxiliary Services Coordinator, dozens of individuals throughout the year assist in the Food Pantry; stocking products, assisting with food pickup and delivery, transporting clients, and providing shopping assistance.

913 W HOLMES ROAD SUITE 115 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48910 • 517 394 3560 • WWW.LAANONLINE.ORG

February 2007 — 11

#### **Important Immigration Email Forwarded**

Subject: The Uniting American Families Act (UAFA)

MSU / LAHR LGBT Help Needed

Hello to all of MSU's & LAHR's LGBT Community & Allies,

Please forgive me for this rather impersonal e-mail, but I felt I needed to reach out to as many people as possible.

I want to thank you for all of your hard work and support of the progressive and pro-LGBT Community in Michigan and beyond!

I need your help and the help of all in the progressive and pro-LGBT Community in Michigan in order to help get the word out about a bill in Congress that would change the lives of many people who's families are being torn apart.

The Uniting American Families Act (UAFA -H.R. 1024/S. 424) was introduced as a Valentine's Day gift this year to samesex, binational couples by Rep. Jerrold Nadler

and Sen. Patrick Leahy.

As you may be aware, the U.S. government discriminates against gay and lesbian binational couples by not allowing us to sponsor our foreign-born life partners for immigration. Because of this, we face the terrible choice of separating from the person we love or leaving our country. As Americans, we should not have to choose between

family and country.

The UAFA would fulfill the pledge of family unification under current U.S. immigration

policy by allowing gay and lesbian Americans to sponsor their life partners for immigration to the United States.

The Washington Post and The San Francisco Chronicle have both recently endorsed passage of the UAFA and the American Bar Association has also just

recently adopted a resolution endorsing the UAFA.

This is not a problem that is fixed by civil unions or even same-sex marriage arriving in Iowa, Vermont or any other state. Tens of thousands of bi-national samesex couples continue to be discriminated against despite changing marriage laws. The Uniting American Families Act would allow us to sponsor our foreign partners for immigration, a right that straight married couples in the US enjoy, along with same-sex couples in 19 other nations around the world. Until this legislation passes, the US will continue, in the gleeful words of the Family Research Council, to "export homosexuals from the United States" as we are forced to choose between our loved ones and our country.

I would ask you to PLEASE contact your members of Congress asking for their support on this bill, and please send this e-mail to your list servs, members, sponsors, board, family and friends - and anyone who is supportive of the LGBT community in Michigan - to help spread

(Continued on page 13)



New & Used Car & Truck Sales Tom's Desk (517) 622-6081 or Cell (517) 749-0532 bestpriceticer@aol.com





CO CHEVROLE (A) BUICK Y PONTIAC GMC

5895 E. Saginaw, Grand Ledge

West on Saginaw Hwy. Just west of the Lansing Mall

### **Over 1500 Cars & Trucks! Open Every Day**



1-800-SUNDANCE WWW.SUNDANCECHEVY.COM

#### **Immigration**

(Continued from page 12)

the word about this very important issue. While I am not from Michigan, in order for this bill to move forward, it needs the support of as many members of Congress as possible, including:

Sen. Carl Levin (517) 377-1508

Sen. Debbie Stabenow (517) 203-1760

Rep. Mike Rogers (Ingham & Livingston) 877-333-6453

Rep. Mark Schauer (Jackson & Eaton) (517) 780-9075

Rep. David Camp (Clinton) 800-342-2455

Rep. John Conyers and Rep. Sander Levin have already signed on to co-sponsor. The majority of rest of these Senators and Representatives have very good records on LGBT issues and just need to hear from a few of their Michigan constituents to sign on - please give them the push that they need! Even if they are Republicans, they need to hear about this issue from their constituents. Reaching out to your two Senators and your Representative by calling, emailing or faxing them to ask for their support can help to ensure this bill will pass.

I am one such person who would benefit greatly from the passage of the UAFA. I am from NY and my partner is from Europe and we both live and work in the suburbs of NY, where we bought an apartment together a few years ago. With the recent economic downturn, my partner's employer has notified him that his work visa will not be renewed when it expires in a few months. If he cannot locate another employer willing to sponsor his work visa (he has been trying for months, but not only is it difficult to find a job at the moment, but especially so when you have to convince the employer to hire an immigration attorney), we will be forced to sell our place, leave our family and friends, and move to Europe. This is something neither of us want to do as we have built a life here together.

(Continued on page 14)

#### **LAHR Services You Need**

by Bill Beachler, Publisher

LAHR provides the local LGBT community some excellent electronic services. Please take advantage of these services and help us improve them. First, if you haven't already done so, please visit LAHR's excellent Web site at <a href="https://www.lahronline.org">www.lahronline.org</a>.

LAHR's home page provides you current news and information about our local community. It provides you a link to The LGBT News, including all past issues of the newsletter going back to Jan., 2008. The home page provides you an easy opportunity to join LAHR and to donate to its many projects and services. Most important, it provides you the opportunity to participate in one of the best communication services in Michigan – see below for more information.

The LAHR Web site also provides you the following information: information about LAHR, such as an excellent History; contact information, such as our mailing address and the ability to contact us by email (please click on email and send us any additions, changes or deletions to any of the information found on the site to help us improve the site); up-to-date information about local events and activities – there is always something to do in the greater Lansing area – check

out the opportunities; political action information, including political activities and prior to elections, the excellent LAHR-PAC candidate ratings; and finally excellent links to other organizations / services/ activities. The Web site is easy to use and to navigate. Check it out!!

Second, if you are not one of the approximately 400 current participants in the excellent LAHR list services, you are missing one of the best communication tools available. There are two list servs available: LAHRonline and LAHRdiscussion. The LAHRonline list service is for social communication. You will receive all postings about what is happening in the Mid-Michigan area. In addition, you also have the opportunity to post what you know, so you can share it with others. The LAHRdiscussion list service is for conversations about various topics. You may read what others think about a particular topic and you may add your "two-cents" to the discussion. This is frequently an educational opportunity. Often this discussion includes information and opinion about politics.

You have the opportunity to join one or both of these excellent list services. Just go to the LAHR Web site home page and on the right side of the screen it says, "Subscribe to Mailing List." Under this heading are the two choices. Just click LAHRonline and/or LAHRdiscussion to join.

#### **GREAT FOOD, GREAT MUSIC, GREAT CAUSE!**

The Lansing Area AIDS Network (LAAN) is hosting a fundraiser on Sunday, August 16<sup>th</sup> from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m. featuring a concert by the Jonas Ridge Bluegrass Band who will be performing from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m.

Don't miss this great event taking place at 1305 Blanchette Street in East Lansing; Picnic themed foods plus light alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages will be provided. This fundraiser is geared for adults and, of course, only those who are 21 years of age or older will be served alcohol.

A minimum donation of \$25 PER PERSON will buy entry to this event – additional donations are always welcome! Tickets are limited so hurry up and order yours now by contacting LAAN at: 517-394-3560 or Nancy English at: <a href="mailto:nenglish@laanonline.org">nenglish@laanonline.org</a> Your donation goes directly to the Lansing Area AIDS Network.

#### **Bungle**

(Continued from page 10)

Unfortunately, the people who were part of the Friends of Fenner Nature Center left the meeting early before Councilmember Hewitt addressed the topic of couples having sex at Fenner. Councilmember Hewitt asked if the concern was only about men having sex with men in the park or if they were also concerned about heterosexual sex in the park. He also questioned if people were complaining about gay and lesbian couples kissing, holding hands or appropriately touching one another while in the park. The Council-members were (and are) sincerely concerned if gays and lesbians were being targeted by the Lansing Police Department.

I asked Captain Hall if the police department received any type of diversity training. According to him they do but the training is not adequate. LAHR President Penny Gardner, some staff from Triangle and possibly others will be talking with Captain Hall about providing diversity training to the police department regarding LGBT people. LAHR will also be contacting the Friends of Fenner Nature Center and begin communication with them about their and our concerns.

When we read about LGBT history we learn a lot about the horrible discrimination done in the past, some of which is still happening today. The meeting I attended occurred exactly 40 years from when the Stonewall Rebellion took place. I was and am furious that we are still dealing with such discrimination from our police department and some city officials. I know that some gay men (and lesbians) get married because of family, religious and/or societal pressure. Sometimes some of these men have

gone to parks, rest areas etc. to meet one another. I do not blame or judge them for this. If gay men and lesbians were not subjected to the prejudices we have been – past and present – there would be no need for people to seek one another out in bathroom stalls and wooded parks. If gay men and lesbians had always been accepted by society, had received all of the legalities and perks that heterosexual couples get, then it is very probable that the Lansing Police Department would have had no reason to go to Fenner Nature Center on May 22<sup>nd</sup> seeking out "male love" and busting men for "gross indecency." Forty years since the Stonewall Rebellion; we've made a lot of progress but we still have a lot of work to

#### **Immigration**

(Continued from page 13)

If this bill does not move forward on its own, it must be included in Comprehensive Immigration Reform - to include the right of gay and lesbian Americans to sponsor our partners for immigration.

If you have any questions about any of this, please feel free to contact me. Sadly, many members of the progressive and pro-LGBT Community are not aware of this issue. Please help me contact Congress to spread the word!!

Sincerely, West Irish Westirish914@, gmail.com

(Unfortunately, because of the legal ramifications surrounding immigration and same-sex couples, I feel I need to remain anonymous.)

## **Torture:**

# ACCOUNTABILITY TODAY STOPS TORTURE TOMORROW

#### **Working for Peace & Justice**

The Greater Lansing Network
Against War & Injustice
www.glnawi.org
e-mail: glnawi2004@yahoo.com

#### For all your printing needs:



3711 Plaza Drive • Lansing, MI 48906 • 517.321.3731 • Fax: 517.321.1283 • northside7@sbcglobal.net

## Calendar of Events!

#### SUNDAY

- Light House Chapel LGBT friendly church -11:00 a.m. service 1501
   Windsor St., Lansing, 48906. Contact (517) 394-2080 for info.
- All Saints Episcopal Church, Open and Affirming, Sunday Service 10am, 800 Abbot, East Lansing.
- Edgewood United Church of Christ, Open and Affirming, Sunday Service 10am, 469 N. Hagadorn, East Lansing
- Unitarian Universalist Church, Open and Affirming, Sunday Services 9:15am & 11:15am, 85 Grove, East Lansing
- Volleyball Call Bill for information at 337-1419.
- Fellowship for Today Rev. Karen Arndorfer at 5:30 p.m. Open & Affirming = 855 Grove St., East Lansing – contact (517) 337-4070 or info@fellowshipfortoday.org.
- Unity of Greater Lansing Rev. Kent Lederer at 10 a.m. (starting Sept. at 11 a.m.) - Open & Affirming - 240 Marshall St. - contact (517) 371-3010 or revkent@unityofgreaterlansing.org.

#### **MONDAY**

- Sistrum, Lansing Women's Chorus 7-9pm @ University Lutheran church, 1020 S. Harrison, E. Lansing. http://www.sistrum.org. Contact: Lisa Haston, haston@lcc.edu.
- LGBT AA meeting 7:30 p.m., University Lutheran Church, South Harrison, in East Lansing.
- Social Knit Night 2nd Monday of each month. 6:30 9:00 p.m., 319
   S. Waverly Rd.

#### **TUESDAY**

- Grand River Connection 4th Tuesday casual group for the "creative class." Sign-up and get more info at: www.grandriverconnection.com.
- Euchre at Esquire Club registration at 6:30 p.m.
- Greater Lansing Gay Men's Chorus Weekley rehearsals are at the Molly Grove Chapel of the First Presbyterian Church at 510 W. Ottawa St. in downtown Lansing from 6:45-8:45pm. To email: info@glgmc.org or visit the website at www.glgmc.org.
- Michigan Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Straight Allies
  of Faith Working for Justice for All 6:30 p.m to 8:30 p.m. the
  third Tuesday of each month in Lansing at a different spiritual place –
  contact Khristian at (586) 801-5427 or kspeelman@afsc.org www.
  faithactionnetwork.org

#### **WEDNESDAY**

- Great Lakes Pride Band Rehearsals Every Wednesday at the Unity of Greater Lansing church, 240 Marshall St.. For information call Paul or Phil at 517-664-1275.
- GLSEN Mid-Michigan 4:30 p.m. 3rd Wednesday of each month in Melinda Goff's room at Eastern.
- Suits And The City 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on the first Wednesday of the Month - the location changes each month - please visit www. suitsandthecity.com for the location or to contact the organization.
- LAHR's Coffee Night Join your friends every Wednesday from 8-10 p.m. at The Gone Wired Cafe, 2021 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing. For questions or info contact Kevin Magnan at kevinmagnan@yahoo.com
- Karaoke Night 9:00 p.m. at Esquire

#### THURSDAY

- LAHR Bowling LAHR bowling is taking a break! Bowling is now on hold. When the group decides to meet again, I'll send out another note. - Greq
- Lansing Community College Gay Straight Alliance Meets every Thursday, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. at the Gannon Vocational Building 262.
   Contact advisor, Jennifer Spenny email: spennyj@lcc.edu
- Bingo 7:00 p.m. at Esquire

#### **FRIDAY**

- LAHR Downtown Lunch 11:45 a.m. second Friday at Soup to Nutz Bistro on Kalamazoo & Grand Avenue, credit cards accepted! Contact Greg at MlLatino@aol.com
- LGBT AA meeting, 6:30 p.m., at University United Methodist Church, South Harrison, in East Lansing

#### **SATURDAY**

 LAHR Breakfast Club - 11 a.m. 4th Sat. each month – met at Denny's Restaurant at 2701 East Grand River in East Lansing – close to Park Lake. Contact Bill 337-1419 or beachlerb@sbcglobal.net .

## JOIN LAHR TODAY AND GET A FREE T-SHIRT!

#### Join LAHR Today!

LAHR Membership & Subscription Information

Name(s)		 
Address	 	 
City/State/Zip		 
Phone/Email		

#### Yes, I would like to join LAHR to support its activities by enclosing my contribution of:

□ \$15.00 Limited income membership includes the LGBT News mailed to your address, Association voting rights and a tax deduction.

□ \$20.00 Individual membership includes the LGBT News mailed to your address, Association voting rights and a tax deduction.

□ \$40.00 Family membership includes the LGBT News mailed to your address, Association voting rights for up to two individuals in the household and a tax deduction.

□ \$50.00 Matron/Patron membership at this organizational sustaining level includes the LGBT News mailed to your address, Association voting rights for up to two individuals in the household and a tax deduction.

\$100.00+ Benefactor membership at this organizational sustaining level includes the LGBT News mailed to your address, Association voting rights for up to two individuals in the household, and a tax deduction.

First time members will receive a LAHR T-shirt. Renewing members who donate at the Matron/Patron or Benefactor level will also receive a LAHR T-Shirt.

Please make checks payable and return to:

LAHR, Inc., P.O. Box 6565, East Lansing, MI 48826

Contributions to LAHR are deductible on your federal income tax return.

"The purpose of the Lansing Association for Human Rights is to improve the quality of life for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people throughout the greater Lansing area through civil rights activities, communications, education, social events and supportive services."

#### Pet Support Services, Inc.

P.O. Box 18041, Lansing, MI 48901 or call (517) 267-9299 or email us at PetSupportMi@aol.com

#### Advertise in the LGBT News!

Deadline is the 10th of each month

#### Our advertising rates:

All ads must be submitted Full page -\$90 in electronic format, 2/3 page -\$75 preferably in a EPS format. 1/2 page -\$65 1/3 page -\$45 Pay for 6 months in advance and 1/4 page -\$35 get one month free! 1/6 page -\$25

For more information contact Bill Beachler 517-337-1419 or email Bill at beachlerb@sbcglobal.net











Matt Tomanica, owner

- **→ FREE ESTIMATES**
- > PROFESSIONAL INSTALLATIONS
- > FINANCING AVAILABLE

- **∨ COMPETITIVE PRICING**
- **→ HUGE SELECTION**
- > OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

## Building friendships, one customer at a time!

8741 W. Saginaw Hwy, Lansing, MI (Across from Art Van Furniture) (517) **622-2000** or (866) 435-7326