

H A P P Y   N E W   Y E A R



# Perceptions Saginaw Valley

Serving the Tri-City Area LGBT  
Community

January 2011

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

Free

## Holiday Party Auction Raises Money for Scholarships and a Facility



See Page 4 For Details

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**Farewell to a  
Great  
Perceptions  
Leader**

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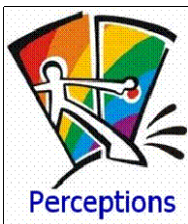
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Mid-Michigan's leading  
resource for  
enriching and  
empowering LGBT  
individuals  
and their  
community

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.

## Perceptions Needs *Your* Support

[Jim Kleinsorge](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org)

Dear Members and Friends of  
Perceptions,

Diversity. You may have heard that term used a lot lately. Our main goal at Perceptions this year is increasing diversity...not just talking about it, but achieving it, from the makeup of our Board of Trustees, to our membership, to the people who participate in our day to day activities. It's easy to say we support diversity, but actually doing something to make that goal a reality is another. Our organization can be open and welcoming to all, but it takes a certain momentum to get people of diverse backgrounds and ethnicities to not only come to our functions, but to KEEP coming back. That's the challenge. When someone comes to an event, whether it's a Friday Night Dinner, a Meet & Greet, a Friends and Members meeting, or any of Perceptions other functions, if they arrive and don't see the people they've come to see, they don't come back. That's where YOU come in. We're seeking to get more participation from ALL of the peoples that make up our community. That brings us back to momentum. We need people to come and participate so that when a new woman shows up, there are other women there to welcome her, when a person of color decides to check us out, he or she doesn't feel alone. We need young people to be able to gather together and not feel like they are in a room of 'old fogies.' When a transgender person arrives, they should see other transgendered people from the community, there to support them and share their experiences.

The only way this will happen

is if people keep returning, not just coming to one meeting or function and giving up, but coming to several events, increasing the chances that the next person will not go away thinking they are the only one or two or three.

Will you join us in our efforts to make our group the wonderful kaleidoscope of people that I know we are?

This is normally the time of year that we ask for your financial support, and we ARE asking for that. But just as importantly, we're asking for your participation. YOU are vital to our organization and we are ready to hear your ideas about what this group is to our community and what it should be.

Encourage your friends to check us out. Not just once, but a few times, to a couple of different functions. Perceptions is much more than someone can see from any one event. Let's build the momentum we need to keep people coming back again and again so they will find the support and sense of community that they're looking for.

A wise man once said to me, if you want to get a message out there, just say it...people will respond. I'm counting on that being true. Please respond with your participation, and with your support of our community...ALL of our community!

If you'd like to join or renew your membership, registration forms are available online. Go to [www.PerceptionsSV.org](http://www.PerceptionsSV.org) and click on the 'Membership' tab in the navigation bar on the left or your screen. To obtain a printed membership form, contact [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org)

## Thanks Alan!

Rick Farrand

The start of the New Year is here and with that we have to say "Good Bye" to our long time friend and leader, Alan Shinaver, as he steps down to let someone else take on the role of "Chair of Perceptions!" It will be a hard spot to fill, as Alan has been the force behind us all, pushing us to do our best and to move Perceptions forward.

He has always run the meetings with style, grace and knowledge. He would always let us speak our minds at the Board Meetings and let us come up with solutions to any problems we had as a group. He would acknowledge our successes and not put blame on our failures. He was always there to lend a helping hand and would step up and do what

had to be done when no one else would. You could always be assured that he would be close at hand to check your progress and to make sure the task was being done correctly. Must be the teacher in him! His knowledge and perseverance has pointed Perceptions in the right direction and because of him and all of Perceptions past and present members we will be here to serve the GLBT community in the new year and further!

When you see Alan let him know how much you appreciate all his hard work and dedication and to thank him for a job well done! You are truly a leader, so THANK-YOU ALAN!!! Now with that said, we have a spot to fill...any volunteers??



## Saginaw Meet & Greet Moves to Whites Bar, 4th Wednesday

We're trying out a new venue for the Saginaw Meet & Greet and changing the week, as well. Our first time at [White's Bar, 2609 State St.](#) in Saginaw, was December 22nd. Although there wasn't time to announce it in the newsletter, it went out in the weekly message. If you didn't get the news in time, you can join us on **January 26th from 7:00 - 9:00 pm** at the new location. Then, come back the 4th Wednesday of each month. White's is a friendly neighborhood bar, just off of Bay Road, so come down and check out a Meet & Greet. Everyone is welcome.

## Perceptions Movie Outing January 8th



Perceptions would like to invite members and friends to join us at a movie on January 8th at **Goodrich [Saginaw 12 Theater, 3250 Kabobel Dr.](#)** in Saginaw. We will be attending an early matinee in the afternoon. Watch the weekly message during the previous week to find out the show and the time we will be meeting. What a great way to kick off the New Year. If you would like an email notification on Friday, of the movie and the time, please write to [Brent@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Brent@PerceptionsSV.org).

# Holiday Party 2010: Food, Dancing & Money for Charity

[Kay Sural](#)

Old friends and new gathered at Bay Valley Resort for the 9th Annual Perceptions Holiday Party and Charity Auction. The Michigan weather cooperated with a beautiful winter evening, seen from the ballroom windows. There were plenty of auction items to choose from including a beautiful apple basket from Bayne's, hair products from the Envy Salon, tea sets, antiques, a

Bay Valley golf package and of course, the one week stay in Key West, won by a smart group of gentlemen who put their money together to not only help Perceptions but have a fabulous week of fun in the sun.

Bay Valley, as always, put on a wonderful buffet dinner. Janis Russell, our auctioneer did a wonderful job getting the

highest price for all the items including me! My dollar dance raised an additional 30 dollars for Perceptions scholarship fund and facility fund. It was a great evening for the over 100 people who attended. Mark your calendars today for Saturday, December 11th, 2011 for the 10th Annual Charity Auction and Holiday Party.





Perceptions Wishes to Thank the Following Businesses and Individuals for Donating to the Holiday Party:

***Businesses:***

[Abele Greenhouse](#)

[ACLU of Michigan](#) / Rana Elmir

Angela Lewis Photography

Asymmetricks<sup>2</sup>

[Bay Valley Resort](#)

Body, Mind & Soul

[Body Zone](#)

Brian M. / Touch of Light Massage

[Dirty Boyz Play Clean](#)

Dog Daze

Envy Salon

[Eric Himan](#)

[Fralia's](#)

Gays, Lesbians & Allies at Dow (GLAD)

Macy's Lakeshore Grill

[Magic Bean Café](#)

[Michigan Insurance](#) / Nate Smith

The Mixx Nightclub

[My Secret Garden](#)

[Northwestern Mutual Financial](#)

[Network](#) / Ann Sage

[Northwood Gallery](#)

Panda House

Pasong's Café

[Pit & Balcony Theatre](#)

[Russell Insurance](#)

Savoy Grill

[Sawmill Smokehouse BBQ](#)

[Signatures Photography Studios](#)

[Starbucks](#)

[Stock Pot Diner](#)

[Strawberry Dip Cake Shoppe](#)

[Temple Theatre](#)

[Windover Resort](#)

***Individuals:***

Alan Shinaver

Barry Kulick & Mitch Reno

Bill Giorgis & Russ Inman

Cindy Martin

Craig McDonald

Dann Federico

Dan LeVay

Darrell Sheets

Doug Barron & Brian Goff

Floyd Andrick

Fred Eland

Jeffrey Eagle ([PartyLite](#))

Jim Kleinsorge & Shawn Nicholes

John Rolando & Don Kephart

Kay Sural

Mandi Sylvester ([Pampered Chef](#))

Mike Swick & Carl Brink

Chef Nonnie Saycosie-Blondin

Phil & Dorothy Rolando-List

Randy Hasso

Rick Farrand

Roger Majeske

Shirley Farrand

Tina Saycosie, CMT

# CURRENT EVENTS PAGE

▼ **January 4th, Tuesday - Men's Discussion Group 7:00 to 8:30 pm.** **Zael Memorial Library, 3100 N. Center Road,** Saginaw Township. This gathering is intended as a discussion and informal support group for gay and bisexual men. The group will be facilitated by Thomas Brubaker. You may contact him at [Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Thomas@PerceptionsSV.org) for additional information or to let him know you'll attend. Light snacks will be provided. You may bring your own beverage into the library as long as the container has a cover or cap.

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

**January 9th, Sunday. - Genessee County PFLAG Meeting 2:00 - 4:30 pm.** The meeting takes place at the **Unitarian Universalist Church** of Flint, [2474 S. Ballenger Hwy.](http://2474.S.BallengerHwy) For more info contact [pflagflint@yahoo.com](mailto:pflagflint@yahoo.com).

▼ **January 12th, 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.

**January 12th, Wednesday - Open Hearts 6:30 pm.** Positive thinking group for members of the LGBT community who are disabled or anyone having issues they are dealing with. Come for discussion, speakers and support! The group meets at **Butman Fish Library** in Saginaw, and is facilitated by Kathy and Carm Audas. For info call 989-755-2618.

▼ **January 14th - Friday Night Dinner 7:00 pm.** Join Perceptions members and friends at **Panda House, 1010 N. Niagara St.,** Saginaw. Please respond to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday if you plan to attend.

## NEW DAY

**January 16th, Sunday - PFLAG Meeting 2:00 - 4:30 pm.** Meeting at **Our Saviour Lutheran Church, 2525 Hemmeter Road** in Saginaw. Jon Cleland Host from the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Midland will speak about Adventure Scouts, an inclusive scout program for youth.

**January 19th, Wednesday - Womyn's Room II 6:00 pm.** Designed as a safe place for Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender women, who are out or not, to come for support and socialization. The group meets at **Butman Fish Library** in Saginaw. For more info contact Rev. Kathy 989-755-2618 or [Rev.KathyV@yahoo.com](mailto:Rev.KathyV@yahoo.com).

**January 19th, 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).

▼ **January 20th, Thursday - Perceptions General Membership Meeting 7:00 pm.** **St. John's Episcopal Church, 123 N. Michigan Ave.** All are welcome. Board Elections will be held and the state of the organization will be discussed. Refreshments will be served.

▼ **January 21st, Friday Night Dinner 7:00 pm.** Join Perceptions members and friends at **Fuzzy's, 1924 Court St.,** Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please respond to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org) by 3:00 pm Friday.

## NEW DAY & NEW LOCATION

▼ **January 26th, Wednesday - Saginaw Meet & Greet 7:00 - 9:00 pm.** An informal gathering for the Tri-Cities' LGBT community. All are welcome. Join us at **White's Bar, 2609 State Sreet** in Saginaw. Meet your old friends and make some new ones.

▼ **January 28th - Friday Night Dinner 7:00 pm.** Join Perceptions members and friends at **Kabob N Curry House, 4070 Bay Road,** Saginaw. If you plan to attend, please respond by 3:00 pm Friday to [Jim@PerceptionsSV.org](mailto:Jim@PerceptionsSV.org).

## MEETINGS RESUME

▼ **January 31st, Monday - Perceptions Transgender Group 6:00 to 7:30 pm.** Meeting at the **Magic Bean Café, 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. For 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)

▼ Denotes a Perceptions sponsored event

# JANUARY 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
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<b>9</b>  Genesee Co. PFLAG Meeting UU Church of Flint <a href="#">2474 S. Ballenger Hwy</a> 2:00 - 4:30 PM	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>  Freeland Meet & Greet Riverside Restaurant 8295 Midland Road 6:00 - 8:00 PM	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>  Friday Night Dinner Panda House <a href="#">1010 N. Niagara</a> Saginaw 7:00 PM	<b>15</b>																																																																																				
<b>16</b>  <a href="#">Tri-Cities</a> <a href="#">PFLAG Meeting</a> Our Savior Lutheran Church 2525 Hemmeter, Saginaw 2:00 - 4:30 PM	<b>17</b> ML King Day	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>  General Membership Meeting / Elections <a href="#">St. John's Episcopal</a> 7:00 - 9:00 PM	<b>21</b>  Friday Night Dinner Fuzzy's <a href="#">1924 Court Street</a> Saginaw 7:00 PM	<b>22</b>																																																																																				
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>  Saginaw Meet & Greet White's Bar <a href="#">2609 State St.</a> 7:00 - 9:00 PM	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>  Friday Night Dinner Kabob N Curry House <a href="#">4070 Bay Road</a> Saginaw 7:00 PM	<b>29</b>																																																																																				
<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>  Transgender Group The Magic Bean <a href="#">5789 State St.</a> Saginaw 6:00 - 7:30 PM	<b>December 2010</b> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>Th</th> <th>F</th> <th>Sa</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12</td> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> <td>17</td> <td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19</td> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>29</td> <td>30</td> <td>31</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		<b>February 2011</b> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>S</th> <th>M</th> <th>T</th> <th>W</th> <th>Th</th> <th>F</th> <th>Sa</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>7</td> <td>8</td> <td>9</td> <td>10</td> <td>11</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13</td> <td>14</td> <td>15</td> <td>16</td> <td>17</td> <td>18</td> <td>19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28						<b>Notes:</b>
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## Transgender Group Resumes

After several months without a meeting, the Perceptions Transgender group will resume on **January 31**. Meetings will continue on the last Monday of each month, from **6:00 to 7:30 pm** at the **Magic Bean Café**, [5789 State Street](#) in Saginaw. The group is billed as “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.” The group was begun in 2008 by Rev. Rebecca Dunn. It is currently being conducted under the guidance of [Rachel Prenzler](#), who says, “we are not like the typical support group. (We) don't dwell on the negative.”

## Perceptions Scholarship Deadline

Applications are now being accepted for the 2011 Perceptions Saginaw Valley Scholarship. The scholarship will be awarded this Spring to a Michigan resident who has demonstrated a passion for promoting mutual respect and acceptance across borders of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Members of Perceptions and PFLAG Tri-Cities and their immediate families qualify for bonus points in the scoring process. To apply, go to Saginaw Community Foundation web site ([www.saginawfoundation.org](http://www.saginawfoundation.org)). There is a tool on the SCF web site that will help you identify additional scholarships for which you may qualify. The application deadline is February 1st, so encourage deserving applicants to turn in their application soon!

## Board Elections Are January 20th

There will be no professional speakers at the January Perceptions General Membership Meeting. No games, no potluck, and no movie, either. January is the month we report on the state of the organization and elect our Board of Trustees for 2011. It doesn't sound that exciting. Maybe it doesn't sound like the best month to come and check us out for the first time. But maybe it is. It is, after all, your organization too. We need your involvement. We want your input. Perceptions is at a crossroads.

As we end our ninth year of serving the LGBT community in the Tri-Cities, we are in the process of securing funds to rent an office/work space. We all want to see it happen: a private place to hold our meetings and support groups, a place to work and store supplies, a place to lend out books. Someplace that a newly coming-out person could eventually stop into on a whim, without the intimidation of meeting dozens of us all at once at a general meeting or a dinner. Having a physical building may help us find those new people we all are looking for. But can we justify a building if we don't find the people first? Are we putting the cart before the horse? We need more involvement. Voting in the board election (if you are a member) or just observing is a good start.

Perceptions isn't here to serve a close knit group of friends, we are here to serve all of the LGBT community. Maybe this is the perfect chance for you to come and see who your Board is. Tell us what we're

doing right and what we're doing wrong. Tell us how we can serve you better in the coming year. You'll hear outgoing Chair Alan Shinaver give his final year-end speech. You'll hear a membership report from our invaluable Secretary Jim Kleinsorge and a Treasurer's Report from Randy Hasso. Then you'll meet and vote on your Trustees for 2011.

Five Trustees will continue to serve their elected terms and do not stand for election this year. In addition to Jim and Randy, Co-Chair Kay Sural (who just pulled off a great Holiday Party), Webmaster Tim Atkinson (who does too much else to name) and Trustee Roger Majeske (who helps distribute the newsletter) will be part of the 2011 Board. Highway Clean Up organizer Rick Farrand will be seeking a 2<sup>nd</sup> term, along with Daphne Barkley, a recent mid-term appointee, who has been a tremendous asset. Tom Brubaker and Brent Theisen are seeking their first terms as Trustees, after serving as Advisors. Come and meet these 9 dedicated people and give them some feedback, as you enjoy the usual snacks and mingle. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend.

At press time, three seats on the board remained open, and the Board planned to conduct some interviews in early January. That means we could soon have as many as six new Trustees since last January. The 2011 Board will be selecting a new Chair, as well. Although we will miss Alan and the others, things are changing. Let's make it a change for the better.

**"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."  
- Antoine de Saint Exupéry**

# Activities Committee Shopping Extravaganza

Rick Farrand

Perceptions' shopping trip to Great Lakes Crossing turned out to be a very intimate and special trip! We had great weather, the roads were free and clear, so we made good time driving down there. This mall is bigger than I had remembered and we spent the day leisurely shopping and looking for Christmas presents for our loved ones.

Fredericks of Hollywood was our 1st stop, and then we all enjoyed the 60% off at Wilson's Leather, where we all managed to procure a great deal and some big savings! We all came out of there with a bag and a smile. We all enjoyed the Sweet Factory and the wonderful smell of chocolate, as we were able to sample some selections.

We had several restaurants to

choose from for lunch, and all decided on the Rain Forrest Cafe, but the line was long and we were starved, so we went to the food court instead, where we all enjoyed the views and the eye candy!! Fun was had by all, and after 5 hours of shopping, we were ready to head home.

The drive home was dampened by a highway accident that took about 40 minutes to get through. We took this opportunity to talk and get to know one another, and share our hopes and dreams and what we want to get out of Perceptions and what we can bring to the table. It was an enjoyable day and we hope that the Activities Committee will come up with more great ideas and fun things to do with Perceptions, friends and members!!



## IN BRIEF

As the LGBT Community ages, problems arise. Many are without children and have no one to care for them. But the [Center on Halsted](#) in Chicago has found a solution, by introducing the nation's first LGBT Homesharing Program. The program matches senior LGBTs with younger counterparts, who can do chores and help out, in exchange for reduced rent.

Source: [nowingaychicago.com](#)

Former president Jimmy Carter says he believes that America may soon be ready to elect a gay president. "I don't know about the next election," Carter said, "but I think in the near future." Statistics back up this claim, which is surprising, given that such a president could not have served openly in the military before now or shared benefits with a partner in most states.

Source: [usatoday.com](#)

The fact that many countries now recognize same sex relationships has gotten a lot of attention, in recent years. But there are over seventy countries where such relations are illegal and are, in some countries, punishable by death. A recent resolution in a General Assembly committee of the United Nations, was pressured to leave out "sexual orientation" from its condemnation of extrajudicial killing of vulnerable people worldwide. Previous resolutions had mentioned it. In fact, some claim that homophobia is getting worse in places like Africa, with the rapid growth of Islam and evangelical forms of Christianity. As we fight for our rights back home, don't forget that others are fighting for their lives.

Sources: [washingtonpost.com](#) and [cbsnews.com](#)

## Finally! An End to Don't Ask, Don't Tell

A Bill that will repeal the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy finally passed the Senate on December 18<sup>th</sup>, by a vote of 63-31. It is still unclear how and when the new policy will be phased in. Over 13,500 troops have been kicked out in the past 17 years under the old policy. President Obama had been promising to lift the ban, by way of Congress, while defending the government's right to keep the policy in court. He also could have signed an executive order to lift the policy, but held to his insistence that the most permanent solution was a repeal by the House and Senate.

Gay Rights supporters considered it a major victory in the struggle for equality. Repealing the policy has been on the table for months and attempts to tack a repeal onto other bills were unsuccessful. With time running out before the new, more conservative congress takes over in January, many were losing hope that it was going to happen. Senator John McCain, who lead the opposition, called it, "a very sad day."

The fight for gay marriage faces a more uphill battle, that may eventually go before the Supreme Court, while the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) seems unlikely to pass anytime soon. So, the repeal of DADT was seen by many as our best hope for progress in the fight for equality. Congratulations to our fighting men and women, who no longer must hide their identities and live in fear of being discharged. Source: [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com)

## THIS DOUG'S LIFE

Douglas D. Solosky

### "Fears and Consolations"



As most of you know by now, I've had a couple of health set backs. To say I was apprehensive is putting it mildly. I've always been independent, self reliant and optimistic. Then---wham, my health goes south. At first, I was upset. I pondered what I must do to exist. I had a pronounced fear of incompatibility. Relying on others for assistance is not in my nature.

Prejudice is a strange and terrible thing. Although I do not consider myself prejudice, thoughts of rejection flooded my mind. Thoughts subliminally based on how I regarded others in similar circumstances. That coupled with apprehension makes you want to stay home where "nothing can get you".

That's all well and good but being fiercely independent is more my style. I am determined to live with this thing. Holing up and feeling sorry for myself won't do it.

I was pleased and surprised how many of my friends came to help. At last count, it was 13 and rising. I felt uncomfortable "using" them but they insisted. Gradually, I gave in. Things have been going a lot better since I stopped being so stubborn.

I'm currently on oxygen 24/7. I have a 57-foot plastic tube hooked to a DeVilbiss, a machine that converts

air to usable oxygen. It enables me to get around the house, 6 large oxygen tanks and 6 small ones. They let me get out of the house for doctor's appointments.

So far, I have not tried to go grocery shopping. For me, that's a major endeavor and will take some planning. I am also adversely affected by the cold.

When I attended the last General Meeting, I was afraid how I might be received. After all, I would be entering with that damned oxygen cannula (nose piece) on with a tank of oxygen trailing behind me. To my relief, all went well. That gave me courage to think about attending the Christmas Party.

Thanks to my good friend from Bay City, I was able to go. We took 2 large O<sub>2</sub> tanks. Things couldn't have worked out better. I was received with open arms. I even mingled. Usually I am too nervous to do that. It was a wonderful experience.

I'd like to give plaudits to our "auctioneer". She was super special!

We left the party about 11pm. I'm only sorry I did not say goodbye to everyone. The evening was glorious, the food superb and the company grand but I was a lot more tired than I thought I'd be. I made it to bed by midnight and wouldn't you know it, I was so "keyed up" that I only slept 2 hours. After lying in bed awake for another 3 hours I thought "piss on it" and got up. I spent that Sunday sleeping.

I was asked to write something more uplifting by a good friend. When I get over this hurdle, and I will, I'll do just that.

As a passing thought: "It is not our purpose in life to do that which lies at a distance but to do that which lies clearly at hand." Sir William Oseler

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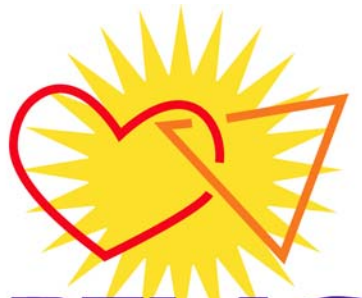
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**Nate Smith**  
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