



The Billys

mailing: PO Box 12205  
Santa Rosa, CA 95406-2205

physical: 1100 Coddington Center Suite 3  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401-3516  
707-545-1044 office@thebillys.org

### **What Some Billys Say About Billy Gatherings**

I am sitting in a hospital room at UCSF but I can't stop thinking about what happened in the heart lodge just one week ago.

It was one of the most powerful experiences of human connection I've had in a long time.

We started slowly, furtively.

Before we knew it we were sharing stories of sorrow and loss, power and luminosity, sexual shamanism and compulsion, unabashed playfulness and fag-bashing, gender-bending and loneliness.

We moved gently, lovingly from story to story, juxtaposed yet connected. We sewed this golden thread through decades, different parts of the world and separate lives to end up with a gorgeous necklace of Life hanging around each of our necks, covered in tears, sweat and joy.

The room was strewn with heretofore hidden treasure chests full of our stories of pain and discovery.

At some point something carried us that was bigger than all of us. And it was made of love and courage, honesty and open hearts. It's a mystery to me, something close to my version of the divine; what Christians call grace perhaps.

Despite all of our wounds that are constantly warning us not to trust, trying to cajole us into isolation -- we as a tribe continue to set the stage every two months for something this powerful to occur. Sometimes it works overwhelmingly, sometimes less so - but we keep coming back to it, letting it carry us.

And for that I am deeply, deeply grateful.

Blessed be.

*Greg*

---

The Billy gathering was probably one of the most significantly positive things that has happened

to me in recent times. It was an amazing experience and my only regret is that we didn't come earlier in the weekend.

Since the weekend we have gone on a hike and had dinner with several of the local Billys.

During the weekend, I heard life experiences that were amazingly helpful at this point in my life. In the heart circle I got to hear men talk about the places they are in their lives, the happiness and the fear and the way they are dealing with their life's bumps and road blocks. All of that was so affirming that I can't begin to tell you.

We felt so welcomed by everyone and we met some real friends and potential friends. Will we be back? You bet we will. We plan to go to the gathering in September and one of us will be at the October gathering as well.

I am very happy we found this group, or they found us - What ever it is, we are very happy to be here.

*M. E.*

---

On my way home tonight I called a friend, a previous co-worker. She and her husband are good friends. I came out to her tonight. Part of telling my story to her, I told her I had gone to S.F. in July and went to a "gay men's retreat" for five days. I told her how I had had the best 5 days of my life. I was with other men who were in a lot of cases just like me... divorced with children. I could be who I was without ridicule or criticism. I had a great time. It was a little weird at first not knowing but a few guys. But that soon changed.

*J. H.*

---

I just want to thank you all from my heart for such a wonderful, warm welcome to the billys. I know I did not speak with each of you individually during this past week's gathering, but I believe I spoke with most of you at least briefly and/or heard your shares in heart circles, and some of you I had the pleasure to connect with in more personal ways.

I really didn't know what to expect, and on the first day in heart circle, after another brought it up, I realized I had expectations and shared that, and shared that I would try to drop them. And then as if by magic, I got some of my expectations and so much more on top of it.

Thank you for your shares -- I was very moved and touched by your pains and joys -- for letting me listen to your stories, and for listening to mine. And for encouraging me in so many ways. Being back at work last night was .... interesting ... not easy to get back into it, and I'm still readjusting to the so-called "real world" ... but I really do feel uplifted by your supportive brotherhood. I will definitely be back, and hope to get to know more of you next time around.

*Eric aka Cinnamon*