

BILLY TIMES

— November 2006 —

The mission of the Billy Club is to promote intimacy and community among gay and bisexual men, and to build bridges with supportive communities.



Letter From Board President Charlie Seltzer

In this day and age, a queen should know when to step down. It's part of her education, after all, drummed into her by tutors from her earliest days. So you'd think I'd already have said my goodbyes in the last *Billy Times*. But no. My reign, as some on the board were quick to point out, and none too respectfully I might add, isn't technically up until November, and I am obliged to remain around until then. So my darlings, here I am, writing you this one last time. And then, really, I will be off. Promise.

I suppose it's my responsibility to leave you with farewell words—good cheer to tide you through the lonely years ahead. Well, you know me—never at a loss for words. So I offer you this vision for where you should go and how you should get there without me to guide you.

First, about this membership thing. Membership in the Billy community should be self-selecting: if you come to community events, you're a Billy. It's really quite simple. No more fussing and flaming about who is and who is not a Billy. If you must argue, then argue about something more useful, like the best way to make wild yeast breads or how to rid Washington of that uncaring, unholy, mentally ill group of warmongering, power-hungry, corrupt, evil bitches.

Well—going on: I believe gatherings should be re-envisioned. Sometimes even when I am attending, gatherings can get . . . shall we say . . . a little . . . familiar. More types of gatherings are in order, don't you think? Gatherings based on strong themes would be so much more attractive, engaging, challenging, and juicy. (Don't you just love that word—juicy?) Furthermore, the Billy community should build its future on clearly articulated mission and values statements as well as on strategic forms of outreach to ensure that new gathering goers are aligned with our ever-evolving values. (Now that just rolls off the tongue, doesn't it?)

What else? Oh, yes. Mechanisms for exchanging information and ideas between the board and the community should be improved. Now, couldn't we all agree that communication has gotten better of late? Of course we can. Even so, let us reach out more. Build on what we've got. You know—risk a bit.

And speaking of the board, they are a wee bit overworked, I'm afraid. It's time for the board to articulate its manpower needs. (And just between you and me, which of us couldn't use a little more manpower?) Speak up board! Let your community know your needs. How will they ever help you if you don't tell them what you need?

And speaking of you, my beloved community, it really is time for you to step up. Leadership is best when it is shared. My tutors were constantly drumming into my head that when a wide group of community members shares leadership and provides counsel to the organization and community, we all benefit. Think of it as taking turns. Sometimes it's your turn, and sometimes it's mine. And mine is just about over. You see, there must be turntakers or there is no community. We carry Billy together.

(Now pay particular attention to this next point. It really is the crux of the whole thing.) You, and you, and you, and you—you own the community. The board is just some of the community's owners stepping forward to steer the ship and handle the occasional tsunami. The board is nested within the community and acts on behalf of the community. The board does not reside outside of the community. There is no outside. (If you don't believe me, talk to a physicist.) I grant you it is a difficult point—for board and community members, alike. But there simply is no us and them in Billyland—just a royal we.

And there, my darlings, is my final gift to you all. As I step down, finally, I leave my royal we behind. It's a rather large we, so it will take many of you to pick it up. Now don't fight. There's plenty for all.

see *PRESIDENT'S LETTER* on page three

Working Groups Manifest Vision by Bill Blackburn

The Billy men and kin who participated in the Visioning Retreat in mid-September determined that there are eight areas of focus requiring attention over the next several years to ensure our success as a community. We established Working Groups to determine what needs to be done in each area. Now we're asking you to consider joining one of these groups.

The success of the visioning process relies on fulfilling these tasks.

1) The **Mission and Values Working Group** will review our existing mission statement and our recently drafted values statement based on the feedback at the retreat and will refine them as needed. Decisions by the board, our gathering coordinators, and our outreach efforts will be based on these important statements. To consider joining this team, contact **Charlie Seltzer** at 707-485-9632 (home) or charlieseltzer@pacific.net.

2) The **Outreach Working Group** will consider whom we should reach out to in expanding our community and how that outreach should be undertaken. To explore being part of this effort, contact **Mark Hoffheimer** at 415-552-1903 (home), 415-602-0165 (cell), or mth-sf@sbcglobal.net.

3) The **Inreach Working Group** will work to understand why some community members have stopped and others have continued attending gatherings. We want to know what keeps Billys happy and sufficiently engaged to keep coming to gatherings and what has led some men to participate less in recent years. This group will be conducting a survey to learn more. To be part of this team, contact **Chas Nol** at 415-621-4538 (home), 415-617-4531 (cell), or chasnol@california.com.

4) To help the Gathering Portfolio holder, Steve Rockwell, envision ways to make our gatherings more meaningful and fun, we're creating the **Juicy Gatherings Working Group**. To be part of this visioning process, contact **Steve Rockwell** at 415-553-8680 (home) or steve.rockwell@jud.ca.gov.

5) The **Communications Working Group** will identify ways to enhance communication between the board and the community and to support the Website Portfolio holder, Joe Kukulka, in improving the role, content, and usability of the website. Contact **Bill Blackburn** at 707-874-9011 (home) or billbb@sonic.net if you're interested in developing these vital areas.

6) The **Volunteerism Working Group** will help us find ways to locate and mentor more volunteers in the Billy community to lead our gatherings and take

on other tasks that are needed by our community. You can contact **Tim Henke** at 415-517-0614 (home), or tjhenke@mcn.org to join this team.

7) Help invigorate our existing Fundraising Portfolio by joining the **Fundraising Working Group** to develop a comprehensive approach to fundraising that will ensure our continuing ability to keep gatherings as affordable as possible and make them accessible to those who are financially challenged. Contact **Paul Mueller** at 707-272-6829 (home) or pmueller@tidepool.com.

8) It's not exactly a Working Group, but it certainly is a *working group*. We hope a few dedicated Billys will step up to explore joining the **Board of the Billy Foundation**. Current board members who plan to remain are Robert (Goat) Conrad, Paul Mueller, John Cwiakala, Jim Burke, and Bill Blackburn. Steve Rockwell and Mark Hoffheimer are exploring board membership. Contact **Paul Mueller** at 707-272-6829 (home) or pmueller@tidepool.com, or any board member if you want to know more about this opportunity to provide service to the community.

And while we're on the subject, you are always welcome to participate in board meetings. They are held on afternoons of the third Sunday of each month from 1:15 until 4:30 or so. Call the office for details or ask Marcus to put you on the board announcement email list for meeting agendas and minutes and other occasional notices.

Many hands and hearts make work light. If the Billy experience is meaningful in your life, please explore ways you can contribute to the effort of making our community one of the best anywhere! ☺

THE BILLY TIMES

is published four times per year and is included with gathering calls. To subscribe to the Billy Club's mailing list for gathering information, send a \$25 (sliding scale) yearly subscription fee. Short on cash? Send what you can afford. Your renewal date is noted on your address label. Contact us at

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The Richard Locke Scholarship Fund Needs Your Contribution!

The Halloween 2006 Billy gathering, although fabulous in presentation, was not as well attended as we wanted, and the scholarship fund reflects that. We had \$2,070 in Halloween scholarship requests, and only \$405 in donations that came with Halloween registrations (and half of that \$405 came from one Billy)!

Luckily, our anonymous donor had matched previous donations and we had \$1,530 already banked for the fund. Everyone who asked for a scholarship for Halloween received one, but the fund is now about \$135 in the hole. (Final figures are not yet available.)

So guys, you gotta pitch in! The Richard Locke Scholarship Fund helps reduce the costs of gatherings for those who cannot afford the gathering fee. For the upcoming New Year's gathering at Heartwood, add something to your gathering fee for the Richard Locke Scholarship Fund. Or volunteer to run a raffle at the next May Day gathering and donate the funds to the RLSF, or leave some of your estate to the Billy Foundation RLSF in your will. We are a loving and devoted community that supports you with friendship and community. Please return that support by helping others attend gatherings and gain the friendship and community we have to offer. ☺

Billy Club Board of Directors

Board meeting are open to all Billys and Billykin on the third Sunday of each month. Two meetings per quarter are at the Billy Office with the third month in Sonoma County. Call the Billy office for location details.

Board of Directors

Charlie Seltzer, *president*

Paul Mueller, *interim treasurer*

Jim Burke, *secretary*

Bill Blackburn

Robert "Goat" Conrad

John Cwiakala

More board members are needed!!!

Ongoing Board Portfolios

BESF: Wil Gonzales, Paul Mueller, Bob Kuder

Gatherings: Steve Rockwell

BillyFon: Jason Bellecci-Serinus

Billy Boutique: Bill Murphy

Billy Times: David Brin, Scott Marley

Website: Joe Kukulka

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Juicy Gatherings

by Moonriver

Dozens of people have talked to me since the Visioning Retreat about deepening and being more creative in how we put on gatherings. More and more ideas for themes that people would like to explore are rising to the surface, though that doesn't mean we don't still just need downtime to relax and play with each other. I'm sure that there are gathering ideas that each of you would like to see crafted into an inspiring gathering experience, just as I'm sure that there are other ideas that you'd rather pass on. So join in the discussion and let's talk about what would really intrigue you to come to the gatherings we hold this next year!

A number of Billys are meeting to brainstorm ideas for future gatherings on Saturday, November 18, from 2 PM on, at the home of Steve Rockwell and Steve Cisowski in San Francisco. We welcome your ideas and participation. Contact Steve Rockwell at 415-553-8680 or steve.rockwell@jud.ca.gov with your thoughts, or for directions to his place. It'll be a good relaxed time, and a chance to really give some thought to the type of experiences we want to share together. ☺

PRESIDENT'S LETTER from page one

And you thought I was gone, didn't you?

I'm afraid I have one final bit to say. All these regal ideas I just told you about—you know, mission and values, shared leadership, deeper communication, even the part about manpower—they're not really my ideas. I know you thought they were, but they're not. They're the ideas of the 28 Billys who attended the September Visioning Retreat. It is their goals and agreements I impart. Sorry for the little subterfuge, but it was rather clever of me, wasn't it—passing their ideas off as my own? But now that I think about it, if there is no us, and there is no them, just a big old we, and since I was at the Visioning Retreat myself, then I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together.

So those were my ideas. And, since I am nothing if not magnanimous in these, my final moments, let us say that they are your ideas, too. Hell—let's all claim them!

Well. I suppose that just about wraps it all up. Be good, all of you, and I'm sure—some day, we'll be together.

Note: The Goals and Agreements that Her Majesty refers to are included in the report from the 2006 Visioning Retreat, which you can read, which Her Majesty really *insists* that you read, at www.billyclub.org/gathering/times/2006-09-vision-report.pdf. ☺

The Billy Office

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211 W. Standley Street
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Email: office@billyclub.org

Office hours: Wednesday through Friday 10 AM to 1 PM and other unscheduled times. Call for information. Resource coordinator: Marcus Borgman.

Game Nights

First and third Saturdays at the Billy office from 7 to 10 PM. Bring games, snacks, and nonalcoholic drinks.

Billy Lunch

Wednesdays from 12:45 to 2 PM. Meet at the Billy office to dine out.

Billy Club Gatherings

typically start with a potluck dinner the first day and end after lunch on the last day. You can contact the coordinators, when known, to volunteer for any of the many positions necessary to make gatherings a success. Contact the office if you wish to coordinate a gathering or work with its future coordinators.

Visit billyclub.org/gathering for online access to the current gathering call or to pay with a credit or debit card. Issues of the *Billy Times* are also available.

BillyFon

The official, board-sanctioned telephone message service providing information on all things Billy. Call 510-533-8136 to receive current info on gatherings, ride sharing, and more. Send your message to billyfon@planetaria.net.

2006-07 Gathering Schedule

New Year's

Billys and Billykin welcome
Heartwood Institute, Garberville, Calif.
Thursday, December 28, to
Tuesday, January 2

Midwinter

Billys only
Theme, location, and dates to be determined
Coordinators needed

May Day

Billys and Billykin welcome
Saratoga Springs, Lake County, Calif.
Friday, April 27, to Tuesday, May 1*

Poz/Neg

Billys only
Brook Trails Lodge, Willits, Calif.
Friday, May 25, to Monday, May 28

July Fourth

Billys only
Saratoga Springs, Lake County, Calif.
Tuesday, July 3, to Monday, July 9*

Labor Day

Billys and Billykin welcome
Location to be determined
Friday, August 31, to
Monday, September 3

Halloween

Billys only
Saratoga Springs, Lake County, Calif.
Friday, October 26, to
Monday October 29

**The first and last days of the July Fourth gathering (Tuesday, July 3, and Monday, July 9) are tentative; we may not contract for them if they cost too much. The same is true for the last day of the May Day gathering, Tuesday, May 1.*

Local Socials

are unofficial get-togethers that take place monthly and usually include schmoozing, a potluck meal, and a heart circle. Here are contact information and attendance policies. Some socials welcome Billykin.

East Bay Potlucks

Contact Alan Oakley at 510-436-3330 or alanoakley46@yahoo.com.

Mendocino Potlucks

Coordinator needed! Call Billy office.

San Francisco Potlucks

Alternates between men only and open to all. Contact G-Fry at 415-558-0469 or gregthebarbersf@yahoo.com.

SonoMen

Men only. Contact Robert Cline at 707-573-9466 or rc95401@hotmail.com.

South San Francisco & Santa Cruz
Coordinator needed! Contact Lou Ceci at 650-969-9556 or ceci_lga@yahoo.com.

Billy Emails

Billy Board minutes, agendas and other "official" information are available via email, separate from the gathering list. If you're interested in receiving them, email office@billyclub.org. Billenet is not part of the Billy Foundation.

Billy Club Receives Generous Donations

The Billy Club has received a \$2,500 award from PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays). Board president Charlie Seltzer wrote the request to PFLAG, which is the trustee of the Ryken-Scull trust. The trust makes awards to groups that promote justice for LGBT groups and individuals. The Billy Club has also recently received two substantial donations from individuals. We appreciate these gifts and extend our thanks to our benefactors. ♪