

BILLY TIMES

—April 2010—

The mission of the Billy Club is to foster community, intimacy, and personal exploration among gay, bi, and queer men through shared values and heart-centered brotherhood.



Letter from the President

by Bill Blackburn

Yesterday, March 21, the guys on the board consensed to make me president. I'm writing to let you know some of the things I want to concentrate on over the coming months.

First, I want to acknowledge Mark Hoffheimer, who stepped down after more than two years as president. Mark took office saying, "but only for one year, I'm clear about that." Yet he was willing to continue when no one else felt ready to take it on. Mark has done a great job and accomplished many of his goals; we owe him our heartfelt thanks. Mark is continuing his work for the board as our vice president.

Prior to Mark holding the office, Jim Burke was elected president. Jim led us through legal, economic and emotional storms to a place of solidity and renewed growth. He's an unsung hero and I sing his praises here.

I'll do my best in following them.

We have a great bunch of Billys who serve on the Board and we work very well together. Steve Rockwell is completing a revision of our bylaws (maybe not exciting but necessary and very helpful) and is engaged in other projects. Jim Hughson just recommitted to being our secretary. In addition to those two, Mark, and myself, we have four new board members: David Hedden, Mike Eccles, Robert Cline, and Ken Kunert. You can read more about them in "News from the Board" in this issue.

I also want to recognize the efforts of three men who recently stepped down from the board. Paul Mueller may be the longest-serving board member in our history, having returned to the board after difficulties some six years ago to repair our financial picture and serve as long-running treasurer. In his time on the board, Peter Deutsch provided important perspective on our budget process and board functioning, and additionally instituted the creation of our affordability discount fund. Jim Gilson put his heart into the beginnings of an endowment fund and served for two

years as vice president. We are deeply grateful for their work. Each served admirably and contributed mightily. They will be missed, though we expect to see them regularly at our gatherings.

By our side and in the office is Marcus Borgman, who keeps our gatherings flowing, our files updated, and our new Billys welcomed. His work is vital to our functioning and he's deeply appreciated.

Around us is an amazing circle of Billys. Our community. You.

In taking on the responsibilities of president, I feel that many of the pressing needs of the Foundation are in process due to diligent work over the past years. There are some big picture issues that I'd like to concentrate on.

Teambuilding

Board members are already working and relating with each other in ways aligned with Billy values, and people are doing important work. But we've been busy enough that we haven't had time to step outside the work to relax together, get to know each other better, and seek the broader view. A board mini-retreat is being planned for the near future and we'll be having a longer one in the fall.

Communication

In reinstating this *Billy Times*, we hope to improve communication with you, our community. I sometimes have a sense that there are a few folks in the center who are working hard to keep things going and lots of others who simply don't know what's needed. At the start of our board meetings, we read the goals that were developed at the Visioning Retreat in 2007. Among them are:

- The Board will effectively articulate its manpower needs as a means of recruiting volunteers for tasks and committee work.
- Leadership, counsel, and commitment will be shared among a wide range of community members, strengthening the community and supporting the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities.
- Community members own the Billy community.

see *LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT* on page four

Billys Care

The Billy community was founded on caring about (and for) our brothers. A Billys Care program has recently been formed specifically to address this issue.

The Billys Care Volunteer List is a listing of Billys willing to be contacted when a Billy is in need of assistance in times of personal crisis. The list is freely available to all Billys for the above use only. Our caring could find expression in simplicity like a check-up phone call. Or chicken soup when a Billy is sick, a ride, a grocery trip, help with a doctor appointment, pet sitting or transportation, helping to move, maybe even staying with a patient for a while after returning home—your need, you describe it!

We all know that a healthy community needs to extend beyond the occasional gathering. The world is experiencing tough times right now and Billys open to a request of help from another Billy will strengthen our whole community. The more of us who include our names on the Billys Care Volunteer List, the more likely we'll be able to come through for a Billy in need and, in turn, that person will more likely be there for another. Please sign up and please spread the word!

If you'd like to add your name to the volunteer list or make corrections, or if you want a copy of the updated list or have ideas or questions about Billys Care, please contact Joe Balestreri (amato@sonic.net or 707-331-0191). In addition, Billys Care has "regional point men" who are there to take calls from Billys who are requesting help. They may connect those in need with volunteers, distribute the volunteer list to any Billy requesting it, find info and help from outside the Billys, and possibly help coordinate volunteers when a Billy has a long-term need.

Your regional point men are:

Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino counties: Doug Tickner (707-233-6979 or dougickner@gmail.com)

Marin, Napa, and Sonoma counties: Jack Pilling (707-566-9136 or jaxdog5403@comcast.net) and Mike Goldstein (707-887-0798 or mikegoldst@yahoo.com)

Alameda, Contra Costa, and Solano counties: Jim Hughson (510-893-2133 or jamesindia03@yahoo.com)

San Francisco and San Mateo counties: Dominik Mollica (415-626-7485 or dominikolas@sbcglobal.net)

Sacramento Valley: Rob Woodman (530-902-1683 or robwoodman@gmail.com) ☺

Billy Community Meets the \$5000 Challenge

We are very pleased to announce that the Billy community at large has met the \$5000 challenge grant made by some generous Billys. This means that the Billy community raised \$5000, which will now be matched by the \$5000 offered by our original donors. Our total fundraising for the fiscal year April 1, 2009, to March 31, 2010, is approximately \$30,000. The year's budget called for \$15,000 in fundraising, so we have well exceeded our goal. We still anticipate a deficit spending total of \$5745. This deficit has improved from previous years, so we are headed in the right direction. Any support you continue to give will help us reach our goal of a positive cash flow—and more support for our community.

We sincerely thank all Billys who gave to our fundraising efforts this year. Donations can be directed to the general fund; to the Richard Locke Scholarship Fund, which helps pay gathering fees for Billys who need financial assistance; and to the Billy Emergency Fund, for Billys anywhere and HIV+ persons in Mendocino, Lake, and southern Humboldt counties. ☺

SF Pride Volunteer Opportunities

Everyone is invited to help raise funds for the Richard Locke Scholarship Fund (RLSF) by helping collect donations at the SF Pride Celebration on June 26 and 27. The RLSF helps make our gatherings financially accessible to many Billys each year. We hope to provide 25 volunteers at Pride. Each shift will be two to three hours in length. SF Pride will pay us to help collect their donations, and the more volunteers we manifest, the more money goes into the Fund. For more information on helping with this important fundraising event for our scholarship fund, please contact Jim Hughson at jamesindia03@yahoo.com. ☺

THE BILLY TIMES

The Billy Foundation
P.O. Box 12205

Santa Rosa, CA 95406
Phone/fax 707-545-1044

office@billyclub.org

Resource coordinator: Marcus Borgman

Contributors:

Joe Balestreri ☺ Bill Blackburn ☺ Marcus Borgman

David Brin ☺ Mike Eccles ☺ David Hedden

Design: Scott Marley

News from the Board of Directors

On Sunday, March 21, Mark Hoffheimer nominated Bill Blackburn to be president of the board of directors of the Billy Foundation. The board consensed to that proposal and elected Mark as vice president. Jim Hughson previously was consensed to be secretary and Robert Cline as treasurer.

We're excited to announce that four Billys have newly joined the board in recent months: David Hedden, Mike Eccles, Robert Cline, and Ken Kunert. They've given a wonderful boost to the board in helping us meet our responsibilities in carrying our community forward. Exciting as well, there are more potential members in the wings in various stages of discernment.

David Hedden states: I've been attending Billy gatherings for the last 10 years and I am committed to fostering communities for gay and bisexual men. In 1989, I helped form the Discovery Community, which is similar in function to the Billys. I served on its board for several years both as a member and as its president. I enjoy leading groups—large and small—in supporting people as they move through their joys and struggles and in watching all of us grow emotionally and spiritually. I live in Sonoma and I'm currently studying toward a master's degree in counseling. My partner, David Brin, and I recently co-facilitated the Midwinter retreat.

Mike Eccles has this to say: About half a day into my first Billy gathering (July 4th, 2009), I realized that I had come upon a very special group of men. My joining the board six months later was about 50% selfish. Now that I have found the Billys, I want to work to make sure they stick around and continue to offer me and others a place to explore our own hearts. I am also excited by the idea of introducing the Billys to others who might come and find the same gifts I have found in the Billys. Being a fundraiser for my work has given me a skill that I hope to bring to the Billys to help them grow into the future.

Robert Cline writes: I became a Billy in 2005, having come out just two years earlier. My first Halloween gathering was the best weekend of my life—dressed in a realistic deer costume, I attracted much attention, had a lot of sex, and found my partner, Tim Wickens (we met in the sweat lodge). I'm one of those Billys who's not afraid of numbers or money, so I was delighted when the board recently elected me to be treasurer. I'm eager to help keep track of our finances; being a good steward of the money we have now makes it likely we'll be entrusted with more later.

see NEWS FROM THE BOARD on page four

July Auction for the Billys

Hey there, Billys: We need your help! It's time to start thinking about the Billy Auction for July. This important event is one of our biggest fundraisers of the year! The gathering is just around the corner and we want to make sure the auction is a big success.

Do you have a talent you want to donate? Perhaps a landscaping consultation, personal chef, house painting, massage, or private yoga instruction? Would you consider adding a piece of your art to be auctioned? How about offering to put on a private concert in someone's home? Can you give private dance lessons? Do you have a time-share or a weekend vacation home you can donate? How about you business-owning Billys: Would you consider a gift of goods or services from your business to help out this great cause?

If you can add to the July 2010 gathering auction, please contact Mike Eccles at ecclesmike@aol.com or call him at 510-918-7357. Mike is also looking for volunteers. He needs your help in searching for auction items. He is also looking for people to run the auction at the gathering.

Your tax-deductible donations are greatly appreciated and go a long way to support this wonderful heart-centered brotherhood of Billys. ☺

Billy Club Board of Directors

These folks would love to hear from you. Please contact them!

Bill Blackburn, *president*

BillBb@sonic.net, 707-827-3953

Robert Cline, *treasurer*

rc95401@hotmail.com, 707-573-9466

Mike Eccles

Ecclesmike@aol.com, 510-918-7357

David Hedden

dhedden@2davids.com, 707-933-1633

Mark Hoffheimer, *vice president*

mth-sf@sbcglobal.net, 415-602-0165

Jim Hughson, *secretary*

jamesindia03@yahoo.com, 510-893-2133

Ken Kunert

kkunert@mac.com, 805-720-4528

Steve Rockwell

yrockwell@gmail.com, 415-553-8680

Big Change Coming Up

After careful consideration by the Billy Board,

we are moving the Billy Office to Sonoma County this month. In addition to saving us \$400 per month, this will bring the office closer to where the majority of Billys live and play. There will be new opportunities for Billys to help out in the office, manage the gathering supplies, drop off stuff at the office, and so forth.

The new office is located at 1100 Coddington Center, Suite 3, Santa Rosa, right behind the Coddington shopping mall in northwest Santa Rosa. Our new mailing address is P.O. Box 12205, Santa Rosa, CA, 95406.

We understand that Ukiah Billys may have some feelings of abandonment, but after extensive conversations with the community, the move was deemed important.

We are deeply grateful to the brave gay men who founded the Billys in 1988, and to all the local guys who helped in the office over the last 22 years. We're not leaving you, we're just moving a little ways south! ♪

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT from page one

During yesterday's board meeting, when I read the first point listed above, I laughed aloud and said, "Some of these goals are still aspirational." I would love to deepen the sense of community ownership among Billys.

Communication with the outside world is key here, too. Outreach is vital if we are to find the gay, bi, queer men out there who are seeking heart-centered community. And key to that outreach is both a heart-to-heart invitation to men we meet who are aligned with our values and a new and zingy website replete with photos that indicate who we are.

Community Involvement

There's a wonderful circle of Billys who volunteer to co-ordinate gatherings, take on major roles there, and take on our various volunteer tasks. We also have a generous group of Billys who have donated about \$30,000 since April 2009, the start of our fiscal year. A group of donors created a \$5000 matching fund that other donors in the Billy community matched. I know for a fact that at least one of those donations was a stretch for that Billy, yet his commitment to seeing us through difficult financial times made the donation a priority. Indeed, there is no such thing as a small gift. All gifts, no matter the size, go to support the Billy community.

We hear stories all the time from new Billys. "The Billys saved my life!" "I've been looking for something like this for a long time and now I've found it!" "I'm so thankful to be a Billy!"

I'd love to see more Billys actively involved. It would be wonderful to have Ruven's job as gathering portfolio holder made easier in recruiting co-coordinators. (Thanks, Ruven!)

Our fiscal responsibility necessitates that we keep our gathering rate at \$90 per night. Moreover, we're unable to offer the \$10 per night affordability discount we've offered in the past, which had been funded by a corporate grant. This \$90 price is significantly less than our costs for venue, food, and overhead. That's where your donations fill in and why they are so important. Even so, some Billys cannot afford to attend our gatherings. More contributions for the Richard Locke Scholarship Fund would help ensure that no Billy is prohibited from partaking in community due to finances.

I realize that the times are hard for many of us and we each give in our own way. But if it's within your capacity to give more of your time or money, we would be most grateful.

Sustainability

I realize this word has become cliché, but it's singularly helpful. The more I ponder it, sustainability could stand in for all the other issues I've named here. A highly functioning board team, productive and timely communication among Billys and the board, outreach to the world of potential new Billys, and a community that feels connected and involved, healthy and contributing, comprised of Billys whose needs are being met—that's my vision of sustainability and my vision of the future of the Billy Foundation and Community. I ask your help in honing this vision and bringing it into reality. ♪

NEWS FROM THE BOARD from page three

Ken Kunert notes: What an opportunity to give back to the Billys who I so enjoy having fun with. Right from my first gathering I have experienced the heartfelt community connections that I knew I wanted to remain connected to every day. I plan on bringing my interest in community and my skills in team building together to produce expanded success for the Billy Foundation. What a gift we have to offer others, the sharing of ourselves through our speaking from the heart. I look forward to working with a great group of board members and representing all the Billys.

Stepping onto the Board is a big commitment. David, Mike, Robert, and Ken each bring unique, valuable skills and interests and are deserving of our thanks! ♪

2010 Gathering Schedule

May Day

Billys and Billykin
Saratoga Springs, Upper Lake, Calif.
Thursday, April 29, to Sunday, May 2
Coordinators: **Chris Lombardi**
(mojomonger@yahoo.com),
J Ume Stockton (garudahealing@yahoo.com), and **Nick Gill**
(mage369@suddenlink.net)

Midsummer

Billys only
Saratoga Springs, Upper Lake, Calif.
Thursday, July 1, to Monday, July 5

Labor Day

Billys and Billykin
Rancho Cicada, Plymouth, Calif.
Thursday, September 2,
to Monday, September 6
Coordinators: **Ken Kunert** (kkunert@mac.com) and **Michael Towne**
(helltowne@aol.com)

Halloween

Billys only
Saratoga Springs, Upper Lake, Calif.
Thursday, October 28,
to Sunday, October 31

New Year's

Billys and Billykin
Dates and location to be announced
Email a gathering's coordinators
to volunteer to help!

Visit Our Website

<http://www.billyclub.org>
login: billy
password: heartspace

The Billy Office

The Billy Foundation
1100 Coddington Center Suite 3
Santa Rosa, CA 95401-3516
Old phone: 707-462-0766
(good until April 16)
New phone/fax: 707-545-1044
Email: office@billyclub.org

Office hours: Wednesday through
Friday, 10 am to 5 pm, and other
unscheduled times. Call for
information. Resource
coordinator: Marcus Borgman.

Monthly Potlucks

While not an official activity of the
Billy Foundation, monthly potlucks
are loosely affiliated with the Billy
Club and occur in Sonoma County,
the East Bay, San Francisco, and
Sacramento. To learn more, contact
the volunteer keepers of the email
lists directly.

- San Francisco: Greg Fry at
gregthebarbersf@yahoo.com
- Sonoma County: Mike Goldstein
mikegoldst@yahoo.com
- East Bay: Alan Oakley at
alanoakley-oakley@sbcglobal.net
- Sacramento: David Buechler at
dbuechler@sbcglobal.net

An Easy Way to Give to the Billys

You can give a small amount to the
Billys each month by setting up an
automatic payment through your
bank's bill-pay online system. Your
tax deductible \$5, \$10, \$15, or \$25
contribution will go to support
your Billy community. You might
not even miss the amount of your
gift each month, but the impact of
your generosity will be appreciated
by your entire community! ☺

Volunteers Needed

Contact the Billy Office at
office@billyclub.org to

- Help move stuff from Ukiah to
Santa Rosa during April
- Help paint and decorate the new
Billy Office
- Become the new Billy Gathering
Supply Manager
- Develop Zip code analysis of
current Billys for geographical data

Contact Ruven Hannah at ruven@ruvenhannah.com for information
about becoming a gathering
coordinator.

Message from the Outgoing President by Mark Hoffheimer

It has been an honor to serve the Billy community these past few
years as president of the board of directors of the Billy Foundation.
With heartfelt gratitude, I pass the presidential baton to Bill
Blackburn. And I continue on the board as vice president.

I am a different man because of this community. I stand proudly for
its mission: "to foster community, intimacy, and personal exploration
in heartfelt brotherhood." I am touched and very pleased that
several new people have stepped forward to serve on the board.
With new energy, the board continues to pursue a path to financial
sustainability. And those beautiful, heart-warming and magical
gatherings continue.

Warm hugs, guys. With gratitude,

Mark ☺