

BILLY TIMES

—January 2008—

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 Board President Mark Hoffheimer

As many of you know, I was recently elected president of the Billy Board. Now, why would I take on such a task, you might ask? I was reminded of why this morning (December 9) at the Gay Buddhist Fellowship, my parallel and sometimes overlapping community of very beautiful men. The *dharma* talk this morning was on *dana*, the act of offering or giving. It speaks to generosity stemming from gratitude, and it usually pertains to offerings made to monks or teachers. In my case, as president, it pertains to service to my Billy community from a place of gratitude—for what this community is, what it stands for, and what it has meant to me personally. I'm honored to be of service to my Billy community.

We are a community whose mission is to “foster community, intimacy, and personal exploration through shared values and heart-centered brotherhood.” This is a noble undertaking, and it is one that involves all of us acting collectively and consciously, in brotherhood, in support of one another. In a more practical way, it involves us coordinating and volunteering at our six annual gatherings. This is one real way we contribute to each other, and I thank all of you for this *dana*.

While I'm on the subject of gratitude, I would like to acknowledge and extend my heartfelt thanks to Jim Burke, my predecessor; Bill Blackburn, past vice president; and Paul Mueller, past and current treasurer. They have worked tirelessly for our community, and they've helped our community through good times and bad. All three remain on the Board, although we're actively looking for a replacement for Paul, our treasurer. I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to the other board members, namely Jim Gilson, vice president; Peter Deutsch, secretary; and Steve Rockwell, gathering portfolio holder extraordinaire. All of us are newbies to the board (within the last year), and we are all committed in our own ways to furthering the Billy mission and growing this community. We are looking for additional board members, and I invite any Billy who may be interested to contact me directly (mth-sf@sbcglobal.net).

Last but not least, I want to extend my heartfelt thank you to Marcus Borgman, our wonderful resource coordinator and only paid staff member, as well as the many others

who graciously volunteer their time (for example, for BillyFon, the website, and the *Billy Times*).

I am fortunate to be president during a relatively stable period in our community. We've recently secured new gathering locations, including the Wellspring Renewal Center where we spent New Year's Eve (our 100th Billy Club gathering, no less). We also continue to enjoy Saratoga Springs for several of our gatherings, a place I find quite magical in its beauty and serenity (thank you, David Carroll). Our attendance has stabilized and our finances, for the moment, are in good order, thanks to the generosity of the Billy community.

I look forward to growing into this new position. I most look forward to our heartfelt revelries and the ongoing support we provide each other. See you at the next gathering! ☺

A Community Parking Lot???

And Creation of an Endowment Fund

by Jim Gilson

Well, the new year is upon us, Billys, and I'm writing you all having been recently elected as your new vice president. Having been a member of the Billy community working on my eleventh year now, I feel honored to be able to support and serve our community as an officer and board member, but more importantly as a Billy concerned about the direction of our community. As I'm sure most of you are aware, the makeup of our Billy community is changing. Some longtime Billys seem to have drifted away, and new Billys are jumping in and showing new enthusiasm for what the Billy community offers, and for what they want it to mean for them.

Having been on the board for eight months or so, I feel like I've finally gotten my stride in understanding how to work on the board and provide guidance and direction for the community based upon my own dreams of what the Billys mean for me, and what others have told me their dreams and desires are for our community. Our new president, Mark Hoffheimer, and I have talked quite a bit about

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Billy Mission and Values Statements

Mission

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

Values

We are a heart-centered community woven together by shared values and by our shared experience as gay, bi, and queer men. We strive to be present and mindful with ourselves and each other and to foster:

- compassion, generosity, honesty, and respect for ourselves and for others
- responsibility for ourselves, to each other, and to our community, including those in need
- personal expression and growth
- fun, frolic, and fabulousness
- celebration of our sexual and spiritual natures
- an environment conducive to our physical, emotional, and sexual health, safety, and well-being
- welcoming and active integration of new Billys as well as openness to friends and family who share our values
- diversity that embraces differences including race and ethnicity, class, age, body type, HIV status, physical ability, education, and financial circumstances; we welcome gay-identified transmen
- the building of bridges to other communities that support our mission and share our values
- authenticity
- reverence for nature
- commitment to resolving conflict through active engagement

We encourage ourselves to be present and mindful by advocating an environment free of drugs and alcohol at our gatherings.

We envision the creation of a world based on principles of nonviolence, sustainability, cooperation, service, and the building of deeper wisdom through shared perspective.

Heart Circle is our central ritual and consensus is our process; they embody our values. ☺

Billy Office Move – Change for the Better?

by Marcus Borgman

An old idea has taken on new life. The Billy Foundation board and staff are seriously considering moving the Billy Office to Sonoma County. Although the logistics of such a move are easy to plan for, it's the philosophical issues that we need to discuss, as a community.

Questions need to be answered, such as: Would such a move change the rural character of the Billy community? Do we even still have a rural character, when so many live in San Francisco and the East Bay? Are we abandoning outreach to gay men in rural and hostile areas like Mendocino, Lake, and Humboldt counties? And are those areas still hostile, or are rural men just more closeted?

What about the Billy Emergency Support Fund, which is open to anyone, Billy or not, if they are HIV positive and living in Mendocino, Lake, or southern Humboldt county? Do we still have a responsibility to them if we move?

Access to Billy gathering supplies may be increased if the office is closer to Billys living further south. How does this need compare with our office being open to drop-in traffic in Ukiah? Can we afford operating an office and storage in Sonoma County? Would the community support the extra costs with higher gathering fees? With more donations?

These issues, and I suspect more are out there, need to get circulated. Beginning with community circles at each gathering, and board meetings, and all the other ways we communicate with each other, let's start this discussion. ☺

THE BILLY TIMES

is published five times per year and is included with gathering calls. To receive gathering information by regular mail, 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. Getting on the email list is free. Contact us at

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office@billyclub.org

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Editor: David Brin Design: Scott Marley

Drug and Alcohol Policy, Oh My!

by Bill Blackburn

Billys have long held a policy of no alcohol or recreational drugs at gatherings. Granted, our reality has not always matched our ideal, but I want to offer some understanding of why we make this request of people. I'm hoping this isn't read as a judgment or a restriction, but as a value we hope to follow. Of course, we're not making any call as to what people do outside of gatherings. I'm writing this to restart a dialogue that seems to have fallen silent for some time in our community.

There are a number of reasons we ask participants to leave non-medicinal drugs and alcohol at home:

1. There are legal issues.
2. We want to respect Billys in recovery who have had struggles with addiction, who have dealt or are dealing with it, and who rely on this policy to feel safe at our gatherings.
3. There are plenty of gay venues where drugs and alcohol are common, and we intend to offer something different than that.
4. Primarily, we as Billys want to be as fully present in mind and heart with each other as we can be, and artificially altered states seem to interrupt that connection.

My hope is that we can look at the issues surrounding this policy and engage with each other on how we might be able to address them in a way that serves everyone. ☺

Billy Club Board of Directors

Board meetings are open to all Billys and Billykin on the third Sunday of each month. Meeting locations rotate among Ukiah, Sonoma County, and San Francisco. Call the Billy Office for location details.

Board of Directors

Mark Hoffheimer, *president*

Jim Gilson, *vice president*

Paul Mueller, *treasurer*

Peter Deutsch, *secretary*

Bill Blackburn

Jim Burke

Steve Rockwell

Ongoing Board Portfolios

Billy Emergency Support Fund

Wil Gonzales, Paul Mueller, Bob Kuder

BillyFon, Jason Bellecci-Serinus

Billy Times, David Brin, Scott Marley

Fundraising, Jim Gilson

Gatherings, Steve Rockwell

Grant writing, Les Wright

Website, Joe Kukulka

COMMUNITY PARKING LOT from page one

where we see our community going, the roles and responsibilities of board members, the projects that the board is working on, the numerous portfolios of various focus of interests as were developed during the past visioning retreats, and so on. What we've come up with is the fact that there are a small number of people, mostly board members, who are doing a whole lot of work and trying to keep the many portfolios going with minimal success. We're all volunteers, and we simply don't have the time or personal resources to do everything on our community wish list.

So, I'm announcing the creation of the "Community Parking Lot." You will start to see the Community Parking Lot at our gatherings as a large poster showing the various projects, portfolios and other past-expressed subjects of community interest that currently have *no one* to take action on or attend to. It is our hope that many of you will find it in your hearts to step forward and start to attend to and move forward with many of these important projects in support of our community, and in your area of interest. Look for the Community Parking Lot on the bulletin board, in future issues of the *Billy Times*, and on our Billy website, and search your heart and volunteer to help and support your community if you feel moved to do so. We sure would enjoy having more help and vision and energy. Many hands make light work!

One area of key interest that I am taking on is the creation of a Billy Endowment Fund. Many nonprofit organizations have endowment funds as a financial vehicle to help defray the ever increasing costs of running an organization. In the case of the Billys, these costs include new and more expensive gathering sites, pay raises for our intrepid office manager, rent costs going up on the storage shed and office, utility costs going up, and so on. In addition, we have seen an increase in requests for scholarship funds, and it's the board's sincere desire and expressed policy to allow anyone to attend a Billy gathering regardless of ability to pay. We haven't always succeeded in this lofty goal due to money shortages. The Endowment Fund would allow Billys to leave gifts and make donations in support of the Billys, but in a fund separate from the General Fund. The Endowment Fund will be a pot of money that is conservatively invested to generate ongoing income for the Billys in support of our stated mission and values. As I don't have any experience in creation of such a fund, I'm looking for others who have a similar interest in helping craft a structure and plan for creation of the fund, and managing of the fund. If you're interested in helping with this important area of creating stability for our community, please email me, Jim Gilson, at safetyhelp@mindspring.com. And if you have an interest in another project or portfolio in the Community Parking Lot, please don't hesitate to contact any board member to discuss what might be the best way to help out your community.

Thanks for reading this and for your continued support of our Billy community. Happy new year to all of you, my Billy brothers! ☺

2008 Gathering Schedule

Midwinter

Billys only
Quaker Center, Ben Lomond, Calif.
Thursday, February 21,
to Sunday, February 24

May Day

Billys and Billykin
Saratoga Springs, Upper Lake, Calif.
Thursday, April 24,
to Sunday, April 27

Midsummer

Billys only
Saratoga Springs, Upper Lake, Calif.
Tuesday, July 1, to Sunday, July 6

Labor Day

Billys and Billykin
Rancho Cicada, Plymouth, Calif.
Thursday, August 29,
to Monday, September 1

Halloween

Billys only
Saratoga Springs, Upper Lake, Calif.
Thursday, October 30,
to Sunday, November 2

Email a gathering's coordinators
to volunteer to help!

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.

The Billy Office

The Billy Foundation
211 W. Standley Street
Ukiah, CA 95482
Phone: 707-462-0766
Fax: 707-462-1164
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.

Billy Lunch

Wednesdays from 12:45 to 2 pm.
Meet at the Billy Office to dine out.

BillyFon

The BillyFon 24-hour message
service offers current information
on Board meetings, potluck, heart
circles, hikes, and gatherings. Call
(415) 289-2080 or (707) 583-2330.

Visit Our Website

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

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 alanoakley-oakley@sbcglobal.net.

Mendocino Potlucks

Coordinator needed! Call Billy
office.

San Francisco Potlucks

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

SonoMen

Men only. Contact Robert Cline at
sonomenpotluck@hotmail.com or
707-573-9466, or Mike Goldstein at
mikegoldst@yahoo.com or
707-887-0798.

South San Francisco & Santa Cruz

Coordinator needed! Contact Lou
Ceci at 650-969-9556 or
ceci_lga@yahoo.com.

