

# BILLY TIMES

— November 2007 —

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 Jim Burke

**Goodbye summer, hello fall. The year is** beginning to wind down. Having grown up in upstate New York, I've never been a fan of hot weather, so I look forward to the gentle chill of the northern California autumn. I suspect I'm not alone in that feeling.

This is a good time for me to report to you on what kind of year this has been for the Billy Club and the Billy Foundation. Overall, it has been a good one. After several years of declining attendance, I'm happy to report that our May Day and July gatherings—our two biggest—both had major upturns this year.

Efforts by many Billys to make gatherings "juicier" (define that word any way you want) has clearly had an impact, with this increase in attendance and participation by both "oldtimer" Billys and the many new ones who joined our community for the first time. Income from gatherings and fundraising has allowed us to keep gathering fees from increasing significantly, and has also allowed many people to attend gatherings who otherwise couldn't, by requesting scholarships from the Richard Locke Scholarship Fund. We're not yet at the stage that would allow us to fund every scholarship request we get, but because of the incredible generosity of this community, we've been able to fund most of the requests we've gotten, if not completely, at least partially. And those we couldn't fund were put first in line for the next gathering.

To help provide a steady source of money for scholarships (and possibly the general fund, too), the board is looking into setting up an endowment fund. We're just beginning to work out the details, but the goal is to create a mechanism to supply money from the Billy Foundation to fund most scholarship requests, as well as possibly to supplement the general fund during our lean period (January to May), when gathering income is at its lowest. Like I said, we're just starting to give

this a serious look, but once we have a plan in hand, we'll let you know about it.

**My congratulations to the many Billys who** helped put together a very successful Labor Day gathering. It was held at Rancho Cicada, near Sacramento, which marked our return to that magnificent site, our first visit in over a decade. The weather was hot, but the river was cool and the spirit was wonderful. It was also our first gathering in several years that actually had a waiting list. While this was bad news for those on the list, it was yet another promising sign that our gathering attendance is improving.

My thanks to gathering coordinator Ezra Cole, as well as to all of the subcoordinators and key people who made the gathering run so smoothly: Bob Ohda (dish dude), Richard Applegate (heart circles), Ken Wagovich (housekeeping), Marvin Salles (housing), Stafen (kitchen queen), Rob Cossetta (parking), Leech Haven (registration), Jean Sward (ride share), Scott Marley (rituals & workshops), Sam Crow (safety/first aid), Jim Gilson (site fluffing), Jim Hughson (site restoration), Jamie Vermillion (snacks & beverages), Ed Wolf (talent/no talent show), Rob Roy Woodman (welcome/emotional support), Chuck Collison (cook extraordinaire), and last—but not least—Marcus Borgman (office/resource coordinator). As always, my apologies in advance to any people whose names I unintentionally omitted!

**While we're on the subject of recognition,** I'd like to announce that longtime Billy Peter Deutsch has joined the Billy Board. Peter has been part of the community for many years, and has many talents to bring to the board, in addition to his intelligence, compassion, and not insignificant reservoir of wisdom. We're delighted that he has joined us, and look forward to the many contributions he'll make to the organization.

With the addition of Peter, we have added four new board members in the past year. But believe it or not,

see *PRESIDENT'S LETTER* on page three

## Two Excerpts from “Sacred Sexuality: Possibilities and Perils”

By Jay Michaelson

From *White Crane*, issue 62

Particularly for queers, whose sexuality has been especially demonized by religion, experiencing the body as holy brings great emotional healing. Even if you never have a mystical or realization experience during sacred sexuality, just knowing that your body is a temple instead of a shithouse is a precious liberation. And creating sacred sexuality in a community is healing on the community level: imagine what would happen if a stadium of 50,000 men did Body Electric. Erotic healing can mend body, mind, heart, and spirit. And it can address the wound that most Gay men carry regarding their sexuality by utilizing precisely the site of woundedness as a site for transcendence. ~

I am still working out how to integrate my sexual practice into my contemplative work. There have been times, recently, when I have felt its opiate-like pull; I've found it very important to be out in nature, alone, but not “go there” sexually all the time. I'm still working out, in my own Jewish-Buddhist context, whether there are practices or ideas that are in too much tension with my core principles, or whether the framing of the question in this way is itself an invitation to consider my own lurking spiritual materialism. Most importantly, I am mindful of something that one of my teachers once said, when I asked him about working with eros along the contemplative path. Grounded in the Buddhist tradition, he was looking out for my soul, in his way, and his sharp response gave me much to contemplate. It's what I wrestle with most, these days, as I explore my own queer erotic spirit. “Of course, there is nothing inherently wrong with it,” he told me. “But the energy of eros is so strong, it's hard not to think it's real.” ~

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Have you come across a passage in your reading that you'd like to share? Please send it to the editor at [dbrin@2davids.com](mailto:dbrin@2davids.com).

## The Billy Office Wish List

### The Billy Foundation office needs your help!

In order to make the nerve center of Billyland a more comfortable and functional place, the Billy Office is seeking donations of equipment, furniture, and volunteer time. Specifically, we're looking for the following.

#### Equipment & Furniture

- Comfortable sofa for board meeting room (est. \$500+ new, used okay)
- Chairs for board meeting room (four upholstered, used okay)

#### Volunteers

- Office assistant—minimum: filing, reception, etc.; maximum: filling in for resource coordinator when sick, on vacation, etc.
- Librarian for Billy Library
- Interior designer for board meeting room (nothing extensive required)
- Interior designer for shared office bathroom (nothing extensive required)

If you think you can help out with any of these, please contact Marcus Borgman at the Billy Foundation office at 707-462-0766 or [office@billyclub.org](mailto:office@billyclub.org). ~

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## 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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Ukiah, CA 95482

Voice 707-462-0766 Fax 707-462-1164  
[office@billyclub.org](mailto:office@billyclub.org)

Resource coordinator: Marcus Borgman  
Editor: David Brin Design: Scott Marley

**PRESIDENT'S LETTER** *from page one*

we still need more. We currently have seven board members, and under our bylaws, we need six to function. At least two other veteran board members would like to step down soon, which will drop us back to five, one fewer than we need. So, as I have asked more than once of late, I urge you, my fellow Billys, to search your head and heart and consider attending a board meeting or two, and if you think you might want to take the next step, join us on the board as a member. You don't need special talents or skills to join (with the exception of the treasurer—and yes, we need a new treasurer!). Just bring yourself and your commitment to this magical organization.

**This is my last column as president of the Billy Foundation.** My one-year term ends at our November board meeting and I'm not seeking another. I've been on the board for over four years, and I've served twice as president. I had the dubious fortune of serving in this office during our embezzlement crisis, but I wanted to stick around long enough to see this organization move past this difficult period and bounce back and thrive once again. Based on our improved finances and the steady rise in our gathering attendance throughout 2007, I think we're well on the road to prospering again. I intend to remain on the board for the time being, but it's time for someone else to take on this role. I think it's very important for the health of the organization that we have regular turnover in this and the other key board positions.

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## 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

Jim Burke, *president*  
 Bill Blackburn, *vice president*  
 Paul Mueller, *treasurer*  
 Mark Hoffheimer, *secretary*  
 Peter Deutsch  
 Jim Gilson  
 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

Lest you think I'm patting myself on the back for Billyland's turnaround, I'm not. I know better. I know it is because of you, the Billy community, that we are now in this vastly improved position. It was your support and commitment that made the difference. So many of you stepped forward to support us financially when we needed it, and also stepped forward to volunteer your energy, your time, and your talents at crucial moments. My fellow board members, of course, played a key role here as well, but the resurrection of the Billy Club and Foundation has been a total community endeavor, which has been thrilling and rewarding to witness.

And the beat goes on. We remain a horizontal, volunteer-driven organization, and for us to continue to thrive as a community, we will continue to need your volunteer energies as well as your financial support. Shortly after my successor takes over—whoever he may be—he will be introducing himself to you by writing our annual fundraising letter where he will ask for your financial support once again. As a nonprofit foundation, we rely on volunteer contributions to survive. These contributions help finance our office, pay the salary of our indispensable resource coordinator, Marcus Borgman, and most critically, keep our gathering fees from going any higher than they already are. As some of you may not realize, the fees you pay to attend our gatherings don't cover all our costs. Only through our annual fundraiser are we able to raise the money needed to cover all of these fixed expenses. As expensive as the gatherings are for many of you, without our annual fundraiser, it would be much, much more costly.

**I guess the final point I'd like to make is this—this is *your* organization, not the board's or anyone else's.** In my role as prez, I get a lot of input from the community, much of it positive (thank you!), but also not so positive. This is to be expected—we're a diverse group of people with strong opinions on things, and not everything that is currently going on in this organization is going to be to everyone's liking. And yes, we still have plenty of issues and problems on our plate to deal with. But to those of you who are unhappy with some aspect of the Billy Club as it now is and are sitting on the sidelines, I strongly urge you to do more than just complain, as good as complaining feels sometimes. If you're unhappy with the way our gatherings are organized and run, consider stepping forward and becoming part of the circle putting together a gathering. If you're upset with the cost of attending a gathering, consider organizing a fundraiser, or maybe even talking to other Billys about putting together a more rustic, bare-bones weekend for the community. If you're annoyed with how the board is conducting business on behalf of the organization, come to a board meeting and speak your mind, or consider joining the board and winning members over to your point of view.

The Billy Club and Foundation is prospering and growing once again, and it's your ongoing participation that allows this to happen. More than ever, we are, thanks to so many of you, succeeding in offering our unique vision to the gay men out there who are intensely seeking it.

On that hopeful note, I wish you all well, and I hope to see you at an upcoming gathering! ☺

# 2007-2008 Gathering Schedule

## New Year's

*Refresh & Renew: Winter's Eve*

Billys and Billykin

Coordinators:

George Anthony

(george\_anthony@elumessence.net)

& Jamie Vermillion

(jamiev5@hotmail.com)

Wellspring Renewal Center,

Mendocino County, Calif.

Thursday-Tuesday,

December 27-January 1

## Midwinter

Billys only

Quaker Center, Ben Lomond, Calif.

Thursday-Sunday, February 21-24

## May Day

Billys and Billykin

Saratoga Springs, Calif.

Thursday-Sunday, April 24-27

## Midsummer

Billys only

Saratoga Springs, Calif.

Tuesday-Sunday, July 1-July 6

## Labor Day

Billys and Billykin

Rancho Cicada, Calif.

Friday-Monday,

August 29-September 1

## Halloween

Billys only

Saratoga Springs, Calif.

Thursday-Sunday,

October 30-November 2

Email a gathering's coordinators  
to volunteer to help!

## 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](mailto:office@billyclub.org)

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

*The next meeting of*

## *the Billy Board*

will be in San Francisco on  
November 18. Email the Billy  
Office for more information.

## 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.

## 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](mailto:office@billyclub.org).

## Local Socials

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

### East Bay Potlucks

Contact Alan Oakley at 510-436-3330  
or [alanoakley-oakley@sbcglobal.net](mailto: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 415-558-0469  
or [gregthebarbersf@yahoo.com](mailto:gregthebarbersf@yahoo.com).

### SonoMen

Men only. Contact Robert Cline at  
707-573-9466 or [sonomenpotluck@hotmail.com](mailto:sonomenpotluck@hotmail.com).

### South San Francisco & Santa Cruz

*Coordinator needed!* Contact Lou Ceci  
at 650-969-9556 or [ceci\\_lga@yahoo.com](mailto:ceci_lga@yahoo.com).

## Billy Lunch

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

## Visit Our Website

<http://www.billyclub.org>

login: billy

password: heartspace

