

An Appreciation for an Outstanding Volunteer

Billy Wine

By Win Wahrer



It was through a mutual friend of mine and Billy's that Billy was introduced to AIDWYC and its work. Billy hails from Montreal, Quebec. He began traveling the world during the summer months when he was 17-years-old. After obtaining his Bachelor of Science degree from McGill University, he traveled more frequently and lived all over the world.

Billy and his family moved to Toronto in 1979 where he found employment in the hospitality industry. He fed his adventurous spirit by continuing to travel, stopping off in Luxembourg to buy a bar which he owned for three years. He bought an English pub in Toronto in 1989 which he sold in the midnineties to his business partner. And in the early nineties Billy owned a nightclub in Guelph, Ontario. Until recently Billy owned racehorses.

Considering his background, it comes as no surprise that when asked by then AIDWYC President Peter Meier and me in which area of AIDWYC's work he was most interested in volunteering, he thought that fundraising would spark his entrepreneurial spirit which began when he ran a ski club while in university. It was decided that AIDWYC would host a benefit concert. This prospect excited Billy and with my help he began to plot and plan how to convince the Board to give the green light to this fundraising event. The AIDWYC Board was for the idea but didn't want to spend what little resources were at hand to take a chance on what might not be a successful venture.

Billy was deeply disappointed but when I challenged him to put his money where his mouth is, he responded by providing the funds needed to launch the first "Sounds Like Justice" concert and silent auction in 2001. It was a huge success. We are now planning our fifth such concert and auction hoped to be later in 2009.

Billy is passionate and deeply dedicated to AIDWYC, its clients and its work. He has never missed an Annual General Meeting, conference, or any other AIDWYC function. He not only attends but usually assists in the set-up, picking up speakers or doing whatever is required to assure a successful event. Billy supports AIDWYC clients by attending court appearances. He even traveled to Michigan to greet the late Maurice Carter when Maurice was released from prison. In 2005, he traveled at his own expense to St. John's Newfoundland where AIDWYC was hosting a conference.

The saying "just keeps on giving" suits Billy to a tee. One example is when he purchased hockey tickets for William Mullins-Johnson in order that Bill experience one of his dreams by attending hockey games at the Sky Dome upon his release in 2005.

Billy is excited to have been given the awesome task of reviewing his very first case and is a viable member of both the Review Committee and the International Review Committee. Billy married Beth Philp in 2005 and in December 2007 they became the proud parents of their little daughter Audrey who shares her home with Mom, Dad and Rook, a Greyhound who Billy rescued.

There are few people that can be called upon at a moment's notice who will drop everything to help but Billy has done just that time and time again. No task is too menial. No idea not worth considering.

Billy you are a GEM!



Walter W. W. W.