

Sharing Hope.

You make anytH(&)Ing possible:

A monthly memoir from the Director of Los Angeles H&I

Since I last corresponded with you, I put my passport to work and traveled to the great state of Iowa: a beautiful, some may say magical place. The weekend included catching up with old friends, concerts, and reminding myself not to label everyone around me a prime candidate for an intervention.

If you ever want to test the bounds of your sobriety try attending a Jimmy Buffett concert. I guess I shouldn't be surprised a guy who sings about going to Margaritaville has fans who like to wear parrots on their heads and drink like prohibition is right around the corner. But alas, I had a wonderful time at the concert, didn't drink, and wore shark fins while asking those around me if they ordered a candy-gram.

The highlight of my trip was taking my mom to the Midwestern traveling production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Someone I most identified with was Toto the dog. You could tell Toto wasn't quite ready for Broadway (I'm guessing he studied acting in Wisconsin) as he kept barking at the wrong times and nearly came to blows with the Cowardly Lion. That was me before I got sober! Always speaking, or shall I say mis-speaking, at the most inopportune times. "Gene, could you wait until we all leave before you join in on the conversation? Much appreciated!" was the usual advice thrown my way.

Anyway, I'm blessed to have better judgement these days and to be able to spend so much quality time with my dear ma, despite the 1800-mile distance.

And speaking of spending quality time with others, (Yes, in case you were wondering, the transitions come that easily for me; call it a gift if you must) that is what we get to do in H&I! Where would we be if someone didn't share their time with us when we were ready to get sober? Lost. And what is our message to others? To quote Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, "Welcome to AA, you're not in incomprehensible demoralization anymore."

*Gene Steichen,
LAHIC Director*

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JULY CAN TOTALS:

This past month your groups gathered an incredibly generous \$11,247.04 to fund the literature we bring into jails, hospitals, sober living facilities and all the rest of the institutions we carry the message to. Thanks to you and to them for sharing the love!

LETTER FROM THE CORRECTIONS DIRECTOR

“Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends—this is an experience you must not miss.”

—**Alcoholics Anonymous, Working with Others, p.89**

The first weekend of this month I went on our annual sober camping trip with my home group. Usually we go to the sequoias, but this year we decided to try something new and went up to El Capitan State Beach near Santa Barbara – right on the ocean. I was helping to coordinate all the group camping supplies, the commitments, as well as cook a taco dinner for everyone on the first night. It was a stressful few weeks getting everything ready. Several times I thought “I’m never doing this again!” Organizing alcoholics is like herding cats lol.



But once I got to the campsite and so many of my other sober friends jumped right in to help set up and mash the avocados, hand-heat the tortillas, chop and stir and pour and heat – and laugh and have fun – I felt like the happiest man in the world. The weekend continued beautifully and we added another wonderful spot to our list of God’s places.

Service to our fellow alcoholics takes many forms - in and out of the jails – and what may at first seem like hardship, so often becomes the joy of fellowship and a new experience of happiness and peace.

Thank you for your commitment to our brothers and sisters in jail and your outstanding generosity of time and

kindness! I wish you a joyful finale to your summer and great kick-off for the fall.

*Stephen B.,
AA H&I Corrections Director*

COMMITMENT ISSUES

Ok, I am going to talk about commitment again. Did I mention that many of us, when we came in, had commitment issues? Some of us still do. When I came in, my sponsor had me take a commitment that I could not hide from. This was my Step 3 assignment. I had to make the coffee at 2nd and Hill in Santa Monica. Back then it was a large, noisy meeting. Maybe it still is. If there weren’t two large pots of coffee ready to go at 7:00 pm, oh lord.

This commitment may be the reason that I am alive today. It kept me coming. It gave me a sense of accomplishment. I met people. It gave me a sense of purpose with no thought of reward. It was exactly what I needed.

When I took on my first H&I panel, I was taking my commitment to my

program to a whole new level. When I got jail clearance, wow. I know very few people that lose time in this program when they are giving time to their program. H&I is



our 12th Step, it reminds us to practice these principles in all of our affairs. I was looking at the hospital grids just now—you know, the ones that are printed in our

monthly newsletter—and I saw some open panels. Let me say that today there are fewer open panels than I have ever seen because our Area Supervisors do amazing work, but there were a few. Honestly, there shouldn’t be any. It is your responsibility, as a member of H&I, to make sure that there are no dark nights.

Come to the business meeting this month, and when we announce the panels that are looking for leaders, step up to the plate and take that panel. If you already have your allotment, then help us find someone that can step in and give one evening a month to this work. As members of Alcoholics Anonymous, our primary purpose comes first.

*Gregory Gardner
AA H&I Hospitals Director*