

Sharing Hope.

You make anytH(&)Ing possible:

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

Hello, once again, I hope you are doing well. I used to get that a lot before I stumbled into sobriety, “How are you doing, Gene?” “Well, Constable, that bail amount you set on my head has made life somewhat unpleasant” was a typical conversation.

Anyway, I love this new life as much as a beaver loves building a hut out of twigs. Recently, I had another great trip with my family, including my dear 81-years-young mom. We went to Las Vegas where I was fortunate enough to attend my mom’s favorite show, Donny & Marie!

Back in the old, *this-alley-looks-like-a-good-place-to-take-a-nap* days, my mom’s wishes were not the ultimate priority to me, unfortunately. Then straight out of the Big Book (“The constant thought of others”) my life changed. “What would you like to do, Mom?” “Well, I’ve always wanted to see Donny & Marie.” So off we went... and then again... and then again... and this last trip marked our 10th time seeing the dynamic brother/sister musical duo, which coincides with my 10 years of sobriety. A window of my life opened, a window I previously never knew existed, thanks to sobriety.

Speaking of windows...full disclosure, I don't have a windows transition ready, so let me close that window for now, pardon the pun, unless of course it's not actually a pun, then just pardon me. Anyway, at a recent H&I panel I attended with my partner, Deborah, we met Rianna; unfortunately for her she resides in a place with very few windows (Is this the windows transition? I'm guessing not.). What struck us is her sharing a story about her 4-year-old son having to visit her in the big house because of her crimes racked up while not being sober. At this early age, the young lad is quite confused by why he can't hug his mom, as they're separated by a plexiglass window. (Thanks for waiting, I now present my transition) “Open the window, Mom. Mom, open the window!” the boy kept pleading to his heartbroken mother.

The way for Rianna and so many others like her to open the window? Sobriety and the experiences we share thru H&I.

Gene Steichen,
LAHIC Director

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OCTOBER CAN TOTALS:

Was October scary? Not for the literature fund (aka “H&I cans”), which took in a treat-worthy \$7,531.86 to buy AA-approved literature for our brothers & sisters in hospitals & institutions. We have much to be grateful for, heading into the holiday season!

LETTER FROM THE CORRECTIONS DIRECTOR

This last weekend I attended and presented at a CMA Retreat. I have been going to this wonderful weekend in Idyllwild for the past few years. This was the 14th retreat and so the theme was 14 All / All 4 1. We presented the AA triangle of Unity, Fellowship and Recovery, wrote about what we were and were not doing with each of them in our lives and discussed how important they are to one's overall wholeness in sobriety.

In addition, the weekend included workshops on other aspects of Mind Body Spirit balance, great fellowship, terrific vegetarian food by the Buddhist monks at this monastery, game nights, a full moon walk on the mountain

and especially a few days out of the city to recharge my weary, urban battery.

There are a number of retreats each year by various sober groups and organizations. If you have not attended one, consider checking one out. They are terrific tools for connecting with ourselves and the program in new ways. You are making this world a better place. Thank you for your terrific energy, service and commitment to our fellow incarcerated brothers and sisters, to AA and to H&I.

In love and service,

*Steve B.,
A.A.L.A. H&I Corrections Director*



LETTER FROM THE HOSPITALS DIRECTOR

Recently we have seen H&I panels shutting down due to lack of interest and attendance at various facilities.

We never like to see this happen. We understand that if one person gets the message and is helped, then we have done our job; but it is frustrating to gather a panel of volunteers, brave Los Angeles traffic, and take time off from our full lives just to be met with seeming indifference, if at all. We bring love and hope, perhaps we expect that in return.

The realities are often quite different. For those of you that return to panels, month after month, and feel as if you are not being heard, I sympathize. I have been there many times myself, and I will be again. We have to ask ourselves if we are getting the support from the facility that we need to continue. Is there anyway that

WE can make the panels more interactive, to perhaps motivate the clientele? Have we given everything that we can to make the panel work? If



we have, and are still getting no response, then it may be time to discontinue bringing in a panel. We have to remember that it is our job to carry the message, not the alcoholic.

Let's talk about how we can keep growing Los Angeles Hospitals and Institutions. Many Area Supervisors are seeking out facilities that would like to bring in an AA panel to share their experience, strength and hope. Area 1 began taking panels to the Downtown Women's Center in Skid Row this year, and though attendance has been light, they are determined to keep coming back, because the rewards are so high. After losing the 9th floor panels at Weingart, Area 1 is determined to find opportunities in a part of town that is in desperate need of help.

There are frustrations and celebrations of the heart being an H&I panel leader, both taking us further from a drink, and closer to serenity.

*Gregory Gardner
AA Los Angeles H&I Hospitals Director*