

Sharing Hope.

You make anytH(&)Ing possible:

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

There's an old phrase many of us might remember from our drinking days when the barkeep was trying to close up the local watering hole: "You don't have to go home, but you can't stay here." Well, luckily it's been 10 years since I've heard that phrase or something similar: "Hey Gene, guess what would improve my life dramatically? You not being here!" Well, that phrase once again applies to me, although in a much nicer way, as it is time for me to leave and turn things over to our new, fantastic H&I Director, Gregory Gardner!

The people who have impacted my AA life and who I have the ultimate respect for, above all, are each one of you; who place the well being of others who are struggling to get on track above your own. That is really hard to imagine in our pre-sober days. "Do you want to spend Saturday at the Rehab Center?" "Sure, but it is a peculiar name for a saloon, what's their Yelp review?" may have been our reply. Anyway, the person who has been with me through out my tenure is my H&I partner, Deborah. I'm so blessed to have a Hall of Fame trudging buddy! I heard that a lot when I got sober: "Gene, you need a trudging buddy." "I do? Can't I trudge on my own, it doesn't seem that complicated, you just...well, you wake up and then you...trudge... until you're done...uh...trudging...okay, I must admit, I'm lost, I do need a trudging buddy, I don't even know what trudging is, in fact, I've never uttered the word trudging!"

Enter, Deborah.

I look at my time in H&I and often wonder what my dad would've thought about it if alcohol hadn't cut his life short. I'm guessing he would have been proud, although he would have been unable to tell me; that's what our relationship was like. "Your dad is very proud of you," my mom would sometimes say to me. "Thank you Mom, any chance he could tell me that directly?" I'd ask. "I don't believe in this lifetime, no," was her answer. And he never did; but if he were here today, perhaps he would, and perhaps he would've been blessed with the gift of sobriety like I have. So with that, it's time for me to leave, but I'm not going home, I'm already home, thank you, AA, thank you H&I...

Gene Steichen,

about-to-be-former LAHIC Director

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NOVEMBER CAN TOTALS:

You (& your groups) kicked off the season of giving with a generous \$9,205.10 to provide AA-approved literature for our brothers & sisters in hospitals & institutions. Thank you (& your groups) for a great 2017; here's wishing us all a happy, healthy, SOBER new year!

LETTER FROM THE CORRECTIONS DIRECTOR

I just went to see the new Disney film *Coco*. Wow! I loved the gorgeous Mexican *Dia de los Muertos* story and imagery, the color and music, and especially the theme about family and remembering people. First, let's talk about family. How many times did we write someone off who has wronged us? Couldn't forgive them or forget? How many times were we written off by our families for things WE did—drunk/high or even sober? The 4th/5th and 8th/9th steps are incredible tools that normies don't know. We get to let go of resentments and right our wrongs. In addition, so many of us lost our family through our addictions but were blessed with reconnecting with them in our sobriety. Or were able to create new family in the rooms.



What about the forgotten? Our brothers and sisters in jails and institutions are often purposely or unintentionally forgotten.

The hand of AA brings more than just solution. It also brings kindness, acknowledgement, understanding and love. The spiritual principle of serving the marginalized is at the forefront of all great spiritual practices—including ours! We 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*

TRIANGULATING LOVE

This is my last column as the Director of the Hospitals side. I have been at this job for two years, and it is time to pass it along. As I have mentioned in several columns, if it were not for my H&I commitments over the years, I would have wandered away from AA completely and probably relapsed. I fear to speculate beyond that. Carrying the message is my primary purpose. When I keep that in mind and heart, I do alright.

The triangle of Alcoholics Anonymous generally has a dangle for me. One side falls to the side. As you can see, service is a big part of my program. I highly recommend it. We need our commitments to keep us coming back. Recovery, which means keeping in step on our journey, changing and growing, comes with the territory when we have a program. Unity is often taken to mean fellowship. This one has always been an issue for me. Like many of us, I have trust issues, and I like to isolate now that I have discovered that I finally like spending time with myself. I am still a little fearful of the world and the people in it. H&I has given me an opportunity to

celebrate all three sides of the triangle, giving me a family in recovery that I pray continues to grow.

We have accomplished so much these past couple of years, thanks to the people who have volunteered to take H&I to the next level—like Claire W. She was the former Area 2 supervisor that said, “Wow, this is a lot of work.” And it was, as we had just implemented mandatory panel reports from each panel leader. She asked if she could bring on a co-supervisor, and it worked brilliantly. Now every Area is better served with multiple people overseeing them. Another Area Supervisor suggested that we start an email list so that panel leaders that are in need of a last minute speaker can send out a help wanted email. This worked because the wonderful Mindy R. took the commitment and ran with it. And it works beautifully thanks to her continual efforts. We created an electronic Hospitals newsletter that is now the official H&I electronic newsletter, sent out through email because Robert S. agreed to manage it. His wish is that this keeps people better informed, lets them



know which panels are open, and reminds us that we are H&I members and need to go to the business meeting. Our bedside visits are up and running with love and care because Albert M. has dedicated himself to Area 7. The panels in Area 1, Skid Row, are on the increase because our supervisors are committed to growing them. All of our Area Supervisors, those that were working the tables when I came on, and those that have joined us more recently, are doing brilliant work keeping track of panels, keeping the lights on, and serving their recovery communities with all of their hearts. I am deeply indebted to you all for the lives that you lead and the examples that you are.

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