

A Short History of "H & I"

The Idea of H&I goes back to our co-founders when Dr Bob thought that he and Bill should go forth and try their new found system of recovery on some new prospect.

Dr. Bob suggested Akron's City Hospital and called ahead to talk with the nurse on the receiving ward. When he had explained that they had a cure for alcoholism, the nurse curtly replied, "Well, Doctor, I suppose you've tried it on yourself?" Dr. Bob explained that indeed he had and asked again if they had any patients that they could work on?

The nurse replied "As a matter of fact they did. A dandy! A man had been brought in the night before in D.T.'s. After being admitted he had become violent and battered two nurses, blackening their eyes before being restrained and sedated. Would this one do?"

Dr. Bob made the appointment for the next day and he and Bill came in to see their new prospect. They talked at length and then asked if he would like for them to come back the next day. He agreed. Upon arriving the next day they found Bill D. talking with his wife, Henrietta. "These are the fellows I was telling you about; they are the ones that understand."

Before their visit was over, Bill D. suddenly turned to his wife and said, "Go fetch my clothes dear. We're getting out of here." Bill D. walked out of that hospital a free man, never to drink again. Bill D. is Alcoholics Anonymous #3.

*Five years latter, here in San Diego, two alcoholics went looking for a new prospect. Ray Lanto, a non-alcoholic friend, introduced them to Police Chief J. T. Peterson. Ray had convinced Chief Peterson that it would be worthwhile to allow Hal S. and his sober friends to hold an AA meeting every week in the jail at the foot of Market Street. Thus, H&I work has been going on in San Diego from the very beginning. However, these ventures were not considered to be the work of any "**Committee**", but rather regular 12-step work.*

Until the spring of 1946, all AA business was conducted at the **"Main Meeting"**, held every Wednesday night. Attendance was running as high as 200 members and business was becoming increasingly difficult to conduct and organizational details needed to be dealt with. The solution was to establish a **"Central Committee"** for San Diego AA. Until that time, AA members were watching their fellowship grow with no idea where it was heading.

By the mid 40's AA members were carrying the message into the psychiatric ward of the County Hospital, and then into County and State honor camps on the outskirts of San Diego. Each location had it's own separate group members heading up the meetings and were solely responsible for these meetings. Still, these were not considered committees.

The Central Committee formed the **"Public Relations Committee"** in 1952 to deal with requests from outside institutions such as the Road Camp meeting in Minnewawa, and evaluations from Viejas and requests from Palomar honor camps, along with requests from Major Jackson of Camp Elliot to encourage meetings at their facilities.

By January 1955, the **"Public Relations Committee"** started conducting monthly **"Institutional Meetings"** to set up schedules and arrange for transportation to fulfill our ever growing responsibility to these institutions. As with all other committee's, cries for additional help were being voiced from the very beginning.

In January, 1956, these groups were brought together to form the **"Hospital and Institutional Committee"**. Later this Committee also joined the **"Southern California Institutional Committee"** operating under their by-laws. Although the committee was in full operation from that time, the new by-laws for the **"Coordinating Council"** were not ratified until July, 1956 with Frank W. as it's first elected Chair.

Although H&I had minimal funding through the Central Committee, more funding was needed to provide institutions with books and literature. The idea for passing the "can" at individual meetings first appeared in September, 1963. It was agreed that the monies collected would be used for the Christmas Party. Interested groups could call the Central Office to pick up these cans. By October of that year it was reported that there was a good

return coming in from the H&I cans. In November of that year it was decided that the money would be used to buy Christmas presents for the members inside the institutions. Enough money had been collected from the H&I cans by December to fully fund the Annual Christmas Party. Any monies left over would go to the general fund at the Central Office.

In January 1964, the "Hospital and Institutions Committee" reported that "all expenses for the Christmas Party was met by returns from the cans and a balance of \$121.18 was turned over to the Central Office.

***AT THIS POINT,** Johnnie M., Central Secretary, stated that "the money turned in by the H&I Committee would be used to set up an account similar to the Program Committee Account. A financial report of income and expense would be published in the report each month. He said it was his opinion that the H&I would have little trouble raising funds to meet expenses in the future."*

Although there has been some debate in the past as to just how this money is to be used, Johnnie's words have been prophetic.

At the Coordinating Council Meeting in June, 1966, it was announced that the H&I Committee had voted to withdraw from the "Southern California H&I Intergroup."

By August of that year San Diego had been excluded from the H&I meeting at the Southern California Convention because they no longer belonged to the Southern California Intergroup. Protests from Marie W. and Rosa B. at the Convention Planning meeting in Pacific Beach resulted in the decision that San Diego would be represented by one speaker and they would help in the H&I booth.

In February, 1968, the H&I Committee voted to again become part of the Southern California H&I Intergroup Committee.

The next month, Rosa B. stated that the local H&I Committee was elected by and responsible to, the Coordinating Council and therefore could not affiliate with any activity with bylaws which are in conflict with those of the Coordinating Council. It was suggested a copy of the bylaws of the So. Cal. H&I Intergroup Committee and a copy of their financial statement be

secured and presented to the Coordinating Council. The decision was made to exchange ideas and establish communications with other H&I Committees.

No further action was taken at this time on the part of San Diego H&I to join the So. Cal. H&I Intergroup. However, communications with other H&I Committees were carried out.

In May of 1970, the Coordinating Council established new bylaws to include a new committee. The **"Government and Public Affairs Committee"**. This committee would affect the H&I Committee in that it would "Delegate to the Hospital and Institutional Committee and the Public Information Committee, all activities falling within their specific functions."

Although no mention of this or the preceding actions were ever "officially" made, on May 6th, 1971, the Chairman of the H&I Committee reported to the Coordinating Council that his committee was now autonomous and that New York Office, the Central Office and all facilities had been so notified.

When H&I volunteers and committee members were questioned on this subject, the most tangible and specific complaint justifying autonomy of such a committee was that the Committee was elected from the fellowship at large, while H&I feels they should elect their own "because they know who the interested, qualified people are."

In August 1971, it was suggested that the Governmental and Public Affairs Committee and representatives of the autonomous group get together to propose a recommendation for a solution to the H&I problems. The meeting was held August 30th and in September the "Governmental and Public Affairs Committee" suggested that the bylaws {Coordinating Council's} be amended.

It wasn't until April 1, 1972, that the bylaws for the San Diego Institutional Committee were officially effective. The bylaws state that the "Committee" would cooperate wholeheartedly with the Coordinating Council and San Diego Central Office, sending an "Institutional Intergroup Representative" to represent said group.

Although not mentioned, it is interesting to note that all other Southern California Institutional Committees (8 at the time) were also autonomous.

While it is not known to this writer at this time when San Diego rejoined the Southern California Hospital & Institutional Intergroup, by March, 1973, H&I was announcing So. Cal. Intergroup meetings being held at the "Y". the first Sunday of the each month.

On September 22, 1974, the San Diego Institutional Committee was voted into the Area Assembly as a member. Now titled "San Diego-Imperial Area Institutional Committee" or "SDAIC."

-----From the Area Assembly Structure and Guidelines-----

VIII. STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE AREA ASSEMBLY

A. Scope.

9. San Diego-Imperial Area Institutional Committee.

- a. Shall operate with respect to the Area Assembly.**
- b. Shall report regularly at the Area Assembly.**
- c. Is exempt from article VIII, sections B. C. D. and E. of these Structures and Guidelines.**

Whether operating as individual groups in the early 40's, or under the bylaws of the Southern California Institutional Committee, The Coordinating Council, or as autonomous committee, volunteers have been exemplary in carrying the message to individuals confined to institutions. This 12th step work is vital in our community and we thank those involved in this effort, whether by actively participating or through your generous contributions to this work.

There is much not known to this writer at the present time. Such as, exactly when H&I contributions started coming directly from group donations or when it was voted that the contributions from the "Green Cans" could be used only for the purpose of buying literature.

For those having "hard evidence" to contribute to update this report, please contact the Archives Committee.