

HISTORY OF H&I IN SAN DIEGO

The first AA meeting in San Diego took place on November 7, 1940 in an apartment on Adams Avenue in the North Park area of the city. Four alcoholics attended including Hal S. who had gotten sober in Los Angeles and had been schooled on the importance of carrying the message. Ray Lanto, a non-alcoholic friend, knew Police Chief J. T. Peterson and convinced him to allow Hal and other AAs to bring weekly meetings into the city jail. This began in December of 1940. Thus within a month of AA beginning in San Diego, H&I work was being done!

By the middle of the 1940s individual AA groups were taking meetings into the County Psychiatric Ward and to several honor camps in the area. In 1952 the Public Relations Committee was formed in order to handle an increasing number of requests for meetings at additional camps. In January, 1955 the Public Relations Committee began monthly Institutional Meetings to coordinate schedules and transportation for these services.

In January 1956 the Hospital and Institutional Committee was formed and later joined the Southern California Institutions Committee which may have been the forerunner of the Southern California H&I Intergroup. The practice of "passing the can" at AA meetings in order to support H&I activities was begun in September, 1963. Although primarily a source for literature funds, this money was also used fund the annual Christmas Party and to buy gifts for inmates. Surplus funds at year's end were turned over to the Central Office.

In June of 1966 the H&I Committee withdrew from the SoCal H&I Intergroup, but joined again in 1968. At this time the H&I Committee was operating under the auspices of the Coordinating Council which in 1970 established The Government and Public Affairs Committee as a parent to the H&I and Public Information Committee. Perhaps as a result on May 6, 1971 the H&I Committee declared itself to be autonomous. The following year an official policy of "cooperation" between H&I and the Coordinating Council was established and H&I has sent a representative to that body ever since.

As an autonomous body the San Diego H&I Committee was participating in the SoCal H&I Intergroup by 1973. On September 22, 1974 the San Diego/Imperial Area Institutional Committee (SDIAC) as we were now called was officially voted into the Area Assembly (Area 8). We have operated as a standing committee within the Area since that time. We are financially independent.

It should be noted that in the late 1970's a separate North County H&I Committee was established. It is an autonomous committee with which we cooperated fully, having liaison members and sharing the responsibility for panels at some facilities in our area.