

Chapter Two

NA As We Know It

There were a number of attempts to start meetings for addicts in the Los Angeles area in the early 1950's. Most were minor and didn't survive very long. The most notable attempt to form an organization by addicts and for addicts occurred in 1953. This attempt involved a number of people, and, as in other cities, had its successes and failures. The most widely known participant in that effort — which ultimately resulted in NA as we know it today — was Jimmy K. He was a leader in the group when it started, but he soon stepped aside when the early group, led by a dominant personality, began to move away from adherence to the Traditions. Jimmy remained close to the group, participated when he chose to or had reason to, and came to the rescue when the group fell apart.

Jimmy K. was reaching the end of his using days at the close of 1949. He had been an addict for a long time and was trying to work, keep his family together and still use drugs. This was not working out very well. He truly wanted to stop. Finally he ended up in meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. He didn't like being there, and for a long time he was a bit crazy and erratic, as he put it later, but he kept coming back. He went to a lot of meetings, often more than one a day. Jimmy said he knew he had to keep going to meetings or he was going to use again, and he didn't want that.

These were the early days of 1950, and although he had used more than just alcohol, there weren't meetings for people like him in the Los Angeles area, as far as he knew. So he did the next best thing: he went to AA. It may not have dawned on him at the time to start something for guys like him, but it had occurred to others in the Los Angeles area.

About the time Jimmy started attending his first AA meetings, a woman in the Santa Monica area named Betty T. started an organization with the name Habit Forming Drugs (HFD) group. She created guidelines for her movement, some written in 1950 and some as late as 1954. The basics of her organization were that its members attended AA meetings, used AA sponsors, and followed the guidelines

for membership that she had written. Her organization is one of those briefly mentioned in the 1954 *Saturday Evening Post* article about NA.

Copies of her writings and guidelines have surfaced in the records of NA along with a copy of a letter from AA founder Bill W. In the letter, dated March 30, 1954, Bill discussed the difficulties addicts had in staying clean, offered congratulations for the work she was doing with addicts, and suggested, "they should surely be allowed attendance at open AA meetings, just as anyone else is." He also mentioned meetings for addicts at Lexington and in the east under the names, "Addicts Anonymous" and "Narcotics Anonymous." It is probable that her group existed, though possibly intermittently, for about five years. Unfortunately, it is not possible to judge the size of her group, or when and under what circumstances it ceased to meet.

In a talk given at NA's twentieth anniversary banquet on August 18, 1973, Jimmy downplayed the Habit Forming Drugs group by saying, "Before [us], there was the Habit Forming Drug groups. These were hidden. These were one or two or three people meeting in apartments here and there. Nobody knew where they were, but they demanded certain things and were dominated by one or two persons. You and I know... we [addicts] don't like authority." Yet, he went on, "another group started in the Valley then that also called itself HFD and was dominated by one man."

While the HFD group may have been hidden, as Jimmy suggests, the drug problem in Los Angeles was getting attention from one of the city's three major newspapers. A columnist for the *L.A. Mirror* (later merged with the *L.A. Times*) published a series of articles which, among other things, encouraged hearings by the State Assembly Judiciary Committee. In 1952, the book, *The Narcotics Menace* (Borden Publishing Co. Los Angeles) contained the following quote about those hearings: "Attending the meeting were two members of the Los Angeles group of NA (Narcotics Anonymous), also known as AA (Addicts Anonymous), an organization founded at the Narcotics hospital at Lexington, Kentucky. They were cured of their addiction and offered themselves as living proof of the fact that given proper treatment dope addicts can be healed." It is unclear what group these two addicts were part of, but it could have been one of the groups Jimmy mentions. The hearings were probably held in early 1951.

Jimmy spoke of another effort about that same time: "A few of the people I met down on skid row years ago, from East Los Angeles, formed a group known as Addicts Anonymous. They infringed on the AA name, and they died very quickly because they too were dominated by one man. So, we found out very early, and our experience has taught us, that we can have no bosses, no big shots, in Narcotics

Anonymous." Eddie C., who was sponsored by Jimmy during those years, remembers going with Jimmy to the meeting in East Los Angeles and taking people along, one or more of whom were probably loaded at the time. Another Addicts Anonymous group is thought to have existed for awhile in the community of Pacoima with Gil von H. as its leader.

The attempts to start Addicts Anonymous meetings in East Los Angeles and Pacoima cannot be dismissed without drawing on the probable connections of their founders with the hospital programs at Lexington or Fort Worth. Since both hospitals were then releasing addicts back to their homes after contact with their in-facility Addicts Anonymous meetings, it seems likely that these meetings are indirectly associated with the hospital efforts. It is also likely that some of those involved with the later attempt to start NA in the San Fernando Valley also were connected to the Addicts Anonymous experience at Fort Worth or Lexington. The monthly publication, *The Key*, would have provided additional insight and assistance to these fragile attempts to start meetings.

Another effort at recovery meetings for addicts was started in the early 1950's in Venice, California. Bob R., a long-time NA member still active in the fellowship at this writing, reports serving as the first secretary of a group called HYAL (Hypes and Alcoholics). Although Bob was not involved long, several members of this group later formed Synanon (a drug addiction treatment program).

There were at least seven separate attempts to start a group or program for addicts in the Los Angeles area in the first few years of the 1950's. Most of the individuals involved were already attending AA meetings. Some, like Jimmy, who got clean in AA in February 1950, were just not comfortable in AA meetings, as they were mostly unwelcome to speak about their use of other drugs.

In the early 1950's, there were nearly a quarter million people living among the twenty-two communities of the San Fernando Valley, a suburb of the City of Los Angeles. Each community had its own name, but they were still part of the City of Los Angeles. These included places like North Hollywood, Studio City, Sun Valley and Pacoima. Adjacent to North Hollywood and Sun Valley is the independent city of Burbank. It was hard to determine where one community began or another ended, as there are no physical barriers and few signs. Consequently, living in the area was like being in one big town.

AA found a foothold here in the 1940's, and by 1953 there were AA clubhouses in Burbank and North Hollywood, about five miles apart. Each clubhouse had six or seven meetings a week, and members fre-

held at which a sign-in sheet was created and notes were taken that provide a glimpse of what happened. But more about that meeting later.

There are two entirely different versions to be analyzed about how NA got started. One version of the origin of NA comes from Jack P., an AA member active in the North Hollywood AA meetings from the 1940's. Jack had helped start the Los Angeles AA Institutional Committee in 1946. He retired to Washington State in the 1970's. In 1985, Jack offered to donate his *AA Big Book* to NA for its historical value. "It was the book," he explained, "that had been used by himself, Jimmy, and others when they held the first NA meetings. In the book they had marked the passages where 'addict' or 'addiction' should be recited rather than what was actually printed." After an exchange of letters and phone calls, Jack was invited to a dinner meeting of the NA Board of Trustees in 1986. He was invited so that he could tell, for the record, what he knew about the origins of NA.

Jack reported he had been approached by a Sheriff's Narcotics Division officer to try and do with drug addicts what he (and others) had done with their AA meetings in the jails. Jack reported these conversations happened, "Oh, about May of 1953, as near as I can check back. ... About the middle of June of 1953, I started a meeting on Moorpark at the church." The Officer promised him that people would come to the meeting if Jack held it; the implication being that he would order addicts to go.

Jack remembers the officer sent three people, and in addition, two women who had heard about the meeting came. One of the women was Penny K., who would later return to the fellowship. One of the men was Cy M., who came back for the second meeting but missed the third. Jimmy wasn't at the first two meetings, but came for the third. When Jimmy started coming, he soon brought Cy back and a man named Scott K. According to Jack, "after eight weeks in this thing, I told Jimmy that I couldn't have any more to do with it because I didn't understand it, and Jimmy said, 'that's fine, I'll do what I can.'" As Jack remembers it, "Jimmy took it over in July, and... periodically he and I would talk about what he was doing in Narcotics Anonymous. But that was the total sum of my experience."

Unfortunately, Jack's memory was not entirely precise on every detail (nor should it have been expected to be after so many years) and in some particulars his memory is at variance with Jimmy's. For example, when responding to a question about Shier's dryer (more correctly the North Hollywood Lodge and Sanitarium but known for its medical director, a Dr. Shier), Jack said "but the Shier's dryer thing, that came two or three years after Jimmy had still held this

thing going." Jimmy, in the 1984 videotape reports the 1953 meeting was moved to Shier's in early 1954, hardly more than three months after they began, and only a short time after Jimmy had resigned from the leadership of the NA group.

Another oldtimer with memories of having been there at the beginning is Eddie C., and his memory is substantially different from both Jimmy's and Jack's. Eddie came first to AA in Burbank in early December, 1951, to a meeting at which Jimmy was the speaker. They soon became acquainted, and Jimmy took him on as a sponsee. In the years that followed, they were together at meetings several times a week, and spent many hours together just talking or doing things.

Eddie recalls that the addict meeting started because the AA meetings in Burbank and North Hollywood were tired of people talking about other drugs. As Eddie remembers it, he heard that Gil von H. was going to get some people together at his house to talk about their drug addiction. When Eddie decided he would go, he invited Jimmy who went along. There he, Jimmy, Gil, Pat H., Steve R. and others began to meet. Thereafter, for some weeks, they met in Gil's home in Pacoima (near its border with Sun Valley) once a week for an Addicts Anonymous/Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. "They just felt the need to meet and talk more openly about things beyond alcohol; they didn't set out to really start something new like another fellowship," Eddie recalled.

Eddie said they had been meeting for awhile before they learned that Doris and Frank had just opened a meeting for addicts in a small building on Clybourn Avenue, not much more than a mile from where they were meeting at Gil's home. Rather than having two things going, they joined Doris and Frank's meeting. They met at the same place for about six months, and then the meeting moved. "The name Narcotics Anonymous came later," he says, "after they discovered AA General Service Office didn't want people using their initials."

Eddie was aware of the interview conducted with Jack P., as someone sent him a copy. He is emphatic that he doesn't remember even seeing Jack at any NA meetings then or later, although he knew Jack pretty well from AA meetings. As for Cy and Scott, he recalls both from AA meetings, and knew that Jimmy and Cy had some differences, but doesn't recall either Cy or Scott being involved with NA until much later.

There are obvious differences between these three sources and each difference must be examined: first, Jimmy's statement "we formed in July"; second, Jack's statement that he started the meeting in May and then turned it over to Jimmy; third, Eddie's recollection of meetings at Gil's that joined with the effort started at Doris and Frank's. Unfortunately, neither Jack's nor Eddie's accounts make a

distinction between business meetings and recovery meetings. And the written records of the business meetings that began on August seventeenth explain they were still working toward having their first announced recovery meeting. It was subsequently scheduled and held on October fifth, 1953. The way in which the October meeting was planned for and addressed when it was announced, clearly suggests they were not simultaneously holding recovery meetings during the informal or formal business meeting phase.

Since the fellowship has accepted Jimmy's "We Do Recover" statement that, "with several other addicts and some members of AA who had great faith in us and the program, we formed in July 1953, what we now know as Narcotics Anonymous" as the basis of NA history, it seems that a decision must be made to accept information which verifies that and disregard information that is contradictory and which cannot be verified.

If the information about the business meetings that began on August seventeenth is to be accepted as valid, then the contradictions between Jimmy, Jack and Eddie are irreconcilable and two of them must be dismissed. If however, the group was already holding recovery meetings while they conducted their informal and then formal business meetings leading up to the October meeting, reconciliation among two of the sources is still possible.

Let us assume, for sake of argument, that recovery meetings were held simultaneously. With this assumption, it is possible to accept Jack's version and it can fit with what Jimmy wrote, although the dates don't match. Or it is possible that Jimmy and Eddie were talking about the same meeting since Eddie is not specific about the starting date at Gil's house. There can be no reconciliation between Jack's and Eddie's accounts because Jack says his meeting was at the church on Moorpark (in Studio City) and Eddie says his meeting was at Gil's home in Pacoima which is five miles from the Moorpark church.

Furthermore, some of the specific details in both Jack's and Eddie's accounts are impossible to reconcile with what Jimmy left in writings and recordings and other factors known about the period. For example, as to Jack's description of how he organized the first meeting, it does not fit with other factors that are known. In 1953, AA was not really that big in the Valley, and the individuals involved all knew each other and attended many of the same AA meetings. Jack even states about Jimmy, "I had known Jimmy in AA [in] the North Hollywood group, for quite some time and we had become very close friends. I had talked to him about this thing, knowing that he was an addict and never thought to ask him to come and help." If Jimmy was at that very time involved in one or both of the other ef-

forts — the meeting at Gil's home that Eddie remembers or the meetings with Frank and Doris, he surely would have expressed more than casual interest in a similar effort of a good friend in AA. Similarly, Jimmy would have told Eddie, Doris, Frank and the others about his discussion with Jack, though they make no mention of this. It is inconceivable, given these facts, that Jimmy, Eddie, Doris, Frank and others would have sat idly by while Jack started a meeting for drug addicts on his own.

As for Eddie's recollection that there were recovery meetings at Gil's home, it too conflicts with the record of the formal business meetings. For example, Eddie says they were already meeting when they discovered Frank and Doris were holding a meeting in a building on Clybourn Avenue. Records of the September fourteenth and twenty-first business meetings indicate that they had just then secured a meeting place at the Dad's Club building on Clybourn Avenue. This does not seem to fit with Eddie's contention that he, Jimmy, Gil and others joined the meeting at that location after it had been going for a while. Eddie also says that the meeting was at the Clybourn location for about six months, then moved. This is inconsistent with the records indicating that Doris arranged for the location in late September, they started in October, and they moved to Shier's Sanitarium around the beginning of 1954.

There is also a difference in references to key people. Jack says Cy was an early participant, declaring Cy came to the first meeting and then came back later when Jimmy brought him. Eddie, however, says Cy came along later. Cy's participation is not clear until references are given by Jimmy, and they suggest involvement around the beginning of 1954.

Perhaps the most convincing reason to accept Jimmy as the authority on who actually started the first meeting, are Jimmy's words in "We Do Recover" and his own traits of honesty and pride. He never used the singular "I" in describing those events, either in writing or in recorded conversations. He never referred to himself directly or by implication as "the founder." He used the collective "we." This could be modesty, but it also might be simple honesty. While he possessed both character traits, it is more likely that honesty prevailed over modesty in matters such as this. This "we" rather than "I" philosophy was carried on by Jimmy throughout the rest of his life. Only near the time of his death did the movement take fire to pronounce Jimmy as "the founder" rather than being among the "we" who "formed in July 1953..."

It is very likely that Jack was involved and was one of "some members of AA" that Jimmy wrote about. And certainly Eddie was one of the founding members. Jimmy's frequent statement that there

are no "big shots" in NA, and his personal decision to back away from the HFD movement — and even NA itself when he felt that it was being dominated by a single personality — seem to support the view that the founding of NA as we know it today was a collaborative affair, and that those involved would have wanted it to be remembered that way. Jimmy was probably very conscious of this when he wrote "We Do Recover," conveying clearly for later generations of NA members that NA was a "we" program from the beginning. And as a matter of record, there simply is no conclusive evidence that one person was the single initiator of the 1953 meetings in California.

After examination of all the various versions of those events, it seems appropriate to continue to rely mostly upon the words of Jimmy K. for the reconstruction of the events of NA's founding. The record of those formal business meetings begins on August seventeenth, 1953, at the home of Doris and Frank C. This record should be used as the basis for events in the fellowship during the five month period they cover. They also confirm the occurrence of informal meetings that preceded them.

The best evidence of earlier organizational meetings is the fact that they adopted the bylaws at the first recorded meeting. It is inconceivable that something so important and (by the standards of that time) so complex would have been approved at the first meeting unless the principals involved had previously met together and worked out their differences. This clearly shows that a series of informal meetings had to precede the August seventeenth meeting. In a more recent declaration about meetings prior to August seventeenth, the group that has control of the records in Jimmy's possession at the time of his death have stated they have evidence that such meetings did take place, and that Jimmy is the only individual to have participated in them continuously. Such information only seems to confirm the value of accepting Jimmy as the proper source to rely upon.

Perhaps the most valuable written artifacts concerning the start of NA in the San Fernando Valley are the meeting sign-in sheet, bylaws and hand-written minutes of the formal business meetings. While not containing great detail, the minutes are adequate to depict the general series of events as the committee began to organize the group. Since Doris was elected as the secretary, it could be assumed that she wrote those minutes. There is some confusion, however, as she resigned from the committee before the narrative ends. The final entries are in the same handwriting as the others, except for the resignation entry of Doris and her husband Frank. At the twentieth anniversary banquet, Jimmy told of that first meeting in these words;

One of the first things... when we sat together trying to iron out some of the things we wanted to do, we came down to very simple ideas. Number one, that we believed that this program of Twelve Steps would work for addicts as well as for alcoholics. Two, that the Traditions must be followed if we were to grow — grow as a fellowship that could stand on its own feet aside from and away from AA. We could take our own place as a fellowship and not be dominated by or affiliated with anything or anybody else.

Attending that meeting were: Joanne P., Manuel C., Jane Von H., Jess L., Gil Von H., Ellen P., James S., James D.C., Frank C., Paul R., Gilda K, Charles D., Jimmy K., and four others whose first names are indecipherable from the much-copied original sign-in sheet. These seventeen began to set the course for the fellowship we know today. It is interesting to note that neither Cy M., nor Scott K., who played important roles in the young fellowship, were present at the first formal business meeting.

At the first meeting, three important decisions were reached: Jimmy was elected chairperson, the bylaws were accepted, and the name San Fernando Valley Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous was chosen. Jimmy later told of objecting to the name, saying that they could not use the AA name. They outvoted him and the name was adopted, at least for a few weeks. In adopting the bylaws, they simultaneously adopted the use of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Among NA aficionados today, there is an interesting riddle concerning the copies of these early bylaws. The bylaws themselves purport to have been adopted on August 17, 1953, and they say in article one, "This Society or Movement shall be known as Narcotics Anonymous..." While the meeting record that is used to chart the business discussion of the group tell that on August seventeenth, they adopted the name "Narcotics Anonymous/Alcoholics Anonymous." It was not until weeks later that the name was paired down to simply "Narcotics Anonymous." This seems to suggest the bylaws so widely copied were retyped at a later date. Other historians may later be able to shed light on this inconsistency.

Jimmy wrote to the AA General Service Office (GSO) in New York asking for permission to use the Steps and Traditions. The answer he expected was soon received: AA granted permission to use the Steps and Traditions but stated that the Narcotics Anonymous group should be separate from Alcoholics Anonymous. Jimmy was undoubtedly gratified that AA authorized use of the Steps and Traditions, and that they supported his position that NA should not use the

AA name as part of its own. The group changed its name at the sixth meeting (September 14, 1953), soon after receiving the letter from AA.

Others elected to positions of responsibility at the first meeting were: Doris C. as Secretary, Frank C. and Gilda K to six-month terms on the rotating committee for leadership, and Paul R. and Steve R. to three-month terms on the rotating committee for leadership.

On August nineteenth, two days after the first meeting, they met again and approved terms of office and descriptions of duties for the chairperson and secretary.

Their third meeting was held on August twenty-fourth. They decided, "The regular meeting of the group shall be held at 8:30 PM every Monday evening. The governing committee will meet the first Wednesday of every month at 8:00 PM. All meetings shall be closed except the first meeting of the month. Speakers must be alcoholics and narcotic addicts or one with both addictions."

At the fourth meeting, on August twenty-sixth, they accepted two resignations, Paul R. and Steve R., and added two replacement members to the committee, Pat H. and Bud C. They also made a decision about institutional committee time requirements, specifying a year clean time for participation.

Notes for the fifth meeting, on August thirty-first, report, "Our purpose has been taken from the *Key*." This reference confirms the influence from the Lexington Hospital on the NA groups on both coasts. The "purpose" statement they used is identical to the "purpose" statement printed in each edition of *The Key*.

On September fourteenth they met again and voted to change the name to "Narcotics Anonymous." They also elected Tommy M. to be vice-chairperson to relieve Jimmy of some of the burden of being chairperson, and "Doris C. [was] voted to procure a suitable building [for their first official meeting]." It may be interesting to note that Tommy, Jimmy, Doris and Frank remained close friends until the first three had passed away, leaving only Frank.

The seventh meeting, on September twenty-first, provided time to make last minute duty assignments: "Gilda K. voted and accepted to print "Our Purpose" and contact all newspapers. Doris C. was to contact all heads of narcotics Divisions of the Police Departments. Tommy M. was to have signs made up." There is also a note that the Salvation Army building, called the Dad's Club in Sun Valley, which was located at the corner of Cantara Street and Clybourn Avenue, would be used.

The notice about the meeting was undoubtedly circulated to area AA meetings. The following is a reproduction of the meeting notice.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

"OUR PURPOSE"

This is an informal group of drug addicts, banded together to help one another renew their strength in remaining free of drug addiction.

Our precepts are patterned after those of Alcoholics Anonymous, to which all credit is given and precedence is acknowledged. We claim no originality but since we believe that the cause of alcoholism and addiction are basically the same, we wish to apply to our lives the truths and principles which have benefited so many otherwise helpless individuals. We believe that by so doing we may regain and maintain our health and sanity.

It shall be the purpose of this group to endeavor to foster a means of rehabilitation for the addict, and to carry a message of hope for the future to those who have become enslaved by the use of habit forming drugs.

Starting Monday Night, October 5, 1953; Each Monday night thereafter at 8:30 PM. Corner of Cantara and Clybourn, Sun Valley, California, directly behind Sunland Lumber Company.

The next entry is on October 5, the date of the "first" recovery meeting. Its only notation was to accept "the absence of Pat H. until such time as is convenient for his return."

The recovery meeting appears to have been successful. Although it was nearly a hundred degrees when the meeting started, as the building had no air conditioning and the city was experiencing a heat wave, they stayed and had their meeting. Jimmy later described how he would set up the meeting, making the coffee and waiting at the door step. Some members, still uncertain about going to a meeting where cops might show up, would cruise by the building once before coming in. Jimmy kept their first coffee pot as a memento long after they got a bigger one. And the glass cups they used (disposable cups were uncommon in 1953) also became collector items that Jimmy retained for many years.

There are five subsequent notations of the business meetings, and then the record ends. They portray the decline of the committee as one resignation after another is accepted, with no replacements being added.

- October 24th: "Resignation of Bud C."
 November 15th: "Accepted resignation of Gilda K. and Tommy M."
 November 16th: "Resignation of Doris and Frank C. accepted."
 December 16th: "Accepted resignation of Jimmy K."
 December 18th: "Nomination of Bud P. for chairperson. Accepted."

There are no further entries. A roll call was not recorded at each meeting, so we do not know who was present and had an impact on the decisions. About his resignation from the committee, Jimmy explained at the twentieth anniversary meeting, "I resigned... as chairperson of NA before I really got going because... we were not following the Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous."

About the participants in the meetings of that summer and fall, Jack gave prominence to Jimmy and remembered the participation of Cy and Scott, but does not mention Eddie, Doris, Frank or Gil. Eddie on the other hand remembers the importance of Gil as well as Doris and Frank, but seemed to think Cy and Scott came later. The minutes of the first meeting include Gil, Doris, Frank and Jimmy, but Cy and Scott were not mentioned, yet Frank's letter supports the contention that Cy became an early participant. Without new and reliable resources, a lot of uncertainty will remain.

The only note concerning the last business meeting says Bud P. was elected as chairperson. Two other persons with his last name appear in the record of the August seventeenth meeting so it is possible he was a participant all along. How long Bud was chairperson is not precisely known, but it was probably just a month or two. Charlotte G., who had been at Shier's in 1954, remembers the NA meeting. Cy, she recalls, kept the meeting going through several of her relapses. Charlotte was correct and her memory is bolstered by the best contemporary resource; Jimmy K. While Jimmy was in the hospital in late January, 1984, he was visited by Pepe A., his old and close friend. They made a tape recording of this visit in which they recount some of the events and people in the early years of NA.

Jimmy talks about giving up responsibility over the group but doesn't mention Bud at all, thereby adding to the theory that Bud's tenure was very short. Jimmy and Pepe concentrate on Cy M. as the authority within the group after Jimmy resigned as chairperson. All of the other fragments of information about the period from the beginning of 1954 to near the end of 1959 confirm that Cy was in charge of the group. Others, like Bob B., Pepe A., Bob R. and Russ C. have also given confirmation of the dominant role Cy had during this period, although Pepe suggests Scott held a larger role in 1958.

Cy was known to be on good terms with Dr. Shier, and he probably arranged the move to Shier's facility from the original meeting place in Sun Valley soon after taking over in 1954. Jimmy objected to this, as Shier's Sanitarium was a detox facility for alcoholics and he felt it was too close of an affiliation as far as his understanding of the Sixth Tradition was concerned.

The meeting stayed at Shier's dryer through most of the following years. It met in a small room, but since there were not many present most of the time, it worked out. But, "long about 1954 or 1955," Jimmy reports, "the meeting was getting as many as eighteen or twenty people, and there was talk of starting a second one, but it didn't happen just then."

Jimmy recalls that Cy was one of those overbearing people who was good at intimidation, even with friends. Jimmy suggests that one of the problems existing between Cy and himself was over Cy's approach to meetings. Cy believed in putting everyone "on the hot seat" at meetings to draw out their feelings and disclose their private experiences. Jimmy, on the other hand felt that members should share what they wanted to share, and shouldn't be challenged or prodded. It got to the point quite early that Cy didn't want Jimmy to talk when he came to the meeting.

Regardless of who was in the leadership role during those years, Jimmy spoke of them in his talk to the twentieth anniversary banquet in these words:

For awhile after we formed, ... some people were put in a position where they became the leaders again, the Great White Father. ... You know we can't have a Great White Father, or a Big Momma; it doesn't work in this organization. And NA died once more, and the friends of ours in AA helped to pick us up and said, "Don't let it bother you." These were the real friends we had in the beginning... that came and helped us get started again. But again and again this happened in this organization. One person would try to dominate the whole movement, and every time it happened we began to die, because the Traditions go down the drain when we try this.

Russell C., who came into the fellowship in 1959, also characterized Cy as "the great white father type, who called all the shots and made all the decisions." Regardless of what may seem to be harsh words for those who took control, Jimmy also said, "We were a small group and we were pretty close, despite disagreements."

Jimmy's comment about being pretty close is important to remember when thinking of the differences between himself and Cy or Scott. All three men were dedicated to making recovery work. Each

was sincere in his belief that the Steps could work with addicts, and each did his best to carry that message. The principal difference seems to be to Jimmy's insistence on following the Traditions when it came to the conduct of meetings. From the scraps of information available, it appears that Cy was so outspoken in his philosophy about how sponsorship worked that it effectively weakened any reliance on group conscience. The conclusion this author has reached is that Cy's influence on the members of the time was stronger than Jimmy's and the other members were not strong enough to stand up to Cy.

Even though Jimmy had given up the leadership role, he made what may have been one of his most significant contributions to NA during that period. It was described by Jack as he told of an AA member who printed copies of the first NA pamphlet, in late 1953 or early 1954. In it the First Step language had been altered by using the word "addiction" rather than "alcohol." Jack said that it got down to a conflict between Cy and Jimmy. Cy wanted different language, but Jimmy prevailed.

The Key may have helped in this discussion. The statement of purpose from *The Key* says, in part, "we believe that the cause of alcoholism and addiction are basically the same..." They obviously felt the First Step should be changed, but the question was what word to insert where "alcohol" appears. Since they had already subscribed to the purpose statement from *The Key*, it would be natural to use the term addiction, since that covered everything.

While the language of *The Key* does continue to subtly separate alcoholism from addiction, calling them "basically the same," the language used in NA's first step laid the groundwork for the later emphasis on addiction as an all-inclusive term. As the movement matured, expanding on Jimmy's seminal contribution in the wording of Step One, this emphasis would be strengthened and expanded upon in the written and spoken message of NA.

This should firmly seat Jimmy as the father of the Narcotics Anonymous philosophy. Most, if not all, of the addicts in this group had used heroin, and they could have logically used a drug-specific term to describe themselves and their disease, just as AA had done with the First Step. By using the term "addiction" the group and its literature shifted the focus in an important way from the symptom — drugs — to the disease — addiction — and opened the door for people addicted to any drugs, including drugs not yet invented.

One of the more interesting statements Jack made was a point about which we do not have a comment from Jimmy. Jack stated, "I do know that in late 1954 or early 1955 a collection was taken up and Jimmy was sent back to Lexington to be part of the seminar on the

program at Lexington." While this statement is unsubstantiated, it would resolve any doubts about the connection of the California fellowship to the Lexington program. It might also link the New York and California efforts in some way, as he would have very likely been made aware of the New York fellowship.

Jimmy has left us no hint of attending a meeting at the Lexington hospital. However, Bob B. also recalls "something of this sort having been told to me (a collection being taken and sending Jimmy to Lexington) as having taken place, but that I wasn't there at the time." Bob also was told there were many letters exchanged between Jimmy and the Lexington hospital.

Despite the uncertainty of those years, they produced a new pamphlet with a post office box address in Studio City and another address in San Diego in 1956. A meeting had started in San Diego, but apparently died rather quickly. It listed twenty questions that might be used as a sort of self-assessment for addiction, as well as a brief essay describing the Narcotics Anonymous program. This essay is clearly the source of our current sections of the NA White Booklet read at meetings. It was a buff-colored publication in the same format as the current Little White Booklet, but a little narrower, and only eight pages long. Members would write on the cover where and when meetings were, as there wasn't a meeting schedule printed in those days.

Jimmy continued to affiliate with the people involved in NA during the second half of the 50's, and he attended the NA meeting from time to time. In the videotape, Jimmy relates that he came "to the meeting if I had a newcomer, as I wanted newcomers to get the proper foundation," even, it seems, if he had problems with how the meeting was being run or where it was being held. Jimmy says he continued to go to AA meetings, as did everyone else in NA at the time, because the one NA meeting just wasn't enough.

Also in the video tape Jimmy describes holding meetings in Scott's home on Chandler Boulevard in Burbank. He recalled that they spent hours (after a meeting) one night looking up in an effort to see the Soviet Sputnik satellite as it passed over. As that had been a 1957 event, it suggests that during the late fifties, Jimmy was still involved with other NA members.

Around 1958, Shier's had some remodeling done and the meeting temporarily moved. The new location was another alcohol treatment facility about a mile away on Ventura Boulevard in Studio City. Jimmy reports that the meeting was there for about a year. When the meeting moved back to Shier's, they kept the other location, so for awhile they had two meetings. Unfortunately there just wasn't enough support, and in about a year the second meeting folded.

It may have been while there were two meetings that Pepe A. had his first brush with the fellowship. Pepe told a convention audience in 1978 of his detoxification in a West Los Angeles area hospital in 1958. He was visited nearly every day by Scott, who invited him to come to the NA meeting after his release. Pepe portrayed Scott as "the leader of NA at the time." The meeting was being held at "Shier's dryer" in North Hollywood, and Pepe attended a few times before he relapsed and was away for a few years.

Cy's closest associate seems to have been Scott K. and he may have allowed Scott to run the second meeting while it existed. Their relationship was strengthened in part because Cy was known to have been Scott's sponsor. Unfortunately Scott had trouble staying clean, both then and in the years that followed. Russell C., who used Scott as his sponsor when he joined NA in 1959, reported that Scott only had five years at that time, suggesting Scott relapsed between the 1953 start date and when Russell met him later.

But all reports about members who came through the doors in those years suggest it was really hard to get much clean time. For example, Bob B. speaking at the 1978 World Convention, characterized the fellowship in these early days as, "lacking the stability in clean time among the members as would be found at a later date." He stressed that in the early days, "members might come to a meeting with only a few days clean time and use again before the next meeting. Recovery using the AA Steps had not yet been sufficiently proven to work for addicts, and no one was really positive it would. But the members would frequently come even if they were loaded." Although he was not specific about the dates these comments applied to, they may well have been basically true through the late 1950's and into the early 1960's.

Scott seems to have lost his leadership role while Pepe was away. Bob R., who attended some meetings at Shier's in 1959, remembers that Cy was in charge. An identical recollection about Cy being in charge came from Russell C. as described earlier. Russ had first come into contact with Jerry K., Jimmy's brother. Jerry had introduced Russ to Jimmy, who took him to the Friday night meeting at Shier's. But Russ remembers that Jimmy didn't come to the meeting at Shier's all the time — mostly he believes, because of his disagreement with how Cy was running things.

The end of Cy's leadership, and the meeting too — for a short while — may have come about as a result of a television program. Jimmy explains in a tape recording that Cy appeared on a television documentary (probably in September or October 1959). Jimmy suggests that at least one of the other members shown in the program may have been loaded. There is also a hint that affiliation also played

a part in the controversy. Another member at the time suggests that Cy may have compromised his anonymity on the program and claimed he was the founding father of NA. It caused a lot of controversy within the meeting and things got so bad that Cy gave up the meeting. It soon folded, as near as memories can recall, in October of 1959. It is possible there were no meetings for a short period.

Jimmy was harsh in his judgment of NA during this period, as when he told the Islander Anniversary meeting, "Actually, although we had meetings going for several years, about four years, there was no Narcotics Anonymous. Because one of the things we said...[in the beginning]...that we would call ourselves an NA organization and fellowship as long as we used the Steps and the Traditions. So when we stopped using the Traditions and became a one-man-rule proposition, there was no longer really any NA. ... It died out, and there were only a few of us left, but it also points out the fact that this program, once we begin to live it, we can't let it go; it's going to grow again."

When it died, Jimmy was there to pick up the pieces. Few members could have taken over as well as Jimmy at that time. He had remained drug free, worked every day to support his family, and was always a stable contact when other addicts needed him. He didn't move around and could always be counted on to be there for others. When the regular meetings started again it was usually Jimmy who opened the door, had the coffee ready and ran the meetings. Since little money was ever collected when the hat was passed, Jimmy probably paid for things out of his own pocket.

Jimmy was born in Paisley, Scotland, a small town a little south and west of Glasgow, in 1911 of Irish parents. His father was in the theater, a comedian and dancer, and there was a lot of laughter in his home. Jimmy also became a dancer when he was very young and it set a pattern for his life — one of intense competition. He always needed to be number one, to come in first.

Jimmy reports that one of his best childhood friends was the town drunk who was good to him in many ways, but not so good in others. His name was Crookshank, and on occasions Jimmy would find him in doorways or along the street, bleeding and needing help. On one such occasion he was bleeding profusely and with Jimmy's help, was taken to the hospital. Later when Jimmy inquired of his mother when Mr. Crookshank was going to come back, he was put off with the words "next week" and this kept going on for some time. Finally his mother took him to see his friend; he was in a mental institution.

He was in a wheel chair, and just sat there staring but not seeing. Jimmy wanted to know what was wrong with him. His mother responded that he was a very sick man, he drank too much, and he got

hurt too much over the years. Jimmy didn't say anything as his friend was taken away or as they walked to the trolley and went home. Finally his mother asked why he was so quiet. Jimmy responded that "when I grow up I'm going to help people like Mr. Crookshank." He never forgot that, even though he didn't fully understand what he meant at the time.

Jimmy came with his family to America in the early 1920's, landing at Ellis Island among the crush of immigrants from around the world looking for a better life. At the World Convention in 1983, Jimmy spoke of the fear of being separated from his family at Ellis Island, and the relief when they were finally given passage to Manhattan. Jimmy remembered the years in New York City and then the years in Philadelphia as one long series of fights and conflicts. As a teenager Jimmy entered a preparatory school in Germantown, Pennsylvania, thinking that was the best way to enter the Catholic priesthood.

However, this is where his addiction was nurtured, as the seminary was not without its supply of alcohol. By the time this phase of his life was over, he had become a dedicated drinker. For the next fourteen years he progressed in his disease, using other drugs along the way and eventually becoming full-blown.

It was during these years that he found his way to Los Angeles and the roofing trade. He would work nearly every day, but did drugs too. He married, fathered three boys and three girls and lived in a little house directly across the road from Lockheed airport (later called the Burbank airport), which at that time was a major airport for Los Angeles.

As his children grew, Jimmy continued to practice his addiction, and it finally began to reach its zenith. A series of arrests led him to AA in February of 1950, where he began to confront some of his problems. Although he went to the meetings, he didn't really take to heart some of the program's ideas. The God part was particularly hard for him to adjust to. He had long since relegated God to an unfavorable corner of his mind, as he blamed everyone, including God, for all the travail he had gone through in his life. But he went to meetings and tried his best to stay clean.

He had been clean for about a year-and-a-half, but still struggling within himself, when he had an experience that changed his life. He was consumed with doubt and fear, having something akin to an anxiety attack, and found himself unable to leave his bedroom for over three days. He couldn't talk, and sat there like a vegetable. His wife came in from time to time and asked what was wrong and tried to help. But the best he could do was sit on the bed, occasionally have

coffee or go to the bathroom, and then go back to the bed. That was as much as he could manage; he was terrified.

He later reported that he was more fearful during that time than at any other time in his life. He was afraid to leave the house. He had found no Higher Power he could depend on. He had rejected the concept of God advanced by most organized religions. He just didn't believe what they told him. He felt he had reached the point where nothing was going to work for him.

On the third night, he had been asleep for awhile when he awoke in abject terror, but didn't know what was wrong. He was afraid but his fear seemed to have no object. He felt paralyzed; he couldn't move; he was unable to scream or ask for help. It was then he saw a great big round glow of light ahead of him, "it was like a great big orange disk of hammered silver with a large post on either side and a caduceus around them and some steps."

His mind leapt to the fear from his rejection of religion he and he felt "they were going to get him." And a voice out of nowhere said, "don't be afraid." For an instant the fear continued, then the fear passed and he wasn't afraid. And the voice told him what to do. But he said he couldn't do that. But the voice spoke again and struck away the mental shield he was trying to hide behind. Jimmy knew the voice knew him too well. He would say later, that this was the first Higher Power he had ever found. And for the next twenty-four hours he knew complete and absolute serenity.

Jimmy related this to a meeting in 1982, and went on to share that the voice told him what to do, and the NA program came, in part, as a result of that experience. He knew that everything was going to be all right, and that if he would just follow directions according to his own conscience, things would work out. He felt that he had made contact with some inner part of himself and the entire universe, and that was the Higher Power.

It was undoubtedly this experience and his single-minded determination to make NA succeed that sustained him in the middle and late 50's. All he seems to have needed was to get a stable core of members who would also make the commitment to keep an NA meeting going. Then, he undoubtedly knew, NA would become a reality and the path for addicts seeking recovery.

Jimmy's notes suggest that he had, as he put it "first thoughts" of building a fellowship for addicts as far back as 1951. As we have seen, this idea was not unique. Others had similar ideas, and had acted on them too. The most notable was the effort by Danny C. in New York. And we know from Jimmy's notes that he had contact with Danny in 1952. Interestingly, Jimmy refers to "their structure" in these notes, indicating that he viewed Danny's effort as a separate

fellowship. There were significant differences between the NA fellowship which developed in California and the New York effort.

The degree of contact between Jimmy and Danny may never be known, but it is nearly inconceivable that they were ignorant of each other's ongoing efforts. It is also nearly inconceivable that they had no communication, especially after the *Post* article in 1954. The difference between them, especially on the issue of Traditions, is important, and would have probably prevented unification of the two organizations. Jimmy later suggested that the failure of the New York City meetings to be faithful to the Traditions had been a reason that organization did not survive. In a published interview in 1985, Jimmy said:

They were aware of the New York Group but felt that it was not true to the program as originally outlined by AA. Strict adherence to this program, including following all the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, was seen as crucial for the organization. The Sun Valley founders emphasized that, in contrast to the New York model, NA should not be identified with a specific treatment agency, nor should it receive government funds.

It may not be important to know how much they communicated, as the facts clearly show that they were different organizations. The close affiliation with the Salvation Army would probably have been found to violate the Sixth and Seventh Traditions by the California fellowship. There has also been the appearance that the New York effort was centered on the personality of Danny, as he allowed himself to be the focus of most of the newspaper and magazine coverage, rather than maintaining his anonymity. This clearly seems to violate the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions. This would not have been acceptable to Jimmy and others in the California group who believed in anonymity and in putting principles before personalities.

It should be remembered, however, that the AA Traditions were not adopted until 1950 — about the time Danny and the others had begun developing their group in New York. Furthermore, it was not until 1951 that the book, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* was first published by AA, and the full meaning of the Traditions became universally available to the average member.

Many AA groups across the country had themselves not fully adopted and implemented the Traditions by 1953. So while the New York NA movement could not be faulted for not following guidelines not yet in wide use, that group's eventual failure, and the California group's eventual success, stand as significant testimony to the wisdom and validity of the Traditions. And Jimmy's steadfast insistence

on adherence to Traditions, including his stepping back from the group during a time when Traditions were being compromised, stands as testimony to Jimmy's significant contribution to the eventual success of NA.

As 1959 came to a close, Jimmy picked up the pieces of NA, which had completely folded after an internal skirmish over a breach of Traditions, to start it up again. As he took stock of the surviving members, perhaps his strongest supporter was Sylvia W., who had been released from the Lexington hospital, and who brought energy and ideas she had learned while there. Sylvia arrived in Los Angeles in late 1959, met Jimmy, and quickly became a dedicated NA member. She and Jimmy made a good team, as both were similar in personality. Unfortunately Sylvia drifted away after a few years.

Then there was Jimmy's brother Jerry, who went mostly to AA, but could be depended on as a supporter of NA. Russ C. was coming to meetings, but he had been in less than a year. Scott was still around, but Jimmy probably didn't count on his participation. Jack G. had been coming to meetings and could be expected to return. And there were a few others, but not many.

Of course there were always some who came and went. But the question for Jimmy was, could he sustain a meeting long enough to keep some of them around? Bob B. for example, had come and gone in late 1959, and Jimmy surely had no expectation that he would return. Bob's wife, who had met Jimmy's wife at an Alanon meeting and learned there was one NA meeting, "the only NA meeting in the world." Alma forced Bob to go, but as a concession to going the first time she also went "to check it out" while he waited in the car. The meeting was at Shier's Dryer. Bob attended for awhile, but returned to using, was soon arrested again, and spent another eighteen months in and out of custody. Bob remembers he was visited by Jimmy and others several times while he was in the county jail.

Another member to stop over was Chuck S. and another guy who came to the meeting with him, both loaded. Chuck continued to use and didn't stop until July 1961. At that time he hooked up with AA meetings and stayed there for a few years. Another guy who came through was Paul S., but he went back to prison for awhile and then returned to stay through the sixties. Bob R. had come earlier in the year but went his own way again. Pepe A. had come and gone, and Jimmy could certainly not have counted on his return.

But deep inside Jimmy was the unwavering commitment to NA, so he began to gather the few that had remained and convinced them to join him in another attempt at making Narcotics Anonymous meetings work.