

recovering addicts, with nearly sixteen meetings in Southern California and nine meetings in Northern California. The Rockefeller laws had ended the New York fellowship by then, and the isolated efforts by the Salvation Army and others to start meetings had all either faded or were rapidly fading away. The remaining branch of Narcotics Anonymous, the portion that started with the meeting in the San Fernando Valley in California in 1953, was about to explode around the world.

Chapter Four

The Growth of a Fellowship

All around the world addicts wanted to end the nightmare they lived in — to stop the pain and misery. Through miracles of circumstance and the provident hand of God, the Los Angeles solution was working, and was poised to spread around the world. Although many of the new meetings were tentative, and their members uncertain if this really was the answer, enough members kept coming back so that regular meetings could be counted on.

The stability that was appearing in the final years of the sixties, was grounds for hope that meetings could be started in other places — without the necessity of the founding members having first gotten clean in AA. Fortunately, there were unseen forces, as yet not connected and harnessed, that were moving in the direction of helping addicts start meetings everywhere. This chapter provides a glimpse of how and where the fellowship sprang up in numerous places throughout the decade of the seventies.

Among the forces that had the effect of stimulating the growth of NA was a general disconnect between the stated philosophy and the actual practice of many AA communities. While loyal AA members were clear that AA was only for recovering alcoholics, they were often sympathetic to people addicted to other substances and could turn a blind eye to the participation of these people in AA. Often AA members would start "dual purpose" meetings or AA meetings for addicts, keeping them running so that addicts could find recovery. The longer NA stayed around, the more the word began to spread in AA that groups should "help those drug addicts to start their own meetings." And in many communities there was a close relationship between NA and AA for a long time. Some of those early meeting formats and members' concepts of recovery came directly from the local AA meetings. Coincident with this general attitude was the growing success of alcohol treatment programs.

Early treatment centers, like Hazelden, had shown by the 1960's a successful track record with a large number of sober alcoholics — still sober years after they had gone through treatment. Usually when these folks left treatment they were immediately plugged into AA meetings in their home town. The growing success of treatment programs such as Eagleville Hospital and White Deer Run in Pennsylvania, Pathways in Northern California, St. Mary's in Minneapolis, just to name a few, had gained considerable public confidence. Mixed in with the alcoholics were a number of other addicts. Their success, although hidden by their participation in AA, was testament to the fact addicts could recover using the AA model. All of these forces, combined with the growing numbers of addicts seeking to find a solution through the haze of addiction, led to efforts to start meetings in a number of places.

Although California NA was not strong enough to really help addicts in distant places until the middle 1970's, they tried. True, there wasn't much in the way of literature, but The White Booklet and some letters or phone calls would have been enough to get a meeting started or to keep one going. And at first, this is what happened. Many times these meetings were greatly influenced by AA members or treatment centers from which they got support. This, in part, was a source of much of the diversity within NA — and still is.

The story of how NA got started in each new place has its own unique history and set of participants. A glance at a few of those early efforts to start NA outside of California in the late 1960's and 1970's will help illustrate what it was like when NA was just starting out. Some of this information was in reports given at the conference in the early 1980's. Since most of these reports were given by people who were not involved in starting the meetings they wrote about, a lot of the information is vague and possibly incorrect. And although considerable investigation went into gathering supporting interviews, the amount of truly accurate and comprehensive written information about the beginnings of individual meetings is pretty limited.

I hope readers will forgive this shortcoming. Additionally, I ask forbearance for not being able to report on every "first meeting" in every state, province or country. The lack of space and time to gather reliable information have caused me to be selective. However, I believe the historical information reported here is basically correct and will paint a picture of the various and unexpected circumstances that led to the formation of NA meetings.

The Late Sixties

The first expansion meetings, as we saw in Chapter Three, were in Northern California, started when NA members moved there from Los Angeles. Keep in mind that in 1966 there were only six meetings in the Los Angeles area. Near the middle of the year Sylvia, Richard, Penny and Scott all moved to Northern California. And since there were no meetings there, they started one in Berkeley and then another in San Jose, then San Francisco, and slowly the fellowship grew on both sides of the San Francisco Bay.

In the fall of 1967, Steve B., an NA member from Southern California, moved to Sebastopol, north of San Francisco. He soon started a meeting with the help of three guys in AA in the nearby town of Cotati, but within a month moved it to St. Sebastians Church in Sebastopol. It was small at first, but the AA folks came over to support it, and a nearby halfway house would occasionally send people. Steve would take a bus on Fridays for a two hour ride each way to go to meetings in San Francisco, and on another evening to the Berkeley meeting. Every once in awhile those folks would come up to his meeting. But after more than two years, the meeting folded. Steve went to AA for several years before starting NA again.

In Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, in 1967, a meeting was started, but only one member, James D., was able to stay clean. Then in 1968 he made another try with six other addicts, none of whom had any contact with NA in California. Known as the "Victoria Group," this meeting continued irregularly and moved from one location to another. Although it disbanded in December of 1970, James kept the notices with his home phone number in circulation, and did Twelfth Step work as it arose. From this he tried again; this time they met in members' homes. They tried again in about 1972, and this effort lasted about four years. Finally, in June of 1976, enough members were around to start a regular meeting on Saturday nights at St. Barnabas's Church Hall. That meeting continues on to this day. The group had been using AA literature until 1975 when they wrote to AA asking for permission to transpose the literature into NA lingo. They were told "no," and referred to the NA World Service Office. The group soon registered with NA.

In December of 1968, an addict named Tom M., soon after his release from a California prison, arrived in Hawaii on a one-way ticket. He hadn't lived there before and had no friends there, so he spent his first night on the beach. He woke up on the beach in the morning and encountered Flobird, a maverick AA member. Flobird had a habit of visiting that beach to meditate, but never at that par-

ticular time of day. But she went early that day, and upon meeting Tom, knew why she was drawn to the beach so early.

Tom took up residence at Flobird's house, where other souls of kindred spirit were finding the support they needed for recovery. Because there were no NA meetings, they all attended AA. Unfortunately there was considerable animosity within the local AA membership against Flobird and her band of addicts. The meeting held in her house was not looked on with approval from other AA groups. The following year Tom returned to Los Angeles for nearly five months, where he connected up with NA and attended a number of meetings. When Tom returned to Hawaii, he went on attending the Flobird meeting and other AA meetings.

One of the vocal adversaries within AA was Pete P., who ironically found himself running a methadone clinic in 1971. After getting disheartened that so few were getting clean, he eventually talked to Tom, who told him about NA in California. He quickly wrote to the Sun Valley address and obtained *The Little White Booklet*. In January of 1972 he arranged for a meeting place at Fort De Russy (and old Army facility). He convinced Tom and several others of Flobird's group to come if he would bring some newcomers. For six weeks he opened the meeting, had coffee ready, and kept things going. At that last meeting he told the addicts it was *their* NA meeting, and he never came back again.

Over the next few years the meeting struggled along with just a few regular members because the Hawaii drug culture was pretty much a transient society. A long simmering controversy developed as several members continued to smoke dope, feeling that if they were off heroin, they were basically clean. It was not until Judy K. and Frank S. contacted the NA office in 1975 that they got the message that total abstinence was an essential part of NA's message of recovery.

One of the oldest NA members in Michigan (as of 1984) shared that they had attended a meeting that had been started in February 1969, on Detroit's Jefferson Avenue at a Presbyterian Church. The meeting was sponsored by an NA group out of Cleveland, but when the member returned several months later the group didn't exist. This was the same member who attempted to start a meeting in Bay City, Michigan in 1975. Another effort to start an NA meeting near the end of the decade happened in Key West, Florida in 1969, which was believed to have established some contact with California NA.

But the most amazing outgrowth of the California fellowship occurred because of one *White Booklet* that was given to an addict at a California AA convention and ended up in the hands of another AA

member, but one who was a true friend of NA. The story deserves a complete telling, as it becomes the history of the strongest fellowship outside of California in the 1970's. It started in Philadelphia and showed the kind of AA friends Jimmy K. used to talk about also lived in Pennsylvania.

In March of 1959, Dick F., an alcoholic living in Philadelphia, reached the end of his using days. Upon finding AA he became a regular member and actively helped others find their way to recovery in AA. As best he can remember, one day in 1965, he was called by the Philadelphia inter-group office (a routine occurrence as he did twelve step calls regularly) to do a twelve step call on a young man. The office suggested the young man might be a heroin addict rather than an alcoholic. As usual he tried to find another AA member to accompany him but none was available, so he went alone.

He arrived at the address in an affluent area on the north side of the city. There he found Roy P., who was indeed a young heroin addict. Although Dick immediately disliked the guy, within a few minutes he clearly identified with his suffering and his addiction. He proceeded to take Roy to AA meetings and Roy remained abstinent from active addiction. Roy continued to go to AA meetings and Dick took him on as a sponsee. However tolerant the AA members were at the beginning, some of the purists mounted an effort to vote that Roy could not participate in the meetings because he was not an alcoholic.

When the vote was taken, Roy was indeed voted out. However, while he sat outside the meeting in tears, Dick and he continued talking about it. Dick, always the pragmatist, suggested that Roy have a few drinks and that would qualify him as an AA member. Roy responded that if he had any drinks, he would be back to using heroin immediately. At that, Dick was convinced Roy was an alcoholic (despite having used other things) and they returned to the meeting despite the vote.

Roy continued to remain clean over the following years and in 1969 he visited his father who then lived in California. Before Roy left, Ray L., a friend in AA who had heard of NA in California, suggested that Roy look up those folks and see what they were all about. While in California Roy attended an AA convention and there met a man and his wife who gave him a copy of the *White Booklet*. Upon his return to Philadelphia he shared the booklet with Dick Flanagan and Ray Lane. They decided to print some on their own and Dick put up the money to produce a thousand copies.

About that time, Dick was hired as a principal counselor by an alcoholic treatment program at Eagleville Hospital north of Philadelphia. Dick introduced the *White Booklet* as part of the literature handed out to addicts in the program. Through the combined efforts

of Dick and Roy, the hospital then consented to allowing them to have an NA meeting in the facility. Intent on doing it right, Dick presided over the meetings, but all the addicts in the facility came to the meeting to share. The meeting survived about six months, but unfortunately Roy had a slip and Dick accepted a new job. In 1970, the meeting died. The Eagleville treatment program, however, elected to expand the admission of addicts on a regular basis and copies of the White Booklet were kept and used along with their dissemination of AA literature. Over the following years Eagleville Hospital treatment center treated and released hundreds upon hundreds of addicts that it fed into the local fellowship. At first into AA, but in time the addicts elected to start meetings for themselves.

The new job Dick F. took was at a new treatment program called White Deer Run in the town of Allenwood, along the western branch of the Susquehanna River near where US Highway Eighty crosses it in central Pennsylvania. As the director of therapy he established a policy of allowing up to one drug addict as a patient for every two alcoholics, thereby allowing up to forty or more addicts into treatment at a time. Using the White Booklet, along with the usual AA literature, the addicts were introduced to a stable regimen and AA meetings in the facility. Every patient also had to have an AA sponsor. In a short time he created an NA meeting in the facility on Wednesday nights. Later he also started a Sunday afternoon NA meeting. He lead the NA meetings, but the addicts did the talking. Although the original White Deer Run program concept was to have a twenty-eight day program, it was soon expanded to forty days for alcoholics and sixty days for addicts. To keep up the supply of White Booklets, more were printed, this time with a statement on the back, "compliments of White Deer Run."

Among the early patients of White Deer Run was Don L., an alcoholic. His transition (as well as that of all other patients) out of the facility involved living in a kind of "half-way" house, finding a job and going to meetings. He rented an apartment and over the next year had four or five room mates at a time, each staying months or longer. In order to "track" patient success and assure that recovery succeeded, White Deer Run required all addicts to submit to urine testing before going onto the property to attend meetings. Over the next few years several hundred addicts from all over Pennsylvania went through White Deer Run and used apartments and homes in the nearby towns in their transition. It proved to be a good process as it kept addicts from immediately going back to their old neighborhoods and connections. It also kept a number of recovering addicts within commuting distance of each other, although many had to hitch-hike

to meetings. Over the following twenty years White Deer Run treated thousands of addicts.

Not long after Don was settled into a routine, he and Dick Flanagan worked together to start a meeting outside the facility. They started a "Drug Abusers Anonymous" meeting about twelve miles south along the river in the town of Lewisburg on Tuesday night at the Baptist Church on Third Street on January 24, 1972. Don sponsored the meeting. Later in the year, on September 22, 1972, Don helped start another Drug Abusers Anonymous meeting, this time at the Divine Providence Hospital on Friday night in Williamsport, about twenty-five miles north of White Deer Run, near where State Highway Fifteen crosses the Susquehanna River. In February 1973, Don made contact with the World Service Office of NA in California and the groups decided to change their name and become part of NA. There were some problems with communications as they sent several letters and more than one literature order but received no response. The two groups adopted the White Deer Run philosophy about urine testing and required those who elected to be voting members of the groups to submit to the twice weekly urine testing. Later other meetings were started in Sunbury, further south along the Susquehanna River, and in Danville on the east branch of the river.

Meanwhile, back in Philadelphia, among the addicts in the Eagleville Hospital treatment program while the NA meeting was going on, were two brothers, Mike and Dan S. Not long after their discharge from Eagleville, they, along with several other addicts began to meet in a clinic in Norristown, not far from the Eagleville hospital and eventually called it an NA meeting. This metamorphosis into a meeting took place near the end of 1970. This meeting was eventually called the Norristown meeting. Not long afterward Dan and Mike started other meetings in Upper Darby and Springfield, two suburbs west of downtown Philadelphia.

Then in June of 1972, Brian and Ray T., along with a long list of partners from Eagleville Hospital, Roy P., Dutch H., Sharon I., Maureen McG., Mike and Jim S., Jimmy B., Bill B., Jimmy C., Ron M., to name a few, started three meetings almost simultaneously. These meetings were at the First Christian Church at tenth and Boulevard (Friday), Muhlenberg Lutheran Church on Ruscomb Street (Tuesday), and another across the river in Bellmawr, New Jersey (Saturday). Lots of addicts going to AA meetings started attending these and made them stable enough that others were then started at Byberry Hospital (Sunday), and Collegeville at the St. James Episcopal Church (Thursday). For awhile the Norristown group folded and started again, and the Bellmawr meeting died. A little later a meeting in Southampton started at the Today Clinic west of the Second

Street Pike. By the end of the year they had meetings five nights a week near the center of Philadelphia, and three others within a short distance of the city.

As 1973 came around, the meetings in Philadelphia decided to get formally organized. After discussing it among themselves for months, they set February fourth as the first meeting of what they called the "NA Intergroup." Five groups were recognized at the meeting, and they elected Ray T. as chairperson, Rick M. as treasurer and Charles F. as secretary, each for a three month term. They decided to meet monthly, assume responsibility for providing literature for all the groups, make a meeting list and contact world services. Not long into the year, two more meetings were added including a re-start of the Norristown meeting at St. Augustine Church (Tuesday) and at the AFL-CIO Union Hall on High Street (Wednesday).

Near the beginning of the 1973, the Philadelphia groups learned about the meetings in Williamsport and Lewisburg from a call inviting some of them to come out to speak at one of their meetings. A date was set, and four members drove west to share at the Williamsport meeting. Upon arrival they were told they would have to submit to a urine test (to prove they were really drug free) before they could speak at the meeting. Their response was to decline the offer to speak, but left the offer open that they would return when the group came to its senses and invited them again. Over the following months they communicated, even having their intergroup meet out there. However the western groups believed the urine testing requirement was right for them and they voted to continue that policy even if it meant they could not participate as voting members of the growing Pennsylvania fellowship. The urine testing requirement was retained by the groups for several years and it was some time before this hurdle was overcome and the groups fully integrated into the rest of the Pennsylvania fellowship.

Over the following months and years, as their minutes show, the intergroup methodically organized themselves into a working force, adding meetings locally as well as helping meetings across Pennsylvania and in neighboring states. This strong foundation was to have a dramatic impact on the whole US Eastern Seaboard. They did communicate with the office in California repeatedly, but communications, especially responses, were slow. Many of the learning experiences the California fellowship went through, the Philadelphia meetings went through in due course, using the same literature, Steps and Traditions as their base.

Between 1969 and the beginning of 1973, ten NA meetings came into existence in Pennsylvania, with no help from California, except one White Booklet. At that time there were only forty-one meetings

in California. Also, two established treatment programs started sending recovering addicts into the community with White Booklets and knowledge of NA. All of this came as a result of having one copy of the White Booklet and getting it into the hands of an AA member who knew what to do with it. Dick F. became the father of NA in Pennsylvania, and much of the eastern fellowship, not because he had any desire to be remembered in history, but simply because he believed recovery was possible for addicts who used the Steps and went to meetings.

1970

A woman named June K., an AA member living in San Diego, got in touch with NA members in Los Angeles and with their help got the first NA meetings started at the Black Panther's Hall in October. Help was provided for a number of months, but in time the meeting folded. Over the succeeding years efforts to re-start meetings in San Diego sprang up again and again.

During the middle of the year, a member was harassing other addicts he knew in AA meetings in Dallas, Texas about starting a meeting for themselves. Finally he and his friends Jim P., Bob T., John D., Bob F., Kim K., and Tanya G. got together and in the fall started a meeting in the parsonage of what is now the Old Lovers Lane Methodist Church in Dallas. After awhile they were meeting twice a week, on Saturday and Wednesday. Since the office in California was so slow in getting literature to them, they decided to make their own. Their first printing of the booklet included about five thousand copies — about a two-year supply for California at the time. The group was small, and when several key members moved, it got harder to keep it going. In a letter Jim P. wrote to the new group in Atlanta in 1974, he said of the beginning in Dallas, "We had only eight people at our first meeting and only five stayed. But we are four years old this summer." Jim didn't mention they were struggling at the time, and the group slowly disbanded about December of 1975.

Peggy T. was a middle-class, white housewife with a drinking and pill problem when she found recovery in a supportive AA group in western Washington in 1962. Five years later when she moved to Portland, Oregon, she became involved with trying to bring recovery to women in the local jails. It was tough at first, since most of the women were black street addicts, a drug-using culture she was not familiar with. But she was stubborn and kept at it, finally starting a women's halfway house. By 1972 it was called Freedom House and was also open to men.

Her first contact with NA in 1969 was not positive, so she continued to use AA literature, inserting "drugs" and "addict" where appropriate. From the beginning of Freedom House she held a Wednesday night meeting, mostly thought of as an AA meeting, but intended for drug users. Finally in 1973 with the arrival of Harry W., a native of Portland's black community, the transition to NA began. Harry came through Freedom House and took seriously the notion that he could overcome his addiction to drugs. After barely a year's clean time Harry knew that NA was where he belonged.

With the help of two Priests, Harry started an NA meeting at Immaculate Heart Church in January 1974. He later made contact with NA meetings in Washington State and then finally with the office in California. Although they were eventually able to get NA literature they continued to keep close ties to AA (who were generally very supportive) until the third and fourth meetings were started in 1978.

1971

Some members who had attended the earlier San Diego meeting started up again in another location and then moved to Pacific Beach. In 1973, eight more meetings were started, but the community was not strong enough to sustain them, and most folded before long. Eventually one meeting was consolidated from among the remaining members, and they stayed together.

In August, Sylvia M. received a letter addressed to the Berkeley mail address. The letter was from a Sonia M., of the Grupo Familiar De Al-Anon in Sao Paulo, Brazil. In the letter she reports they started a group for addicts five months earlier called Toxicomanos Anonimos and that six members were off drugs. Sylvia sent some pamphlets and a nice letter of encouragement. Since the group does not appear again in the skimpy records of the following years, it is assumed the group later folded.

Although the details have not surfaced, a meeting was started in Atlanta, Georgia, during the year. Bo S., later a key figure in the writing of the Basic Text, was involved in this effort. In a footnote to the financial report given at the first World Convention in November it showed donations had been received from meetings in Georgia; Haley, Idaho; and both Las Vegas and Reno, Nevada.

1972

Jim N., who had gotten clean nine months earlier, started a meeting in July with the help of his probation officer. It met at a new treatment center in St. Johns Hospital on Thursdays in Salina, Kansas. After a few months it was moved from the center and continued for some time, but then folded. Jim then moved to Cedar Falls, Iowa. There was also a meeting about sixty miles away in Hucheson, Kansas, but it survived only about six months. Meetings were started in Salina several times over the years after this, but they also folded. In the early 1980's they finally took hold.

A letter was received at the office in May from an addict named Jim in Detroit, Michigan. In his lengthy correspondence he relates that a meeting for addicts then existed in the Waterloo prison camp. He was asking for literature and announced he was preparing to have a newsletter in production in the near future. He explained the group format and what they were reading from NA literature. He also advised they were re-printing some AA literature with the statement used by the Northern California GSO, that described what NA was. Sadly, contact was probably lost; this meeting does not appear in later reports.

Another letter announcing the existence of meetings arrived in August. Richard V. wrote to advise that Jack C. from San Francisco had been instrumental in starting meetings in June in Cleveland, Ohio. The letter tells of two meetings at a bank building on Lorain Avenue on Wednesday and Friday nights. He also invites California NA to reprint copies of the Cleveland group's publication "12 Points" as long as they give credit to "Cleveland, Ohio Narcotics Anonymous."

Meetings listed in the directory prepared near the time of the convention included: Phoenix, Arizona; Ontario, Canada; Denver, Colorado; Mt. Pleasant and Iowa City, Iowa; Duluth and Minneapolis, Minnesota; Cleveland, Ohio (3 meetings); Springfield, Upper Darby, State College, Altoona and Norristown, Pennsylvania; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Memphis, Tennessee (2 meetings); Dallas, Texas (4 meetings); Ogden, Utah; and Tayehesdah, Wisconsin.

1973

George and Ann B., while going through treatment in Houston, Texas, were informed about NA, but since there were no NA meetings there at the time, they went to AA after treatment. Months later some of their friends (also addicts going to AA), were given a copy of The Little White Book from California. After talking about it, they all got together and started a meeting at the St. Joseph Hospital, Cullen

Family Building on Wednesday nights. In this way George and Ann B., Toni C., Gino H., Ernie and Larry began "Alive and Kicking" the oldest continuous meeting in the state. In the following year another group began in Houston, calling themselves "Natural High."

Probably the first meeting to start and survive in Florida was begun in West Palm Beach. Now called the "Mainline Group" it was small for many years. There is some evidence that this group was in contact with California NA after a period of time operating alone.

In Cedar Falls, Iowa, Jim N. tried again to start a meeting, and for nearly nine months kept one going in the coffee shop of an automobile dealership. About a thousand miles to the east, Lin A. reported the first meeting in New York State connected to the California fellowship began on August thirty-first in Buffalo.

1974

Ray C., who had been to NA meetings in San Francisco several years earlier, found himself working in an outreach program in Dade County, Florida. While at the center he hooked up with Marvin S., who had been the secretary of the Salvation Army group in Cleveland back in 1963. They knew about NA in California and together they ordered some literature. Once they had it, one said to the other, "we need to start a meeting." And thus began their meeting at the Little River AA clubhouse on Wednesday nights.

After attending AA in Atlanta for about two years, Pat H. was being prodded to start a meeting for addicts like herself by friends who had heard of NA. She relented on August twenty-fourth, and helped start a meeting at the Peachford Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia. The group soon called itself the New Connections Group. A letter was immediately sent to NA in California, although no response came back. But, a few weeks later, an unexpected letter arrived from Jim P. in Texas which contained a copy of The White Booklet. It turned out that Jim had been talking with Jimmy about the time the letter arrived and Jimmy asked him to send something to them, which he did. He offered help and advised the Atlanta group to "bootleg" their own copies of the booklet, which they promptly did. About three months later a telephone helpline was started and a second meeting began in mid-1975. From this nucleus more meetings were to spring up in Atlanta and around the state. Within three years they had an area committee and three clubhouses.

A Tuesday night meeting was started at an auditorium on Hope Street in Lincoln, Nebraska, by Jim N., in his third try in as many years to keep a meeting going. This time it worked. After awhile the

meeting moved to the basement of a church on Otto Street, and there it remained for over ten years.

In Connecticut a meeting was started at the YMCA, On the Green, in Waterbury. For the first nine weeks there was only one member. Two additional addicts arrived after that and things got better. In December, at the first anniversary, eighty people were present. A second meeting was started in Westport at Halbrook Psychiatric Hospital. This meeting is still going on, although it was changed to an Hospitals and Institutions meeting in 1982.

Larry G. had a job as a welder, working with the crew building a California Prison. He knew he had better do something about his addiction when he later found himself locked up in the very cell he had help build. On his release he found NA in California, then moved back home to Fargo, North Dakota. In 1974, he and a couple other newcomers staying clean in AA started an NA meeting across the river in Moorhead, Minnesota, at Christ the King Lutheran Church. That meeting later spawned other meetings, so that by the early eighties there was at least one meeting every day in the Fargo-Moorhead area. The meeting at Christ the King still meets to this day in its original time and place, 8:00 Monday nights.

1975

In February, two members wrote to the office from Billings, Montana, to announce they had started an NA meeting there. Literature was sent, but communications didn't continue.

The Faith Lutheran Church in Mt. Penn., a community in Reading, Pennsylvania, became the site of a meeting in May. Held on Monday nights, it survived until the fall of 1978 when it died. However, a member who had attended this meeting helped start a new one in March of 1979, a meeting that continued.

The Michigan representative in 1982 told of a meeting that existed for a few months in Bay City, Michigan, at the Bailey Building on Wednesday nights. During the following few years other meetings were intermittently held at other places in Bay City such as the Riverside Center Friendship House. In 1977 the Bailey meeting moved to the Trinity Episcopal Church. In 1978 the Bailey meeting and another merged into the "Never Alone Group" and have continued since then.

In the Chicago area, a group of addicts from an outpatient therapy group held the first NA meeting in Illinois on Sunday, October 19, 1975 at the Forest Hospital in Des Plaines. The group, including Ron C., who became the chairperson, Fred P., his brother Berry, plus

Moon, Heather and Bob decided to meet on a regular basis, and because of support from the rehabilitation institution there was a regular influx of newcomers. There was no knowledge of NA, so the group elected to use AA material and adapt it to their understanding. By the time the group was three months old, there twenty-five to thirty people at the meetings.

In time a beginners' meeting was started in conjunction with the regular meeting because of over-crowding. In the spring of 1976 another meeting was started at the Gateway House in Chicago. A steering committee had been set up, and the chairperson of the committee came to have considerable power, often using it arbitrarily. It was only in the summer of 1977 that an understanding of the Second Tradition spread among the members and things began to change. A phonenumber had been in existence for a long time, and considerable PI work was being done. Finally, in 1978, a third successful meeting was started, and this led to the formation of the area committee. However, it was not until 1981 that these groups matured and organized an area committee truly connected to the broader fellowship.

Far away in Melbourne, Australia, an addict suffering an illness that lasted from late 1975 into 1976 set in motion the beginnings of NA there. Earlier he had obtained a White Booklet from Hazelden and given it to a friend. After the hospital stay, they met two others of like mind who had known about NA when they lived in Sydney. From their discussions, the four started the "South Yarra Group" on August twentieth at the Fawkner Park Community Health Center in Melbourne; seven members were in attendance. At the one-year anniversary of the meeting, sixty addicts were in attendance, and a PO box and phonenumber were soon put into use.

After the meeting was started it soon received considerable public attention. The Australian government, much impressed with the venture, was even anxious to give the new fellowship a grant of money — which the young group accepted — with which to carry on the good work. Eager to move the fellowship forward, and still quite inexperienced with the Traditions, the group also published its own literature, since getting it from California was nearly impossible at the time. Their booklet, some thirty pages long, includes most of the NA literature from California, but also advertisements from a variety of local businesses. In a short period of time they had nearly a dozen meetings.

The controversy within the fellowship over the government grant and advertisements, when seen in the light of the Traditions, split the fellowshipwide open. Some members reportedly were so upset over the conflict that they ended up using again. In time the meetings nearly folded. It was several years before things got better.

1976

In Wisconsin, a meeting was started in March by addicts in Milwaukee at a facility called Wisconsin Family, a therapeutic community for drug addicts. Sadly it didn't last but a few months. But on November twentieth, four addicts came up from Chicago and started it again; this time it lasted. In attendance at this meeting were about twenty addicts (a handful from the outside) and fifteen professionals from the facility. In the following year, six other meetings were started, one of which later folded.

Over in Nebraska, the Lincoln group branched out and started a Sunday evening meeting that ran for a long time. While it was going, another meeting was started in York, about fifty miles west, on Sunday afternoons. Near the end of the year Linda S., along with Jim N. and Mary L., started a meeting at a Catholic Church school on the west side of Omaha on Sunday nights. It was also about this time that a commitment was made to sustain a meeting at the women's prison near York. From this commitment would come several members who were stalwarts of fellowship growth in the following years. One of the new members to the Lincoln group near the end of the year was Cindy D., who had been going to AA since getting clean earlier. After attending a few meetings she moved to Topeka, Kansas, and had to help start meetings there.

In the *World Directory* published in 1976, meetings in the following places were listed as still active from the list published in 1972: Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada; "Hand of Hope Group" Denver, Colorado; "The Free Stage Group" in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa; Trinity Episcopal Church on Thursdays in Coralville, Iowa; Duluth and Minneapolis, Minnesota. In Pennsylvania, the Norristown, Upper Darby, and Springfield meetings all continued. The meeting listed as State College, Pennsylvania may have moved to University Park and also continued.

1977

In the first week in February, Cindy D. gathered Bobby F., along with another member who we weren't able to identify, and started a meeting at the Potiwan Presbyterian Church in Topeka on Thursday nights. That meeting still continues. About a month later they started a meeting on Sundays. This was followed by a floating meeting on Friday nights they held in each others' homes.

As best we can determine from surviving but fading memories, it was near the beginning of the year that a representative of a substance abuse department of a farm equipment manufacturer in Waterloo, Iowa, inquired about how to run an NA meeting from members in Lincoln. They visited the Lincoln meeting, and from that came a Sunday night meeting in Waterloo at the American Legion hall that Jim R. and Joe O. helped set up. This meeting continued well into the 1990's.

In Miami, the meeting at the Little River Club that had started in 1974 was still going but only a few showed up each time. This group got a boost in November when Rosalie R. arrived. While not the gregarious happy person she later became, she brought enough determination to help stabilize the meeting. When the meeting moved to the Back Room Club and named itself the "Bridge Group," it began to grow, and continues meeting today.

At the foot of the Colorado Rockies, the NA "Boulder Group One" was begun on October fourth, a Monday night. Through the good and bad times its members have continued to provide an atmosphere for recovery and started many other meetings.

Finding they were not getting what they needed from the AA meetings they attended, two addicts in Jackson, Mississippi, started an NA meeting. They struggled for three years by themselves but they finally got the help they needed when treatment center referrals began sending people. In 1980 a second meeting was started.

1978

In Moorhead, Minnesota, the meeting started by Drugger Larry was now consistently over a dozen strong and growing. They had been helped a lot by local AA folks, and were beginning to find their own legs. During this year, Rob W., Ron H., Theresa B., and Willie L. all showed up. Sammy V. and Mark S., members who also worked with the a local youth addiction program, began sending a large number of young people to the NA meeting. Many of them stayed, and their enthusiasm brought explosive growth. By 1980 it was common to see 75 addicts in attendance at the single Monday night candle light meeting.

Several of those members started another meeting on Friday nights in April of that year at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Fargo, and soon meetings were sprouting up all over the Fargo-Moorhead area. The Friday Night meeting began having a free dance after the monthly open meeting, sometimes drawing to the speaker meeting over 200 addicts, parents, friends and others in the community inter-

ested in this growing, youthful recovery movement. During this period, two members attended the 1979 Atlanta World Convention, and 11 attended the 1980 World Convention in Wichita, Kansas. This contact with NA at large had a huge impact on the growth and stability of the NA community.

While living in San Francisco, Kathy M. had found recovery in NA. Not long afterward she moved to New Orleans, and, finding no meetings there, started one by herself. This first meeting began in February and has weathered through the years, helping hundreds of addicts and leading to the creation of many other meetings in Louisiana.

About the same time, in Baton Rouge (approximately eighty miles northwest of New Orleans), a meeting was started on Monday, February twentieth at the Oak Manor Motor Motel. Three members attended the meeting. It later moved locations and changed its night and survived under the name "Scout Hut," where it met for awhile. In September, another meeting was started at the Grenwall Hospital Women's Prison. Unfortunately it soon folded, and only the Scout Hut meeting remained. But the WSO had helped the meetings in Baton Rouge and New Orleans get together so they were able to provide support for each other.

After finding recovery two years earlier in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, Bob P. moved to Aliquippa, north and west of Pittsburgh. On May tenth, with the help of some AA members, he started a meeting, now called the Double Bubble. Held initially in a treatment center, there was a steady supply of newcomers.

In the second half of the year, Julie W., Cindy D., Jim N., and several others from Nebraska and neighboring states, who by then knew about each other, got together and decided to follow *The NA Tree* and form a service committee. Since the area covered a number of neighboring states, they called it a regional committee, even though there were no area committees at the time.

About seven miles southwest of Gary, Indiana (and only 45 miles southeast of Chicago), a meeting was started in October in the city of Griffith. An addict who had earlier contact with NA in Chicago started the meeting. Among his early memories were two students caught by their teacher for smoking pot and the teacher made them attend the meeting. From this beginning slowly emerged "The Aquarians," probably the oldest meeting in Indiana.

1979

On Super Bowl Sunday, "The Sobriety First Group" held its first meeting at the Butler County Council on Alcoholism's office in Butler, Pennsylvania. Among its early members were Michael C., Maryann C., Danny R., Betty T., Ivan H., Bonnie H., and Timothy H. These dedicated members would see the venture through and kept it alive during turbulent times that followed.

In the early part of the year, about twenty five miles from Griffith, Indiana, a meeting was started in Valparaiso. The meeting was held at a halfway house on Sundays and was the second meeting in Indiana. In time this meeting and the one in Griffith discovered each other and began to work together for mutual support.

In Frankfurt, West Germany, Stephanie K., a US Army drug and alcohol counselor, started a group for addicts she worked with, including one soldier named Bob McD. Pauli B., an Englishman attending AA meetings in the area at the time, was invited to speak at this meeting. Relating to his own addiction, Pauli stayed as a core member of this new group, becoming the bridge between this "American" meeting and the beginning of meetings for non-military addicts in the same area. Pauli started a meeting in Frankfurt in the basement of a church Wednesday night. Two members of this group were Inge E. and Volker V. In May or June of 1979, Volker started another meeting in a town about 40 miles away.

Soon after the beginning of the year, the WSO connected up the Ft. Lauderdale and West Palm Beach meetings in Florida. They had existed without knowledge of each other for some time, although the WSO had been communicating with each separately. With other addicts so close, they were more confident the program would work. Later about half of the membership of both groups went to the World Convention in Atlanta. Most came back with the drive to start new meetings and three were quickly founded. Not long after the convention, an area committee was formed and a phonenumber was soon put into operation.

Meanwhile in Kansas City, Missouri, Becky and Eddie P. and Bill O. were completing treatment in a local center. They met Terry and Don S., who had a year's clean time. AA had been bringing in a meeting to this facility, but Becky, Eddie and Bill didn't relate well to it. When they completed treatment they started going to a meeting called "Addicts Anonymous" at a halfway house. After a while Terry and Don S. began to attend and the five of them decided to start a meeting called the "Chemical Abuse Group" which met on Friday nights and patterned itself after AA meetings. They met for a long time at the North Methodist Church. Later they learned about NA

and the World Convention scheduled for Wichita in 1980. A bunch of members went to the convention and came back excited about NA. This was about the time when the group split up. Some wanted to continue drinking, but simply not use "hard drugs," and they went their own way.

In March, a "dual purpose" meeting of AA was formed in Reno, Nevada, because of the large number of addicts in the regular AA meetings. In April, Randy F., who had found recovery in NA in California, helped transform it to an NA meeting. This encouraged Don D., Becky M., and Mat T., to commit to staying with the meeting. However, it folded in July. Later in the year, at a halfway house for women, these same addicts formed an NA meeting there. The group stayed small, but the commitment was there. In May 1980 the halfway house was closed, but the group remained together, found a new home, and began calling itself "Friday Night Survivors." Early that year they established contact with the WSO. They then made contact with other Northern California meetings.

On April thirtieth, the first meeting of the Charleston Central Group was held at St. John's Episcopal Church in Charleston, West Virginia. Six persons attended the meeting, but that was enough; the meeting survived and grew, finally starting two meetings in 1980. Most of the early West Virginia fellowship started from these two meetings.

In mid-year, Bob McD., who was to have completed his military service at the end of the year took a week's vacation in Dublin, Ireland. There he had the opportunity to do some Twelve Step work with an AA member who was having a problem with his drug use. He learned from that fellow that there was a therapy group in Dublin calling itself NA. He got in touch with them, gave them his White Booklet because they didn't have any NA literature, and suggested they write for a starter kit. Soon thereafter the group from Dublin registered with the office.

Bob then traveled to London, where he met Pauli, also there on vacation. They went to some AA meetings and shared about NA with several people who spoke about drugs. After returning home, they mailed White Booklets to those people, and this literature was used about a year later by Dudley S. and Johnny H. when they started the first NA meeting in London. This Twelfth Step spirit by Pauli helped start a meeting in Glasgow, Scotland sometime later. Unfortunately he had a hard time communicating with the WSO.

From Ohio, Jim M. wrote to the office to register himself as secretary and Jeff McK. as the group representative for the Original Youngstown Group as a Sunday evening meeting at the Union Hall

on Rush Boulevard. His note includes a plea to rush the order he had placed a month earlier for White Booklets.

In the spring of 1979, Bob R. arrived at a treatment center in Palm Beach and soon came into contact with the Mainline Group in West Palm Beach. But upon his return to Joplin, Missouri, he went to AA meetings. In the fall, Blackie B., another addict going to AA meetings in Joplin, heard that Bob had joined NA while in treatment in Florida. Blackie searched out Bob and after a meeting one night asked all about NA. He thought NA was the thing to do and asked Bob if he would help if they started an NA meeting. On October 8, 1979, the first NA meeting in southwest Missouri was held at the Alano club in Joplin. Within a few weeks there were eight addicts at their meeting.

Bob called the WSO and talked to Jimmy, who told him of others in Missouri that had recently contacted him about starting meetings. Bob was soon in contact with Mitch H. in Springfield, Jim and Kat J., who had started a meeting in St. Louis, and Bill O., who had a group meeting at his home in Kansas City. In nearby states, Bob learned of Russ C. in Norman, Oklahoma, and of Mark T. and Sherlyn D. in Tulsa, Oklahoma (who had joined forces to start a meeting there). As the months went by it was decided that an event should be held that brought all these groups together. The following spring an area committee was formed centered around Joplin and the first High On Life Picnic was held in May at Stockton Lake.

A number of addicts who were all attending AA meetings in Pittsburgh found each other and on August sixth started an NA meeting at Turtle Creek Valley drug and alcohol facility on a Monday night. In time, despite the usual ups and downs, they grew and moved to larger rooms at St. Brendan's Catholic Church in Braddock Pennsylvania. The meeting still carries the message of NA recovery. Several months later a meeting was started in Sharon, Pennsylvania, a little northeast of Youngstown, Ohio.

The sudden growth of meetings in Ohio was duplicated in many places in the eastern states because the World Convention had been held in the first week of September. Members left there "all fired up" and started new meetings and service committees all over the south and east.

John J. had been trying to start and maintain a meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma since 1975 when he first got some material from California. But each time he tried, few people came and after a while he gave up. So he sheltered himself in a tolerant AA group and waited. In October he tried again, but this time a few regulars came, and early in 1980 enough people were staying to make it last.

The VA Hospital in Washington DC had been operating its own version of an NA meeting (using modified AA literature) for several year before they were suddenly presented with some real NA literature (Starter Kit and White Booklet) and confronted by addicts demanding a change. Doreen had been a court probation officer in DC for seven years before she and Anthony E. obtained the starter kit in September, 1978. They immediately called the WSO and got another complete starter kit and NA literature. After getting the VA to convert their Friday night meeting to a true NA meeting, they started a new one on Tuesday evenings. Both meetings were bolstered because the VA program was releasing ten to fifteen recovering drug addicts each month, and many stayed in DC after their release. A third meeting was soon started, and DC was well on its way to building a large and stable fellowship.

In Southern Florida things began to change near the end of the year. A lot of the members from the isolated groups had attended the convention in Atlanta and returned all fired up. Equally important, they had found each other and were now beginning to work together. Soon a new meeting was started in Coconut Grove and the Mainline Group became involved, although there was some reluctance at first. And finally an area committee was formed that linked most of the meetings together for the first time.

Although meetings in Dallas had ceased several years earlier, a meeting was started again by Ray C., who arrived from NA in Chicago, Illinois. It began on Tuesday nights at the South Oak Cliff Medical Center, and sometimes there wasn't anybody around for a meeting. But a few attended, and sort of kept it going. Patience paid off for this small meeting, and when Mary B. arrived the following November, she was soon followed by others. Within a few months of this rejuvenation, a second meeting was started on Wednesday nights. This soon brought Jim P. and others who had started NA nearly ten years earlier back to the fellowship.

In mid-December, a meeting was started at the ARID Club in Detroit Michigan after one member had spent weeks trying to convince the club's board that an NA meeting would not attract "robbers, thieves or perverts," as he put it. The meeting was held at 10:00 AM on Sundays. Contact was established with the WSO for literature. Attendance was low and erratic. Nevertheless, a second meeting was initiated Tuesdays at midnight. It soon had greater participation than the Sunday meeting.

Late in the year, Steve M. moved to Nashville from Florida and had with him a White Booklet. After sharing this with several others he met at AA meetings, they started meeting to discuss starting an NA meeting. After many discussions, Gina H. found a place to meet,

and in April of the following year they began to meet on Tuesdays. Winston G., one of the original seven at that first meeting, still calls it his home group. Two weeks later they started a meeting in a state hospital, where several years earlier an attempt had been made to start a meeting that didn't survive. One of those original members remembers, "There was contact with the WSO in the early days via phone with Jimmy K. It was Jimmy's confident voice that helped some of us keep the faith in those early days when there were only two or three people who attended regularly. He would tell us tales of the early days of NA that would provide the hope needed for us to hold fast to our belief that we could carry the message to the addicts in Nashville."

1980

In November of 1979, a doctor from Greenville, South Carolina, made contact with the fellowship in Atlanta, Georgia. After some discussions Ron R. moved to Greenville and started a meeting in January 1980 in a new treatment center the doctor opened. Called the Clean and Green group, the meeting moved after a few months because of pressure from the medical staff who wanted to control the meeting. The new location was the Westminster Presbyterian Church on Augusta Road. This meeting continues to meet even today.

About the same time a meeting had been started in Asheville, North Carolina by Milton B., but the meeting was having difficulty. Contact was established with Ron R. in Greenville (about forty miles away) and they began to help each other's meetings. They heard rumors during those early months about meetings in Charlotte, North Carolina and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, but neither group made secure contact. In late spring, the Asheville and Greenville groups put on the Blue Ridge Mini-Convention about half way between their cities. This became the annual Carolinas Regional convention.

Near the end of the year two more meetings in South Carolina (Charleston and Columbia), and five meetings in North Carolina (Wilmington, Durham, Hickory, Winston-Salem and Greensboro), were started. During that first year and for many to follow, members drove great distances to attend meetings in support of other groups in the Carolinas. A bunch of these early members, while attending an AA convention that fall, got together and formed the NA Carolina Region without even having any area committees. This was quite an accomplishment to have taken place in less than a year.

In May, two addicts met in an AA meeting in Martinsburg, West Virginia, and both of them had an NA starter kit. They tried to find NA in DC, the largest city nearby, and were unable to locate meetings. They decided to start their own meeting, and in May they began to meet in Winchester, Virginia at a counseling center on Wednesday nights. A second meeting was soon started nearby in Martinsburg, West Virginia.

The first meeting in Knoxville, Tennessee met in early June with six people. They had been told not to talk about their drug addiction in an AA group so they started their own, called "Friendship Group." Phil D. and Sara G. were among the founders of this group, and their meeting continues to carry the message. From this group came many others in the eastern end of Tennessee.

Attempts that had been made to start a meeting in Eugene, Oregon didn't succeed as members kept getting loaded. Later another meeting was attempted by Herb C. in Junction City, about 20 miles north of Eugene. This attempt ended because nobody was coming. Donna H., who had been secretary to one of the Eugene meetings, was just getting ready to pawn some jewelry so she could score when she received a call from Bob McD., who found her number in a copy of the *World Directory*. Bob had just arrived in Portland from Germany and was looking for NA. They shared with each other about their need for a meeting and held one a few days later in the home of Donna's husband's sponsor. They invited several of the members from the earlier Eugene and Junction City Groups, recruited addicts from AA meetings, and visited addicts in the city jail. Within three months there were three meetings.

On August fifth, eight members were present in the Chelsea District, London, for the first NA meeting in England. Among those present were Dudley S., who had found NA while staying in Miami a year earlier. Upon his return to London, where he had been an AA member for thirteen years, he began identifying himself as an "Alcoholic and an Addict." In time, several others at the AA meetings — Johnny H. and Janet S. among them — asked privately what he meant by it, and thus began the associations that formed the beginnings of NA in England. About the same time, the AA member, who had obtained the NA literature from Paul B. in Frankfurt gave it to Dudley and suggested he and his acquaintances start their own meeting. They did just that, although it was not until April of the following year that Johnny sent a group registration form to the WSO, giving details and contact information.

A little more than a month after London's meeting, the first NA meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, began on September eighteenth on the west side of town. By 1981 the "Support Group Discussion" out-

grew the small kitchenette area it had originally met in and found a church for its meeting place. Finally in May of 1981 a second meeting was started with the name "Recovery Step Meeting."

In August, Kyoshi, an NA member who had found recovery in AA in Tokyo was vacationing in Hawaii. While there he searched around to find NA. He was referred by local AA folks to Tom McC., who had come to Hawaii in 1969. Tom and others took Kyoshi to meetings, gave him literature, and did their best to help him so he could start NA in Tokyo. He started a meeting there soon after his return. Although it took awhile, they did get a group going. From this meeting grew a fellowship in Japan that had over fifty meetings when this book was written.

A group calling itself Drug Abusers Anonymous was started in Cincinnati, Ohio in September but membership was very low and it died. In January 1981 another attempt was made, this time as NA, called "the Winners Group." Shortly thereafter (February 1981) an interested AA member started an NA group, with the name of "Action Group" in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky, across the river from Cincinnati. A controversy over using AA literature in meetings arose and was resolved only after the meetings were visited by addicts returning from a meeting in Georgia.

In the Upper Midwest, NA took another quantum leap in 1981. The Fargo-Moorhead groups, still flush from a surge of growth and the influence of the members who had attended the World Convention in Wichita the previous year, were hard at work making contacts with all known NA meetings in Minnesota, the Dakotas and Manitoba, seeking to form a region. They were also trying to put together a bid to host the World Convention in Fargo. All of this service activity, including sending a regional service representative to the World Service Conference, produced the Upper Midwest Region spanning those three states and a Canadian Province.

As the decade came to a close, there existed a great number of meetings and recovering addicts across the country and in several other nations. One of the greatest needs was to join these groups together and unify them into one fellowship. Unfortunately, as the 1980's began, many of those in leadership positions who could have brought NA together were already burdened with other duties. Sadly, many were also involved in conflicts with each other. The major service units, the conference, trustees and office were not working together, if they were really working at all.

For the most part, there was a *laissez-faire* attitude among the leadership and the three service units. Rather than seeking to reach out and bring unity, most of those in positions of responsibility sat

and waited until the next meeting or the next problem arose, and then limited their action to the minimum necessary effort. The single exception to this was the literature committee and its effort to involve the fellowship in the development of the NA book.

As a consequence of this inaction, the fellowship evolved with a decidedly negative attitude toward the three units of world services. This left a legacy of disunity and conflict that has not yet, at this writing, been overcome.