

Chapter Five

The Early Seventies

Having previewed the eventual growth of the fellowship in the seventies, we know the fellowship grew at an ever-accelerating rate. We return now to the uncertainties of 1970 and pick up the story of the California fellowship as it began to move towards better organization and then on to become the fellowship as we know it today.

Although pace of NA's growth was quickening — new meetings were starting every few months — most addicts around the world still saw no hope of recovery. NA had begun to spread in small pockets outside of California, but they were truly isolated. There were still few places where addicts could get help even if they were looking for it. The unlucky did it in jail, with no base of support either in the jail or on the outside after they were released. Only a very few fortunate ones found another addict willing and able to help.

The shortage of detox facilities for addicts often left newcomers to go through withdrawal on a couch of an NA member. Too often the lure of old friends, connections and temptations outstripped their resolve to learn how to live clean. As often as not, they would leave after a day or two, frequently taking a few things from the member's home to sell for drugs. But many NA members, time and time again, were willing to take that chance to give a newer member a chance for recovery.

In California, the Chrysalis and Reprieve programs kept their doors open and helped addicts through these difficult periods. But they were only two small places of refuge in a huge sea of misery that literally spanned the globe. The only other places where addicts could be assured of a positive reception if they wanted to get clean were Eagleville Hospital and White Deer Run. While these four centers moved along towards helping addicts, members in California still brought addicts to their homes. But at least for those close to these facilities, they represented a real alternative.

Then suddenly the Reprieve House program folded. Some report it was because of the neighborhood stigma of having addicts in the

neighborhood, while others reported it was cited by city building inspectors as being in violation of building and safety standards. Undaunted, Bill, Bob and some of the others started again. This time they chose the name "Impact," suggesting that their program could indeed be the critical key to kicking addiction and finding recovery. They rented a large house in the community of Panorama City where Impact stayed for nearly six months. Right away, however, they started a meeting in their facility twice a week and took their residents out to meetings on other days. If there wasn't an NA meeting on a particular night that they could get to, they went to an AA meeting.

Since Bob and Bill were really active in the fellowship, they easily found newcomers who were looking for a place to stay at nearly every meeting. For a long time people came and went on a daily or weekly basis. Some stayed long enough to get clean, while others quickly used again. Bill initiated a number of rules for what could and could not be done, putting each resident to work on various make-work tasks or helping to scout out provisions for the next day. All residents had to go to meetings every night, and there were step-study groups or problem-solving sessions during the day.

At first there was never any assurance the house would remain open beyond the end of the week, or even the day, because there was almost no money. But Bill "the hustler" kept working every angle to make the house succeed. In time he was able to gather enough financial and logistical support to keep it going. As word got around that there was a cheap place, a "kicking pad," more addicts were seeking entry than there was space to house them. In a short time a second "house" was opened twenty miles away in the town of Monrovia. Two new meetings were started here also, but again, their residents were taken out to meetings on other days.

This house, too, was soon overwhelmed, so in December of 1970, Bill started a third house in a commercial area of Sun Valley. He called this enterprise "Cri-Help," and began filling it with addicts seeking recovery. He started in-house NA meetings again and had the residents taken to outside meetings on other nights. This new enterprise did not meet with approval of the other organizers of Impact, and two months later Bill gave up control of Impact when the Directors and advisors felt it should be run differently.

Bob B., as a director, then took control, but since he had his own job and couldn't be there during the day, Bob T. who had been Bill's assistant was temporarily placed in charge. Not long afterward, one of the Impact residents, Ben W., with barely a month's clean time, was asked to take over. Although truly new to recovery, he worked closely with directors like Bob B. and Mari W. Over the next eight

years they built Impact into a multi-million dollar recovery program. In order to provide more effective management, they soon closed the Monrovia house and consolidated it with the Panorama City facility. Because it was now too small, and they lost their lease, they looked for other quarters closer to the center of Los Angeles. They found a place on Crenshaw Boulevard and moved there in early 1971.

Chrysalis, Impact and Cri-Help, all working on their own but not without some indirect communication, began to pass a few, then dozens of recovering addicts into the local meetings. In time each would garner considerable respect within the fellowship as their former clients began to fill NA meetings, gain clean time, and take over leadership positions. These were "related facilities or outside enterprises" as far as the Traditions were concerned so along the way there were some problems to work out. For example recovery house residents, while in NA meetings, would often espouse concepts and ideas of the treatment house, not knowing the difference between treatment house philosophy and NA.

The service structure document adopted in 1969 had worked out reasonably well. Groups were indeed sending their representative (most of the time) to the monthly meeting of the GSO. The trustees met monthly and the office committee person was usually there to give a report. Unfortunately, since there still wasn't a physical service office, what records there were, could be found at Bob B.'s house. The fellowship had continued to use the Sun Valley Post Office box as the permanent address. If Bob couldn't get someone else to make the thirty mile round-trip over the hill to get the mail each week, he did it himself. And he usually visited Jimmy too. Bob would normally answer the letters himself. For awhile in 1970, Richard M. was helping with the literature production and distribution. When literature ran low, Bob or Richard ordered more. When a group ran out of literature, they called the NA number and left a message with the answering service, or called either Richard or Bob at their homes. It worked, but it was sometimes a burden, especially on Bob.

As 1971 began, a few more meetings existed than had a year earlier, but four meetings were soon temporarily closed. On February ninth, a major earthquake destroyed many buildings in the north part of the Valley, two of which hosted meetings. It was some time before replacement meetings were started. In addition to meetings in California, there were meetings starting in other places across the country, and lots of people just asking for a piece of literature so they would know what NA was.

Discussions began among some of the trustees and the Southern California GSO officers on whether or not "the duties of the office"

should be divided, so that the services needed for the Southern California fellowship would be performed by one office and the services given to the rest of the world would be provided by a "world" office. Since decisions so fundamental as this took time to evolve, it was months before any action was taken. But in general, things were going relatively well for the fellowship. There were about thirty-five regular meetings, and the number of people who achieved a year's clean time nearly doubled that year.

Exactly who suggested the idea of an event for the entire fellowship, like the AA conventions (which many NA members attended), is unknown, but in the Spring of 1971, the idea of starting an NA convention began to receive a lot of attention. The Southern California fellowship took the lead, although by as late as July a committee had not been formed. At the July GSO meeting, GSO chairperson Mel H. asked for a volunteer to manage the conference committee (they were then calling it a rally), but no offers were received. Over the following months the focus of the proposed event shifted from a conference to a convention with a business meeting.

A glimpse at the July meeting gives insight to the state of things and the variety of issues they faced. Under old business it was reported the July fourth picnic had been fun, but they lost money. Richard M. gave the names of people who owed for booklets they had taken, reported he was nearly out of them, and wanted to know if he should order more. During the booklet discussion, Mel suggested that the booklet be revised to include more stories, but action on the idea was put off at the suggestion of Chuck S. until after the trustees had their meeting a few days later.

A discussion of public relations ensued after Ed M. suggested more work should be put into publicizing NA. Bill suggested a Public Relations Committee be formed, although no action was taken on the idea. Some nagging complaints among those present were aired in this context. Chuck expressed his contention that recovery houses were not NA, and a mistaken impression was being given out because of the way they were included on the Twelve Step list. Bill B. suggested improvements in how people on the phone service list are identified (list the individual rather than identify an institution such as Impact or Cri-Help). Perhaps, he felt, something should be added to NA literature that better explained NA philosophy on these issues.

This led to the question of whether or not the answering service should be allowed to refer callers to Families Anonymous and/or Naranon. This matter was deferred to the trustees for consideration. Mel reported that the institutional commitment to the California Rehabilitation Center (CRC) was in "sad shape, as people aren't going out to CRC who have accepted the responsibility to go." Since the In-

stitutional Committee formed in 1969, and it seemed to have fallen by the wayside, Chuck S. moved to hold a meeting at his house the next night to form a new Institutional Committee.

A few days later, at their July meeting, the trustees decided to approve revising the Booklet and adding more personal stories. They resolved to solicit stories from members all across the fellowship. They also decided to call for a fellowship business meeting at the convention. At that time, they proposed approval would be sought from a vote by representatives of every group that sent a member, for establishing "a business office (a world central office) for NA as a whole..."

Not long after their July meeting, they sent a letter to the fellowship announcing the convention and requested that each group send a delegate to the conference to participate in the business meeting. The world central office concept was explained and member ideas solicited. Also announced was the trustee decision to pursue publication of a book that, "will be somewhat analogous to AA's big book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. ... We will need additional stories to include in this book by clean addicts with some time in NA, relating what it used to be like, what happened and what it's like now." The letter was sent to every address on the GSO mail list and to every group.

The GSO and intergroup for Northern California were working too. With Sylvia still at the helm, the monthly meetings happened on time and decisions were made when necessary. A new meeting directory was made when necessary, and literature was made available, although there were constant complaints that they should print their own rather than getting it from the GSO in Southern California. They had discovered they could print the booklet cheaper and didn't want to pay the extra money. They also felt they were not getting reasonable response time to letters and literature orders sent to the Sun Valley address.

There was considerable interest in creating some new literature, and several members had been working to transcribe an AA pamphlet, inserting language more appropriate to NA. About the conference, there were two sensitive issues. First, they were not consulted in advance about it, and second there was a feeling the meeting should have been set near the middle of the state, so both fellowships would have a better chance of getting a lot of people to go. As it was, they decided to get a group together and drive down.

The trustees met again on September tenth. They received a report from Norm S. about details he worked out with the country club for the convention. Other details about a registration fee, dinner price and a dance were also discussed. They worked out a program, including having Jimmy give a talk about NA history, if he were not

hospitalized. Russ indicated in a letter that the Northern California groups were thinking about working on a book for NA, and were considering dividing their region into smaller units — zones or something like that. Chuck S. reported the Institutional Committees would only pay the amount it cost to produce the booklet (\$.10) not the established retail price. The trustees approved the idea.

On September twentieth, the trustees sent a letter to every known address, and had copies of it distributed to every meeting, extending an invitation to the conference. Probably every regular member of the fellowship knew about the convention by the time it took place.

In October, Sylvia and Mel had a lengthy discussion about the interest in the Northern California fellowship in writing a book. Mel included Mari in the discussion, who soon wrote to Sylvia. It is clear from the letter that a difference was about to arise between Northern and Southern California over what should be done. It appeared that the North simply wanted to edit the AA Big Book so that it sounded like an NA publication. Mari wrote that people in the South might not buy that idea. It was a positive letter and addressed complaints they both shared.

On Friday evening, November fifth, in the banquet room of the La Mirada Country Club in Southern Los Angeles County, the first NA Convention got underway. Mari W. sat at a table at the banquet room entrance and made out receipts to those who paid. The cost was five dollars for the conference registration fee, and an additional five dollars to attend the banquet the following night. The meetings began at 8:00 PM, with Bob B. as master of ceremonies. Two speakers were given the podium that evening: Jimmy K., who spoke about the history of NA, and Jack W., who talked about the more recent progress of NA. Jimmy was in the hospital at the time of the convention, still sick with tuberculosis. Bob B. went in the afternoon and got him out, took him to the convention and returned him to the hospital after the meeting.

On Saturday morning, a workshop was held with trustees Ed M. and Dorothy Gildersleeve as leaders. A marathon meeting was started in another room at the same time. In the afternoon speakers meeting, Bill B. lead the meeting at which three speakers were invited to talk about the purpose of the convention. A business meeting began about 4:30 for the election of an "NA business manager, establishment of NA business office and other business." The resolution to establish an office was discussed and adopted with near unanimous support. Frank L. was elected as the office manager. The biggest concern was over the ability of the fellowship to sustain the continuing expense. This issue was resolved, so it was thought, by get-

ting pledges from various members to provide direct contributions on a monthly basis. Unfortunately most of the pledges didn't materialize.

In the evening, a banquet was held, after which Jimmy and Sylvia shared the podium. Later a show put on by some members entertained everyone, and the evening ended after a dance. The convention raised some money, but perhaps more importantly it started a yearly fellowship convocation. Just under 200 people attended, and some were from outside of California.

A meeting list was produced concurrent with the convention which showed all known meetings within the fellowship. Thirty-eight meetings were listed in all. These covered a wide area of California, although nineteen were within twenty miles of Sun Valley. There were four listed in San Jose, two in San Francisco and two in San Diego. Other cities in California showing meetings were Lancaster, Santa Anna, Berkeley, Morro Bay, and Riverside. Help lines were listed for the three NA-friendly treatment houses. The helpline numbers served both an NA Public Information function as well as a practical tool for the Cri-Help and Impact houses, including a Cri-Help spin-off in San Diego. This caused much consternation among some members who felt that such an affiliation violated the Sixth Tradition, and was discussed again and again at GSO and trustee meetings.

It is interesting to note that two institutional meetings at the California Corrections Institution in Corona were included on that meeting list. These Monday and Wednesday night meetings had begun many years earlier and have continued, without interruption, ever since. Two names and a phone number were included for anyone interested in the only known meeting outside of California. That meeting was for a group in Denver, Colorado.

A financial report was prepared by the General Service organization and distributed at the business meeting. It must be remembered, however, that the "office" was still in someone's home and the phone contact was an answering service. The year to date report (eleven months) showed a beginning balance on January 15, 1971 of \$201.66, after which \$489.10 was received in donations, \$441.60 in sales and \$84.21 in miscellaneous revenue for total available cash of \$1,014.91.*

The two biggest expenses were for printing literature (\$472.50) and maintaining the telephone (\$473.12). After expenditures were

* The math doesn't quite work here, and Bob's records weren't available at our final edit, but the figures give you the general idea of the financial picture of that day.

accounted for, \$185.56 was left. Although not shown in the meeting list, groups in Georgia; Las Vegas; Reno; and Haley, Idaho sent contributions totaling twenty-six dollars.

At their December meeting, the trustees had a lengthy discussion about opening the office. The convention didn't produce enough money to cover the start-up expenses, and even if they relied fully on the pledges they received, they might still be short of money. Among the alternatives they discussed were possibly sharing space with Naranon, or Families Anonymous. It was even suggested they open a clubhouse and have the office in one part but have the clubhouse essentially provide the basic support. It was finally resolved to have the office separate from anything else so as not to create difficulties with the Sixth Tradition. The minutes of the meeting show clearly that they were going through the very same learning experience others went through later about how to apply the Traditions in the practical operation of an office.

Perhaps the most controversial matter they considered was the reinstatement of Bill B. as a trustee. His membership as a trustee had been suspended (the reasons for which are somewhat unclear today, since members still living offer different versions). The issue was satisfactorily resolved, and at the prior trustee meeting, they had voted to reinstate him. Part of the controversy arose from the fact that in those days it was generally accepted that a trustee was elected for life, at least while they were still clean. There was discussion about the propriety of the reinstatement, or if they should take the matter to the GSO. They voted to let the reinstatement stand and allow the GSO to bring the matter to them if they objected.

The General Service Organization met in December and elected Greg P. as chairperson. With just over a year clean, it was a testimony to his ability, and showed how much the fellowship was already depending on him. A report sent after its December meeting said it was decided "that we should have a paid office manager, plus as many volunteers as possible to answer phones — do 12 Step work... This was approved and voted on by the GSO representatives at the first NA, convention, November 6, 1971." The report goes on to say, "As of January 1, 1972, The NA World Service Office will be located at 2335 Crenshaw Boulevard."

At that Los Angeles address was a large house leased by Bob B. which had earlier served as the location for Impact house. He offered to rent the space to the office, plus a place for the manager to live, for only \$100 a month. The spending plan they worked from was based on needing \$600 a month, but they were starting with only \$500. And it never got any better! The office operated under the direction of the

office committee established under the General Service Organization created in 1969 and the Board of Trustees.

After the decision was made to house the office on Crenshaw, Frank L., who had been elected as the office manager, said he could not live in that area. The plan had been that the manager would receive part of his compensation by getting free rent for his living facilities. Frank didn't like the area so he resigned and Bob B. got stuck being the manager.

In 1972, a member named Julie was hired as the first employee of the fellowship to work in the new service office under Bob's leadership. Julie was one of the women who lived in the house when it was an Impact dormitory. Since she had lived there, could type, and had some extra time, she was enlisted as the part-time employee. In a memorandum titled, "What's Happening?" published in the early months of 1972, she reports to the fellowship, "I'm the one and only staff member of your NA World Service Office. The office is in a small room on the first floor of a two story house. The office is open." Among the first productions was an outline for meetings containing an explanation of how meetings should be conducted. It contained "Who is an Addict?" and "What is the NA Program," almost as they appear in the literature today. What Julie didn't say is that she only worked about five hours a week on the NA payroll.

As the new GSO chairperson, Greg set the pattern he was to follow for many years. He prepared a detailed agenda for the first meeting on January nineteenth. Regardless of how many group representatives showed up, he was going to conduct business in an organized manner.

Julie helped distribute a February, 1972 letter from the "Book Committee, NA World Service Office" in which the committee asked members to write their stories and submit them to the office for possible inclusion in the book. Judging, however, from the difficulty *The Voice* had at getting stories, it is doubtful the committee was overworked.

Julie answered the phone, responded to letters, and sent out literature, occasionally assisted by member volunteers. Of course Bob B. was always there frequently doing more than Julie did. In April, a new meeting directory was produced for the Southern California fellowship. Showing the Sun Valley mailing address and the Crenshaw office address, it listed thirty-nine meetings, six of which were more than a hundred miles from the center of L.A. Included in the list were five meetings that were clearly institutional meetings in prisons

or similar facilities. In order to encourage full participation, the meeting schedule for the GSO and its committees were also listed.

At the April Northern California intergroup meeting, lingering dissatisfaction over the November convention in La Mirada was expressed. The feeling was expressed (and recorded) that it should have been held in a cheaper facility rather than a country club so that the fellowship could have made money. And perhaps more importantly, they had just learned a decision had been made (presumably by members in Southern California) to hold the second convention — again they had not been consulted.

This unhappiness was related to other concerns they voiced at that meeting as well. How, they wondered, were trustees were appointed (and by whom)? They questioned the trustees' bylaws, and wondered how many were connected to recovery houses (this was probably an indirect reference to Jimmy who was listed as a director of Cri-Help in their promotional brochure). On the positive side there was a report given about work on the pamphlet, *This is NA* and the *Twelve Questions*, that they intended to submit to the trustees for approval.

Just less than a month later, the Southern California GSO had its May meeting. Greg presided, and Julie acted as recording secretary. It was a short meeting; only four reports were given to representatives of fourteen meetings (out of thirty-nine) who attended. Apparently word of the unhappiness from Northern California had reached them, as they reportedly were awaiting a response from the North about where they suggested the convention should be held. Greg again requested stories for an NA book. He followed this up with a letter mailed to each meeting with the same request.

It was about this time that Greg and Jimmy began to develop a close friendship. Greg had arrived in the fellowship in late 1970 and knew right away this is where he belonged. He soon became active in his home group at St. Steven's Church in Hollywood. Within a few months he was secretary of that group and representative for the Moorpark group. Thereafter he was a regular at the GSO meetings, gradually becoming a principal participant, and eventually, as we have stated above, being elected to the chair. Greg had considerable talents which were being invested heavily in NA service.

Jimmy, who had been slowly recovering from his illness, began to be well enough to get out of the house by the early part of 1972. They soon met and established a very close bond. Greg and his wife were to spend nearly as much of their waking hours at Jimmy's house during the next six years as they did at their own. Jimmy and Greg became constant companions, as their temperaments complemented

each other and their ideas about the future of NA were the subject of endless hours of discussion.

While there was to some degree a father-son relationship between them, and Jimmy was Greg's sponsor, they worked as equals in a two man team in service to NA in a manner unprecedented up to that time. Each used the other as a sounding board for ideas and opened their hearts and minds to look for NA problems to solve.

The trustee minutes from the early years did not record who was present or absent. The only indicator of who was present were references in the minutes to what different people said. One list discovered in this author's research, undated, but matching other sources, shows these individuals as members of the board at that time: Ralph Worden, MD (non-addict), Dr. Louis Quitt (non-addict), Judge Leon Emmerson (non-addict), Dorothy Gildersleeve (non-addict), Carl B., Ed M., Bill B., Mari W., Bob B., Chuck S., Jack W., Jimmy K., Russ C. and Mel H. The list seems to fit into about mid-year, 1972. However, soon after that list was prepared, Dr. Worden resigned. The following spring Russ C. also resigned, as he was going to college full-time.

Out in California, in June another attempt was made at publishing a fellowship newsletter. From the Crenshaw address came a small but valuable publication with a little news and recovery notes submitted by members. An attempt to solicit subscriptions was made, though an admission was included that the three previous attempts to publish a newsletter had failed. As it turned out, few subscriptions were received and it failed again.

For several months, communications had been flowing back and forth between the US Army and the office. The Army had decided that it might have a drug problem among the forces in Europe, and had decided that maybe NA could help. They invited NA to send, at Army expense, several representatives to Europe to advise them about what to do. Several trusted servants were selected by the trustees to embark on this journey, but at the last moment the Army changed its mind and dropped the matter.

As August rolled around, the dissatisfaction in Northern California continued. They decided to make their own printing of *The White Booklet*, which they did, and put their address on it. At the trustee meeting, despite what may have been suggested, the next convention was set for the American Legion Hall in North Hollywood for September first through the third with Bob B. serving as chairperson.

The convention came off as scheduled, although accounts of it in later years report that only one hundred fifty people attended, about fifty fewer than the first. Nolan W. and Danny T. were the Friday night speakers. Saturday morning a business meeting was jointly

conducted by Bob, Mari and Chuck S. This was followed by a speaker meeting at which Sally E. shared. That evening, after a buffet dinner, Jimmy and Dr. Lou S. both spoke. For those who got to bed early enough after the dance, the speakers on Sunday at 10:00 AM were Pepe A. and Fran S. A Naranon meeting was printed on the agenda for Saturday afternoon. It would be a tug-of-war for nearly eleven years before the Naranon connection to conventions would be settled.

A report published later shows WSO advanced \$119 to get the convention going, while total receipts were \$820.50 and expenditures totaled \$682.58. The convention committee repaid the deposit and gave to the office the remaining profit of \$137.92. A WSO financial report published at the same time (covering a nine month period) shows the office received donations of \$2,909, literature sales of \$534 and miscellaneous income of \$156. The largest expenditures were for rent, \$800, and office staff, \$690. Even if a calculation is made of the staff expense, using 520 hours worked during a year (about 1/4 of a normal work year, or about ten hours a week), the per hour salary would have been about \$1.32 per hour. For the amount of work that was done, the fellowship sure got its money's worth. But it must be remembered that Bob B. and a few volunteers still did most of the work.

At about the time of the convention, Julie compiled a meeting list which she called the *World Directory*, with a September 13, 1972 date. It lists none of the California meetings, but includes information on eleven meetings and contacts for an additional eleven groups whose meeting time or location was not given. In separate meeting lists for Southern and Northern California, prepared about the same time, thirty-one meetings in the South and eleven in the North were listed. Helplines were not listed in connection with treatment centers this time.

In mid-September, another issue of the newsletter was published, with the convention as the lead story. Personal input comprised the majority of the issue, with a lot of space allocated to writers from the California Rehabilitation Center and Patton State Hospital. It was announced as the second quarterly issue and subscribers were sought.

At the October meeting of the trustees, Bob B. presided over a serious discussion about the future of the office. Not enough money had been made from the convention to continue long, so alternative plans were discussed. It was thought many groups had money that could be used to help keep the office open, but since the groups were autonomous, the trustees could only ask, not demand that money be forwarded. The continuing problem about keeping NA meetings separated from AA meetings was discussed. It was thought that sev-

eral groups were acting as NA one time and the next time acting as AA, while keeping their meeting listed in both AA and NA directories. It was decided to try, through understanding and enlightenment, to terminate such practices.

Toward the end of the year, another newsletter was prepared and mailed. Mel wrote the covering article titled, "From One Man's Opinion," which was a well-written exhortation for members to get involved in their group's activities and to devote more time to NA as well as to their own recovery. Another article written by a newcomer expressed gratitude at learning to live again. The newsletter carries the Crenshaw address and offered a congratulatory note to Julie for having completed a full year's employment with the fellowship.

In 1973 the Southern California GSO and its counterpart in Northern California, the intergroup continued to hold monthly meetings. At the Southern California GSO February meeting, Jack B. discussed complaints he had received about phone calls to the office not being answered. He asked for volunteers to help out. The Northern California group became concerned, according to the record of their April meeting, about information they received from reading a newsletter published by Cri-Help, the Southern California treatment house. Their concern had been boiling for nearly a year over the appearance of affiliation caused, they felt, by trustees who were listed as serving on the Cri-Help Board of Directors. Since nothing had been done about this in a year, they resolved to write a letter of "disaffiliation with NA-South" because of this relationship to an outside treatment facility.

When their next meeting came around, the letter was not yet ready; they decided to hold off on it pending a decision about where the next World Convention was going to be. They had received a letter from Mel, the convention chairperson, suggesting they work together and put the convention on in San Jose. They decided if the convention was held in the North, they would talk to the trustees in person about the affiliation matter. They discussed the resignation of Russ C. from the trustees and the need to find a replacement. Sylvia would continue to serve, although a letter had been received notifying her (and everyone else) that continued absence from meetings would result in her removal.

In Pottstown, Pennsylvania, at the April fifteenth intergroup meeting, the group decided to keep Ray T. as chairperson and Charlie F. as secretary for another three months. Perhaps equally important, they had previously received a copy of bylaws from California and

modified them according to their needs. Their version was adopted as the bylaws of the intergroup of Narcotics Anonymous of the Middle Atlantic States. They were then sent to each group for a vote. Within three weeks they had been approved by each group. By the obvious strength of administrative skill and the ability to interpret the Traditions, the members in Pennsylvania were showing a level of maturity that belied their youth as a fellowship.

At their May 1973 meeting in Southern California, the NA trustees addressed an important legal and financial problem. Earlier in the year a tax return had been filed for the office for 1972. Unfortunately the office had not sought or obtained a tax exemption from the IRS. The tax return had been sent back with a request for more information about the organization. The trustees decided to send a committee of several of their members to meet with the IRS and seek an extension so the matter could be given proper preparation. Among other things they discussed were election of the next trustee chairperson and the appointment of several trustees to head different committees. Bob B. was again appointed to oversee the office, and Jimmy K. was given duty for publications. This meeting showed that Jimmy was on the mend and returning to active service, although he voluntarily restricted his service commitments so as not to become overly tired.

The urine testing requirement in Williamsport and Lewisburg was on the agenda for the May intergroup meeting in Philadelphia. They agreed to take a group conscience vote among the Philadelphia meetings to determine if this was a violation of Traditions. At the July meeting it was decided by a vote of eleven to four that such an action was indeed in violation of the Third and Fourth Traditions. It was decided that the Williamsport and Lewisburg meetings could only be recognized by the intergroup if they were able to comply with the Traditions. This was conveyed to their groups, and the Williamsport and Lewisburg meetings didn't officially associate with the Philadelphia intergroup for more than a year and a half.

In June, a letter was sent from Philadelphia to the California GSO in Los Angeles. They wanted to know what the problem was with communications. They had written several times in recent months, and even called and talked with Debbie, who worked at the office, but they got no answers. They wanted to know the difference between the GSO concept and their intergroup, the status of "the NA Big Book" (with which they offered to help), what had happened to money they had previously sent for copies of literature, and if they should exchange with California the literature they had printed and

were using. A review of their intergroup minutes for the following six months suggests they never got a response, even though they sent an additional letter in the fall.

In July, the trustee meeting turned again to the IRS matter. Some progress was reported, as a member who was also an attorney was providing help. The board held elections that month and chose Jack W. as chairperson while Carl B. became treasurer and Mari W. the secretary. Also serving on the board at this time were: Jimmy K., Mel H., Sylvia M., Dorothy Gildersleeve, Bob B., Ed M., Bill B., Judge Leon Emerson, Chuck S., and Louis Q.

The board set up a banquet meeting for August eighteenth to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the first meeting held on August 17, 1953. The trustees formally decided that this year's convention should be in Northern California. Since this had been in the works for awhile, Sylvia was ready to announce that they had made arrangements for the convention to be in San Jose on October 19, 20 and 21. The board again took up the issue of the pamphlet submitted by Northern California the previous winter. The northern California members spent nearly a year working on it but never received any response. Without going into precise detail, the board re-hashed the earlier discussion and decision. They rejected it because they believed it was plagiarized too heavily from an AA pamphlet.

The discussion about the plagiarized pamphlet led to renewed interest in writing an NA book. The message to write stories and submit them went out to meetings everywhere, but only a few were submitted. It was however a pet project of Jimmy's and he got his friends to write their stories. These became the first to be added to what was a pretty slim collection of stories accumulated in the next few years. That it was a slow beginning, was acceptable to Jimmy and Greg because they had other projects to handle first.

Sometime during the summer or early fall of 1973, Julie departed from the office after more than a year-and-a-half. Although the details of her departure were not recorded, she appears to have done a reasonably good job and left on good terms. However, the financial condition of the office continued to be bleak. With Julie's departure Bob was back to doing all the work again along with help from volunteers he recruited.

On August eighteenth, the twentieth Anniversary banquet was held at the Islander Restaurant on La Cienega in Los Angeles. The principal speakers were Jack, Jimmy and Bob. Jimmy talked about the early days and the changes that had taken place since then. Bob presented Jimmy with the original set of bylaws adopted at the August 17, 1953 meeting, encased on a plastic coated plaque. Speaking for a grateful fellowship, Bob said, "I would like to, at this

time introduce and present this set of bylaws as a token of safe keeping and as a token of... I don't even know the words to express it... to Jimmy K., one of the founders of NA and one of the people who has been a mainstay; and one that keeps it together."

Jimmy responded with a few remarks about the struggle, the fights and failures NA went through in the early days. The times NA folded but started again and the hope for a stronger NA tomorrow. Near his closing he said, "We can no longer contain it here in California or in this country [not that he would have ever intended to]. But it's going to take everything all of us have. ... We've got to stay in this program. This is a blood-and-guts program. ... If you're an addict you've got a lot of guts to begin with or you wouldn't be here. So let's put them to good use. Let's take this thing that we've got and make something better even than it is. ... Two years ago at the convention, when I had just regained my voice, I said then that as long as I live I would use what strength I have to further the efforts of Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous."

As NA celebrated its twentieth anniversary, in Southern California alone there were thirty-two meetings. In Northern California there were about thirteen more. Outside of California there were approximately twenty meetings, several of which were in Canada or other countries.

That Fall, the office was moved to Hollywood, 1246 North Highland Avenue, just a short distance from Sunset Boulevard. It was a smaller space and rented for only fifty dollars a month, plus utilities. The move was completed by the October tenth trustee meeting, where that was discussed along with the possibility of hiring new part-time help to replace Julie.

As Greg and Jimmy discussed their ideas for the future of NA, many conversations had centered on how the service structure would need to be changed if the fellowship really began to spread. Greg spent time considering this, made some notes, and finally wrote an outline of a service body that would meet the needs of groups in a relatively small area. This came, in part, from his experience as chairperson of the Southern California GSO. With nearly thirty meetings, he was dismayed to have fewer than half that many representatives at any meeting.

He also found that with meetings so spread out in the metropolitan area, it was next to impossible for groups in the Valley to help, or be helped by, groups forty miles away in Long Beach. But with the way the GSO was structured, groups with so much distance were still herded together for literature distribution, institutional commitments, phonelines, social activities and supporting meetings. It really

didn't work well in many ways. What was needed, he concluded was a newer level of service, one that could address the needs of groups in close proximity to each other, yet still have equal input to the actions and decisions of the GSO.

After he had boiled his notes into a coherent plan, he spent a couple of evenings discussing these ideas with Jimmy. He even tape recorded the discussion so he wouldn't miss anything. When they were through, they got the Valley groups together to see if they would buy it. It was a plan for an area service committee (ASC).

The Third World Convention was held in San Jose on October 19-21. Jack W. spoke on Saturday night, giving another profane and hard-hitting recitation about recovery to a crowd of over four hundred. Three hundred twenty-three paid for the banquet, which helped the convention produce \$2,433 in income. There were expenses of \$1,942, leaving a profit of \$491 which was given to the office.

Just two days after the convention, a milestone was reached when the meeting Greg had been planning for Valley groups took place. The meeting was held in Jimmy's home. Representatives of the six Valley meetings listened to Greg present the plan for an area service committee. First he explained why the idea had come up. He went over each point and answered questions that arose.

Jimmy participated in the discussion, mostly to support Greg and provide answers to various questions that arose. By the end of the meeting, the proposal had been adopted. Greg had even drafted a complete set of guidelines that were to be used. The group decided that Jeff S. should explain this at the next GSO meeting, and thereafter represent the San Fernando Valley as a whole at the GSO. Other officers were; Greg P., Chairperson; Marie S., Secretary; and Chuck G., Treasurer.

During the discussion, Jeff was considerably worried that his ability to represent all the groups in the voting procedure at meetings would not be accepted by the groups themselves. He insisted that a letter be sent assigning to him the voting rights of all of the Valley groups. Greg wrote the letter, giving full details and even describing the extent of the geographical area the committee would consider their own territory.

Formation of the area committee took the rest of the Southern California fellowship by surprise and created some conflict. Until that time there were only two "areas," Northern and Southern California (the Pennsylvania groups, although getting organized, were probably too far away to be considered at the time). Now the Valley seemed to be going off on its own. Some members outside of the Val-

ley felt the action was "high-handed" and this caused a few long-term resentments. It must be remembered that *The NA Tree* which made provision for area committees was not published until two years later. Despite the conflict caused when the Valley area committee was created, it paved the way for services to be provided through relatively small, compact service units.

At the next General Service Organization meeting, Greg and the Valley representative learned how unpopular their decision was. Although Greg was the presiding officer, they were told their idea of having one person vote as the representative of all the groups in the Valley was not acceptable. The other sections of the metropolitan area were not ready to follow the lead of the Valley and didn't seem willing to accommodate this move. Nevertheless they stuck to their guns and didn't resume sending representatives of each group. Their single representatives stuck it out until the others formed area service committees of their own.

Bob B. entered the fray in a short letter he signed as WSO manager. The office had recently moved to Highland Avenue, and the letter could have been intended to herald that announcement, but he used more space in the letter to address the formation of the area committee. He wrote, "Since my last... newsletter, many things have been taking place. The organization of NA has been taking on a responsible change; area GSO's have been forming and taking a greater responsibility for their respective areas. San Fernando Valley GSO has had greater participation in their business meetings, they are better able to service their particular needs in their area. Hats off to those of you that are taking a responsible part in the growth of NA. It is our hope that other areas will follow the lead of San Fernando Valley, San Francisco, San Jose and Philadelphia."

The conflicts of the 1970's were, in many respects, repeated over and over in later years. Much of what happened resulted from strong personalities — how they got along, who they didn't get along with, what was their particular philosophy or perspective. One significant conflict occurred between Jimmy and his supporters and a group of people centered around Sylvia M. and her brothers. The conflict started in the 1960's and continued until after the conference began to meet. Even when Sylvia moved to Northern California the conflict continued.

Part of the conflict centered around the relationship to AA and the lack of NA-produced literature. Many members were of the view that AA was being treated, by implication, as the enemy. They felt that using AA literature didn't really harm NA. And, since NA didn't produce its own literature the AA literature should simply be revised to incorporate NA jargon and used within NA.

Sylvia and the groups in Northern California spent considerable time editing AA literature to sound acceptable to NA members. They hoped, (and expected) that their efforts would be welcomed in the South, and that the literature would be approved by the trustees. The trustee rejected it outright, and apparently didn't communicate that they had done so. And the fact that NA publications of equal purpose and value didn't get produced further alienated Sylvia and some others from the trustees.

Another element of the conflict was the appearance that Jimmy and his friends had more power than anyone else, and didn't often listen to what others said or wanted. The convention locations were a good example of this complaint. Another example was the view from the Northern California groups that they were charged too much for literature. They felt that no profit should be made on literature production. Since there was no forum other than the trustee meetings where such issues could be resolved, and the trustees were making these decisions, the frustration continued to mount.

Everyone was earnestly concerned first with recovery and what was best for NA. Unfortunately there was a communications gap. When the fellowship consisted of four or five meetings, the parties with a disagreement could face each other directly and most likely find a resolution. By the 1970's with everyone working full-time jobs and meetings four hundred miles apart, there was no opportunity to talk like there had been in 1964.

Over the next several years, Sylvia began to withdraw from the fray, and her brothers narrowed their concerns mostly to working with sponsees and groups in their geographical areas. Jimmy continued to serve as a trustee. Conflicts continued throughout the seventies, with several others taking Sylvia's place as antagonist in battles with Jimmy.

During the decades that followed, this scenario was repeated over and over again. The individuals changed, and the specific issues involved changed, but sharp conflict was a constant. There were fights over philosophy, and personality, and policy, and day-to-day decisions. The distance between adversaries and the propensity to make major conflicts out of even the smallest things diverted great energies away from serving the addict who still suffers.