

Chapter Six

The Middle Seventies

By 1974 there could be no doubt that Narcotics Anonymous was going to work. The old lie that "once an addict always an addict" was being proven wrong by the hundreds as addicts were living new lives across the country. There was now enough evidence so that addicts who still used could know that a choice did exist; they too could find a way out of their active addiction. The struggle was far from over, though. This evidence was of little use in the big picture if NA didn't get the word out so that addicts and those seeking to help them might know about it. And the fellowship had to mature, get better organized and develop more extensive recovery literature so others could use this answer no matter where they were.

For the most part, 1974 was simply characterized by continued growth. The Philadelphia fellowship continued to exhibit reasoned judgment and a willingness to work together as they built a new fellowship. They started meetings essentially in isolation from the rest of NA. By applying group conscience and working the Steps they were finding their way towards an organized and stable fellowship. This became a clear example of the fact that NA could work anywhere, given a little literature, a little help, and a desire to make it work. In January they revised the bylaws covering their seven groups, discussed a motion to revise their hot line system, and reconsidered the procedure for handling money.

Despite what the rest of Southern California was saying about the Valley area committee, they began to meet regularly and work on meeting their needs. At their January meeting they discussed an answering service for the Valley and set a date for their first dance.

During February a new meeting list was published showing the Highland Avenue office address. It shows thirty-six meetings, of which six were identified as institutional or rehabilitation house meetings with special rules. In an early 1974 letter to the fellowship, Bob B. (writing as the office manager) said that the office was still collecting material for the NA book. He was also asking for volunteers to help staff an eight to twelve hour schedule for responding to Twelve Step calls received at the new office. Bob worked at a regular

job all day, so he had to go into the NA office after work and on weekends to fill orders and handle other office tasks. It was a big job to keep things going. They still used the Sun Valley Post Office address, so Bob or someone else had to drive out there to the Post Office, or to Jimmy's home if he had picked up the mail. Despite the inconvenience, it had to be done regularly.

At their February meeting, with Jack W. presiding, the trustees discussed the continued absence of both Dorothy Gildersleeve and Judge Emerson. They decided to send these non-addict trustees a letter expressing a desire for their participation, or perhaps if they had other plans, a resignation would be accepted. Carl B. was assigned the task of writing the letters. Some controversy arose during that meeting over the booklets the Northern California intergroup had printed. They resolved to ask that the intergroup send copies of the pamphlet to the trustees for their scrutiny. And on another matter concerning the Northern fellowship, the trustees decided to accept their trustee candidate, and offered trustee membership to Gloria Coleman, a non-addict. Near the end of the month Gloria sent a letter of acceptance.

At the March trustee meeting, a contingent from Families Anonymous made a visit for the purpose of asking the trustees to support the idea of having the NA phonedlines refer calls from family members to them. Most calls had usually been referred to Naranon, but an internal struggle had produced Families Anonymous as a separate organization. Families Anonymous was composed mostly of families with members who had drug problems and they wanted family member calls referred to them. The discussion ended on a friendly note, but no agreement for referrals was made.

It was a fairly common practice to allow each helpline volunteer who responded to a call from family members to use their own judgment about what to do. Some were referred to Naranon, some were referred to Families Anonymous and some received no referral. On a related issue, the trustees had received a report from San Diego stating that some individual or group in their local NA community was creating confusion over whether or not alcohol should be considered a drug for purposes of NA. It was resolved that Jack would communicate with them and make things clear.

The June trustee meeting was held in the Highland Avenue office. The principal focus was planning for the World Convention scheduled for November. Another concern was office income. The office had been on Highland Avenue about seven months, and the financial situation had slowly gotten worse. Discussion centered on perhaps finding a new and cheaper location. A short while later, Carl B. came up with an office at 101 N. Santa Fe Avenue in downtown

Los Angeles. But few were supportive of that as a location; it was in a bad part of town and far away from where the volunteers lived. The GSO seemed to like it better than the office did, so they used the space for awhile, holding recovery and business meetings there and publishing the address on the new meeting list. That list, published in June, showed thirty-three meetings. But the office somehow held on financially, and remained at the Highland address.

With a theme of "Just for Today," the Fourth World Convention began on November eighth at a hotel in Anaheim. Friday morning, Chuck S. and a woman named Lucille spoke. That evening Frank P. from Santa Rosa and Alice M. shared the podium. On Saturday morning three speakers shared: Martin R., Connie C., and Don Z. A General Service Conference business meeting was held in the afternoon. The Saturday evening speaker was Eddie C., even though he hadn't been to a lot of NA meetings in years. He was followed by a show and a dance. On Sunday morning Beth D. and Mel H. shared the podium at the closing meeting.

The business meeting was principally about the office and it could have had long-term consequences for the fellowship. Bob B. presided over the meeting at which the office reported an approximate balance of \$700. Monthly expenses were in the range of \$500 to \$600, and since Bob was doing the work as a volunteer, no employee expense was included. The sale of literature provided the bulk of income. The focus of the meeting was whether or not the office should incorporate. There was considerable discussion, after which a motion was proposed and adopted "that the NA World Service Office be incorporated." It was further proposed that an interim Board of Directors be established, to consist of three officers and representatives of the major NA population centers.

After adoption, Jack B. was elected president, Nolan W. vice-president, and Ken H. secretary. A vote was also taken that convention proceeds in excess of a \$500 reserve for the next convention be given to the office. Jack was already a volunteer working with Bob in the office on a regular basis. The selection of both Jack and Nolan had merit, as both were active and strong leaders. Members who were there at the time report that a large number of voters were then current or former patients at the treatment program where Jack was employed. Even Jack remembers that Bill B., who was the Executive Director of the treatment center they both worked at, went around to their alumni and patients and got them to vote for Jack. In the months before the convention, Ken had handled the incorporation of an Alano club in his area, and this experience was probably his ticket to selection as secretary.

Ken remembers the committee met at his home in Riverside several times, and he came to the Valley for other meetings. He dropped out of the committee when Carl, an attorney and trustee, began coming to the meetings, because Ken felt Carl could do the job quite well. Jack remembers they had a number of meetings and conducted considerable research, but they never got so far as writing bylaws or articles of incorporation, nor did they meet the other requirements to complete the job. It seemed the daily crush of life simply allowed this task to get pushed aside until it was seldom thought of. And the effort to incorporate the office just faded away.

The year 1975 was mostly quiet. There was a lull in the hustle around the Southern California fellowship, and even the number of meetings remained about the same. The GSO continued to meet regularly, but near the middle of the year they made a few changes. In Northern California a few new meetings arose, but the only big issue was the hosting of the Fifth World Convention.

Even in Philadelphia things were mostly quiet. In January they recognized their fifteenth meeting, and another was added not long afterward. What eventually made 1975 memorable was the move of the office, and the work performed by Greg and Jimmy near the end of the year.

The financial situation for the office began to get worse during February of 1975, and a change had to be made. Since both Jack and Nolan had been elected to head the committee to incorporate the office, they took the lead in finding a solution. Nolan had recently been working for the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Bureau on Menlo Avenue. They had a lot of space and were one of NA's best outside literature customers. The Bureau also made frequent referrals of addicts to NA meetings. After some discussions, the management made an offer for NA to take over a small space in the Bureau's facilities for a nominal rent.

This was fine with Bob as it avoided having everything brought back to his house. It wasn't exactly convenient for Jack, but the offer was accepted. In March, the office was moved and the telephone was installed; operation continued. The host agency even agreed to have their workers and volunteers answer the NA phone when no NA folks were around. Since there were relatively few calls they even answered the phone by saying, "Narcotics Anonymous."

A meeting list was published in April announcing the new location. It showed thirty-one meetings, including ten institutional or rehab house meetings. In the following months Jack came more often to help Bob on Saturdays. Gradually he was doing more than Bob, and eventually handling it by himself.

In Philadelphia, where they had been using fifty-fifty raffles as a way of sustaining part of their expenditures, someone began to question the propriety of "gambling" to support NA services. Letters were eventually sent to the California and New York fellowships to get their opinions (it may be that "New York" means the AA General Service Office in New York, although it is unclear from this context). At the April meeting the response from New York was read although the portion of the letter paraphrased in the minutes is misleading, "Letter from N.Y. was read - AA seems to not to like raffles except where literature is raffled off. All groups present voted no raffles - unanimously." However, they immediately made an exception to allow raffles at social functions.

In Northern California, the Convention Committee was having problems with its chairperson. He didn't always show up. After some months of this, the committee members simply drafted Mac M. to take over. He had come to every meeting and knew what was going on. Mac recalls "being blown away" by the decision, as he only had about eighteen months clean time when he took over. One of the first steps he took was to secure use of the hotel facility. Since the committee didn't have the money to put up as a deposit, he used his own credit card to serve as guarantee of payment on the meeting rooms. He did his best, the committee worked hard, and the result was a great convention.

As Mac's committee was getting things set, the intergroup published a new meeting directory. It listed five Naranon and twenty-one NA meetings spread from San Luis Obispo in the south to Santa Rosa in the north, a distance of about three hundred miles.

In the summer months, the Philadelphia intergroup discussed two intriguing questions. First, there was an organization known as Addicts Anonymous in town, and it was thought that some contact might be made with them. Second, at the next meeting, some information had been received from California indicating the intergroup should be called a GSO. It was suggested that they bring back to the groups the question of whether or not the California fellowship was the "ultimate authority."

After the August meeting, a new meeting list was printed for those meetings close in to Philadelphia. This one was in booklet form, and showed eleven meetings. It one included the creative idea of including the Steps, Traditions and a brief note about what NA was, which made this an extremely effective tool to give to newcomers and interested others.

Quite unexpectedly, Sylvia received the letter from Philadelphia about the raffle issue. Why it was addressed to the Berkeley mailing

address rather than the Sun Valley address is unknown — perhaps this stems from their earlier complaint of non-responsiveness from the trustees — but Sylvia wrote back. Her response was probably predictable: "In my thirteen years of being clean and sober, I have never heard of raffles of or for money within the fellowship."

Jack B., who had been doing most of the office chores for a few months, finally decided he needed to move the office. He had gotten enough flack for having the connection with the Suicide Prevention folks, and he had to drive quite some distance to get to it anyway. Most of the controversy over being with Suicide Prevention centered around the fact that they used federally funded workers, and these workers also answered the NA phone. There was a small unused space being rented by Cri-Help, where Jack worked. That might work out for the office, and it was only a few miles from where he lived, which would make his life a lot easier. So he got everything moved. He remembers that when he decided to move it, "I didn't even think to ask the trustees, or anyone else, for that matter, for permission."

The GSO didn't move, and continued to use the Menlo Avenue location for their helpline and some of their business meetings. Exactly when Jack made this move is uncertain, as documentary evidence has not been located. Memories suggest it was less than six months after it had moved from Highland in March. Some have suggested it was only there a few months. A reasonable guess is that the move occurred in July. Even after the move, Jack was doing everything he could to get things done and was pretty busy with his regular job. He really needed help at the office.

Jimmy, who was feeling much better since his bout with tuberculosis and knowing about Jack's burden with the office, began to go over and help. As days turned into weeks, Jimmy was working there more often and Jack was stopping by less frequently. Jimmy was often assisted by his special friend, Betty G., who also took an interest in getting things done in the office. It was a tiny space, with hardly room enough for the desk, the boxes and one person, much less two or more people. In just a short while it seems that Jack hardly came around anymore at all, de facto handing the office over to Jimmy and Betty.

Throughout the year, a calm but frequently recurring discussion had been going on among the trustees and the Southern California fellowship concerning the future of the office. Some felt the office should be separated, so that one office could concentrate on serving the general worldwide needs, and a separate office serve the Southern California membership. The office was doing double duty, trying to serve the needs of local groups and also handle the needs of small, isolated new NA communities cropping up in distant areas. Those

two sets of needs were very different. Also, the continuing conflicts and uneasiness that existed between Northern and Southern California was a persistent problem which foretold of even greater future disunity. Most people really felt the office was poorly supported and managed anyway, so it wasn't meeting even the minimum needs at the time. It was a situation that was only getting worse.

These issues were turning the wheels of thought in Greg's head, and he resolved to do something about it. He recognized that NA had to have a plan that would facilitate the growing membership from across the country and eventually around the world. He was familiar with the AA structure, and felt it had some weakness if directly adapted to NA's membership.

During the time that he was the chairperson of the GSO, he had been in the middle of these discussions. He had heard all sides, recognized the problems, and decided it was time to do something about it. He began to make notes about what he believed would be a practical service structure for NA. An early outline, in his handwriting, shows how close his ideas were to the eventual product.

Over the closing weeks of summer and early fall, he spent a considerable amount of time thinking and writing. He came up with what he believed was a practical structure. He had many discussions with Jimmy about his draft and made some revisions as a result. Several parts Jimmy even wrote himself. Jimmy was exceedingly pleased that Greg had taken on this project. But he was even more pleased with the balance of power and authority the structure envisioned as it took take shape.

On September twenty-sixth through the twenty-eighth, the Fifth World Convention was held at the El Rancho Tropicana hotel in Santa Rosa, California. The theme was, appropriately enough, "We Came to Believe." Friday evening began with a candle light speakers meeting at which Mike S. and George T. spoke (both were from San Jose). On Saturday afternoon a world business meeting was held, presided over by Connie C. That evening Sylvia gave a history of NA in Northern California which was followed by the main speaker, Steve B. from Santa Rosa. Sadly, Steve is a soft spoken man, and the sound system was so poor that many didn't hear what he said.

Although Steve had started in NA some years before, he had been discouraged, and for a few years went mostly to AA. Being asked to speak was the kick in the pants he needed to bring him back as a dedicated member. Twenty years later he is still actively providing leadership in NA. Sunday morning, Gene L. of Gunerville spoke at the closing meeting.

In the post convention financial report, Mac wrote that a total of 310 registrations were received and 266 banquet tickets were sold.

Total receipts were \$4,452. Unfortunately the banquet, room rental and coffee costs were greater than banquet and registration income so the total profit after all expenses were paid was only \$528. Nevertheless it was money to be used to help carry the message. The report also contained some good tips for subsequent Convention Committees.

During the time Jimmy had been working in the small Van Nuys office, he concluded it was foolish to drive ten miles to do this work in a tiny space when he could bring the whole mess over to his house, work on it when he wanted and get more done. During the late summer he continued to work in the small space but began to make preparations to move.

Following the convention, Greg and Jimmy spent more time working on the *Service Manual*. From time to time they would discuss parts of their work in general terms with the trustees. Mel remembers discussing parts of it with Jimmy at a trustee meeting before it was done. Fortunately nearly everyone recognized the need to have a new service structure. Unfortunately the first tendency was to simply use the AA structure, since it seemed to work and there was a close resemblance between the two fellowships. To forestall getting pushed by the membership into trying that rather than a completely new approach, they wrote about the differences and the need for something that was tailored to NA needs.

Although the Northern California GSO was not involved with these discussions, they were aware of the discussion about having the world office separate from the office that served the Southern California fellowship. At their meeting on October twenty-eighth, this was discussed and consensus was that the idea had merit, but no motion was adopted to support it.

At the November meeting of intergroup in Philadelphia, it was announced they had received from California, "a 'shaky' letter back. They're moving again (back to Sun Valley)." On the raffle issue, it seems they still had not received Sylvia's letter. As an extension of an issue raised in the gripe session from their previous meeting about the propriety of using AA literature, someone raised the question of selling *Day by Day* books at the meetings because they were not intergroup approved. It was quickly "made to accept *Day by Day* as intergroup approved. Passed."

As the letter Jimmy wrote to Philadelphia indicated, the office was moving. Concurrence was probably easily given by the trustees, if they had any discussion about it, and probably in October the office was moved into Jimmy's home. It had been in the Cri-Help space perhaps three or four months. Everything went, but unfortunately many of the fellowships historical records simply vanished somewhere between the Highland Avenue location and the time things

were moved to Jimmy's. There wasn't much more space in Jimmy's home than the office they moved out of, but here the office was to stay for over four years. Everything was done from Jimmy's home and from his truck in which he kept some literature so people could easily get what they needed.

Even while this was being done, Greg and Jimmy were putting the final touches on their service guide. They recognized that they were laying the foundation for a fellowship that was clearly here to stay and was going to get much bigger. The feeling of responsibility was not misplaced or abused. They knew what they were out to do and why. When it was done they included "An open letter to the membership of Narcotics Anonymous" that explained why they had written the manuscript. They signed it, "A group of concerned members."

After a last read-through it was typeset and printed. They then got a copy to each trustee. They presented this material to the trustees saying something like, "Here, this is an idea. If everyone likes it, fine. If not, we can make changes, but at least it's a start." This is the approach Greg used with most things that he wrote, and the technique proved successful one more time. During the following weeks the trustees read it and asked questions of both Jimmy and Greg.

As the year came to a close, a Southern California meeting directory was produced with the Menlo address, showing thirty meetings, including institutional or restricted meetings. Since the GSO was now producing the meeting lists, their address and meeting locations were different than the office. They did include a note that trustee meetings were being held at the WSO (World Service Office).

Jimmy had been handling all office matters from his home, including answering the office telephone which he also had installed there. He became a volunteer on duty any time someone called. People were calling from dawn to late at night and stopping by at all hours too. At any meeting Jimmy went to he always had with him a supply of what people needed; it would have been an inconvenience if he didn't like doing it so much.

The frequency of phone calls continued to increase, and the calls were coming from all over the world. People from Australia to Europe would call, mostly when it was convenient to them, often waking Jimmy in the middle of the night.

Jimmy was on a medical retirement because of his emphysema, but he was able to devote considerable time to getting the office work done. Through his dedication and leadership, and with the help and support of NA members, he brought the stability to the office critical to the fellowship's growth. There was little controversy over having

the office run from a home. It had been done that way before, and the fellowship was still so small that most everyone with a little time knew everyone else, especially Jimmy. Over the following years there evolved a small core of dedicated addicts who came to Jimmy's home to have coffee and to help with orders and letters. Their diligence and sacrifice is verified by the consistent growth of the office and the fellowship as a whole. Without their efforts, NA might never have reached the level of acceptance and worldwide success it has achieved.

In December, Jimmy initiated a record-keeping system in which he logged every phone call and every order he processed. He maintained these systems as long as the office was his responsibility. Since a lot of orders and inquiries were handled over the phone, and because he used the answering machine extensively, his notes about each call are a good source for discovering the growth of NA. For example in early January, Pat K. called from Iowa wanting to start a meeting. Jimmy made four attempts to call back before reaching her. In late January Shirley C., who would later become a trustee, called from Connecticut to order two *NA Trees* and fifty White Booklets.

Near the end of the year Hank M., Mark McG. and Al V. began to question why there wasn't a twenty-four hour helpline instead of using an answering service to just take messages from addicts seeking help. Mark and Al went to the next GSO meeting to discuss this. Failing to get a satisfactory answer, they joined Hank and other groups in the coastal communities and decided they would start their own twenty-four hour helpline staffed by volunteers. In the process of getting other groups in the area to commit to the idea, they realized they needed to form an area committee just like the Valley had done two years earlier. After some weeks of discussion, the Bay Cities Area Service Committee was organized and began meeting regularly. By February, Hank had been elected chairperson of the committee and a helpline with addicts answering the phone was in operation.

Nineteen seventy-six brought one of the most important events in NA history. Present at the trustee meeting in January were Bill B., Chuck S., Jimmy K., Bob B., Carl B., Greg P. and Gloria Coleman who had been proposed by Northern California as a non-addict Trustee. Gloria was quickly elected to the board and began to participate as a regular member. The board was satisfied that the office had been moved, but had problems with the GSO still being located in the Suicide Prevention Bureau. There were rumors of interference by them with its operation.

The trustees then elected Bill B. to be chairperson. Greg and Jack were considered for election to the board. Greg was selected at

this meeting but Jack was not; several years would pass before he became a trustee. Printing matters about the White Booklet were discussed, followed by consideration of *The NA Tree*. All of the trustees had studied their copy. There were a number of questions and concerns they had with various parts of it, but individually they were convinced there was a need to make a change. Everyone saw tremendous growth coming, and no one was convinced that the current structure would be adequate to meet it.

Something had to be done. The rate of growth was accelerating and the then-fragmented fellowship needed to be united. They had a number of choices: they could have appointed a committee to review and revise the *Tree*, they could have spent the time at their meetings to revise it, or they could, as they did, adopt it with the presumption that the necessary changes would come to light over time and it would be changed later. And frankly, they were generally satisfied with it anyway.

After some consideration, it was unanimously decided "that the board approve the pamphlet as part of NA Literature." Two hundred copies had already been printed, and more would be if necessary. In this manner, *The NA Tree* became the document officially describing the structure of the fellowship. They then accepted an invitation from Bibs W., who lived in San Luis Obispo, as the location for a general service committee meeting to be held on March twenty-seventh. San Luis Obispo is about the middle of the state near the coast, and almost an equal distance between Los Angeles and San Francisco. By selecting this site, it was expected that members from both ends of the state would come. The purpose was to discuss the *Tree* and possibly plan for the first World Service Conference that was described in the *Tree*. Before adjourning, they decided to hold meetings quarterly from then on rather than monthly.

Only later did the trustees begin to understand that the *Tree* had some defects that caused problems for years. First of all it confused the issue of who controlled the office; was it the trustees, or someone else? It defined the office as a corporation, and that put it out of effective control by the rest of the fellowship. A careful and deliberate discussion of the Traditions and their application to such an important service arm took several years. Only through a running battle over the office from 1978 to 1983 did the fellowship learn that creating the office as an independent power unto itself was a mistake. Chuck S., at the trustee meeting in Milwaukee in 1982, clearly stated that he felt the adoption of *The NA Tree* had been a blunder.

Within a few weeks, many of the two hundred copies were distributed. It was an imposing document to most members. Nothing in NA had ever been so massive or so complex. The range of response

went from happy acceptance and support to angry rejection. Somewhere in the middle was where the fellowship needed to be. Right away people began to pick it apart. Many simply didn't understand it, and more than a few felt it wasn't necessary.

The *Tree*, with whatever faults it had, was a good starting point for the fellowship to grow from. It reflected considerable experience in how groups worked and how area committees could effectively function. The structure outlined for the regions was a little uncertain, although it was thought they would mostly operate as enlarged area committees.

The biggest difficulty with the *Tree* was in its descriptions of world service and how the various world service elements worked together. There seemed to be more guesswork than knowledge. And this is understandable, as no experience had really been gained through operating a conference composed of delegates from across the country, nor from operation of active independent service bodies. Consequently some aspects of world services were considerably vague, and it was readily admitted that the world service branches would need to fill in the details later.

The most definite language in the *Tree* about world services concerned the office. The details of that part were more specific and authoritarian. The office, it said, was "separate from NA but works for NA. WSO functions as a non-profit corporation; with managers, departments, administrators, paid employees, subsidiaries and the like. Our office is administrated by our World Service board and acts upon the directives of our World Service Conference."

In the trustee section, the authority over the office was clearly stated, "The WSB [World Service Board] is responsible for the administration of our World Service Office." But in an earlier sentence the section says, "Like the WSO, our WSB functions as a corporation apart from our program per se." The manual didn't include guidelines or any details about essential trustee operation. This soon became a matter which needed to be rectified.

When I was first exposed to this separate-but-not-separate concept later in the year, I tried to explain to those who inquired of my opinion that it wouldn't work. I had been accustomed to forming non-profit organizations, and this description frankly struck me as "mumbo-jumbo double talk."

To most readers this was all quite confusing. It seemed that by adopting the *Tree* there was going to be a fellowship with appendages off to one side that were not quite part of the fellowship, yet they controlled the literature and the primary services, and they made inter-

pretations of the Traditions. Because it was so confusing, it quickly brought out a body of detractors that never seemed to go away.

To anyone familiar with the basics of organizational structures it would be clear that the office, a non-profit corporation with such direct responsibility as the focal point of communications in the fellowship, would never be able to operate separately from anything the rest of the fellowship did. And the statement that the WSB "functions as a corporation apart from our program per se" was a declaration that the fellowship at large would have no control over the Trustees either.

Unfortunately the drafters of the *Tree* had only a vague understanding of the rights and responsibilities of corporations. So they wrote, with clear conscience and all the best intentions, contradictory passages; then, when challenged, they tried to explain the contradictions away. This was at the heart of all the biggest difficulties I was to experience with the office and the fellowship for the entire length of my association with it. There was a general unwillingness to accept the "legal real world" as it is and abide by its conventions. There was an almost universal attempt to disregard those realities and attempt to exist within a cocoon, maintaining an attitude of, "this is how we want it to be in NA regardless of what the rest of the world lives by."

It was not really possible to have the office incorporated and separate from NA and still be directly accountable to the conference which was not incorporated. Even in discussions years later among trustees, several with fifteen years of service who had experienced all the intervening legal discussions, they were still trying to fashion the same mythical world into the *Guide to Service*.

Since the trustees had voted to endorse the *Tree* as approved literature, many people began to implement the parts that applied to them. Committees began to consider changing their intergroup names to area service committees, and the terms GSR, ASR (group service representative and area service representative) and other terms used in the *Tree* began to be used throughout the fellowship. If the *Tree* did anything, it put NA on the road to self-examination. It put forth the challenge, agonized over by many, of how a fellowship that, "as such, ought never to be organized," must indeed organize its efforts with some sophistication if it is to operate effectively at the world level.

At a meeting on January twenty-fifth in San Francisco, a group of addicts assembled to discuss forming an ASC to cover all the groups in Northern California. Unfortunately the meeting adjourned because there were not enough people from enough groups to actually make decisions. They agreed to meet a week later in Santa Rosa.

When they met in Santa Rosa, more people were present, and they discussed forming an ASC. They also discussed consolidating the separate directories that were then being printed. When the committee met again on March twenty-first, they decided to form an ASC and elected their first officers: Sylvia M., chair (Berkeley), Jan R., secretary (Santa Rosa) and Wayne W., treasurer (Salinas).

There appears to have been a substantial improvement in overall response by the office to orders and phone calls in the months after Jimmy moved it into his home. There also seems to have been an increase in the number of group registrations from across the country. He was sending out about sixty starter kits a month and getting orders out on time. One of the orders received during this time (February) was from Hazelden. They wanted two hundred copies of the Little White Booklet, but apparently the trustees were suspicious about this purchase. They asked Jimmy to call and find out what they wanted to do with them. Apparently their answer was satisfactory, because the shipment was subsequently made. It appears they did not use all these in their treatment center, but included the Booklet in their catalog and sold some.

On March twenty-seventh the meeting in San Luis Obispo was held. This was the agenda:

Opening Statement by Chairperson

1. Nature of the meeting (purpose)
2. World Service Conference
(set for March 1977 and WSO will administrate)
3. Incorporation of WSO
4. 1976 Convention Report (Ventura)
5. Literature
6. Funds
7. Violation of Traditions
 - a. Affiliation - office at S.P.C.
 - b. Accepting money for representatives going to service meetings
 - c. Anonymity breaks
8. New Business and discussions

Fifty-two people were in attendance, and the meeting lasted from late afternoon well into the night. Although minutes of the meeting have not surfaced, some decisions have been recalled. Here are some of them:

Every effort should be made to inform the entire fellowship about the next World Convention to be held in Ventura, and a World

Service Conference meeting would be held during that weekend, on Saturday.

Representatives from outside California should be specifically sought.

Jimmy should move to incorporate the office as soon as it was practical to do so.

Everyone was encouraged to make the structural changes consistent with the *Tree*.

Concerning literature, Greg and Jimmy had written and printed one-page pamphlets that could be a cheaper and practical way to carry the message.

Copies were handed out of: *Who, What, How and Why; The Group; Another Look* and *So You Love An Addict*. They intended to approve these at the November meeting. It was the consensus that more literature was needed and that a committee to work on literature should be one of the first committees created by the conference when it was organized.

A request was also made to have each group send in an updated group registration form so the office would have an accurate list of meetings and a contact for each group contact. A consensus was reached that the conference should be held during the convention in November rather than a full year away as the agenda suggested.

During March, Bill A. from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania came to California. He had brought what was probably a long list of questions from the Philadelphia intergroup, where his pending trip had been discussed. Unfortunately he missed the San Luis Obispo meeting. A full report was given of his visit to the office upon his return, and for awhile, at least, there was better communication with California. He brought back new material, including copies of the *Tree*. He had been asked to encourage members to write input for an NA book and send it to California. But there still remained doubt about the intergroup Vs. GSO for Philadelphia. That discussion turned out to be moot anyway; they soon read the *Tree*, and elected to adapt their local structure to the area committee concept, since they were getting too many delegates at the intergroup anyway.

At the trustee meeting in April, six members were present: Bill, who presided, Bob, Chuck S., Cliff C., Jimmy and Greg. A committee was established to look into writing bylaws and guidelines for the board as a first step toward incorporation. Bob, Jimmy and Greg volunteered for this task. Although they tried for awhile to get the job done, it never got properly finished.

A draft was prepared for the next meeting, but they were in need of further work. There also seems to have been a general lack of interest among the rest of the trustees to get this task finished. When discussing attendance of the northern trustees (Sylvia, Russ and Gloria), there was consensus that at least one of them should be at each meeting to vote for all three.

A discussion about the management of institutional activities led to a decision that problems of this nature should be handled at the local level or brought to the trustees by a GSO. This seems to be the beginning of the philosophy of the board to force the fellowship to address and resolve these "local" issues themselves. Someone suggested that a Hospitals and Institutions Committee be created, but the board decided that "the emergence of such a committee, it seems, would and should arise from the membership as needed." In what seems the last of Jack's duties with the office, his desire to resign from handling office finances was noted by the board. He soon resigned and Jimmy promptly took over that task too.

At the April twenty-fifth meeting of the Northern California ASC, the principal topic was the new literature that had been distributed at the San Luis Obispo meeting. Group Service Representatives were encouraged to have their groups review all the new literature and be ready to submit their group conscience decision on them by October.

About the time of the San Luis Obispo meeting, Jimmy and Greg decided that they should prepare and send out a *World Directory* of meetings that would include a letter asking for corrections in the directory to be sent back by the first of November, so that a corrected directory could be available at the conference. From all the notes, registration forms and letters that this mailing generated, Betty began to type the directory.

It was not an easy task, as the meeting and contact records had not been well kept until Jimmy took over. But it was an essential project, and in fairly short order Betty had it done. It was then duplicated and mailed out to people all across the fellowship. There were approximately one hundred thirty-nine meetings with times listed, and nearly twice that number of contacts and probable meetings, but not all the information was available for every meeting or contact. They used every bit of information they could find.

At the May second meeting of the Ventura ASC, eight representatives from the new Bay Cities ASC came for a visit. From this meeting came a closer relationship between the two ASC's, and they began to exchange copies of their minutes.

Nearly simultaneous efforts to start using radio, TV and newspapers to announce the existence of NA were initiated around May by

the Bay Cities ASC and the intergroup in Northern California. Soon many radio stations were broadcasting short NA messages and helpline numbers. As this was being done, the Bay Cities ASC stepped up its commitment to handling these Twelve Step calls, as there was a sudden increase. At their June meeting, the Bay Cities ASC elected their representative to the region on the assumption that one would eventually be formed.

In Northern California, the intergroup and the GSO meetings discussed how to merge their activities into the area committee format outlined in the *Tree*. At the June meetings they developed a transition plan to take back to the groups for a decision at the July meetings of both intergroup and GSO. They also discussed whether they would continue to purchase and distribute AA pamphlets. After some discussion, they decided the Sixth and Ninth Traditions prohibited it. It was acknowledged that members could do what they like in their personal lives, but that NA needed to rely on its own literature.

In early June, a letter was sent from the chairperson of the committee hosting the convention set for November. The letter was informative, and established a schedule for decisions that had to be made. It also announced a meeting in July at which most of the decisions about the convention were to be made. Some Northern California members felt they were not given adequate notice, and another rift was started. When the committee met, the complete program was approved including speakers, and subcommittees were assigned to handle the various other tasks.

At the June intergroup meeting in Philadelphia, a long presentation was made that informed everyone about the *Tree* and outlined the changes that would be necessary for a transition to it. At the July meeting, the first signal of transition could be seen as the minutes were identified as, "NA Area Service Committee, July 11, 1976, Philadelphia." They then dug in to reorganize themselves in accordance with the *Tree*. It took a number of months before everything was accomplished, but the largest single branch of the fellowship outside California was showing its willingness to be part of a united fellowship.

In August the trustees generally accepted the guidelines that Bob, Greg and Jimmy had proposed (though some changes and deletions were to be made later). Unfortunately, the guidelines were still not strong enough, because in less than a year, discussions about poor trustee attendance and participation came up again. They approved for publication a Spanish translation of *The White Booklet* and the pamphlet, *Who, What, How and Why*. There was some discussion

about the letter from Sylvia concerning the Convention Committee meeting held in July. They decided to have Bill send a letter, and he did, but it didn't really smooth things over. Tensions remained.

I came into this picture in late August of 1976. For most of the rest of this book, because I was a direct participant, I am going to switch to telling much of what follows in the first person.

Dorothy Gildersleeve, who had left the Board of Trustees several years before, was a friend of mine. Her son and I had been friends in college some years earlier. Back in 1974 and 1975, I needed some help with some research I was doing, and I knew she had plenty of knowledge and experience with social service non-profit corporations. She was more than willing to help me. In fact she helped put me on boards of directors of several that needed help. She was a firm believer in NA, and had been helpful in getting acceptance of NA as a legitimate resource in the battle against addiction. She called me in August of 1976 to see whether a friend of hers could call me and ask for help for Narcotics Anonymous. I agreed and several days later I got a call from Jimmy.

He wanted assistance in conducting a business meeting that was to be held in Ventura in a few months. He thought it would only take a few hours, although the group might be a little rowdy, since it was composed of people with no experience in organizational etiquette. Having had considerable experience with non-profit organizations and rules of procedure for meetings, and always a willing volunteer, I said I'd be glad to help in whatever way I could.

He came to my office the next week for a brief chat. We discussed how I might be able to serve as a sort of parliamentarian at the meeting itself. We confirmed the where and when, and outlined what he expected to happen. It didn't sound so hard. He gave me copies of the literature, which I read, but not much of it made sense to me, having had no personal experience with drug addiction.

In early September, Sylvia drafted a letter listing a number of concerns she had about the *Tree* and intended to press them at the appropriate time. Her letter appears to have been given fairly wide circulation. Her concerns seem to have been echoed in the Bay Cities ASC, which may be easy to understand as she still had many friends in the area, as well as relatives. At the Bay Cities meeting about a week later they established an ad hoc committee to study the *Tree* and to prepare recommendations to be considered at the November meeting. It started meeting in late September, and held three meetings in the following weeks. The ASC also had to deal with the continuing consequences of the Public Information success their radio

and TV announcements were creating. The Helpline Committee was in great need of more volunteers. They also decided to press the groups for a decision about the pamphlets to be voted on in November.

Evaluation of the *Tree* was complicated by the sudden publication and distribution of a Second Edition of the *Tree*. This Second Edition was generated by Greg and Jimmy without approval from the trustees before it was printed or distributed. The Second Edition accommodated one of the more pronounced objections that some members had with it. It changed the relationship between the area committee (ASC) and the regional service committee (RSC) by adding a new elected representative called the area service representative (ASR). When the trustees met on October thirtieth, among their decisions was that in the future, any new or changed literature must be authorized by the trustees before it was printed or distributed.

On October twenty-fourth, a meeting was held in Ventura at the Holiday Inn to go over problems with the *Tree* and run through the agenda of the November meeting. This was billed as a regional business meeting, but the list of attendees suggested it was a repeat of the spring meeting in San Luis Obispo. The sign in sheet reports thirty-six meetings were represented, over one third of all California meetings. Four trustees were in attendance, "along with just about everybody who was anybody in California NA at the time."

Reports from the Ventura and Bay Cities ASC's were presented and discussed. Sylvia presented her objections, and the Berkeley-San Francisco ASC (recently renamed from the Northern California General Service Organization) presented their objections too. In short order it was clear there were nearly enough votes to veto adoption of the *Tree* at the conference, two weeks away. If Greg and Jimmy had not understood before then the strength of the opposition, they finally did.

The trustees met on October thirtieth, although only five of the twelve members were present. Greg served as acting chairperson. The primary issues were the poor attendance (they discussed possibly getting resignations from some of the less active absentees) and the function of the trustees in the light of the changing nature of NA. Throughout the next eighteen years this would be a recurring discussion with no conclusion. A lengthy discussion was held about the Bay Cities recommendations regarding the *Tree* and, probably due to the strong opposition to the *Tree*, they decided to halt all projects in the works until further notice.

By the end of October, Betty had begun to re-type the *World Directory*. Many groups had complied with the request to correct information in the directory published in the spring. It took quite a

while, as new changes kept coming in. The job was not completed until near the convention date. This was a substantial improvement over the spring publication. With corrections and additions, there were 224 meetings listed, including the day and time they met. This was a fine *World Directory*, a great piece of work on Betty's part, and an impressive bit of evidence for the growth of NA.

Greg took the information about all the groups and prepared a map of the US to show a physical distribution of where the registered meetings were. He included this as part of the packet of information handed out at the conference to suggest a partitioning of the country into tentative regions for voting purposes. He and Jimmy prepared a complete package of things they intended to accomplish.

Under the theme of "Coming Together" the fellowship gathered in Ventura, California at the Holiday Inn to have a good time and to get serious about organizing the fellowship. This was the Sixth World Convention, and it attracted a fairly large number of people. The Friday evening meeting featured Cathy L. and Danny T.

The Saturday morning business meeting was scheduled for about three hours of work. I arrived on Saturday morning and easily found Jimmy in the coffee shop as we had arranged. We sat there for a little while as he and two others primed me with their game plan. I was a bit puzzled during this short discussion, as it seemed somewhat conspiratorial. I was cautioned not to help the opposition as they were trying to disrupt the meeting.

When we left the restaurant, we went to the meeting room where others had already begun to assemble. Unfortunately I don't remember everything that took place. I do remember a few things, one of which is that I soon experienced sheer panic! I was certain they should never have invited me. I had been accustomed to people who dressed conservatively and behaved in meetings with moderation and decorum. This was very different!

Greg P., who had been acting chairperson of the Board of Trustees, served as chairperson of the meeting. He billed the meeting as "the first World Service Conference." Before the work got underway, the office distributed a packet of material to work from. The packet was quite impressive, probably the largest accumulation of information about NA produced to that time. It is interesting to look back and recognize how small the fellowship was at the time of the first conference. Who knows what the participants were thinking, but I can't imagine they knew the fellowship or the conference would grow as fast or as large as it did in the following years.

Here is a meeting count taken from the list compiled at that time:

AL	0	IN	3	NE	3	SC	0
AK	4	IA	1	NV	1	SD	0
AZ	10	KS	6	NH	0	TN	2
AR	0	KY	0	NJ	1	TX	11
CA	83	LA	0	NM	1	UT	2
CO	1	MA	0	NY	2	VA	0
CN	3	MD	2	NC	0	VT	0
DE	0	MS	1	ND	1	WA	4
FL	6	MI	6	OH	1	WV	0
GA	7	MN	11	OK	0	WI	1
HI	4	MP	0	OR	3	WY	0
ID	1	MO	0	PA	16		
IL	5	MT	5	RI	0		
Australia	16						

Total meetings: 224

There was also believed to be one or more meetings in Germany, Canada and several other countries, but the specifics were not reported by the office. Only five years had passed since the first convention in 1971, but the fellowship had grown from thirty-eight meetings to over two hundred twenty-five! For the first time, it was truly evident to everyone that the fellowship was no longer simply a California movement. There were now more meetings outside of California (141) than were in California (83). However, everything was controlled by the California members, and that would eventually grow to become a source of resentment. No matter that California had many more years of experience in recovery, there soon developed a protracted struggle against domination by the California fellowship.

The trustees were all present at the first World Service Conference: Bill B., Chuck S., Cliff K., Dennis McG., Bob B., Sylvia M., Jack W., Gloria Coleman, Greg P., Mel H., Carl B. and Jimmy K. A written opening statement declared, "It is and has been, the intent of the World Service Board [the trustees] to transfer the decision-making process and guidance of NA to the fellowship. The purpose of this conference is to set in motion the wheels which will make it possible to have future conferences which are truly representative of the fellowship..." The board distributed a copy of their guidelines showing qualifications for trustees. They stated their support for and intention to abide by *The NA Tree*.

The office report presented by Jimmy gave a review of current objectives and an overview of the problems he inherited when he took over the office about a year earlier. He explained the nature of each difficulty and his response to it. It was an impressive list of accomplishments: Publication of the *Tree*, six English language pamphlets, one Spanish translation, the *World Directory* and a complete group kit. It showed real progress toward meeting the needs of the fellowship. Attached was a financial report covering the previous eight months. It showed a balance of \$153 of income over expenses: Income; \$3,773, Expense; \$3,620 — a pretty slim margin.

If the agenda had been followed, things might have been different for the next twenty years or so, but it didn't work out that way. A few days before the conference, Sylvia had mailed to Greg and Bill B. (as trustee chairperson) an alternative agenda that would have established a committee to examine and modify the *Tree* rather than adopting it as printed. Sylvia included a copy of a four and a half page critique of the *Tree* written by the Ventura ASC. Although they enumerated many specific objections, they ended with suggesting the key factor was to add voting participants who could vote at this conference. The trustees collectively had twelve votes; there were only two regions represented, so there were only fourteen voting participants. The Ventura ASC wanted a delegate from each of the ASC's to vote, thus adding five more votes. This was not accepted.

When Greg began the presentation of the *Tree*, the turmoil rose to a loud crescendo. Everything he said was questioned or challenged. Who were these "concerned members" who wrote this? What gave them the right to do so? Why did the trustees approve it without first asking the fellowship? And the tempers kept rising with each response.

The conflict had been aided by another memorandum that was passed out at the conference concerning the *Tree*. Although attributed to Sylvia, copies in the files of NA aficionados have no identifiable markings, although it was not written in her style or on the typewriter she normally used. It was a persuasive essay about the weaknesses of the *Tree*. It examines specifics that would plague the fellowship for years: near autonomy for trustees and WSO, trustees appointed for life (rather than elected), lack of specificity about who ran the office (and how their directors were chosen), how conference policy was approved, lack of a clear description of how group conscience functions throughout the structure which would aid members in seeing how their participation matters.

As they fought over everything Greg or Jimmy said, and what others said too, I realized I was like a fish out of water. I stood there with my crew-cut hair, in my shiny black shoes, white shirt, thin

blue striped tie and neatly pressed suit and faced a fairly ferocious looking group. Some were pretty mad, and showed it clearly. Although I had no idea the conflict between these people had been stewing for years, I could tell that this was the day for battle. My first reaction was to avoid antagonizing these people and get out quick!

At first I tried to make them abide by the standards of Robert's Rules of Order. This provoked more arguments than it solved, and became the focus of attention, diverting the group from the actual issues. I quickly gave up that idea and tried to simply get them to phrase their decisions in an appropriate manner and not argue so much about what someone said as opposed to what was in the motion to be voted on.

The arguments were punctuated with obscenities and seemed to be veiled in threats. As the battle raged on, it seemed clear that the *Tree* was not going to get approved. Regardless of the prior intent of Jimmy, Greg or anyone else, a "yes or no vote" was slowly sidetracked. As the hours set aside for the conference ended, it was concluded that approval of the *Tree* should be accomplished at the next conference. The *Tree* was left in limbo. Since the trustees had given it the mark of approved literature back in January, it was still the service guide for the fellowship. Unfortunately there were too few regional representatives in attendance to justify calling the conference a successful expression of group conscience, so management of the fellowship was once again left in the hands of the trustees.

I was not sure who was more glad when it was over; them or me. But it did get over and I was invited to stay for the rest of the events and the dance that night. I gave my polite "no thank you" and got out as fast as I could! As I drove back to Los Angeles, I concluded they would never want to call me again, and I was okay with that.

Saturday evening Richard C. Heaton, Judge of the Superior Court of Ventura County, offered a welcome, after which Hank M. took to the podium as the featured speaker. On Sunday morning Pepe A. returned to the podium to deliver his second consecutive Sunday morning spiritual talk.

The Convention Committee's closing report, made in December, showed a balance of \$1,500 after all bills had been paid. The site of the next convention had not been determined, and they resolved to move forward with that selection at or after their next meeting.

No minutes were made of the first World Service Conference meeting, and recollections are mostly vague. Oldtimers who were there remember the conflict, but few details about the actual decision to put off voting on the *Tree*. For nearly seven years there had been a growing conflict between two groups of people centered around who

was in control of the trustees and the office. Then, and for years thereafter, there were suspicions that some core group of people were making all the decisions behind the scenes and giving lip service to the idea of group conscience. Throughout my entire experience with Narcotics Anonymous, this has been the charge that every dissenting group has made against those they have battled. It is a pity. And I suspect it will never change.

It is interesting to see how the two largest ASC's recorded the events in the minutes of their next meetings. At the next Bay Cities meeting, the conference was not even mentioned, but they did examine the difficulties they were having with helpline calls since their phone number was being broadcast on radio and TV. In Northern California the intergroup discussed, "heatedly" their minutes say, the idea of starting their own office, and the Northern California GSO had already changed its name to the Regional Service Committee.

To my great surprise, Jimmy came into my office several weeks later and gave me a plaque to convey their appreciation. He said the next meeting was going to be in San Francisco, but when they had the next meeting in Southern California, they would like to have me back. I said OK, but doubted it would happen.

Nineteen seventy-seven was another landmark year for the fellowship, complete with much success and a little failure. Undoubtedly the most significant events were the incorporation of the office and events that transpired as a result of the San Francisco convention. Minutes of the January office meeting reveal the actions taken to incorporate, although there are some questions about who was there, and therefore who made up the original de facto WSO Board of Directors.

It must have taken months to get the bylaws, articles of incorporation and application for recognition by the State of California prepared for the meeting. It usually did, and Jimmy was determined not to allow the incorporation matter to drag on any longer. Jimmy's signature is shown on the records as the responsible officer, and his home address was used on the form filed to register with the State.

The Articles of Incorporation show the meeting was held on January 25, 1977 with the following directors and members present: Jimmy K., Greg P., Bob B., Betty G. (later to become Betty K. when she married Jimmy), Donald K., and Carl B. It is interesting to note that two of the five were not trustees. If the incorporation had been accomplished, as suggested in the Tree, wherein the office was controlled by the trustees, it would have been appropriate for the trustees to have been the incorporating individuals.

In the following month Donald K. suddenly left town, and when a revised set of Articles was prepared, Carl B. was excluded and Chuck G. was listed as Secretary. The copy on record with the California Secretary of State shows Don and Carl but does not include Chuck. It appears the version with Chuck's name was typed later and thereafter included with the copy kept in the office.

The minutes of the May 26, 1977 meeting show Chuck was voted in as a member and a note added that Don K.'s resignation had been accepted. There was no mention of the decision about Carl. They also contain a statement, apparently quoted from Jimmy, that says in response to the suggestion to establish secondary committees, "that we wait until the next meeting, until such committees as decided on by the Board of Trustees of NA can be defined so that we know our main direction. This is so because the Board of Trustees of NA do oversee the World Service Office in all its activities." It is uncertain whether this was a correctly quoted statement or an error, as the trustees had, de facto, already lost control of the office.

Application for federal tax exemption was submitted, and Jimmy proceeded to engage in an ongoing exchange of calls and letters with the IRS until full exemption was granted five years later. About this time a notice was also filed with the County of Los Angeles, known as a "fictions business name filing." This notice gets published in a local newspaper and declares that the individuals named in the application are doing business at a certain address and using one or more specific names. Jimmy reported the office was doing business under the names, "CARENA," "World Service Office, Inc.," and "Narcotics Anonymous." The name "CARENA" was a carryover from the publisher name used in the First Edition of *The Voice*, published in 1968.

While the organizational efforts were going on, Jimmy kept up the literature distribution chores. At the beginning of the year, a new price list was published. Included for sale were: *The White Book*; *The NA Tree*; *Group Starter Kit* (a collection of pages to guide a new group); *Monthly Record Form* (for recording money); the *World Directory*; *Complete Group Kit* (a compilation of several inventory items); the pamphlets, *Who, What, How and Why*; *The Group*; *So You Love an Addict*; *We Made a Decision*; *Another Look*; *Recovery and Relapse* and a Spanish translation of *Who, What, How and Why*. The *White Book* sold for a quarter, the pamphlets for a dime.

Jimmy continued to maintain a log of phone calls, outgoing mail, and office income. On a typical day he mailed about ten packages, a few letters and a postcard or two. One day, for example, he mailed packages to Bob B. in San Francisco, Ralph P. in Tulare, Gary G. in Frankfurt, Carrier Clinic in New Jersey, Bo S. in Marietta, and five others.

Jimmy was precise in recording the money received. On the monthly ledger pages he maintained, he listed the name of every committee or individual that ordered literature and the amount they sent. The same information was recorded about every financial contribution. Probably because people were always suspicious that the office was "ripping off" the fellowship, he kept all receipts, down to the last dime, for every expenditure. By keeping such records, he was able to show, if necessary, the exact condition of the office at any one time. This was a good first step, but he needed to turn this duty over to a trained bookkeeper. As methodical as he was, the records were far from adequate for a business, even for NA at the time.

In May for example, donations were received from the Mill Valley meeting (\$20.00), Bob B. (\$10.00) and Perry I. of Amarillo Texas (\$5.00). Literature orders were received from Patricia H. in Miami Beach, Florida; Sharon G. in North Carolina; Louisa L. in Moxton, New Brunswick, Canada; Teiuben H. in Corinth, Mississippi; and the St. Luke's Hospital in Denver, Colorado. In Pennsylvania, orders were sent to Bill A. in Feasterville, Howard S. in Butler and Tom R. in Rockledge. Nine orders were received from locations in California. Office expenditures for the month were: mailing \$46.70, telephone service \$50.56, and packing supplies \$38.59.

While all of these business transactions were taking place, Jimmy was taking the phone calls and returning them when necessary. Jimmy was also the listening post for just about anybody who had an idea about getting the fellowship organized, getting a book written or making revisions to the service structure. But most of all he was there when an addict needed to talk about their struggle to stay clean that day.

On March twentieth, a meeting was held in the Valley, presided over by Hank M., chairperson of the Bay Cities ASC. Effort had been exerted to bring together representatives from all four ASC's in Southern California for the purpose of forming a regional committee. Nineteen people showed up including representatives of the Valley, Ventura and Bay Cities ASC's. The Eastern Counties ASC didn't show up.

The San Fernando Valley Area Committee had existed since November 1973, and both the Ventura County and Bay Cities ASC's had been created early in 1976. Later, near the end of 1976, groups on the east and south side of the county, stretching all the way to San Bernardino, formed the Eastern Counties ASC. The meetings further south, in San Diego, were part of the region, but had not organized themselves as an area committee.

The discussion seemed to be quite reasonable, and alternatives were considered, but it was soon decided "that the areas represented

here today be known as the Regional Committee of Southern California, for the time being." The motion was adopted unanimously. Hank then proposed that Frank D. from the Bay Cities be temporarily appointed chairperson of the region until the region could meet and elect a chairperson. This was also adopted unanimously. Discussion then turned to the *Tree*. It was the consensus of the meeting that there should be no further revisions issued by world services of the *Tree*, and that member suggestions should be collected and passed through the service structure for possible modification of the *Tree*.

When the region had its next meeting in May, Frank presided. They elected to have a rotating committee chairperson structure, and Cathy L. was selected as the next chairperson. They discussed what committee structure was needed, and they seemed to agree that they would have an institutional and an entertainment Committee. Discussion included consideration of a regional office, but no action was taken. The committee agreed to meet monthly for awhile and adjust that schedule later.

When the office board met in May, Greg suggested they form secondary committees but that was squashed by Jimmy in deference to expected action by the trustees. It is declared in the minutes that "the Literature Committee will remain within the province of the office, although supervised by a proper committee." This declaration later became the basis of an ongoing battle between the office and the Conference Literature Committee.

When the Southern California Region met in June they continued to get more organized. They established a committee to write bylaws, and tentatively set an August meeting date for another comprehensive review of the *Tree*. During the month, new meeting directories were made by the region and also by Northern California.

At the July Southern California regional meeting, an attempt was made by the H&I folks to become autonomous from the region and be fully independent. That didn't fly. The region voted to confirm that H&I was a subcommittee of the region. A set of draft guidelines for H&I were then adopted, and Henry S. was selected as the first chairperson. While they were in the electing mood, they decided to have four standing officers for the region and then promptly elected them: Frank D. as chairperson, Don A. as vice-chairperson, Kevin F. as treasurer and Eileen A. as secretary.

Philadelphia was also getting organized. In late July they held their second regional meeting at Milton State Park. Ray served as chairperson with forty-three people in attendance. After the preliminaries, which included a donation of \$96.39 to the WSO, GSR reports were given from each meeting. Then the two ASC chairpersons

made a report. When the region was formed, they divided the groups around Philadelphia just about in half, making northern and southern ASC's. It seems the consensus of the meeting was "that some complacency is coming into the program regarding officers in groups, ASC and general problems getting some one to keep a commitment."

At the September trustee meeting, held shortly before the convention, the board elected new officers to serve for the remainder of the year: Greg P. was the new chairperson and Cliff C. the vice-chairperson. Bill, who had been chairperson, stepped aside for personal reasons. Present at this meeting were: Jimmy K., Cliff C., Bob B., Chuck K., Carl B., Greg P., and Bill B. Recorded as absent were: Jack W. (who was ill), Sylvia M., Gloria Coleman, Mel H., and Dennis McG. They discussed separating the World Service Conference from the Convention in the future and they talked about how conventions ought to be organized. They also considered what the role of trustees should be in conventions and on the various committees. This was recorded in somewhat unclear terms, indicating that the discussion itself was a bit unclear. It may be that they had already begun to sense they were getting "put out to pasture."

Since the *Tree* had been in circulation for almost eighteen months, some NA communities were already beginning to apply it under some circumstances. In Atlanta on September sixteenth a meeting was held to organize an area service committee. Chuck S., a long time Atlanta member, served as chairperson and gave detailed explanations of the relevant parts of the *Tree*. In the discussion that followed, Bo S. reminded everyone "it was important not to isolate any group and hopefully the ASC would draw enthusiasm and support (from them)." Chuck was elected as chairperson, Tommy B. was elected vice-chairperson. Pat S., one of the founders of NA in Atlanta, was chosen as secretary, and Elliot H. became the treasurer. A list of the GSR's of each of Atlanta's seven groups was then prepared for dispatch to the office.

In the last days before the World Convention, a special meeting of the Southern California Region was held. Its primary purpose was to discuss conventions. Stu T., who had written the convention guidelines for the region, led the discussion. Since there had become a sort of unwritten understanding that the convention alternated between Northern and Southern California, it was assumed that one of the two Southern California bids (Pasadena or Santa Monica) would be selected.

Stu suggested that the region could, at that moment, elect to put forward only one bid and avoid any conflict at the convention over the matter. He stressed that regardless of which bid was selected by the region or Convention Committee, it would require a regionwide team

effort. The group decided that both bids should go forward. When the committee met in San Francisco, it could select the one the members felt was best. As a footnote, the minutes of this meeting were written after the convention in San Francisco, and the typist mentions that Houston, Texas was selected as the site, "which is near Barstow, I think."

The Seventh Annual World Convention began on October twenty-first at the Jack Tar Hotel in San Francisco under the theme, "Now We Are Thousands." The business meeting was scheduled for Friday at 12:30. A full agenda was planned:

- Opening session - including:
 - Conference format
 - Committee reports
- Old Business
 - The NA Tree
 - Conference Committees
 - Supporting our Services
 - Literature
 - Other Old Business
- New Business
 - Planning 1978 Conference
 - Other New Business

The meeting didn't take place. In his report prepared on November eleventh, Greg wrote,

The WSC was called to order at 12:30 on October 21, 1977 as planned in the agenda. At that time only three trustees were in attendance (none of the regional delegates or other trustees had, as yet arrived). Because of this poor showing the conference was adjourned until 2:30 in the hope that more participants would be there at that time. When we reconvened we had gained one trustee, two delegates and one regional chairperson (sitting in for his absent delegate). We opened up the conference for discussion and the consensus was that this showing was not representative of the fellowship and that the conference should be postponed until a later date separate from the convention. The dates March 25 and March 26, 1978 were chosen and the World Service Office will make the arrangements."

There were, however, quite a few people who had come to observe the meeting. In all, thirty-four people were present. All of those who put their names on the sign-in sheet were from California.

Friday night, the podium speakers included Bud K., Ron M., Richard M., Milicent, Carl C., Sharon S., and Jeff S. A full range of workshops and meetings were held on Saturday, leading up to the main speaker meeting (my records don't indicate who that was). Sunday morning Frank D. (Venice, California), was the speaker. Although reports vary considerably, there were possibly as many as 600 people at the convention.

One of the two events to take place at the convention that changed the course of NA happened during site selection for the 1978 convention. When it came time, both the Pasadena and Santa Monica bids were offered. Each passionately wanted to win the bid. On the first ballot (a standing vote), there was a tie and another vote was required. Well, about that time George and Ann B. rose and suggested they would offer Houston, Texas as an alternative site. They reported there were a few meetings in Houston and her fellow members had considerable experience in putting on large events like this.

They had been vacationing in San Francisco, without knowing about the NA convention. Both had been regular members of one of the NA groups that existed in Houston, but were also experienced Convention Committee members from AA Young People's activities. When they heard about the convention they joined in.

Supporters of both California bids preferred to switch to someplace other than their opponent, so on the next vote enough from both sides went with Houston to make it the winner. Even though there were only a few meetings in Houston at the time, through the provident hand of a Higher Power, California dominance over the convention was lost, and it was ten years before the World Convention came back to California.

As for the other event that changed the course of NA, Bo S. from Atlanta had been a dedicated member for a couple years and was disappointed that NA didn't have its own version of the AA Big Book. He had been talking about it around Atlanta for a long time. He tried to get answers from the office but never got what he believed was a satisfactory response, even about who was working on it. He sent in his own story and never even got an acknowledgment. He came to the convention primarily to discuss the book.

Bo writes about this event in his book, *The History of The Writing of The Basic Text*. From various sources found in the research for this book, I've discovered that his description of those events is generally accurate. He began asking who was responsible for the writing of the "NA Big Book" when he arrived at the registration table. He was handed off from one person to another until he ended up asking his questions of Jimmy. Jimmy in turn took him to meet with Greg. During the following four days Bo and Greg spent a lot of time to-

gether. Bo suggests that he and Greg were of "kindred spirit" and in many ways shared the same vision about a book for NA. Greg confirms they were easily drawn together in a common cause to get a book done. When the convention was over, Bo accompanied Greg back to Los Angeles and stayed in his home for two nights. They were constantly talking about NA service and NA literature, and they shared extensively about themselves and their dreams for NA.

Bo visited Jimmy's house, saw the office (what there was of it), was treated to a few hours of Jimmy's undivided attention as they talked and Bo learned first-hand that nearly nothing existed that could truly be considered the beginnings of an NA book. True, there were the stories Jimmy had encouraged a few members to write years earlier, but otherwise there was little of substance. The message he got from this experience was that not much was truly being done. If he was as interested and determined as he let on to be, he should endeavor to begin writing his own thoughts on what an NA book should contain and how it should be organized. If he did this, Greg told him, he (Greg) would offer his personal help in every way.

Bo was simply a member from Georgia who attended a convention and left as a man on a mission. He learned that nearly everyone wanted an NA book, but they all expected someone else to get it done. For years a book had been discussed, and the office would even solicit stories for it occasionally. But nothing of substance had been accomplished. He set out to change all of that, and perhaps without forethought, helped change the fellowship.

Bo had been an activists in the days of the anti-Vietnam war movement and knew about using large numbers of people to get things done. Many people were to learn from this event that if you give Bo something to do that he really wants to do, he will probably just go and do it. The wheels in his head had been turning, and this signal of approval was simply all he needed. Within days he began writing his thoughts in a notebook and talking to others about getting them to write theirs also.

His talking with others was nearly compulsive, and certainly calculated. He really wanted to get people involved. In his discussions with Greg it began to become apparent that Bo believed in writing the book by using a mass of people. He apparently didn't have much confidence in the idea of a small committee doing the job. Consistent with this idea, he talked at meetings, at coffee and with nearly everyone, suggesting they start writing too and join him in this effort. While at first it may not have seemed realistic, he began to convince people it was possible, and began to get a few involved. After awhile he had a few recruits, like Motorcycle Ed, who began to believe it might just happen if they all worked hard at it. Over the following

six months he slowly built a base of support in the Atlanta fellowship for his work.

Soon after the convention was over, Greg sent a letter out to the fellowship reporting the cancellation of the conference for lack of attendance. His letter went on to announce the conference meeting date for the following spring. He also announced that the next World Convention would be held in Houston, Texas and declared it was, "Fantastic! And probably one of the best things that could happen for the growth of NA." He mailed the letter to over one hundred eight members and committees, at least sixty-five of whom were outside of California.

In late November, Jimmy called me and gave me a report about the poor turnout for the conference in San Francisco and the plans for the next one. He said they were organizing a meeting for April 1978 (only a few months away) and asked if I would come and help again. Having by then forgotten how intimidated I had been the first time, I agreed to serve again.

In the final days of November, a meeting was held in the east side of Los Angeles to organize another area committee in the Southern California region. The new area was created, and the first officers were Bob E., chairperson, Jose T., vice-chairperson, Carol H., secretary and Alex L., treasurer.

With almost unbelievable speed, the Houston folks sent a letter around the fellowship (through the office). They announced the date and place of the 1978 convention. They enclosed a hotel brochure showing room rates so reservations could be made. Also announced were the Convention Committee officers: Kathy H., chairperson, George B., vice-chairperson, Jenny B., secretary, Mary DeF., co-secretary and Peggy McC., treasurer. As a happy addendum to their letter they announced that so much excitement had been generated among their members that some of the original members who started meetings in Houston had decided to get involved again.

In the weeks leading up to the December trustee meeting, Greg revised the trustee guidelines and gave greater clarity to descriptions of organization duties. At the meeting, Greg read the letter he sent about the cancellation. He said he was trying to send out a monthly letter to the full range of addresses from around the fellowship. There was a long discussion about the *Tree* that centered on making the changes that had been suggested, including possibly having the conference establish a permanent committee to work on structural matters.

Considerable discussion centered on the spring conference. Topics included sending the agenda out in advance and changing the date

so it was not on Easter weekend. A lengthy discussion also focused on the poor attendance record of some trustees. So many members were absent so often that everyone agreed something had to be done. Various ideas were discussed that might be included in guidelines for attendance and participation. Another matter was whether to open trustee meetings to all NA members. After discussion they decided "the regular quarterly meetings of the World Service Board of Trustees are open to members of the fellowship as non-participant observers." It was the most productive trustee meeting in several years and showed the impact of having selected Greg as the chairperson. He was going to try and get the board to work.

They had taken control of the primary service units of NA and had gotten them to function properly, at least for awhile; but the fellowship was growing so fast they would soon fall behind again. Because they were in California it was hard to really know what had been taking place across the country, but the group registrations they received during the year and group up-dates to the *World Directory* showed the speed and distribution of fellowship growth. The fellowship was growing by leaps and bounds. As for the others in California, there was even less knowledge of what had quietly been taking place across the country. Had they known what was really going on, as the next chapter relates, they might have responded differently to the problems of the office and the conference when it began again in 1978.