

Chapter Fifteen

Light at the End of the Tunnel

The evolution of the conference takes a leap forward with the introduction of combined committee workshops. With increased staff support, the committees flourish. In mid-summer, NA is rocked by the death of Jimmy K. He was eulogized at a simple ceremony in the foothills above Los Angeles. Efforts to bridge the gap between the West Coast and the East Coast factions accelerates as trusted servants are shuttled across the country and into Europe and Australia. The unification of a worldwide fellowship becomes an important goal of world services.

The 1985 meeting of the World Service Conference was called to order by George H. on Monday, April twentieth-ninth, at the Airtel Plaza Hotel, just a hundred yards from the WSO. The hotel had been built in the eighteen months since we had rented the building on Wyandotte, and was, fortunately, big enough for the conference. With most of the participants also staying at the hotel, much more work got done than at earlier conferences. At the first roll call, thirty-three regions answered the call, along with ten trustees, nine administrative and committee voting members, and the WSO. Seven new regions were added after regional reports were given, but a fight erupted over an eighth region seeking recognition.

An effort had been launched in the months just prior to the conference to form a new region in Virginia from what had been the southern end of the Chesapeake/Potomac region. The organizers had gone to groups and area committees with a proposal for the region, but were rejected by most of them. Rather than abide defeat, the organizers accepted any group or meeting that wanted to join and announced they were a region. The result was a patchwork constituency for both regions with some non-contiguous areas. The Chesapeake/Potomac representative explained their region was disturbed about what had taken place, and reported that his region was opposed to the seating of the new delegation. After considerable debate, some of which was acrimonious, the conference voted not to seat the new region. This did not mean the region didn't exist. It only denied the region a vote at that conference meeting. The consensus was that they should work out their differences with their own region and

come back with a more unified proposal for the split. The Virginia delegation remained at the conference as an observer and hallway lobbyist.

Also added to the voting roster were delegates from Canada's province of Quebec and from Germany. This brought the voting strength of regions to forty-three. The delegate from Germany, Uli Z., was among the most direct people I ever met. He was very clear with his opinions and observations. He was quite critical of how the US fellowship, and the office in particular, seemed to waste time and energy on frivolous things (fighting with each other was his principal objection) while addicts were dying in the streets.

Burt D., the delegate from Quebec, reported that a number of groups had formed on their own in French-speaking Quebec in two independent fellowships, but that most of them had decided to become NA groups. He was speaking to an audience, thrilled that he was there, and thrilled with his news.

George had come up with an idea for something new that was first tried at this conference. On the first evening, the conference took a recess from strict application of the rules of order and opened the floor for wide-ranging discussions. This "open forum" gave participants the opportunity to speak their mind on nearly any issue so as to vent anger, criticism, offer suggestions or simply raise concerns. It proved to be an excellent mechanism to relieve tensions and hear the hidden agendas or complaints some delegates harbored. It proved very effective.

Committees met all day on Tuesday. George and I were busy moving from committee to committee so that one of us would be there when they considered items that affected the office or its staffing resources. Since the office budget was still expanding, we were very accommodating to many requests; still, it was frequently necessary to recommend that committees tone down their aspirations. WSO board members were assigned to each committee, and they too helped keep a lid on some of the wild spending ideas. We worked well together, with board members participating throughout the meeting and then bringing me in when they got to critical decision points.

The most striking aspect of this conference was the change that had taken place in the committees. This had been the first year they were adequately funded. They received constant attention and leadership from George and Leah. The trustees had assigned their members to work with each of the committees and that had started to take place. The office directors also began to work with committee assignments, lending even more stability.

But the most important change had been the work by our staff. Ginni, Bob, Ron and Danette had made a world of difference in what

took place. Our staff had been able to keep the momentum going, handling the secretarial and administrative functions so even a weak committee chairperson looked great. The only exception, and it was obvious to close observers, were those committees where a staff person was not assigned, such as the Policy and Finance. These changes collectively caused the committees and the conference leadership to turn the corner from haphazard operation to ongoing success. At last there was light at the end of the tunnel!

On Tuesday evening, the Administrative Committee and I gave our reports. Their reports were short as usual, but mine lasted nearly two hours, followed by over an hour and a half of questions. "Phenomenal" was the word I used to describe the growth of NA during the preceding twelve months. I reported a nearly one hundred percent increase in the number of registered meetings, and sales of 85,664 copies of the Text. The board had met six times and I had mailed them seventeen periodic reports.

Although I reported that the office's prudent reserve at the end of the 1984 calendar year had been \$130,000, we had temporarily spent part of it on Text printing. The financial report presented by our accountant showed total sales of \$818,045 from which was subtracted the cost of producing the merchandise (\$218,548), leaving a profit (for operating expenses) of \$599,497. Our actual operating costs were only \$381,899 and the remainder, \$217,598 was reflected in our inventory, savings and equipment. We spent \$17,550 on magazine-related expenses, but the magazine had produced income of \$13,440. We had 1,292 magazine subscriptions at that time, but needed over 3,000 to break even. Nevertheless the improved magazine quality and better delivery record showed the conference had made the correct decision a year earlier.

Reporting on the *It Works: How and Why* project, I explained about the expense and background to the decision to use skilled professionals and how the selection was made. I even attached a separate four page letter about the issue that went into considerable detail. It also included some justification for the office having encouraged and financially supported the project, but I was not ashamed of the idea or expense. In the question period, a lot of time was spent on this. Some pointed questions were also raised about my decision to hire Ginni, and about the work assignments I had given her. I did my best, but a few of the standing minority remained unhappy over other matters.

As we had planned, when my report was done, Bob R. gave a brief and general report from the Select Committee. There were few questions at the time, as the draft had not arrived from the printer (it was distributed the following day) and besides, it was about midnight

when the report was given. Fortunately the report was vague enough that it did not cause much excitement, and everyone was eagerly waiting to read the draft. Since this was only a "work in progress" and Bob promised workshops and pleaded for input, the committee's work was not thoroughly reviewed during the conference. The only people who seemed strongly interested were the standing minority.

On Wednesday the conference moved to high gear and began to buzz through the stack of motions before it. Sally E. announced that Jack B. had been elected as chairperson of the board for the next year. Jack worked at a treatment center about five miles from the office and would be able to come over frequently. He had been in service for a long time and a trustee for five years.

Sally then offered motions from the trustees which resulted in several changes. *For Those We Love and Others* was removed as approved literature (and with conference approval offered to Naranon for their use), the *Starter Kit* reference to the Lord's Prayer was removed, the national PI response plan was adopted, and a trustee was removed from the board for non-participation.

Bill H. came next and gave his Policy Committee report. The committee had done almost nothing, and Bill proposed the committee be disbanded. Its devotees rose in vigorous protest and defeated the proposal. That was disappointing to me, because I could see little use for the committee. On the other hand, it served as a catch basin that kept some strident activists busy. Over the next several years the committee ended up spinning its wheels and remained unproductive and ineffective.

The most unfortunate effect of keeping the Policy Committee was the utter waste of money and staff time devoted to its work. In some ways this was probably a justifiable expense, for it diverted some of the hotheads among the standing minority away from more vital activities. Vern P., who became Bill's successor, took the brunt of the energies expended by this unwieldy mob. With the standing minority on one side and no money or much staff support, little could get done. The rest of world services owed Vern a debt of gratitude.

Literature business came next. Ginni offered the Literature Committee motions to approve revisions to *Another Look* and removal of the pamphlet *The Use of Medication in Recovery* from circulation. She also gave the conference a detailed report on the work being done by the professional writers, and a summary description of how that project came to be.

After a late lunch, Kim showed the PSAs as part of her report. They were enthusiastically received with wild applause, shouts and whistles. It was a grand approval for having stuck our necks out. The PSAs did quite well over the next several years, and no doubt

contributed to the considerable improvement in our public image, as well as being a key element in bringing many addicts to NA meetings.

Kim's report was followed by a motion from the trustees on literature guidelines. It proposed a substitute section be adopted to replace the Literature Review Committee language then in the *Temporary Working Guide*. The motion was adopted with forty-three in favor and twelve opposed. However, the twelve, mostly members of the standing opposition, took to the floor to send the matter out to the fellowship. They failed, but amidst the fight we had a re-hash of the two-thirds rule discussion.

H&I came next, with Bob B. of San Francisco at the helm again. Their handbook, developed during the previous two years, was approved. Actually the conference spent a lot of time making last minute changes, but its approval was a milestone for the committee. In a related action, the conference directed that H&I money collected to purchase H&I literature for distribution by the conference would now be handled by the WSO H&I coordinator under the supervision of the committee chairperson. This removed the direct control of funds from the committee and alleviated some of the concern over its management.

In the evening, Bobby B. gave the Convention Committee report and handled an extremely complicated approval process for selecting each part of the handbook. We had fretted over this complicated proposal as it offered the fellowship a number of choices. With surprising ease, the options were voted on and the best policy emerged. It was clear the fellowship wanted the convention managed in a professional manner using local members for manpower. The convention would be rotated among nine geographical divisions as shown in the map enclosed with the handbook. Bobby did a masterful job in handling the intricate approval and responding to questions. His charming personality, matched with detailed knowledge and a little humor, carried the day on each motion.

When the last vote was taken on the *Convention Handbook*, all of us who had helped put it together were greatly pleased. A tremendous step had been made toward managing one of the most visible and unwieldy fellowship events. Although the convention scheduled for that September in Washington would continue to operate on its own, future conventions would come under the control of the conference. By these actions, a source of significant controversy had been removed.

Before the conference concluded, additional convention motions were adopted that established guidelines for the distribution of proceeds from WCNA-15 in Washington DC, and gave the office the task of being the treasurer for convention funds. The Washington DC

committee was not very happy when they learned of these long decisions about which they had no input. During the coming year, the need for a major modification to the handbook would become obvious, but otherwise, the steps taken at this conference set the pattern for conventions that followed.

Shane D., International Committee vice-chairperson, gave the report for their committee. Problems resulting from Roger T.'s tenure as chairperson of the committee took up only a small amount of time. Reimbursement was approved for money lost by the Irish fellowship from T-shirts they gave him to sell when he returned to the United States. The New York region was also reimbursed for the literature he "borrowed" from them to take and sell at the Irish Convention.

Susan C. presented the Finance Committee motion to approve the *Treasurer's Handbook*. A few last minute word changes were made before it was accepted by a near-unanimous vote. Although I thought the handbook was quite inadequate, it was a step forward in managing fellowship money.

Chuck G. then took the podium to make the motions from the WSO. As usual, he did an excellent job of answering questions, and all of our proposals were adopted with unanimous or near unanimous votes. Of particular importance was the approval of a medallion design. The conference voted on each alternative (and others could have been offered), but they chose the one K. Bea C. had been selling.

Immediately following the office report, the standing opposition brought back the voting rights issue again, attempting to deny votes to anyone except regional representatives. By a vote to object to consideration, this issue was defeated once again. The prevailing side received thirty-six votes and the losing side received fourteen. It would be back next year.

Elections were the next order of business. All Administrative Committee members were reelected for a second year: George H., chairperson; Leah G., vice-chair; K Bea C., secretary; Sherry B. of the WSO staff, vice-secretary; and Susan C., treasurer. Committee chairs were Vern P. for Policy, Lee M. for Finance, Mary B. for International, Maggie O. for Literature, Bob B. returning as H&I chair, Kim J. Returning as PI chair, and Bobby B. Returning as Convention Committee chair. Elections for trustees resulted in approval of three new members: Jerry Synold, a navy Doctor of Psychology (and non-addict); James D. of BC, Canada; and Tom McC. of Hawaii.

One of the more important decisions of the conference was reached soon after elections were over. Forty votes were cast for and five against conducting subcommittee workshops each quarter on a rotating basis in different geographic areas of the country. This was the second step in making the conference committee system viable,

and set the stage for the most productive years for conference committees. It would now be possible to assemble the manpower and administrative services to facilitate development of policies and written tools the fellowship so sorely needed.

Several motions were considered that proposed the production a softcover Basic Text, but each was defeated. I had been opposed to a softcover, as I expected we would have to sell it for less than the hardcover edition. Further, I reasoned that the cheaper book would become the better seller, and we would therefore simply reduce our income. Reducing the income would have immediately affected the office, diminishing our ability to serve an expanding fellowship.

The argument for the softcover book, it turned out, was that there were many prisons which wouldn't accept hardcover books inside. Some of our H&I members made the case that we truly needed a softcover book if we were committed to carrying the message "behind the walls." Before the conference was over, it seemed like the entire Board of Directors had gotten the message that we had to make one even if it reduced office income.

In the closing hour of the conference, two motions pertaining to literature were adopted. Both were to cause great controversy during the following years. They first addressed changes in the White Booklet. At issue was changing "sobriety" to "clean time" or "recovery," and several similar concerns about phrasing in the older material. This motion was referred to the trustees for study.

The second motion was "that the WSO be instructed to have the Basic Text professionally edited to ensure consistent and correct use of capitalization, verb tenses, gender, singular/plural endings and other grammatical errors, and that the edited Text be returned to the Literature Review Committee for acceptance and approval prior to printing and distribution." It was adopted by a vote of forty-seven in favor, one voting against and three abstentions. This motion was to produce the biggest crisis NA World Services faced during my years as Executive Director.

In one other last minute motion, the conference approved a translation policy proposal that I had drafted. The policy was supported by the International Committee. It provided for office management of translations, utilization of professional translators, and final editing by a committee of members conversant with the language being translated. This policy worked, for the most part, over the next five years, even though it was implemented slowly and we experimented with variations of it from time to time.

As the conference set to adjourn, the budget was again hurriedly adopted. It projected a deficit, and the office was again requested to cover any shortfall. Nothing new here, but we had actually been do-

ing a good job with the informal system for allocating funds for committee needs. During the previous two years under Bob R., we had evolved into spending by consensus. When a committee wanted money for some meeting or other expense, it was discussed between the conference chairperson and treasurer, the office chairperson, the trustee chairperson and myself. If we reached consensus the expenditure was approved, otherwise it was rejected. In this way we were able to compensate for the urge by committees to spend every dime they could get regardless of other priorities. And now that committees were going to meet jointly, financial decisions became easier and, to some degree, more equitable.

Before the conference adjourned, George, Leah, Susan, Jack, Chuck and I had talked about where we wanted the first conference workshop to be held. We made a preference list and we then set out to get it done. A few days later, I called the Mid-America Regional Chairperson and RSR to get their help finding a hotel, preferably in Kansas City. They were taken by surprise, but excited by the request. In a matter of days they had located a hotel interested in our event. Simultaneously we were working through Bobby B. to find a location in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for the fall meeting. This took some doing, but he finally managed to get us a location for the October meeting in a hotel near the center of the city.

Throughout the year, K. Bea had reassured me that if the conference selected her medallion design, she would sell the rights for it to the office. Within an hour of the approval, she and I met in my office to consummate the deal. I wrote up a simple contract, we signed it and I gave her a dollar out of my pocket, which is all she asked for. She had started making medallions because people wanted them, not really to make money, and she could have asked for a royalty or a large buy-out figure, but she did not. Her generosity allowed the office to make over a quarter million dollars during the next five years. This was a sizable gift from one member who believed in Narcotics Anonymous. I've never had the opportunity to express my appreciation for her selfless act, nor did the fellowship. I hope she knows how much her generosity has done to help NA to carry the message of recovery to addicts around the world.

We actually had a few problems with getting the ownership confirmed. K. Bea had informed me before the conference that the manufacturer was attempting to sell the medallion through another organization, and was disputing the claim to ownership that she asserted. Through a series of strongly worded letters, the manufacturer finally saw the light (and his own best financial interest), and sent us a letter acknowledging K. Bea's rights to the medallions, and the

transfer of those rights to us. After that, we had a good relationship for the remaining years I was with the office.

The directors met the day following the conference and immediately added three directors (Donna M., Willie L. and Jim W.). The board approved a lease of the second building on Wyandotte Street to be used for shipping. Also approved were two general policies about sales and production of literature for non-US fellowships. This opened the door for greater flexibility in our response to non-US fellowship needs.

In my opinion — both then and now — this conference signaled a critical turning point for the fellowship. During the previous two years, the conference leadership, trustees, office directors and staff had worked closely together to build and strengthen unity of purpose and direction for world services. We had finally reached the point where the light of fellowship unity was visible at the end of the tunnel of darkness and disunity from which we were emerging. The majority worked with considerable harmony, and the minority kept the majority on its toes. Often they just kept us jumping — from one fire to another.

I had devoted two years to getting the office organized, assembling a staff, training them to work together, devising and refining procedures, and setting a positive rapport with the fellowship. The office was organized into departments and staffed with people capable of handling their assigned duties. There was still much to be done to get it all working "like a fine Swiss watch," but I could afford to be away from the office for considerable periods of time and the basic work still got done.

The challenges ahead were to encourage fellowship growth and keep up with the demands created by that growth. Much of this was outside the US. I began to spend a much larger proportion of my time on international matters, the World Convention, local service offices and the continued reduction of the anti-office bias.

These objectives involved considerable travel, a lot of "dead time" at airports. There was a clear downside to this on a personal level. It was one thing to go to the office each day and be home at night, free to pursue my private interests. But to be on the road where each evening was really a working night was a different matter entirely. I was away from home about a hundred and ten days and nights during each of the following five years. That was a total of over a year and a half out of those five years. Friendships were hard to maintain, my fish died, house plants died, and my sail boat rotted in the garage. But I would have done it again if I had to.

To maximize efficiency on these trips, I frequently took early morning flights or overnight flights so there was more "day time" with

the members I was going to see. I did this voluntarily, I suppose because the challenge it presented in terms of forging alliances and building fellowship unity was irresistible. My only regret was that there were so many hundreds and thousands of people to meet — and I met thousands — but there was not enough time to get to know more of them personally. I treasure those friendships I've been able to make and keep.

Burt D. from Quebec returned to the task of French translations when the conference was over. After he left, we printed the work he had done, only to find that his grasp of English (and perhaps even his fluency in French) left something to be desired. Many of his members back home criticized the work when it reached their meetings, and they wanted more changes.

A continuing discussion among the trustees revolved around the question, under what conditions should the trustees become involved with local problems around the fellowship? This discussion came up again at the trustee meeting at the conference, as it was alleged that irreconcilable problems had been causing great controversy in the Greater New York City Region. The metro area was considered to be a key growth center for the fellowship and warranted some attention. It was decided by the trustees that Bob R. and Jack B. would be sent to New York City to wade through the problems and try to help resolve them. They went in late May and attended meetings in several areas, talked incessantly, including a lot about how the Steps worked. They reported afterward that most of the issues were really personalities and seemed to have been resolved. By July this optimism had vanished.

Between the conference and the WSO board meetings, we produced and mailed the *May Newslines*. On the front page, we put an announcement about the medallions, while asking members to be patient as we made arrangements to get them produced. We suggested September would be about the right time for orders, and it worked out exactly that way. We also announced an editor was needed for the Basic Text as ordered by the conference. Other important announcements were about the public service tapes soon to be available, as well as the first conference workshop to be in Kansas City. Sadly I also announced that Jimmy K. was hospitalized, and encouraged friends to write rather than call.

During and immediately after the conference, a discussion had been brewing over the work being done by the professionals working to refine the Steps material. By the time the conference was over, their first drafts had been received and read by several people. The results were not encouraging. Woven through the writing, I was told, were subtle reference to AA philosophy through examples and termi-

nology. A group of capable members visited them at their home to work together for a few days and move them more in an NA direction. This was done in June. Unfortunately it caused a problem. They were not accustomed to having novices either criticize their work or direct that alterations be made. During July, a series of phone calls were exchanged which resulted in a movement towards termination of the agreement.

The office board met in June and discussed the *It Works* material submitted so far. They expressed concern about its ultimate acceptability. They also discussed the related matter of the assignment to have the Basic Text edited. Soon after the board meeting I sent a letter to the Literature Committee indicating a need to reach a mutually agreeable process for the work and its approval. I suggested the work, when completed, be circulated as approval form for a year and adopted at the 1987 conference. Unfortunately, this admonition was forgotten in the year we spent working on the editing, and the approval form suggestion was not followed. It proved to be an error I greatly regretted.

To get the Basic Text edited, we first had to have it typed into our computer. Until that moment, we didn't have the book in a computer file. In earlier years, the book was typeset by outside companies, and all we actually got were the typeset masters — paper copies. When the conference had made changes, those changes were also made and given to us as paper copies from the typesetter. It was expensive to have the typesetter give us a double spaced print-out. Besides, we thought, we really should have the entire Basic Text in our own computer.

We picked one of our better typists, Carol K., to type the book. Carol was also assigned other duties, and since there seemed no immediate hurry, she worked the typing into her schedule of other duties. Several months later, when the typing was done, we had not found an editor, so the manuscript was put aside to be proofread later. Unfortunately, Carol left the office before an editor was found, and we forgot to proofread it.

The board elected Steve B., who had been conference chairperson in 1981/82, as its new chairperson. He was easy to work with and very supportive of the things I did. He lived in Northern California, and we talked by phone at least two or three times a week. About once a month he flew down for a day or two for meetings and first-hand supervision. It proved to be a good working relationship.

Chuck G. stepped down as chairperson of the office board after more than over two years. He is one of the unsung heroes of NA service. His steady bearing and quiet demeanor were indispensable in the conflicts and arguments that the office endured during those

years. He was rock solid in his belief in NA and knew how to lead and make decisions. With all respect to other strong leaders that followed, I have never met his equal.

Curiously, we forgot to renew my contract for another year, but I kept on working anyway. But in other personnel matters, the board approved a Group Services Coordinator position and authorized Ginni to become the literature coordinator. Soon after Ginni began her duties as literature coordinator, she hired a lady named Hazel McClara (a non-addict) as her secretary. Hazel was to serve with the office for many years, later becoming responsible for personnel matters. I grew to depend on her greatly. She was one of our best employees.

The board also approved a motion I suggested, to pass all future donations the office received along to the conference treasury. At my request, the board authorized staff visits to cities where fellowship service offices were being established. This was to consume a lot of my time over the following years, but it was an extremely valuable investment. It helped me better understand the problems they faced and how we could help them. But equally important was that it afforded opportunity to combat the standing minority sentiment that existed. We were very successful in this regard too.

During the rest of June and most of July a lot of energy was devoted to preparations for the Kansas City workshop. Never had so much effort been invested to bring so many trusted servants to meet in a workshop environment. At the end of June, the first quarterly *Fellowship Report* for the year was mailed. They had proved to be successful over the past year and became a regular duty of the Administrative Committee. They kept the fellowship informed about what was going on.

Just a week before the workshop was to begin, the second European service conference was held in London. Mary B. and George both went to represent the world fellowship, and perhaps to undo some of the damage Roger had done the previous year. The Europeans were wrestling with the purpose for their annual meeting. Some wanted a legislative meeting, much like the World Service Conference, where the European fellowships could make decisions and establish policy, approve literature or handle similar matters. Others felt that would be divisive and create a direct conflict with the World Service Conference, instead they simply wanted a platform for sharing. Unity was the primary objective they could all agree on, and by the end of the meeting their principal resolution was to continue meeting each year and work to be closer, sharing experience, strength and hope.

They also met with members from Italy and went to a London Regional meeting. When they left, George went to Montreal and

Mary went back to Texas. George met Bob R. in Montreal, and they attended the Fiftieth Anniversary convention of AA. As a result of an earlier meeting George had with the Executive Director of AA's GSO, NA had been invited to send a delegation to their convention to talk about addiction and NA. It had been decided that Bob R., as a trustee, and George, as the WSC Chair, should handle that task.

Bob and George left Montreal and arrived in Kansas City tired, but ready for the workshop. The facilities were perfectly suited to the needs of our committees, and the host fellowship was friendly and helpful. A speaker meeting and dance set the stage for a positive and productive meeting. We sold literature, made copies, produced reports and minutes of meetings, and answered questions all the time. We worked eighteen hour days.

Operating in much the same manner as they had while at the conference in April, committee members, trustees, directors and staff worked side by side to accomplish the various tasks each committee had set out. The PI Committee worked on its handbook and phone-line publication. The H&I Committee began to work out a plan for conducting multi-regional workshops. The Literature Committee worked on its pamphlets and guidelines. Again, I visited each committee when they needed me, to express options and opinions on matters related to the office.

Every committee was aided by the participation of trustees, who provided a calming influence. Although there would again be conflict with committee meetings, there would not be a repeat of the disastrous behavior at the Literature Committee meeting in November of 1983.

While we were in Kansas City, the New York City conflict came back to a boiling point, and a series of discussions with Jack, George, Steve, myself and several others led to a decision for George, Leah and I to travel direct from Kansas City to New York to see what we could do to resolve the mess. We spent four days there, interviewing each area representative one at a time and a long list of others. It was almost like a "star chamber" inquisition at times and provoked us into a sense of black humor. What we discovered was indeed a struggle for power among competing factions embedded in a rapidly expanding fellowship with not many people who had more than a year or two of clean time.

We were not able to make much of a difference on this trip, and we soon decided that a world-level trusted servant should be at each New York City regional meeting, if at all possible. For the next year or more, we kept track of their regional meetings and tried to schedule business trips to have a trustee, conference officer or myself at their meetings.

Over the next two years, I visited New York about nine times. Those trips served in part to help with the organization of their office, but also to keep a lid on their conflict. A lot of time was also devoted to conditioning their leadership to adhere to the national and international public information plan. We were greatly concerned that the New York City public information committees might regard the media network headquarters located in New York City to be a regional or area PI responsibility, and they did just that from time to time. As it turned out, the resolution of their conflicts was influenced more by the passage of time and their individual personal and spiritual growth than by our presence. As more of them worked the Steps and gained longer time in recovery, the general level of conflict began to subside. And about the public information matters, we had a few scares, but they generally followed the emergency response plan.

About the time we were arriving in Kansas City for the quarterly workshop, we received our first copy of a new publication from some members in New Jersey. This was publication of the first issue of the *Purist Newsletter*. Formed by a number of members with particular zeal and an abhorrence of anything that resembled an AA connotation, they began to lead the fight to purify NA of "AA jargon." Their first target was the word "alcoholic" so often used by some members in introducing themselves, as in, "I am an addict and an alcoholic." "Sobriety" was also targeted. And since so many members had used these words for a long time, a bloody fight was to come. The purists had formed almost a year earlier, and their movement had been gaining strength.

Jimmy had been released from the hospital in June, and readmitted in late July. At first the prognosis was good, and everyone thought he might be out in a few days. But as the days passed, his condition did not improve; in fact it began to worsen. After one of his frequent visits to Jimmy's hospital bed, Chuck called to suggest we should probably write an obituary in the event he died. I agreed, and assigned Ron H. to prepare a draft.

Chuck came by several days later, and we discussed the draft and Jimmy's deteriorating condition. Chuck took the draft and shared it with Betty and Jimmy's children. They agreed to it, suggesting only a few changes, which we made. There was one thing in it that troubled me, and I resolved to discuss it with others before Jimmy died. And frankly, we did not expect him to die at that time.

About a week later, Chuck called and told me Jimmy had passed away. It was a sad day. His passing affected the whole office, even those who never met him. I called Chuck the following morning to discuss sending out the obituary, and expressed my concern on the final wording.

My worry centered around the sentence that described the role Jimmy had in the founding of NA. In 1985, almost no records were available to the office concerning the early history. Our only sources of information were word-of-mouth from second or third-hand sources. The draft said pointedly, "Jimmy was the founder of NA." However, we had no direct evidence of that, and as reported in the earlier chapters of this book, he told of several addicts having gotten together to start that first meeting. I was reluctant to essentially write the history of NA in his obituary. I knew that people would later point to this statement from the office as "historical fact."

I explained this to Chuck, and suggested the wording be changed to "one of the founders of NA." Chuck was not really pleased with the idea but recognized the difficulty in writing the official history in this manner. We agreed that I would check with Jack, Steve and George.

I called them and explained my dilemma. They agreed it should read "one of the founders," although they didn't like the idea of having all of us on the spot in this matter. I called Chuck back and indicated the consensus was to refer to Jimmy as "one of the founders." Reluctantly, he acknowledged it would be appropriate, but still was not at all pleased.

Late that afternoon I printed and mailed twenty copies of the obituary to local and national media outlets: television, radio and newspapers, including the national press associations. On Friday the obituary was carried in the *Los Angeles Times*, and I immediately received calls from several people, including Chuck. "Send a correction," was the message, people wanted Jimmy credited with being the founder.

This whole episode was one of the most unhappy experiences in my years with Narcotics Anonymous. On a personal level, I really wanted to have simply called Jimmy "the founder," as was then common in word-of-mouth legend among the fellowship. I always considered Jimmy a friend, and I always had strong affection for him. But on the professional side, as a non-member administrator who had no clear evidence to go from, it did not seem correct for me to be declaring what was the true history of those events thirty-two years earlier. With great personal reluctance, I did not send a notice of correction.

I believe this decision, right or wrong, broke the final strand of communication with Betty and Jimmy's children and the office. Relations between us were abruptly ended. And I understood that reaction as much as I understood the strongly negative reaction of Jimmy's other close friends when they learned of the wording.

On Saturday, August 4, 1985, an extremely hot Southern California day, family, friends, WSO staff, and a few who just managed to hear about it, assembled at the small Ananda Ashram, a sanctuary

nestled in the foothills of La Crescenta above Los Angeles. There Dick K., Jimmy's oldest son, welcomed everyone to Jimmy's memorial. He spoke of Jimmy as a good father and devoted husband. He told of Jimmy's devotion to the fellowship and the principles which governed his life. He thanked NA friends for coming and welcomed those who knew him to rise and speak about their warm remembrances of friendship with Jimmy.

One by one, many rose to speak of the times over coffee that Jimmy helped them get off drugs or walk through a crisis. They told of Jimmy scrounging boxes to use for shipping literature or talking hours on end with some addict in a far away place in desperate need of a steady voice. Some talked of Jimmy the teacher, and others of Jimmy the task master. They spoke of his love and affection, but also of his determination to resist the disease that claimed so many addicts. "Jimmy was a fighter," they said, not only with his fists (he admitted to more than a few fights) but mostly against the disease of addiction.

They told of a man strong in his principles yet kind with his affection and always a warming laugh. There were a few old AA members who remembered him from years ago, even before the founding of NA, and there were NA members he sponsored and others he just reached with his message of recovery. It was a simple but moving remembrance of a man who helped set the stage for recovery for millions of addicts. Many tears were shed as we remembered Jimmy. It was clear to everyone present that we lost one who had been for a long time the bedrock of NA.

When the Board of Directors met in August, they considered an offer by the people working on the steps to terminate the agreement. The contract had provided for compensation of about a hundred thousand dollars to be paid over a three-year period. They were aware of the growing dissatisfaction with the work, and they simply weren't receptive to making substantial shifts in their writing style. They offered to terminate the agreement without further compensation. The board agreed to this, and the contract was terminated, having cost the office only about a third of the original amount.

As the summer wore on, we began to receive inquiries about our announcement of the opening for the position of Group Services Coordinator. We eventually sent each applicant a written test, asking them to devise answers to a variety of questions about fellowship philosophy. We actually used problems we had already encountered and resolved. It was interesting to read some of the answers. One candidate seemed much stronger than the others, and I brought him

to Los Angeles for an interview. He was Steve S., a former RSR from Colorado. Although he wanted more money than we had allocated, we did reach an accommodation, and he took the job. Within a few months he was sitting at his desk.

Steve was a quiet man with a lively sense of humor. His positive attitude and friendly manner made him particularly effective in this position. Over the years he was to handle a number of delicate problems for groups and committees. Later, we even gave him the task of being secretary for the Board of Trustees, perhaps his most arduous task, but he was great at it!

In late August, I departed on a marathon trip that ended at the World Convention in Washington DC. First I spent several days in New York working with their members and committees. This was followed by two days in Pittsburgh for work with their office committee. When I finally arrived in Washington, I was already tired.

With the theme of "Unified and Staying Alive in 1985" the convention got underway on August twenty-ninth at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington DC. The committee did a fantastic job! They had everything organized right down to small details, and I was greatly impressed. Registration began at noon on Thursday, and that evening there was a speaker meeting. On Friday night, Vito L. (Pennsylvania) and Vida M. (California) shared the podium.

I spent a lot of time talking with people about Jimmy, I told his many friends of his passing and of the memorial service. Before the banquet on Saturday evening, one of his close friends, Lin A., was given time to speak about Jimmy to the full convention audience. The featured speaker was William H. from California who addressed over three thousand addicts. On Sunday morning, Dot T. (Pennsylvania) addressed the spirituality meeting with a rousing message of recovery.

The convention was a tremendous success, both financially and in terms of the spirit and unity it generated. I paid closer attention to its activities and organization than I had at past conventions, as I knew Bobby, Stu, and Chuck L. were getting ready for the committee to take control of the next World Convention. When the bid meeting was held and London was chosen as the site for 1986, I was both surprised and dismayed. I could only visualize the monumental complications this would bring. A meeting between the London bid committee and the Washington host committee revealed the problems more clearly. Bobby and Stu were also there and helped establish a close rapport with the London committee. In the months ahead, this early contact was to pay many dividends and pave the way for direct oversight.

For most of the convention, my time was spent with individual members answering the usual variety of questions. A lot of time was spent discussing the writing being done on the Steps. Well, actually, I did more listening than talking. This was about as close as I had previously been to the folks who were most against using professional to help develop NA literature, and they took every opportunity to express their feelings. A meeting was held with a number of international fellowship members where we discussed ideas about meeting their literature needs. As always, I tried to be positive and accommodating, but found myself promising more than I would be able to deliver.

After the convention was over, the Literature Committee got down to work on the material generated by the contract professionals. They had produced quality work. But there was no doubt in the minds of the Literature Committee members that it needed considerable modification to suit the tastes and mood of NA members. They set about to revise it. Although they used the draft as the basis for their own work, by the time they were finished, it was clearly a different document. Their work was bound and published as approval form literature for the 1987 conference meeting.

On the first weekend in October, I met in Montreal with Shane D., vice-chair of the International Committee, and Tom McC., trustee. The weather was cold, but lovely, for their first annual convention. However, I was chewed apart by several of the English and French speaking members, led by a volatile woman named Andrea L. They were very unhappy with Burt's translations, and dissatisfied with the temporary literature distribution plan that I had established through the membership in Shawinigan. When Burt had been at the conference, we arranged for him to use his area committee to print and distribute the French versions of NA literature in Canada. However, he charged much more than we had determined, and orders were not getting filled properly.

Andrea was a very kind and sensitive person. But she was also direct, strong willed and tenacious. Once she got hold of my attention, there was almost no getting away. She wore me down. By the time the weekend was over, I was willing to give the Montreal office everything it wanted and volunteered to give them more. For about a year our relationship was rocky, to say the least. But in time, translations were improved and literature became available, their office began to function effectively, and they began to feel our good faith in our relationships. With those developments, the softer side of Andrea came to the surface.

On October sixteenth, I flew to Philadelphia for the second conference workshop. It was another success, although I had expected a lot of conflict. This was right near what I believed to be the breeding ground of the standing opposition. I was braced for a large contingent of members from all over Pennsylvania and nearby states who would be set to attack the office, the conference, and nearly everything we had done. I was pleasantly surprised that almost no one showed up with those motives, and a lot of work was accomplished.

One confrontation did take place, but it was within the privacy of a closed door meeting. One world-level trusted servant had been creating a number of problems by his unsavory behavior in personal matters, and it was spilling over into his service responsibilities. This had prompted a number of discussions between George, Leah, Jack, Bob B., Stu, Bob R., Chuck, myself and several others equally concerned with both the personal and service implications. We had resolved to confront the member.

It went well. He acknowledged the impropriety of his behavior and promised to make changes immediately. This was not the first nor last such "private meeting" that I found myself in during my years with the fellowship. They were unique experiences, and often ignited a turnaround in the member's personal behavior and spiritual growth.

In a strictly business endeavor, such problems may have been dealt with simply by firing the individual. But in this context, the first concern was for the member's basic survival. If they were acting out craziness in service, it signaled unresolved issues in their own recovery. We simply knew we had to confront their behavior with program principles to get the message across.

An extremely important series of events took place at the Philadelphia meeting. The Convention Committee, while discussing the problems resulting from the selection of London as the site for WCNA-16, recognized that their unincorporated committee was not adequate to manage the convention. It was obvious that a corporation was really needed to avoid unacceptable liabilities.

Through a series of discussions, it was decided to take over ownership of the Convention Corporation that had been created by the Chicago Convention Committee to manage WCNA-14. They decided to modify its Board of Directors so as to incorporate membership from the conference, trustees, WSO board, the London convention, the next convention and several members from previous conventions.

Between meetings of the committee, I sat at one of the computers and wrote out a plan to use the Chicago Convention Corporation, outlining the membership on the corporation and a transition plan for the committee to adopt. This plan was quickly adopted, and the first

meeting was held by the committee as a corporation. It helped that five members from the London host committee were at the Philadelphia workshop to participate in the discussions. Immediately after the workshop I prepared the necessary paperwork, and in a special report to the fellowship, an announcement was made of this "corporation take-over." When the conference *Agenda Report* was prepared in January, this was included as an agenda item.

Both the PI and H&I Committees completed major projects in Philadelphia. Kim and the PI Committee had been working for nearly eighteen months on two mammoth projects: *A Guide to Public Information* and *A Guide to Phoneline Service*. Our staff had spent enormous numbers of hours in committee meetings and private discussions, then later writing and typing these publications. Finally in Philadelphia the work was complete. Well, complete enough for the committee to approve. It took Kim and Danette and her staff another two months to get a final printable version ready for the *Agenda Report*.

The H&I Committee and their coordinator, Bob S., had asked Ron H., the *NA Way* editor, to work with them in writing a handbook and a proper restatement of H&I Committee guidelines. The guideline revision was adopted for submission to the conference when it met in 1986. Several people proposed that we make a special publication from the Basic Text for members in jails and institutions. They proposed an abbreviated book in paperback that could be purchased for a buck or two. It was hard to oppose this, but I found it necessary to do so. I really understood the need, but was concerned about the financial impact. The best solution was a paperback edition of the entire Text, but I was still opposed to the idea at that time for fear of financially crippling the office during this critical time of growth and development. Much later, we would resolve this issue by producing a paperback Text, but charging the same price as for the hardcover.

The Literature Committee gave approval for two pamphlets, *A Physician's Viewpoint* (revised) and *Self Acceptance* to be submitted to the fellowship for adoption. The committee also voted to seek adoption of the *Handbook for NA Newsletters*.

The trustees had been discussing the relationship between the fellowship and other organizations, especially AA, at several of their recent meetings. And in October they considered an essay written by Ron H., our magazine editor. In the article he carefully articulated the separation that must exist between NA and other organizations, while remaining cognizant of the common threads of our existence. The trustees liked his essay so well they adopted it without modification, and submitted it for publication in the *Newsline*. Ron then took the basic substance of that article and wrote another piece targeted at

the AA reader and submitted it to the AA *Grapevine*. They published that article as well. At last we had a clear and eloquent statement on our relationship to AA.

The day before Thanksgiving, I boarded a plane and flew to Memphis for the Volunteer Region's annual convention. I had been invited (actually "dared" is more accurate) at the conference to attend and put on a workshop about the office. Well, I was not really certain of the kind of reception I would find, as the regional representatives from Tennessee had been pretty antagonistic toward the office since before I started working there, and remained antagonistic toward me once I did. Actually, I wasn't too surprised to find, once I did meet the members of that region, that they were among the nicest people I ever met, and we had a great time.

Only three people showed up for the workshop, so we had a twenty-minute chat about the office. We then talked about the Steps and how they worked in their lives for the next two hours. During the last hour we were joined by several others who jumped right into this sharing session. I learned a lot, and a newcomer who sat through the entire meeting seemed to have soaked in even more than I did. Disappointment at not having given my prepared summary of the office was erased by this pleasant and valuable discussion.

In early December, I went on quick visits to different cities to assist committees forming office corporations and to resolve literature distribution problems. This was to become a pattern about this time each year until I left NA.

This trip began with an overnight flight to Pittsburgh for one day and a meeting with their office formation committee. The following day was spent in New York with their committee. On day three I was in Detroit, and from there I went on to Milwaukee for twenty-two hours (including overnight) to meet with their office board. On day five I arrived in Montreal to stay two nights and work on their office needs, translations and literature problems. On my way home, I spent one day in Dallas to meet with their office directors.

This trip was rather exhausting, but really productive. Until I got to Dallas, the temperature never rose above freezing. The only time I saw the sun was from airplanes high above the clouds. For a Southern California native, this was not what the body was used to.

While I was away, the committee working on *It Works* met at the office and made the final changes they felt were desirable in the Steps portion. They were now ready to offer it for approval. The first stage was to print it and have it available for distribution before the coming conference. They intended that its approval would come at the conference the following year (1987).

In the final weeks of December, we worked frantically to prepare for meetings and deadlines arriving in January. The first weekend, there was to be a Joint Administrative Committee meeting, and the second weekend a meeting of the office board. The third weekend was our deadline to publish the *Conference Agenda Report*. During this time, we hired a part-time temporary person to work in shipping. His name was Carlos M., and he had about ninety days clean. We had our doubts about him working out, but over the next ten years he proved to be one of the WSO's most valuable employees.

The JAC produced some interesting friction as consideration for the coming year's work was undertaken. Agreement was reached that the Joint Administrative Committee should be formalized and given certain responsibilities. Several of these ideas were put into the *Agenda Report* as motions. One of the decisions was to offer a motion to dissolve the Finance Committee, as it had effectively become superfluous. Associated with the recommended demise of the Finance Committee was a lot of discussion about budgeting. It was decided that a proposed budget should be made and sent in advance of the conference but not included in the *Agenda Report*.

They also adopted and put forward a proposal I offered that deleted the positions of secretary and assistant secretary of the conference. The duties normally expected of those positions were already being accomplished by the office, and the office should formally be given those duties. It was decided to send three administrative members to agenda workshop meetings around the fellowship. This was not going to be enough, but it was a fair beginning.

Unfortunately, Kim J. resigned as chairperson of the PI Committee. She had been leading the committee for twenty-one months and had done an excellent job. They had completed and gotten ready for approval two massive PI publications. Her leadership of the committee had been strong and fair. Although our working relationship had its ups and downs, she proved to be a good co-worker.

The office board meeting went smoothly and endorsed the procedure then being followed to select an editor for the Text. It had taken a long time to find one of suitable skill and sensitivity, but one had been located. They adopted a budget I proposed for 1986, based on income of approximately two million two hundred thousand dollars. The board authorized a loan to the Convention Corporation (which at that time had no funds) for expenditures associated with managing the London convention. No money had been received from the Washington convention committee, and we resolved to make an effort to get money from them. The board voted to send Stu T. and Chuck L. to London to help organize the host committee along the lines of a traditional US committee. They were given great latitude

in making decisions for the corporation, signing agreements, establishing budgets and giving instructions. Fortunately they were well received and did an admirable job. They went again before the summer months to follow up on many things and finalize plans for the September convention.

The Convention Corporation also had a meeting and adopted motions to enter into agreements with a company called Expotel and one named Cardillo Travel Agency. The Expotel company was a hotel reservation agency. They booked large numbers of rooms and served as a middleman between hotels and tourists. Without contracting with one of the reservation agencies, we could not "block out," or reserve large numbers of rooms, in London hotels. The travel agency agreement was to help our members arrange for travel. Members could elect to use the Cardillo agency or anyone they wanted. Cardillo simply served, so we thought, to help our members make their travel and Expotel reservations.

The *Agenda Report* was beautiful. For the first time it contained a list of motions to be acted on and all the publications offered for approval. The two PI publications were included along with a proposal Kim and I had been developing about participation in non-NA events. Since it would involve office staff and money, we had negotiated the fine points of it for months.

The Convention Committee put forth motions to accept and structure the Convention Corporation along the lines I had suggested to them in Philadelphia. The Convention Corporation was to be a subsidiary of the office corporation, and although operating independently, the office could override their decisions. If this were adopted, it would be a testament to the progress made in building confidence in the office, and would establish a good corporate structure for the fellowship.

The trustees included the entire White Booklet in the *Conference Agenda Report*, along with a comprehensive side by side comparison of the suggested changes. Ron H. of our staff had worked closely with the Trustees on this. He had attended many trustee meetings since the last conference. In September, after having been asked to assist a working group of Trustees headed by Sydney R., he presented his recommended changes to the full board. They reviewed his suggestions one at a time. They then asked him to go through the entire book and suggest edits for clarity, grammatical correctness and punctuation. By December, when they had finished, he was rewarded with the satisfaction of having nearly all his suggestions approved by them. His modifications were made with a deft literary hand and keen insight into both the original wording and the prevailing sentiment of the fellowship.

For the Select Committee, I had drafted a letter outlining a procedure for completion of the work over the coming year without actually putting forth any work for approval. The report reminded every one that a partial draft had been distributed at the last conference, but almost no input had been received. After decrying the inadequate response, we proposed that all input had to be received by the coming summer when, it was suggested, the final committee writing would get done. This was actually a reflection of the little amount of time Bob and I had been able to devote to the work since the last conference. We actually had two official meetings since then, but accomplished very little.

In early February I began what became an annual visit to the fellowships in Europe. There were no non-Americans on the Board of Directors at that time, and our appreciation of the European problems was minimal, and only seen from a distance. After months of talk, it had been decided that I should visit several of the European membership centers and get information first-hand and try to work out some of the problems.

In order to get the most out of my travel time, I took along the drafts of the Steps that the Literature Review Committee had already completed. Throughout my trip, on airplane flights, I would get the Steps out of my brief case and read them, making notes and writing questions. It was my belief that their writing should flow easily from idea to idea and that I should find no doubt about what each sentence said. I wrote lots of questions and when I returned, gave them to the committee chairperson.

The trip began in Ft. Lauderdale where the regional PI Committee had organized a public information meeting with a number of local public officials. The committee wanted me there to be able to "go on record" as an employee of NA in addressing recovery-based issues. After twenty-one hours in Florida, I departed for Louisville, Kentucky, where I met with officers of the new Kentuckyana region. Unfortunately my visit schedule had been altered at the last minute and I missed their regional meeting. I did attend a hastily assembled meeting of regional officers and met some really nice folks.

The following day I flew to Atlanta and a connecting all-night flight to London. I reached Gatwick Airport bleary-eyed, rustled my bags to the train, and headed for Victoria Station. Upon getting into my hotel room, I fell fast asleep after being awake for most of thirty-five hours since Kentucky.

In London I went to meetings each night and met with Convention Committee members, regional service committees and regular members. There was a constant parade of people coming and going. I met with the representative of Expotel, the hotel agency who had con-

trol of the room reservations for our members. A meeting was held with Johnny H. to help resolve literature problems.

They had a small office on the third floor of a walk-up office building. It was out of the way for some purposes, but more than adequate for literature distribution needs. I found the English as reserved as I was led to believe they were, and a little uncomfortable with the American NA custom of hugs, so I shook a lot of hands. I would liked to have had a day to see the sights, but that didn't happen. All too soon my time was up and it was off to the airport again.

I caught my scheduled morning flight for Dublin, where I was met by three Irish members and lots of hugs. Amid the barrage of questions, all spoken terribly fast and with heavy accents that were hard to understand, we exchanged a lot of information about the fellowships in America and Ireland.

They had arranged meetings in shifts with key members of their fellowship, so I was constantly busy. I was left alone for three hours the second morning and I wandered about the streets near my hotel on the Key in the center of the City. I found out later that the hotel I stayed in had been a brothel for English soldiers during the war of Independence.

Germany was my next stop. There the real test of patience and understanding was awaiting me. At the last conference, Uli had been openly hostile toward me and the office for our inability to get them literature in a reasonable manner and at a reasonable price. They had been particularly unhappy with our translation efforts. I understood that perfectly, and the lessons learned from their criticism had helped shape the new translation policy. They felt insulted by our failure to consult directly with them when we did our first translations.

Their second most strident criticism was of our translator's choice of words. Where the English word for leader appeared in our literature, (such as in the Second Tradition) the college instructor used one of only two German words for leader: "Führer." The world, including Germany, had come to associate this word with Adolph Hitler. Their fellowship had elected not to use that term. They simply refused to use the translations we had made, preferring to use no literature at all rather than the literature we provided. With this as the background, I was expecting a less-than-friendly reception.

Sylvia K. met me at the airport, and I was grateful she did. Within minutes of getting off the plane I was at a total loss. I had never traveled in a non-English-speaking place, and I quickly became helpless. Actually it was good. It helped condition me to understand their complaints with the English-speaking World Service Office. For two days, Sylvia acted as guide, interpreter, friend and advocate for

the German fellowship. Sylvia was persuasive, blunt, and not at all shy in presenting their side of each issue we discussed. By the time I got to meet with the rest of the leaders, much of the determination I had built up for handling things the way we wanted them had ebbed away.

The business discussions were conducted mostly with Sylvia. It was difficult for me to hold to the firm resolve that I had told the board we needed on literature matters in Germany. The board and I had been aware that their service committee had been translating and printing literature on their own.

This presented several problems that would get worse if it continued. If we allowed the German fellowship to do their own translations and printing, how could we prevent other European fellowships from doing the same? If other developing fellowships did the same, there would be little opportunity for a unified service office for all of Europe. If there were no bond or close relationship between the fellowships, there would eventually develop a separate and competitive relationship. There was a common belief among the American leaders that a unified service office for Europe was the best — perhaps the only — route to take. In my discussions with Sylvia and the rest of the German leadership, I could feel strong resistance to that idea — especially if it were controlled by the Americans.

Well, when you are in Germany and they are less than happy with the mistakes you've made, and you don't speak one word of their language, it is pretty difficult to be forceful and tell them to cease and desist printing their own literature. The fall-back position I had in mind was to suggest American support for their translations and American subsidy for the printing. All we would seek, I said, was eventual responsibility being shifted to the WSO for printing the German literature. An alternative, I explained, was to have the German fellowship contribute a percentage of their sales profits to the office as a way of demonstrating German fellowship support for the worldwide effort of a single fellowship. Well, some of these ideas were for future meetings. We needed a solution for the situation we were then presented with.

At the business meeting, I was first dragged through a litany of office deficiencies going back to the first attempt they made to communicate with the office, some nine years earlier. Frankly, they felt things had not gotten any better. After the fearless and thorough inventory had subsided, we began to talk about how to go forward from there. They were generally supportive of the ideas suggested, but would wait until my proposals were finalized and written in German. In the meantime they would continue to print their own literature.

They were going to send their representative to the conference, a few months away, and we could iron out the details then. When I left the following day, I felt this part of the trip had been very unsuccessful. We had not communicated well, and neither of us was really clear about the other's positions. Nor was anyone really satisfied with the tentative plan.

After a week in Europe, I was beginning to get over the jet lag and get my body adjusted to the time zone. That's when I got on the next plane to Atlanta, and then home. As always, I kept in touch with the office each day by phone and on occasions with others such as Jack or George.

While on this trip, I spoke with George by phone several times about meeting in Washington DC and maybe helping to resolve the convention money issue. By the time I reached Atlanta, George had made arrangements for us to meet with Brother Rick in Washington to talk. George and I both arrived at National Airport in the middle of a blinding snow storm. As soon as my plane touched down they closed the airport because of the heavy snow fall. We went to our hotel to discuss strategy.

Brother Rick had been one of the early members in DC when there was only a handful of recovering addicts. He knew Jimmy by phone, and had been getting literature on credit from Jimmy. In the weeks after I came to work, in 1983, Brother Rick and I had several phone calls about that situation. I had to tell him that we could not continue that credit practice, and they had to pay their bill. He was not happy about that, but he managed to live with it. In the intervening years we had several conversations so we were not total strangers.

Brother Rick was one of those up-front guys who didn't beat around the bush at all. His voice and manner of speaking seemed aggressive at times, so you could tell he was no pushover. But just below the surface of what seemed a bellicose exterior was an affectionate and sensitive man. He was a determined individual with clear thoughts of right and wrong, and well suited to his chosen field. I've retained my admiration of him through all these years. I was sometimes told that he often spoke of some members of the fellowship as being "shoplifters: those are people who take what NA has to offer and then leave." His lament was right on the mark, as usual.

Brother Rick had ended up with some control over the money. We met with him that afternoon. After hello and hugs, we sat down and he went right at it. "You guys are here to get the money aren't you?" he asked. He went on to describe an ongoing fight over it, which he feared was about to tear up the DC fellowship. "It would have been better if we had never even made a dime from that con-

vention, at all. I wish I could just give it to you and get it out of our hair." George and I both sensed success might be possible.

We acknowledged the truth of his observations, and then discussed if it really was possible to take the money with us. For several hours we talked about the problems and alternatives. We left for a few hours and then went to a recovery meeting with him that evening. He had been busy on the phone working out a solution while we were gone, but it was not until the following day that it was fully resolved.

In our morning meeting with him, he outlined how the money could be divided, including the conditions, but it would take another day to finalize. I took George to the airport and he went home while I stayed until the following day. When everything had been completed, Brother Rick gave me a cashier's check for over \$86,000 and I headed home. I was tired after having been on the road for nineteen days, flown on thirteen planes and traveled fifteen-thousand miles.

When I arrived home from Washington, I was informed that the member we had contracted with to edit the Basic Text had gotten loaded and we needed to start the search again. We were all disappointed, but we had no alternative. This delayed the project another four months.

I announced in my section of the March *Newsline* that we were looking for a person to hire whose job title might well be "Assistant Manager" although the exact title and job description had not been completed. I reported the person would likely supervise the project coordinators, and a large share of the staff. We had a number of applicants: one trustee, a conference committee chair and a vice-chair, two existing staff members and a few others. Each applicant was sent a test to determine writing skills and NA-based reasoning. I presented them with ten situations we had already experienced and asked them to explain how they would handle the matter. The applicants were given only three days from the date they received the test in which to mail their answers. The tests were reviewed jointly by the board Personnel Committee and myself, and George H. was eventually selected.

During the months leading up to the conference, we went through the normal uneasiness about which fires to pay attention to. There was a growing discontent over the writing contract on the Steps, even though it had been terminated, as word was being passed around that a non-member had been hired, plus we had undoubtedly paid them a lot of money. Both the office and Literature Committee were targets this time.

The trustee revision of the White Booklet was also causing controversy. There were a lot of oldtimers who got clean when the White

Booklet was all there was, and they were opposed to changing it. I attended a few local special meetings where revisions to the White Booklet were discussed. I gave background about the conference decision to authorize the trustees to revise it and the procedure they followed in arriving at the changes. I got a full measure of the emotions involved, but I never heard a complaint about the specific changes, only about the propriety for making them at all.

In a report to the directors before the conference, I reviewed the differences in productivity between the directors and the trustees. My thesis was that the trustees had been greatly ineffective, because the directors received direct and substantial administrative support for their meetings. The trustees, on the other hand, were not given the same level of administrative support. I felt this needed to change.

The evening before the conference began, the trustees held a regular meeting. They reviewed a series of statements on various issues they had been working on. Elections were conducted and Jack was re-elected as chairperson. Bob R. was again elected as vice-chairperson. Jack announced assignments of trustees to work with the conference committees. They had received a complaint about a group in New York City that was sponsoring a Gay Pride parade. They elected to defer that until later. Jack also made assignments of specific writing projects for each trustee to work on. Jack kept the trustees busy on these projects during the coming year as they moved to establish an understanding and a position statement on each item. With Steve S. now working with the trustees they were finally getting the administrative support to make their efforts successful.