

## I REMEMBER WHEN....

Small clusters of us would meet at Jimmy's house.  
A yellow wooden house with a beautiful garden in the front yard.  
It always amazed me how flowers and plants would grow and keep so green  
And how the birds would perch themselves on his trees and makeshift birdhouses.  
A dozen orange football helmets would serve as planters for ivies and ferns.  
As you entered his and Betty's home, you'd always be greeted with, "What ya say? Come on in."  
Passing through a small but compact office with files and desks and notes pinned all over his walls  
You'd come on through and into his kitchen.  
I always loved that kitchen. Hot coffee or tea and lots of sweets were always on the dining room table.  
That room was always so warm and made me feel so good and safe.  
Betty always knew my fondness for sweets and she would take me into her room and share the box of chocolate covered cherries she had or a beautiful chocolate Easter egg.  
The living room was a small one with books and things you just knew had some very special meaning connected with them. Each piece had their own story.  
The couch and chairs would be draped with handmade afghans and comfy pillows.  
At Christmas time there would be a small tree with a miniature setting of the Christ in his cradle and the 3 wise men bearing gifts. All sorts of gifts would be spread out under the tree.  
The guys would be counting out pamphlets and leaflets, others would be stapling and collating.  
The phone would be ringing and it made me so proud to answer "World Service Office, may I help you?"  
2, 3, sometimes as many as 5 different conversations would be going on at the same time.  
Never once did I leave that house without having laughed. Except once. And that was when I cried.  
We all used to meet at least once a week, usually Tuesday. Some of us were involved with THE VOICE, or strictly with the mail process, or answering letters, and other times, it was just a gathering of friends and a place where we brought newcomers so that they could feel the warmth and love too.  
Then some of us were involved with making tapes and updating the Tape Library.  
I loved this home in the winter. No matter how cold it got outside, it was always so warm inside, gee, I loved that house.  
We would all curse the airplanes as they flew by up above for the house was located directly across the street from the airport.

Some of us would go there and end up writing a story for THE VOICE and everyone knew to go there for pamphlets and I.P.'s.

One time about 25 of us surprised Jimmy & Betty and went and sang X-mas carols at their house. They invited all of us in and amazingly enough, there was enough room and food for all of us.

N.A. started to grow at a very fast rate. Meetings were popping up all over the world. There had been talk by others in the Fellowship of moving the office out of Jimmy's house.

We thought we had the answer by renting out the entire house next door to Jimmy's.

But that didn't prove to be a good idea. None of us knew what the future had in store for the office so we all agreed it was best to move the office away from Jimmy's home.

I remember that day. It was in the late afternoon.

I drove up to the house and there was a big truck in the driveway. Files and desks were being moved onto the truck.

I knew the time had come to get a bigger office and to give Jimmy's and Betty's home back to them.

It was then that I started to cry. I felt as if my place of solitude and refuge was being taken away from me and I felt sad most of all for Jimmy.

He was so busy moving things too that I wondered if he would miss all the commotion and constant movement of the office in his house.

I felt paralyzed. I stood there in disbelief. It was all happening so fast.

And then Betty came outside and saw me. She asked me to come in and sit down. I did. I just looked at her and she knew. She hugged me and I cried like a little girl.

Time has been a healer for me and I'm adjusting now to the new office and duties.

I thank God for the little bit of peace and comfort I so desperately needed in the beginning. I thanked God for the path he had chosen for me, in letting me share a part of my life with 2 very giving and caring human beings.

I have learned so much. Steps, Traditions, goodwill, fellowship, service, action.

Thank you Jimmy. Thank you Betty. And thank you God.