

Southern Exposure

LIMITED EDITION

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Recovery Under The Sun

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Southern Exposure
Recovery Under The Sun

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DECLARATION

Southern Exposure

Recovery Under The Sun

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DISCLAIMER

The information in this publication is a compilation of available fellowship archives and memorabilia as well as group, area, and regional records. Books, magazines, newspapers, and internet sites were also used to ascertain data, as were interviews conducted with members of Narcotics Anonymous.

Despite the exhaustive effort undertaken to verify the accuracy of the materials and corroborate all accounts shared by individuals, the possibility of factual or interpretational errors may still exist.

This material was compiled by and for members of Narcotics Anonymous. This publication is not World Service Conference *or* fellowship-approved literature. The Florida Regional Service Office, Inc. produced this publication for members in Florida. Any opinions expressed in this book are not necessarily those of N.A. as a whole.

All proceeds from the sale of this book go to the Florida Regional Service Office.

Southern Exposure

THE FLORIDA HISTORY OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

CONTENTS

Notes to the Reader		3
Preface		4
Introduction		5
Chapter 1	As Old As Mankind	9
Chapter 2	The Birth Of A Fellowship	37
Chapter 3	Beyond Southern California	57
Chapter 4	Planting Seeds	79
Chapter 5	The Biltmore To The Marco Polo	103
Chapter 6	Florida – The Early Years	143
Chapter 7	From Infancy To Adolescence	191
Chapter 8	The Journey Continues	223
Chapter 9	A Fellowship In Crisis	263
Chapter 10	It's Just The Beginning	293
Appendices	References & Sources Of Information	317
	Photo Credits	325

NOTES TO THE READER

Many of the individuals named in this text made significant contributions within Narcotics Anonymous both in Florida and beyond. We have protected their individual anonymity by using only first names and last initials regardless of their current status as alive or deceased. The only exception to this rule involves those who have had their full identity disclosed in other publications. We kept this same policy when deciding which photos to include in this book.

We have used individual first names and initials of last names accurate as of a specific period of time. Due to marriages, last initials may have changed throughout the text.

Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues, though within the context of this book we occasionally used statements of fact to explain issues in our history. Footnotes, endnotes, as well as a reference section was used in this publication in order to attribute the source used and to clarify when information used in this publication came from sources other than Narcotics Anonymous materials, literature or its members.

Throughout our history, incidents occurred which may reflect personal behavior that could be considered inappropriate or does not reflect the spiritual principles practiced by members in our fellowship. We have attempted to explain these incidents without distributing blame. In some cases, we used the word "we" rather than specify any individual or group.

All due diligence was employed in verifying the facts and anecdotes recreated in this book. Nonetheless, the possibility remains that evidence to the contrary may arise. In regards to "firsts," dates, places, times and the like, we used specific dates when indisputable evidence was available. Otherwise, we used months or weeks when we did not have specific dates, and we used portions of years or a specific year to prevent inaccuracies.

Some of the information contained in this publication are excerpts from published materials. The publications and related documentation are acknowledged and noted as such in an addendum section at the end of the book.

If anyone believes errors have been made in fact or conclusion or can offer a new discovery, we invite you to direct this information along with any documentation that verifies such claims to the Florida Regional Service Office. This publication is a first edition and subject to revision at a later date.

PREFACE

The idea for this book came from the members of the Narcotics Anonymous fellowship in Florida. In 1969, the first Narcotics Anonymous meeting was held in Florida, although this meeting was short-lived. Finally, in October, 1974, another fledgling meeting began, but this time it gave birth to the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

The Florida fellowship was nearly thirty years old and Narcotics Anonymous itself nearly fifty years old when this project was undertaken. Many of the earliest members from the 1970's and early 1980's had moved away, passed away, or relapsed. It became obvious that something should be done to capture the spirit of "those who came before us."

At the September 2002 meeting of the Florida Regional Service Committee of Narcotics Anonymous, a motion was submitted and passed to establish The Florida History Project. The project was to focus on the entire state, including the groups and areas in the Florida region, South Florida region, and areas in Northwest Florida.

An ad hoc committee was established and a group of members met and began the project shortly thereafter. The initial goal was to research and compile information through a variety of means to create a book of the history of Narcotics Anonymous in Florida. The information and material collected and compiled would be placed in trust at the Florida Regional Service Office (RSO).

The second goal was to establish the office as the proper and perpetual trust for the collection, storage, and cataloging of documents, memorabilia, photographs and other records in order to properly honor materials that may be historical in nature. Finally, the material collected would be available to the fellowship by means of creating a permanent portable display available to any regional, area convention, or other event so that our history is available to all members of the fellowship.

The first obstacle in writing this book was its mandate that the narrative must come from addicts. Compiling and writing a history book comes with its own challenges. Typically, recovery books focus on the experience, strength and hope of our members; thus, they are a compilation of experiences in recovery.

History, on the other hand, must be factual, objective, and not swayed by personal bias. Therefore, the committee endeavored to present an accurate and precise viewpoint of our history. Through the years, our memories fade and recollections can differ widely. This is a natural occurrence of age and health as well as individual perspectives and personal growth.

INTRODUCTION

History by its very nature can be tedious and, at times, dull. Consequently, the History Ad hoc committee set out to offer an enlightening story that would stimulate gratitude for the program of Narcotics Anonymous.

“In order to recover we must first understand the nature of the illness, the nature of the addict and the nature of recovery.”

Jimmy K.

Therefore, the story begins with some helpful background information, a brief history of the evolution of drugs, addiction and recovery movements from their earliest known origins. Then the birth of Narcotics Anonymous and its early years in California are chronicled. Next, the book focuses on the development of the fellowship east of the Rockies and beyond. Primarily, though, this publication will underscore the evolution, growth and development of Narcotics Anonymous throughout Florida and its significant impact on the entire fellowship.

This book is a collection of individual and shared experiences told by members of the N.A. fellowship. These accounts express the Sunshine State's humble beginnings during the '70s and early '80s, which led to the entire fellowship's rise out of obscurity. The story includes accounts of how a once small and relatively unknown fellowship overcame adversity and eventually won the hard-earned respect of the entire recovery community and society alike. We conclude with the explosive growth that continued into the '90s and beyond.

Many may not be aware of the obstacles confronted by those who found N.A. in earlier years. Perhaps by making this information available, some may be motivated to express their gratitude through greater participation in N.A. service work. Others may learn a new appreciation for the Twelve Traditions by becoming aware of how early members struggled, endured adversity, and eventually flourished from adherence to these principles. They are truly “the ties that bind us together.”

We hope you enjoy this book

“Southern Exposure – Recovery Under The Sun”

A Brief History of Narcotics Anonymous in Florida