

Native American Indian General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous

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Winter: Stepping Outside Ourselves, Walking Toward Others and the Creator



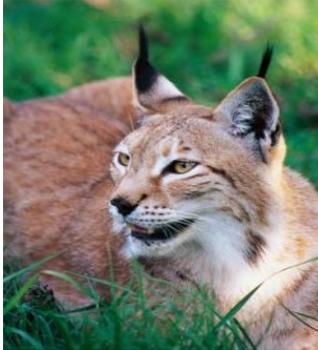
In the case of **Tekiya'teh, Spirit keeper of the North (stone #9), the color is white and the totem animal is the American Bison or the Lynx.** Characteristics of the Bison is its powerful physique and is regarded as a feminine bringer of important medicines to the people, of which the two most important are the sacred pipe and the sweat lodge. She gave all of herself to the people; her skin, her flesh, and her bones, that the people might prosper and be healthy and strong. So, she was unselfish, sacrificing herself for the good of others, bringer of ancient wisdoms and hope. The totem plant of the North is sweetgrass. This herb is used ceremonially to bring good energies and generous spirits, and to cleanse the sacred pipe before and after its use. The totem mineral of the North is white alabaster (although alabaster comes in many colors) which is a relatively soft stone but also has a tensile strength. Alabaster encourages a softness that guards against rigidity, teaches us about sensitivity as well as strength, pureness of thought, high ideals with courage and convictions, serenity, and peace. Imagine yourself in a forest in the middle of winter, alone and quiet as the snow falls softly around, and upon you. You are now one with creation. The time of year of the North is winter, a time when Mother Earth (Lynx, daughter of Sky Woman and mother to twins Sapling and Flint, she died giving birth) has taken her rest and the plants and animals sleep beneath the white blanket of snow. It is not coincidental that the North is where we begin our journey, but also where it ends. In this respect, the time of day is midnight.

Midnight is the apex of our 24-hour day. It is neither; no longer day, but no longer night. It is like balancing on the end of a pin, a time of life where birth either begins or where we cross over into death. This why **the North direction is represented by the element of the earth, the Turtle, Ha'no:wa:h,** a physical plane. The North is a time of transition; of accepting death, of rebirth, and a time for reflection of this place where we will all arrive someday.



Later I will teach about the East direction. But for now, consider your own ideas about this North direction and how it might speak to your physical body, your intellectual mind, your emotions/ relationships and your own religious/spiritual convictions, and also consider where you are and how your own decisions affect not only your own life but how they may

affect the lives of others. But do this honestly and truthfully, without remorse or regret for your own physical condition. This is why we walk the wheel, to change those things which are revealed to us that are detrimental and harmful to ourselves and others.....God's Peace.....Ush`ka Waso'



"Neh da'as dye'ant sno a'eh na go'gwa ne ga wis'dah kuh ne ga jah; neh neh a ga ak' haeh gwah deh jo'ginas de'gwa."

"Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter that the outside of them may be clean also."

The North direction provides us with instructions for our personal physical bodies, but we must also apply those principles to the physical world around us. And just as the wisdom above instructs us we must be diligent to clean the entire house, it serves no good to wash the physical body if you plan to immerse yourself back into those things which contaminate us. The first stone of the Northern path is the cleansing stone. It is relatively simple to go about our lives and shower each day. It may even be relatively simple to keep a clean home. But as we enter the outside world are we aware of the things which need to be put back into order? A candy wrapper blowing in the wind? A bag of broken garbage along the roadside? A dump site where unknown substances are discarded? Or even the safety of where and how nuclear waste is disposed of? These all contribute to the cleansing of our physical world. Here is an analogy; you know you haven't bathed for a while and you think you are sufficiently clean. But do others close by share that same opinion? And if you reverse the scenario, would you say something to the one who has neglected his hygiene? If we are to follow this path of honesty, we cannot ignore the obvious. This **cleansing stone (#25)** is represented by its totem mineral, sodalite. The plant totem is Echinacea and its animal totem is the **raccoon (Dzo'a:da)** which is fastidious about washing its food. The color of this stone is dark blue, usually white-veined.



Stone #26 is the stone of renewal. It is important for us to get enough rest in order to function at our present peak performance. And just as our bodies need an opportunity to rest and renew itself, the same is true of our physical world. Winter is the time when much of the natural world is taking the time to sleep, to rest, in preparation for the spring. As we overpopulate our world and devise new technologies to accommodate the billions on our planet we leave a lot of stuff behind. We stress our natural environment and threaten our Mother to her limit with noxious and toxic substances. And while we may subscribe to scientific theory, we must be honest enough to realize we are compromising the very organism which gives us life. We are involved in excesses which are detrimental to all life. We must give our Mother Earth the opportunity to catch up and cleanse herself. In order to do this, she will require a time of renewal where human factors have given her a respite. Any person who has been sleep deprived for a period of time will increasingly become ill



and eventually incapacitated and unable to function. That person will eventually shut down and be of no good service to the task which they were assigned. Our Earth Mother is no different. If all she has available to give her children is toxic, she will do what she must to make it right; as any good, loving parent would do. The renewal stone is represented by the mineral totem peridot. Her animal totem is the earthworm and her plant totem is red clover. The color of this stone is dark to pale green.

The 3rd stone of the Northern path (#27) is purity. Purity is usually temporary and transient, it comes and goes. After showering and a good night's sleep we are refreshed and have a clear (pure) mind and body. Or, having cleaned your home thoroughly you have that same sense of satisfaction of knowing it will be a healthier place in which to live, purer. The processes required to reach that stage demand you perform the first two actions. Purity can be long lasting or it can be fleeting. This depends on your attentiveness. As I described the scenarios above of trash, pollutants, of giving the earth a reprieve from her abuse, how can we ever expect to create a more clean and pure environment (body, home, world) if we do not take the steps required to achieve that end? And if we can reach this stone in our journey, we are closer to the Creator and will have a strong desire to share this wonderful gift with others, freely and without cost. We will have reaped the benefits of cleansing, rest and renewal, and purity...at least in the moment, for the journey has just begun. The purity stone's totem mineral is the herkimer diamond and its color is transparent white. Its totem animal is the dolphin and its totem plant is the trillium.



The relevance to sobriety and these three gifts should be evident. When one first enters recovery from substance abuse, that one must first cleanse the body of all toxins and chemicals within the physical body.

Once that person has been detoxed, they are given a place to rest and renew their strength through a healthy diet and understanding what, and why, they are feeling the way they do.

And finally, during this process of recovery and detoxification, they get a little closer to the purity of our body that our Creator intended for each of us.





What started at the turn of the century as an effort to gain a day of recognition for the significant contributions the first Americans made to the establishment and growth of the U.S., has resulted in a whole month being designated for that purpose.

One of the very proponents of an American Indian Day was Dr. Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca Indian, who was the director of the Museum of Arts and Science in Rochester, N.Y. He persuaded the Boy Scouts of America to set aside a day for the “First Americans” and for three years they adopted such a day. In 1915, the annual Congress of the American Indian Association meeting in Lawrence, Kansas, formally approved a plan concerning American Indian Day. It directed its president, Rev. Sherman Coolidge, an Arapahoe, to call upon the country to observe such a day. Coolidge issued a proclamation on Sept. 28, 1915, which declared the second Saturday of each May as an American Indian Day and contained the first formal appeal for recognition of Indians as citizens.

The year before this proclamation was issued, Red Fox James, a Blackfoot Indian, rode horseback from state to state seeking approval for a day to honor Indians. On December 14, 1915, he presented the endorsements of 24 state governments at the White House. There is no record, however, of such a national day being proclaimed.

The first American Indian Day in a state was declared on the second Saturday in May 1916 by the governor of New York. Several states celebrate the fourth Friday in September. In Illinois, for example, legislators enacted such a day in 1919. Presently, several states have designated Columbus Day as Native American Day, but it continues to be a day we observe without any recognition as a national legal holiday.

In 1990 President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designating November 1990 “National American Indian Heritage Month.” Similar proclamations, under variants on the name (including “Native American Heritage Month” and “National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month”) have been issued each year since 1994.

Native American Heritage Day is a civil holiday observed on the day after Thanksgiving in the United States. **In 2017 it will be celebrated on November 24th**.

National legislative history:

President George W. Bush signed into law legislation introduced by Congressman Joe Baca (D-Rialto), to designate the Friday after Thanksgiving as Native American Heritage Day. The Native American Heritage Day Bill was supported by the National Indian Gaming

Association (NIGA) and 184 federally recognized tribes, and designated Friday, November 28, 2008, as a day to pay tribute to Native Americans for their many contributions to the United States.

The Native American Heritage Day Bill encouraged Americans of all backgrounds to observe Friday, November 28, 2008, as Native American Heritage Day, through appropriate ceremonies and activities. It also encouraged public elementary and secondary schools to enhance student understanding of Native Americans by providing classroom instructions focusing on their history, achievements, and contributions.

The House of Representatives originally passed H.J. Res. 62 on November 13, 2007. The bill was passed with technical adjustments by unanimous consent in the United States Senate on September 22, 2008. Then, on September 26, 2008, the House of Representatives unanimously voted to pass the legislation again, this time including the adjustments from the Senate. The legislation was signed into public law by the President on October 8, 2008.

Some individual states have also taken legislative action to recognize this day. For example, Maryland established this day in 2008 under the name American Indian Heritage Day.

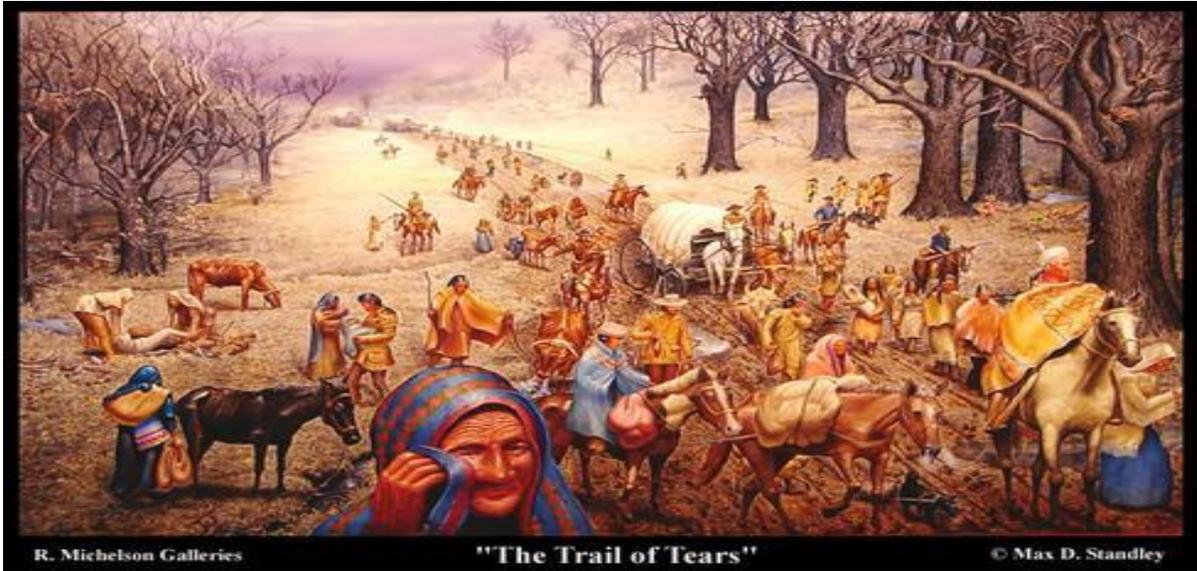
2009: Day after Thanksgiving named Native American Heritage Day

President Barack Obama signs “The Native American Heritage Day Resolution 2009,” designating the Friday after Thanksgiving as “Native American Heritage Day.” The resolution had unanimous support in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate.

In signing H.J. Res. 40 into law, President Obama stated, *“I encourage every American to join me in observing Native American Heritage Day ... It is also important for all of us to understand the rich culture, tradition, and history of Native Americans and their status today, and to appreciate the contributions that First Americans have made and will continue to make to our Nation.”*

Executive and Legislative Documents

The Law Library of Congress has compiled guides to commemorative observations, including a comprehensive inventory of the Public Laws, Presidential Proclamations and congressional resolutions related to Native American Heritage Month.



You can see some of the confusion of recognizing a month vs. a day. But neither the month, nor the day, is recognized on most calendars and is usually dismissed or forgotten altogether.... It was always a part of the master plan of the federal government's "Manifest destiny".



Historical Paiute Village and Wikiups

Chief Sequoia

developer of the Cherokee language



History of the Development of the Native American Indian General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous

In 1989 an “Ad Hoc” committee was formed in the San Diego, CA, Area 8 of Alcoholics Anonymous to see how effectively the AA message was being carried to Native Americans.

The committee’s suggestion was to establish meetings on the reservations in San Diego County, solicit support from urban groups to keep them going, and report back the results with recommendations. The committee had roving potluck meetings each month, meeting at different locations throughout the area, and having a different host reservation each month. When an Indian with

an interest in starting an A.A. meeting on the reservation was found, his tribal council was approached and A.A. traditions were explained (such as being self-supportive), along with what A.A. does not do. A tribal location and date to start the meeting would be agreed upon. All participants dedicated themselves to supporting the new meeting, making sure someone was always there to open the door. This level of experience did not come about overnight, but over a period of years. It has been shown in the San Diego area that this way of encouraging the message to come from within does work. The San Diego ad hoc committee approach is extremely effective as long as they are carrying the message of A.A.

By March 1993 AA meetings had been established on twelve of eighteen reservations around San Diego County. In keeping with AA’s tradition of autonomy, these meetings were encouraged to incorporate Native American customs and culture into their formats. Ten of the original twelve meetings still flourish today!

The committee also concluded that in order to effectively carry the message to the still-suffering Native American alcoholic, a service structure built around the traditional beliefs, practices and customs was needed. With this conclusion made the “Ad Hoc” committee formally terminated but the majority of the members continued in their effort to serve. After meeting with the Pacific Coast Regional trustee and the General Manager of the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous the majority of the members formed the Native American General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous and an application was filed for representation at AA’s World Service Meeting.

In 1990 Earl L., a Paiute Indian had a vision. Following this vision Earl was instrumental in establishing the first-ever National/ International Native American AA committee/convention. Earl saw in the vision Indian Nations coming together in unity, celebrating sobriety and embracing their culture. He saw the helping hand of AA as being attractive within Indian Country. Earl’s vision saw our traditional ways as adding to the warmth and unconditional love of AA’s principals. Earl made numerous trips to the San Diego area and worked with the “Ad Hoc” Committee to foster and promote Native American AA meetings on the local reservations. After the “Ad Hoc” Committee disbanded, Earl continued to encourage and support the remaining members to move forward and implement the committee’s recommendations. In 1999, on the day Earl passed into the spirit world, he signed a letter to the Native Nations honoring their

sovereignty and requesting their consensus for the NAIGSO-AA to interact with their people. Now Earl joins us in Council and the vision rests on our shoulders.

Today the Native American General Service Office continues to carry the AA recovery message to the Indian Nations. Our Home Fires registry includes over 100 Native American AA groups and 450 loners/associates. There are Native American AA conventions held in all four corners of Indian Country and recovery from alcoholism is coming into reach of all Native peoples wherever they live.

NAIGSO Goals and Service Activities

The General Service Conference will focus on serving the Native North American People. The NAIGSO goals and service activities we desire to implement and improve on are as follows.

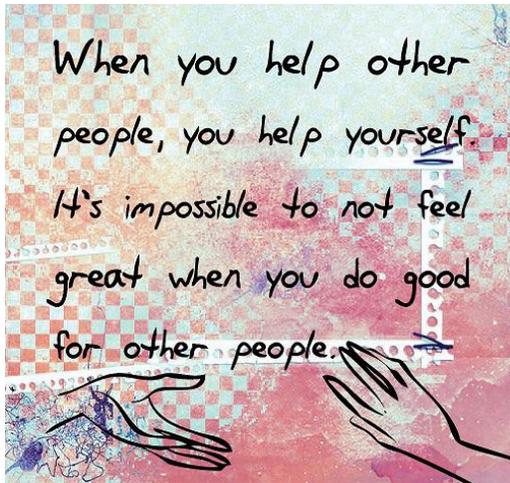
Goals:

1. To help our Indian people obtain sobriety through the 12 steps and 12 traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).
2. To be a helping hand to Alcoholics Anonymous general services office, New York, NY and Alcoholics Anonymous world service, New York, NY as an information source and referral service.
3. To provide traditional/cultural means of representation from the AA individual/group level to the AA world services level.
4. To induce Native American Indian AA groups and peoples to work closely and confidently with general services office and world services in AA.
5. To support the Native American people in obtaining sobriety through their own culture.
6. To provide service in concert with the Native American's traditional gathering(s).

Service Activities:

1. Provide and distribute AA information and materials to members. Publish newsletter and maintain web site containing sobriety meeting and event information.
2. Conduct, coordinate and facilitate sobriety events including pow wows, camp meetings, encampments, conventions and conferences.
3. Provide guidance on how to establish and facilitate AA groups with Native American members while maintaining the twelve concepts, traditions and steps of AA, yet incorporating the Indian's traditional way of life and spirituality. This will also involve the linking of Indian alcoholics of different tribes, in cities, on reservations and in prison settings, in such a way that will be comfortable and compatible for members. These concepts extend to the structural organization of NAIGSO, which means adapting the AA hierarchical system into a circular system to better serve the Indian customs.
4. Provide a path within AA for Indians to voice needs, from individual member to the world service level of AA. Meet requirements for Indian delegate to be seated and represent Indian nations at the world service meetings of AA. Sponsor a General Service Conference from which issues will merge to be brought before the world organization.
5. Provide NAIGSO representatives at sobriety gatherings, to meet members and determine better ways to provide services.
6. Provide directory of persons available to help individual Indian alcoholics.





Willingness is the Key

I have lived a long hard life. Spent some time in the streets and under a few bridges. Married a couple of times, have a couple of kids. Lived in several different states and did some hard traveling outside and inside the iron house. Had some trauma and lots of drama. Got to AA a real mess through felony papers I had to have signed.

Worked those darn steps after a long period of moccasin dragging and feather waving that claimed my uniqueness.

When I came to step 8 my list of persons I had harmed was longer than anything I ever looked at before. How could I possible make amends to people that I would never see again.

Sponsor kept saying it is the willingness that is the key. I was told that I could make donations to an organization that helped the kind of person I helped. Okay, so I did some of that stuff.

The biggest part of doing these steps was changing my character defects. I had no clue. I wanted to be a different person but couldn't figure out how to get from point A to point B. Oh yes, I did ask my Creator to take them away. But there was no big miracle, and all of a sudden I was a new being. Nope, I have to do everything the experiential way.

I did some volunteering with a homeless outreach team, hell I knew the streets I figured. What I found is that I really cared about the people living rough. If I made a promise to someone that I would bring them some supplies, then I did it and I became accountable.

I volunteered with a food pantry and found out that I liked elderly people. I wasn't looking for where they stored their money and how easy it would be for me to get at it. I told the ladies they had beautiful smiles, or I liked their hair-do.

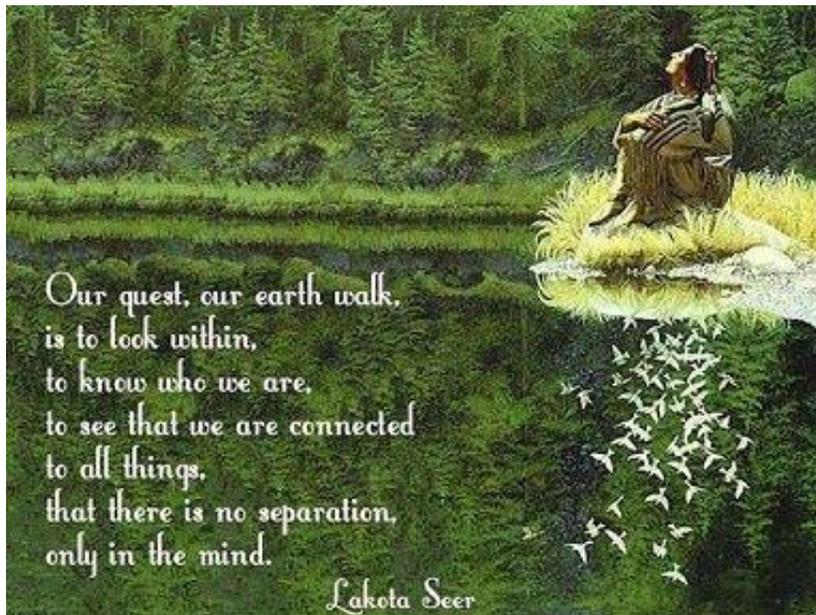
I volunteered so many places in the community I can't even count. But what I found is that it changed me. If the cashier at the store gave me too much change, I corrected her mistake. The feeling I used to get from getting over on someone was replaced with an even better feeling.

Now fast forward a bunch of years. Still willing to make amends, I bump into an ex-spouse. Oh, what drama we had way back when. I figured out what my part was in it and was able to have civil conversation with the person and that was as much as I could offer.

It got me thinking about my other ex-spouse who had remarried and had another child. Oh, thank you Facebook. I was able to find the now adult child and hook her up with my two daughters. She said she always knew she had sisters but didn't know how to find them. Once they were connected, I backed out of it.

Just recently, which prompted me to write today, I found another person from an old relationship and was able to clean up my side of the street, years and years after the fact.

Now, 3 decades later I'm still willing and volunteering when I can. When I used to hear they were grateful they were alcoholic I thought they were nuts. Today I understand. Without this program of these 12 steps I could not have found the me that I was meant to be. -- Anonymous



Meditations and Prayers of Gratitude

Ohen:ton Karihwaterkwen: Thanksgiving Words Before All Else

The People: Today we have gathered and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as People.....Now our Minds are One.

The Earth Mother: We are all thankful to our Mother, the Earth, for she gives us all that we need for life: the air that we breathe, the food that we eat, the water we drink, the earth we stand on as we walk about upon her. IT gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginning of time. To our Mother we send greetings and thanks....Now our Minds are One.

The Waters: We give thanks to all the Waterways of the world for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength. Water is life. We know its power in many forms—waterfalls, and rain, mists and streams, rivers and oceans. Its living form cleanses and heals all things. With one mind we send greetings and thanks to the Spirit of Water....Now our Minds are One.

The Fish: We turn our minds to all the Fish People in the water. They were instructed to cleanse and purify the water. We are grateful that we can still find pure water. They also give themselves to us as food. So we turn now to the Fish and send our greetings and thanks....Now our Minds are One

The Plants: Now we turn toward the vast fields of Plant People. As far as the eye can see, the Plants grow, working many wonders. They sustain many life forms. With our minds gathered together, we give thanks and look forward to seeing Plant life for many generations to come....Now our Minds are One.

The Food Plants: With one mind, we turn to honor and thank all the Food Plants we harvest from the gardens and fields. Since the beginning of time, the grains, vegetables, beans, and berries have helped the people survive. Many other living things draw strength from them too. We gather all the Food Plants together as one and send them a greeting and thanks....Now our Minds are One.

The Medicine Plants: Now we turn to all the Medicine Herbs of the world. From the beginning, they were instructed to take away sickness. They are always waiting and ready to heal us. We are happy there are still among us those special few who remember how to use these plants for healing. With one mind we send greetings and thanks to the Keepers of the Medicines....Now our Minds are One.

The Animals: We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to all the Animal People, our Four-legged Relatives, in the world. They have many things to teach us as people. To watch them is to learn

about our earth. We see them near our homes and in the deep forests. WE are glad they are still here and we hope that it will always be so....Now our Minds are One.

The Insect World: We now turn our thoughts to the Creepy and Crawly People. They do many things in our world—butterflies add color and charm, bees provide honey and help the Food Plants. Others keep our earth clean, or offer themselves as food to sustain other life forms, or provide nutrients for the earth. We are grateful for the many small creepy and crawly insect people....Now our Minds are One.

The Trees: We now turn our thoughts to the Standing People. The Earth has many families of Trees who have their own instructions and uses. Some provide little animals and birds as well as us, with shelter and shade. Others provide fruit, beauty and other useful things. Many peoples of the world use a Tree as a symbol of peace and strength. With one mind, we greet and thank the Tree Life....Now our Minds are One.

The Birds: We put our minds together as one and thank all the Winged People who move and fly about over our heads. The Creator gave them beautiful songs. Each day they remind us to enjoy and appreciate life. The Eagle was chosen to be their leader. To all the Birds from the smallest to the largest—we send our joyful greetings and thanks....Now our Minds are One.

The Rocks: Now we turn our thoughts to the Stone People. They hold our Earth in place and support our feet. They give minerals to the land so as to replenish our gardens and fields, meadows and forests with vital nutrients to keep all life healthy. They keep the records of the earth and its many ages. With one mind, we greet and give thanks to the Rocks....Now our Minds are One.

The Four Winds: We are all thankful to the Powers we know as the Four Winds. We hear their voices in the moving air as they refresh us and purify the living air, the spirit of Mother Earth, that we breathe. They help to bring the change of seasons. From the four directions they come, bringing us messages and giving us strength. With one mind, we send our greetings and thanks to the Four Winds....Now our Minds are One.

The Thunderers: Now we turn to the west where our Grandfathers, the thunder Beings live. With lightening and thundering voices. They bring with them the water that renews life. We bring our minds together as one to send greetings and thanks to our Grandfathers, the Thunderers....Now our Minds are One.

The Sun: We now send greetings and thanks to our eldest Brother, the Sun. Each day without fail he travels the sky from east to west, bringing the Light of a new day. He is the source of all the fires of life. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks our Brother the Sun....Now our Minds are One.

Grandmother Moon: We put our minds together and give thanks to our oldest Grandmother. The Moon, who lights the night time sky. She is the leader of women all over the world, and she governs the movement of the ocean tides. By her changing face we measure time, and it is the Moon who watches over the arrival of children here on Earth. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Grandmother, the Moon....Now our Minds are One.

The Stars: We give thanks to the Star People who are spread across the sky like diamonds. We see them in the night helping the Moon to light the darkness and bringing dew to the gardens and growing things. When we travel at night, they guide us home. With our minds gathered together as one, we send greetings and thanks to all our relatives in the Stars....Now our Minds are One.

The Enlightened Teachers: We gather our minds to greet and thank the enlightened Teachers who have come to help throughout the ages. When we forget how to live in harmony, they remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to these caring Teachers....Now our Minds are One.

The Creator: Now we turn our thoughts to the Creator, or Great Spirit, and send greetings and thanks for all the gifts of Creation this awesome world we live in. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth. For all the love that is still around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our choicest words of greetings and thanks to the Creator....Now our Minds are One.

These words of thanksgiving come to us from the Native people known as the Haudenosaunee, also known as the Iroquois or Six Nations of upstate New York and Canada. The Thanksgiving Address has ancient roots, dating back over 1000 years to the formation of the Great Law of Peace by a man called the Peacemaker and perhaps before that. Today these words are still spoken at the opening and closing of all ceremonial and governmental gatherings held by the Six Nations.



Steps 10, 11, and 12 are the maintenance steps of our spiritual condition upon which our recovery and very lives depend. This Winter Solstice 2017 edition of the 4 Directions is intended to help our readers understand the critical nature of carrying our message of recovery to others and the vision of our leaders who saw the necessity of creating the NAIGSO-AA even without the blessings of AAWS/GSO in New York.

The articles within this edition speak to our service to others, giving selflessly without expectations of reward or recognition. The articles speak to the Native American Indian Way of respecting all of creation; and not only those things from which many take, but without returning, and who exploit the gifts so freely and generously given by our Creator, Hot`ye Nok`ta. Change is in the wind. There will come a time when all of humankind will be humbled and they will come to understand

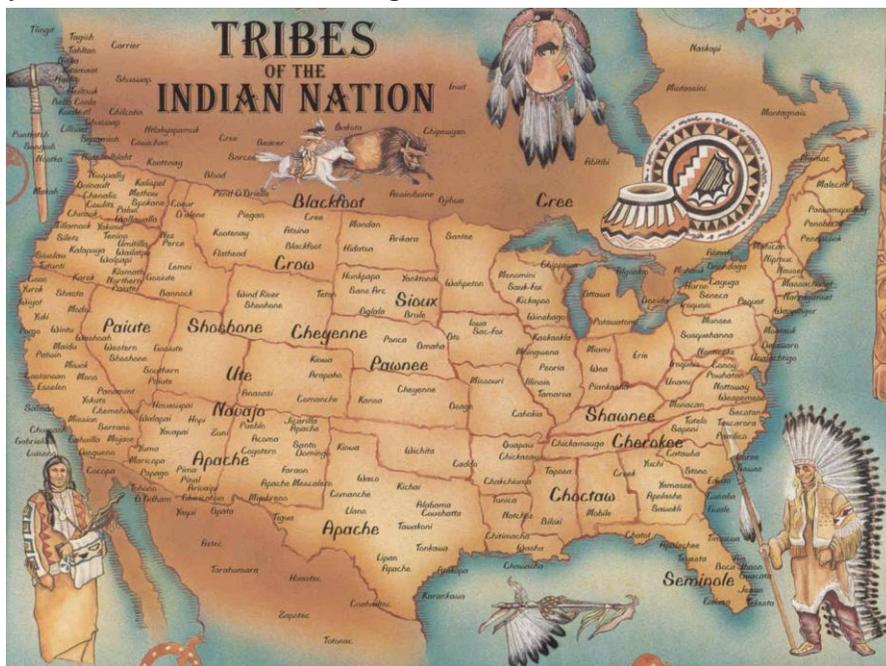
the ways of all Indigenous tribes around the world has always been the right path...**the Red Road.**

Hot`ye Nok`ta neh Okashewakon Manitou skge`no ha`gwa....Creator of the Universe and the Great and Holy Spirit guide and bless you....Jamie T- H (Ush`ka Waso')

Send your articles and events to us in time for the Spring equinox newsletter coming out in March 2018! We need your stories of recovery to show others this 12-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous will work for anyone who has a desire to stop drinking. Go to NAIGSO-AA.org and forward them to our General Manager who wrote the article below.

A Vision of NAIGSO-AA Service

Our early mission statement stated, “To provide a vision of service by the Native American Indian General Service Office (NAIGSO-AA) to the more than 500 sovereign Indian Nations in North America recognized by state governments and the Federal Government. The structure of the fellowship is in a form as to become attractive to the alcoholic Native American Indian. NAIGSO-AA recognizes the need for each Nation, tribe, and band to honor their spiritual customs and traditions and to base recovery on those living principles. The form of these spiritual customs and traditions cannot be separated from the social aspects of daily living and thus it cannot be separated from the structure and form of AA. This applies to individuals in recovery, to the AA group, and to NAIGSO-AA as a whole.



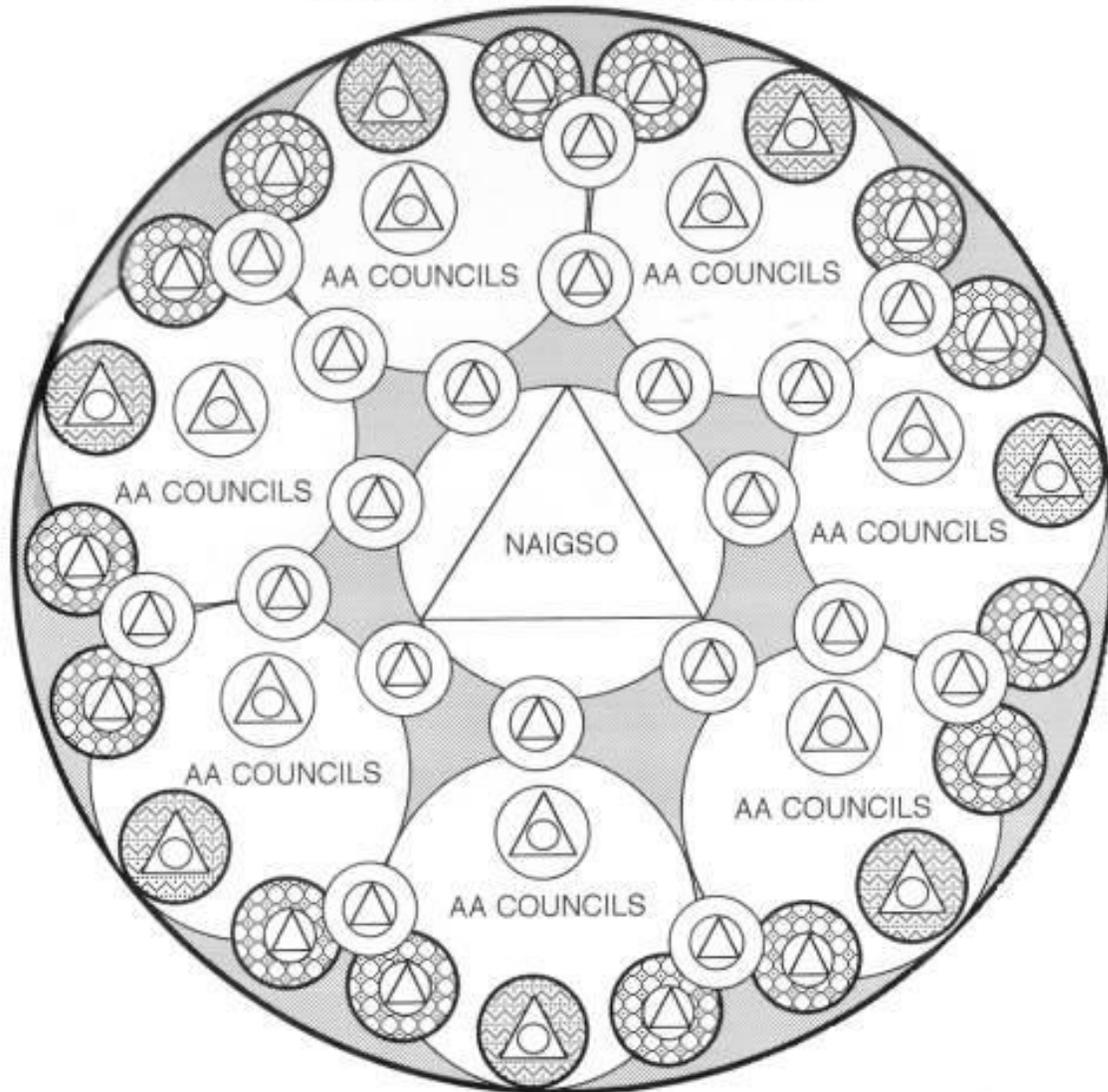
It is our vision to make all of the social aspects of our natural gatherings available for AA meetings and fellowship. This includes but is not limited to pot luck dinner meetings, pow wows, camp meetings, encampments, conventions, and conferences. Each group is free in the tradition of AA to incorporate their own traditional ways into the format of their meetings. At these gatherings, representatives assigned, elected, or appointed by their AA group will meet and exchange information which may then be communicated to the NAIGSO-AA.

The diagram below is a design of the structure of the AA fellowship for the Native American Indian. The outer circle represents the universe of the Indian Nations of North America. NAIGSO-AA is available to and has sent communications introducing itself to almost all Indian Nations at this time. This configuration is a dynamic representation of all the entities that are moving and interacting with each other through the meetings, pow wows, conventions, conferences, gatherings, etc. Although the NAIGSO-AA is shown at the center of the circle, it is always in touch and available to all individuals and groups. It is expected that NAIGSO-AA representatives will be available at these events.

It is our intention to provide a service organization that is able to evolve and grow to meet the needs of those it serves. This is only a beginning and we expect the Creator to continue to direct us all in the development and success of NAIGSO-AA as time goes by.” (From naigso-aa.org website)

Alcoholics Anonymous for the Native American Indian

Structure of the Fellowship



The outer circle represents the Universe of Native American Indians



Native American Indian
General Service Office



Native American Indian
AA Group



Native American Indian
Alanon Group



AA Council Meetings



Individual Native American
AA Member



Individual Native American
Alanon Member

NAIGSO-AA was formed to create an AA service structure comfortable to Indian peoples based on a vision given to Earl, a Paiute Indian. In this vision Earl saw Indian people coming together to celebrate their sobriety and the customs and traditions of their own nations. Earl saw the need hold a National and International Native American AA Convention so he formed the planning committee and the very first convention was held in Las Vegas, NV in 1991.

In his vision Earl saw the need of Indian peoples to have representation at the World Service level of Alcoholics Anonymous. So he suggested and supported the formation of the Native American Indian General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous. Earl and several others formed the original board of directors. Earl was kicked off the AA convention committee he originally formed as a result of his involvement in NAIGSO- AA. Earl continued to follow his vision despite the feelings of those committee members. Because Earl stood steadfast to that vision NAIGSO-AA, the National-International Native American AA convention, and the Wellbriety movement (formed by another Indian AA member who understood the needs of Indian peoples but whose ideas were rejected by New York AA GSO) have all come about as the legacy of Earl's vision and have become like three legs (directions) holding up the stool of recovery for Native Americans.

Recovery from alcoholism through Native American traditions and customs and the principals of Alcoholics Anonymous are not only alive and well, but thriving in Indian Country. These facts were recently documented in an article in Box 459, volume 62, Spring 2016, an AA GSO publication. This was a history making action by New York GSO, the written documentation of the validity of Earl's vision and Indian peoples need to seek and find sobriety through their own customs and traditions. But as is the way of AA, it is slow to change and much work still needs to be done. Thus NAIGSO-AA still functions to provide AA service to Native Americans.

After many decades of struggle and misunderstanding between New York AA GSO and NAIGSO-AA it was decided to follow the wisdom of Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce Nation and we have chosen to "fight no more" for recognition in the AA World Service structure.

Today, we function strictly as an AA service entity to Native Americans and all alcoholics maintaining a database of Native American AA groups, a Loners' directory, a Calendar of Indian AA events, publish and distribute our daily meditations manuscript, "Daily Readings from the AA Lodge."

The printing, distribution-free of charge and approval of this manuscript, by AA as a whole, has become the very heart of the NAIGSO-AA vision. The wisdom of our elders and the principals of Alcoholics Anonymous have been brought together in a way that speaks deeply to Indian people seeking sobriety. It has become the fourth leg (fourth direction) of Earl's vision and has broken through one of the major hurdles in carrying the AA message to Native Americans- "AA is a Whiteman's program." Over the last decade we have sent out over one thousand manuscripts. They are being sent out to AA members around the world seeking approval and to carry the AA message. They are being paid for by the faithful financial contributions of AA members from around the world. It is the instrument that has truly made us an AA World Service entity and is the fourth leg or direction of the Indian AA recovery circle or stool. A stool will stand on three legs but can be a

little wobbly. When you add the fourth leg the circle is complete and the stool is very hard to tip over.



No stool or circle is complete or effective without a seat (center.) The seat of the Native American recovery circle is made up of all the sober folks carrying the AA recovery message to the Native Nations. This is true whether the AA message is being carried in a formal AA meeting, at a pow-wow or around a Spirit Fire, it may be being carried during a sweat lodge or through a sacred pipe or any other Native American spiritual ceremony or gathering.



For the real center of the AA program is one drunk talking to another drunk. It does not matter where or how, provided it is done only “to stay sober and to help another alcoholic achieve sobriety.”

In 1954 Bernard Smith, late chairman of AA’s General Service Board, addressed the question: **Why Do We Need a Conference?**

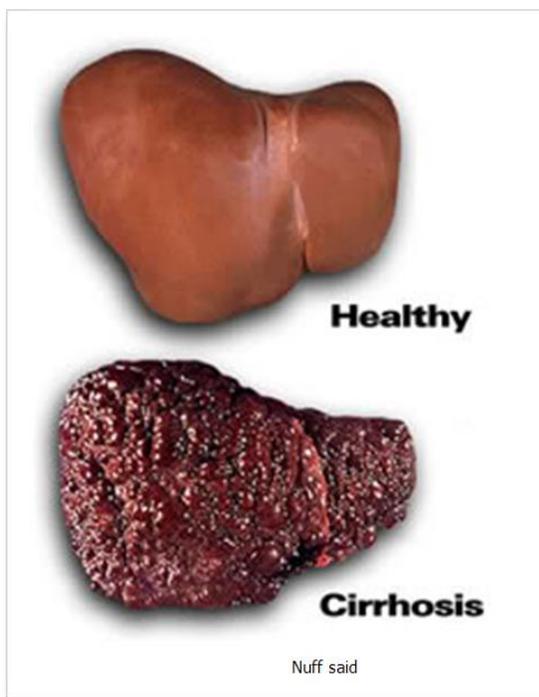
“We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth that brought us back to life.

“We need it because we, more than others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige, which we must endure, can never invade A.A. We need it to ensure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing over-integration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services.

“We need it to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all A.A., and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is.” (AA Service Manual, page S19, 1999-2000 edition)

Despite Bernard’s bold words there exists a need in AA for more understanding of the barriers of carrying the AA message, as presented in AA’s conference-approved literature, to many Native peoples. Despite his bold words, there is a need to add new dimensions and dynamics to the AA message in order to reach a people who have had their identities stripped from them by invaders, their homes destroyed, then locked up on reservations (insert “prison camps”), who have been punished for speaking their own language and spiritual practices and who suffer from a rate of alcoholism 10 times higher than mainstream American society. AA seems to flourish worldwide, yet, struggles to carry its message to Native Americans, perhaps, because AA clings too tightly to its own words, *“the tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action.”* (Alcoholics Anonymous, page 17)

Red, yellow, black, or white man's liver?



So, Earl was given a vision to begin the process of “Bridging the Gap.” Earl’s vision is growing and Bernard’s bold words are beginning to take root in Native American communities. However, alcoholism, abuse and other manifestations of spiritual disease are still destroying Native Americans every day. Some will say that AA must stick to its “singleness of purpose,” but in its own literature it speaks of “bottles being a symbol of much deeper problems” and “the need to get down to causes and conditions.”

In “The Doctor’s Opinion,” found in the front of AA’s basic text, “Alcoholics Anonymous,” Dr. William D. Silkworth speaks about the different types of alcoholics, the psychopaths, those unwilling to admit they cannot take even one drink, those who are entirely normal folk except in the effect alcohol has upon them, and the manic-depressive type about whom a whole chapter got be written. In the Indian world, perhaps there are also several types. Maybe

there is the full-blood traditional Indian, who experiences the world in a way so that he is unable to understand the Euro-Christian terms used in AA literature, the type who has chosen to stay in the poverty, abuse and desolation found on many reservations because he was raised to believe tribe and family come first, the mixed blood that is not accepted by full-bloods or whites, the urban Indian who has become bi-cultural and has found sobriety in the Whiteman’s program but cannot grasp why other types of Indians cannot get sober that way. And maybe there is another type who was raised in the Whiteman’s world and does not know he suffers from the spiritual darkness Indians do, perhaps he is a descendent of an ancestor who was abused in a Boarding School then adopted out to a white family. Perhaps a whole chapter needs to be written about him too?

Well, just maybe, a whole chapter has been written about all types of Indian alcoholics. And maybe, all alcoholics can find a rebirth in AA and the halls of AA will become unlocked so anyone with an alcohol problem may enter unasked and feel welcome. And maybe, in the Indian way, it was written during a vision given to a Paiute Indian called Earl Lent, Jr.

And maybe, each day, AA is slowly accepting the message in its own literature, “Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven’t got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.” *(Alcoholics Anonymous, page 164)*

At the 2000 International AA Convention a Native American elder was allowed to carry the Eagle Staff in the Parade of Flags opening ceremony, another first in AA history.

In 2017, NAIGSO-AA still supports Earl's vision of AA service, the AA circle of love continues to expand and the "language of the heart" is still being spoken in Alcoholics Anonymous....Gary C., General Manager of NAIGSO-AA.org



ARE YOU TALKING
THE TALK?



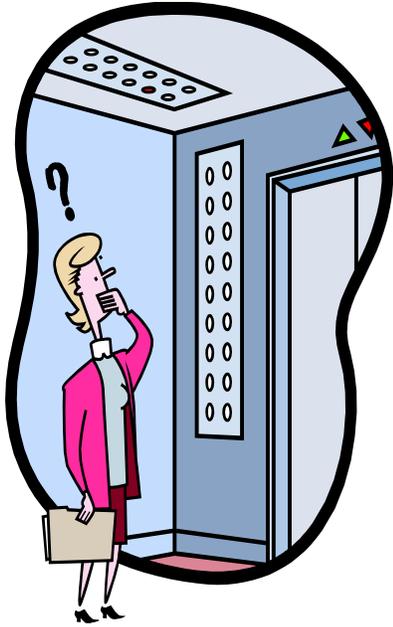
*THEN WALK THE WALK ...IN THE NATIVE
AMERICAN SPIRITUAL WAY!*

RECOVERY ROCKS ON OR OFF THE REZ!

**Fact: Fourteen states have no Indian
Reservations. They are:**

- Arkansas
- Delaware
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Kentucky
- Maryland
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- Ohio
- Pennsylvania
- Tennessee
- Vermont
- Virginia
- West Virginia





*There is no elevator to
sobriety....*

Noooooooooo.....!!!!!!



You have to use the steps!!!

To all our Owisas and De'no'des (Sisters and Brothers) at Christmas:



*"Ga gwe'goh na ga neh huh' niya'wah' oh
neh noh gai'wa ye'ih neh thos nyieh'oh
Na'wen ni' yuh, neh ho'gwa ho wa'nit
gah'dah goh ha yah'da dek, no do'gas
da'niak, ha'wa." - Oi'wah 1:23 (Seneca)*

*"Behold, a virgin shall be with child,
and shall bring forth a son, and they
shall call his name Emmanuel, which
being interpreted is, God with us." -
Matthew 1:23*



As we move into a new year may we all be sober and mindful of those who have very little, yet they never complain. Let us open our hearts to those whom religions have persecuted and condemned. May we all make the amends necessary for reconciliatory peace with others. And may we all remember that our own personal way/path is not the only one, remembering the words of Yesu;

"But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." - Luke 6:27-28

May you all be blessed this Christmas and forever.....Jamie Terra Hawk (Ush'ka Waso')

