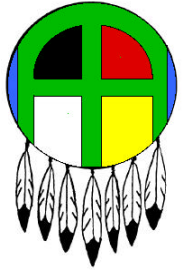


# Four Directions



*Native American Indian General Service Office*

*Fall 2006*

*Pg. 1*



## **“West”**



**“I earnestly advise every alcoholic to read this book through, and though perhaps he came to scoff, he may remain to pray.”**

William D. Silkworth, M.D.

“Alcoholics Anonymous” pg. xxx Reprinted with permission A.A.W.S.

**West is commonly represented with the color black, and sometimes red. Some of the many nations believe that West is the direction of the spirit and is home of the Ancient Ones, that it represents death, not death as the end but as a necessary part of the circle of life. It usually represents Autumn-the harvest, a culmination of our goals, spiritual renewal, purity, strength, and the direction from which the rain comes.**

**As the rain brings new life, so should we approach the West in our cycle of life looking to the wisdom of our elders. AA tells us our recovery is a journey based on our spiritual growth, that we must let go of old ideas and thoroughly follow the “path.” NAIGSO-AA is now at that crossroads, it is time to review the culmination of our goals, to watch the rain bring new life, to harvest the blessings of purity, strength and spiritual renewal.**

**There are several exciting articles in this issue about the growth of AA in the Native American world. It is the hope of this editor that these are the signs of the rain bringing new life to Native Americans in recovery.**

**Gary C. – Editor**



## **2008 NAIGSO-AA General Service Conference**



We would like to announce the heartfelt decision to hold the 2008 NAIGSO-AA General Service Conference in a new location on Native American land. It is the desire of the NAIGSO Board members to find a suitable location and a local council to host this gathering. Our desire is to bring NAIGSO-AA home, to the people.

It is also at the heart of the NAIGSO-AA vision of service to make the conference part of an annual Native American AA convention. We hope to create a Native American AA Gathering that is in keeping with AA and Native American traditions, to provide a warm home to our brothers and sisters in recovery.

We look forward to hearing from everyone who is interested in hosting, being a part of this gathering, or would like to offer a suitable location. Please contact us:

NAIGSO-AA  
P.O. Box 1253, Lakeside, CA 92040  
Telephone (951) 927-2626  
Fax: 866-716-8752  
E-mail: [generalmanager@naigso-aa.org](mailto:generalmanager@naigso-aa.org)

**NAIGSO-AA's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Service Conference**

**January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Chet Huntley room**

**Many Nations in Recovery Center**

**3928 Illinois St., San Diego, CA. 92104**

**Starts @ 12 Noon with Opening Prayer and Potluck Dinner**

**Everyone is invited to attend!!**



## Special Native American AA Forum Banning, CA

Reprinted from Box 4-5-9  
October-November 2006 Issue - Page 5



The Special Native American Forum in Banning, California—which was held on an Indian reservation—was an opportunity for Native Americans A.A. members to share their thoughts about reconciling the principals of Alcoholics Anonymous with their tribal cultures. There were 201 attendees from 16 states and one Canadian province, and local Native American A.A.'s had significant input into the agenda and format.

"I think A.A. is the only way to go, though I may be biased," says Sam E. from New Mexico, a Native American who has been sober in A.A. for 24 years. "Among Native Americans, though, A.A. can be perceived as a white man's organization," says Sam. "There are historical hurdles which can't be denied, and there can be a lack of understanding on both sides."

The Forum, he says, was an occasion to air concerns. "Getting folks to talk about issues, about how they can feel isolated and not a part of A.A., starts the healing process. We are all human beings, and when we begin to understand each other, we have a chance to really communicate."

Sam notes that the problem of alcoholism among Native Americans is "substantial."

"We in the Indian community—no matter what the issues—need to take care of our side of the street and find a way to stay sober. We need to reconcile, and after that we can go out and share this wonderful program."

Forums were created in 1976 to bring together A.A. members from around the U.S. and Canada with representatives from the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Inc., the Grapevine Corporate Board, and Grapevine and General Service Office staff members. There is no registration fee for a forum, and no formal actions are taken.

The Forum in Banning was held on the weekend of May 20 and 21, and included a workshop on reaching alcoholics on reservations and another on how an area started A.A. meetings on a reservation. As at all Forums, there were presentations from members of the G.S.O. staff, the General Service Board, and the A.A. Grapevine, in addition to those by local A.A. members.

Also attending the Forum was Ken S. from South Dakota, a Native American who has been sober in A.A. for 20 years. "There can be a lot of confusion about A.A. in the Indian community, so it is good to have something like this gathering to discuss the basics of what A.A. is and what it does," says Ken.

(Continued page 4)



## Special Native American AA Forum Banning, CA

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He acknowledges that there are issues particular to being Native American and a member of Alcoholics Anonymous: "We not only have to deal with being alcoholics, we have to deal with the Indian and white issues. But my feeling is that the spirit of the whole Forum experience was good, and the fact that the Forum was held on a reservation helped. It put people at ease and set the foundation for good interaction," says Ken.

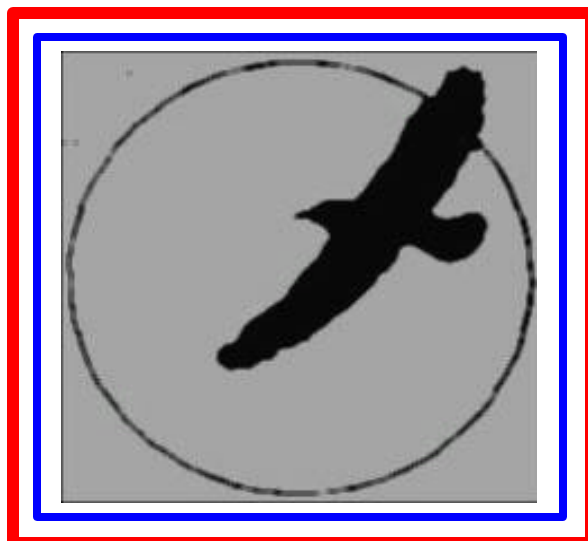
At the end of this gathering, people wanted more. They felt empowered by being able to interact with members of the board and G.S.O. staff," he says. "Most of us in the Native American community believe in A.A. just as it is, and the message at the Forum was that the power in A.A. comes out of the A.A. groups."

Barbara A, from Escondido, California, an A.A. member and Native American who helped with input to the agenda, says "issues were addressed head-on at the event. There are some in the Indian community who insist that the only way to get sober is the traditional way...My life was changed by non-natives who, like me, had one foot in the grave."

Some of the questions discussed were:

Do we teach A.A. newcomers that living A.A.'s Traditions is in keeping with our culture?

How can we make it easier for people to come into A.A. and to overcome their problems with the religious aspects of A.A.?





## Some Highlights from the Final Report of the "Special Native American Forum"



1. It took Alcoholics Anonymous to clarify my mind and spirit.
2. After 18 years of sobriety, the songs of my people are coming back into my heart. Every morning I pray for my Creator to help me walk in spirit and beauty.
3. There is some confusion on reservations by ex-drinkers who are sober through their church or wellness programs. To avoid this confusion, we need to continue to identify ourselves as A.A. members and make clear we live by the principals of Alcoholics Anonymous.
4. I learned that anything I put before Alcoholics Anonymous, I will lose. As a result of working A.A.'s Steps, I had to look at mayor resentments regarding racism, history, and Native American prejudice.
5. I was asked "How can you drink when you know who you are?" "Why don't you honor the old ways?"
6. Solution - one alcoholic at a time, one gathering like this at a time.
7. We need lots of future discussions on ways to come to this solution.
8. Suggestion - Go to tribal leadership and ask for help.
9. I appreciate seeing everyone here at this Forum, our sponsors, friends, and co-workers of our 12 Steps.
10. Some of us are good at dragging alcoholics out of bars and out of treatment facilities. We honor one another for the hard work each of us is doing in service.
11. My ancestors and your ancestors brought us to this point at the Morongo Reservation. It is important to have one language, one dance, one song.
12. We are lucky to have a culture to carry. A.A. is traditional and sobriety is traditional.
13. Thank you for 12<sup>th</sup> Stepping me today. Although I got sober at 16, my feelings were and are no different from anyone else. I grew up when I had to change.
14. Thank you for bringing you souls here today.

### Group Conscience Decision:

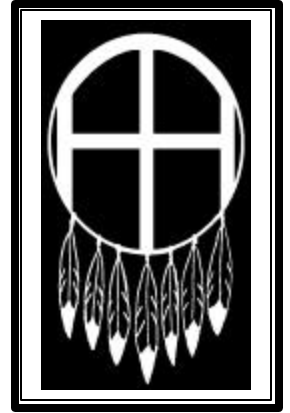
On Saturday afternoon, a member asked to have sage burned in the community center. A vote was taken by a show of hands. The majority wished to comply with this request. Two members spoke eloquently in opposition. A second vote was taken and, once again, the majority vote was to burn sage to bless the community center.

Valerie O. received a note Sunday morning from an elder stating, "Thanks to all. The building has been blessed."



## **The Goddess's Hands**

A Navajo Story



One Solstice two women, one an elder, one young, went camping. They rode horses as far as they could, then hiked up a steep mountain. By the time they had pitched their tent, made supper and cleaned up they were pretty well bushed. The elder lady asked the younger to make sure the horses were secure. The next morning the horses were gone. The elder woman said to the younger, "What happened to the horses, I thought you had tethered them?" The younger woman said, "I don't know, ask the Goddess because I was so tired last night I just prayed to the Goddess to take care of the horses. I don't know what happened. I prayed three times!"

The elder replied "It is good that you have faith, but to ask the Goddess to tether the horses you would have to offer her your hands because she has no others.'

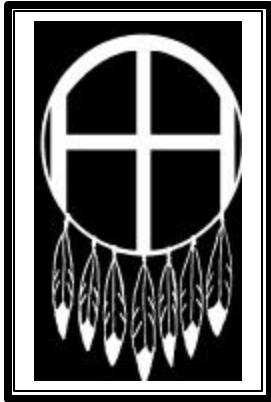
**"You are the Goddess's hands."**

**2007 Native American Forum    May 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>**

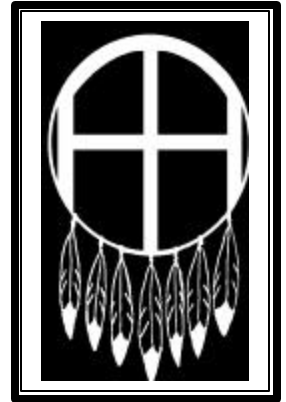
**Tululip Tribal Center  
6700 Totem Beach Road  
Tululip, Washington 98271**

**Contact: Sam E. (505) 798-0936  
Email: <mailto:sam@samenglish.com>**

**\*This Forum is being coordinated by a local Native American A.A. Committee\***



## *The Common Thread*



The common thread between the teachings of the Native Elders and Alcoholics Anonymous are absolutely amazing. To me it enforces the belief that the spiritual journey of all people is the same path. We just call it different things because we learn to communicate in different cultures.

Sometimes the teachings become clouded by the tellers, sometimes by translation, and sometimes by the followers. Sometimes it is by accident, sometimes by misunderstanding and sometimes for personal gain. We must walk the path we feel is right. This is taught by the elders of AA, not always followed to closely by individuals in the program.

So it is my responsibility to walk my path and teach others to find their own path in recovery. Many people read "How It Works" and insert the idea that there is only one path. And there is only one path for each of us. Sometimes we just manage to stumble upon others on a common path.

Below is an example, though I have found many versions of this story, it always carries that "common thread" and it is exactly what AA teaches us about our emotions and actions. In fact, the first time I found this story it was in an AA newsletter!!

Anonymous

### **"AN OLD INDIAN TALE"**

A Cherokee elder is teaching his grandson about life. "A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy. "It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves."

"One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resent, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.  
The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith."

"This same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too."  
The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather which wolf would win.

The Cherokee elder simply replied, "The one you feed."

**Please join the circle and send us news of what is happening in your area. Share your experience, strength and hope with the NAIGSO-AA family.**

**Four Directions is the voice of the people.**

Share your experience and your wisdom with the Circle. Please submit articles of interest to Native Americans in recovery from alcoholism by emailing them to: [newsletter@naigso-aa.org](mailto:newsletter@naigso-aa.org).

Your original artwork is also needed. Any graphics with a Native American or recovery theme can be submitted.

*Please do not submit any copyrighted materials.*

How to contact the Native American Indian General Service Office (NAIGSO):  
NAIGSO

P. O. Box 1253, Lakeside, CA 92040

<http://www.naigso-aa.org/>

951-927-2626

[generalmanager@naigso-aa.org](mailto:generalmanager@naigso-aa.org)

[newsletter@naigso-aa.org](mailto:newsletter@naigso-aa.org)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/naigsoaafamilycircles/>

## Four Directions Newsletter Subscriptions

If you would like to have "Four Directions" delivered to your home each quarter, you can receive a postage- paid copy for \$2.00 a year.

You can even have one sent to a friend as gift!!

NAME-----

ADDRESS-----

PHONE-----

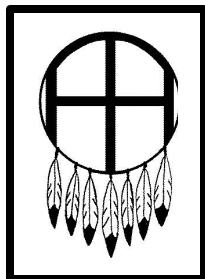
Make check payable to: "Naigso-AA"

Mail to: Native American Indian General Service Office

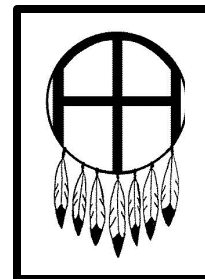
PO Box 1253

Lakeside, CA 92040





**Native American Indian Alcoholics Anonymous  
Registration Form for Individuals**



I am an individual who is willing to be a point of contact to carry the message of AA to the alcoholic who still suffers. I authorize my name and information as I have recorded it on this form to be included in the Native American Indian Alcoholics Anonymous Directory. In order to be included in the directory NAIGSO must receive your original signed copy of this form.

To help us be self-supporting it is suggested that each member on his or her sobriety birthday contribute one dollar per recovery year to NAIGSO.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

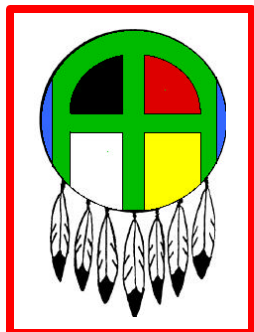
Tribal Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

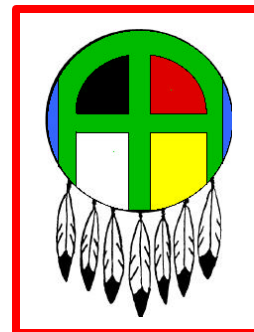
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return the completed form to:

**NAIGSO**, P.O. Box 1253, Lakeside, CA 92040  
Telephone (951) 927-2626 E-mail: [generalmanager@naigso-aa.org](mailto:generalmanager@naigso-aa.org)



**Native American Indian Alcoholics Anonymous  
Group Registration Form**



Group name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date group was started: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting location: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Reservation: \_\_\_\_\_ Nation: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting day:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Meeting time:							

Contact for the group

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tribal Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return the completed form to:

**NAIGSO**, P.O. Box 1253, Lakeside, CA 92040  
Telephone (951) 927-2626 E-mail: [generalmanager@naigso-aa.org](mailto:generalmanager@naigso-aa.org)