

Four Directions



Native American Indian General Service Office

Spring 2006

Pg.1

“East”

The direction, East represented by different colors by our many relations, always represents new beginnings, new life, hope, strength, success and vision.

The theme of this issue is “Vision.” The Native American Indian General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous was created as the result of a vision received by a Paiute Indian, Earl L. NAIGSO functions to provide recovery, unity and service to Native Americans, as well as all people in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Native Americans are dying at twice the average rate from the spiritual malady known as alcoholism. Every vision, every hope, ever new beginning needs to be held on to and nurtured in order to bring recovery into the grasp of the people dying out there. Every one of us who have experienced that vision of recovery, unity, and service have the responsibility to carry it to the next suffering alcoholic, whether they are living on a remote reservation or in the middle of the “big city” somewhere.

The first meeting of the Southeast Native American AA Council was held in Cherokee, NC during the “Indians in Sobriety” campout. Those who helped to put together this council wish to express their gratitude to the Cherokee committee who welcomed us into their home and allowed us to hold this council.

“Vision” lives in the hearts of many people today and it is the hope of the editor of this newsletter that the articles contained in this issue will express some of those visions.

On the topic of “Vision,” don’t forget to checkout the June issue of the AA Grapevine. It will feature Harriett S. and the story of her father’s vision, entitled “In My Father’s Footsteps.”

In keeping with the vision of service to Indian peoples, I would like to remind you that if the subscription fee prohibits you from receiving this newsletter in hardcopy form NAIGO-AA would be glad to send it to you for free.

“All My Relations”

**Gary C.
Editor**



Unity
Recovery
Service

Chukma !



Well here we are in 2006 and it is progress not perfection we seek. I have been making the transition from my mountain life in Durango, Colorado to the desert life in Tucson. I have now lived here three months and am getting acclimated to becoming a desert coyote. If you have time, I would appreciate your suggestions around several areas. For the last two months, I have been going with another fella on Wednesday mornings to Sells, AZ on the reservation of the Tohona O'Odham Nation to take an AA meeting to the jail inmates. I did this in Ignacio, Colorado on the Southern Ute land for a couple of years and I guess it remains on my heart to do so. In Ignacio, we were able to have our meetings in a circle and pass the Eagle feather and have AA meetings in a good way and we grew and saw sober results. This very good gentleman I am going with has been unselfishly taking these meetings for a couple of years and the most we seem to have is 4 or 5 guys out of an inmate population of 120 plus inmates. We started with about five in Ignacio but as the word got around, we grew to two sessions of about 30.

The good gentleman I am going with has 34 years of sobriety and is a stickler for the traditions. When I suggested bringing Native American AA meditations, he said he had difficulty as they were not (in his opinion) conference-approved literature. He says to the inmates that he is bringing them an AA meeting that is just like ALL AA meetings all over the world, where they all read How it Works, The Traditions, and they all close with The Lord's Prayer. Well you and I know this is not true.

I want to continue and I pray to Grandfather to not let my ego get in the way.

On a brighter note, my new home group in Tucson, The Happy Destiny Group has a literature topic meeting on one Thursday Night, a month and they have honored me and NAIGSO-AA by asking me to read from our website. I only have 10 minutes or so for the literature portion and there is so much history of love and service. I wish the gentleman I referred to earlier attended this meeting but he does not. I would appreciate your suggestions as to what I could emphasize in 10 short minutes. I am so grateful for the opportunity and there are some Native Americans who attend.

Higher Power willing, I shall celebrate 20 sober years on March 4th and 68 years on Mother Earth in September and moving to lower elevation has given more energy and enthusiasm than ever.

My only transportation is still my Harley-Davidson and I hope to ride to meet many of you in May at the conference.

Ayockpa chi, Philip

William's Story

I'm William and I'm an alcoholic. My first beer was when I was twelve; at thirteen I went to work in a pizza place. They sold beer and wine. I worked weekends, so I got drunk every weekend. I didn't get drunk like some people, I drank till I couldn't walk and always got sick. In High School, I joined the Rodeo Club and I got drunk. I started going to bars. I also started smoking pot. After school I started working in the oilfields and made a lot of money. I was drinking, smoking pot and doing crank. I was doing all I could get my hands on and doing all that was there. My drinking got up to a fifth of "Jack" a day. I started going to jail a lot for drinking, once with a gun.

I got married with the promise that I would quit drinking. I put her through Hell for five years. We split up for a week and I told her I needed help. The next day I was on a bus to Dallas to start treatment. It worked! I didn't drink for fifteen years until our marriage began to have problems. One day, on my way to work I picked up a six-pack and I was drinking again. I drank for another three years.

I'm forty-five years old and I'm sick and tired of being "sick and tired." I am blessed because I should be dead from all that I put myself through. Today is day nine of not drinking. I want to say thanks to Tracy for helping me find a group that helps me live sober. I drank because I could not relate to life. All I can do is one day at a time. Thanks for being there!

"In A Good Way" Heard on the Rez

Recently I was at the clinic on my husband's reservation when I overheard two guys talking.

One asked the other, "How are you doing?"

He replied, "I just got out of treatment, and it's hard to stay away from old friends and old places!"

The first guy answers, "I can understand that, I've been through that! But you got to stay away from those friends."

The second guy then says, "I don't feel like my old friends want me to stay sober."

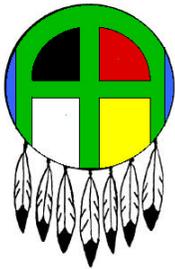
The first agrees and says, "They seem to think that when a person quits drinking, he thinks he is better than they are."

Well the reality is they are just trying to better themselves.

Then the first guy says, "Hey, you can hangout with me anytime! Remember we used to hangout in a bad way? Well now we can hang out in a good way. In a sober way!"

It made me smile because they were young guys. When my husband got sober, there were so few people that were sober.

Debbie R.



Like Wind Through The Trees



In the spring of 1946 I was born an outcast on the *Ki-on-twog-ky* (Cornplanter) reservation in the state of Pennsylvania, the ancestral land of the Seneca Indian. Today it is the Kinzua Valley, now covered by water.

Being born neither white nor oh'n-weh-oh'n-weh (of the real people), I wondered which race would claim me. To which culture did I belong? I soon lost any identity I may have had, resenting Senecas, hating white society, and angry at both. I would get even! I would show them! Prejudice, racial slurs, hatred, and indifference were my life. I did not fit in the workplace, the social circle, even religion. So alcohol became my master and I turned my back on everything. My spirit was dead. My life of self-destruction had begun. For the next three decades I saw the edge of the world through the bottom of a whiskey, wine, or beer bottle. It is the way and belief of the oh'n-weh-oh'n-weh (real people) that life is spirituality—that the spirit lives while the body is dead. When my body gave up and darkness came upon me like the Sunfather gives up to the West its light—it was then I was born to the East where life begins. I met the windwalker, ta-tey-mani. Windwalker was so named by his grandmother, a true Seneca and a true oh'n-weh-oh'n-weh. Ta-tey-mani was a man who knew the medicine of the wolf teachings. He shared with me the teachings of the sacred tree, the medicine wheel, and the teachings of the Creator of all living things. He shared with me the teachings of the Big Book. Today, I sit silently in spirit, letting the Creator flow through me, as the wind whispers through the trees on a warm summer day. I am grateful for the Creator's teachings and lessons of life. A tear of happiness runs down my cheek as a question arises: "Why was I spared?" Perhaps I will never know. But I am thankful, for through the Creator I can take a sober breath and walk in freedom as other men do. Today, I accept and surrender to a power greater than myself, for it is through this power, whom I call the Creator, that I live. He does for me what I cannot do for myself. He gives me hope, courage, strength, unconditional love, and life. Through him, I was placed among a group of special people like me. They are a group of loving, kind people, helping and guiding those who still struggle. Truly a great power works through this Fellowship of men and women whose name is AA. It is here where I find shelter from my self-made storm, sanctuary from fear, peace from the turmoil. I walk with a clear mind and a pure heart and speak with an honest tongue. I have hope and humility. Today I am an alcoholic, not an outcast from life.

Larry J.

(Reprinted with Permission-AA Grapevine)

"Be An Eagle"

One day a farmer came upon a man carrying a dead eagle. The farmer asked, "What happened to the eagle?" The man replied, "I shot it." "Well," asked the farmer, "is it a male or a female?" The man answered, "It's a female!"

So being smart, the farmer looked around and sure enough, he found the eagle's nest. Inside he discovered two little eaglets. So he stuck the two little eaglets in his pocket and took them home. Figuring that since they had wings and all, they must be a lot like chickens, so he put them in with his chickens to live. And the two little eagles grew up, thinking they were chickens.

One day, a wise old owl swooped down and said, "Hey, what are you guys doing living here with these chickens?" "Why we live here because we are chickens, silly." "I'm afraid not," said the wise, old owl, "You guys are eagles!" "Sorry," answered one of the eagles, "but we are chickens."

"One of you hop on my back and I will show you that you are eagles," said the wise old owl. So one of the eagles hopped on his back and the wise old owl flew off. They flew and they flew. Pretty soon they came upon an eagle soaring on the wind, high in the sky. "See," said the wise old owl, "I told you that you're an eagle!" The eagle said, "Say we do look like that, but we're chickens." "Nope, you're eagles," said the wise old owl and he dumped the eagle off his back. The eagle began to fall and screeched, "Help me, help me! I am falling!" But the wise old owl just told him, "Stretch your wings and soar like the eagle you are!" "I can't, I'm a chicken," cried the eagle. But the wise old owl only repeated, "Stretch your wings and soar!" Finally the eagle stretched one wing, and then he stretched the other wing and he started to fly. And he flew. And he started to flap his wings and he started to fly faster. And he flew faster! Then he started to soar. So he flapped his wings and he started to soar higher. And he flapped his wings and he began to soar higher and faster. He soared higher and higher and faster and faster.

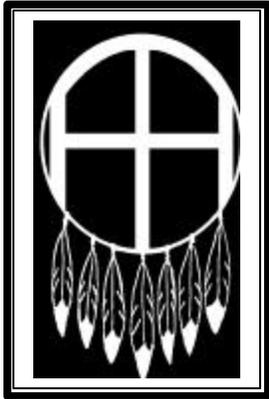
After a while, him and the wise old owl returned to the farm. The eagle was very excited and he told the other eagle, "We are eagles, we are eagles!" But the second eagle only replied, "Nope, we're only chickens just like all the other chickens we grew up with."

So the wise old owl said, "Come on, hop on my back and I will take you and show you that you're really an eagle, too." The second eagle hopped on his back. They flew and they flew. Finally they came upon an eagle soaring high in the sky. "See, eagles soar high in the sky, higher than any other bird, as a matter of fact," said the wise old owl. "But I'm only a chicken," sighed the eagle. Then the wise old owl dumped the second eagle off his back and said, "Stretch your wings and soar like the eagle you are!" Finally, the second eagle stretched one wing, and then he slowly stretched the other wing and he started to fly. And he flew. And he started to flap his wings and he started to fly faster! Then he started to soar. Then he flapped his wings and he started to soar higher. And he flapped his wings and he began to soar higher and faster. He soared higher and higher and faster and faster. And he started to screech, "We are Eagles!"

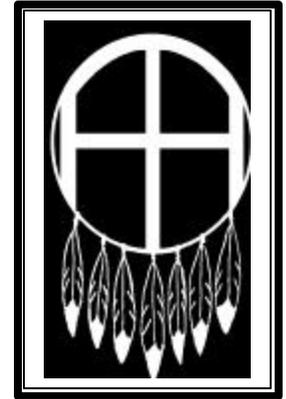
"We are Eagles, We are Eagles!"

The wise old owl laughed and said, "So start acting like Eagles!"

Then the wise old owl flew away.



“Visions”



In late 1934, Bill W. had a vision of one drunk talking to another drunk carrying the message that it is possible to recover from alcoholism, thus starting a chain reaction that has become Alcoholics Anonymous.

In 1990, Earl L, a Paiute Indian, had a vision in which he saw Native Americans coming to together in unity, celebrating sobriety, and embracing their culture. He saw the helping hand of AA as being attractive to the Native American, he saw the Native American traditional ways as adding to the warmth and unconditional love of AA's principals.

Each year, since 1993, a small committee of dedicated and determined people have created a wonderful gathering known as the “Indians in Sobriety” campout. This campout is truly a vision of dreams and new life. The committee holds to its vision of helping Indians to obtain sobriety. The selflessness of these people who work so hard to make this gathering possible is awesome. It is absolutely amazing to a part of the event.

This year over 300 people came together to celebrate their sobriety. The gathering is nestled in the home of the Tsalagi people on the Cherokee Indian Reservation, also known as the Qualla Boundary. Deep in the mountain community of Big Cove, these people open their home, hearts and arms to welcome everyone who wants to be a part of the campout.

The vision of A Southeastern Native American AA Council was fulfilled with the first-ever gathering being held as part of the campout. Many of the concerns facing Native Americans seeking sobriety were discussed with the focus being on the devastation caused by alcoholism in Indian Country.

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone in Cherokee who works so hard to make these events possible. And I thank the Creator for life and sobriety.

Gary C.

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

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

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newsletter@naigso-aa.org

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

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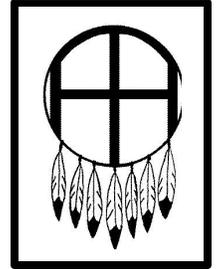
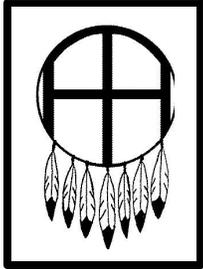
You can even have one sent to a friend as gift!!

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: _____

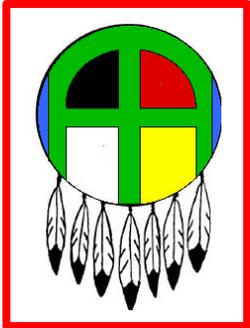
Telephone Number: _____ E-mail address: _____

Tribal Affiliation: _____

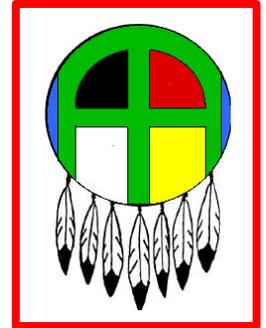
Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return the completed form to:

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



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