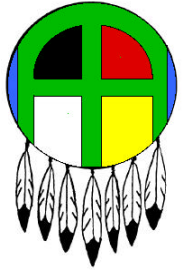


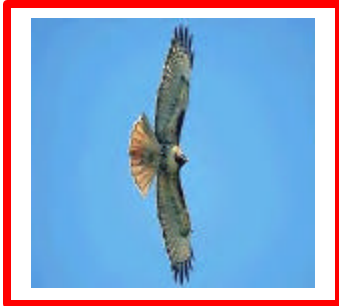
# Four Directions



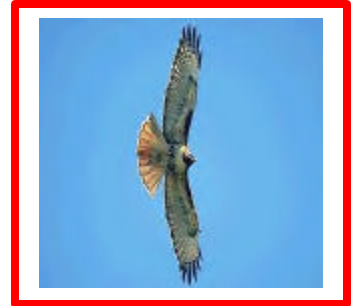
*Native American Indian General Service Office*

*Winter 2007*

*Pg.1*



**“North”**



Brothers and Sisters,

In honor of the four directions, I dedicate this issue to those who have gone before us. I give thanks to the Great Mystery and to you, who live today to continue the journey of AA recovery on the Red Road. Inside you will find several articles about AA members who have worked very hard to carry the AA message in the Indian world. One thing common to all their stories is the great love each of them possessed for people and for AA.

In the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous it says, “We were reborn.” This is what happens when we quit drinking and begin the journey of recovery; we complete the circle and enter the life of the spirit.

Most of all I would like to show my respect to all those elders who have helped to bring sobriety to the Native American world. Though some of them were not elders in the traditional sense, they were all certainly elders in AA.

Today my spirit knows that death is only the renewing of the cycle of life. This topic is very close to my heart as I work on this edition, for my father takes his last steps on his journey to the spirit world. Yet, I know when he passes over, he will become another part of the circle of life.

Though I was not raised in my Native American heritage, I have tried to honor those traditions to best my ability in this newsletter. With many varying tribes out there and their varying customs, I have simply done the best I could to show honor to each of you.

Wado! Gary C.



## In Memory of An Elder...



On November 27th at 5:28 pm Roger L went through the Western Door. He went peacefully with many friends and family around him, who were praying, smudging, drumming and singing. This is how Roger wanted to go. He passed at Dunnville Hospital, about 20 minutes from his home. Although we have not been given an official cause of death, I believe he passed from COPD and emphysema, which he struggled with for many years. He had been diagnosed with lung cancer two weeks earlier, but the doctors and I do not believe this was the cause of death. I had the honor and gift of moving to his home in mid October to help him through his sickness. My plan was to assist with his getting better, and as we all know, it's ok to plan as long as we don't plan the outcome.

The doctor was talking to Roger's sister, Inez, Donnie and myself, when Bert came to say he was gone. Donnie got to one side of him, I got to the other, when we saw him take one more breath as the nurse confirmed his heart had stopped. Just before that, Louise, Ray's wife, told him that it was okay to go, Bernice (his late wife), was waiting.

I know that most of you already know of his passing, yet there are some I just have not reached yet. This is my first opportunity to get on a computer since his passing. I want to thank the people who sent out emails to make notifications. I also want to clarify some things, and share with those who were unable to make it to the wake and funeral. I wish for you to know what the future brings for his legacy.

Roger was of the Mississauga of the New Credit First Nation. He lived in Cayuga, Ontario, Canada. Many considered him an Elder or Teacher, but he did not think of himself that way at all. He thought of himself as a poor little Ojibwa boy who by the grace and love of the Creator had been sober for 41 years. He believed in Alcoholic Anonymous, first, above all else. AA was his life and he gave willingly and unconditionally to carrying the message of recovery and AA to our brothers and sisters all over Turtle Island. He worked diligently in his AA and Native community, giving of self. He was Executive Director of the Toronto House for 26 years, a house for men coming out of prison, wishing to get clean and sober and have a better way of life. He accomplished many things in his life but the highest honor he felt ever bestowed on him was when he carried in the Fireside Eagle Staff at the World Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in 2005 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. This was an event in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous, honoring all Native people. Toronto sits on Mississauga land, and he brought in the Eagle Staff to welcome all the members of AA around the world in the Flag Ceremony as part of the opening ceremonies of the 70th birthday of Alcoholics Anonymous. He also hosted the Native American Hospitality Suite that year as well.

Roger was one of the founders of the Fireside Sharing Circle 17 years ago, which led to the birth of the Fireside Open Air Gathering, which led to the Fireside Open Air Gathering and Powwow, traditionally held every Labor Day Weekend for the last 16 years. Roger loved to drum and sing, and I believe Roger's time here would have been shorter without the drum, as one would have never had known about his condition when listening to him sing with his drum.

(Continued page 3)



### In Memory of an Elder....



Roger shared his recovery all over Turtle Island, doing the Creators work wherever he goes. In recent years he was a speaker at the International Native American AA conference in Minneapolis, Minn in 2005. He loved the Cherokee AA Conference and the Campout, speaking, conducting sunrise ceremonies, sharing circles, drumming and the people of Cherokee loved him so they honored him with Fireside South. He spoke in Columbus, Ohio; Colorado Springs, CO; Seattle, WA; and many other places wherever he was asked to serve the fellowship of this program. He was well respected and well regarded. He welcomed all people to the Fireside Sharing Circle.

His services were held in a traditional way, four women washed and dressed his body, he was waked at his home Wednesday and Thursday. His funeral was held on Friday, Dec. 1st at his home in Cayuga, Ontario, Canada. The ceremony on Friday began with a sunrise ceremony, which he loved. He was interred next to his wife, Bernice, at the New Credit First Nation on First Line. The family held a feast afterwards at his home with a small giveaway. His traditional giveaway will be in one year of his passing. Over 300 people passed through the house during those days, and many others called, sent cards or flowers.

No one will ever be able to fill Roger's shoes, therefore at the Fireside Sharing Circle, held Saturday night, for the last time at his home, it was decided to hold a speaker meeting followed by a business meeting to plan the new journey for the Fireside. Meetings will be held at Burt's home on 1087 Second Line until a new place is found and Ken King has offered us land to store and hold the Fireside belongings as well as our Pow wow for 2007. We ask for prayers with this undertaking to continue the legacy of the Fireside, to continue to let the vision was given to Roger from the Creator to flourish.

Roger will be missed by many, loved by many, and we hope to continue in the path he showed many.

Roger was my traditional father, I was honored to be his traditional daughter, and for this honor I have been truly blessed. Lastly, I want to extend my gratitude and love to all of you, for without the outpour of love and friendship, I could have never made it through these this last week.

Blessings, Debbie

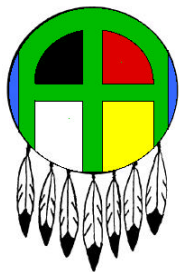
### Good News.....!!!!

Native American AA Forum May 19-20, 2007

Tulalip Tribes Tribal Center 6700 Totem Beach Rd. Tulalip, WA 98271

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

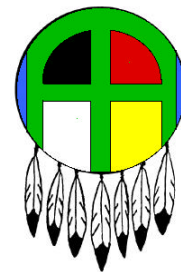
This Forum is being coordinated by a local Native American AA committee.



## In My Father's Footsteps

(Reprinted with permission AA Grapevine June 2006)

### "In Loving Memory of Douglas S. and Bill Iron Moccasins"



When my father got sober in 1954 on Standing Rock Reservation, there were no AA meetings and not many people spoke English. He and his only sober buddy, Bill, went to many Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota villages to start AA. If you were a non-Indian or didn't understand the language, it was pretty boring. My father and Bill translated the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions into the Lakota language.

Both are gone now. Dad died in 1970 with sixteen years of sobriety and Bill passed away two years ago. He had been sober forty-nine years and was still working with young Indian kids in trouble, not only with alcohol and drug problems, but with the law as well. He lived most of his life at Sisseton, South Dakota, and met my father at an AA Roundup in Miller, South Dakota, in 1955. Both were newly sober and the only Indians at the Roundup. Dad was born and raised in the Porcupine District on Standing Rock. When he sobered up in 1954, he said that he "looked around me and saw that we were in big trouble at Standing Rock."

There were no Indians in AA that they knew of, so they began to see if they could locate others like themselves. They found Caroline at Fort Belknap, Josephine at Crow, and Esther at Blackfeet. They took the message to all the Indian Reservations in North and South Dakota, Montana, Nebraska, and wherever else they were called to deliver the message.

One difference between Indian AA and non-Indian AA, at that time anyway, was the duration of meetings. An Indian meeting could start at 8:00 P.M. but it might go on all night. Everybody showed up.

In 1955, I went with my father to Red Shirt Table Indian village to a day school there. The meeting didn't end until the next morning at dawn. All the people from the village had lost someone to alcohol or drugs. They broke at midnight for a nice lunch and the meeting resumed again. Although the people were not all alcoholics, their lives had been touched by alcohol and they wanted to talk about the loved ones they had lost. They also wanted to help carry the message. A lot of crying took place, but so did a great deal of healing.

I wasn't sober yet, but my father was already very concerned about me. He told me later that he knew he was supposed to let me find out about AA on my own, but that was impossible for him, so he lied to me. When we went to Red Shirt Table, he said he was taking me on a trip. I thought it was a shopping trip; instead we went to Martin, Rosebud, Pine Ridge, and Red Shirt Table, South Dakota. We went to AA meetings all weekend and I was angry.

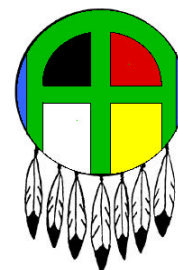
There are still AA meetings in some of those villages today. Many villages speak English but still prefer using their own first language. When I am home, I go mostly to Indian AA meetings and have yet to see a meeting end in one hour.

At one time, all seven of my father's children drank with him. Today, as a result of his sobriety, none of us drink. In fact, our children, nieces, and nephews are sober as well. He gave us a great gift. His recovery had the ripple effect.

Harriett S.



## Paul E.



Paul was a Yankton Sioux, raised on the Yankton rez. He was sober over 35 years when he passed at 61 years of age. A strikingly handsome man with a great smile, quick wit, and sense of humor, he was a Native American Story teller, known as "Voice In The Wind," and took stories of our culture to various places here in the Southeast. He had a commanding presence, a beautiful speaking voice, and a powerful spiritual aura about him. He was an avid and ardent representative of Alcoholics Anonymous, and a living example of how this program changes lives and transforms people.

In his early days of sobriety he was sought after as a speaker, often being treated as "the token sober Indian," and he spoke all over the United States. Although he still spoke from time to time, he spent most of his time in Winder, Georgia, where he lived.

As a practicing drunk he had spurned his native traditions and turned his back on his people because he felt they had turned theirs on him.

Once sober, he returned to the Red Road and became a teacher to non-Indians, working tirelessly to help them understand Native culture and to bridge the gap of misunderstanding. He organized two annual powwows, which he called "Festivals," held on Memorial Day of each year and the first week in October. As he walked among the vendors, dancers, and singers, it was clear that he was held in high esteem by all.

He leaves a widow, known as "Toadie," (Mary Leotis Eddy), and a son, Ryan, who is in his early thirties. He will be missed by all whom he touched. He was my last sponsor, taking over after my first one died unexpectedly. Sadly, Paul came down with lung cancer mere weeks after taking me as a sponsee so I did not get to work with him long in this capacity. However, he and I had been close friends for about ten years so I was blessed with his friendship and wisdom for that period of time. He was a solid, honest, caring, wise, and compassionate man and I will miss him forever.

Lyle P.

"Chief Joseph of the Nez Percé looked upon his people, and saw them cold, destitute, homeless, lonely, and defeated. He said, "We cannot go on living the life we once knew. We must begin a new life. Take the best the white man has to offer and the best the red man has to offer, and begin this new life." I stood at the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous full of fear, guilt, remorse, confusion, and defeat. Those doors were open to me, and I was welcomed in. As my mind clears and I recall the teachings of my ancestors, I believe I found the best the red man has to offer. Today, I have the fellowship and program of Alcoholics Anonymous and my wonderful wife. I feel that I have found the best the white man has to offer."

Paul E. (Excerpted from - "Do You Think You're Different" Reprinted with permission A.A.W.S.)



## A Legacy of Vision



"In 1990, a vision came to a Paiute Indian named Earl L. Jr., an alcoholic from Bishop, California. Earl saw the Indian Nations coming together in unity, celebrating sobriety, and embracing their culture. Earl's vision began with a National/International Indian AA convention in which he saw the extended helping hand of AA as being attractive within Indian Country. As envisioned, the General Service Structure of the Fellowship includes Indian AA Councils. The Councils are dynamic and alive. They interact and nourish one another and are empowered by the Spirit of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions. Earl's vision saw our traditional ways as adding to the warmth and unconditional love of AA's principles. 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." (Excerpted from the NAIGSO-AA Website)

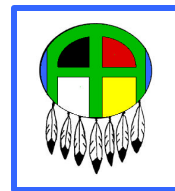
Earl told me that he saw things happening in Indian Country. As an A.A. member he felt this vision of service pertained to A.A. and their new frontier. He envisioned a council of elders functioning as a separate A.A. entity in helping to carry A.A.'s message to the suffering alcoholic in the Native American community. This council would be an Advisory Council with NAIGSO board members as members on that Advisory Council. In this vision, there would not be an A.A. service structure as exists in the current A.A. General Service Structure – no GSR's, no districts, and so on...simply a dynamic flow of information shared at powwows, potlucks and other Native American conferences, councils, and ceremonial events. Also, in this vision Earl saw an Eagle Staff, which symbolizes the sovereignty of the Native American Nations, and this sovereignty allowing for seating at the World Service meeting. Earl was uncertain of his experience with the Great Mystery or what to do with it, until the Paiute elders came to Earl at his house and told him that he had received a vision from the Creator and that he must follow it or suffers consequences. He attended numerous sweat lodges throughout California and Nevada cleansing and soul searching. Acting on confirmation and faith he stood up at the A.A. Area Conference in Tonopah, Nevada and announced that a Native American National/International A.A. Convention would be held in Las Vegas, Nevada in the fall, about 15 years ago. This was to be a portion of the vision with the remainder to follow. We are the remainders and it truly rests on our shoulders.

Don W.





## 13th Annual Cherokee AA Convention



I have been looking forward to this experience for many years. Thirteen is my lucky number. At the 11th hour, I enlisted my best friend, Betty, to join me in my first adventure to Cherokee. I contacted Sharon who helped me get my registration for the last two days and tickets for the banquet. Gary and I exchanged multiple e-mails about hotels and his experience, strength and hope with going to Cherokee. I called a couple of hotels and found a very reasonable room at the Holiday Inn. Betty and I figured out that our mutual budget could handle the registration, banquet and one night at the hotel. I went to the post office, purchased the necessary money order and sent off my registration. Let the excitement begin! Firing up my computer and loading the Internet map web site is very exciting for me. I have traveled this beautiful country many times and a new destination is always exhilarating. I have many anxieties and being lost is one of them. I have found map reading and land navigation as a healthy relief for this particular angst. There are even Internet sites that have satellite imagery that give me an even better visual perspicacity. I will use anything I can to reduce the angst-induced rise in my blood pressure.

This has everything to do with the trip because this alcoholic is a master of finding ways to avoid happiness through ubiquitous fear. In my recovery, I have learned that it is good to ask for directions. The lovely gentleman who took my reservation at the Holiday Inn was kind enough to tell me to take an alternate route and avoid a very steep and windy mountain road. He told me there were construction delays and considering I would be headed there for the first time, I had no problem going a little out of my way for much less stress. Betty and I wanted to cheer when we arrived because it was an incredibly beautiful drive. It was only a three-hour drive from Charlotte that included a stop for gas. The mountains were still showing off their fall colors, despite many of the trees going to sleep for the winter. Harrah's was very easy to find and there was a very nice staff available to direct us to parking and the convention.

We arrived at the time of the Talking Circle, so we designed the rest of our afternoon to include meetings, food and napping. We went for a walk and found another member who directed us to the hospitality suite down the road. We had a nice conversation, not to mention some good exercise and fellowship. When we returned, we received a much-needed sage smudging and we purchased our beautiful t-shirts. We heard Virginia talk about her Al-Anon experience, and went off in search of the hotel and a much needed nap. It was a good thing we took the nap because we were in for an adventurous evening.

I cannot say enough about the wonderful people we met from so many different places. The banquet seemed to be well organized and the food was good. Not your average rubber chicken, which was a relief. Dessert was exciting because of the selection. I was working on a wonderful key lime pie when Betty took a bite of her turtle cheesecake. She was in good spirits until someone walked up to the table to inform us the turtle was full of spirits. Betty's face fell into sadness. The kitchen seemed to miss the fact that we were all recovering alcoholics at the convention and put a liqueur in the drizzle over the cheesecake. Oops. Well we had a good laugh and went on hear the speaker. Steve P. gave a great talk and we all took a break before the countdown and sobriety pow-wow. I met a really nice group of members from Alexandria, Va., and we all found a non-smoking conference room for an impromptu discussion meeting. It was great to connect on such a personal level with people I had just met. Honestly, we were trying to keep focus because the drawings for the raffles were going to start the pow-wow. I did not win anything, but it was just as much fun experiencing the entire process.

Time for the countdown. What an incredibly long process. We were warned not to linger to socialize, but to please greet and move along to keep the line moving. Yeah, that required some of us old-timers acting as elder statesmen to keep things moving. Why the long line? A designated calculator counted a total of 2 days, 6 months and 2,627 years. Impressive.

We started a snake dance to complete the countdown and it was thrilling for me because I had never participated in a sober dance before. What really did it for me was the look on Betty's face and her elation. She had never before experienced a pow-wow and had nothing short of a spiritual experience. There were several dances to come. One celebrated our veterans of military service and honored our lost loved ones and those still in service. I danced for my brother currently serving in Colombia. One young woman had a New Dress dance to introduce her. There were traditional dancers and I was intrigued by the Hoop Dance and the intricacies of the dance. The hula-hoop is nothing compared to the Hoop Dancer. I slept very well that night after a very long and incredible day.

I was so thrilled to have the opportunity to experience Cherokee for the first time. I feel privileged to have learned about the seven clans and met such a wonderful group of people. I do not know if I will be able to attend the campout in May, but I am planning to make the drive again next year through the mountains. I can hardly wait and would love to meet you there. Join me for some coffee and a smudge of sage.

**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/>

(256) 247-5887

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

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

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

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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!!

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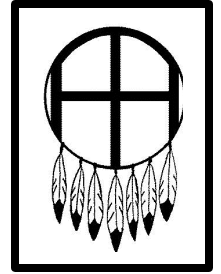
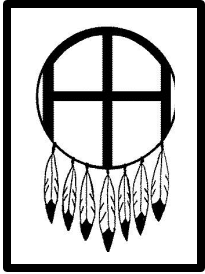
Make check payable to: "Naigso-AA"

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: \_\_\_\_\_

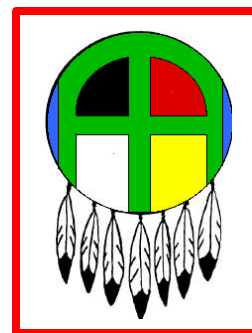
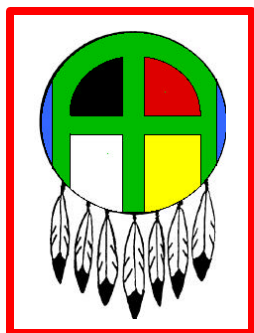
Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Please return the completed form to:

**NAIGSO**, P.O. Box 1253, Lakeside, CA 92040  
Telephone (256) 247-5887 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:

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Telephone (256) 247-5887 E-mail: [generalmanager@naigso-aa.org](mailto:generalmanager@naigso-aa.org)