



## 2008 NAIGSO-AA General Service Conference Report

September 16, 2008



Wednesday morning, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, as we sat down to discuss the final plans for the conference with the local representatives from United Tribes Technical College I became overwhelmed with the reality of our first general service conference being held on Indian land. Our plans, our visions and our hopes were really taking place!

But that was only the beginning. The next morning as we gathered for the Opening Ceremony the air filled with the Spirit of AA Recovery. We received a very warm welcome from DR. Gipp, President of UTTC; Sherri Baker, Director of the Lewis Goodhouse Wellness Center; Julie Cain, Director of the Chemical Dependency Program; and Harriett Skye, President of Inter-tribal Programs.

Every AA meeting was filled with the strong emotion of the difficulties Native Americans face getting sober. Yet, their determination to achieve sobriety was just as apparent.

The future path of NAIGSO-AA has been firmly revealed. The thirst of the people for the love and unity of the AA program shone on the entire gathering. Following the hope of making AA a natural part of Indian events, we scheduled our conference to run parallel to UTTC's International powwow. This was as it should be, people wondered back and forth between the two events.

On Saturday, we came together for the formal conference portion knowing something good was happening, that the vision would keep going, and the Creator's presence was being felt by everyone.

We listened as one member described his need for Native American traditions to find his spiritual experience in AA. We listened as he described his group's use of our Daily Meditations. We listened as he described the alcoholism among Native Americans in the Fargo, ND area and the need to carry the AA message to these people.

We listened as Don W explained the vision given to Earl L and how it has manifested. That NAIGSO-AA is the Alcoholics Anonymous leg of Earl's vision, of how Earl has passed into the Spirit World, and thus the vision rests on our shoulders.

We listened as TJ told of how when he wanted to start an AA meeting on campus he was told AA would never work there. But not only is the meeting working, it grows stronger each day.

We listened as everyone present discussed their desire to see the Daily Meditations be made available as a hardbound book.

When the conference came to a close, we knew it would go on, the vision is real, and it truly "rests on our shoulders." That our ancestors are with us and will guide us on the path.

Gary C, General Manager  
NAIGSO-AA

## **NAIGSO-AA origins explained**

In 1990, a vision came to a Paiute Indian named Earl Lent Jr., an alcoholic from Bishop, California. Earl saw the Indian Nations coming together in unity, celebrating sobriety, and embracing their culture. Native American spiritual leaders in the area heard of his vision, came to his house and explained to him that he had a vision and needed to act on it. Phase one of Earl's vision came to being under his influence and guidance in Las Vegas, Nevada. He gathered a committee and created the National/International Native American Indian AA Convention (NAI-AA Convention) in which he saw the extended helping hand of AA as being attractive within Indian Country. He envisioned a flag ceremony with the eagle staff carried in followed by all the nation's flags. He envisioned a roll call of nations. He heard the drum beating and saw peoples holding hands, circling up and dancing. Later he moved to implement the second phase of his vision. Phase two: "What happens to the people when they go home to the Reservation – How do they stay sober?). This phase of the vision consists of establishing a Native American Indian General Service Office of AA (NAIGSO-AA). The NAIGSO-AA connects Indian spirituality with AA spirituality (unity). NAIGSO-AA's organization/service flow adapts to Indian culture and traditional way of life and is in concert with Indians traditional manner of gathering(s). It provides Indian people voice from the individual/group all the way up within the AA organization. We in NAIGSO-AA (as do all AAers) believe that where there is unity and service recovery will follow. Consequently, Alcoholics Anonymous understanding of how Indian people's sovereignty, traditions, spirituality, and culture relates to their desire to stop drinking (unity) is key to helping in Native people's recovery. Earl's vision saw Native people's traditional ways as adding to the warmth and unconditional love of AA's principles. 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. Earl has passed into the spirit world but now joins us in Council and the vision rests on our shoulders.

In addition, I believe similar visions are given to those that have an ear to hear. Don C. of White Bison heard. In my opinion NAIGSO-AA and White Bison climb the same mountain - hand in hand just up a slightly different ravine.

Don W.