



2009 NAIGSO-AA Fall Gathering of the Vision



This event was held on the Barona Band of Mission Indians' reservation and was hosted for the first time by a Tribal Council. We were truly granted the hospitality and generosity of an Indian people. We were given free use of the community center, not only in cost but also in spirit, and were well fed by our hosts. It shall live and be held fondly in the fulfillment of Earl's vision of AA service.

The Gathering began as it should with the people being fed. The Opening Ceremony set the spirit of the event with an Osage ceremonial prayer, then introductions by Gary C, and traditional Lakota ceremonial songs sung by Dennis A.

The message was quickly set during the morning talking circle and carried through, not only to the speaker meeting which concluded the first day, but all the way through the formal council meeting the next day. There was much open sharing, and many misunderstandings were brought into a common solution. The Closing Ceremony concluded the bringing together of the spirit and opened the path of NAIGSO-AA's vision of service to Native peoples.

It confirmed that the traditional cultures and spirituality of Native peoples is in complete harmony with AA's spirituality. That, just as life is a circle, so are the principals of AA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, and that Native American spirituality is the embodiment of those principals. Everything returns to where it began and as we heal so we are given the power to help others. Through unity, recovery and service we receive life. There is simply no conflict between traditional ways and AA, the misunderstanding lies only in our view of life. The bond of spirit exists when we speak the language of the heart and sit in the Circle.

It confirmed that, just as AA had its early struggles, so NAIGSO-AA goes through its own growth experiences. Each of the steps NAIGSO-AA takes on the path of Earl's Vision is a mirror image of AA's early experiences. First came the debate over the need to create a service entity and the need to hear the voice of the people. Next came the debate over just, "Just what is the message and how do we convey that message to the people?" Now, it is time to bring our message of hope to the people, it is time for NAIGSO-AA to take this gathering to the Four Directions, to ride the Four Winds, to visit the peoples during all Four Seasons, to complete the "Circle of AA Service" as given to Earl in his vision.

Thus, as a simple two-legged, I propose that we expand the annual gathering to a quarterly event, and that it be held not as a "conference," but as a simple healing ceremony.

Gary C