

The Leland Hotel Group

9th & South A Street (1956—195?)

Bill Meier exuded the sort of outspoken personality that often led to dissention. Thelma Ross explained that some of the younger guys didn't like Bill and when a new group started at the Leland Hotel, many decided to change groups. Dan Fitzpatrick and Bill did not see eye to eye on how the AA steps should work. Roy H. and Marie B. fol-



suit. There is no current record of the other members. This was a 'couples meeting' and it is told that this was an 'invitation only,' meeting, which was, of course, in violation of the Third Tradition. It is not known when this meeting finally closed.

The Richmond Group Moves Again

(Now called the '101 North 10th Street Group')

In 1956, the large Hibberd Building Club became unavailable, so the Richmond Group began meeting on Saturdays and Mondays at the Reid Youth Center (pictured). Thelma said the Al-Anon attendance dropped dramatically after this move. This new place was not a club, but simply a place to meet on Saturday and Monday evenings. The 'open' Saturday meeting was



dropped in the mid-1990s, but this 62 year old group still meets on Mondays, with Al-Anon meeting in a nearby room. They have been now been 52 years at this location.

Their long history of strict adherence to AA customs and traditional values had left them slow to accept change. When the mid-seventies practice of holding hands during the Lord's Prayer enveloped the Richmond AA community, the Richmond Group didn't follow suit for at least a decade, and to date have not allowed the ever popular new-age chanting after the Amen to creep in. One attendee, recently arrived from California AA, continually elaborated on the west coast meeting practices. He became almost adamant that this group adapt some of the same customs. An old-time member, Jack P., told him to shut up, or leave the room. This was a nonsense group, indeed! The custom of discussing three steps per meeting, which started in the early 1950s, still prevails through all these years.

But there was always humor. Back in the seventies, a regular member, Noble Breeden, often spoke the following parable on AA honesty: "Yes, it's AA up to \$10.00, but after that it becomes business!" Another of his favorite quotes: "When you point your finger at another person, there are three fingers pointing back at you!" The meetings during the seventies and eighties would sometimes last as long as two hours. The fellowship was close, and they would often continue conversations at a truck stop restaurant on National Rd. East.