

## THE PRESTON GROUP HISTORY

In September of 1965, a group of 28 dissatisfied members of the old Suburban Group met and discussed plans for a new group of their own.

The reasons for their dissatisfaction were, and I quote: "a close governing body clique who ramrodded elections to keep their own in power, and ran the group as they saw fit, rather than follow the will of the group.

Also, an interference by this same body on the Al-Anon members, with many restrictions placed upon them."

These members had the following firm ideas in mind, and again I quote: "All decisions were to be made by the group as a whole, and the elected officers would exist to carry out the wishes of the group. There would be no by-laws and rules would be established as the group went along. The Al-Anon group would be autonomous."

The first Preston A.A. and Al-Anon group, known as the Preston Family Group, met on October 18, 1965, in a private residence. A search committee was formed to find a meeting place and the following week, October 25th, 1965, 30 AAs met and voted on a location: the Ventura Building in Preston Center.

As with all good AA meetings, a voluntary collection provided the funding for the operational cost of the new group. A check was made out and signed by Jim A. for \$375.00, our first month's rent.

The first official meeting of the Preston Group was held in the Ventura Bldg., 6131 Luther Lane, with fifty-seven members in attendance. The Al-Anon group also met in that location, adjacent to the AAs.

Our space was adequate on the second floor, but we were right next to a Fred Astair Dance Studio. You would climb the stairs and pass by the gyrating dancers. I think there was a few problems with newer AA prospects who had'nt quite got their bearings! Dance your way to sobriety!

A few of our earliest members were Jack Lego, Bob D., Don J., George H., Leo and Glenn S. Our very first newcomer was Roger W. who showed up in 1965, then like some of us, went back out for about three months. Fortunately, Roger came back in April of 1966 and has had continuous sobriety ever since.

Roger is still with us... Roger, will you stand up and be recognized?

Preston was organized thirty years after A.A. was founded by Bill W. and Dr. Bob, June 10, 1935. We were six years old at Preston when Bill died, January 26, 1971.

You may not know that the Lone Star Roundup was started by several members of this group. We always had a Hospitality room at the conference. The North Texas Roundup replaced the old Lone Star this year.

There was a conference over in Longview, Texas called the East Texas Roundup. Preston supported that convention for many years, also hosting a Hospitality room. Many good times were spent in April in East Texas, listening to the circuit speakers of the day.

We also had a picnic every summer for a while at Sandy Lake, if my memory is correct. This never went over too well because of the heat.

And who can forget the Christmas parties Howard P. would throw every year? The whole club was invited and scores of happy, sober alcoholics celebrated into the night. When another Preston member bought Howard's house, the tradition went on for several years.

When I sobered up and came to Preston in July of 1974, we had meetings every night at 8:00pm, except on Thursday at 7:30pm, mainly to accommodate the Al-Ateens, who had school work and had to be home. Sunday morning was an 11:00am speakers meeting. Wednesday was step speaker and Thursday, beginners meeting. Friday, an open meeting.

In the mid-seventies a noon meeting was added on Wednesday. In the early eighties, a Saturday morning men's Stag came along, followed by a Saturday Women's meeting. This was the first break from night meetings only.

Between October 1985 and October 1990, the Noon meeting followed by the 7:00am meeting were added. The last in the sequence was the 6:00pm meeting...so no one can complain about not finding a meeting!

The Preston Group has actually occupied four different locations over the years. Originally, we were at 6131 Luther Lane, down the street, for about 18 years. Relations with our landlord, Mr. Ventura were always a bit rocky. There was always a disagreement about something. For instance, we want to spruce up our space, painting and other improvements but he vetoed that...said it would raise his tax base. One of our members nearly came to blows with Mr. Sam.

Eventually, we decided to move, and we did move to a tiny location on Sherry Lane.

I will never forget the night when all members, Al-Anon included, picked up our chairs, tables and whatever we owned and carried them all across Luther Lane over to Sherry Lane to our new clubhouse. Then the 8'oclock meeting resumed promptly on time!

However, we didn't stay at this location long, as there wasn't enough room for our expanding size.

We then moved across Preston Center to 6115 Berkshire Lane, which was also upstairs. The layout being what it was, the Al-Anons had to walk through the back of our room to get to their meeting. Not an ideal arrangement.

Our beloved Eve.E., who suffered from polio, had to be carried up the stairs every night, wheelchair and all, by volunteers, of which there were many.

Eve has passed away, as so many of our early ones. To mention just a few, there was Andy W.. (One arm) Howard (Apple duplins) P., Micky McB., Big Ben K., Grady T., Jack L., Freda Y., Ott H., Keith (Toby) T., Bedford W., Helen J., Conway P., Bobby E., Jerrv B.. Manly P., Wade I., Gene G., Pinky S., Gene T., Buddy (Cannon Ball) H., Melvin C., Father John, and, of couse, David A.

The good news is they are all probably attending "The Big Meeting In The Sky".

Finally, Preston moved to our present location at 6024 Luther Lane in 1990. I know that I am very satisfied with these digs, and hope we stay here.

As evidenced by the sobriety board, Preston has flourished over th past 41 years. We are the fifth oldes group in the Dallas area.

David A. used to say that we were the largest A.A. group in the world and I think he was right. But who can say?

I do know it is the BEST.

Thank you,