



Hand in Hand

Fall Issue 2010

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Board Members

Chair: Ruth irw Debbie

Vice-Chair: Jerry irw Stephanie

Secretary: Matt irw Tami

Treasurer: Dave irw Kelly

Tyler irw Michele

Report from the Trustees' Chair

Hello everyone. This is Ruth in relationship with Debbie, and I'm honored to be the new Chair of the World Service Organization Board. The Trustees are very excited to serve this year and are looking forward to many new ways to serve and grow our fellowship. Many thanks to the outgoing Board for all its service. Legacies from that Board include our existing Policy and Procedures Manual, and our Vision and Mission statement for the WSO Board of Trustees.

This has been a year of transition, and there are three member couples that have remained for the coming year: Ruth and Debbie, Jerry and Stephanie, and Tyler and Michelle. We have two new member couples on Board: Dave and Kelly and Tami and Matt. You can read their biographies in this issue of the Hand-In-Hand.

In our first meeting in Niagara Falls, your Trustees embraced three goals for the coming year: Transparency, Communication, and Growing the Fellowship. In respect to transparency, please watch for the regular reports in the Hand-In-Hand called "Minding Our Business." This will include financial reporting as well as current business topics and discussions. We are working on having access to Board meetings via Skype, and we welcome input and topics from the Fellowship.

Communication is a passion shared by many of us on the Board. We will have an online forum to discuss current topics, problems, questions, concerns, and ideas. We hope to address current topics during our regular Board meetings on the second Sunday of each month. We want to hear from YOU. You can reach all of us by e-mail at rca-board@recovering-couples.org.

Growing the Fellowship was brought up in this year's annual business meeting. The vision statement of the World Service Organization Board of Trustees says: **"Our vision is a world where couples have the opportunity to find the spiritual tools and Fellowship they need to create a safe, loving, committed relationship that flourishes."** To make that happen we need to reach out to all who do not have local groups as well as those who do. One idea is to have an e-mail list that will ask what state or country you are in. This would let us see if there are several couples in an area, and then perhaps take a face-to-face meeting to them! There are many ways of reaching out, and we are just starting to brainstorm.

It was unanimously agreed that our monthly Board meetings would include a study of the 12 Traditions of RCA. We will also be studying the 12 concepts of service from our parent fellowships. We hope this will help us to serve in a manner consistent with the principles of our program. This is an exciting time to be a part of this wonderful organization. We have new and established committees, both looking for members who will "stand up" to be a part of our "wave of recovery." We all know couples that still suffer. Let's make a difference together! We look forward to working with you.

Yours in service,

Ruth in recovery with Debbie

Recovering Couples Anonymous Board of Trustees

Debbie & Ruth in Loving Recovery

Hello Everyone! We are happy to be back for our second year on the RCA Board of Trustees. It has been an incredible experience and really pushed our relationship work into a growth spurt. Service has been important to both of us, and the opportunity for being Trustees in the World Service Organization has been a gift.

Our local group in New York's Capital District is growing and thriving. We are so grateful to the people who started the meeting and to those who held the space for it to flourish. We found our sponsor couple at the convention in Florida in 2009. Working with them has inspired us to more diligently work the steps, and to better apply the tools of RCA to our coupleship. They are an inspiration to us and an example of the promises of this program. We are extremely grateful to them for being in our lives. We hope to be able to pass on all that we are learning. It really works when we work it!

One of our goals this year is being able to bring RCA to many more couples who still suffer. Growing the Fellowship is a passion for both of us, and there are many new tools and ways of connecting with others. We hope to meet many more of you on this road of recovery. Thank you for being on this wonderful journey with us!

Matt and Tami

Matt and Tami have been in RCA since April of 2006. We like to joke that RCA started in 1988, the year we got married, because our higher power knew we would need it. Our first RCA convention was in St. Louis in 2007, and we have attended every year since. We have completed the Steps twice and the Traditions once on our coupleship, and are on Step One on our third time through the Steps.

We both find that RCA really helps our coupleship and supports our individual programs. We also notice what a difference it makes in our individual fellowships to work a couples' program. We have found that we get back the time we dedicate to RCA because we spend less time arguing and in dysfunction than we do in working our RCA program.

We attend the Sunday night phone meeting and our local meeting. We were the program chairs for the 2009 Florida convention and Matt led the closing ceremony. We believe strongly in service, the tools, steps, traditions, and concepts, and we are grateful for how much RCA has given us, including the miracles in our coupleship. We sponsor other couples and learn so much from them. Safety is very important to us and we know that any time we have not felt safe in a 12 Step program it has been when traditions have been violated. We are so thankful to the members of RCA and for this opportunity to serve the fellowship. It has saved our marriage and made it a safe, peaceful, and happy place to be.

Jerry and Stephanie

We have been grateful for RCA every since walking into our first RCA meeting in April of 1999. We appreciate this opportunity to serve on the Board of Trustees as a means to give back what was so freely given to us over the years. We pray our contribution of service will, in some small way, help RCA continue to grow and flourish. We thank all those who served before us, with us, and after.

Dave R. & Kelly R.

Dave and Kelly are members of the First Hamilton Group of RCA (Hamilton, Ontario, Canada). They have been together 15 years, the last 7 ½ years in RCA. They have held a variety of service positions within their RCA group as well as their own individual recovery groups, and have even been instrumental in starting new meetings locally.

They gladly assisted the London group in coordinating the 2010 RCA Convention in Niagara Falls, Ontario, where they hosted a session on Early Recovery. Dave and Kelly were honored to be elected to serve on the WSO Board of RCA. Dave looks forward to his role as Treasurer.

Tyler irw Michele

Returning for another year, Tyler and Michele live in Florida. They are very active in the Sunday and Thursday phone meetings along with their home group.

RCA Phoenix 2011 Convention

Put the heat back in your coupleship and come to the Phoenix 2011 RCA Convention, July 29-31, 2011. It will be held at the Sheraton Phoenix Airport Hotel in Tempe, Arizona.

The hotel is offering rooms for \$89.00 per night, including breakfast if you mention RCA. This rate will also be available to RCA members for rooms rented 5 days before and 5 days after the convention.

There is a free hotel shuttle to and from the airport, and for RCA attendees the hotel shuttle is also available for trips within a five-mile radius of the hotel. This will get you to Tempe Market Place and Mill Avenue by the University Campus, both of which have shops and restaurants, and to the nearest light rail stop, which will take you to downtown Phoenix.

As with all RCA Conventions, there will be a delegate meeting all day Friday, July 29th, so come early to represent your group at the delegate meeting. Watch for the registration form on the RCA website, it will be there soon! If you have questions about the Convention or want information about activities to do you can email the Convention Committee at:

rcacphoenix2011@yahoo.com



Recovering Couples Anonymous World Service Organization Board of Trustee Positions are filled each year at the annual Meeting. These meetings are held during the weekend of the Annual Convention. These meetings are open to all RCA members. Our Bylaws state that a couple is qualified for Board Service if they meet this criteria: "Any couple which is a member of a Member Group and which professes that they have been actively working the twelve steps of R.C.A. for 12 months shall be qualified to be nominated for the Board of Trustees." Experienced Board Members would suggest that couples interested in Board Service have had some experience in working on a WSO committee. Nominations are taken at the Annual meeting, with voting occurring immediately before the closing ceremony. The first meeting of the "new" Board occurs that same day. Contact the WSO Chair for more information.

POST NIAGARA

Back in 1992, way before recovery, we went to a church convention in Niagara Falls. We got lost on the way to a restaurant there, and I shamed and blamed my partner in front of my parents and other family members. That incident had been such a painful experience, especially for my partner, that we were still talking about it in a therapist's office 16 years later.

One tool I have learned in recovery is that you can start the day over, but this time we decided to do a memory over. On our way back to the airport from the 2010 convention in Niagara Falls we arrived 30 minutes early to a restaurant where we planned to eat lunch. We were armed with a GPS and our RCA driving/navigation agreement, and my husband decided he wanted to see Lake Erie, since we had extra time.

We had no idea where Lake Erie was and we got a little lost, but we knew we could get back to the restaurant and our flight later that day. We drove around, and just as we realized it was time to turn back, we came upon a nice, quiet spot to see the lake. We had not said our daily couple's meditation, so we walked out to the lake, hand in hand, and said our meditation together. Instead of our old dance of fear, we had a dance of intimacy. We went to the restaurant, had a very nice, romantic steak dinner together, and shared dessert. My husband would send me the dessert, spelling T for Tami, I'd send it back to him, spelling L for Love, and he would send it back to me, spelling I for intimacy. If it weren't for RCA we wouldn't have had the chance to redo this and we wouldn't have the partnership and the intimacy that we have received from this fellowship.

Tami IRW Matt

Minding Our Business

This is a new section of the Hand-In-Hand. We hope to use it as a way for our fellowship to hear more of what is happening. Our intention and goal is transparency and open communication.

The highlight of business in July was the Annual Business Meeting in Niagara Falls, Canada. There were 19 delegates on site to vote, 8 mail-in votes, and 4 couples who called in on Skype but who were not able to vote this year. We had four topics for discussion and voting this year:

Topic I would authorize participation in the RCA convention via teleconference or an equivalent method. Four couples were connected to the convention this year via Skype, including one Board couple that spoke to all the delegates present on this and other topics. It was a powerful statement to the new tools available to our members. The motion passed with 23 for, two against, and two abstentions. The major concern and discussion was the cost to the Fellowship for Internet connectivity. The Trustees and the 2011 Convention

Committee were entrusted to be conscious and transparent of the cost of this for next year's convention. We need to ensure fiscal responsibility.

Topic II proposed to eliminate the use of by-mail voting at the annual business meeting. The motion was defeated with five for, 17 against, and five abstentions. Discussion was spirited. One concern was that by-mail votes do not hear discussion during the meetings, and therefore cannot make a truly informed decision. On the other hand, the need for options for the most RCA members to be represented was cited as the main reason for allowing mail-in votes in the first place, and for continuing them at this time.

Topic III would maintain and make available the 1996 version of the third edition of the Blue Book. The motion's author was present. Some of the questions asked were: How long should this be "maintained?" Does it mean keeping concurrent copies in print? Should print-on-demand be an option?

Questions on the cost of reproduction, the number of copies required, and other concerns came up that could not be answered at the meeting. Our merchandise provider stated that the stock of the current Blue Books, should last until the next convention. The trustees were tasked to ensure the Blue Book remained available, and to act appropriately if the need arose. This topic will return in 2011 when a comparison to the fourth edition can be made, and when each concern can be directly expressed and voted on.

Topic IV required that the Board of Trustees include certain measures in the Policies and Procedures Manuals. The author of this topic was present, and after hearing input from current and past Board members, opted to withdraw the topic completely. The conversation and dialogue that ensued from this topic was informative and appreciated.

Over all there was a spirit of cooperation and understanding that permeated the day. It was a wonderful way to move into a weekend of fun and fellowship at the Niagara Falls International Convention.

Yours in Service,

RCA WSO Board of Trustees



RCA WSO Treasurer's Report Summary

August 2010 Board Meeting

(All figures current as of July 31, 2010)

Please note: "Total Income" includes all sources (7th Tradition, Individual Contributions, Convention Income, Shipping/Handling fees, sales of products, etc.). "Total Expenses" includes all payouts (Costs of Goods Sold, Professional and Consultant's Fees, Finance Charges, Insurance, Printing/Copying, Postage, Leasing, Rent, Storage, Telephone, etc.)

	<u>July 2010</u>	<u>June 2010</u>	<u>July 2009</u>
Total Income	\$2,420.03	\$2,791.32	\$2,586.53
Total Expenses	\$2,653.45	\$2,987.70	\$3,233.97
Variance	-\$233.42	-\$196.38	-\$647.44
Current Assets	\$21,769.43		

Year End Summary

Fiscal year ending June 30, 2010

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Total Income	\$35,505.00	\$44,019.62	+\$8,514.62
Total Expenses	\$35,505.00	\$35,147.77	-\$357.23
			\$8,871.85

We wound up \$8,871.85 above budget due to a few factors:

- First, funds budgeted for the 4th Edition Blue Book were not paid during the 2009/2010 fiscal year, and will be carried over to the current fiscal year (2010/2011).
- Second, a deposit from the California Board of Equalization (to whom we pay our sales tax) was returned. The deposit was required at the time we set up our tax account years ago.

Third, and most significantly, was a higher than expected amount of merchandise sales and the connected shipping & handling income.

These factors have made up for the shortfall in projected 7th Tradition contributions.

Dave R. irw Kelly R.

Treasurer

RCA WSO Board of Trustees

RCA BED & BREAKFAST CLUB

The 7th tradition Bed and Breakfast Club gives **RCA couples** an opportunity to connect with other **RCA couples**. Instead of spending money on a hotel, traveling RCA couples stay with members of the RCA fellowship, and send a 7th tradition donation to the WSO (\$20 to \$30 per night has been used in the past). This is another way to support RCA through our own contributions!

"...queen size bed, private bath, large deck, tennis courts, and a pool!"

(404)-849-2189 - Tami and Matt in Roswell (suburb of Atlanta), GA

"...hot tub with a view of the Cascade Mountains, dog-friendly"

(541) 343-4920 - Gladys IRW Jade, Eugene, Oregon

"...Winnipeg...from ice fishing in the winter to hot summers"

(204) 668-1515 - Gerrie committed to Randy, Randy committed to Gerrie"

"...condominium with private bedroom and bath suite on San Francisco Bay"

(510) 235-6111 - Elise and David near San Francisco"

"...own room in their home... surrounded by great books, experience, strength, and hope"

(925) 274-1186 - Bob and Betsy from San Francisco"

"...their Rockville home " (near Washington, DC)"

(301) 424-4594 - Kate and Dan Rockville, Maryland

If you want to add your name to the RCA Bed & Breakfast Club

end a finished description to the editor at: articles@recovering-couples.org

Connection Section:

Aloha! We are traveling to Maui in October of this year (2010), and would love to connect with any RCA couples on the island. Please email Debbie@dragontracks.net to connect!

This is an area where members can reach out to other couples. Do you have any announcements or connections that you would like to make with other RCA groups or members? Please send short notes to: articles@recovering-couples.org.

Help Create Our “Vision 2010!”

In 2000 a survey of our RCA Fellowship was conducted. Questions centered on: what we needed and wanted; what we liked and disliked; who we were as a group; what our demographics were. The information that your WSO Trustees and Service Committees gathered was used to serve the membership at large.

This year we want to create “Vision 2010,” and to present the results of the survey at the 2011 International Convention in Phoenix. We are looking for a few members willing to serve this vision. It is a short term, high visibility project.

Communication technology has improved dramatically in the last ten years. The committee would be using the original survey as a starting point, deciding what questions to add, making it available to members electronically, gathering the data, and presenting the results to the fellowship in July 2011. If you are interested in being of service in this project, please email: vice-chair@recovering-couples.org.

The Search Is On

Executive Search Committee Forming

The WSO Board of Trustees is establishing a “standing committee” to recruit and then present couples for service on the RCA Board of Trustees at each convention. We are looking for former Board couples that are willing to share their ESH of service with potential RCA Board candidates, and to help create a method or system for those candidates, so they can be presented to the Fellowship in a fair and balanced manner.

Our hope is to offer Fellowship delegates bio-information of willing couples. These biographies would then be available at the convention, so that delegates could make an informed decision when choosing Trustees. The Executive Search Committee would create guidelines for applicants and compile the incoming information to be presented each year. If you are interested in serving, please email: vicechair@recovering-couples.org.

A MESSAGE FROM GLENN AND DIANE

We have come to find out that our relationship today is not what we imagined it would be before we started our program of Recovering Couples Anonymous. Before starting RCA, we knew we didn't want what we had – long cycles of intense pain and dysfunction with brief periods of calm. We wanted something different for ourselves, individually and for our relationship.

We each wrote down lists of what we wanted from the other person, and had a faint but glowing vision of how our relationship would function if only our partner would change. When we put our two lists together it became painfully clear that our lists were incompatible and, even with some compromise, our life together was just not going to be what we each imagined. “Perhaps therapy would help my partner see how right I am,” we each thought. We jumped through hoop after hoop after hoop on our journey downward to our relationship bottom, finally understanding that neither of us was going to accept the demands made by our partner. This last realization was the acceptance of our absolute powerlessness.

Society frequently honors “fighters” with stories in the news, accolades, and “combat medals,” admiration for those who never give up. Unfortunately, there are no “Relationship Combat Medals” for charging up the same relationship hill time after time and always getting the same results. Success in relationship healing and renewal starts with *surrender* not dogged combat.

When we were able to say, “I give up” we allowed our relationship to experience a new beginning. We always think of the words Janis Joplin sang in her hit song, Me and Bobby McGee: “Freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose.” It wasn't until we gave up all expectations for our relationship, each other, and ourselves that we were at last able to put the right foot forward on our healing journey. When we gave up ALL our expectations and came to a new starting point then, and only then, we were ready to follow a new path. The new path with new tools led to a place where we lived in joy never before experienced or imagined. And, in the process, we found freedom where only pain, uselessness, and personal deep-seated dogma had been before.

From that one point of just giving up came the spark that ignited the burning flame from which the Phoenix rose. We now walk the relationship path together, hand in hand, and have been led to the fulfillment of all those things we treasure as 12 Step Promises.

Characteristics of Functional & Dysfunctional *TRADITIONS*??

Much of RCA's original literature was adapted word for word from the literature of Alcoholics Anonymous. As RCA prepares to celebrate 22 years as a fellowship, we can see that this approach has had both benefits and limitations.

Much of AA co-founder Bill W's work at the AA World Service Office in the 1940s was taking care of the correspondence. Many of the letters asked for assistance in forming new groups, or requested advice on various problems and circumstances in the groups.

Seeing similar questions arise again and again, the idea evolved to devise clear guidelines for the groups:

“[It was suggested] that all this mass of experience might be codified into a set of principles which could offer tested solutions to all of our problems of living and working together and of relating our Society to the world outside.”

While AA's Traditions have been successfully applied in many Twelve-Step fellowships, in RCA's case the adaptation of these Traditions is not necessarily based on the evolving experience of RCA members. Therefore, RCA's Traditions may not always be accurate in describing the process of RCA unity.

Thinking about how the RCA Traditions work at the level of the coupleship, the group, and the Fellowship, we might consider questions such as these: What has been the overall experience with the Traditions in our RCA Home Group? With RCA groups that have died? In our service on RCA boards and committees? In our individual coupleship?

The AA Traditions were initially titled “Twelve Points To Assure Our Future.” How well have **our** Traditions served to assure the future of Recovering Couples Anonymous?

It may be useful to apply to RCA the model of “functional” and “dysfunctional” applications of the Traditions, as in the following examples -- all drawn directly from the literature of other 12-Step fellowships.

The Twelve Traditions

1. Functional: “The Traditions offer a lucid assessment of group problems. Members study the Traditions and extract meaning in such a way that the valuable experience of the past and the lessons drawn from that experience can never be lost or forgotten.” Members carry the wisdom of the Traditions with them as they serve the fellowship in various capacities.

1. Dysfunctional: “For the most part we forget about the Traditions and only have to consider how the Traditions are important when we see them broken.”

2. Functional: “When we disagree, we express ourselves in non-personal, non-shaming ways. We do not attack an individual's point of view or question their motives. Instead, we accept what the person says as true for them. In turn, we respectfully express our differing point of view. In this manner, we can share our experiences in a constructive manner.”

2. Dysfunctional: “Addicts and co-addicts, in common with many, find it very difficult to express contrary opinions without things developing into clashes of personality, even if they don't start out that way.”

3. Functional: “More often than not, differences arise not because any party has a lack of regard for the Traditions, but because of an honest difference in how the spirit of the Traditions can be applied.” We have high regard for the Traditions, and when we share our differences in how their spirit can be applied, we do so honestly.

3. Dysfunctional: “Don't beat one other up with principles!!” We use the Traditions as weapons to take the moral high ground, push our opinions, or force agreement.

4. Functional: “The groups follow these traditional principles for the very same reason that the individual member follows the Twelve Steps to recovery. Groups see they would disintegrate if they didn't -- and they soon discover that adherence to our tradition and experience is the foundation for a happier and more effective group life.”

4. Dysfunctional: “We experience black and white thinking such as, ‘If I am right, you are wrong.’ We succumb to the urge to take on more than we can handle. After a motion is presented we react immediately instead of choosing our response. We feel driven by a sense of urgency.”

5. Functional: “No group is bound to conform to the Traditions, but those that do tend to flourish.”

5. Dysfunctional: “Is my own behavior accurately described by the Traditions? If not, what needs changing?”

6. Functional: “The Steps are personal. The Traditions are communal. How I work the Steps is ultimately my own business. The Traditions are everybody’s business and everybody’s responsibility.”

6. Dysfunctional: “One Program slogan is that ‘You can’t give away what you don’t have.’ If you have no experience with the Traditions, then you’re merely guessing at their meaning.”

Conclusion: Future articles may explore issues such as authority, eligibility, autonomy, purpose, responsibility, etc.

-- Submitted by three RCA members.

“Reaching Out Our Hands...”

The RCA Outreach Committee has been very busy serving existing RCA groups. We want to create an additional committee that will focus strictly on growing the fellowship externally. If you are interested in serving on this committee or have ideas to help grow the fellowship please email:

growing-the-fellowship@recovering-couples.org.

In the meantime here are some ideas for growing:

Give outreach brochures out at RCA meetings and ask folks to keep one handy to share with anyone to whom they may be talking about RCA.

Print out business cards with some basics of your local RCA meeting. These are easy to keep with you and hand out if you are talking to someone who could use the recovery that RCA has to offer.

Donate an RCA book to a recovery house, therapist, or church library.

One group has emailed the Step Up To Love flier to all members in their RCA Home group. Members in turn can send it to their couple's therapist, minister/rabbi, local AA/Al-Anon club, etc.

Include a flier that can be down loaded with meeting listings. Meeting details are listed there quick and easy and group members can take copies of fliers to local recovery bulletin boards.

Some meetings have meetings for fellowship, and circulate phone lists of couples that sponsor to encourage people to work the program.

By doing this we may attract new members to the fellowship. Bringing in new members keeps the group alive and gives current couples a continuing place to recover.

Tami H.

Daily Meditation Book

A virtual suggestion box has been put on the website to collect ideas for the book, and they will be reviewed by this new committee. That email box is dailyreader@recovering-couples.org. **The committee is looking for members to participate in the process. Contact Jerry, the Vice-chair at vice-chair@recovering-couples.org if you are interested.** This committee has already begun to collect material and will be taking the book through to publication over the next few years. The Board looks forward to lots of participation and feedback from RCA members and groups.

For the most up to date information, visit our website often.

Send us your feedback on this newsletter to articles@recovering-couples.org.

Seventh Tradition Contributions

RCA Groups and Individuals

April, May and June 2010

Bend, Oregon	\$100.00
Birmingham, MI	\$ 31.00
Chicago, IL Friday Night	\$450.00
Day In Spring, Santa Cruz, CA	\$110.00
El Segundo, CA	\$ 22.00
Fort Worth, TX	\$150.00
Individuals	\$155.00
Jamestown-Sonora, CA	\$180.33
Los Altos, CA	\$300.00
Miracle Mountain, PA	\$ 75.00
Naples - Bonita Springs, FL	\$ 50.00
Norwell, MA	\$100.00
Orlando, FL	\$ 50.00
Phoenix, AZ Thursday Crossroads	\$ 50.00
Phoenix Saturday Night	\$126.00
Phoenix Area groups all together	\$127.00
Richmond, VA Being In The Solution	\$ 50.00
Rockville, MD Stepping Together	\$ 40.00
Salem, Oregon Wednesday Mid-Valley	\$100.00
Salt Lake City, UT	\$101.00
Santa Cruz, CA	\$350.00
St. Peters, MO Monday Night	\$100.00
Tacoma, WA	\$ 50.00
Venice, K.I.S.S., FL	\$ 70.00
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$2,937.33</u>

Your donations help keep the RCA Website up and running, fund operation of the literature store, and support the annual meeting.

Please remember to use your **group number**, which can be found on the website, when you place orders for literature.

This same number will help us keep track of 7th tradition contributions.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

The 2011 Convention

will be in Phoenix, Arizona

The WSO Board is now entertaining bids for 2012.

Would your RCA group like to bid on 2012 or 2013?

Speaker Couples Network

RCA Groups: Would you like to have a guest speaker couple phone into your meeting and share their stories with your group members?

RCA Couples: Would you be willing to phone into a group meeting anywhere and share your experience, strength and hope as a Guest Speaker Couple?

Email: jfkolessar@verizon.net or sponsorship@recovering-couples.org

Recovering Couples Anonymous

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