



Hand in Hand

Summer Edition, July 2008

Recovering Couples Anonymous <http://www.recovering-couples.org> <mailto:wso-rca@recovering-couples.org>

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Letter From the Board

The RCA Board of Trustees hopes to see you at the San Francisco RCA convention. This is your fellowship, and the Board wants to hear from you so please attend the Friday Aug. 1 business meeting. All board meetings are open meetings. Please bring your RCA group's conscience.

Please have your RCA group:

1. Identify your DELEGATE COUPLE. This should have been done by June 30th or sooner, but if you didn't make the deadline, do this anyway. They will represent your RCA group's conscience on RCA matters whether they are going to San Francisco RCA convention or not. We really hope couples from your RCA group are attending the exciting San Francisco RCA convention... see website for details!!!

We hope all RCA groups will vote on the topics below. Each RCA group needs to identify their delegate couple at a business meeting. Your designated couple will have 1 vote as a couple for each topic. They will vote in person or send in your group's vote by mail on behalf of your group.

Please complete the info below and send to WSO office,
by e-mail wso-rca@recovering-couples.org

Name of your RCA group and location_____

Names of the delegate couple representing your group's conscience_____

Phone # and email of delegate Couple_____

Alternate delegate couple_____

Letter From the Board continued

Please check one....

_____Yes, our delegate couple will be at the San Fran. Business meeting in SF on Friday to vote our group's conscience

_____ We will be voting by mail because no one from our group can attend RCAC San Francisco

_____We will ask the delegate couple in _____ (indicate names and group) to be our proxy because no one from our group will be at the business mtg.

2. RCAC in San Francisco needs your help. RCA groups... please bring or send something for the SF RCA silent auction. Hope your RCA group will do that. Please contact JoAnn jsutherland3@mac.com and let her know.

3. Here are the **4 Topics to be considered at the Annual Business Meeting** on August 1, 2008, time: 9am to 5 pm. All four topics involve proposed changes to the bylaws (this is on the RCA website as well):

Topic 1. Reduce the Maximum Number of Couples Serving on the Board of Trustees:

Under the current bylaws the maximum number of members on the Board of Trustees is nine couples resulting in 18 voting members on the Board. The proposed change is to reduce the maximum number of couples to six resulting in 12 voting members on the Board. The proposed reduction is based on the fact that most of the Board meetings over the course of a year are conducted by teleconferencing. Conducting a telephone meeting with 18 individuals participating is cumbersome and time consuming. Reducing the maximum size of the Board would make the conduct of Board meetings more efficient.

Topic 2. Provide Express Authorization for Holding Board of Trustee Meetings by Means of Teleconferencing:

For a number of years the vast majority of Board of Trustee meetings have been held by means of teleconferencing. The RCA WSO bylaws incorporate the provisions of Robert's Rules of Order. If an organization wishes to permit teleconference meetings of its Board of Trustees, Robert's Rules requires that the bylaws of that organization expressly authorize the use of teleconferencing. Thus, for several years the Boards of Trustees have been in technical violation of the provision of Robert's Rules requiring that an express authorization be included in the bylaws. This amendment will include in the bylaws the required express authorization to hold Board meetings by means of teleconferencing.

Letter From the Board continued

Topic 3. Modify the Bylaws so that All Members of the Board of Trustees are Elected Only by the Fellowship at the Annual Business Meeting.

The present bylaws permit the Board of Trustees to fill any vacant positions on the Board with such new members having terms of up to three years in length. The purpose of this change is to eliminate the authority of the Board to fill vacant positions. With elections to the Board held annually, there is no apparent need for the Board to fill vacant positions. Having all positions on the Board filled by vote of the Fellowship at the annual convention helps ensure the Board will remain responsive to the needs of the Fellowship.

Topic 4. Modification of the Duties of Service Providers in the WSO Central Office

Article II of the bylaws covers responsibilities of the WSO Central Office and those service providers providing necessary services for its operation. The Central Office is currently being restructured by the Board of Trustees. The efficient operation of the restructured Central Office requires the modification of the services provided by the Office Manager with some of those services to be provided by an Office Coordinator. Under this proposal the bylaws would be modified to define more accurately the services that are to be provided by each of these service providers.

Notice submitted by the Structure Committee as authorized by the RCA WSO Board of Trustees

Voting By Mail for the RCA Convention

At the RCA Convention in 2006 it was decided that member groups would be allowed to vote by mail at future conventions. The intent was to ensure that the collective group

conscience of the entire membership was represented. What we were unaware of at the time is that Robert's Rules of Order prohibits the mixing of mail-in ballots with ballots cast at a face-to-face meeting. The reason is simple; the mail-in ballots would be cast without the benefit of hearing the discussion taking place on the floor of the meeting. Our Structure Committee did a tremendous job of putting together a set of rules for last year's convention that did allow us to mix the mail-in ballots with those of the attending delegate couples while generally preserving the integrity of the vote. Unfortunately this added another layer of complexity to an already complex process and required us to send any amended motions back to the fellowship to be voted on by mail.

We have just completed the process of voting by mail on those amendments. After much encouragement and several reminders we received 24 ballots in the mail - so in the end the motions were decided by significantly *less* than the total number of member groups that were represented at last year's convention. Our vote by mail provision is not fulfilling its intended purpose of giving us a better representation of our collective group conscience.

It could be argued that dropping a ballot in the mail lacks the intimacy and understanding that can come from listening to the discussion in a face-to-face meeting. Presenting and listening to different viewpoints in a live forum can help us reach decisions that are best for our fellowship, just as many of us have found this sort of process beneficial in our coupleships.

Voting By Mail continued

Most of the other 12-Step fellowships select trusted servants to represent member groups on the regional and national level and this system seems to serve them well. In addition, our proxy system makes it possible for groups unable to send a delegate couple to still be represented at the RCA Convention.

It is time to take another look at our provision for voting by mail

Richard irw Barbara

Seventh Tradition

Hello out there to all fellow RCAers. Summer is upon us and hopefully you have plans to take a vacation. Some of you may even take that vacation to the RCA Convention in San Francisco the first weekend in August. If you've never been to a convention before, I would give it high consideration.

What I would also like to suggest is that when you make your vacation plans, please think about sending some of your money on vacation, too, in the form of a donation to our WSO office in Oakland, CA.

There is so much your money can do on this vacation, such as helping to keep our office up and running, and support our wonderful staff and volunteers in their efforts to bring you the quality service and information that you have come to depend on. 7th tradition donations are an important part of service to the program and the fellowship. There is a bonus: when you give a little, you get a lot in return.

So open your hearts and wallets, and be kind enough to send your dollars on vacation, too.

Thank you and blessings to all.

Allan S IRW Kathy S

How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Show You...

A healthy coupleship needs continual nurturing in order to remain healthy. One of the most effective ways to keep love alive and deepen intimacy is to find ways to make my partner feel cared for and important. Simple and quick communications, when done consistently, are the most effective. Even the busiest person can wedge simple, easy tasks into their routine.

I started with small, loving and supportive statements. I thought about how often I said, "Thank you" to a stranger as they held the door open for me. Did I thank my partner often enough? Everyone loves to hear those simple words, even for a task done each day, maybe many times (poured me the first cup of morning coffee; fed the dog; took out the trash; remembered to get "ones" for the meeting... even if I had to ask).

I tried to be generous with my verbal gratitude. Beyond "Thank you" I added: "You are such a giving person." "That was so thoughtful of you." "That really helped me." "I appreciate what you did for me." "You're the best thing that ever happened to me." "That was kind of you." "I love when you do that."

It felt a little awkward at first, but as I practiced finding positive words, I soon found that I had the right words at the right time. Little moments presented themselves each day for me to use messages of love and interest:

1. I love you.
2. I can't wait to see you.
3. I love spending time with you.
4. I look forward to spending time with you.
5. I'm thinking about you. I love that about you.
6. How was your day? I would love to hear about it.

How Do I Love Thee? continued

Other messages of support and commitment have been:

1. We're in this together. (I'm here for you.)
2. Tell me how I can help. (What can I do to help? Tell me what you need.)
3. Don't worry; I'll take care of it.
4. That took a lot of courage.
5. I appreciate the hard work you put in each day by_____.
6. I'm sending you good-luck vibes.

Then there is the non-verbal communication we share, gestures of love and support that can speak louder than words. Little gestures that are regular and consistent can be more effective than large, rare ones!

1. A simple, quick kiss; holding hands; touching one another
2. A loving glance or a quick wink; a smile; making my partner laugh or smile
3. Making coffee; carrying my partner's bag; a small gift; helping out more
4. A loving note, or quick e-mail, text, or voice message; a pleasant surprise
5. Meeting my partner at the door at the end of the day
6. Being present; being playful; planning for fun

The list goes on. I try to be creative, and I must be honest. I don't just fling out a statement that I do not truly believe. My goal is to touch my partner's heart. To do this, I need to be in tune with my own heart.

Feeling loved and appreciated go hand in hand. My partner and I nurture our love and emotional intimacy through messages and actions of love and care, and we feel special. I know I can keep love alive and deepen intimacy when I treat my partner like I did when we were first dating, like he is truly cared for and an important part of my life.

Vicki irw Mark

Sponsorship As Part of Recovery

Gordon & I have been members of RCA for almost 6 years. It has radically changed the way we relate to each other... for the better. We still have struggles, but we rely on our Higher Power, RCA tools, our own practices from working the Steps, and the support of our incredible group in Los Altos, CA. They keep us honest and serene!

We also believe in service as part of our recovery, and have sponsored other couples when asked. Like our coupleship, sponsoring others is a work in progress. While we've gone in with our eyes open, we realize that we don't necessarily know the "how" of being sponsors. We learn by listening to other couples in meetings and to our sponsees about what works and doesn't work for them, and we talk to other sponsoring couples.

One way we do this is to participate on the RCA sponsorship committee, which meets once a month by phone. We learn from other couples with more years of sponsorship experience and different perspectives.

While we support our sponsees in working the steps, and share our experience, strength and hope, we recognize when we don't know the answers. From time to time we even feel like our sponsees are in better shape than we are! Sponsorship has taught us humility, and that we don't need to have all the answers to help another couple.

In sponsoring other couples, we refer to the wisdom of the RCA Blue Book and invite our sponsees to read the sections on sponsorship. We ask them to sign an agreement as a way to ensure that sacred time is reserved for their coupleship and for working the Steps. Mostly, we listen, support and encourage our sponsees as they work the Steps, and "be with" whatever comes up along that journey.

Sponsorship continued

Sponsorship has been a rewarding and challenging experience for Gordon and me, and we thank our sponsees for contributing to our coupleship.

Shelly & Gordon
Los Altos RCA Group
Palo Alto, CA

Convention Schedule

Our theme for this year's International RCA Convention in San Francisco, August 1-3, is ***The Renewal Festival***, and couples from all over the world will gather and renew their vows. The program will cover the experience, strength, and hope of our RCA fellowship: over 20 years of conventions, and couples work.

Friday the WSO Business Meeting will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., followed by an Ice Breaker Social from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday mornings will include four breakout sessions that will cover four tracks: 1) Intimacy and Sexuality; 2) Working the Relationship; 3) Specific Issues (Finance, Food, Clutter, etc.); 4) Meditation and / or Relaxation. Here is how it looks:

Session One

- The Art of Touch
- Respectful Conflict
- Keep it Real
- God in the Kitchen

Session Two

- Intimacy Building
- Triggers
- Staying in the Now
- Yours, Mine, and Ours: Finance in Couple Recovery

Session Three

- The Road from Sexual Anorexia to Joyous Sexuality
- Breaking the Shame Cycle
- Owning Our Feelings
- Clutter

Session Four

- Healthy Sexuality
- Freedom from Resentment
- 'How to' and Benefits of Sponsorship
- 7th Step Contracts

During breakfast and lunch there will be marked tables displaying the three 'C's of RCA: Communication, Caring, and Commitment. This way we mingle a bit, and get different couples together in different groups during the conference.

We hope to see you all there.

Yours in Service,
 The San Francisco Convention Committee

For additional information, contact Darcy at 650 966 1776 or
 Email darcy@alteredcouture.com

2008 San Francisco Convention Auction

We hope you will embrace the Golden Gate, recovery, AND our Silent Auction. We invite you to bring your treasures to the Convention in August for our Silent Auction, have some couple fun bidding on items, and support RCA World Service.

Popular items are: food baskets donated by your RCA home group; recovery books, artistic pictures, and crafts. If you have a house, condo, or bed & breakfast that you are willing to donate for one night or more, couples will bid for the item!

For more information, or to find out how to make a donation, contact JoAnn & Carl S. at (650) 212-7692, or jsutherland3@mac.com.

Convention Store

Each year many of us journey to the RCA Convention to commune with other couples and celebrate our progress in recovery. It's also a good place to see the literature first hand, and to take some home.

In the past the WSO has shipped boxes of material to and from the convention. This year we are going to try something different, more out of necessity, than a spirit of adventure. As many of you are aware, we are undergoing a big transition in the office, and we are all (Board, too) stretched pretty thin.

To keep our bodies and recovery intact, we are making the store smaller. We will provide order forms and samples of brochures and other items. You can fill out the form, attach a check or cash, and your order will be sent USPS Priority Mail after the convention. Some third edition blue books and step journals can be purchased separately, but all other items will be shipped later.

If you are coming from Europe, India, or any country that requires higher shipping costs, and you were planning to buy here to save shipping costs, please email the office (soon, please!). We can work out purchasing ahead of time, and delivery of your order to the convention site or pick up at the office.

Also, we are planning to bring items from RCA's past, and we don't want to bring them back! Items like: limited First (25) and Second (5) Edition "Blue" Books; CDs, tapes, and tape sets from past conventions and workshops; souvenirs from past conventions. We want to make room in the office, and raise funds for RCA to "carry the message."

I'm really looking forward to being at this convention.

Elise (irw David), volunteer, and assistant to Brian

7th Tradition Donations

Name	Amount
Austin Riverbend RCA Group	26.00
Birmingham, MI RCA Group	100.00
Birmingham, MI RCA Group	100.00
Bring In The Solution	50.00
Rachele B	71.55
Chattanooga, TN RCA Group #1	150.00
Ft. Worth, Tx 83020	150.00
George S	40.00
Barton and Rebecca H	80.00
Idaho Falls SOS RCA Group	55.75
Jamestown, CA – 45015	94.45
K.I.S.S. – Nokomis, FL – 49030	50.00
Kiss – RCA 49030	0.25
Alan L	40.00
LA–Sun CLARE – 45045	60.00
Los Altos CA – RCA	2.05
Lisa M	5.01
Miracle Mountain Group – RCA	37.50
Missoula Group of RCA	100.00
Kate M	139.00
Oakland Early Birds Step Study	122.00
Oakland, CA Earlybird	117.00
RCA – Tyler TX – 75701	50.00
Salt Lake City, UT RCA Group	24.00
Sharon C	10.00
Sherman Oaks, CA – 45020	80.00
St. Charles, MO – 65005	100.00
Stepping Together RCA	100.00
St. Peters Monday Night RCA	50.00
Tucson, AZ – 43020	350.00
James U	0.56
W.LA Sunday Night	200.00
Walnut Creek Friday Night Group – 45105	500.00
Barb and John W	29.40
TOTAL	<u>3,084.52</u>