



Hand in Hand

Winter Issue 2009

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Mark and Jim's RCA Story

In September of 1999, while visiting relatives in California, Mark began to identify himself as a person with a sexual addiction. After returning to Seattle he began his individual process of 12 step recovery. Meanwhile, Jim was going to a counselor and attending a men's therapy group.

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We are looking for a few special stories!

Whose story? Why yours, of course!

The Hand in Hand is your newsletter. Take a moment and share with us about a special moment in your coupleship. Share your experiences, struggles, strength, and hope.

Tell us about your groups special activities. What makes your group strong? What obstacles have you overcome?

Do you have some ideas about what you would like to see here?

Email your ideas to articles@recovering-couples.org for consideration.

Important message from the

Board of Trustees of the World Service Organization.

We now offer a toll free number to contact the WSO. The new number is **877-663-2317**. You may still use the local number 510-663-2312. Messages left at both numbers will be responded to. The fellowship within the United States and Canada can dial this toll-free service.

You may use the RCA email address to contact the WSO at:

wso-rca@recovering-couples.org

When sending an email to the WSO, please **discontinue** using the old Pachel email address: wso-rca@pachel.net, this has been discontinued as part of the WSO transition.

Mark & Jim's story, continued:

During the first few months of Mark's attending his 12 step group, things got better between us, then they got worse. This resulted in us deciding to go to a couples counselor to save our relationship. During one of the sessions, the counselor asked us what we were willing to do to save our relationship. Mark suggested RCA because he had met some people in his recovery fellowship that were part of RCA. The counselor asked us if we would be willing to attend a RCA meeting. Reluctantly, Jim agreed to go. Somewhere Mark has heard a suggestion "try it for 6 meeting to see if it is for you".

The first Sunday of January 2000, Mark and Jim attended their first Face to Face RCA meeting. The meeting itself is a blur to us but what happened after the meeting is clear in our memories. Jim said "you didn't tell me this was a 12 step group". Mark responded with "F___ you, I am going to work on my own recovery". Needless to say, our life together was unmanageable.

The following Sunday, we found ourselves back at the meeting. We kept coming back, continued to hear "our story" being told during these first few meetings. Before and after the meetings we would argue, isolate and threaten to leave the relationship, all the while wondering if we were going to make it.

The pain was intense. We were desperate. As hopelessness set in, somehow we found the courage to reach out to another couple, asking them to be our co-sponsors and to work the 12 steps with us. Over the following months, the four of us would meet for an hour prior to the RCA meeting. Over dinner we would check in and do our step work. In our literature it says that sometimes couples will need to work the steps in the presence of another couple because of a need to feel safe. While writing on our initial steps, we realized that we needed to set a time limit for any work we wanted to do as a couple. The result was that we learned to set the timer and work for no more than 30 minutes at a time. The outcome was nothing short of a miracle. We began to listen to each other with compassion and caring. Between working the first steps in the presence of another couple and learning to honor the time restraints we agreed upon, our communication dysfunction began to fade away. We were happy to be a couple in recovery, thanks to the RCA program.

As a result of working through the 12 steps together, we were beginning to share a greater sense of intimacy, with more honest sharing,

compassion towards one another and a willingness to share our experience, strength and hope with others.

In October of 2005, we moved from the West Coast to the East Coast. We could not find an RCA face to face meeting to attend. This resulted in us beginning to repeat our old, negative but comfortable ways of communicating. We began to slip back into "old behaviors". Thanks to a higher power, in January 2006 we found the phone meeting listings on the RCA WSO Website. Thank you God and RCA.

The first Sunday of January 2006, we started attending the Phone Meetings. It seemed strange at first but slowly we got back on track. We again began to feel safe using the "Tools" of RCA: "meeting of two", 10th step check in, working the steps, co-sponsoring, sponsoring other couples and being of service to the Sunday night Phone meeting.

All these tools have had a major impact on our lives. But nothing as much as Sponsoring. Sponsoring helps us learn things from the people are in contact with on a regular basis. Not only do we get to hear and experience honest, love and vulnerability from others, we get to share our experience, strength and hope at the same time.

As a result of being in RCA, we now have a life worth living. A life filled with open and honest communication, compassion and caring. A day does not go by without thanking our Higher Power for the RCA program and the people in it.

Gratefully in Recovery

Mark and Jim

Outreach to the RCA groups....
Is your group's contact info up to date on
the website?

The Outreach Committee has four dedicated team leaders and many dedicated team members that they count on to get the word out to the fellowship several times a year. Just as important...Outreach wants to hear what the RCA fellowship needs and wants. Outreach passes that information onto the board. There are 5 Outreach regions: East, Mid US, West, International and Canada. Vicky irw Jerry is our East

Coast team leader. Kathy irw Allan is the Mid US team leader and the chair of the Outreach committee. Jade irw Gladys heads up the West. Julaine irw Steve connects with all the Canadian groups.

We need an International RCA groups team leader. Call 1-877-663-2317 and tell us you want to serve.

The Outreach team leaders phone or email their team members who in turn phones or emails their particular RCA groups to get information out concerning RCA.

With Outreach's help the RCA directory on the website is more current than ever. If you are traveling this winter, use the directory to find an RCA meeting and attend a meeting and meet other RCA couples. Some RCA couples are part of the RCA Bed and Breakfast club. Stay with a couple for \$20 to \$30 per night (a donation to World Services Organization).

You can help Outreach by going to the RCA website and checking to see if your RCA group's contact information is correct.

1. on the RCA home page click on **find a meeting**
2. under **group resources** click on **meeting registry**
3. follow the directions to make your changes
4. click submit and the webmaster will update your RCA group's contact info

[Need a sponsor couple?](#)

The Outreach team strives to have a pulse on the needs of RCA groups. Outreach has heard that RCA couples need sponsor couples. RCA couples want

- To connect with an RCA couple anywhere in the world on a once in a while basis
- A long term sponsor couple that they can connect with by phone

An RCA group in Spanish Fork, Utah has a good idea. They hope that there are RCA couples who will let their names stand on a sponsorship list and indicate if they are willing to do one or both kinds of sponsorship. The list would be held by the World Service Organization and RCA couples looking for a sponsor couple would be given that list. E-mail harmony_couple@yahoo.com if you want to serve as a sponsor couple.

The future of RCA depends on your 7th tradition donations. by Randy and Gerrie irt

Send a Valentine to World Services Organization and enclose a 7th tradition donation from your coupleship to RCA!

Did you know that RCA is now 20 years old! Our first duty is to maintain what we have now. We need to be vigilant. There is no room for complacency. We have rallied to meet and transcend crisis and failure. Problems moved us forward.

We think the RCA fellowship and World Services Organization has the dedication, courage and imagination to open wider every means of news and channels to reach the couples still suffering. Look at the consequences of broken relationships and the suffering children.

Furthermore, we must not take for granted that RCA will be here forever. RCA is here because of RCA members' special attention, their service to the fellowship and contributions to 7th traditions. Half the RCA groups do not contribute to 7th tradition donations. One could say that half the RCA groups have little concern for RCA's welfare. We don't think so. We think they just haven't seen the need yet.

In our hearts we believe that every RCA couple who has found greater caring, commitment and communication in their relationship because of RCA, wants to do what they can for the longevity of RCA.

We have our RCA recovery because of our willingness to do the work.

Let us not forget that each and every RCA couple also has a part to do in the well being of RCA itself.

So as Valentine's Day approaches, we invite your coupleship to rededicate to the future of RCA so it is around for 20 more years!

Celebrate your recovery! Have a heart and make a 7th Tradition Donation to RCA on Valentine's Day! The World Service Organization is in place to carry the message to struggling couples. This is done through the website, email, phone calls, and literature. There are 3 revenue streams for the RCA World Service Organization.

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1. **The annual RCA convention** We know that the convention's primary importance is to carry the message via recovery meetings, help to develop 'informed group consciences ' at the business meeting and have fun. We hope you are planning to attend the RCA convention in Fort Lauderdale in October. Register today for the discount rate!

2. An important revenue stream for RCA is **literature**. Sometimes we have underestimated the importance of that. Not too long ago RCA literature was sold at near cost, but this did not allow for new literature.

3. The 3rd source of income for RCA WSO is of course **7th tradition**. 7th tradition no matter what form i.e. group or individual donations is immensely important. Because of 7th Tradition donations RCA's message of hope can be carried to struggling couples.

We know there are currently about 130 groups. We guesstimate there is an average of 5 couples per group. If all couples contributed \$1/wk. OR \$4/month OR just \$50/year RCA would have over \$32,500 / year. It's very simple math.

Please give back to RCA because you and your coupleship are worth it!
Randy and Gerrie irt

Send to: **Recovering Couples Anonymous P.O. Box 11029, Oakland CA 94611**

OR

Go to wso-rca@recovering-couples.org and click on **contribute** on the home page

(Please include your group number if your 7th Tradition is from your group)

Our primary purpose

is to stay committed in loving and intimate relationships and to help other couples achieve freedom from addicted and destructive relationships.

Re-organization of RCA in our efforts

to serve RCA better

To keep the fellowship informed and to provide needed transparency, the Board wishes to report on the recent history of the World Service Organization transition. This transition process includes the reasons for the recent decision to close the Office in Oakland. Last January, the Office Manager gave the Board his intention to move on. Since then, the Board has been working hard to restructure the ways the fellowship is served. In the past months, the Board and committee members sought out new paid personnel to handle the functions of the World Service Office. Some legal questions and concerns became apparent. After much deliberation, the difficult decision was made to suspend the work being done in the office. The functions of the World Service Office continue to be provided for, JUST in a different way.

These services are being provided for by three independent contractors and some RCA volunteers throughout the country. Two of these independent contractors have been in place and working hard for the fellowship since early 2008. These are:

- Fantaz Web in South Carolina which provides our website services and has been keeping our website up-to-date and accurate while at the same time working on improvements and additions to the RCA website.
- Compleat Small Business Services in Oakland provides our financial services at a professional level resulting in a more complete financial record keeping.

During the transition period from September through early November 2008, there were a number of problems with the filling of literature orders. By the end of November there was a concerted effort to address these problems. At the same time an effort was initiated to locate an independent contractor to provide merchandise services for the WSO. After some research, the Board selected Bob F as our merchandise service provider. Bob is a long-time RCA member in the Bay area with a background in literature merchandising and inventory control.

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Due to Bob's extensive experience in this field and his familiarity with RCA literature, literature orders are now being filled accurately and quickly. In addition to providing merchandise services, Bob is processing 7th Tradition contributions to the WSO. As an independent contractor, his service will be called "12 Step Merchandise".

The Board is working on acquiring a communications contractor to provide necessary communications services including answering phone and email messages, as well as, processing important correspondence. These services are being provided by volunteers from the Board temporarily.

The cost to operate the World Service Organization with four independent contractors providing these services using their own work spaces and their own equipment amounts to about \$26,500 annually. In contrast, the cost of maintaining an office in downtown Oakland with one employee providing the merchandise and communication services and with independent contractors providing financial and website services totals in excess of \$36,000 annually. The members of this Board think that the yearly savings of approximately \$9,500 can be better spent on what the fellowship has been asking for and needs such as:

- New literature including the revised 4th edition of the Blue Book
- Alternate literature including a new 12 Step workbook.
- Revitalization... so RCA can grow and groups can be supported.

We hope that this description of the World Service Office transition is helpful and informative. Any further inquiries can be made to our new toll free ATT phone service at 877-663-2317 or send an email to wso-rca@recovering-couples.org. You may continue to use the 510 number until late February when we anticipate switching to a new local phone number provided by our Communications Service Provider. It is the Board of Trustee's goal to meet the needs of the fellowship in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

RCA Retreat

March 27,28,29 2009

St. Joseph's Spiritual Life Center

495 Maple Lane North

Valatie, NY 12184

Come and spend the weekend working on the Steps. Join us for a time of Growth and Spirituality. Very quiet location in the country, simple amenities, great food and fellowship. Saturday Morning, a therapist will be presenting to us.

We only have space for 15 over night couples. Please sign up soon!

Registration Fee is \$25.00; Cost for Friday Thru Sunday including 5 meals \$270.00, for a total of \$295.00 per couple. Weekend couples may add a Sunday Noon Dinner for \$30.00 per couple. If you plan on attending for the Saturday only, the cost for the day program including the speaker and three meals is \$85 per person.

Registration form is available online at <http://www.recovering-couples.org> or you may contact **Mark W** at 845 853 6753.

Bed and 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 couples stay with members of the RCA fellowship, and a recommended donation of \$20 to \$30 per night goes to WSO. This is a 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, dogfriendly"

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

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Processing Grief in Our Coupleship

Deborah irw Mark

Sunday night RCA phone meeting

“Being in the Solution” RCA meeting, Richmond, VA

During the past four months, we lost two extended family members to cancer. The first was Mark’s brother-in-law in Philadelphia in October, and, the second loss was my brother in Dallas, during the first week of December. What does a recovering couple do when there are work schedules, household tasks, and financial, sexuality and communication issues, all which seem to be never-ending? Although we have seventh step agreements, including one for extended family visits, they do not address loss and grief. What is grief and, how does a recovering couple process it? According to Webster, grief is defined as “*intense emotional suffering caused by loss; acute sorrow, deep sadness.*” We prayed, reached out to couples for support and worked our individual recovery programs.

After prayer, meetings for two, individual work with my sponsor, and working with our RCA sponsor couple, I willingly left for Dallas on November 9th and returned December 20th, 2009. I am the only surviving family member and my brother was not married, nor had children. Who would have thought we would be physically separated for six weeks? When we first began RCA recovery, our partnership would not have withstood the time apart. Our Higher Power does for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

Our couple sponsors shared with us that recovery does not necessarily mean that our life gets better; it means we do things differently. We have had many opportunities to respond to these losses in a healthier way. When my mother passed away in 2002, there wasn’t any partnership. We lived parallel lives and processed our own grief, if we processed it at all. These past few months gave us an opportunity to incorporate tools of our individual and RCA programs in our lives. While I was in Texas, we checked in every morning, by beginning and ending calls with the Serenity Prayer. We shared what each of us did to help and hurt the coupleship and we were transparent about our feelings, something that is hard for me to do. We kept our phone appointments with our sponsor couple. During one of our calls, I was reminded to lower my expectations during this time of unpredictability.

The greatest gift my brother left us was his four years in his individual recovery program. Mark reached out to my brother’s sponsor and he took him to meetings. Another friend of his invited us to hear her speak at an

open meeting. Because of my brother’s recovering community, and his sponsor, being authentic was easier for us. Mark and I were able express our sadness, anger and fear with his friends in recovery; the feelings that constitute grief. We both felt heard and validated and we listened to them share their experience, strength and hope.

A month has passed since my brother’s death. We are together in our home in Virginia. How are we processing grief? We are sharing our feelings, reaching out to our recovering friends, and attending RCA meetings. Service work in RCA has helped me diminish any of my own self-centered thoughts and feelings. We know that expressing grief will not be easy for us, and, since our recovery in RCA, we are committed in this relationship, one day at a time. We both know that with time and faith in our coupleship Higher Power, the sad feelings will pass and will be replaced with joy and laughter, one day at a time.

RCA Safety Guidelines

Our purpose is not to give advice or try to fix one another, but rather to create a safe environment in which we can support each other through the sharing of our experience, strength, hope, pain and joy. Most of us have had great difficulty establishing our boundaries, assertiveness, and personal space, and we are, therefore, sensitive. For that reason, it is important for us to act and speak respectfully to our partners and others. We have found that:

- It is OK to have feelings, and to express them, clearly and respectfully.
- It is OK to make mistakes, and to make appropriate amends.
- It is OK to disagree, and to use a conflict-resolution plan.
- It is OK to have needs, and to ask politely for them to be heard.
- It is important that we avoid taking or sharing another person's inventory, or using statements that are baiting, button-pushing, case-building, self-righteous, or judgmental. We use "I statements" to help us each take individual responsibility for our feelings and thoughts, and to avoid blame. Saying, “I feel hurt”, “I am sad”, rather than saying “You did...”, “You are...”, or “You said...” helps us each take individual responsibility for our feelings and thoughts, and avoid blame. We do not globalize a conflict by saying, “You always...” or “You never...” and we keep the focus on current issues, not past issues, rather than try to resolve past hurts during conflict resolution.
- It is important that we each work on our own individual recoveries, to support our couple recoveries. We learn to forgive, remembering that resentment hurts our coupleship, our partners, and us, and we learn the healing power of compassion, as well.



Riding the Wave of Recovery

2009 RCA Convention, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Break with Convention

It's October in South Florida, Ft. Lauderdale in particular. During the daytime it's a balmy 83° F. At night, well, at night it's a spectacular 75° F. What a great time to come enjoy the weather and immerse yourselves in couple recovery.

Riding the Wave of Recovery, the 2009 RCA Convention on October 16, 17 and 18 in Ft. Lauderdale will be as spectacular as the weather. *Let the Sunshine In, Learning to Play and Have Fun Together* is the theme. And that's what you'll be doing. Your relationship will be better for your attendance — more joyful, more intimate, more spiritual. You'll also get to renew old friendships and meet some of the most wonderful new couples on the same journey.

Fort Lauderdale, the *Venice of America*, is located in the east-central portion of Broward County, Florida approximately 23 miles north of hot and spicy Miami and 42 miles south of the sophisticated, upper crust Palm Beach and Worth Avenue shopping. Encompassing more than 33 square miles, Fort Lauderdale is the seventh largest city in Florida and the largest in Broward County.

There's a lot to do and see here. Blessed with over 3,000 hours of sunshine each year, world-famous Fort Lauderdale Beach, only four miles from the convention hotel, offers premier opportunities for recreation, relaxation and enjoyment. The picturesque Riverwalk serves as the cornerstone of the City's arts, science, cultural and historic district that features the Museum of Discovery and Science, Museum of Art and Old Fort Lauderdale Village and Museum. Las Olas Boulevard has gained international acclaim as Fort Lauderdale's centerpiece of fashion, fine dining and entertainment.

If you want to take time to travel Florida before or after the RCA Convention, surprisingly, the theme parks are not too crowded in October. Each park has its own fantastic October festivities to make your visit unique and exciting.

The earlier you register for the convention, the less it costs so **do it today**. Go to www.recovering-couples.org and click on "2. 2009 Florida Convention Registration Form" to download the form. You may save as much as \$25.00 per person by registering now. If you have questions about the convention, you may e-mail them to FloridaConvention@recovering-couples.org. Or if you'd like you can call Vicky and Jerry at (954) 432-8167.

You'll be staying at the Sheraton Fort Lauderdale Airport Hotel, only 1.5 miles from the user-friendly Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport. And there's a really special room rate for the convention ... only \$119 per night double! To book your room, go to www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/RCA2009 or call (954) 920-3500. There is also a direct link from the RCA website.

See y'all in October, y' hear!



Riding the Wave of Recovery

2009 RCA Convention, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Learning to Play and Have Fun Together

Keep your Convention in mind this Spring and think of some new ideas for our silent auction. The proceeds are all sent to help run the RCA-WSO office and keep the webpage up to date.

We have had some great items in the past, including a hand made RCA quilt, "Get Away" values, bar-b-que items, great recovery books, and three legged stools.

What new items can you think of? Can your group send something in? What about your coupleship?

Contact Mark & Vicki at SilentAuction@recovering-couples.org with your donations and ideas. *Please put silent auction in the subject line.*

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...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 or their Delaware condo (a mile from Bethany Beach)"

(301) 424-4594 - Kate and Dan Rockville, Maryland (20 miles from DC)"

"...Winnipeg...ice fishing in the winter to hot summers" (204) 668-1515 - Gerrie committed to Randy, Randy committed to Gerrie"

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

send a finished description to articles@recovering-couples.org

When Making a 7th tradition contribution, include your group service number

Annual RCA Convention Meeting:	\$	243.00
Austin Texas Group - 83060	\$	20.00
In Harmony Hollywood FL	\$	25.00
Being In The Solution	\$	50.00
Birmingham, Mi RCA	\$	100.00
Bozeman RCA	\$	35.26
individual	\$	20.00
Chattanooga RCA	\$	40.00
Individual	\$	400.00
Individual	\$	1.50
Fort Worth, Texas RCA	\$	300.00
individual	\$	100.00
Lake Nokomis (S.Minneapolis) RCA	\$	2.00
London Stepping Together RCA	\$	100.00
Los Altos CA - RCA	\$	1,000.00
Los Angeles Care - 45045	\$	162.30
Las Vegas Monday Night RCA	\$	50.00
Norwell MA RCA	\$	50.00
Oakland, CA Earlybird	\$	651.00
Individual	\$	62.28
Philadelphia Friday Night	\$	28.60
RCA - Rockford ILL	\$	40.00
RCA - Walnut Creek Friday Night	\$	500.00
RCA Chapter 9 Northwest	\$	4.90
RCA Joint Venture Group	\$	161.85
RCA-Green Gulch 08	\$	150.00
RCA-Joint Venture - James Town	\$	182.61
RCA-Keizer OR 77012	\$	50.00
San Diego - RCA	\$	420.00
Santa Cruz, CA - 45100	\$	350.00
Saturday Mesa Group - 43005	\$	13.00
Seattle, WA Sunday Group #87010	\$	317.24
Individual	\$	60.00
Sherman Oaks - RCA	\$	315.75
Individual	\$	149.00
Sonora RCA-Joint Venture	\$	53.00
St Peters Monday Night RCA	\$	150.00
Individual	\$	150.00
Tucson Wednesday Night RCA	\$	80.00
Tyler Texas RCA	\$	100.00
Winnipeg Sunday - 24005	\$	100.00

**Total Donations & 7th Tradition—
July—Dec 2008** **\$ 6, 804.29**

The RCA-WSO attempts to accurately track whether a contribution is an RCA group contribution or an individual contribution from an RCA member. The WSO needs the help of contributors in providing the information needed to properly record the type of contribution and to provide acknowledgment for the contribution. Of special importance is providing **your group service number** when submitting a group contribution. The global meeting directory on the website is being modified to display the group service number for every group listed in the meeting directory. This will provide an easy way to keep track of your group service number.

Watch for these and other upcoming changes on the website for information regarding the submission of contributions either by postal mail or by using the Pay Pal link on the website. The upcoming changes on the website will provide guidance to contributors regarding information that will aid the WSO in properly recording and acknowledging contributions by RCA members and by RCA groups.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

The 2009 RCAC will be in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

The 2010 RCAC will be in the mid continent. Maybe your RCA group wants to bid on 2010 or 2011!

Do you want to be a sponsor couple to a struggling RCA group and phone into their meeting and serve as speaker couple?

Email Betsy betsyf2720@earthlink.net or preferably phone (925) 274-1186

Recovering Couples Anonymous

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