



HAND IN HAND



A Publication of Recovering Couples Anonymous World Service Organization P.O. Box 11029, Oakland, CA 94611 510-663-2312

Volume XIII, Issue 1

Winter 2005

Upcoming RCA Events

Flyers posted on www.recovering-couples.org

RCA Convention/Conference August 12, 13, 14, 2005 San Diego Contact Sue & Mike 619-668-6931

Back to Basics Workshop (12 Steps for Couples) Feb. 5-7, 2005 Phoenix Jerry & Beth 480-917-7943

Valentines Dance February 12, 2005, 7-12 PM \$10 each LA (El Segundo) Fred & Eva 310-518-9916

Winnipeg RCACC A Winner!

WSB Chair Report

Katherine S. RCA WSB Chair

Coming out of the cold and rain, into the warmth of a dancing fire, cheerfully greeted by friends – some new, some familiar faces – few events in life can be more uplifting. Add to that many opportunities for expanding our wisdom through the wisdom of others and advancing the quality of our relationship through workshops - and you have a picture of the Winnipeg RCACC'05.

A trip to Winnipeg added truly international flair to our convention this year. Signs in drugstores are printed in both French and English; products and customs reflect Canada's status as an off-continent member of the EU (European Union). Meals not included in the convention package could be enjoyed in the very popular English-style pub downstairs.

Many thanks to our folks in Winnipeg for their hard work and dedication!

The convention closed with the powerful Forgiveness Ceremony conducted by our Vice Chair, Jane, and her spouse, Ed, RCA Communication Chair 2004.

(Continued on p. 2, Column 2)

The Magic of our Spiritual Connection Manifests Through Service!

A Call to Action by Jane W., RCA WSB VC

We've seen some amazing advances for the good of this fellowship in 2004 but our Board and our service committees are stretched really thin. They need your help to keep RCA Alive and Well. Every dimension you would like to see improved is entirely dependent upon your willingness to be a part of the solutions! We need you! You need you to help RCA grow.

The Magic of our Spiritual Connection (Continued)

The problems and needs of this fellowship can be worked out by the Committees of RCA. Work in Committees and the World Service Board takes a few simple things.

1. First of all we ask that all of RCA members willing to step up for Service have at least **one year of working the 12 steps of RCA.**
2. Board members are elected as Couples so it is important that you decide together that you are both willing to Serve RCA. The term is generally for two years through two conventions.
3. Committee members can sign up as individuals for two committees.

(Continued on page 2, Column 1)

NEW RCA LITERATURE

NOW ON SALE ONLINE OR ORDER FROM THE WSO.

Still Only 50¢ Per Brochure!

INTO ACTION TITLES All 6 \$3

Stepping Together

Caring Communication

Couple Contracts

Conflict Resolution

Restoring Joy and Intimacy

We Practice These Principles.

THE POWER OF SPONSORSHIP TITLES

What Is Couple Sponsorship

Overcoming Barriers

Choosing a Sponsor Couple

Working With Others

All 4 \$2

Magic of our Spiritual Connection

(Continued from p. 1)

4. Computers with e-mail accounts and telephones are necessary for Service on RCA these days. So... if you have a **computer with e-mail and a phone**, you can make things happen!
5. This past year we have worked together every month on the phone during our monthly scheduled World Service Board Teleconferences. New volunteers should have the **ability and willingness to read and respond via e-mail and be available to commit to attend scheduled teleconferenced Committee and/or World Service Board meetings**.
6. The Trustees agreed that in order to ensure that each of the Service committees had representation in front of the Board, we asked that each committee be Chaired by a Board member. **If you decide you are willing to become a Board member you may expect to be asked to step up to Chair one of the Service Committees**.
7. Chairing a committee means you agree to schedule meetings as necessary to work on projects for the fellowship, and to email out a report one week in advance of the WSB meeting date.

The **commitment** you bring to Service is ultimately important to all of us so the greater your commitment to work within these groups and put in your best efforts the better our fellowship will be served. **Every Board member will be required to: chair committees and organize and report on committee meetings, and/or serve as an officer, attend board meetings by teleconference or at face to face meetings – at their own (or their group's) expense, do work each week to carry out responsibilities and prepare for board meetings; be willing to receive direction from the fellowship as a whole through feedback and being in contact with the fellowship on a regular basis.**

Mindfulness of our Traditions is key. It takes us all some reminding at times that we are “but trusted servants” and we do not govern. We believe it is our duty to do for the fellowship what is asked of us and to work for the fellowship as a whole. Therefore, we work by the determinations made in the Informed Group Conscience process to accomplish goals for the common good, and are willing to work together with a diverse group of recovering couples to be a part of a solution.

We use the **Informed Group Conscience process** to become aligned with HPs will for our fellowship. Realizing that the adage about “principles before personalities” will most likely take on a much more

complex meaning than ever before as we work together is a part of this too. We use our **RCA safety guidelines** to work on things, especially when our opinions don't match. The tools of the program that work for our coupleships apply to Service work just a well. Creative people who have ideas and enthusiasm for RCA are essential to our process. Every bit of progress we make to bring you a new and better RCA begins with a single spark of creativity. Diligent and hard working people fuel the spark and help to make it a flame. When the magic of our spiritual connection manifests through Service, we have seen that idea, that spark, become wonderful advancements for the fellowship. Sparks like this became new and revised Literature from the Literature Committee, a consistent delivery of the Hand in Hand newsletter, a new experimental Communications Forum which can help us connect to others in RCA no matter how isolated our meetings may be, thanks to the Communications Committee, and much greater clarity on our procedures so we can function more effectively, thanks to the Structure committee.

Chair Report to the Fellowship (Continued from p. 1)

Trustees: In Service to You and RCA

Trustees met for their traditional first meeting after the closing of the convention. The trustees voted to retain the same slate of officers as last year. Since that meeting, Doreen D. has stepped up to the position of Secretary, Yea, Doreen! To date, your officers are Katherine S., Chair, Jane W., VC, Doreen D., Secretary, and the new Treasurer is Randy irw Gerrie, Winnipeg. Jim B., our '04 Treasurer, has resigned from the Board. Jim and Diane will be greatly missed! As, Jim checked in weekly with the Office Manager and kept the Board aware of our financial status regularly. Diane's training as a Parliamentarian has benefited RCA greatly as she was also Chair of the Structure Committee. Thank you both so much for your legacy to RCA. We also sadly received the resignation of Mark and James, GCC's from Seattle, WA, who were elected at RCACC in Winnipeg. New brochures were approved and produced by the Board. Thanks to a very creative, busy and diligent Literature Committee! Information on these and ordering information is include in this publication. You will want these right away to get a preview of what's coming in the 2005 Blue Book.

The Trustees voted to conduct a Face-to-Face meeting in Phoenix Feb. 5 and 6. This would be a wonderful time for anyone considering board service to sit in on some meetings and see first-hand what goes on and whether they would like to become a part of the board. All WSB

meetings are open meetings, so you will be welcomed. Contact any Trustee for more information. We have many opportunities for you to be a part of World Service. Check out the WANT ADS in this issue and see how you can be a part of carrying our message. Katherine S, RCA WSB Chair

“Work the First Step On It”

Many times our sponsor couple have suggested that we “work the first step” on an issue. When they say this they are suggesting we take the questions in the first step of the RCA Blue book and answer the questions specifically regarding the issue that may be currently causing upset for one or both of us. Taking each of the questions and relating the question specifically to the issue at hand will help us see where our feelings are really coming from. For example, if we are into an upset about money, we could each answer the Step One questions like this: What dysfunctional roles about money had we brought from our families-of-origin? What had our family-of-origin model taught us about money? What were our individual experiences of abuse and how had those affected our ability to earn, save, give, and receive money? How had our individual addictions affected our relationship with money? What were the unmanageable issues we never seemed to resolve? (e.g., how we spend money, earn money, save money, share money) How had these issues brought us to anger and what were our patterns of expressing anger? How had we felt hopeless about money issues in our relationship? In order to deal with our money issues, what measures had we tried that hadn’t seemed to work? How had we fought unfairly about money?

Our awareness of what old ideas we brought from our family-of-origin and from our past experiences, and admitting we are powerless over them, can help us become allies. As allies, we can stop fighting over “my solution against your solution” and join together in the process of surrendering our problem with money to our Higher Power. *Anonymous, Los Angeles*

Reflection

Trust *by Carl S. in recovery with JoAnn*
By the time we came to the RCA program, much of our trust was gone. Breaches of trust from our past haunted our relationship. Our addictions and co-addictions had caused us to be untrustworthy. When we came to RCA for help, the feelings of the old mistrust came with us. The first thing we needed to trust was the 12 Step process. We had to be willing to trust that the program

would work for us. After that we had to trust that what we were doing was the beginning of the “right way” to live. We had to trust that our Higher Power would be with us and entrust our life together to the Will of this Higher Power. We had to trust that when we became totally open, honest and willing we would be safe and heal. We had to trust others in the program: our sponsors and others in our group. We had to trust that God would remove the sickness from our relationship. And in this process of learning to trust, we came to trust in ourselves. At any previous time in our life, we probably would not have been able to do this. This much trust would have led to betrayal and pain; as had happened so many times in the past. But the commitment by both partners to the 12 Step process allows us to safely trust again and experience moments of tremendous intimacy. The program of RCA gives us a recipe, a formula, for trust. We find, eventually, that not only can the process be trusted, but also our sponsor couple and our Higher Power. And then, the greatest gift of the program comes: complete trust in ourselves, our partner and our relationship.

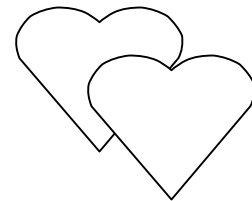
Our Commitment Today

Today we will look at where we are putting our trust. Is it in our old ways of coping, or in the proven recipe for trust in the 12-step process?

My Commitment Today

Today I will dare to trust one 12-step process and give myself to it with complete abandon.

RCA Heart Cards



Create intentional moments of joy and intimacy with this deck of Heart Cards

\$5 Deck

Created by RCA couples for RCA couples

Reflection

Healthy Couple Commitment

Commitment means choosing to live with our partner, to give to our partner and the relationship without the expectation of an equal giving by our partner. At the same time, commitment means being willing to surrender the control of our commitment and our relationship to God. Choosing and surrendering lead to relationship; they are not the result of relationship.

Commitment does not mean or require complete agreement. We are not called to be together to be dependent or codependent. Rather, we are called together as interdependent persons: Two people reaching for our own wholeness and through that striving, encouraging and modeling spiritual, emotional and physical health to each other. Commitment is often thought of as “giving up of my power” in the relationship. Quite the contrary, commitment empowers me for it takes me out of the center of our relationship and our relationship out of the center of our lives. When we see ourselves and our relationship in proper perspective to our couple Higher Power, blessings flow into our relationship.

Our Commitment Today

As a couple, we turn our wills and life together over to the care of God, as we understand God.

My Commitment Today

I will look for and act upon an opportunity to freely choose to be committed to my partner.

“If you are creative or diligent or both, or simply if you love this program and would like to give RCA something in return for all RCA has done for your coupleship, please consider becoming a member of one or two committees or the World Service Board.”

What’s the Buzz?

Find out by checking in on RCA’s members forum at <http://rcamembers.b4ai.com>. This experimental site was provided by our 2004 Communication Committee Chair, Ed B., to help members communicate with each other and the Trustees. Majority, Unanimity, or Substantial Majority is a topic being discussed.

Majority, Unanimity, or Substantial Majority?

The Board of Trustees in 2004 voted to increase the margin required to pass a vote from a simple majority to a 2/3 substantial majority. This was a compromise. Some thought the rule we had been using – simple majority (50% + 1) – was sufficient; this is the standard in Robert’s Rules of Order, which our Bylaws reference, as stated below:

Article VI. Procedures

6.1 Rules of Order. The latest edition of Robert’s Rules of Order shall be the authority on parliamentary law and its usage, unless otherwise provided for in these bylaws.

6.2 Amendments. Amendments to these bylaws may be made at the annual open business meeting at RCAC. Written notice of the proposed amendment must be filed with the Board of Trustees at a Board meeting preceding RCAC. An affirmative vote of 75% of all RCA members present and voting shall be necessary to adopt any amendment to these bylaws. Some thought that a 2/3 majority was not good enough; that true “consensus” should be unanimity – or 100%. Some thought that it should be more than 80% but 100% was

unrealistic. Some RCA groups, at the group level, require unanimity, and others require only a simple majority. So, the 2/3 majority was something the majority of the Structure Committee, and the majority of the Trustees, could live with, but it was definitely a compromise, which the minority voters did not support. Since the Bylaws supersede the Board policy, the next Board, or the next can set the requirement of a 2/3 majority aside, unless the Bylaws are amended. Bylaw amendment requires a ¾ vote; therefore 75% of the members voting at the conference would have to be in favor for the 2/3 vote to become the standard in RCA. Until then, motions pass by majority + 1. At the RCACC04, the motion to change the Bylaws to require a substantial majority of 2/3 to pass a motion failed to receive a 75% approval. Some conference attendees thought the motion should have been introduced much earlier to the Fellowship so the pro’s and con’s could be fully examined...so here it is.. The motion for Bylaw amendment to increase the majority margin from a simple majority to a 2/3 majority may be presented at the RCACC 05. The WSB would welcome your input so we may serve you better. Please post your ideas on the fellowship members website which is <http://rcamembers.b4ai.com>, under *MEMBER DISCUSSIONS*, *What’s New at WSO?* Katherine S.

On the Lighter Side

“Marriages may be made in Heaven... but, they have to be maintained on earth!”

Hand in Hand is published four times a year. It can be mailed to you printed in full color for a subscription fee of \$12, or downloaded at no fee from our WSO website www.recovering-couples.org. Under Hand In Hand, [Subscribe Now](#).

2005 Publications Deadlines

Spring	March 3, 2005
Summer	May 13, 2005
Fall	Sept. 8, 2005

Please send your submissions to: RCA WSO Hand in Hand ♥ P.O. Box 11029 Oakland, CA 94611 ♥ Phone: 510-663-2312

Disclaimer Articles in the Hand in Hand are the Experience, Strength and Hope of the individuals and groups who submitted them. Please take what you like and leave the rest.

We welcome notices of upcoming events and your stories or reflections on your coupleship recovery. Once an item has been submitted to RCA, it can be used in RCA publications, i.e., books, pamphlets, and Hand In Hand. Submissions may be edited due to spatial considerations, or publishing may be delayed. Please sign your submission exactly the way you want it.

WSO OFFICE REPORT

Coming Soon... The 2005 Step Guide Journey Through the Steps

Happy 2005 RCA'ers!!

It was great to see a lot of you at The 2004 RCACC in Winnipeg last October. Even though I was dealing with computer problems, and the TSA delayed my baggage, it was great to be there. Hope to see you again in San Diego this August for the 2005 RCACC.

The WSO office depends on the annual RCACC for a financial, as well as spiritual, boost. Between the generous donation from the Winnipeg Convention Committee (\$1,700.00 USD), and the generosity of the attendees when the basket was passed for the WSO Office (nearly \$300.00 USD), I have been able to keep the WSO Office running and serving the fellowship. The convention attendees also raised \$480.00 USD as seed money for the 2005 San Diego RCACC Committee. Way to go, RCA'ers.

Since my QuickBooks software is not quite up to speed from the computer crash, I will give you the big picture and send a more detailed report as soon as possible.

	<u>10/04</u>	<u>11/04</u>	<u>12/04</u>	<u>1/05</u>	<u>Total</u>
Income	\$3,157	2,714	4,174	2,800	\$12,845
Expense	\$3,898	2,796	3,043	3,951	<u>13,688</u>
			Profit/(Loss)		(\$843)

The balance for RCA as of January 29, 2005 is \$1,300.

Thank you to all the groups and individuals who responded to an appeal for funds in December. It was much appreciated. 7th tradition donations (including the donation from the 2004 convention committee) accounted for \$7579. Literature and medallion sales accounted for \$5265.

Thank you all for your service to your local RCA groups, and your support of the WSO Office. I am excited about working with you all in 2005 to continue growing, in existing meetings and through outreach to communities that now have no RCA meetings. Please visit the RCA web site at www.recovering-couples.org and see where RCA currently has meetings. I am still getting several requests a month for Meeting Starter Packets, and am working with the current Board of Trustees to give these new meetings the support they need to take hold and grow. Please e-mail the WSO office at wso-rca@pacbell.net if you are ready, willing and able to help reach out to new, and existing meetings to provide the support needed. I will gladly put you in touch with other like-minded couples.

See you in San Diego.

Your trusted servant,
Steve A – WSO Office Manager

As we journey through the steps together, we discover that the real enemy is not our partner, but the old ideas we brought from our past: ideas about ideal relationships, ideal partners, ideal roles, and old wounds and losses...
"We began to let go, to take responsibility for our own part, and to reverse the process of blame."

***"Many thanks
to our loyal groups and members
for your contributions and donations!"***

The record of your gifts, which usually appears here, is safely locked away in the secrets of the WSO crashed computer. However, help is on the way. RCA's Higher Power sent two knowledgeable and generous RCA members to WSO to study the office equipment and make recommendations. Thanks, HP!

May (s)he whose computer has never crashed please call WSO and tell us how you did it!!

Acknowledgements for your donations will appear in the next Hand In Hand. Your patience with us as we try to catch up with the dot com world is much appreciated.

OVERHEAD AT A MEETING

"It's not old behavior if I'm still doing it."

"I often obsessively pursue feeling good, no matter how bad, it makes me feel."

"Resentments are like stray cats: if you don't feed them, they'll go away."

"In order to change the way we feel we need to change the way we act."

"There is only one way to coast, and that is down hill."

*Please share the insights you hear at meetings.
They will be published anonymously.*

RCA CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

AMBASSADORS

The Job

Educating the public with a focus on reaching 12 step fellowships about the Program of RCA

Contacting media outlets and coordinating a media relations campaign to Newspapers and radio stations Providing them with Press releases, and Public Service Announcements

Contacting Group Contact Couples and Want-to-be Group Contact Couples in nearby areas
Scheduling and presenting Workshops for Couples
Use outreach brochures, step guide, and Outreach Kit developed by RCA.

The Qualifications

Active RCA couple working the 12 steps in their Coupleship recovery
Experience with 12 Steps a Must
Successful applicant will have great Communication skills and a genuine Interest in helping others.

Contact RCA Office Manager at 510- Or email chairperson@recovering-couples.org
Call today! Couples are suffering!

ANGELS WANTED

Website Angels

www.recovering-couples.org is our link to suffering couples worldwide.

A day on the World Wide Web

A contribution of \$6.67 will pay for our WSO website for one day

A week on the World Wide Web

A contribution of \$50 will pay for our WSO website for one week.

RCA CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

A month on the World Wide Web

A contribution of \$200 will pay for our WSO website for one month.

World Service Office Angels

Our World Service Office expenses Are met through individual and group donations. The WSO is the primary way the RCA message is carried world-wide.

One Hour Angel \$15

One Day Angel \$67

One Week Angel \$500

SERVICE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Writers and Editors needed for Literature and Communication Committees

Members with 12 step service experience or Parliamentary Procedure needed for Structure Committee

Intergroup Outreach needs members in all areas of the country to help carry the message.

Contact vicechair@recovering-couples.org

LONG DISTANCE SPONSORS

Successful candidates must have completed the 12 Steps and have time to devote to new or suffering couples. Good Phone plan and email are a plus.

Contact Steve at 510-663-2312

OFFICE

ELVES

Our Office Elves have retired. Our Office Manager is up to the wazoo with the mail, literature orders, errands, and responding to members while keeping the records in order and working with the Board. Organizational skills and time to donate are required for filling this position.

TRUSTEES

Several more couples wanted to serve on WSB.

The successful applicant here must bring a spouse. This year's Board has planned a face-to-face meeting in Phoenix Feb. 5&6, monthly teleconferences, and a face-to-face meeting at the RCACC 05 in San Diego August 12, 13, &14.

Our Bylaws state," The Board of Trustees shall consist of a maximum of nine voting couples and two alternate non-voting couples." Four more voting couples and one more alternate couple are being sought. Email chairperson@recovering-couples.org

The Safety Guidelines

Anonymity and mutual respect of boundaries are essential to providing a healing experience for each of us. We meet to both receive and provide the nurturing our relationships need to grow and endure. 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 to “*cross talk*.” For that reason, it is important for us to act and speak respectfully to our partners and others. As we do this, we value the group and the relationships within it.

We have found that:

1. It is OK to have feelings, and to express them, clearly and respectfully.
2. It is OK to make mistakes, and to make appropriate amends.
3. It is OK to disagree, and to use a conflict-resolution plan.
4. It is OK to have needs, and to ask politely for them to be heard.
5. 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.
6. It is important that we each work on our own individual recovery, to support our couple recovery. We learn to forgive, remembering that resentment hurts us, our coupleships, and our partners. And we learn the healing power of compassion, as well.
7. It is important also to respect ourselves and to avoid self- pity or self put-downs. It is helpful to take ownership of our own story, and to take credit for our progress and work in recovery.
8. It is important to remember that anonymity is our spiritual foundation.

Who you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here.

Approved by RCA World Service Board January 13, 2005

THE MIRACLE WILL HAPPEN!!!!"

RCA CONVENTION / CONFERENCE 2005

will be held

AUGUST 12,13,14th, 2005

at the

**RED LION HANALEI HOTEL
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**

Check it out!!! at

www.hanaleihotel.com

For more information contact
Sue and Mike (619) 668-6931
Or email suesheffield@cox.net

Reserve these dates on your calendar today!!

Look for details and a registration form on
www.recovering-couples.org
at the end of January!