

HAND IN HAND

JANUARY ISSUE 2017



OUR WEBSITE : www.recovering-couples.org
TO EMAIL RCA : info@recovering-couples.org

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The RCA Board :

Chair	Jim IRW Linda
Vice-Chair	Kate IRW Dan
Treasurer	David IRW Elizabeth
Secretary	Dick IRW Vicki
Other Board members:	
	Karl IRW Pat
	Jade IRW Gladys
	Annette IRW Widar
	Gopal IRW Wendy
	Robert IRW Sandy

The Members of the RCA Board for 2016 to 2017 introduce themselves...



Chair – Jim IRW Linda (Charlottesville, VA)

Jim is Chair this year for the RCA WSO. The two previous years he was Vice Chair. We joined the Board at the London Annual Convention. (That was a wonderful facility and we had a great time there — even playing lawn croquette.)

We had served on the *Outreach* and *Growing the Fellowship* committees. We helped start our local group in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2012. We've been to every Annual Convention since then and RCA has been a wonderful addition to our lives.

We have also enjoyed participating in the Monterey California weekend retreats and helping with the one-day retreats for Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C.

We were hesitant to join the Board since both of us still work very full-time. But people we respect said that this 12th-Step work would help us grow—and they were right! We have increased our ability to think in terms of the whole rather than the parts; in terms of Higher Power instead of our power. When there are challenges in RCA or in our lives, we are learning to turn them over and listen for the internal guidance that inevitably comes—if and when we ask.

(Chairperson contd...)

Starting with RCA in 2012 makes us relative newcomers but we see how far we've come and how much help working the program can be for ourselves and for others that work it. Therefore, we are dedicated to help ensure that RCA continues to survive and thrive by investing our time in the future of RCA.

Vice-Chair – Kate IRW Dan

(Rockville, MD)

Dan and I are finishing our last year of a three-year term on the Board. Dan was the Chair for the first two years, and this Board year I am the Vice-Chair. We also were Board members in 2007–2009. We enjoy the service work and the discussions it creates, both with each other and with the other members of the Board.

Joining RCA in 2002, we have been on many committees through the years. Dan was on the Structure committee from 2005 through 2013 and more recently has served on the *Technology and Website*; *Merchandise*; and *Translations* committees. Through the years, I have worked on the *Outreach* and *Literature* committees, while also serving on Ad-Hoc committees for the publishing of the Fourth Edition and *Creating Healthy Agreements*. Being the Group Contact Couple (GCC) for our home group for many years was also an important part of our service work, work that involved us with the WSO and the various Conventions. We have been most fortunate to have been able to attend every convention since the 2003 Philadelphia convention.

Our service work has sometimes been challenging, but also has been a very rewarding aspect of our recovery work. We have met many wonderful people who have shared their commitment to service and recovery—those relationships continue to add to our growth in recovery.

Secretary – Dick IRW Vicki

(Palm Desert, CA)

Dick and Vicki have attended RCA for 17 years (2000) beginning at the same time as their own individual 12-Step Programs.

Dick's humorous story how he got on the Board: "At the Atlanta convention last year, Dan O. tripped me (accidentally) and I fell flat on my face.

As I lay there stunned but not too hurt, Dan leaned down within inches of my face. I thought he was going to ask how I was. He did, and then he followed up by asking if I wanted to be on the Board. Groggily, I agreed. I am the new Secretary."

Dick also serves as Secretary or Treasurer in other fellowships; has helped with the *Literature Committee* doing editing and, with Vicki, sponsors couples in RCA and sponsors men in other 12-Step groups.

Vicki was surprised and pleased to join the Board when Dick told her he was willing to not only join, but be Secretary. Vicki has served as Treasurer, Secretary, literature person, intergroup rep, and other service positions in three fellowships over the last 17 years. Most recently Vicki is working on the *Literature Committee* and the *Technology and Website Committee*.

As a couple we have also served for several years as Co-Chairs of Hospitality/Fellowship for International and Regional conventions.

Treasurer – Elizabeth IRW David

(Chicago, IL)

Elizabeth and I attended the RCA Annual Convention in Atlanta in August 2016. We had been members of RCA for about seven years, going to our local meeting in Chicago and attending several annual conventions during that time. Elizabeth thought we might be able to find a new sponsor couple at the convention and make new connections with other RCA couples. The idea of serving on the Board did not even cross our minds.

Just as elections of new Board members were about to begin at the annual conference, another couple invited us to consider serving as a Board member couple. Our service in RCA at that time had been to our local RCA community in Chicago. We also did presentations at two RCA annual conferences. We made the decision on the spot to be open to what our higher power was offering; we chose to say "yes". We weren't exactly sure what we were committing to but we were willing to trust the process and see what developed. I also volunteered to serve as Treasurer of this Board.

The experience of serving on the Board has been rich and fulfilling for both of us. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work with other RCA couples and to support RCA as Board members.

Pat IRW Karl (Berkeley, CA)

This is our second time serving on the WSO Board of Trustees. Our first Board service was in the mid-nineties when the Board only had face-to-face meetings, usually four times a year. It involved quite a bit of travelling and was expensive. But it was nice, getting to see more of the country and getting to see other RCA groups personally. Board service was more personal and intense then. One of the signal steps we took as a Board then was the publication of the Third Edition of *Recovering Couples Anonymous*. Pat was actually chair of the Literature Committee when that was published. (Committees then were composed entirely of Board members, unlike now) This time we rejoined the Board because we were convinced at the London convention, that the whole Board of Trustees were coming off that year, and the new Board would need support from people with previous Board experience. We are now in our third (and final) year.

Pat and I have been participants in RCA since 1988, and we have seen a lot of changes over the years. RCA has been terribly important in our lives and our coupleship. It has literally saved us, and we owe the fellowship a deep debt of gratitude. Participation in service work at various levels has been instrumental in our own recovery, and we serve the fellowship as much for what that service brings to us as to what we can bring to the fellowship.

Jade IRW Gladys (Eugene, OR)

We are Jade and Gladys in recovery. We have been in RCA for over fourteen years, partners for twenty-four years and married for the last four years. Currently, we are serving our second round on the RCA Board. Being on the board has enriched our personal RCA program and connected us with friendships all over the world. The conventions, for us, have been a huge part of recovery.

We started RCA for a "tune-up" and were gifted with new language for our coupleship and more compassion and understanding of our lives together. We are a delegate couple for our local group, *Rain or Shine Couple's Recovery*, in Eugene, Oregon, USA. We have attended several RCA retreats and have facilitated the Northwest retreat (Sept 22–24 this year) Doing service work and having amazing sponsors really makes us work the program.

Annette IRW Widar (Copenhagen, Denmark)

We are finishing the last year of our three-year term on the Board. It has been great working with such wonderful and dedicated people who all want to give back to RCA. We feel so blessed and grateful.

It has been challenging as a couple from a country where English is not the first language, so getting a hang of this has taken some time, especially the more administrative and legal stuff. However, we have, with the patience of our fellow Board members, been given a clear view of how RCA and the Fellowship works. This is very helpful for us in regard to the work we do in growing the RCA Fellowship in Denmark with other Danish RCA couples. We can also see that the way service work is done in Denmark (Europe) is sometimes a bit different from the way it is done in the USA. Therefore, it has been very rewarding to be able to share our experience, as well as learn from others.

Besides the Board work, Annette is serving as Chair on the *Translation Committee* and since the ABM in 2016 also on the *Technology and Website Committee*. She will continue to do so after our term on the Board ends.

Sandy IRW Robert (Irvine, CA)

Sandy and I are doing our first year on the Board. This position has helped us discuss many issues facing our fellowship and be of service to such a valuable organization. We have thoroughly enjoyed talking with each other prior to the Board meeting, staying in email contact regarding pressing issues and then discussing them with other Board members during the meeting. This interaction has given us great joy and provoked thought filled discussion.

We have held and have service positions for our home group and also have been on the Outreach Committee for the Northern California groups. This helped us to interact with and understand issues facing many of the groups in our fellowship and to stay current with the changes occurring in many areas. This has also helped us develop personal friendships with other RCA couples—which has been a great joy.

RCA needs YOU!



Hand In Hand

We want to make the Hand In Hand a relevant publication in which we can share our experience, strength and hope with the wider RCA community. We are always looking for RCA couples to help with writing articles. Please submit them to articles@recovering-couples.org (by 1st April 2017 for the next edition).

RCA en Español / RCA in Spanish

RCA busca 5–8 personas para leer y para evaluar el nuevo libro básico de RCA en español. Después de dos años tenemos la primera copia y necesitamos personas que puedan ayudarnos con leerlo y darnos su opinión. Sabemos que hay varios dialectos y países donde se hablan español. Es el primero, en el futuro podemos hacer variaciones. Por favor, mándame un email si quiere una copia. gladyssunrise@aol.com

RCA is looking for 5–8 people to read and evaluate the new Spanish RCA basic book. After two years we have the first copy and need people that can help us with reading it and giving opinions. We know that there are various dialects and countries where Spanish is spoken. This is the first, and in the future we can make variations.

Please, send me an email if you would like a copy. gladyssunrise@aol.com

Technology and Website Committee

Why not offer some of your time? You do not need to be a rocket scientist! We need people who know Twitter, Facebook, and other social media that can help us get the word out about RCA.

We are also looking for people who are willing to review the website layout and content.

Please drop us a line at: web-team@recovering-couples.org

(RCA Board contd... Sandy IRW Robert)

Our service work has been rewarding in our own personal lives and helped us stay in touch with many couples. Observing all the recovery tools in action has been a source of great personal growth. We feel we have acquired new skills and capabilities in personal communication which has allowed us to come out of isolation and connect with others in a very meaningful way. This has truly been a gift from God for which we are very grateful.

Wendy IRW Gopal (Tucson, AZ)

We have been in RCA six years. We attend two of the three meetings that are in Southern Arizona each week. RCA has been instrumental in saving and strengthening our relationship and prevented us from reverting to the dysfunctions we experienced and which destroyed previous relationships.

We have served on the Board of Trustees since being elected in August 2016 at the Atlanta Convention. Additionally, Gopal heads the *Outreach Committee* and Wendy serves on the *Technology and Website Committee*. Service on the Board, our committees, and in individual meetings has caused us to meet numerous wonderful RCA couples whose experience, strength and hope has enriched our lives and recovery.

Series on Tools of Recovery

Calling a *Moratorium* or *Time-Out*



When communications break down, a prior agreement to call a **Time-Out**, also called a **Moratorium**, for fifteen minutes, an hour, or a day can interrupt destructive interaction. We can walk away from each other without walking away from the coupleship. By stating specifically when we will be available to continue discussion, we are showing that we are not abandoning the coupleship or our partner.

Oh how I struggled to use this tool. Before RCA, when my husband and I got into conflict it was my pattern to be like a dog with a bone, never letting go until the problem was "solved", by which I meant until my husband agreed with my point of view!

I still have a vivid recollection of calling a recovery friend during an early *Time-Out* and talking with her about how wrong it felt to leave our coupleship alone in that moment – and how much I wanted to go back and resume the argument / discussion with my husband. It took her support to help me trust the tool I was attempting to use and not renege on my commitment to give this RCA stuff a go. I took a walk that time in order to stay away from our destructive interaction. These days, some five years later, arguments are extremely rare, partly, that's because I've learned to step away in a respectful manner.

It still takes courage and trust and a lot of willingness for me to respect my husband's requests for *Time-Out*. His "refusal to talk to me" and "taking control of the situation", as my illness wants to put it, can still sometimes leave me triggered and teetering on the brink of anger. But if I summon my will in that moment and turn it over to God (who funnily enough always seems to want me to respect my husband's need for a *Time-Out*!) then I always receive that power beyond my understanding and am able to stay quiet and step away and trust that we'll pick it up later. And when our coupleship is in God's hands the outcome is always (yes always!) better.

Samantha IRW Cian

7th tradition update

Contributions received Oct–Dec 2016



thank you!

Meeting	Amount
Ashburn VA Sat night group	\$150
Birmingham group	\$100
El Segundo Sat night group	\$180
GSN 53060	\$50
GSN 99025	\$150
Sacramento, CA group	\$94
Thurs eve Santa Clarita group	\$325
Together In Hope' group	\$200
Together We Can' group	\$100
Trailblazers group	\$400
Yucaipa group	\$40
Individual contributions	\$900
Total	\$2,689

RCA Announcements

Lighthouse retreat, California

24th – 26th March 2017 in Pacific Grove, California. \$650 per couple (\$325 at time of registration and remainder due by Jan 15th). For further info please email sharoni701@yahoo.com (Sharon IRW Art)

RCA Convention 2017

Conventions help us remember that we are a worldwide organization. Couples in other countries, states and cities all share the same RCA program - meeting format, literature, tools, slogans and much more. On any given night, somewhere there is a room where couples are gathered to find a way to attain a high level of *Caring, Communication, and Commitment*.

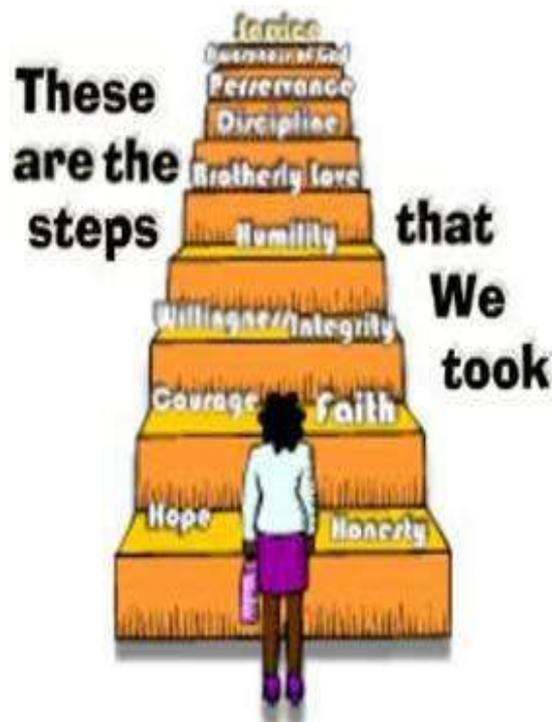
Conventions are an opportunity to come together as one fellowship and celebrate our recovery. May be you are just beginning your journey in 12-Step recovery, or you may be farther down the road. You are part of something much bigger. RCA would not be the same if you were not there, and the convention is no different. There will be many workshops, the latest literature and sharing of experience, strength and hope. Please join us in Minnesota August 11th – 13th, 2017.

To sign up or find more information on the 2017 RCA Convention go to www.recovering-couples.org under EVENTS. If you would like to present a workshop or help with the convention email Catherine at caearley@gmail.com or call 001-651 208-6696.

Reader's Submissions (Many thanks!)

The Twelve Steps – short version!

1. I can't
2. God can
3. Let God
4. Look within
5. Admit wrongs
6. Ready self for change
7. Seek God's help
8. Become willing
9. Make amends
10. Daily inventory
11. Pray and meditate
12. Give it away



Just for Today

Just for today — I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle my whole life problem at once.

Just for today — I will be happy. It seems to be true what Abraham Lincoln said, that "most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be."

Just for today — I will adjust myself to what is, and not try to adjust everything to my own desires. I will take my "luck" as it comes, and fit myself to it.



Just for today — I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study. I will learn something useful. I will not be a mental loafer. I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration.

Just for today — I will exercise my soul in three ways; I will do somebody a good turn, and not get found out; if anybody knows of it, it will not count. I will do at least two things I don't want to do - just for exercise. I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today I will not show it.

Just for today — I will be agreeable. I will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, talk low, act courteously, criticize not one bit, not find fault with anything, and not try to improve or regulate anybody but myself.

Just for today — I will have a program. I may not follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two pests : hurry and indecision.

Just for today — I will have a quiet half hour all by myself, and relax. During this half hour, sometime I will try to get a better perspective of my life.

Just for today — I will be unafraid. Especially I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful, and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me.

Adapted from the AL anon Family Group

RCA Monthly Phone-In Step Study - A new beginning is at hand

After 5 months doing weekly RCA phone meetings, we wanted to work the Steps but hadn't found a sponsor couple. We also weren't sure entirely what it even meant to work the Steps as a couple. We were grateful to discover the Monthly Phone-In Step Study where we met our current sponsor couple and found a format and structure to support us in working the 12 Steps of RCA



We benefited from listening to the ESH of the monthly speaker couples and going on the monthly calls gave us motivation and structure to work our Steps. During the monthly meetings, we had the chance to connect more deeply with other couples, including our sponsor couple, which expanded our recovery network, gave us hope and support as a couple, and helped us begin to heal from years of couple shame. In addition to the monthly meeting, we answered the Step questions together at home and talked to our sponsors twice monthly--all surprisingly do-able even as parents of three children.

Working the Steps of RCA this way and using the tools of the program worked synergistically with our individual 12-Step work to create a positive way forward in our coupleship. The time we put into the program was worth it and there was never shame if we couldn't make a meeting. Today, we feel a healthy pride in our coupleship for investing in our relationship through these calls and we're deeply thankful to enjoy the promises of RCA. — *A Testimonial from an RCA Couple*

For more information about the Monthly Phone-In Step Study log on to the RCA website at www.recovering-couples.org. On the Home Page, you will find a link to the Monthly Phone-In Step Study.

"If we are honest about our commitment and painstaking about working the Twelve Steps together, we will quickly be amazed at how soon our love returns."

The next Monthly Phone-In Step Study (Step 2) is Sunday, February 19th.
Take that bold step together and you will not regret it.

Russ IRW Annie