



# Hand in Hand

A Publication of Recovering Couples Anonymous  
World Service Organization

PO Box 11029, Oakland, CA 94611 (510) 663-2312

September 2002

Vol. XI, No. 3

## **"Partners in Paradise"**

**2002 RCA Convention**

**Oahu Hawaii**

There is still time to attend!  
**October 11<sup>th</sup> through 13<sup>th</sup> 2002**

Contact either  
Betsy F. at 925-274-1186  
betsyF2720@hotmail.com  
or  
Pat M. at 510-849-3655  
pat\_manley@ls.berkeley.edu

**WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**

**RCA Winnipeg  
Mini-Convention**

**November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2002**

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada is located just north of North Dakota and about 700 miles north west of Minneapolis Minnesota.

If your group would like to have more information, we will keep you posted. Let us know your interest and thoughts at dodraffin@hotmail.com.

We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Doreen, in Recovery with Doug

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## **OUR SPONSOR COUPLE SAID...**

Throughout this issue of Hand in Hand we have sprinkled stories and adages received from many RCA couples addressing the different ways some couples have been helped by their Sponsor Couple. If you and your partner have received any helpful guidance from your sponsor couple we invite you to share those experiences with the rest of us. Send submissions to the RCA Office or email to "Communication\_Committee@.Recovering-Couples.org".

**Our sponsor couple** are great listeners. When one of us is upset, they listen until it's all out. When one of us is shut down, they encourage us to open up. They share that they have had similar problems. It helps to know others have "been where you are" and that they did resolve it. Their

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## **SECRETS: Recovery from damage of the past**

Secrets are not healthy, they were dangerous to the welfare of my partner, me, and our relationship. Our belief today is we are as sick as our secrets.

### **HE SAID:**

Early in our relationship there were many secrets, I could not imagine that, but it is a fact, it was the truth. I kept operating in my relationship as though everything was okay, but I was on a constant roller coaster. It should have been my first clue. I had a couple of incidents early in the relationship, but chose to ignore them, I did not want to believe that my partner was dishonest and lied. Although, continuing to smile and laugh to the world, I was in a world of hurt, sadness, and pain, emotionally "skinned up." I could not acknowledge something was wrong. It was not until several revelations through Higher Power, when I realized I was not being told the truth. I was devastated and an emotional wreck. Here I

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## **The Third Way**

When my partner and I get blocked on an issue and can't get anywhere near resolution and yet are both frantically trying to resolve it anyway, our sponsors have suggested two things. First, that we accept that we have an "unresolvable issue," at least for the time being, and do our best to "Let It Go". They said that if we leave the issue on the shelf and work the steps, it might somehow resolve itself or simply cease to look so huge and foreboding. (That actually happened with a major unresolvable issue one year ago -- now it's relatively minor).

Second, they suggest that we can expand our thinking, that is, to take it from "there's two ways to look at it: there's My Way (a.k.a. The Right Way), and there's My Partner's Way - period" -- to a Third Way which is our Higher Power's way. Maybe (probably) we don't have a clue what that is yet, but we have to let go of the idea of WINNING long enough to ask our couple HP to come into the mix. Then, we pray together, and wait to see what is revealed.

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**"The Third Way"**

Once my partner and I were in disagreement about speaking at a meeting. I did not feel good about turning down the request to speak and my partner was very ready to turn it down because of some personal reasons. We brought it up to our sponsors who told us that they had had conflict sometimes over doing service. They suggested that we consult our higher power about it. They told us that when they get into my way vs. your way kinds of things they go to nature and just listen. They believe that their higher power will guide them. Well, we went to the doorway of the kitchen and looked at our collage of our higher power, thinking that just looking at it for a time would help us both shift out of our personal perspectives. Then my partner suggested that we throw the "I Ching" (*the Ching is an oriental system of receiving guidance*). What to do and how to behave was clearly in the reading. We spoke at the meeting.

Sharon & Judith

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## SECRETS

was 10 years in my own recovery, never wanting to suspect that my partner was not in integrity, let alone just plain dishonest. It was an abuse that I could not imagine would ever happen to me. Emotionally, spiritually, physically, financially, mentally, I was a wreck, my partner was a wreck, and so was our relationship. It was the beginning of the end.

A major confrontation, and several intervening circumstances, led to a change. The end was truly the beginning of the journey of our couple's recovery. Outside help was a necessity for my partner and me. My personal recovery and my Higher Power, sustained me to

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## RCA FALLS INTO PLACE

**"Motion: to pay Judy \$1,000 for hours worked. We will ask her to invoice us for the balance of \$400, and Marcial will pay her once we have received the Convention money. Approved: 11, Opposed: 0 Minutes of RCA WSO Board Meeting in September 1998, Phoenix, AZ"**

In our not so distant past, RCA WSO operated under these conditions. In September 2002, things have changed. Today, our WSO Office, in fulfillment of our promises, functions in our first commercial location. However, that is only a portion of our success. Through the grace of Higher Power, and the footwork of many, RCA WSO maintains a healthy reserve and is operating in the black. Today, the RCA WSO savings account maintains a balance of \$5,000, with a separate checking/operating account. These are the most current figures for the operating account in 2002 for: May/\$9,838; June/\$8,210; July/\$7,205; and as of August 23, \$8,271.

In 2002, through your vision and commitment to unity, RCA has achieved the first step in establishing a complete professional look and operation similar to other established 12 step programs. Our office is maintained by special workers, who assure the integrity of our operation, meeting the business needs of the fellowship, and complying with the nonprofit status of our organization. Taxes are paid, all forms are completed, our bills are paid regularly, including our compensation to our special workers.

In a recent Office Oversight Committee meeting of August 2002, Steve A., our WSO Office Manager, remarked "I am so grateful; we have \$10,000 in our bank account today. That's a miracle. I remember when I was

Board Chair, and we couldn't pay Judy W., (the WSO Office Manager), because RCA did not have the funds. We would have to wait until money came in for her to be paid. Boy, things have changed."

Our promise that fear of economic insecurity will leave us is being fulfilled one day at a time. The World Service office continues to serve the fellowship and fulfill RCA's primary purpose, to be there for those couples who desire healthier relationships. The office provides information to those seekers and RCAers about meetings, starting meetings, RCA contact couples, and literature orders. Although our current operations look different, the office staff and our Board have preserved the intended efficiency and quality service from the earlier years. From the simple beginnings of several years ago to this "new look," RCA has made great strides in establishing a status as an international 12-step recovery program for couples.

Your support of the Traditions of RCA, by working together at the local level, along with your donations, and willingness to serve the RCA Fellowship is how RCA WSO is falling in place. Higher Power is continuing to bless the RCA Fellowship with an inordinate number of individuals who carry the message to those still suffering, and maintain the principles of our 12 Steps and 12 Traditions Fellowship. You made this happen, old-timers and newcomers alike. You are responsible. As our adopted prayer says "beyond our wildest dreams." Thank you, RCA Fellowship for giving back to assure the continued growth of RCA.

Office Oversight Committee

Great works are performed,  
 not by strength, but by  
 perseverance.

By Samuel Johnson

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## SECRETS

endure through years of continued distrust, and being on guard. I was a committed partner in this relationship, although I did consider many times ending the relationship for my own good, not necessarily my partner's. It remained an option, even though I was taking the relationship "a day at a time." In my mind it was "well, we'll see how we do today, and then wait until tomorrow to see if any changes are needed." It's been 10 years since the major upset in the relationship, and many twenty-four hours and turning over each day's end to a Power greater than me and us. A lot of praying, individually and together, seeking further guidance from individual sponsors, programs, as well as our couple's sponsors, and the RCA program of recovery. Many RCA meetings, meeting for coffee and many hours on the phone with other recovering couples, has brought us to seven plus years in Recovering Couples Anonymous.

### SHE SAID:

My life was run by secrets. Everything in my family of origin was about secrets. From hiding the dog in the house, to mom hiding money to pay for my education, and that I was molested throughout my adolescence was a secret. How I was bribed by adult children was a secret. How I drank to cover up my pain was a secret. Then I married my partner, and all these secrets remained in place for the first half of our marriage. I did everything humanly possible to keep the secrets. However, one by one, the secrets were uncovered. I did not have the power to control or keep them anymore; my life as I knew it was falling apart, as well as my marriage. I discovered my way of living was no longer working for me. I needed outside help, and a 12 Step program or two, so I could regain my sanity. My marriage needed additional attention that my individual programs could not provide. I became willing to do

whatever it took to restore my marriage and my commitment to my partner. It was the first step to admitting we could not do it by ourselves.

We discovered Recovering Couples Anonymous through an ad, and my partner made the first call. We found our way to our first RCA Meeting and have never given up since. We found an abundance of compassionate people who were willing to love us through the trying times we experienced. The process of being held by others, and our inching trust with each other, brought about amazing results. I found the courage to reveal my "secrets" to my supportive and loving partner. This was one of many miracles that happened on our path as a recovering couple.

### HE SAID:

Although, the initial set of circumstances brought us to our knees, it was the same wreckage that brought us to and maintained us in Recovering Couples Anonymous. It was my partner's and my continued affirming of "honesty, openness, and willingness" with each other. It was slow going in the beginning. Hurt and pain continued to plague our relationship then. Today we understand that it was part of the process and the path to healing from the harm, in our relationship, as well as our histories. We each have our own understanding and acceptance that this is what it took to have the peaceful and serene moments we enjoy with each other today. It is only through Higher Power's grace that we both have survived and come through the damage of my partner's secret life. We continue to take our relationship "one day at a time." Thank Higher Power for Recovering Couples Anonymous.

### Share your stories with us too.

Stories can be sent for consideration to:  
Communication\_Committee@  
Recovering-Couples.org

Every situation, properly perceived, becomes

## AN OPPORTUNITY FOR HEALING

by Jerry in recovery with Stephanie

My partner and I heard this expression many years ago ("*Every situation, properly perceived, becomes an opportunity for healing*"). It has always sounded good to us, and often difficult to incorporate into our daily lives. The last two years, serving as a Trustee Couple on the Board of RCA, has given us new opportunities to incorporate this concept into our lives more fully.

We joined the RCA Board at the 2000 Convention in LA having been in RCA a year and a half and being very grateful for the healing we had experienced in our coupleship in RCA so far. We wanted to make sure we kept coming back and we felt that committing to doing Board service would ensure that we continued to work on our coupleship recovery. Boy, were we right about that.

We didn't come into service with any particular "vision" for RCA or any clue at all as to how the Board ran, or should run. We didn't have anything in particular we wanted to accomplish during our term. We were just here to serve however we could.

During the first year of service one of us was usually much more involved than the other, and several of the events of that year gave us both opportunities to heal, with each other and with other Board members. When life is in session, and we are involved in it, stuff happens. That's how life works.

This second year has been a bit more challenging for us both. In these challenges is where we have found the greatest opportunities for healing. On page 90 of the AA 12 X 12 it says: "It is a spiritual axiom that every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong *with us*."

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### Our sponsor couple

sharing helped us feel hope that we could get past our upset. Our sponsors told us that when issues seem "unresolvable" we can ask our Higher Power for acceptance instead of arguing and fighting.

When we were emotionally charged, they directed us to use the same speaking/recording procedure we use writing on our steps so we were really hearing each other. Today we can discuss things we used to fight about, and come to a solution. Our sponsors have guided us through the process of creating "written agreements" and this tool has enabled us to find ways to live with problems that previously baffled and frustrated us. We are truly becoming a team.

John and Katherine (Culver City)

### Thank You For The Trust

We thank you for the privilege of serving you, the Fellowship of RCA. We will be completing our three years of service at the RCA annual convention, in Hawaii. We have found the experience to be incredibly invaluable spiritually and educationally for our coupleship, as well as unbelievably rewarding.

The dear friendships that we have developed with members who have served with us on the RCA WSO Board and the friendships which we have developed with those coupleships whom we have met in the different locations of the country, while attending the regularly scheduled quarterly Board meetings, have also become an invaluable support for our coupleship (we hope that the support is mutual).

We have found that the experiences of other 12 Step Fellowships in creating and growing meetings is based in the wisdom of the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts. We have also stumbled onto the idea

## North Midwest RCA Weekend Retreat

Held this last July 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>

### Was A Big Success!

Thank You to Vic and Mary for coordinating a successful event

### The Dates Are Set For A Repeat in 2003

July 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> 2003

At the Beautiful Aurora University Williams Bay, WI  
Overlooking Lake Geneva.

Contact Vic or Mary at [fbp@rockford.com](mailto:fbp@rockford.com)

For more information

that our coupleship is A GROUP, and in order for our coupleship to grow and thrive, we use the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts, along with the tools listed and elaborated on in the RCA Blue Book. We would not have thought of this without having done this level of service in this Fellowship.

We have been involved in RCA step study meetings for the past several years where we study and work one step a month in the safety of the group. This last year we have been incorporating studying the RCA Traditions along with the Steps. There are not questions in the RCA Blue Book that deal with the Traditions, as it does for the Steps, but we seek the guidance of the many 12 Step, 12 Tradition Fellowships which have been in existence many years before the development of RCA.

We also have been attending a weekly, Traditions Study Meeting (not an RCA meeting) where any and all 12 Step Fellowship writings on Traditions are utilized for study (one Tradition is studied per month). This works for our coupleship since we come from many different addictions and are familiar with these other programs. It also made us aware of how each fellowship has a slightly different way of wording something that allows for further understanding. This has given us further insight into how in this RCA fellowship,

with all of us coupleship members coming from different addictions and places, all see things just a little different, and that *can* be beneficial. This was helpful for Board service and tremendously helpful in our coupleship.

We are turning over our service as Board members, but not our commitment to the service of this Fellowship and our coupleship. We love and honor you for your commitment to your coupleship and your ability to keep showing up. This is what creates, and IS, the Fellowship of RCA.

Blessings and THANK YOU.  
Suzanne and Lenel



### The Financial Trend of RCA

#### TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY START OF MONTH BALANCE

As Of

JUL 1, 2001	\$6,035.59
AUG 1, 2001	7,990.35
SEP 1, 2001	4,458.77
OCT 1, 2001	3,466.66
NOV 1, 2001	5,153.67
DEC 1, 2001	13,062.26
JAN 1, 2002	11,777.92
FEB 1, 2002	10,017.60
MAR 1, 2002	10,833.23
APR 1, 2002	11,503.74
MAY 1, 2002	12,798.03
JUN 1, 2002	14,909.62
JUL 1, 2002	12,550.08
AUG 1, 2002	11,282.99
SEP 1, 2002	11,138.55

## Our Sponsor Couple said:

Our sponsorship couple has helped us in many ways. They taught us about affirmations--wherever our mind goes life will follow. They really taught us that the twelve step way is a spiritual path and to trust that God is the One in control and I was not in control of my husband's recovery.

Just the ability to talk with another couple in recovery who has been through this before was a huge gift. It stopped me from being so abusive to my husband, I couldn't really rage at him with another couple on the other end of the phone. It gave me an opportunity to really see where I was at in the process.

Probably the biggest gift was that our sponsorship couple often says things like "speak for yourself" and "speak about yourself". I used to think that "I think that you...." was an I statement. They taught me how to speak only for myself and stay on my side of the street. It is actually much more powerful when a couple communicates that way. It leads to a much greater sense of intimacy. I used to get caught in the trap of playing therapist for my partner once I stopped doing that and started to speak for myself things really changed in our relationship.

With Love and Light  
Renee & David S



## Our Sponsor Couple said...

My partner and I are not at war....we are on the same team. That one statement has just about eliminated our fights.

Another thing that our sponsor couple said ... when I don't understand the step work ... There is no right or wrong way to answer the questions.

Love, Laurie & Kevin



## Stop the War of the Roses

Our goal in RCA recovery was to stop the "War of the Roses", so we searched for a sponsor couple who could help us stop. We knew that our HP did not like us to harm each other.

The best thing our sponsors did for us is to serve as good role models for a healthy partnership. We never have heard them speak unkindly to or about each other in a meeting, or elsewhere. And in their shares, they take great precautions to choose their words very carefully. They really seem to appreciate and cherish each other, and both make allowances for the needs and rhythms of their partner. And likewise, they have taught us to treat each other with respect too. We now refrain from losing hope when things seem bleak, for we trust there will be a miracle, when we are willing to "surrender, and win!"

We wish to share a list of slogans and other adages, which have made a lasting impression on us.

"If you want what we have, do what we do."

"It takes all 3 legs of the stool to be strong enough to support it."

"Just because you're invited to the dance does not mean you have to accept the invitation."

"See what *are* your triggers. Then decide what *are* your choices."

"It's not that we think less of ourselves; it's just that we think of ourselves less." (And of the partnership, more!)

"Once our partner has made amends for the past, we have no right to go back and keep bringing up the past, over and over...."

"When you're at the end of your rope, you're at the beginning of HP's rope."

K.C. and Richard



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## An Opportunity For Healing

We have been given ample opportunities in the last 12 months to check in and see what is wrong with us, "*our perspective askew.*"

In this second year of Board service we *have* had some RCA projects we were attached to and wanted to further. Our inability to move forward on these has "disturbed us" and given us opportunities to see the parts of ourselves that need healing. In these times it became obvious to us that we were becoming victim to our "self-will run riot". In our individual programs we are reminded that our self-will had been the crux of the problem.

On page 45 of the third edition of the AA Big Book it reads: "Our human resources, as marshaled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly. Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a *Power greater than ourselves.*"

Realizing that our Higher Power is in charge, regardless of what we or anyone else may say or do, has been a powerfully healing perspective over this last year. It has given each of us an opportunity to come closer to our God, to each other and to other couples. We have been given many opportunities to really put the Spiritual Principles of this program to work as we remind ourselves daily to place Principles before Personalities.

RCA is a fellowship experiencing growing pains, like many other 12 step fellowships before us. When Patrick C. spoke at a Board meeting last year he characterized RCA as "post graduate work of 12 step work". It requires two individuals who are committed to coupleship recovery at the same time. We acknowledge all who are committed to coupleship recovery and thank each of you for helping to heal our society, one couple at a time.



# WSO Board of Trustees Update

## WSO Board of Trustee Members as of 9/15/02

### 1<sup>st</sup> Term Board Members

Betsy & Bob .....California  
Christine & Rick .....Louisiana

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Term Board Members

Stephanie and Jerry.....California

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Term Board Members

JoAnn & Carl.....Louisiana  
Lenel & Suzanne .....California

### 2001-2002 Board Officers

Bob F ..... Chair  
Christine F ..... Vice Chair  
Stephanie.....Secretary  
Vacant..... Treasurer

### Brief overview of

## Board Meeting Minutes of the WSO Board of Trustees of Recovering Couples Anonymous In New Orleans, Louisiana on April 12 - 14, 2002

### The following topics were discussed:

Suggested change from the current process of electing Board members, to election of members from geographical division of the continental U.S., into eight regions, and other countries, as one region.

### Service Board Meeting Preparation and Participation.

Upcoming July Board meeting being held in conjunction with the Regional Gathering of the local RCA fellowship at Aurora University, at Lake Geneva, WI.

All members of the Board worked on and completed an individual inventory.

### There were discussions of these various topics:

Operation of Office Oversight Committee;  
Communication by email among Board members;  
Use of form for submitting committee reports to the Board;  
Discussion on Vice Chair position.

### Various reports were submitted to the Board by the following Committees:

Structure, Literature, and OutReach  
The following reports were submitted and discussed:

Board Transition requiring various materials for new Board members at their first meeting to assist with the transition.

### Board did not accept

2003 bid for the Philadelphia, New York, New Jersey, Boston, Northeast Region

submitted and denied, with recommendation to submit another bid at July Board meeting

### Board accepted and approved

The proposal for a redesign of various RCA literature with the graphic change;  
Board accepted and approved the literature committee responsibility for handling all RCA tape duplication project;  
Board accepted and approved the OutReach Committee handling all contacts with any meetings which request to be identified as "closed" with inquiries of how the Board may serve them.

Board accepted the resignation of Robert as Vice Chair; Board voted for Paul as chair; Paul withdrew, because of the conflict, with partner as Secretary of Board;

Board reviewed redesign of literature and Out Reach letter was accepted and approved for distribution to the fellowship.

Resignation of Wayne and Linda accepted; Approved Rick and Christine as voting members

## NEW MEETINGS

**Salt Lake City**, Utah, Renee & Todd P.  
801-467-8064, tpaulsmeyer@attbi.com

**Birmingham**, Alabama, Tim & Kim C.  
956-6924, kjmassey02@netzero.net

**Chattanooga**, Tennessee, Jim & Cynthia M  
423-894-4592, cmjm@bellsouth.net

**West Sacramento**, CA, Doug & Louise  
916-224-3989, dcrawford58@attbi.com

## DISBANDED MEETINGS

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA  
Group Service Number: 49010

ATLANTA, GEORGIA  
Group Service Number: 50005

BELTSVILLE, MARYLAND  
Group Service Number: 60010

NORTH DARTMOUTH, MAINE  
Group Service Number: 61005

NOVI, MICHIGAN  
Group Service Number: 62020

## A.A. Grants Permission To Adapt Material, Again

RCA has had several conversations with A.A. over the years regarding permission for RCA to adapt Alcoholics Anonymous' material, including the letter below and a letter from AA dated May 3, 1996. Both letters are similar in their message regarding permission to adapt material.

Alcoholics Anonymous World Service, Inc. Letter To RCA Dated June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2002

Dear Mr. S.

Thank you for your recent letter seeking permission to adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous and the Grapevine Preamble for use in a new group known as Recovering Couples. A.A. does not object to your adaptation of its Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions provided that the following guidelines are observed.

First, we ask that you reprint the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in their original form, preceding the respective, adapted versions. Secondly, we ask that you use following attribution/disclaimer:

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous have been reprinted and adapted with the permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. ("A.A.W.S."). Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions does not mean that A.A. is affiliated with this program. A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism only – use of A.A.'s Steps and Traditions or an adapted version of its Steps and Traditions in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after A.A., but which address other problems, our use in any other non-A.A. context, does not imply otherwise.

The Grapevine has authorized us to handle routine requests to reprint the Preamble if they come to our attention directly. In this regard, there would be no objection to your reprinting the Preamble. the reprint should be accompanied by the following attribution:

"Reprint with permission of the A.A. Grapevine, Inc."

If you are in agreement with the above, we have no objection to your use of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and the Grapevine Preamble as described. Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Best Regards,

D.S.  
Copyright/Permission Assistant.

### **In My Opinion "Disclaimer"**

The goal of the Communication Committee is to ensure the Fellowship is being served, and the integrity of the Hand is Hand is maintained. This Committee, in an effort to ensure these goals, has deliberated at length to guarantee the best, most accurate and complete information is being presented to the Fellowship. We invite you to read this publication and the articles within it with an open mind and a prayer for guidance from your Higher Power.

The following "opinion" from the Chair of the RCA Board of Trustees is being published in its entirety, without the benefit of being edited. The Hand in Hand has a standing practice of allowing each Chair to publish an "Opinion Piece" in each issue. This Committee has chosen in unanimity to continue this practice and to print the opinion piece as presented by the Chair while pointing out to the Fellowship that, as mentioned several times within the article, what has been written is the opinion of one person, and is not, and should not be considered, the opinion of this current Board. In unanimity, this Committee has also chosen to include this disclaimer. The content of this disclaimer, however, was agreed to by a vote of two-thirds of the committee.

The article by the Chair indicates "WSO revenues (income) for the year end Jun

30<sup>th</sup> are below the levels of three years ago..." Today, RCA consistently carries a \$5000 savings account and an operating account of equal or greater amounts (See the article in this issue titled "RCA Falls Into Place, page 2").

The article by the Chair indicates that as of 8/8/02 "the Board has yet to grant final approval to any 2003 convention committee." At the last Board meeting, on July 21<sup>s</sup>, the Board voted to accept the bid of Cherry Hill New Jersey group to host the 2003 RCA Convention (See article in this issue titled "2003 Convention, page 8").

The article by the Chair indicates that there "have been major and crippling obstacles both to serving the Fellowship while carrying RCA's message generally, and also to supporting and strengthening your Central Office specifically." During the last 12 months the Board has re-established the Office Oversight Committee, specifically charged with the support of the operations of the Central Office (See the article in this issue titled "RCA Falls Into Place", page 2). Additionally, two of this year's meetings of Board of Trustees met face to face between conventions in conjunction with regional RCA retreats. The remaining two face to face Board meetings enjoyed an evening social gathering with RCA groups in the area.

The article by the Chair states "As of this date, the AA copyright matter has yet to be resolved." The letter from AA, reprinted in this issue of Hand in Hand, speaks for itself regarding this issue. (See article on page 7 titled "AA Grants Permission to Adapt Material, Again").

The article by the Chair indicates that "some Board members feel strongly that any "special focus" meetings or any "special requirements" for membership are Traditions violations." Discussions among Board members have centered on assuring that all meetings of the Fellowship be served according to their particular needs, including those having a special focus, according to the 12 Traditions of RCA. (See articles in past issues of Hand in Hand that have spoken to this issue.)

The article by the Chair states "Absent your voice, RCA's elected Board is in effect a random collection of necessarily direction-deprived "Service Mind-Readers." The fellowship has provided the Board direction as to how it desires to be served through the Vision 2000 survey conducted in 1997. The Vision 2000 committee has remained active and routinely relies on these survey results for guidance and to assure the voice of the Fellowship continues to be heard. Subsequently, a Five Year Business Plan has been developed, and is currently on the table for Board consideration. The Board is, and has been, moving toward adoption of a Five Year Business Plan.

### **In My Opinion**

By RCA WSO Board Chair, Bob F.

The Board Chair is asking for help and direction from your RCA Home Group and from yourself.

Right now. And for direction to RCA's entire Board of Trustees.

As outgoing Chair, I'm writing you of my own service assessment and service experience of events and conditions within your WSO Board. A sort of "Service Year In Review."

This is but the experience and perspective of just one RCAer speaking only for himself.

Since the Dallas Convention last August, the World Service Organization Board Treasurer has resigned, the Board Vice Chair has resigned, the

Board Secretary has resigned, the Interim Board Treasurer has resigned, and now twelve (12) Board members have resigned. In just the past few months there have been more Board resignations than in all 13 previous years of the RCA Fellowship.

Some of the remaining Board members have stated they too are considering or have considered resigning. Several couples have failed to attend one, two, or more quarterly Board meetings. Currently the World Service Office has no annual financial plan in place, and there has been no budget for 3+ years. WSO revenues (income) for the year ended June 30<sup>th</sup> are below the levels of three years ago, according to one report.

For the Central Office Manager, hourly compensation has not changed for 5+ years, and an April-scheduled review of the current Manager's compensation

remains uncompleted.

Unexpectedly and quite suddenly last fall your Central Office had to find a new home. In terms of future months' and years' operating incomes, the first-time burden of commercial office rent, insurance, and other expenses is unclear.

As of this writing, the Board has received no convention bids for 2004 and has heard rumor of not a single prospective bid for 2004. (This writer's understanding.)

Last October the Board rejected one convention bid for 2003 on the grounds of geography. As of this late date (August 2002) the Board has yet to grant final approval to any 2003 convention committee -- although lately the prospects for one last-minute bid seem encouraging.

**Continued on page 8**

*Continued from page 7*  
**In My Opinion**

In this member's experience and evaluation, the Board has dedicated numbingly inordinate amounts of quite limited meeting time on purely procedural and administrative matters, on issues as seemingly simple as the accuracy and acceptance of Minutes, debates about Roberts Rules, when to start or resume each meeting -- and countless personality clashes, challenges, charges and counter-charges of Tradition violations among members and Board committees.

In this member's assessment, these and other matters have been major and crippling obstacles both to serving the Fellowship while carrying RCA's message generally, and also to supporting and strengthening your Central Office specifically. Perhaps some other Board members (those remaining as well as all who have resigned) would share with you that this has been an extremely frustrating, tense, stressful service year, draining, painful and exasperating. Board casualties and service casualties are quite high. WSO service this year has indeed been cunning, baffling and powerful -- and often pitifully and incomprehensibly demoralizing.

Alcoholics Anonymous wrote the RCA Office last December, indicating that AA had on file no record of any AA permission ever for RCA to reprint or adapt AA's Steps, Traditions, Preamble, or Promises. Your Board of Trustees has spent months debating and disagreeing about which Board Committees or which Board members might have the "right" to reply to AA on behalf of the RCA Fellowship. As of this date, the AA copyright matter has yet to be resolved.

For two years the RCA Board has argued the issue of whether to de-list from the RCA meeting directory and website any RCA groups which are not open to all recovering couples. Some Board members feel strongly that any "special focus" meetings or any "special requirements" for membership are Traditions violations. Other Board members feel strongly that each RCA group ought to be autonomous, without governance or mandates from the RCA Board. This issue has divided the Board severely and has contributed to widespread service paralysis.

These and other issues and events hopefully will raise for your RCA group the question of how well your Board of Trustees is serving the RCA Fellowship, and also the question of how effectively the Fellowship is choosing its Board of Trustees members and the Board its own Officers.

In this one Board member's view there is no substantial unanimity among the remaining Board members about just how these harsh conditions and service obstacles developed, or about how to overcome or resolve them, or even just how to survive and live with them.

If you and your RCA Home Group want to communicate to the Board about any of what is presented here, please do so and soon. You can mail your communiqué to the postal address below.\*\* Your voice will be shared with each and every remaining Board member. Or you can simply e-mail all Trustees at [RCA\\_Board@recovering-couples.org](mailto:RCA_Board@recovering-couples.org).

Another option is to bring your group's conscience or your personal communication to the International Convention's open business meeting October 12th -- or if not attending, to send in your communication and request that it be delivered aloud during that open meeting.

Perhaps your group or you have notions about how your trusted servants are to be directed and guided and held accountable for their service. Perhaps you yourself are giving consideration to serving on the Board in order to contribute to solutions and to the future of the entire Fellowship.

While this article is represented as an attempt at rigorous service honesty, service openness, and "Alarm For The Good of RCA," it is just one member's purported experience. No one speaks for the RCA Board as a whole or for RCA itself as a whole.

If you make the effort to contact other Board members, you may likely hear of service experiences and Board perspectives widely and wildly at variance with this one voice. In older 12-Step organizations, the voices of member groups and individual members provide the direction and guidance of their elected officials. In the absence of a mature,

extensive RCA service structure, your voice and your group's conscience are just about the only guidance and direction the RCA Board will ever receive.

If you communicate to RCA's Board, you're a committed part of the whole Fellowship speaking to its elected leaders.

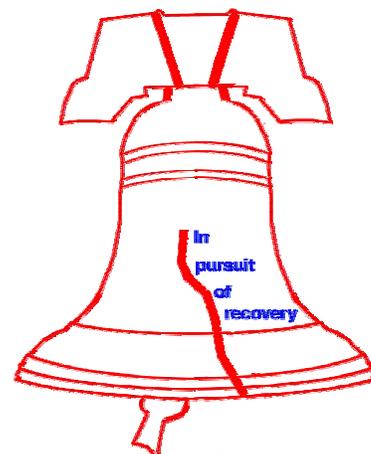
Absent your voice, RCA's elected Board is in effect just a random collection of necessarily direction-deprived "Service Mind-Readers."

Please help. Now.

Outgoing Chair Bob F.  
 August 15, 2002

**July Board Meeting Accepts  
 Northeastern Groups' Bid  
 to Host  
 2003 RCA Convention  
 August 15<sup>th</sup> thru 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

**Ring the Bell of Love**



**in Pursuit of Recovery**

**Doubletree Hotel  
 Philadelphia, Penn.**

This is a great location with lots to offer in & out of this old city with lots of history. We also have the Jersey shore with the best beaches & boardwalks around.

Contact Joe and Jean at [grzy49@juno.com](mailto:grzy49@juno.com) if you want more information, or would like to assist with this production. Or, visit the RCA web site at [www.Recovering-Couples.org](http://www.Recovering-Couples.org)

Brief overview of  
**Board Meeting Minutes** of the WSO  
 Board of Trustees of  
 Recovering Couples Anonymous  
 In Lake Geneva Wisconsin on  
**July 19 – 21, 2002**

Board Officer Election

Stephanie is elected Secretary and immediately assumes those responsibilities, after Luanne resigns as Secretary.

Board approval

The Board approves, without opposition, the appointment of a current member of the Office Oversight Committee (OOC), Christine, to immediately assume the Committee Chair responsibilities. Christine gives the OOC report. Melinda resigned as OOC Chair, due to lack of time to meet the commitment the position required.

Office Manager report

Central Office Manager reports on the status of RCA WSO as a not for profit organization, incorporated in Missouri and doing business in California. As the office is maintained in Oakland, CA, a tax accountant is overseeing all tax requirements for both states. The manager is investigating any other tax requirements for the city.

The motion is on the table to require two signatures on all RCA checks.

The Board approves a motion to have a list of WSO office needs made known to the fellowship through the Hand in Hand and all contact with the Group Contact Couples.

The Board approves a confidentiality agreement, to be formulated, and to be signed by all those who do service in the WSO office.

A motion is on the table to have the OOC work with the Literature Committee to prepare a new price list for RCA literature.

Structure Committee/Bylaw Subcommittee report/presentation

The Structure Committee, through the Bylaw subcommittee, presented their recommendations for proposed bylaw changes, and included other changes proposed by individuals. The Board approved a phone meeting to review proposed changes.

Structure Committee/Copyright subcommittee

The Board affirmed for Structure Committee, to include a Copyright subcommittee composed of the chairs of Structure, Literature, and Communication committees. This committee will address any and all copyright matters, including those relating to other fellowships.

Written permission has been received from the authors of the original RCA Blue Book. A letter from Patrick C. was presented to the Board, granting copyright permission to use the materials he contributed to the RCA fellowship. The Board was in agreement that questions remain regarding the difference between "copyright permission" and "a release."

A question remains regarding RCA's policy for cooperation and association with other organizations, while maintaining the Traditions. There is continued communication with NCCFR on this topic.

Literature Committee report

The Literature Committee presented a report outlining how another 12 Step Fellowship established financial solvency largely through the sale of a variety of books and literature from various sources. A mockup of a new design for an RCA literature catalog, with the possibility of including outside literature to increase RCA revenue, was also presented. The question was raised as to the appropriateness of distributing outside literature, and how this association would reconcile with RCA Traditions.

Convention Support Committee report

The Convention Support Committee recommended new RCA Convention Bid Guidelines, designed to support and assist RCA communities in preparing and presenting bids to host RCA conventions. The Board approved in unanimity the use of this format as an interim tool.

A bid to host the 2003 RCA Convention was approved in unanimity, as offered by The Northeast RCA community, which includes the membership in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, and Boston.

Board Officer Elections

Christine was nominated and elected Vice-Chair, by acclamation, to fill the position that had been vacant for 7 months.

**WSO ANNUAL INCOME**

July 1<sup>st</sup> 2001 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2002

7 <sup>th</sup> Tradition Contributions	
Unidentified Meetings .....	3,415.41
Akron, OH - 75005 .....	25.00
Cherry Hill, NJ - 70010 .....	23.60
Columbia/Sonora, CA - 45015 .....	214.00
Dallas, TX - 83010 .....	1,000.00
Des Moines, Iowa - 55005 .....	505.92
Eagan, MN - 63005 .....	38.50
Encino, CA - 45020 .....	84.00
Excelsior, MN - 63010 .....	193.11
Ft. Worth, Tx - 83020 .....	50.00
Gilbert, AZ - 43005 .....	200.00
Grand Rapids, MI - 62015 .....	37.63
Green Gulch Retreat .....	77.00
Indianapolis, Indiana - 54005 .....	150.00
La Mirada, CA - 45030 .....	90.00
LA Monthly Step Meeting .....	212.55
Largo, FL - 49025 .....	76.00
Lodi, CA - 45035 .....	25.00
Los Angeles, - 45045 .....	197.08
Los Angeles, CA - 45040 .....	88.19
Madison, WI - 89005 .....	52.15
Marlton, NJ - 70005 .....	153.00
Milwaukee, WI - 89010 .....	67.50
Minneapolis, MN - 63015 .....	42.80
N. Ca. Asilomar Retreat .....	237.84
New Orleans, LA - 58005 .....	836.00
Norwell, MA - 61020 .....	80.12
Novi, MI - 62020 .....	44.00
Oakland, CA - 45050 .....	1,000.00
Philadelphia, PA - 78015 .....	92.50
Phoenix, AZ - 43010 .....	293.00
Portland, OR - 77010 .....	50.00
Providence, RI - 79005 .....	141.73
Rapid City, SD - 81005 .....	7.50
River Head, NY - 72010 .....	100.00
Rockville, MD - 60015 .....	403.00
Sacramento - 45070 .....	10.00
Sacramento, CA - 45065 .....	119.75
San Antonio, TX - 83035 .....	100.00
San Diego/La Mesa - 45075 .....	177.60
San Francisco, CA - 45085 .....	100.00
Santa Barbara, CA - 45095 .....	270.00
Santa Cruz, CA - 45100 .....	200.00
Sarasota, FL - 49030 .....	150.00
Seattle, WA - 87010 .....	88.50
St. Louis, MO - 65005 .....	349.00
St. Petersburg, FL - 49035 .....	227.65
Syracuse, NY - 72015 .....	200.00
Thousand Oaks, CA .....	148.68
Tri County, MI - 62025 .....	130.00
Tucson, AZ - 43015 .....	75.00
Tucson, AZ - 43020 .....	150.00
Walnut Creek, CA 45105 .....	442.27
Wernersville, PA 78030.....	430.00
7th Tradition - Other .....	10,442.93
Total 7th Tradition .....	24,115.51
<b>Individual .....</b>	<b>4,753.19</b>
<b>Total Donations .....</b>	<b>28,868.70</b>
Interest .....	73.66
Merchandise .....	11,087.87
Postage and Handling .....	1,385.11
Unallocated Income .....	4,971.95
Total Website .....	0.83
Refund .....	-126.50
<b>Total Income .....</b>	<b>46,261.62</b>

If you have any reason to question the accuracy of the amount from your meeting, please contact the WSO Office to verify.

**WSO ANNUAL EXPENSES**

July 1<sup>st</sup> 2001 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2002

Bank Charges .....	210.50
Total Computer Expenses .....	1,396.38
Consultant	
Administrative Assistant .....	1,500.00
E-mail .....	3,577.65
WSO .....	15,430.92
<b>Total Consultant .....</b>	<b>20,508.57</b>
Total Internet Expenses .....	193.19
Total Medallions .....	1,164.49
Total Office Equipment .....	411.19
Office Supplies .....	825.88
PayPal Fees .....	298.88
Total Postage .....	2,256.48
Total Printing .....	2,807.33
Total Professional fees .....	1,152.32
Reimbursement	
Board Expenses .....	402.01
Reimbursement - Other .....	186.34
<b>Total Reimbursement .....</b>	<b>588.35</b>
Rent .....	4,164.00
Subcontractor	
Newsletter 1 .....	30.00
Subcontractor - Other .....	334.91
<b>Total Subcontractor .....</b>	<b>464.91</b>
Taxes & Licenses .....	30.00
Telephone .....	2,778.07
<b>Total Expense .....</b>	<b>39,250.54</b>
Net Ordinary Income .....	7,011.08
Total Other Expense .....	312.00
Net Other Income .....	-312.00
<b>Net Annual Income...</b>	<b>6,699.08</b>

**WSO OFFICE MANAGER'S REPORT**

The following report reflects the time period June 7, 2002 through August 31, 2002.

HOURS

During June, July and August a total of 404 hours were put in doing WSO Office related work. This breaks down to 314 hours for the Office Manager; 64 hours for the E-mail Consultant; 26 Hours by volunteers. This does not include the many hours put in by board members in the performance of their duties. These hours were spent primarily on the following major categories –Phone/Voice Mail; E-mail; Literature Orders/Post Office; Board meeting preparation and attendance; Office-Records & Business; Accounting & Financial; Special Projects.

CONTACTS

June, July and August brought the office approximately 60 phone calls and approximately 700 e-mail contacts.

LITERATURE/TAPE ORDERS

The Office received and processed 97 literature orders and no tape orders. PayPal accounted for 39 of these orders from the website. The sales of items from the orders amounted to \$3,329.01, and included 165 RCA Blue Books; 136 Brochures; 238 Medallions; 9 Meeting Starter Packets; 14 new Newsletter subscriptions.

**DONATIONS RECEIVED**

Jun 7 - Aug 31, 02

Donations 7th Tradition	
X-Files .....	63.57
Burbank, CA - 45010 .....	20.00
Cherry Hill, NJ - 70010 .....	58.65
Columbia/Sonora, CA - 45015 .....	89.00
Excelsior, MN - 63010 .....	139.50
Ft. Worth, Tx - 83020 .....	30.00
Houston, TX - 83025 .....	227.50
Los Angeles, - 45045 .....	467.51
Los Angeles, CA - 45040 .....	87.17
Madison, WI - 89005 .....	7.75
Marlton, NJ - 70005 .....	70.00
New Orleans, LA - 58005 .....	335.00
Norwell, MA - 61020 .....	25.00
Oakland, CA - 45050 .....	777.00
Portland, OR - 77010 .....	30.00
Rockville, MD - 60015 .....	118.00
Sarasota, FL - 49030 .....	150.00
St. Louis, MO - 65005 .....	125.00
St. Petersburg, FL - 49035 .....	20.00
Thousand Oaks, CA 0.....	.76
Tri County, MI - 62025 .....	35.00
Walnut Creek, CA 45105 .....	39.36
Wernersville, PA 78030 .....	150.00
7th Tradition - Other .....	264.75
Total 7th Tradition .....	3,330.52
Individual .....	218.30
<b>Total Donations .....</b>	<b>3,548.82</b>

HAND IN HAND

The Hand in Hand went out in June to 681 members. This was down from 714 last issue due to the elimination of duplicates and members no longer active and asking to be removed from the subscription list. Additional copies were made available for distribution from the WSO. Thanks again to Paul B. and friends in ST. Louis, MO for doing an excellent job handling the bulk mailing. The total cost of production and distribution was approximately \$880.00. I have received few returns from the Post Office.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are usually more scarce in the summer time, although this summer a few came through for 26 hours worth of data entry, organizing files, helping with literature orders, and answering voice mail when I was out of town. Thank you, all.

CONCLUSION

The main focus during this period has been to provide accurate financial information to the board in a timely manner. I succeeded in improving this focus and got better, not perfect, results. After having the RCA books

reconciled by a volunteer financial auditor, the books are ready to go to our CPA for the informational tax return we are required to file each year.

An updated RCA budget and financial plan, done annually, is my goal. My hope is that this will be forthcoming in this year, once a long term treasurer is elected. I can provide the figures and financial "reality check". The board needs to guide me, and the board Treasurer, in what the financial priorities are and where they see the money going in the next year to five years.

Thank you for your support and friendship. I look forward to serving you all in the coming year.

Your Trusted Servant,  
Steve A  
World Service Office Manager

**WSO Office Needs**

Here is a list of the ways anyone can help out at the RCA WSO, if they have the desire and ability.

We need

**"NEW" COPIER**  
**A SCANNER**

**Stackable/Folding Chairs**  
**1 FILE CABINET**

**"GIFT CERTIFICATES" From**  
**National Office Supply Chain**

Office Volunteers

If you are in, or visiting, the Oakland area please consider volunteering some time in the office.

Can you answer phones?

Are you able to do data entry?

Do you love to organize others' stuff, and inventory documents, literature, etc?

Are you fluent in another language?

Call or E-Mail The WSO Office and Offer Your Assistance Today

**510-663-2312**

**WSO-RCA@pacbell.net**



The **Hand in Hand** is published, and mailed out, FREE four times a year to anyone who subscribes. The associated cost is approximately \$6.00/year/subscriber. You can help defer this cost, if you choose, by making a voluntary contribution. You may want to consider a contribution of \$12 to help pay for the subscription of someone who can not afford to do so. Enclosed please find my voluntary contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_. Please send my newsletter to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Us The Hand in Hand too: \_\_\_\_\_