



# Hand in Hand

A Publication of Recovering Couples Anonymous  
World Service Organization

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## 2004 RCA Convention and Conference

in Winnipeg Canada

October 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>, 2004



Recovery in The Heart of  
North America

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## Our #1 Goal is to Grow and Work Together Harmoniously

-by Katherine S, WSB Chair

In the October quarterly meeting, the Board developed a list of the top 10 priorities, and selected four as being most urgent for improving the functioning of the Service Structure of RCA. These top four goals are reviewed at each Board meeting:

1. **Nurture and support Intergroup development.** WSB has created an Intergroup Support Committee and appointed to it five members from around the country. Several areas in the country have groups getting together to print area meeting lists, put on workshops and retreats, respond to Public Information requests, etc. – the tasks usually performed by an Intergroup. As of this date, however, WSB knows of only one area that has formally organized itself as an Intergroup.

*“We believe that each of us is responsible to take part in the protection and preservation of RCA as a whole in order to grow and work in unity.”*

-From RCA Tradition Twelve

2. **Establish procedures for WSB to use the Steps and Tradition; exactly how do we do it?** At RCACC03, the Fellowship voted to add the words, “*as guided by the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions.*” to bylaw 1.2. Our Structure Committee meets twice a month to research ways we can do this and report to the Trustees. At the February 22 WSB meeting, the 6 resolutions the Structure Committee presented to the Trustees passed unanimously - a tribute to the careful analysis and attention to detail of this committee.

## Time to Register for the RCA 2004 Convention Now's your moment

Registration Forms available at: <http://www.recovering-couples.org/Winnipeg/Convention/form%20only.pdf>

Hotel Reservations should be made at this hotel. Registering NOW will help the convention organizers!

### Norwood Hotel

112 Marion Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2H 0T1  
Phone: (204) 233-4475  
Fax: (204) 231-1910  
Toll free: 1 888 888-1879  
Web site: [www.norwood-hotel.com](http://www.norwood-hotel.com)

Rate: \$79.00CDN double/per night

**Mention Group #13023 / RCA Convention for this special rate.**

Please note this rate available if booking made before September 22, 2004

***“No couple directs and no couple controls the other members.”***

*-From RCA Tradition Nine*

**3. Clarity on how we do business.** Define what process to follow, and then work as a team. The Board has developed a process for conducting business so that an informed group conscience can develop. The RCA policy pamphlet “Developing an Informed Group Conscience”, and the orderly discussion procedures of Roberts Rules of Order are incorporated in the process. We are learning that consensus is not an event, but a process.

***“The group conscience is what governs the group, and we all help to form this conscience, by discussion.”***

*-From RCA Tradition Two*

**4. Build trust and healthy boundaries: take charge *only* when it’s your responsibility; when it *is* your responsibility, *do it*.** In Step seven, we saw that clear written agreements (contracts) could bring peace and productivity to our coupleship. As we develop these clear written agreements for board work, boundaries are strengthened. As the Division of Labor is made clear, we can each take responsibility for what we agreed to do. As our agreements are made, they become a written record, called our Procedures Manual, and serve as a foundation for future Trustees.

***“RCA believes strongly in making contracts.”***

*-From RCA Step Six*

***“Each RCA group is responsible to take the time to know the Traditions and understand why they are important to the fellowship. -From RCA Tradition Four***

## WSO Office Manager’s Report

### INTRODUCTION

January was a very good month for RCA with a net surplus of \$2,575.02 after expenses. February the pendulum swung the other way, and expenses outpaced income by \$695.17.

The phone has been bringing in about 3-5 requests for information a day. The RCA WSO web site [www.recovering-couples.org](http://www.recovering-couples.org) received about 80 inquiries, which were answered by the e-mail consultant, Josie H. The WSB Chair, Katherine S, came to the WSO Office to visit, see how things are going, and work on some projects. It was good to work with her, and get the new scanner up and running.

### MERCHANDISE

We sold three Meeting Starter Packets in January, four in February. Ninety-one Blue Books were sold in January, seventy two in February. We have approximately 1,000 Blue Books remaining in stock. In 2003 we sold an average of 76 Blue Books per month. At that rate we have a 12 – 13 month supply in stock. I received and filled four orders for “From the Heart” Cards during the pre-Valentine’s Day promotion.

The wooden Welcome to RCA chip continues to be popular. I am pleased with our new vendor in San Antonio, TX. I placed an order for 1,000 chips. They cost us \$.17/chip. We were running out of several years of our ever-popular antique bronze medallions, so I placed an order for 716 medallions (we get a good price break when I order a minimum of 500). The medallions cost us \$1.54 apiece, including shipping. This will meet our needs for the next 7 – 8 months.

### DONATIONS

Total donations in January were a fabulous \$3,381.63 up from \$952.47 in January 2003. This month of Feb 2004 brought in \$1,159.91 down from \$1,526.82 in February of 2003. Also thanks to Katherine and John S for their generous donation of a scanner/printer/color copier to the WSO Office.

### HAND IN HAND

The Winter issue of the Hand in Hand went out to 86 Group Contact Couples with verified e-mail addresses, as well as to those members of the fellowship who have requested e-mail copies. I received four requests for hard copy subscriptions at \$12/year (four issues).

### PROJECTS

During January and February I completed the GCC contact list and sent it to the Board; completed updating the GCC e-mail contact list; and sent out 1099’s to our contract employees. Progress was made on the Int’l Meeting Directory, and the revised merchandise order form to be effective July 1, 2004.

### VOLUNTEERS

Thank you all who have volunteered time and resources. You are very much appreciated. During Jan/Feb I received approximately 15 hours of volunteer help. Thank you Lenel, Suzanne, Katherine, and Alan.

### GOALS

My goals for the next quarter include; completing an updated merchandise price list, gaining easier access to PayPal and eliminating several money losing categories with them, continuing the monthly “Letter to the Fellowship” to all GCC’s, completing the Int’l Meeting Directory and e-mailing it to all GCC’s for proof reading and approval before printing hard copies, updating our corporate registration information, researching and implementing ways to reduce our phone costs, looking into the feasibility of accepting credit cards for purchases and donations directly through the WSO Office; and finding a new quality vendor for tape duplicating.

### CONCLUSION

The monthly Letter to the Fellowship from the WSO is a work in progress. The goal is to provide Group Contact Couples (GCC’s) with a monthly report on the activities of the WSO – including the current financial condition and accounting, the most recent approved Board meeting minutes, and the agenda for the next Board meeting. Other items that may be included in these monthly letter/reports are; updates on the 2004 RCAC in Winnipeg; announcements of regional retreats and activities; meeting directory updates; articles of interest to the Fellowship. Your input, feedback, and CONSTRUCTIVE criticisms are welcome.

Your Trusted Servant, Steve A

## World Service Board Activity

A. January 18, 2004 WSB Meeting:

K.C., substituting for Lit Com Chair, Kathy M, recommended, in her report from the Literature Committee, that the WSB approve a timeline and a spending plan for the revised 3rd edition of the Blue Book. Jane W seconded this motion.

It was noted that Information from WSO is essential in this matter. Ed B then inquired as to how the budget is set for the Blue Book. In the past, the Board delegated this authority to the Literature Committee. Ultimately the Board has final approval on this matter. The motion was passed unanimously.

B. February 22, 2004 Meeting:

Diane M, substituting for Structure Committee Chair Bob M, in her report, made the following motions, recommended by her committee to the WSB:

1. There must be a minimum of 2 and maximum of 10 voting members on each committee
2. The number of non-voting committee members can be unlimited.
3. The number of voting committee members is subject to same rules as voting committee.
4. At the RCACC [annual national convention and conference], a list of all committees is to be presented for volunteers to sign their names.
5. Those names and others are to be presented to the Trustees for approval.
6. Approved names are to be published in Hand in Hand and their position, acknowledged through a welcoming note from Chair of Board of Trustees.
7. The first ten approved names on committee list are to become the voting members.

Jane W asked, about number 7, "What if these members don't want to be voting members?" The answer was: "They will need to speak to the committee chair, in this case. The list then goes to Board for its approval."

All 7 motions were passed unanimously by the Trustees.

### Tired of doing the Coupleship Dance?

Try just doing one thing differently....  
Act counter-intuitively.  
Risk learning a new dance step.

## Coupleship vs. Relationship

When we first began attending RCA meetings we didn't really distinguish a difference between using the words "relationship" or "coupleship" to describe who we were together. However, with time in RCA we came to appreciate the significant difference in their meaning.

A relationship can be, and frequently is, a "one-sided" attachment to a person, place or thing. I can have a relationship with a person, a pet, a possession or even a job.

A coupleship however is a much more dynamic relationship, and is characterized by "mutual attachments" and includes reciprocation. When two people "choose" to be in partnership for their mutual benefit they have entered into a coupleship. They will have mutual goals and share the vision they agree to work toward together as partners.

Whenever two people commit to form a couple it initiates a "couple dynamic" that is independent of the two individuals. The coupleship develops a life of its own, and being dynamic, it will change in both predictable and unpredictable ways.

When couples agree to work the RCA program, working the steps together, they begin to guide and direct the evolution of their coupleship along a spiritual path. The Promises of RCA indicate the more "predictable" changes we can expect.

### Our Commitment Today

Today we will work together to transform our relationship into a coupleship, a partnership with shared goals and a shared vision. We will share our excitement for both the predictable and unpredictable changes that lie ahead.

### My Commitment Today

Today I will set aside my expectations of what my relationship with my partner should look like. I will be open to the evolutionary process as we work the steps of RCA together and our coupleship evolves along a more spiritual path.

### The Lighter Side...

Working the RCA program as couple can be hard! We always have a choice though.

We can do what is **HARD**, and have our life be easy, or we can do what is **EASY** and have our life be hard.

## A message to the Fellowship

regarding the Recovering Couples Anonymous Conference (RCAC) during this year's RCA Convention in Winnipeg Oct 22, 23, and 24, 2004

*-From the Vice Chair, Jane W.*

Hello Friends,

In writing this to you now, I hope to give you all a heads up, a little extra time and information before the **RCA Convention in Winnipeg** this October to ask for your much needed input that will largely determine the issues being discussed and voted upon during the **RCA Conference** portions of our October 22, 23, & 24 weekend together.

OK this may be a brain twister....but stay with me....The **World Service Board**, with much effort from several **Committees**, and the **World Service Office**, are working to plan the **RCA Conference** in conjunction with the dedicated and industrious RCA folks up in Canada of the **Convention Winnipeg Committee**. Those people up North sure know how to plan a party! This is going to be FUN! Together we are collaborating on the big ball of wax, so to speak...or perhaps the big ball of snow, woohoooo! In other words the RCA Winnipeg 2004 Convention/Conference.

Many plans are being made in all these WSB committees now for the **RCA Winnipeg 2004 Convention / Conference**. Although things are coming along beautifully the most important element in all of this is missing.... and that is **YOU!**

Once you tell us how you'd like the Board and committees to serve you best, once you guide your trusted servants, I anticipate an RCA Convention / Conference that will both nurture and support our coupleships (aside from being a Blast) as well as building a strong and vital Fellowship. And that's what we all want, *isn't it?* Well, I try not to assume too much since I got into recovery so I don't *really* know, do I...it's only a guess...because I haven't *asked* you what **you** want until now.

In our meetings and discussions we always get down to one basic idea; that we need to know what you need and want so that the **Higher Power** that works through our **Group Conscience** together may guide the business portions of our weekend in Winnipeg. We, serving on the World Service Board believe it is our spiritual duty to seek direction from you, the whole Fellowship, rather than seek to direct the Fellowship as a whole. In our spiritual fellowship "we are but trusted servants, we do not govern."

So here's the deal - these trusted servants of yours will soon be sending out a letter to your group contact couples,

requesting direction from you.

After you've had awhile to think about things, and discuss your ideas for RCA in your groups, we will be asking to hear from you. We seek to gather a clear perspective of the issues and concerns facing your groups and your coupleships so that we make certain to create a Conference agenda in which your true priorities are directly addressed.

In order to do this we will be asking your groups to give your feedback to the World Service Board and once we receive these valued inputs from you, we will prioritize the most predominant concerns and include them in the agenda for our conference this fall. Is that OK with you? We'd really like to know.

The more we hear from you about what you really care about the better this entire Fellowship will be served...so please... ask not what the WS Board can do for your Fellowship, ask what your Fellowship can do for your World!

Your Grateful Servant who can't wait to hear from you,  
Jane W. in recovery with Ed B.

**Come and Explore**  
**Relationship Characteristics**  
**(Both Functional & Dysfunctional)**  
**At The Third Annual**  
**North Midwest RCA Retreat**

to be held on Lake Geneva, at the  
**Aurora University on July 23- 25, 2004.**

Plan to become a part of this continuing tradition for couples in the Midwest. This year the focus of the weekend will be exploring the Characteristics of Functional and Dysfunctional relationships, as outlined in RCA Literature, learning to "choose" and create the kind of coupleship we want.

**It Works for Us...**

We are Gerrie and Randy in recovery together from the RCA group in Winnipeg, Manitoba. We thought that we would ask members from our group the following question and post their answers

**What is the best thing about RCA?**

"We don't feel so alone. Many of our problems and struggles are not much different than other couples in the group. We get a sense that we belong and that we are part of a community."

"I go every week because I like to be reminded that we are committed to each other". As we go around the circle and introduce ourselves as couples, we say "Hi! I'm Gerrie (in my case) and I'm committed to Randy" And.. Randy says " Hi! I'm Randy and I'm committed to Gerrie ". That reinforces our commitment to each other. No one is threatening to go away.

"Sometimes I don't feel safe sharing in private with my partner but I feel safe sharing at the meeting. I know it needs to be shared. I can share at an RCA meeting without fear of repercussion."

" RCA is a great forum for couples like us to work out our problems together. The guidelines are good."

"If we don't go to meetings, we get too complacent. We go weekly because we need to get new habits and practice doing things differently. "

" I appreciate my partner more. I have developed a sense of humor about my own character defects. After all, there is no perfect relationship. We are enjoying being together."

" When couples share their stories of experience, strength and hope at meetings and their stories connect with our story, I no longer feel insane."

"We are remembering to tell each other that there are good things about our relationship. In the midst of the pain, it seemed hard to remember anything good. When we take the time to tell each other what we appreciate, it fuels the relationship."

" RCA helps me focus on my partner not just myself. We are an "us". We need to create a life together. Instead of acting out of my family of origin stuff, my relationship demands uniqueness. Doing the RCA steps guides us to create a new and healthy way of living together."

**Winnipeg 2004 needs your coupleship!**

Please volunteer to facilitate breakout sessions such as: healthy sexuality, kind confrontation, money matters, relapse, communication, working the 12 steps, safety guidelines, using the tools, caring, commitment, character defects, defining our Higher Power. ... Of course if you have a topic that you would like to present, OR if you are willing to be speakers please sign up.

**Gerrie and Randy e-mail [gprymak@merlin.mb.ca](mailto:gprymak@merlin.mb.ca) (204) 668-1515**

**SERVICE KEEPS YOU COMING BACK**

**Jan 04 - Mar 04**

**World Service Office**

**7th Tradition & Donations**

Burbank, CA - 45010	100.00
Jamestown, CA - 45015	160.00
Des Moines, Iowa - 55005	40.00
Encino, CA - 45020	150.00
Fairfax, VA - 86005	37.00
LA Monthly Step Meeting 45043	32.00
LA-Culver City Sun SHARE- 45045	58.50
Madison, WI - 89005	10.00
Marlton, NJ - 70005	36.00
Oconomowoc, WI - 89010	50.00
New Orleans, LA - 58005	237.00
Norwell, MA - 61020	50.00
Oakland, CA - 45050	100.00
Phoenix, AZ - 43010	187.35
River Head, NY - 72010	75.00
Rockville, MD - 60015	100.00
San Digeo/Miramar, CA - 45080	197.28
Santa Cruz, Ca 45100	100.00
Sarasota, FL - 49030	100.00
Walnut Creek, CA 45105	134.16
Wernersville, PA 78030	150.00
Okaloosa county, FL 49015	42.00
South Pittsburgh, PA 78026	60.00
W. LA Sunday, CA 45340	200.00
Simi Valley, CA 45023	100.00
Salt Lake City, UT 84010	40.00
Carmel Valley, CA	40.00
W.LA, CA Monthly Step Study RCA 45043	15.00
Total 7th Tradition	2,601.29
In the previous quarter	
Sweden - multiple groups	200.00

## SUGGESTED MEETING TOPICS

### Issues For Recovering Couples

#### 4. *Both partners may be co-dependent*

This may be a factor in our co-addiction with each other. Partner codependency actually is based on profound fear of abandonment, deep shame, and a strong need for approval. Enmeshed partner attachments may result, causing us to seek to control our partner and prevent him/her from leaving.

There can be two basic styles of this control: manipulative and controlling. In one style, we seek to manipulate our partner by always doing what we think he/she needs or wants. Being this kind of co-dependent, we would almost, literally, die for our partner. This style might also include portraying ourselves in a victim stance, which projects an image of being such a poor, wretched, mistreated person that no one would ever leave us.

The other style is a more directly controlling one. In this style, we use anger, orders, argumentation, and/or the suggestion (in a variety of subtle and not-so-subtle ways) that we are superior and, thus, should control the behavior of our partner. This type of codependency is based on the deep fear of our partner's leaving.

Whichever style we choose, each of us fears the other's leaving, and we both use our own personal co-dependent style to seek to prevent this from happening

#### 5. *Both partners probably suffer from intimacy disorder.*

Intimacy disorder is based on the individual feeling of shame that says, "*If you really knew me, you would hate me.*" Intimacy disorder produces a fear of intimacy, and an inability to be honest and vulnerable with our partner.

One of the maxims of intimacy disorder is that we will be least honest with the person we are most afraid of losing. Many of us experience great resentment because our partner seems to be able to be totally honest with relative strangers, but not with us. We need to realize that we may be the last one to know "the truth," not because our partner is willingly trying to deceive us or because he/she doesn't care, but because he/she is deathly afraid of losing us.

Ultimately, intimacy is a matter of practice. We must learn to take great risks to tell the truth about ourselves - the truth about old behaviors, feelings, attitudes, preferences, and needs. As we take these risks we will find that our partners usually don't leave, but that they are grateful for our honesty. Practicing honesty like this will build trust and intimacy.

#### 6. *Both partners usually have significant family-of-origin issues.*

Addicted couples learn unhealthy styles of relationship in their families. We don't receive healthy modeling of intimacy and nurturing. Research that has been conducted with addicted couples suggests that each of us is a victim of some kind of abuse.

The most common forms of abuse are invasive abuse and abandonment abuse. Invasive abuse occurs when our personal boundaries have been violated - emotionally, physically, sexually, or spiritually. Such abuse creates suppressed anger and rage, and profound fear and anxiety. Addictions may develop as ways of coping with these feelings.

Abandonment abuse occurs when our needs for nurturing were not met by one or both of our parents (or primary caretakers). This form of abuse leaves deep holes, which we experience as great loneliness.

We may suppress memories of invasive abuse, and the resultant feelings; and these feelings can be provoked *without the memories becoming conscious*. Our partner may say or do something that produces the old but buried feelings. The reactions that occur may seem out of proportion to the current event. Our rage or sadness may seem totally inappropriate to our partner, or we may get mad at our partner for over-reacting. Such "mysterious" emotional reactions can often be traced to family-of-origin issues. As we become aware that only a small fraction of each partner's reactions is caused by the current event, and a much greater part is the result of childhood wounds, we can learn to be patient with each other and help each other trace back to the roots of these feelings.

Abandonment abuse creates codependency. We may hope that our partner will be the nurturing parent we never had. The fear of current abandonment drives us to codependent behavior. When one of us expects that our partner will solve the feeling of abandonment, their partner may respond by thinking, "I'm not your mother (or father)."

No partner can ever take the place of a parent. When we realize this, pressure is taken off our partner to be someone he/she can never be. We can work as a team to recognize the real cause of the pain. True partner intimacy can then proceed.

### 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