



# Hand in Hand

A Publication of Recovering Couples Anonymous  
World Service Organization

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

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## 2004 RCA Convention and Conference

**Winnipeg Canada**

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



**Recovery in The Heart of  
North America**

### **COUPLES, WE NEED YOUR HELP at the RCA convention in Winnipeg!!**

We need couples who would like to facilitate a small group session at the RCA convention in Winnipeg on Saturday, October 23 or Sunday, October 23rd.

Here are some RCA requests for small group sessions:

- healthy sexuality,
- money matters,
- communication,
- safety guidelines,
- caring
- character defects
- kind confrontation,
- relapse,
- working the 12 steps,
- using the tools, etc.
- committment
- defining our Higher Power

Of course, couples, if you have a topic that you would like to present, please sign up...

**SERVICE KEEPS YOU COMING BACK**

### **RCA Richness of Diversity and Essential Unity**

When I see the dignity and kind regard for each other of our RCA couples as they face the challenges of their lives, and hear their gratitude for each other and their groups, I feel a deep appreciation for this Fellowship – an appreciation that brings new meaning to the word “belonging.” In the past few months, I have had the opportunity to meet face to face with RCA World Service Organization Trustees and Service Committee Members. The purpose of the meetings was to further the work on our committee projects and to gain input from past Trustees. It was an unexpected bonus that these meetings extended my understanding of the rich diversity that exists within our organization.

*“Act and Speak Respectfully”*

*-RCA Safety Guidelines*

I learned that groups in different regions have developed some powerful ways to provide couples with safe space to practice the respectful communication skills we in RCA use to stop the fighting, resolve our conflicts, and restore intimacy and joy to our relationships. For example, the “check-in”: speaking directly to one’s partner in the presence of the group; each member has an opportunity to share how they are feeling. This allows the individual to focus on and reveal personal experience and feelings, and the presence of the group assures that both partners observe the Safety Guidelines.

**“Many of us have found that doing service has helped to speed our healing process. We have a new sense of belonging and we learn to work together with other couples and not “isolate” in our coupleships.”** *-Excerpt from Tradition 1 of RCA*

## Here's an opportunity to fill out and mail in the registration form for the *2004 RCA convention!!!*

*"Hand in Hand Across Borders"*  
Recovering Couples Anonymous  
2004 Convention Registration Form

Names:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Convention Registration

x \$75.00 CDN per person =

x \$85.00 CDN after Sept. 1, 2004 =

Dinner and Dance Saturday

x \$40.00 CDN per person =

Total Enclosed

Make Cheque or Money Order payable  
"RCA 2004"

*Sorry no refunds*

COMPLETE AND MAIL THIS FORM TO:

RCA 2004  
C/O A.J. & Lynne  
35 Kilmarnock Bay  
Winnipeg, MB Canada  
R2M 4R7

**Note:** Confirmation will be sent by email. Receipts will be handed out at the door. If you want a receipt earlier, please send a self addressed envelope with your payment.

<b>Frida</b>	<b>October 22,</b>	<b>Norwood</b>
12-7 pm	Registration	Warm up
1 - 5 pm	<b>Open business meeting</b> Representation from each RCA group to discuss agenda items.	
7-9 pm	<b>Keynote</b> <i>Patrick C.</i> <b>( A Founders</b>	
9-11 pm	12 step RCA meeting (Marathon	
<b>Saturday October 23, 2004</b> <i>Breakfast On Your</i>		
8 - 10 am	<b>open business</b> (vote on agenda	
10 - 12 pm	- small group sessions (topics	
12 - 1:30	- <i>Round table discussions</i> - lunch included (discuss items important to your group)	
1:30 - 4:30	- couple's gratitude time/small group	
6-8 pm	<b>Dinne @ The Inn at the</b>  <b>(\$40:00 CDN includes dinner/speaker/and</b>	
8-9:30 pm	<b>Keynote couple-</b> (T.B.A)	
9:30-12:00	- <b>Dance w/live band-Silent Auction</b>	
<b>Sunda</b>	<b>October 24,</b>	<b>Norwood</b>
8 -10 am	<b>Meeting/Fellowship</b> (breakfast included) (nominations and elections of board and committees)	
10 -12:30	- keynote couple / couple's gratitude Closing ritual - " <i>couples magic</i> "	

*continued on page 3*

*From the Chair continued from page 1*

When John and I came to RCA, we immediately accepted a commitment to our meeting. We knew from individual recovery that service was vital to recovery. By listening without judgment to other couples' viewpoints and differing opinions in meetings and at fellowship, we became more able to listen to each other's differing viewpoints and opinions.

***“Before recovery many of us thought we have the only “right” opinion and that our viewpoints were correct.”***

*-Excerpt from Tradition 1 of RCA*

Our world became richer as we grew in accepting diversity. As our service has expanded to the World Service level, our sense of belonging has expanded as well... and we are learning to not “isolate” in our recovery community! Although our meeting does not use the “check-in”, we now have another option for our “Meeting of Two”.

***“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.”***

*-Excerpt from Tradition 12 of RCA*

While each group is free to choose its own meeting program and topics for discussion, we preserve the essential unity of RCA by using the meeting format from the RCA website or the Blue Book, and by observing the Safety Guidelines, the 12 Steps and the 12 Traditions. *(See RCA Tradition 4)* Within these boundaries, a wealth of resources has been developed in our program. While many of us may not travel to meet with folks from other states, most RCA'ers can get a taste of the diversity of RCA at the annual RCA Conference Convention. I believe you will find, as I have, that the benefits last long after the fees are paid.

Join us at the

**2004 International Conference/Convention  
in Winnipeg CANADA  
October 22, 23, and 24, 2004.  
Please Register Today!**

I look forward to seeing you there!

**Your WSB Chair,**

**Katherine S., in recovery with John**

## Report on WSO Board of Trustee Activities

Excerpted from approved minutes

### Literature Committee

As Kathy has not been heard from, John was elected Interim Chair, he will coordinate the task forces, and there will be multiple task forces working simultaneously on various aspect of the book. Jason agreed to provide leadership for a task force.

The following task forces are already meeting: Safety Guidelines, Meeting Starter Kit, Getting Started Guide, Sponsorship pamphlet, Reflections, Meeting Topic Revision,

These task forces are proposed: Contracts and Agreements, Tools of Recovery (Expanded List), Meeting Guidelines (Revise all Reading) Overall Format, and Blue Book Revision Planning

### Communications Committee Report - Ed B Committee

**Motion: Hand in Hand will posted on the Forum; a notice will be sent. It will be “approved to go” if there are no objections to the issue within one week of the posting. Passed Unanimously.**

### Outreach Committee Report Doug.

1. Doug and Doreen requested Ed create an area for Group Contact Couples on the Forum, for input on RCACC; Ed agreed.
2. Doug and Doreen will assign each Trustee 10 groups to contact; the goals are to establish direct contact, keep list updated, to find out their priorities and how they best receive information. Please email the questions we want answered to [dodraffin@mts.net](mailto:dodraffin@mts.net) so they can create a script, or checklist, for Trustees to use so there is some continuity.
3. A note about GCC interaction at RCACC will be put in Hand in Hand and in the Conference Letter.

### Structure Committee Bob, Diane *(Excused Absence)*

Committee Members: Diane, Bob, Marcial, Carl S., Suzanne (Dennis resigns)

Suzanne read the Minutes for Diane who is at a convention  
Structure motions to amend “Committee member approval at RCACC”  
*Changes in italics:*

Motion 1. That proposal 3. (see the February Committee Member Approval Process) be amended to read as follows: 3) BIRT At the *beginning of the RCA Annual Conference* a list of committees is to be presented for volunteers to sign their names. Passed unanimously

Motion 2. Amend 4) to read, “4.) BIRT Those names and others are to be presented at the *first meeting of the new Board of Trustees* for approval by *Informed Group Conscience Process at that meeting*. Passed Unanimously

Motion 3. *If any committee seats remain unfilled at the end of the conference, or throughout the year, the Board will use the Informed Group Conscience Process to approve an RCA member to fill the vacancy.* Passed unanimously

The amended recommendations now read:

### Recommendations for Committee Structure:

- 1.) BIRT there be a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 10 voting members on each committee
- 2.) BIRT That the number of non-voting committee members be unlimited
- 3.) BIRT At the beginning of the RCA Annual Conference a list of committees is to be presented for volunteers to sign their names. \*
- 4.) BIRT Those names and others are to be presented at the first meeting of the new Board of Trustees for approval by Informed Group Conscience Process at that meeting.

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## Treasurer Report

*Dear friends and couples in RCA,*

As some of you may know, I am the treasurer of RCA-WSO and my name is Jim Backus. I live way up here in the great north in Hamilton, Ont. An event happened recently which affected me. This city is of 500,000 people, and on April 30/2004, my primary 12 step program had to remove my friend Gail from her position of the worker in our Central office. It seems that 40 groups can no longer support her position after some 40 years. And hot on the heels will be the demise of the office itself. Why? Well some of you may know that it's an old story, perhaps the second oldest story in recovery. Lack of funds. Not enough support from the fellowship.

I wanted to share some of our finances just this year from January to May. We had a couple of good months, those being January and May, with reasons to follow. Other than those, in Feb we were in the red \$700; in March red \$2275, and again in April. However in January and May we had a couple of "warm fuzzies". And those were: In January some few people, those unknown to me, donated near \$2000 to our fellowship. WOW! And so we ended in the black \$2575. Greato! And then in May, the super folk at Santa Cruz had an "RCA Day in Spring" workshop and were able to send us \$700. This allowed us to show a black figure again of \$330. (Otherwise in the red).

I have sat and pondered our state, ruminated at least, and thought that if we can possibly support ourselves to the tune of \$15-\$18 per group per month, this may be all we need until something changes. This figure DOES NOT include any individual donations. Now we know that some of our "smaller" families who do not sport any large numbers (ours is 4 regular couples now), can perhaps not do so well, however we can all try. Larger groups of course could perhaps give a little more.

You know, Jim is powerless. I know that. I can only inform, and do MY best. "WE" are self supporting, through "OUR OWN" contributions. Nice sharing with you all, EH?

*Yours in love and service,  
Warmest best wishes,  
Jim Backus*

### 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

5.) BIRT The approved names are to be published in the Hand-in-Hand and their position acknowledges through a welcoming note from the WSB chair .

6.) BIRT The first 10 approved names on the committee list are to be the voting members.

7.) If any committee seats remain unfilled at the end of the conference, or throughout the year, the Board will use the Informed Group Conscience Process to approve an RCA member to fill the vacancy.

#### Convention Support Committee Doug & Doreen

Winnipeg Convention Committee has been meeting; a new keynote speaker couple is wanted for Saturday night. A note about the convention will be in Hand in Hand, Spring and Summer. A Conference Letter will be sent out. Committee requests no other regional events be planned for the North Central area this summer and fall.

WSB Input for CSC: Each Chair will speak to the conference Sunday Business meeting for 5 minutes about his/her committee.

#### Unfinished Business

1. From 12-14- 03 and 1-18-04 All RCA groups should be contacted; each board member would contact about nine groups

Follow-up: The GCC lists were sent to Katherine, Jane, and Doug. A safe way to distribute the list was discussed, as all trustees need one so they can choose 9 groups to contact. Ed will find a secure spot (Trustees use only) on the Forum. To preserve our anonymity, when sending an email to a group, put your own email address after To:, and recipients email addresses after BCC:

**Motion: The WSB shall plan a face to face meeting, at a location chosen to reactivate areas that have disconnected. 6 For ? Abstain**

### WSO OFFICE MANAGER'S REPORT

The following report reflects the time period of April, 2004 through May, 2004.

#### HOURS

During April and May a total of 220 hours were put in doing WSO Office related work. This breaks down to 200 hours for the Office Manager; 12 hours for the E-mail Consultant; 6 Hours by volunteers. These hours were spent primarily on the following –Phone/Voice Mail; E-mail; Literature Orders/Post Office; Office-Records & Business; Accounting & Financial; Maintaining the web site; Monthly reports; Merchandise order form revision; Updating meeting directory; In-house printing and duplicating; Maintaining inventory and supplies.

#### CONTACTS

April and May brought the office approximately 60 phone calls and approximately 300 e-mails.

#### LITERATURE/TAPE ORDERS

The Office received and processed 50 literature orders and 1 tape order. PayPal accounted for 16 of these orders from the website. The sales of items from the orders amounted to \$2651.40, and included 126 RCA Blue Books; 14 Reflections; 6 Booklets; 135 Brochures; 229 Medallions;

6 Meeting Starter Packets; 1 tape; 4 new Newsletter subscriptions.

## DONATIONS

RCA WSO received \$2705.03 from 32 donations during April and May. Thanks to all the groups who faithfully

*Continued page 5*

support the World Service Office. Your regular donations make this work possible. Thanks also to the individuals who donate to celebrate their RCA anniversaries. It is wonderful to hear from you and to receive your support. A special thanks this month to the Santa Cruz, Ca RCA group for their generous contribution from their very successful "RCA Day in Spring".

## HAND IN HAND

The Hand in Hand has been posted on the web site. We are moving in the direction of sending as many copies out by e-mail as we can, and encouraging members to download it from the web site.

## VOLUNTEERS

Three volunteers came to help this quarter. Thank you Alan, Lenel, and Suzanne!!

## CONCLUSION

April and May saw a drop of 26% ( \$954.89) in 7<sup>th</sup> tradition and individual donations from April/May, 2003. Merchandise sales dropped 12% ( \$326.33 ) from last year. Postage costs rose 1.2% from last year. The increase in postage, as well as increased costs for mailing materials will be reflected in the revised merchandise order form effective July 1, 2004. Total expenses were reduced 32% (\$2806.00) this year compared to last year, but due to the drop in 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition donations and merchandise sales, we were in the red \$240.45 at the end of May for the current fiscal quarter. I will continue to look for ways to cut costs. Please keep up your regular 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition donations over the summer months. The annual RCAC is coming in beautiful Winnipeg this October. The convention is a major fund raiser for the World Service Office. Please plan to attend, and send in your registration as soon as possible. It will be wonderful to have representatives from RCA groups across North America and Europe. Don't miss it! Visit our web site [www.recovering-couples.org](http://www.recovering-couples.org) for the latest information and registration forms, or contact me and I will send the forms out to you. Keep in touch. My e-mail here at the office is [wso-rca@pacbell.net](mailto:wso-rca@pacbell.net). Members of the RCA Board of Trustees can be contacted through the website, or by e-mailing me. You can also send letters addressed to the board to RCA, PO Box 11029, Oakland, CA 94611. Thank you all for your service, and support. Be sure and contact me if you are in the SF Bay area, and I will be glad to show you the office and visit with you.

*Your trusted servant,  
Steve Adams, WSO Office Manager*

## 7<sup>th</sup> TRADITION DONATIONS APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2004

### GROUP:

Bloomington, IA – 54015	76.40
Braintree, MA – 61010	100.00
Jamestown, CA – 45015	120.00
Des Moines, IA – 55005	50.00
Sherman Oaks, CA – 45020	72.00
Fairfax, VA – 86005	31.88
Tempe, AZ – 43005	50.00
Hamilton, Ont., CD– 26005	50.00
Houston, TX – 83025	106.00
LA Monthly Step – 45043	42.00
LA Sunday SHARE – 45045	76.43
Minneapolis, MN – 63015	23.00
Missoula, MT – 66005	100.00
Okaloosa County, FL – 49015	99.00
Phoenix, AZ – 43010	200.00
So. Pittsburgh, PA – 78026	21.00
Rockford, IL – 53010	50.00
Rockville, MD – 60015	100.00
Salt Lake City, UT – 84010	40.00
S. Cruz Day in Spring – 00500	700.00
Sarasota, FL – 49030	200.00
Tucson, AZ – 43020	75.00
Virginia Beach, VA – 86015	5.00
Walnut Creek, CA – 45105	204.32
Total 7 <sup>th</sup> Tradition Group	2,592.03
	-
INDIVIDUAL 7 <sup>th</sup> TRADITION	113.00
<b>TOTAL DONATIONS</b>	<b>2,705.03</b>

### The Lighter Side...

#### Heard at a Meeting

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
the courage to change the things I can,  
and the wisdom to know that's **ME**.

## SUGGESTED MEETING TOPICS

### Issues For Recovering Couples

**7. Some RCA'ers have been abused by one or both of their parents.** In order to stay together, one partner or both partners may need to "divorce" their parents: i.e., to detach from them, in order to preserve the coupleship's and individual's recovery. If the abuse has been invasive, a couple and/or individual will need to create boundaries around the abusive parent or in-law. This will be particularly true if there is fear that the parent will continue the pattern of abuse with vulnerable grandchildren. Detachment may be achieved in a number of ways, from not seeing or talking to that parent, or to placing limits on the frequency and/or nature of visits.

If the abuse has been abandonment, it will be necessary to grieve the loss. This might involve receiving a significant amount of counseling, and/or participation in group support. Grief work helps the abused partner free the stuffed feelings that affect a relationship. We have learned that "*Hurt people hurt people,*" and to see with compassion the abusive parent, who was too ill to behave as a "normal" parent. It helps us to release resentments, which are poisonous to the soul. Over time, this work in individual recovery will help remove the pressure from the other partner to be the "perfect nurturer."

The goal is staying together. If an individual or couple can "divorce" their abusive parents and eliminate further abuse, it may not be necessary for the couple to divorce each other. Good boundaries protect recovery couples.

**8. Addicted couples are full of illusions about ideal relationships.** They may have a list of requirements for what they believe makes an "Ideal Couple." They may think that if they have violated their marital vows, have money problems, or are not perfect parents to perfect children, they can never be an Ideal Couple.

Sometimes ideal standards are reinforced by religious values. For example, a couple might think, "*The sun should never set on our anger.*" Such a couple might argue well into the night trying to "*get it right.*"

A recovering couple could make a list of these ideals, and determine which may be totally unrealistic. For example, we may never obtain the money we thought we would have, or should have. Our kids will never be perfect. We must let go of these "ideals" and perhaps grieve over the loss of them.

Some of the list, however, can be reclaimed. Wedding or commitment vows can be rededicated. Some ideals or goals, while realistic, may require work to obtain, or we may require help to achieve them.

Perhaps they believe it is realistic to expect to have a

certain amount of money, but their coupleship may need help to learn to set reasonable spending plans, to balance the checkbook, or to make to wise investments. For support in reaching these goals, we may choose specific sponsors, such as a financial sponsor-couple. Reaching out for help is a valuable tool in RCA. Recovering couples know they are not alone.

**9.**An individual in recovery knows that addiction is a lifetime disease, and that s/he must maintain his/her program. Likewise, a recovering couple must maintain their program for life. If they do not, old patterns of dysfunction are likely to return.

**Just as an individual addict has slips, so will a couple.** Slips occur in coupleships when their communication breaks down, when old fights and patterns of interaction take place again, and when they start distancing from each other. Couples in recovery learn to sense this, and can feel when their intimacy is breaking down. If they can be mindful of themselves at these times, they can recognize that an old and familiar feeling of isolation and loneliness returns to haunt them. Old angers and resentments are resurrected, and fears of abandonment are elevated. Hopelessness overcomes the suffering couple who have relapsed into the same old dance of dysfunction.

In this loneliness, old individual patterns of addiction may recur. In response, one of the partners may criticize some of the old addictive patterns, which, in turn, may cause her/his partner to further distance. This creates a relapse into dysfunction that may cause them to distance further and further from each other - a "couple addictive cycle."

This is the time to reach out to a sponsor couple, or attend a meeting for couple support. New contracts should be created, and old ones resurrected. We use the tools of RCA to get out of the abyss.

If the relapse has become really deep, the couple can see a counselor. Slips may mean that old family-of-origin issues have resurfaced. If this is true, individual counseling might be necessary to help heal old wounds. If individual addictions have surfaced as a method of coping with old pain, then individual recovery tools need to be employed. Remembering that the 3-legged stool of RCA Recovery stands for

- 1) my recovery,
- 2) my partner's recovery, and
- 3) our coupleship recovery,

as well as

- 1) communication,
- 2) commitment, and
- 3) caring.

Helps a couple stay on their Path.