



Hand in Hand



Publication of Recovering Couples Anonymous World Service Organization PO Box 11029, Oakland, CA 94611

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Volume XV, Issue 2

Spring 2006

Upcoming RCA Events!!! Recovering Couples Anonymous - 2006 Convention/Conference LIVING IN LOVE Boston, Mass. Area August 4th- 6th Flyer enclosed!

Chair Report to the Fellowship

WSO Plans for Group Voting Plan and Member Group's Approval of RCA Literature at RCACC

The World Service Board and Service Committee activity has been primarily focused on developing a voting plan for member groups, working toward a stable and balanced budget, and compiling your input on the 4th Edition of the "Blue Book" for viewing and for integration by our editors.

Much effort has gone into developing procedures to give the Member Groups more opportunities to provide direction to your Trusted Servants: the Trustees, Service Committees, and World Service Office personnel in the future, beginning now.

The RCA Outreach Committee has made efforts to reach out to all the GCC's to inform them that their group will have soon have a Delegate packet outlining the recommendations for Bylaw changes (these establish the "upside down" triangle organization plan customarily used in 12-Step programs) and to get up-to-date registration information. Each GCC should receive their Group's packet with the issues on the RCACC 2006 agenda and a voting form. If your group has not received this by the end of March, please ask your GCC to update your group's registration information on the website, or call it in to Steve at the Office. The Delegate packet will also be available for downloading on the official RCA www.recovering-couples.org site. Under World Service, click Annual Conference. **Let us hear from you!**

The Literature Committee is working diligently to compile the input on the 4th Edition for posting so that the Groups can vote on RCA literature.

Here's how feedback on the 4th edition will be shared:

Comments, corrections, etc. and Survey Monkey entries concerning the 4th edition of Recovering Couples Anonymous, received by February 28, 2006, will be posted on the official RCA website for review by the fellowship by April 1. The Literature committee is tasked to prepare a final draft for approval by May 31, 2006.

Copies of the final draft will be made available to the members on the website between June 6, 2006 and July 6, 2006. We have no fees, we do have expenses! The 7th Tradition Committee suggests a donation for this service of posting the book of \$3 (to survive) or \$5 (to thrive). The groups will be requested to take a group conscience and to vote on RCA literature at the RCACC2006.

A Balanced Budget. We want to implement a balanced budget and become more responsible and transparent in our financial operations. The 7th Tradition Committee has met and has come up with some new ideas for improving our cash flow (see Can RCA Survive? on page 3), revitalized some old ideas that worked well in the past, and is coordinating projects with the Literature Committee. It is great to see committees working together for the common good. As of this writing, we have a positive cash flow in WSO. Thanks to our loyal individual and group donors, we will be able to keep the **World Service Office** in Oakland open even though we couldn't find a less expensive space. But we need volunteer support from our members in the Bay Area to supplement the efforts of our part-time office manager to make this work.

Planning for RCA growth: our goal is that at the end of 5 years, we'll have an office open full time, with a balanced budget in place, a prudent reserve of 9 to 12 months operating costs, the Blue Book fund maintained, and Fellowship clarity on where money comes from and where it goes. At RCACC 06, we will campaign to ask members to start new meetings, (we'll have meeting starter kits available) and renew the idea of Regional Liaison (RLC) couples supporting meetings in their areas. **The 4th Edition draft is now being offered for sale** and for review and editing by the Fellowship. You can order yours now from the WSO. The book is \$11, the electronic version is \$5, or get both for \$15

The WSB Meeting Minutes and attached reports are available for our members. Email your request to secretary@recovering-couples.org

Highlights of the RCA 2006 Conference/Convention

“Living in Love” will bring us joyful Relationships!

♥♥ On Friday, the RCA Convention begins with a **“Living in Love”** Keynote Event & Opening Ceremonies along with workshops.

♥♥ Saturday, you will fill your body, soul and spirit with gatherings in RCA workshops and meetings leading to our jubilant, relaxing **“Living in Love”** wonderful banquet, food, song and dance.

♥♥ Sunday morning will bring more enrichment via workshops with a meaningful luncheon leading to a concluding peaceful **“Living in Love”** gathering.

♥♥ Workshop and panel gatherings will provide input on pertinent topics such as: Communicating, Conflict Resolution, “Right to Know & Need to Know”, “Miracle of Total Honesty”, “Anger, Good, Bad, or?”, “Expectations, Assumptions, Resentment”, “What’s Clutter?” and more and more and more.....

♥♥ On Monday, groups can gather for a “duck tour” sightseeing around the Boston metro area.

Want more information "what to do in Braintree (Boston)"? Log on to www.boston.worldweb.com or check the www.recovering-couples.org website.

Register NOW to get the Early Bird Rate of \$39.00

Highlights of the 2006 World Service Conference:
Events for Delegates, Committee Members, and Trustees

🕒 Thursday August 3, we will kick off the annual meeting with a "meet and greet" social for all delegates and current board members from 8 - 9:00 p.m. Delegates will have a chance to meet current board members, obtain information on World Service Committees, and have an opportunity to preview some of the goals of the RCA WSB for the coming year. The current board hopes that having a time for social interaction and a preview of some of the issues to be discussed at the Delegate meeting will help delegates feel more at ease and prepared for the Annual Meeting of the board and delegates on Friday.

🕒 On Friday, August 4th, from 9 am – 4:00 pm. our Annual Delegate Meeting will convene. There is a lot of business and the Board is committed to working through the agenda in an efficient and thoughtful way along with a nice simple luncheon.

🕒 Issues to be voted on at RCAC 2006:

1. Bylaw change establishing a Conference Charter
2. Bylaw change - Member Group Representation
3. Vote on accepting AA’s Copyright Request
4. Approving RCA Basic Literature
5. RCA Budget Proposed for 2006-7 Year

🕒 Sunday morning from 9 - 10 am the Board,

delegates, committee members, and any interested members of the fellowship will convene to nominate and elect a new Board for next year. That new board will meet Sunday from 2 - 4 pm to finalize committee assignments and make initial plans.

Editor’s Note

Hand in Hand is distributed to GCCs and email subscribers FREE four times a year. If your group wants a hard copy of the Hand in Hand mailed to you please add your \$15 subscription fee to your next literature order. FREE!

You can *DOWNLOAD PAST ISSUES* on www.recoveringcouples.org. On the front page, click Hand in Hand Newsletter and click on the issue you want.

Disclaimer Articles in the Hand in Hand are the Experience, Strength and Hope of the individuals and groups who submitted them. Take what you like & leave the rest. We welcome notices of upcoming events and your stories or reflections on your coupleship recovery. Once an item has been submitted to RCA, it can be used in RCA publications, i.e., books, pamphlets, and Hand In Hand. Submissions may be edited due to spatial considerations, or publishing may be delayed. Please sign your submission exactly the way you want it printed!!

2006 Publications Submissions Deadlines

Summer 2006 June 14, 2006

Fall 2006 September 14, 2006

**Please send your submissions to
RCA WSO Hand in Hand**

P.O. Box 11029 ♥ Oakland, CA 94611♥

Phone: 510-663-2312

E-mail: wso-rca@recovering-couples.org

Website: www.recovering-couples.org

NOTICE The Group Contact Couple listing on the website is for the use of individuals to locate meetings. Any individual using it for any other purpose should be dissuaded from doing so in a letter clarifying the policy; Steve will send a letter, at the direction of the Board.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

SPONSORSHIP: We need help for new couples and new groups in areas with little RCA support
WRITERS, REPORTERS, EDITORS: Your talent is needed to interview groups, to write couple stories or articles for Hand In Hand.

AMBASSADORS: Couples to carry the message to communities where the RCA presence is missing, or needs support. Contact Steve

NEW LITERATURE

Blue Book Companion STEP WORK JOURNAL

Cost: \$14.95 Benefit: Priceless



Sex and Romance Agreement

Workshop in a Box

Workshop for 3 couples: \$12.95

- 1 Tape of Sami and Paul, San Diego
- 1 Facilitators' Guide
- 6 Sex and Romance Agreement pamphlets
- 3 Couple Contract pamphlets
- 3 Reflections on the Spark of Sex

Workshop for 5 couples: \$18.95

- 1 Tape of Sami and Paul, San Diego
- 1 Facilitators' Guide
- 10 Sex and Romance Agreement pamphlets
- 5 Couple Contract pamphlets
- 5 Reflections on the Spark of Sex

RCA Members' Points of View

Can RCA Survive?

Dear RCA members,

You know the scene in "Gone with the Wind" where things are so bad at Tara that Scarlett has to eat the single putrid carrot left over from when they had a thriving plantation; it's so old it makes her sick? Then the camera pans back and she holds the carrot up and says, "As God is my witness, I will never be hungry again"??

Well that sort of describes the current state of affairs at RCA.. The situation is bad. We are broke. Not broke like we-can't-go-out-to-dinner-three-times-a-week-anymore, broke like what-happened-to-that-rotten-carrot-I'm-willing-to-give-it-another-shot broke.

In the dark days before RCA, when my husband and I were shopping for divorce attorneys, they were \$150/hr. Thanks to R.C.A. we did not need their services. Think about what a divorce attorney would have charged you for just one hour. Can you afford to send us 10 percent of that? We did, and still had enough left over to use a portion of that money we saved to buy the special boxed set DVD of "Gone With The

Wind" and watch it together on our couch while my husband searches in the cushions for spare change.

Are you willing to make a financial commitment to the group that helped us all so much while we were fighting for the lives of our marriages? We need money. Check your couch cushions for spare change. Clean out your basement and have a garage sale. Whatever money you can send will help us.

RCA is fighting for its life. Ideally, we'd like you to send checks directly to the RCA office in Oakland, and we've also made it possible to contribute on the website. Please help us continue our work.

Your trusted servant,
Shira, RCA 7th Tradition Committee

RCA Growth and Stability??

Over the years practically everyone seems to talk about the vast turnover in meeting couples. This has sure been true in our own home groups. And the

same experience is shared by other RCAers who say they've been in the fellowship some number of years: compared to perhaps five years ago, most of the couples who were there then are not here now. This seems to be a consistent and often discouraging fact of life throughout our fellowship.

Similarly there's been considerable turnover of entire RCA groups themselves. Since RCA started in 1988, nearly 400 groups have been formed; today there are perhaps as many as 105 active groups, and as few as 85. In 1994 the number of registered groups was 86. Three out of four groups just don't seem to make it.

Many RCAers rightly point out that if even half of those failed meetings had found some key to survival, then today there would be considerably more couples available for Fellowship service, the Central Office would be financially sound, vastly more suffering couples would be finding help and support, convention attendance would be more robust, more couples would have the rewards of being sponsored and of sponsoring, there would be more energy and more collective experience for starting and supporting more RCA meetings, and so on.

As recently as mid-2002 the RCA International Meeting Directory listed over 130 registered groups. Of those 130+ groups less than four years ago, apparently about 50 survive today; shockingly, 80 of those 130+ groups in 2002 no longer exist. And so today's other 35-55 groups are all under four years old.

When RCAers assemble at annual conventions or at retreats -- or just share experience via phone and e-mail -- there's always the question and puzzlement of what this all means and what can be done. The instability is a big concern. Everybody reports vast numbers of efforts to deal with what seems to be an "unsolvable issue" -- an issue seemingly critical to the survival of meetings and to the long-term health and viability of our fellowship as a whole. Many solutions have been proposed and tried, with great service dedication and passion and energy, with sacrifice of much time and some money by many RCAers current and past.

Some years ago when Fellowship debates were raging about the

future direction and service needs of RCA as a whole, another member wrote at the time: ³I challenge the Board and the fellowship to make 2003 the year of growth. Direct all the energies, so vivid in the debates, to developing the growth process. There are many couples in pain, there are many hurt children and parents, there is too much misery out there for us to be blinded by our egos. This should be the common goal of the new Board. I have read many excellent recommendations and suggestions [in the volume of e-mail exchanges during the general service debates]. Re-focus those to growth, reorganize for growth, think growth. Higher Power will be there.² Perhaps we can all ask ourselves and fellow home group members what we can do personally and specifically to help new groups get started and then to survive and thrive. And help the Fellowship as a whole attain a greater degree of stability. And what we can do ourselves to help more newcomer couples stick -- those couples who do make it to the doors of RCA. Let's share our collective thoughts and suggestions throughout the Fellowship. We can write the Central Office with the commitments we're willing to make. And see what develops from our collective intentions and actions. The survival of just 50 groups today out of 130 groups 3+ years ago seems a loud plea indeed for unity in service. *An Outreach Committee member*

The Right Focus

This email addresses the article that has been submitted to Hand In Hand addressing RCA growth and stability. The article thoughtfully points out that if failed meetings had found some key to survival, the fellowship would not be facing such a disconcerting attrition problem. Perhaps this key to survival is identifying and successfully deploying healing tools, which we would like to suggest promotes growth and stability. In other words, perhaps the issue is not growth and stability, rather the issue is healing.

We are members of the Los Altos Fellowship, which has evolved out of the earlier Palo Alto Fellowship. Somewhere between four and five years ago, there was only one couple in the Palo Alto group for many months. Today, the Los Altos' meeting averages around fifteen couples regularly, and some of our meetings are twice this size. While many of these couples are new to RCA, so the jury is still out as to whether they are getting the healing tools they need to survive in their coupleships, we are certainly experiencing growth.

Clearly, there are couples in our fellowship who are older than the 35-55 groups 'under four years old.' These couples have indeed experienced healing attributable to their longevity in this fellowship. Perhaps we need only look to these elders for thoughts on how to obtain growth and stability by using the tools they have garnered for their own couple recovery. And perhaps the right question to ask, or the right focus of the Board and the fellowship, is how to stay focused on the healing tools of recovery rather than growth and stability.

Another RCA Couple

Requiem for a Meeting Gone Dark

RCA member's response to condolences on a nearby meeting closing

It was too bad to see the meeting die. That's what happens when the Traditions are not honored, Safety Guidelines are

not honored, and the focus of the shares is NOT kept on "couple recovery".

We had supported the meeting for nearly a year and it seemed to be growing but my partner and I stopped attending for the reasons I mentioned. In the last 6 months or so since we stopped attending we had heard from one of our sponsee couples that they were concerned about way the meeting was being run. They finally quit attending because the meeting didn't feel safe to them any more.

7th TRADITION DONATIONS

December 22, 2005 to March 21, 2006

GROUP	RCACC GSN	DONATION
San Diego	20005	\$370.00
Hamilton, ONT Canada	26005	85.43
Birmingham, MI	62000	58.05
Jamestown, Ca	45015	100.00
Fremont/Newark, Ca	45012	125.00
K.I.S.S. Florida	49030	224.00
LA Sunday SHARE	45045	159.21
Los Altos, CA	45060	294.00
Eagan, MN	63005	20.00
Minn.-Lake Nokomis	63015	41.20
Oakland Candlelight	45050	590.00
Oakland Monthly Meditation		102.00
Salt Lake City	84010	30.00
San Diego, CA	45075	273.00
San Francisco, CA	45085	52.00
Santa Cruz, CA	45100	125.00
Seattle, WA Sunday	87010	75.00
Seattle, WA Friday	87007	75.00
Friday Harbor, WA	87012	75.00
Sherman Oaks, CA	45020	300.00
Idaho Falls, ID	52006	35.00
Chicago, Ill	53040	100.00
St. Charles, MO	65005	30.00
St. Louis, MO Thursday	65003	30.00
Tri-County, MI	62025	10.00
River Head, NY	72010	175.00
Western Carolina	73010	25.00
Eugene, OR	77005	150.00
Miracle Mountain, PA	78030	25.00
Rapid City, SD	81005	20.00
San Antonio, TX	83035	100.00
<u>Walnut Creek, CA – Fri</u>	<u>45105</u>	<u>393.00</u>
TOTAL GROUP DONATIONS		4,266.89
Individual Donations		3,072.53
<u>Blue Book Publishing Fund</u>		<u>50.00</u>
TOTAL DONATIONS		\$7,389.42

Thank You!!

RCA Net Income for the Winter Quarter was \$592.74

Please read "Can RCA Survive?" on page 3 of this issue.

RCA Income and Expense Report for Dec 22,2005 through March 21,2006

Income	
Donations	\$7,389.42
Merchandise	5,361.20
Postage & Handling	<u>982.26</u>
Total Income	\$13,732.88
Expenses	
WSO Office Manager	\$ 5,282.50
Webmaster and E-mail	<u>616.26</u>
Total Consultant	5,898.76
Insurance	1,242.20
Medallions	275.10
Office Supplies	27.14
Printing	2,899.05
Postage	628.06
PayPal Fees	95.52
Rent	1,709.22
Telephone/Fax/DSL	<u>365.09</u>
Total Expenses	\$13,140.14
Net Income	\$592.74

Reflection on Autonomy and Cooperation

When we conduct ourselves according to the spiritual principles of our program, we find the balance that allows us to act both independently and cooperatively. Tradition Four says "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or RCA as a whole." Therefore each group may act as it sees fit on local issues, but it behooves us to also act for the benefit of RCA as a whole. While RCA has suggested Safety Guidelines and other material for the meetings provided from WSO on conducting meetings, each group is free to choose its own meeting program and topics for discussion; to decide where and when it shall meet and how the funds will be apportioned. We suggest that in a business meeting, the Informed Group Conscience Process or How to Conduct a Sharing Session be used. This assures that the majority opinion can evolve to guide the group, while minority opinions are aired and taken into consideration. When an RCA group has plans that concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, we suggest those groups be consulted as well.

This flow of autonomy and cooperation has its place in our coupleships. When we make plans that affect our coupleship, naturally it is better that our partners be consulted. Fellowship with people other than just our partners through couple-to-couple outreach calls and meeting with other couples over coffee or tea builds a network of relationships. We can share successes, divide problems, and have a real life beyond our primary relationship.

Our Commitment Today

Today we will celebrate the ways we have created a balance of autonomy and cooperation in our relationship, and look for new ways to apply this principle.

My Commitment Today

Today I will look honestly at the flow of give and take, of togetherness and individuality, and ask my Higher Power for wisdom to find the balance we both need to thrive.

Reflection on Keeping our Focus on our Mission

Tradition Five. "Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to recovering couples who still suffer." This Tradition sums up for us what our program is really about. Each RCA group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose—that

of carrying its message of intimacy and commitment to suffering couples. When we welcome a newcomer couple to our fellowship, we share our experience, strength and hope. We extend to them a spiritual support and the opportunity to connect with other couples in the group, especially through sponsorship, either temporary or long-term. We can provide conference approved literature and a listing of meetings in the area as well as the opportunity to purchase or order the RCA Blue Book, and tapes from previous international conventions.

The safe sharing of our own struggles and successes in couple recovery invites others to participate in building healthy coupleships.

Our Commitment Today

Today we will look at the characteristics of functional couples, and list and celebrate together our gains in our couple recovery.

My Commitment Today

Today I will identify one characteristic of suffering couples that still troubles me, and find a tool, step, or affirmation to carry the message of couple recovery to myself.

Reflection on Living the RCA Program

When an individual gets into 12-Step recovery, the social system around them may not comprehend or appreciate the changes both partners will have to make, and the system will likely not support both partners in their efforts. As a group and as couples, we can reach out to individuals and couples as well as the recovery community and community helpers with the good news about the practical steps we take in RCA to develop skills for commitment, communication, and caring. And within our own coupleships, we can carry the RCA message to each other of joy, intimacy, and hope of recovery. In this way, we keep our focus on our primary purpose. Our own recovery is our most attractive asset, and being a living example of the program is our most powerful way of carrying the message of couple recovery.

Our Commitment Today

Today we will take one action as a couple to share the message of couple recovery with our community.

My Commitment Today

Today I will look for one way to share what I have gained from RCA with someone at a meeting, after a meeting, by leaving a brochure, or in a phone call.

Reflection on Purposeful Integrity

Tradition Six says that RCA ought never endorse, finance, or lend the RCA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. Our primary aim is reaching out to help couples attain the spiritual experience that is promised to those who work the steps together. Many outside enterprises send members to us. As long as we are committed to our primary purpose, we can cooperate with others in confidence. Often, RCA groups coordinate with other 12 step groups to plan picnics, potlucks, dances, or other special events. These activities support our primary purpose of sharing the message of coupleship recovery. The skills for setting clear boundaries and agreements that brought peace to our coupleships will serve us well in interaction with other communities.

In our extended families and communities, the same principle applies. Our primary bond is to the coupleship and our children. We need to protect this integrity by ensuring that no other entity, however well-meaning, distracts us from our coupleship commitment.

Our commitment today

Today we will reflect on our relationships with others. In what ways are we creating clear boundaries for our interactions?

My Commitment today

Today I will reflect on my personal commitment to our coupleship's spiritual path. In what ways am I choosing interactions that support that, rather than distract from it?

RCA Convention/Conference

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS AUGUST 4-6, 2006

FEEL THE MAGIC
LIVING IN LOVE

There's no place like home and we Bostonians are eager to have you know our Bean Town. Boston is commonly referred to as "town," although some who don't live here do call it the city.

When you arrive, you'll begin to feel the magic of our town and our conference.

LIVING IN LOVE TRULY IS MAGICAL.

We have some great "stuff" planned for you, all mindful of our goal of

LIVING IN LOVE daily for the rest of our lives.

Recovering Couples Anonymous - 2006 Convention Registration Form

Names: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Will assist with _____ Topics _____

COMPLETE AND MAIL THIS FORM TO: **RCA 2006 c/o The Petitti's**

For info: contact Bob & Keren 103 Bradford Commons Lane

781-848-5922 Braintree, Ma 02184 rppetitti@aol.com

VERY Early Bird Convention Registration Fees

_____ x \$ 39. (Jack Benny's Age) per person (no meals) = _____. Payable to RCA 2006

Fee for Saturday night banquet, dance, and meal package fees later. Sorry no refunds.

Note: Confirmation will be sent by e-mail. Receipts will be handed out at the door.

If you want a receipt earlier, please send a self addressed envelope with your payment.

Register NOW for the RCACC 2006 at www.recovering-couples.org.

Hotel Reservations are Separate and your own Responsibility

For more hotel info. contact: The Sheraton Braintree Hotel

37 Forbes Road Phone (781) 848-0600 E-mail "sheraton_braintree@sheraton.com"

Rate: \$ 99.00 per night (up to four per room)

Mention: **RCA** for this special rate. Please note this rate is for **you** before July 1st.