



Hand in Hand

Fall Issue 2009

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Board Members

Chair- Vicki R. (irw Mark R.)

Vice-chair- (Dec 6)

Secretary- Debbie V. (irw Ruth B.)

Treasurer- James K. (IRW Mark W.)

Vicky T. irw Jerry T.

Julaine IRW Steve

Richard P irw Barbara P.

Elena J. irw Allen J.

Jerry H irw Stephanie H.

Alternates:

Tyler B. irw Michele B.

Message from the RCA WSO

We have just had a delight-filled convention in Florida. One result of a convention is that RCA has a new WSO Board of Trustees. Most of our new officers are in their second year, but we also have four new couples.

I want to talk to you about what I see RCA, as an international body, is going to encounter in this next nine months.

We will continue to have four independent contractors who are doing a tremendous job of serving the fellowship. They are helping us promote couple recovery in an efficient and knowledgeable way.

The 4th Edition of the basic text of RCA is nearing completion of its review and revision by the Literature committee. Soon, the Board will have a chance to review it and send it to the fellowship for approval. Following the wishes of the 2007 convention, the fellowship will be given 90 days to review and approve the new edition. This 90 day review period is likely to begin at the end of March and last until early July, when each group may mail in their vote. If that occurs, RCA will have its first literature approved by the fellowship. So, be ready to participate in your group's reading and discussion of the new text.

I want to encourage all RCA members to participate in committee work. We have several standing committees to help RCA grow and promote couple recovery, and three new ones: Literature Translation, the Daily Reader, and Merchandising Support. All need support and willing hands.

Participating in committee work gives us a chance to experience RCA at a level different from our local meeting. It is an opportunity to broaden our horizons, and take our couple recovery into a larger field.

A second reason to participate in committee work is that it is a gentle way to learn about RCA's function as an international body. This prepares us, as couples, for service at higher levels, particularly on the Board.

The third reason is that it is good for RCA. We make decisions as a fellowship by voting on motions at the Board level and at the Annual Convention. Motions that come out of ideas from committee work tend to be better informed and thought through than motions brought by individuals doing independent thinking. Committees are excellent forums to discuss ideas and test their viability.

So spread your wings for a further horizon, and do some committee work. There is more specific information on committees in this issue of the Hand in Hand.

If you are not already, you may find it helpful to become familiar with our web site at www.recovering-couples.org. (cont. on pg 2)

(continued from page 1) It is useful in finding resources for couples or groups, and literature can be ordered there. Finally, I want to encourage you to call on your WSO Board if you have needs as a couple or as a meeting group. Use the web site to contact us so that we can help you find the resources you need.

David H. irw Kathleen

RCA WSO 2009-2010 Board of Trustees



Report of 2008-2009 Workings of the Board

This past year the Board came up with solutions to problems and opportunities, such as:

Creating a "Virtual Office" for the World Service Organization. After months of research and debate by the Ad Hoc Committee and the Board, we opted for a "Virtual Office," thereby eliminating the legal concerns of employee versus independent contractor. This also saves the WSO the costs of rent and employee benefits. The transition to the Virtual Office with four service providers is documented in the 2009 Spring issue of the Hand n Hand if you want more information. These service providers have contracts that are renewed yearly by the Board. New committees were created to provide support for each contractor. More Committee members are needed for support, please contact the Vice Chair, Vicki R.

The WSO continues to function well and from this Board's point of view, better than ever. Services are being provided, just in a different way. We think from the feedback of the fellowship that our Merchandise Provider is quickly answering questions about literature, and our Communications Provider is giving quick responses to questions from potential members, as well as the fellowship. The Website Service Provider keeps the global directory current from changes requested by the groups, posts regional retreats and keeps the communications flowing from the Board to the GCC's and more. The Financial Service Provider is keeping accurate books and paying our bills in a timely manner. Two ways the savings have been used are on the purchase of new copies of the 3rd Edition, and the creation of new literature, such as the Step Up To Love book.

In a survey taken in 2000 the fellowship strongly indicated a desire for new literature. Although last year's Board thought that the 4th Edition would precede the publication of any other literature, the 4th Edition will not be ready for review by the fellowship until Spring, 2010. The Literature Committee believes that it will be available at the next Convention in Niagara Falls in July 2010, and that it may become the first fellowship approved piece of literature.

Step Up to Love (more than three years in production), is available now. **All the proceeds** for this book will go to RCA. This is the authors' gift to us. There were some costs incurred in production that will be recovered after the sale of about 200 books. There were, of course, struggles within the Board and the members of the Ad Hoc Book Committee. Many rewrites by the Authors were needed to quell some of the critiques, but we worked through our differences, or agreed to disagree, and votes were cast to determine the outcome. Recovery tools were in constant use. Although the decision to go forward with this book was not unanimous, the majority prevailed. The fellowship's acceptance of the book through the purchase of it and word of mouth discussion of its benefits (as another tool of recovery) will provide the evidence needed to know whether we did the right thing by publishing this book. Time will tell. The book can be purchased through the website with the literature form and Pay Pal.

Two RCA pamphlets and 7 documents were translated into Spanish (such as the Preamble, the Twelve Steps and Traditions, and others) and were made available on the website. The website reflects this opportunity for our Spanish speaking members of RCA. A special thank you to Vicky irw Jerry for her many hours and days connected with this process.

Changes were continually made throughout this Board year to improve the website in order to make it more user friendly for the fellowship, including changes to Pay-Pal.

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Riding the Wave of Recovery
2009 RCA Convention, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

RCA Convention Rides the Wave of Recovery

What a fantastic weekend at the **19th Annual RCA Convention and Conference!** Almost 59 couples came to **Ride the Wave of Recovery** in sunny, spectacular Fort Lauderdale, Florida, October 16, 17, and 18.

Board members arrived early to attend the Board of Trustees meeting on Thursday, October 15th. The Hospitality Suite opened at noon and became the hub for information, and for couples socializing and sharing their experience, strength and hope.

Beginning on Friday, couples meditation was available every morning. The hotel served delicious meals for those who purchased the convention meal package. But couples wishing to sample the local cuisine were not disappointed by the amazing variety of fine restaurants in the Fort Lauderdale area. During the day the RCA Annual Business Meeting was held for delegates and interested members of the fellowship.

The opening ceremony and a panel of RCA members speaking about their recovery and the importance of service got Friday evening off to a great start. Afterward, Tropical Friday Night Fun capped off the evening with an ice breaker treasure hunt, craft projects for couples and the whimsical flamingo couple, a life-sized cutout in which participants could have their photos taken as the flamingos' faces. A wonderful coffee cart with coffees, teas and hot chocolate provided the after dinner aperitifs!

Recovery meetings were an option after the festivities on Friday and Saturday evenings; a positive, spiritual way to end each day.

On Saturday and Sunday fourteen workshops were available. Topics ranged from improving communication to dealing with financial issues in a healthy way, to spiritual growth, to playing and having fun together, to working the Steps, and much more. The workshops were the core of the convention and provided great opportunities for increasing knowledge and enhancing relationship growth.

After a delicious banquet on Saturday evening, the keynote speakers, Pat and Karl, West Coast founding members of RCA, presented a moving program on their recovery in RCA and their thoughts on 12 Step service. This was followed by great dance music, by a local DJ, that many truly enjoyed. A Power Point preview for next year's convention in Niagara Falls, Canada, was presented. Flower and vegetable seed packets, donated by generous RCAers, were available for purchase and helped increase the total of seed money that the next Convention Committee will receive from RCA WSO.

The annual Silent Auction was held during the day on Saturday and was definitely a success. The Convention Committee is grateful to the many RCAers who donated wonderful items, including vacation homes, jewelry, stamp collections, memorabilia, and much, much more to help RCA grow and prosper.

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ONE COUPLE'S EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH, AND...SURFING!

We were thrilled to be at the Ft Lauderdale, Florida International Convention! It was our first such conference as a Recovering Couple. What a wonderful chance to see the Fellowship as a whole, and to experience the love and support from around the world!

We were the delegates for our local group in Albany, NY. Our first experience was with the business meeting held on Friday, where votes on the issues were taken. It was beautiful to see the Board and members as a whole living and using the principles of the program – and placing them before personalities! Having seen many corporate proceedings, this was a breath of fresh air. We felt very blessed to be entrusted with a voice for our home group and to be heard on the topics and issues.

After the business meeting came a wonderful “get to know you” at the opening that evening. It was so fun to circulate around everyone and find the answers to questions such as, “Have you been hot air ballooning together?” And meeting so many couples who echoed our thoughts of, “If it weren't for this program, we would not have the life we have together now!” It was a great evening.

Saturday was full of wonderful workshops. We were blessed with the opportunity of service and had a wonderful time sharing some techniques for couples massage with our fellow RCA couples. Our thanks to Vicky, who had noticed the tag line on our emails and lovingly recruited us!

The service that we saw from everyone involved was a great inspiration. We met people who were part of the founding of RCA, and some who were brand new to recovery. The effort and commitment that went into the convention were phenomenal. Now we are endeavoring to bring the spirit home, pass it on, and share the gifts with many others. At the closing ceremony, we were given the chance to let go of the old, and a crystal heart to bring home new energy and commitment. It has a place on our home altar and will serve as a reminder of the 2009 “Wave of Recovery” we rode together that weekend!

Yours in loving recovery and service,

Debbie irw Ruth

(continued from page 2)

Five couples are leaving the Board this year. Alan and Kathy from Minneapolis have finished a term of two years, and three other couples have finished three-year terms of service to the Fellowship. The three are: Randy and Gerrie from Winnipeg, Canada; Gladys and Jade from Oregon; Dan and Kate from Maryland. David and Kathleen from California have left after one year. The Board extends its appreciation to these five couples for their dedication of service on behalf of the Fellowship.

THE FELLOWSHIP, THE BOARD, AND THE CONVENTION

RCA is a fellowship of recovering couples. It is a safe place for couples to begin the healing process, and the only requirement for membership is a desire to remain committed to each other and to develop new intimacy.

To help reach couples that need RCA, we want places for them to find us, and one of those places is the website. It offers experience, strength and hope to the newcomer. It directs them to a group in their area, and offers literature and other tools for their use. It also provides the tools to begin their own group.

The website and its content are managed by members of the WSO Board and its committees. The Board is guided by the WSO Bylaws, which are voted upon by the RCA fellowship at the annual convention.

Each year RCA WSO holds its annual business meeting during the convention. The annual convention also holds an open Board meeting, and includes the annual report, motions, and discussion of RCA business.

As with any 12 step fellowship, the Board does not govern. We take our direction from the group conscience of the fellowship. Any RCA group can send in a motion for research and consideration by the Board. Sometimes items are sent to a committee for further review. This helps us all to make an informed decision. Motions come to the Board and the Structure Committee months before a convention so research can be done regarding the issue, and feedback given to members in case the motion needs amending. This also gives the Structure committee

time to post the items for review by the fellowship, according to the timelines RCA is legally obligated to follow. We welcome and encourage all RCA members to serve on a WSO Committee. (See the article on committees in this newsletter for more information.)

Each year all groups are asked to designate a delegate couple to vote on matters of concern at the annual meeting. At present, votes may be delivered by mail or in person. The benefit of the physical meeting is the discussion that occurs around each motion. The energy in the room can be quite inspiring, and certainly shows 12 step recovery at work. The pro and con arguments are very informative, and votes have been changed by this discourse. Members of the Board are available for questions.

Since not all groups can send a delegate couple to each year's convention, voting by mail has been available for the last few years. This provides each group with the opportunity to have a voice in the business of RCA. Unfortunately, not all groups avail themselves of this opportunity. Of the 130+ active groups in RCA, less than 1/3 of them participated in the voting process this year. Of those members who came to the convention, only a small portion attended the business meeting. We hope to encourage more participation in the future.

RCA belongs to each of us. The annual meeting is our chance to have our voices heard. I look forward to seeing more of you in Niagara Falls, Canada on Friday, July 23, 2010.

New RCA Step Work Tool

Step Up To Love, billed as a new look at RCA's 12 Steps, is now available for purchase through the RCA website. This 144-page, soft cover book was introduced at the October International Convention in Florida, and interest was high, with several dozen copies purchased by attendees. Internet and postal orders have also been received and filled for Berlin, Vienna, Stockholm, and Toronto!

With recent revisions of the RCA website order forms, **Step Up To Love** can be previewed online. On our home page, under "Current News," click "Online Literature Store," then "Pay Pal," and scroll down. The cover of the new book is shown, along with a brief description of its contents. (continued on page 11)



**"I am the master of my own reactions !
Today, I choose to enjoy the roses in spite of the thorns."**



(continued from page 3) Many couples went home with beautiful and useful commemoratives of this year's convention. There were beautiful beach towels, t-shirts and polo shirts with the Convention embroidered logo available for purchase. Anyone wishing to purchase a commemorative may still do so as a donation to RCA/WSO by contacting harmony_couple@yahoo.com or call 954-432-8167.

The closing ceremony on Sunday, held after the workshops and the election of new board members, was very heartwarming. Couples were encouraged to take two very ordinary pebbles as a representation of their old relationship. They brought them to a beautiful bamboo fountain and dropped them in as a symbol of washing away all the old beliefs that got the relationship into trouble. Then they received a heart-shaped amethyst and a card describing the healing and spiritual properties of the amethyst. A circle formed and the Unity Prayer said by all the participants. It was a fantastic end to a wonderful convention.

The convention committee and support members want to give sincere appreciation and gratitude to the fellowship for making this a memorable and successful event. The Silent Auction raised \$1826.50 and the final net amount donated to the WSO by the 2009 RCAC was \$4622.79.

Outreach Request

A special request from outreach: we need Group Contact Couples to help carry the message of recovery for RCA. The 12th Step asks that we carry the message to others, and this is one of the ways we help our own recovery.

The first thing we need is for groups to re-check your online information at RCA@recovering-couples.org and if the time or location has changed, or if you have a new GC Couple, choose "Group Resources" from the tool bar. From that drop down choose "Meeting Registry" and make necessary changes. It's that easy!

Outreach, though simple, is vital for the health of the program. We are currently looking for individuals or couples who are willing to help with this work. It is a 10 to 20 hour a year time commitment. As Outreach Chair, I find this work enjoyable, and it gives me insight as to how my partner and I can better work the program.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at kathystein06@yahoo.com

Kathy irw Allan

The Recovery of My Coupleship

"...I have not chosen to put an emphasis on the fact that we live in India, but on the recovery of my coupleship by the help of the RCA program." (quote from the author)

I was a long standing member of other 12 Step programs, when I came to RCA. In my own perception I had a good grip on my personal program and had reached a certain level of serenity. I had good relations with the world at large and with my family of origin, so when I met my husband I felt convinced that I was ready for a coupleship full of love, compassion, care and togetherness.

It came as a total shock to me to find out that deeply buried dysfunctions surfaced in me and that all my defects of character came out in the open in their most extreme forms, dominating my relationship with my husband in many destructive ways. We had furious fights almost daily over all kinds of issues and our marriage came closer and closer to being destroyed.

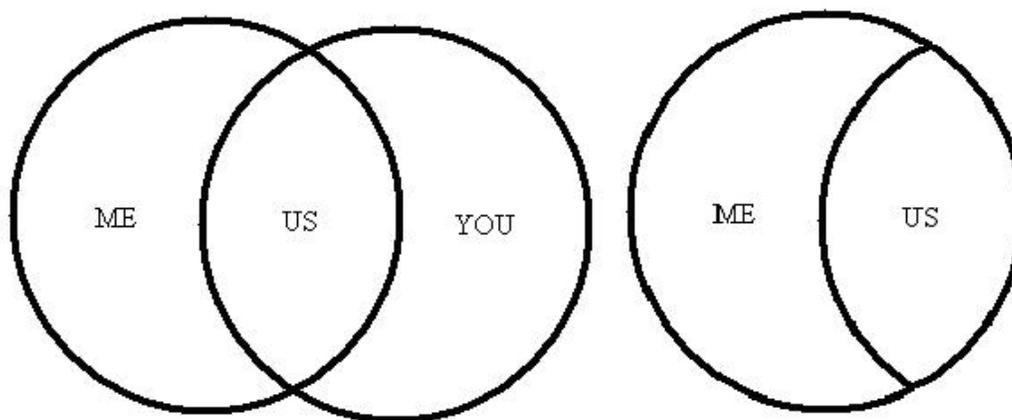
My husband is also a member of other 12 Step programs and he too felt that his coupleship was a disaster, so he looked for a 12 Step solution. He made an online search, found RCA, and asked me if I was interested in working with him in the RCA program. I was amazed and happy to get the hope of finding better ways.

The first idea of the RCA program that caught my attention was the "three legged stool" that consists of me, you, and us, and that each of us is 100% responsible for the coupleship. I became indignant.

Why on Earth should I take 100% responsibility for my coupleship? It was OUR coupleship, not mine alone, and we should each take 50% responsibility. If I didn't think my husband was taking his 50% responsibility for OUR coupleship I was on his case, and the war was on, with accusations and vengeance. He didn't take it kindly that I held the idea that it was my job to decide what he should or shouldn't do, feel, or think about OUR coupleship and that made me even more angry and resentful.

It took awhile for me to take to heart that I was 100% responsible for MY coupleship, and that he was 100 % responsible for HIS coupleship. When I finally accepted my 100 % responsibility I found a way to express it to myself with the following images:

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The two circles on the left illustrated where his life and mine met in us. If I separated my life circle from his (on the right), almost half of my life circle was taken up by MY coupleship. That made it obvious to me that if I did something to my coupleship that was harmful, I in actual fact harmed my life and myself.

The next RCA concept that caught my attention was the “Fair Fighting Agreement.” It suggested that I don’t look at my husband as my adversary, but that we are on the same team, and our job together is to nurture the coupleship that has come into our life. It also suggested tools, and one of them was using “I” statements.

That was a very difficult one for me because I was so used to being busy with ideas of how HE could change so that the coupleship would thrive and for that I needed the word “you.” To tell you honestly it took more than a couple of years for me to learn to use “I” statements on a regular basis, but it worked wonders in my coupleship when I began sticking to myself instead of dragging him into my opinions and ideas and allowed him to have his own opinions and ideas.

The tool suggested for this by the RCA program was active, non-defensive listening, both when I was in agreement with him, but in particular when I had a different opinion. We used a timer, and each had three minutes to express whatever needed to be expressed, for a total of twenty minutes for the whole conversation.

In this way I gradually learned to allow him to express himself, and to hear him even when the opinions and ideas he expressed were bringing about emotional or mental turmoil in me. For these disturbances I used my personal program to heal my hurts.

Some RCA tools that had an immense beneficial impact on my coupleship were the words “case building,” “button pushing,” and “baiting.” Before RCA I didn’t even know that I built a case in my mind as to why my husband should change. If I was angry at him I built a case as to why it was fair and just that I was angry, resentful, hateful, revengeful, and so on. I must do this and that to show him I am displeased with him, with an underlying threat that I would give up my coupleship if my conditions were not met.

It took more than some years in RCA before it dawned on me that his desire for HIS coupleship to blossom was just as strong as mine was to make MY coupleship blossom, even when we had different ideas of how that could be brought about. We were not adversaries.

If I misbehaved with him I felt so uncomfortable that I wanted to drag him into my dysfunction, and I did that with the help of baiting and button pushing. I would bait him by pretending to approach him with kindness, saying something that would make him respond to me, and then I would push his most sore spots to make him lose it and misbehave, too. My justification was that I thought he felt contempt for me due to my dysfunction, and I could avoid his contempt if we both misbehaved.

From this realization it became clear to me that compassion – this highest quality of love that embraces the pain of another – was essential for me to be able to build a coupleship with another human being. Also, I realized the importance of working my own 12 Step program because I needed to take responsibility for my dysfunction, without dragging him into it. If my emotions and thoughts got so heated that I found it difficult to listen I suggested a ‘time-out’ and asked for another time to talk.

(Continued on page 7)

If we needed to talk about some of the 'hot spots' in the coupleship we chose a set time and a time limit, and that worked well for me to be able to address difficult topics like sex, money, chores, family of origin, together time and individual time, etc. Before starting we read the "Fair Fighting Agreement," the "RCA Safety Guidelines," and our "Coupleship Agreement."

For a couple of years we had a set time every day where we spent half an hour reading some of the RCA literature, and each of us then shared our understanding of what was read. Before sharing we used the coupleship prayer or the Serenity Prayer. We took turns choosing what to read and we particularly liked "The Daily Reflections."

Finally, we found a sponsor couple online and began our step work. Here we experienced "intimacy backlash" when we began sharing with our sponsor couple what we had found out in Step One. Our program came to a halt for a while until we were able to move on.

We started a meeting in our community and it was immensely beneficial for us to hear others share their problems with nurturing a coupleship. Many issues that I believed were particularly my problem proved to be obstacles for others as well, and that was an immense help in changing my attitude and my desire to overcome these obstacles.

In Step One we looked into our family of origin issues and I was amazed to discover that a lot of the issues I had attributed to my husband or our coupleship had nothing to do with either one. They were issues I had brought with me from early childhood, and I needed my personal program to deal with them. That helped me to heal from many deep-seated issues inside of me.

I have come to the conclusion that my responsibility for my coupleship is 100% mine. The fact that my husband sparked my love doesn't imply that he is responsible for making me happy about loving him by reciprocation. That is his choice and has nothing to do with me.

For my part, I feel responsible for how I nurture my opportunity to be with a person that I love and stick to my love at all costs. I believe that love and compassion are characteristics of the soul, and by being with a man I love I get the opportunity to be in touch with my soul by nurturing love and compassion for my coupleship.

When death comes my way and I meet my God the question will not be, "Were you loved?" The question will be, "Did you love? How did you deal with your love? Did you surrender to your heart?" RCA gave me the tools to surrender to my heart and to use the opportunity given by my Higher Power to develop my capacity for love and compassion by showing love and compassion for my husband. In that way I nurture our mutual body: Our coupleship.

Solvejg in recovery with Tahir

RCA COMMITTEES – BE A PART!

Below is a list of committees, and a brief description of their functions. If you have a skill or a burning desire in a particular area, and want to give back, consider serving on one of them.

Send all requests regarding the committees to the vice chair @ vicechair@recovering-couples.org unless there is a specific email address noted.

Literature

Tasked with updating literature. At the present time they are working exclusively on the 4th Edition draft of the Blue Book. They meet weekly, going through the blue book page by page. This has been a long process, which began in 2004. The next step will be for the Blue Book Draft to come before the

fellowship for final acceptance, and is scheduled to happen in the spring of 2010. Then the next task will be to update our pamphlets.

Daily Meditation Book

Newly created. A virtual suggestion box has been put on the website to collect ideas for the book, and they will be reviewed by this new committee. That email box is dailyreader@recovering-couples.org.

The committee will soon begin to work out the concept of the book, decide its format, and collect and edit material. We expect it to take well over a year to get the book ready for its first review, with lots of participation and feedback from RCA members, and we are looking for people to submit items, as well as help create the book itself. (continued on page 10)

BED & BREAKFAST CLUB

The 7th tradition Bed and Breakfast Club gives RCA couples an opportunity to connect with other RCA couples. Instead of spending money on a hotel, traveling RCA couples stay with members of the RCA fellowship, and send a donation to the WSO (\$20 to \$30 donation per night has been used in the past). This is a way to support RCA through our own contributions!

NEW! "Private guest room and bath, two blocks from the harbor in Redondo Beach, California."

(310) 890-9999 Malia irw Arden

"...queen size bed, private bath, large deck, tennis courts, and a pool!"

(404)-849-2189 - Tami and Matt in Roswell (suburb of Atlanta), GA

"...hot tub with a view of the Cascade Mountains, dog-friendly"

(541) 343-4920 - Gladys IRW Jade, Eugene, Oregon

"...Winnipeg...from ice fishing in the winter to hot summers"

(204) 668-1515 - Gerrie committed to Randy, Randy committed to Gerrie"

"...condominium with private bedroom and bath suite on San Francisco Bay"

(510) 235-6111 - Elise and David near San Francisco"

"...own room in their home... surrounded by great books, experience, strength, and hope"

(925) 274-1186 - Bob and Betsy from San Francisco"

"...their Rockville home or their Delaware condo (a mile from Bethany Beach)"

(301) 424-4594 - Kate and Dan Rockville, Maryland (near Washington, DC)"

If you want to add your name to the RCA Bed & Breakfast Club send a finished description to the editor at: articles@recovering-couples.org

Speaker Couples Network

RCA Groups: Would you like to have a guest speaker couple phone into your meeting and share their stories with your group members?

RCA Couples: Would you be willing to phone into a group meeting anywhere and share your experience, strength and hope as a Guest Speaker Couple?

Email: harmony_couple@yahoo.com or Call Jerry and Vicky at 954-432-8167

This is from the closing ceremony at the 2009 Florida RCA Convention.

POEM BY MATT H.

We live in a world where each man walks according to his own understanding. We find ourselves scarred smudged and stained. This program of recovery shows us a path of healing wounds and cleansing stains, whether on the surface or buried deep within. We know how they show up for us in our relationships – pain.

At the end of this year's convention I am going to ask you to suspend your despair, your disbelief that the pain will ever go away. You have each been given a rock. Just a simple rock. Nothing special about it. I want you to think of this rock as your pain. Your despair, your secret wounds that you find never seem to heal. Let this rock be those things for you. I know for some of us that seems more like a boulder than this small rock, but for a moment let it be. As you attempt this let me paint a word picture for you.

There is a part of me

I leave behind

A part to which

I had been blind

When the stripes of childhood

Laid me bare

Pain and confusion

Were always there

Have I lived with the pain

Quite long enough

Can I let those I care for

Live without my stuff

These things I let

My higher power take

Like throwing a stone

Into a lake

I see the stone

It is in my hand

On the shore of a lake

I seem to stand

With all my strength

I let it fly

To give happiness and peace

Another try.

As you pass by the fountain let your pain fall in. Let the waters wash your wounds. Let this be another end of suffering and a beginning of fun and recovery. When you decide to let go of your individual pain, there is a clean clear heart waiting for you to receive. A heart of sobriety and relatedness. Pick it up and let it be a symbol of what is possible for you and your relationship.

At this time each couple received an amethyst heart!

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Hand in Hand

Our quarterly newsletter has been around for many years. The current Hand in Hand is a mix of information and personal stories from RCA members just like all of you. Some past issues can be easily found on the website, and quickly downloaded. Hand in Hand is a great place to find topics for meetings, the latest convention and retreat information, and 7th Tradition contributions. We are always looking for RCA members who are willing to write articles or just give us feedback. Please consider printing out the Hand in Hand and sharing it with your group. Articles or feedback can be sent to articles@recovering-couples.org.

Translation Committee

A new committee has been created and will now begin to research the process of translating our literature into other languages. We will begin after the publication of the new Blue Book in 2010. Until then, we will look at how other 12 step organizations have handled this process. We want to create a process that can be adapted for any language. At the 2009 annual meeting the fellowship approved translation of the forthcoming Blue Book into Swedish, and funds to help the project. Sweden will use the process that this committee creates and it is looking for interested members, especially those with any experience in the process or in translation itself.

Structure

This committee is pretty busy just before the Annual Convention, as it prepares agenda items and wording of the topics for the Annual Business Meeting. Committee members work with people as they make motions, to help them clarify the intention of the motion, and to clearly state their rationale for it. The committee then researches and reports the implications of that motion to the RCA fellowship. RCA bylaws and the prevailing law in the state in which we incorporated bind this committee. Members do most of their work with conference calls and email. The committee has several legal deadlines they must follow before each annual meeting. This committee is in dire need of some help. It is a big job that has been performed by a tired few in the past. If you have relevant experience, and are up to a challenge, please send an email to vicechair@recovering-couples.org.

Outreach

These folks reach all of the Group Contact Couples (GCCs) on a regular basis. The committee has divided the active RCA groups into areas and they make personal contact with the GCCs for each and every registered group. Members offer support, give and receive information for the Board and its committees, and take feedback and ideas to help make RCA operate better. Sometimes they use email as a communication tool, but rely mostly on phone calls. This committee is looking for people to make a few calls each month. If you enjoy meeting and talking with great people in recovery, this might be just the committee for you.

Ethics Committee

Deals with matters of an ethical nature, relating to the WSO Board. Only meets if a matter is brought to them. They make sure we do our best to follow the RCA Steps, Traditions, and Bylaws.

Seventh Traditions

Our WSO could not operate without our contributions and this committee keeps the 7th Tradition on our minds. It could use a few creative minds on it. Requesting 7th Tradition contributions is not always a fun job, but someone has to do it!

2010 Convention

Organizes next year's convention in Niagara Falls, Canada. There are lots of sub-committees here that will need volunteers to spread the effort around. Please contact us to join in the fun!

Sponsorship Committee

Keeps a list of couples willing to be temporary, long term, or long distance sponsors. The list of couples requesting sponsors is long, and the list of volunteers is short. This committee maintains those lists and helps them find each other. To learn more about how it works, contact sponsorship@recovering-couples.org.

Policy and Procedures

We are looking for RCA members who have served on the WSO Board of Trustees. Your experience is needed to create a policies and procedures manual for future Boards.

Merchandise Support -new committee

(continued from page 4)

A more extensive description is available on a full-page flyer, under the picture of the book cover when you click on "Download Printable Flyer Here." Copies can be printed off for RCA home group members, and some meetings already have a stack available to help carry the message. The flyer can also be distributed to couples' therapists, local 12-Step meeting places, health fairs, recovery bookstores, treatment centers, and after-care programs.

From the flier:

"The newest major piece of RCA literature in over 10 years, this book provides a personal and powerful experience – helping couples realize they are not alone or eternally destined to be at the mercy of addicted and destructive relationships.

"It is expected that **Step Up To Love** will play its part in passing on RCA's basic message of couple recovery. It includes examples of personal experiences and demonstrates how the RCA program works.

"Approved by the Board of Trustees of Recovering Couples Anonymous, **Step Up To Love** is offered in the hope that many more couples may be led toward recovery."

By Bob F.

2009-2010 Board Bios

Vicki R. in Loving Recovery with **Mark R.** are returning for their second year on the board. We have been members of RCA since June of 2006. We attended a few phone meeting where we shared our story then attended our first annual convention in St. Louis in 2007, jumping right in to help where we could. Mark loves to greet and meet, so he was put to work at registration. Vicki volunteered for the Hand in Hand and submitted a few articles. At the 2008 convention in San Francisco, we were invited to join the board as alternates. Part way through the year we stepped up to voting members when another couple had to leave the board. Vicki became the formatter for the Hand in Hand and helped the Step Up To Love Book committee. In June, Vicki was voted vice-chair to fill another vacated position. Mark spent his year working on the Website committee. Both of us were actively working on the 2009 convention committee as silent Auction chairs. During this time the small Hollywood, Florida group we participate in has grown to over 15 couples. We both work full time, and continue to work our own individual programs. Together, we raised 4 children and have been married for 31 years. We have been touched by so many members of RCA who gave so freely of themselves and their experience, strength, and hope. It provided us with such inspiration we felt we wanted to give service in the same way to the RCA fellowship. We feel we learn and grow with each task we take on. We have found such a renewal in RCA that we wanted to share that through service to RCA as a whole. We have met many dedicated people who have become very special friends to us. We want to ensure that this organization is strong, that it grows and reaches more couples each year. We want to see more literature. We want more couples to find what we have found.

Jim and Mark have been in RCA for 10 years. We live in NY state and attend the Sunday Night RCA Phone meeting. We sponsor other couples, work the steps with another couple and are serving on the Board of RCA in our second year. On the board Mark served as Chair last year and this year Jim is the Treasurer.

Jerry and Vicky T. from South Florida – We were nominated and elected to the board of trustees at the St. Louis convention in August of 2007. When we came into the RCA fellowship in April of 2005 as a couple headed for divorce or separation, we knew as our individual fellowship has taught us that we needed to make a commitment to give this program a chance and to get involved in doing service and working the steps. We were conscious and willing of the 12 step recovery slogan; it works if you work it! We have been privileged to sponsor many couples nationwide and facilitate couples in finding temporary sponsor couples. Being of service to the organization and fellowship has brought many gifts and rewarding experiences to our coupleship and both of our recoveries. We are grateful for involvement opportunities like being chairs to the Florida convention, outreach, structure, and Spanish literature. We will be rotating out of serving on the board and fulfilling our three years term commitment in 7/2010 to allow other RCA couples the experience. One of our service support tools that we have found to be very valuable to us is having a service sponsor couple. We look forward to continuing our service journey and ESH that bonds us!

(continued on next page)



2009-2010 Board Bios- continued

Julaine M and **Steve M** have been in RCA for almost 4 years. We started "Stepping Together", London, Ontario's first RCA group in January of 2006 at the urging of a visiting counselor who felt that an RCA group would benefit London couples in recovery. We attended our first RCA world conference in San Francisco and were elected as Alternates. Later that year, Stepping together offered to host the World Conference 2010 in Niagara Falls, Canada, with Julaine and Steve as the conference chairs. We became full Board Members just before the Fort Lauderdale conference. We are looking forward to bringing the wisdom and experience of RCA members to Niagara Falls next summer, hoping that the International Conference will be a major outreach to both Canadian and American couples.

Elena J. and **Allen J.** from St Petersburg Florida. We joined the First Florida Group of RCA in November of 1997. We were married shortly before that time and found RCA a blessing that has given us the tools to have a healthy and happy relationship. It had been 7 years since we had attended a convention, and the theme of service this year inspired us to join the board. We look forward to serving RCA in any capacity we can and sharing our experience, strength, and hope.

Richard & Barbara have been in RCA recovery together for the past 6 years. We currently live in Salem, OR. We joined RCA shortly after we met and several RCA members attended our wedding about 10 months later. We believe strongly that RCA is a spiritual program and hope through our service on the board to live out the principle of Tradition 2, "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority, a loving God as known in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."

Ruth B in a loving and committed relationship of recovery with **Debbie V** from Albany, NY. We are thrilled and honored to serve on the RCA Board of Trustees as trusted servants. We are gratefully passionate about our coupleship work and look forward to our new dimension of service. RCA recovery has breathed a new spirit into our coupleship. As we walk through life together we have the opportunity to share with so many others the experience, strength and hope of our programs. We strive to be loving links to RCA, especially for those couples still out there alone. We so look forward to growing in service and in our own 12-step work as we forge friendships and new connections in the Fellowship of RCA.

My name is **Jerry**, and my name is **Stephanie**, and we are a Recovering Couple. (*a Southern California style introduction*). We met in 1986, and got married in 1989. We found RCA in April of 1999 through the outreach efforts of an RCA member who followed the 5th tradition by carrying the RCA message to couples who still suffer. We are eternally grateful they did; because we feel we were able to celebrate our 20th Wedding Anniversary this last summer thanks to the 12 Step Fellowship of Recovering Couples Anonymous.

During the last 10 ½ years we have worked the steps, used the tools, and honored the traditions of RCA. We believe that by taking these actions, and through the Grace of our Higher Power, our coupleship has been transformed from a "fear based relationship" to a "love based relationship" of partners who are "allies and on the same team".

We are honored to have been asked to serve on the RCA Board of Trustees during the last RCA Convention. We both place very high value in the Spiritual Principles upon which RCA is founded. We believe our coupleship has "had a Spiritual Awakening as a result of these steps" and that service to others, and to this Fellowship, is a big part of our spiritual path together as a couple.



Recovering Couples Anonymous World Service Organization Board of Trustee Positions are filled each year at the annual Meeting. These meetings are held during the weekend of the Annual Convention. These meetings are open to all RCA members. Our Bylaws state that a couple is qualified for Board Service if they meet this criteria: "Any couple which is a member of a Member Group and which professes that they have been actively working the twelve steps of R.C.A. for 12 months shall be qualified to be nominated for the Board of Trustees." Experienced Board Members would suggest that couples interested in Board Service have had some experience in working on a WSO committee. Nominations are taken at the Annual meeting, with voting occurring immediately before the closing ceremony. The first meeting of the "new" Board occurs that same day. Contact the WSO Chair for more information.

Please remember to use your **group number**, which can be found on the website, when you place orders for literature.

This same number will help us keep track of 7th tradition contributions.

**Seventh Tradition Contributions
RCA Groups and Individuals
July, August and September**

Individual Total (7 contributions)	\$180.00
Bend, Oregon	\$60.00
Capital District, NY	\$60.00
El Segundo Saturday	\$424.00
Fort Worth, TX	\$150.00
Ithaca, NY	\$50.00
Jamestown / Sonora Joint Venture	\$104.00
K.I.S.S./Venice, FL	\$100.00
Los Altos, CA	\$400.00
Los Angeles S.H.A.R.E.	\$71.54
Los Angeles S.H.A.R.E.	\$30.00
Mid Valley, OR	\$75.00
Naples / Bonita Springs, FL	\$35.00
Norwell, MA	\$100.00
Petaluma, CA	\$50.00
Richmond, VA	\$75.00
Santa Cruz, CA	\$100.00
St. Peters, MO Monday Night	\$50.00
Sherman Oaks	\$245.00
Walnut Creek, CA	\$500.00
TOTAL	\$2,859.54

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

The 2010 RCAC will be at Niagara Falls, Canada

We are now entertaining bids for 2011.

Maybe your RCA group wants to bid on 2012 or 2013!

Upcoming events:

Four & Five, Staying Alive

East Coast Retreat

March 19, 20, 21 2010

Valatie, NY 12184

\$350 per couple includes 2 nights and 6 meals

Register and reserve your room for \$40

Contact Mark W at 845-853-6753

Or email Mark at markw1950@verizon.net

Asilomar Retreat

March 19, 20, 21 2010

Pacific Grove, Monterey Peninsula, California

\$500 per couple includes 2 nights and 6 meals

Contact Fran & Robert @ 650-856-3726

Or Shelly & Gordon @ 650-856-1607

Or Judy & Joe @ 650-856-0181

**For the most up to date information,
visit our website often.**

**Send us your feedback on this
newsletter to articles@recovering-couples.org.**



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