

# Hand in Hand

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A Publication of Recovering Couples Anonymous World Service Organization

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To Contact The RCA World Service Office

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By E-Mail [RCAWSO@iname.com](mailto:RCAWSO@iname.com) For inquiries about RCA [RCAWSO@iname.com](mailto:RCAWSO@iname.com) To check on or place a literature order or update meeting information

Web Site <http://www.recovering-couples.org>

## What's Happening At W.S.O.

### WSO Board of Trustees

SYNOPSIS OF THE WSO BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF RECOVERING COUPLES ANONYMOUS MEETING IN ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA ON OCTOBER 8 and 10, 1999.

## BOARD POSITIONS

The Board welcomed new couples K.C. and Richard from West Virginia, Dave and Jean from Los Angeles, Lenel and Suzanne from Richmond, California, and Carl and JoAnn from New Orleans. Kim and Marcial were reelected as Chair and Treasurer respectively. Nancy Lee resigned as Secretary. Ron will continue as web guru after he leaves the Board. The next Board meeting will be January 15 - 16 in St. Louis.

## REGIONAL LIAISON COUPLES

We have three new Regional Liaison Couples: Phil and Cindy, Tim and Liz and Stella and Paul.

## TREASURY

The WSO Office Manager and Board Treasurer will interview tax consultants to audit RCA's financial records and provide guidance with special filings necessary for our tax exempt status.

## **LITERATURE**

The sample Fair Fighting Contracts are available through the World Service Office and will be sent out with Starter Packets. The Board is beginning work on a pamphlet for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people. Part of its purpose is to encourage and guide groups on how to reach out to the gay, lesbian, and bisexual communities. The Swedish groups have translated two RCA pamphlets, which the Swedish Service Office will publish. Members of the RCA Fellowship are encouraged to give the Board feedback on all RCA literature.

## **FUND RAISING**

Scott and Lenel will coordinate a Holiday Appeal in early November (to be mailed out in late November or early December).

## **VISION 2000**

The Board agreed to focus on the needs of the RCA Fellowship expressed in the Vision 2000 Survey. This year, Public Relations, Service, and Support of local RCA Groups will be the top three priorities. Ideas for projects within each of these priorities included the following: Public Relations: Send literature to divorce lawyers, mediators, and court systems; network with other recovery groups; and outreach to ministers and churches, rabbis and temples and other organized religious groups. Service: List service opportunities in every Hand in Hand; hold working service sessions at conventions; and delegate projects to local meetings. Local Group Support: Collect information from successful groups to determine why they're successful and publicize results; contact Group Contact Couples periodically; and put meeting list on the web site.

Happy Holidays!

## **In My Opinion**

**Kim K., chairperson WSO Board of Trustees**

I've just returned from this year's RCA International Convention in St. Petersburg, Florida. What a wonderful job the Convention Committee did organizing a great experience for those of us who were fortunate enough to attend. I could really identify with the members of the Convention Committee when they spoke of their initial reservations about taking on such a major project, but in the end realizing how valuable an experience it was for their coupleships as well as for their group. That's what service is all about -- giving is receiving. At the convention, seven couples took a similar leap of faith by taking on important service positions in RCA. Four couples joined our Board of Trustees; Dave and Jean, Lenel and Suzanne, K.C. and Richard and Carl and JoAnn. Additionally, three couples have become Regional Liaison Couples; Phil and Cindy, Tim and Liz and Stella and Paul. At this time, they are probably still wondering if this was the right thing for them to do. All of us who have preceded them know those feelings as well as the growth that occurs when we respond to a calling. The Fellowship is grateful to all of you who

serve. I feel it is unfortunate that beyond the group level there are very few opportunities for service in RCA. The Board of Trustees, Regional Liaison Couples and Convention Committees are about it and these positions require a commitment of time and money beyond what many couples are able to afford. However, I feel there are many among our Fellowship who can not take on these positions but are more than willing to contribute something of themselves to RCA. We are a young, growing Fellowship and there is more to be done than we are currently able to do. Two years ago the Vision 2000 survey was conducted to determine the needs of the Fellowship. The results came as no real surprise. We need to produce more RCA literature, better support local groups, increase our efforts in getting the RCA word out to those who still suffer, etc. We have a lot of great ideas and some progress is being made, but it is happening slowly. I feel that getting more of you involved will enable us to work together to better support the Fellowship, get the RCA message out and provide opportunities for service. Copies of a questionnaire, "In Search of Service," will be sent to each Group Contact Couple. We are truly in search of service and this questionnaire is a means to gather information from those who are interested in contributing to RCA's efforts. If you are willing to write a reflection, review/edit literature, answer a few telephone calls, join a committee, create artwork for RCA literature, etc., we would appreciate it if you would complete this questionnaire and either return it to your Group Contact Couple or mail it back to: World Service Organization Recovering Couples Anonymous P.O. Box 11872 St. Louis, Missouri 63105 We will put the data from these questionnaires into a confidential data base at the WSO office. Individuals, couples and groups will be contacted as needs are identified that match their interests, skills and/or experiences. We are in this together and I feel the more of us who get actively involved, the healthier this Fellowship will become and the more successful we will be in carrying the RCA word to others.

## **In Gratitude And Remembrance**

It is with great sadness that we share with you that Judy W., the former office manager of the World Service Office of RCA, lost her battle with cancer and died on October 24, 1999. Judy became the WSO office manager in 1993. She literally built the working world of RCA. For many of you, Judy's voice was the first you heard when you reached out for help as a couple. For five years, she sat day and night inputting 7th Tradition donations, filling orders, and talking to folks, giving them information and listening to couples pour out their deepest secrets. When she was first asked to develop an office to carry the RCA message, she said, "I'll do it" without hesitation. She had a vision for RCA to help couples throughout the world. Every new meeting was a celebration of her vision coming true. She devoted all of her time and energy to RCA. Her home was RCA from one end to the other. She knew more about most of us than our own families. Despite this, she accepted us as we were, applauding our growth as we journeyed along. Judy and Jim have been a recovering couple since the beginning of RCA. As we sit here, we remember the many Sunday nights we attended the RCA meetings and Jim and Judy's smiling faces were the first thing we would see. They were like cheerleaders urging us on no matter what issues they were working through themselves. Judy will be sorely missed by all of us who knew her.

## **New Board Member Works On Holiday Appeal Greetings!**

I am Lenel d'E, a grateful member of RCA. I am in a committed recovering relationship with my partner of 7+ years, Suzanne C. Our home meeting is the Saturday 11 AM Meeting in Oakland, California and we share a strong connection with the Sunday Night RCA Meeting in Oakland. Only through the RCA program have we truly received the support and encouragement to learn and grow within the commitment of our relationship. In the beauty and nurturing, with which we felt blessed during the conference in St. Petersburg, Florida (thanks to all of you who worked so hard to create this GREAT conference!), we were strongly encouraged, and agreed, to serve on the WSO Board. At our first Board meeting, Sunday afternoon, I was pleased with the idea of having teams to address major WSO projects. I look forward to the January Board meeting in St. Louis when the Board can take a more thorough look at projects for the upcoming year and commit to working teams. My first committed project is the preparation of this year's Holiday Appeal with Scott S. of Los Angeles. Please look for it in your mailbox or at your RCA meeting. The contributions you send to RCA are greatly appreciated and essential in providing information to couples around the world who are seeking help through this miraculous program of RCA. If you don't receive a Holiday Appeal, please contact Mary Monica at the WSO in St. Louis: (636) 397-0867 or RCAWSO@iname.com.

## **The Votes Are In On CoupleWorld**

The Evaluation Forms were tallied and an average of 91% of respondents gave the 1999 convention above average or excellent ratings in all categories. The Keynote Address got a 97% above average or excellent rating. So far, the 1999 Convention Committee has contributed \$1,500 to the WSO, but that is just the beginning. Once all of the bills have been paid and the checking account reconciled, a larger contribution will be made.

## **Your Group's Contact Couple: Trusted Servants Essential to the Unity of Our Fellowship**

The RCA Fellowship receives a variety of requests and questions from couples outside RCA -- some wanting to join and participate. Within RCA, new groups struggling with growing pains request support, shared experience and other RCAers to talk with. Current RCA couples contact the World Service Office (WSO) for other RCA couples to help deal with specific relationship recovery issues. A potent means of sharing how RCA works is the direct connection with other recovering couples and other RCA groups -- occasionally face to face, but more often in our dispersed Fellowship, phone to phone or e-mail to e-mail. Communication within our Fellowship is strengthened when every group has a voice -- through Fellowship-wide surveys like the recent Vision 2000 or the current In Search of Service; through group conscience votes on proposed bylaw changes, outside speakers or suggested reading lists; through self-support campaigns like the upcoming Holiday Appeal; through basic communications among us, like group newsletter subscriptions and group sharing of this newsletter; and through RCA conventions and retreats. You and your group play an essential part in offering support to recovering couples (and groups!) who still suffer. Group Contact Couples (GCCs) and Alternate GCCs are the key to these connections. We rely on accurate, current, confidential, complete information at RCA's World Service Office. Currently, for about a third of the groups in our Fellowship, the contact information available through WSO is either incomplete or totally lacking. Each of us can help

by seeing that the WSO is updated promptly on changes in meeting locations, times, GCCs or alternate GCCs, phone numbers or area codes, postal mailing and e-mail addresses and by sharing your group's experience when you're contacted for help and support. From outside our Fellowship, many couples checking out RCA want to attend a local RCA meeting and simply need current contact information. Other couples may ask whether RCA is for married couples only, or just for couples already actively working individual recovery programs, or whether just one partner of the coupleship is allowed to attend a particular meeting. Other non-RCA recovering couples are part of their own couples in recovery group; they've just run across RCA on the Internet and want to explore affiliation with our Fellowship. Sometimes another couple will say, for instance, that they're in SA and S-Anon, and they wonder whether RCA is the right place for us. RCA also gets pleas for help from partners in a current relationship who are struggling with issues like sexual anorexia or relapse or blended families, or perhaps are seeking an inpatient treatment center for sexual addiction. One non-RCA couple wrote that they were using the RCA big book and wanted to have the words to the Unity Prayer. When information about your GCC is current and complete, the WSO can refer those couples looking for a local RCA meeting. With a specific coupleship issue, the office can contact your group through your GCC or Alternate GCC and explore whether your group can offer phone or e-mail support to these suffering couples. In the past year, RCA groups have provided such support to couples in Australia, Scotland, and New Zealand, as well as Alabama, New Hampshire, and Montana -- all places where there is no current RCA meeting. By making GCC information available, your group becomes active in RCA's primary purpose of carrying the RCA message. Outreach helps your group attract newcomer couples and build your meeting's attendance too. Sometimes a current RCA member couple moves to another state, and want to attend a local meeting or start a new RCA group. Other member couples want to refer friends and family members to some RCA group across the country. Still other current RCA couples are planning an extensive vacation and hope to get to local meetings in a number of different states. RCA's unity is maintained and enhanced when these couples can connect with other RCAers through your help. New RCA groups write, e-mail or call the RCA WSO about long-distance sponsorship, about how other meetings' treasuries operate, about cosponsorship, or just how you work the Steps as a couple. Many new groups want to know what works for successful RCA groups, plus the specifics of how you got it to work in carrying the RCA message, attracting newcomer couples and building meeting attendance. Questions are asked about how other groups handle cross-talk, how they use the suggested meeting Safety Guidelines or what their experience is with seemingly high turnover among couples new to the group. All these needs, inquiries, and appeals for help are well met by linking the inquiring couples and groups with current RCA members or meetings who can share their own practical knowledge experience and hope. In our relatively young, geographically dispersed Fellowship, we all depend on GCC information maintained in the WSO to be accurate, complete and up-to-date. If your group does not have a GCC, have a group conscience to decide on a GCC. The GCC must be willing to give full names and addresses to WSO. The GCC receives the group Hand in Hand and brings it to meetings.

## **Pros And Cons Of Outside Reading List**

### **The Pros:**

Recently, the RCA Board of Trustees voted to cease publishing what had come to be known as the outside reading list a list of materials, though not RCA approved, that various couples individually found useful in their couple recovery. It was designed to supplement the scanty approved RCA materials. Several former RCA Board of Trustee members disagree with this decision to discontinue the list, and respectfully urge the Board to reconsider for the following reasons: We believe the list to be helpful in the complex area of couple recovery, especially with so few materials published by RCA directly, and we fail to see any actual (as opposed to theoretical) damage this list has done. We routinely encourage couples to seek supplemental professional help (counseling, therapy and medical help). How is this list different? The founding of RCA, itself, was unorthodox, and did not fit easily within the format of the then existing 12 Step programs. In Minnesota the vision of a family sex therapist and a 12 Step approach merged to form the embryonic RCA movement. In California, a similar merger occurred between alcoholics and their families at the Kaiser Alcohol and Drug Dependency Program. Later, both streams merged to form RCA. It is our opinion that RCA would have never gotten off the ground if the ultra-orthodox zeal of the current Board had held sway at its founding. We are a recovery program not a cult! To the extent that we cut off outside influences, we become more and more cult-like. As individuals and as couples, we are able to decide for ourselves what works and what doesn't. We are just asking for suggestions and support not control. We, in RCA, are widely separated. Many of us do not have the luxury of having a strong set of meetings and other RCA couples immediately at hand. But the outside materials are typically readily available in our local libraries or bookstores. We need all the help we can get. For many of us, this has to be a more or less do-it-ourselves program. Do not cut us off from knowledge of supplemental materials. The compiling and editing of the outside reading materials represents hard work by many RCA members who believe their efforts are helping other couples. To just discard our work without a thorough group conscience of all the members and member meetings constitutes a slap in the face of all of us who worked so hard to compile those materials. If these materials are now out of date, there are volunteers ready and willing to do the work needed to update them. Call on us! If you wish, we can report through the chair of the Literature Committee. Please tap the resources available. Do not discard us and our work.

Sincerely, Some Former RCA Board of Trustees members

### **The Cons:**

RCA has for some time provided a list of suggested outside literature recommended by members of the RCA Fellowship. At our July meeting, the Board of Trustees began to question whether that list was appropriate in a 12 Step program such as ours. More specifically we came to the conclusion it was in violation of our sixth tradition: 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. There are several reasons for our drawing this conclusion and ultimately deciding to discontinue the use of this list. The list as a tool leads couples to purchase literature from which authors, publishers and bookstores financially benefit. The list is prepared, copied, updated and distributed by RCA's WSO Office Manager who is paid by RCA. The copying and distribution of this list is also paid for out of RCA funds. Moreover, the RCA Board spends time discussing this list that could be used on other resources to support

the Fellowship. In other words, RCA time and money is used to encourage the purchase of materials from which selected others gain financially. Another reason we concluded that the list is an endorsement is that it is selective. We are choosing what goes on the list and what does not. Do materials that are useful to some couples but are also produced by and promote a particular religion get included? What if a couple found some value in a book many people would find distasteful, offensive and perhaps even harmful? Does it get included because someone recommended it? This puts RCA in the awkward position of being selective which we believe will have a negative impact on the Fellowship. RCA is a 12 Step recovery Fellowship based on the principles, steps and traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. In researching other 12 Step programs the Board found no precedent for a suggested outside literature list and their service manuals and literature explicitly prohibit such a list even though outside literature is currently available that could be valuable for members of their Fellowships. This interpretation of the sixth tradition has contributed to their success and longevity. While we recognize the intent of the suggested outside literature list is to provide resources for couples, the Board feels that the long term health of the Fellowship is our primary objective and that the attention and energy of RCA resources should be clearly focused on the development of new RCA literature.

Sincerely, Some Current RCA Board of Trustees members

Please send your comments about these Pro & Con articles to: World Service Organization  
Recovering Couples Anonymous P.O. Box 11872 St. Louis, Missouri 63105 or e-mail  
RCAWSO@iname.com

## **A Hearty Welcome To New RCA Meetings**

Norrkoping, Sweden Glasgow, Scotland San Rafael, CA Tarzana, CA Blacksburg, VA Virginia Beach, VA New Hope Group in Dumas, TX Piedmont RCA in Burlington, NC Ft Lauderdale RCA, FL

## **SEVENTH TRADITION DONATIONS**

From 9/10/1999 to 11/03/1999

Caring Couples of Des Moines, IA.....	139.70
Celebrating Partnership.....	81.00
Crossroads Phoenix Thurs. RCA.....	30.00
Deland, FL- RCA.....	25.00
Eagan, Minnesota Friday Night RCA.....	50.00
First Florida Group of RCA.....	22.00

Just Us Step Group.....	20.00
LA Area Monthly Step Meeting.....	25.00
Lakeshore RCA Saturday Night Group.....	50.00
LaMorinda Sunday Night Step Meeting.....	200.00
Los Angeles, California 6 PM Share Meeting.....	74.47
Madison, Wisconsin RCA.....	15.50
Miracle Mountain RCA Of Wernersville, PA.....	20.00
New Orleans RCA.....	60.00
Oakland CA Sunday Night Meeting.....	340.00
Piedmont NC RCA.....	34.00
Riverhead, New York Wed. Night RCA.....	80.00
Sacramento, California RCA .....	100.00
Seattle, Washington Sunday 5 pm RCA Meet.....	100.00
St. Louis MO, Sunday Evening RCA.....	250.00
Stepping Together RCA of Gaithersburg .....	142.00
Tri-County Michigan RCA.....	10.00
Tuesday Night Ravenna, Ohio RCA.....	78.00
Virginia Beach, Thursday RCA Meeting.....	12.00
TOTAL.....	\$1958.67

In addition to the group donations: Two individuals made donations totaling \$510.15. One couple made a donation of \$78.00 to help offset the anticipated costs of the future expanded "Reflections for Couples" booklet. The Green Gulch Farm Retreat made a special event donation of \$176.00. By far the largest donation for this period was from the 1999 CoupleWorld Convention Committee in the amount of \$1500.00. When all CoupleWorld accounts are reconciled, another final donation will be made.

## **Call for Future Convention Locations**

At the next Board of Trustees meeting in January, we will be making decisions on future sites for RCA's annual conventions. If your group would be interested in sponsoring a convention or at least getting information about sponsoring a convention, please e-mail the RCA Board of Trustees at: [RCAWSO@iname.com](mailto:RCAWSO@iname.com)

## **2000 RCA Convention To Be Held In Hollywood!**

!Lights, Camera, Into Action!! A Casting Call for a Healthy Coupleship in the New Millennium August 4, 5, & 6, 2000 at the Radisson Hotel Los Angeles Westside 6161 Centinela Avenue Culver City, CA

For a brochure, write to: RCA Into Action 2000 c/o Keith & Matthew 8828 Pershing Drive #312 Playa del Rey, CA 90293

## **Rediscovering Each Other: Finding New Joys Together**

Saturday, December 11, 1999 \$12.50 per person (Lunch Included)

Sponsored by the Morgantown, WV !Mountaineer! RCA Group

10:30 AM- 11:00 AM Tea & Coffee 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM Program

For information, contact: K.C. and/or Richard H. at (304) 598-0329, or [BLYHADA@aol.com](mailto:BLYHADA@aol.com) or Box 4167, Morgantown, WV 26504

The purpose of this retreat is to allow couples to focus on their relationship in a peaceful, safe environment, away from the usual distractions which interfere with relationship nurturing. In addition to the usual 12 Step work, special !care-of-the soul! exercises will be offered. These include meditation and relaxation techniques, gratitude-attitude affirmations of self and partner, and guided imagery for removing impediments to the healing of the both individuals and the coupleship.

## **Ninth Annual Green Gulch Retreat**

September 29, 30 & October 1, 2000

Sponsored by the Oakland California Sunday Evening Candlelight Meeting

\$325 per couple. Space is limited.

For information, contact: Linda & Leigh at [Linde1980@aol.com](mailto:Linde1980@aol.com)

## **Monthly Themes**

In the Vision 2000 survey, the Fellowship expressed a desire to receive information that would make meetings more interesting and inspiring as well as help in developing a perceived connection between local groups around the world. Out of these desires grew the idea for monthly themes. Local groups may decide to use these themes for meeting topics, meeting development aids and for fund raising. By doing so, they will become one of many groups worldwide focusing thought and energy on a single topic of value for recovering couples.

January - Money February - Conflict March - Higher Power April - Yours, Mine & Ours May - Having Fun Together June - Celebrating Differences July - Special Occasions August - Boundaries September - Working the 12th Step

**Money** Many people misquote the old saying, "Love of money is the root of all evil." There is no evil in money ó it is the importance that we attach to money that causes problems. Money can be used to threaten, control, and destroy or to benefit, bring freedom to and build up the important people, places and things in our lives. Money is one of the "Deadly Issues" identified in the RCA big book. Working the 12 Steps of RCA help us understand we are worthy of having money. The Steps help us become better workers, so money flows more easily into our lives. We begin to understand God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves and as we release our emotional attachment to money, fear of economic insecurity begins to leave us. It is not important how we decide to handle the coupleship's money, but that we do decide and have a well thought out plan. Some coupleships have separate personal money accounts and a joint account for paying bills. Others keep their money together and pay everything out of one account. Some couples have two accounts and each pays predetermined bills. In coupleships where both work for a paycheck, the arrangement is probably very different from coupleships in which only one partner does so. But it is important to understand that whatever the arrangement, both individuals are members of partnership and both have input into how money will be handled in the coupleship. When money problems surface, it is not uncommon for couples to seek outside help. Many of us do not have the knowledge or the tools to be money experts. Praying together for knowledge of God's Will for us is also a helpful way to begin any coupleship meeting in which money will be discussed.

**Conflict** My partner brings up in me those things that need emotional healing. When we come together, we each bring with us ineffective belief systems formed in our families of origin and during contacts made and events experienced in our youth. The ineffective belief systems I bring to the coupleship and those of my partner will never be entirely compatible because my wounds are different than my partner's wounds. Some members of the psychological professions think that we actually attract people who will clash with our belief systems that need to be altered. What is certain is that experiencing conflict in coupleship is inevitable. I can look at conflict with my partner as a negative thing or I can see it as an opportunity to change myself and the relationship for the better. Discovering why I am feeling angry or upset with my partner often leads me to places in my past where I have unresolved issues. By learning to work through these conflicts with my partner in a mature way, using the tools of RCA, such as the Rules of Fair Fighting and a Fair Fighting Contract, I begin healing old wounds as well as my coupleship.

**Higher Power** It doesn't matter what I call my Higher Power ó God, Christ, Allah, Truth, Creator, Great Mystery, Supreme Being, Buddha, The Group, Odin, Gumby or any other of a

myriad of names people have used over the millennia. It is not even necessary that I and my partner have the same concept of a Higher Power. What is important is that we come to believe, that as individuals, we are not able to control the outcome of our relationship together and that a higher "energy" will be able to help us. Our spiritual self is at the core of our being. One of the most intimate and rewarding aspects of the Second and Third Steps is truthfully sharing, with our partner, our concept of our Higher Power without the fear that we will be told we are "wrong" or "sinful" or "foolish." It is a time of true vulnerability because we are often sharing from a place where we have been treated in a less than nurturing way in our past. Having a concept of a Higher Power offers us and our coupleship peace. It takes the pressure off of either partner to "make" the partnership work. Both partners begin to understand that the third entity - the Higher Power - will guide the coupleship to a place where the best and highest good will be experienced ... not just in the coupleship but for each of the individuals who share it. By the time the coupleship has worked through the Eleventh Step, we know, without a doubt, that whenever the coupleship is troubled, a Higher Power can and will help. As we pray and meditate together, our lives begin to feel more manageable, less out of control. And we come to understand that it is through giving up our control and allowing a Higher Power into our lives that we are able to experience the joyful, balanced, harmonious coupleship that we deserve and are meant to have.

Share Your Experience, Strength & Hope

Send your thoughts about coupleship issues, in 300 words or less, to be published in the Hand in Hand. Authors for Yours, Mine & Ours, Having Fun Together and Celebrating Differences are needed. The Hand in Hand copy deadline for these topics is February 7, 2000. E-mailed copy is preferred.

Send to WSO or E-Mail to: [WlfSng914@aol.com](mailto:WlfSng914@aol.com)

The End!

Send to WSO or E-Mail to: [wlfsg914@aol.com](mailto:wlfsg914@aol.com)