



Hand in Hand

Spring Edition, May 2008

Recovering Couples Anonymous <http://www.recovering-couples.org> <mailto:wso-rca@recovering-couples.org>

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Letter From the Chair

Hi RCAers,

If we are to function better in our coupleship, we learn in RCA that Changes need to be made and that there is work involved. Some changes were needed in the WSO.

Over the last few months the Board has worked long and hard to implement some changes. We have been mindful as a board *to do what is good for RCA*. This Board knows that its role is to expedite the WSO operations, keep the office open and the lights on so that the RCA message can be carried worldwide to those couples still suffering. We need the WSO to sell the RCA literature, connect with RCA groups, maintain our website, answer the phone calls and emails.

Did you know that there are approximately 130 RCA groups? Please go to the RCA website and discover that there are new RCA meetings in India, Germany, Hungary, South Africa, England, West Indies, Calgary, Nebraska, Las Vegas, New York, Virginia, etc. In your travels this summer, plan to attend an RCA meeting. You can find the contact info for all groups on the RCA website.

Josie Hurt ended her contract in March. Thanks Josie for all that you've given as webmaster for RCA. Shannon Nichols is the new webmaster. Welcome! Shannon reports to Dan, the chair of the website committee. Much effort has been made by Dan, Shannon, Bob F., Kate and Outreach to make sure all the RCA group information is current and up-to-date on the RCA website! Please go to the RCA website and check to see if your group information is current and includes both a phone number and an email address so that you may be contacted. If your information needs to be updated you can either use the form on the website or just send the information in an email to meetings@recovering-couples.org. **With the changes underway, please use the following email address if you need to contact the Central Office: wso-rca@recovering-couples.org.** Please use this instead of the wso-rca@pacbell.net address.

Letter From the Chair continued

Steve A. our trusted Office Manager since 2000 has decided to make changes in his career and is moving on. All the best Steve! We really appreciate all that Steve A. has done for RCA as well as his many efforts to make this transition smooth.

Doug Condie has been contracted to handle the WSO finances. Welcome aboard! Doug reports to Steve S. the treasurer, as well as to the chair and the OOC.

Elise, our very dependable and helpful volunteer in the Oakland area is handling all RCA merchandise orders during this transition and while Steve A. is on vacation during the month of May. Elise and Doug have worked out a good system and your literature orders will be filled promptly. Thanks Elise!

The (OOC) Office Overview Committee is made up of Steve S. (Treasurer), Andrea (co-treasurer), Bob F, Elise, Jo-Ann and Allan. This committee has been working together for nearly two years. They have a firm handle on the WSO expenses and income as well as WSO operations. An OOC subcommittee will be interviewing RCA candidates for Steve A.'s replacement. This subcommittee will confer with the OOC and the Board before a final decision will be made.

Consider serving on a World Service Office committee. We need you! Contact wso-rca@recovering-couples.org to do some service work. Long distance sponsor couples are needed.

The deadline for the by-mail vote on the two bylaw amendments is May 23. If your group has not voted yet, please get your ballot in. The ballot and information on the amendments are on the RCA website www.recovering-couples.org.

Randy and I are looking forward to attending the San Francisco RCA convention on August 1st to 3rd. We've gone to the conventions for the last four years. We have met many grateful RCAers. We have gained friendships beyond our wildest dreams! We've met couples to co-sponsor. We learned to take responsibility for the things that trigger us and not blame others. And so much more! Hope you are attending the **RCA Convention in San Francisco August 1 to 3, 2008!**

Grateful members of RCA,

Gerrie in recovery with Randy
Chair, RCA WSO Board 2007-2008

Board Service Opportunity

There are now openings for couples to serve on the Board. Please consider this opportunity for a service commitment, and let your names stand for nomination when elections take place in San Francisco this August.

“San Francisco, Open Your Golden Gate...

**We'll let no stranger wait
Outside our doors..." ***

So whether you are brand new to RCA or long time fellows, sign up today for the 2008 International RCA Convention, August 1, 2, and 3 at the Doubletree Hotel San Francisco Airport.

Our theme for this exciting event is *The Renewal Festival*, and we will cover the experience, strength, and hope of fellowship and processes spanning 20 years of RCA convention and couple work. Each RCA convention builds on previous ones, bringing the recovery of so many couples together, including couples from around the world to gather and renew their couple vows.

Recovery this powerful, in the embrace of our Golden Gate, cannot be missed! The Early Bird fee is available until May 1st, so make sure to get your registration in early! You will find flyers and registration forms on our website www.recovering-couples.org.

Remember, the form has to be mailed, it is not done electronically as of yet.

We hope to see you all there!

Yours in Service,
The San Francisco Convention Committee

** Title song from the 1936 movie, San Francisco, starring Clark Gable and Jeanette MacDonald*

Enjoying Life Today!

Recovery is not easy. Recovery as an individual takes a great deal of willingness and commitment. To be in a relationship where two individuals are working separate, healthy programs for a healthy life is wonderful. To be in that rare relationship where both individuals are also willing to work and commit themselves to the recovery of a third entity is amazing!

And so began our couple recovery just two short years ago. When Mark and I began RCA in June of 2006, we were both new to the world of recovery of any kind. Mark had just started his individual program in March. I attended a few meetings with another 12 step group, but felt I needed a meeting more specific to my needs, so I started one in my area. That took a few months of personal growth to accomplish.

RCA recovery has occasionally taken a back seat to personal issues with our individual programs. But our growth has continued. Weekly RCA meetings and literature have kept us going. Some days I don't feel like we are where I want to be, and then I remind myself, "Progress and not Perfection!" Oh yeah! I remember affirmation 69 from the pamphlet, Affirmations For Couples: "We relax and enjoy our life right now."

Right now! I do not have to wait. Right now I can enjoy the benefits of our new program of recovery. We haven't finished the steps? That does not stop us from enjoying the process of the step we are on (however long we are on it!). We have great intentions of joining the phone meetings, but we just can't seem to fit that in, too? Okay, but we know it is there for us whenever we are ready. No one will admonish us for only occasionally phoning in. They will welcome us like old friends. Each time! We can read the material when we can. We can reach out to our new friends at local meetings, and to those far away friends that we have met through conventions and WSO meetings.

Enjoying Life Today! continued

Instead of focusing on how I want to work the program in the future, I can focus on how my life is today, this moment, thanks to what we have done so far! I can enjoy a coupleship that, while not perfect, is definitely a wonderful work in progress! I can appreciate that both Mark and I are working our individual programs each day. I can understand that life goes on, day by day, and it is so much better if we enjoy it one day at a time. My old habits of wanting perfection do not fit in with my new life. Waiting for the perfect moment before I relax and enjoy anything, will keep me waiting until the end of time for what is right in front of my nose, right now!

Today is good! I can enjoy it and that does not take away anything from future enjoyment. Life can be lived, felt, breathed, and loved each and every moment, over and over. It doesn't have to be the one-time, future reward I used to work for!

Vicki in loving recovery with Mark

We Believe

A birth certificate shows that we were born; a death certificate shows that we died; and pictures show that we existed! Here are some thoughts about living. We believe:

- Just because we argue, it doesn't mean we don't love each other; and just because we don't argue, it doesn't mean we do.
- True friendship grows, even over long distances; the same goes for true love.
- We can do something in an instant that will give us heartache for life.
- It takes a long time to become the couple we want to be.
- Leave loved ones with loving words. It may be the last time we see them.
- We can keep going long after we think we can't.
- We are responsible for what we do (no matter how we feel).

- We control our attitude or it controls us.
- Money is a lousy way of keeping score.
- Sometimes the people we expect to kick us when we're down will be the ones to help us get back up.
- Sometimes when I'm angry I have the right to be angry, but that doesn't give me the right to be cruel.
- Maturity has more to do with the experiences we've had and what we've learned from them, and less to do with how many birthdays we've celebrated.
- It isn't always enough to be forgiven by others. Sometimes we need to learn to forgive ourselves.
- Our background and circumstances may have influenced who we are, but we are responsible for who we become.
- Two people can look at the same thing and see something totally different.
- Our lives can be changed in a matter of hours by people we don't even know
- When we think we have no more to give, and a friend cries out to us, we will find the strength to help.
- The happiest people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the best of everything they have.
- HP will never direct us where we are not protected.

Submitted by Bob P., author unknown

Board Service Opportunity

There are now openings for couples to serve on the Board. Please consider this opportunity for a service commitment, and let your names stand for nomination when elections take place in San Francisco this August.

RCA Sponsorship - Who Needs It?

Sponsorship in RCA was not thought about twice when we decided to order the RCA Starter Kit 2 years ago. We had been well trained in our other 12 Step programs that sponsorship was not only necessary to work the steps but also part of service. So, as soon as we received the starter kit we read the information and decided to practice being a group in our own home before starting the group officially.

We knew we would need help and emailed the Oakland office requesting a long distance sponsoring couple. The office manager sent us two long distance sponsor couples' email addresses and we were off and running. With the sponsor couple we started working the steps after the first call. We were guided in how to do this together as well as counseled about the issues that would arise and the emotions that would well up. It was hard those first 6 months as we worked the first 3 Steps. It was trusting in our couple's Higher Power and in another couple to listen to us and witness our process that we could begin to recover and stop the blaming/shaming.

We have sponsored a few couples and continue to be sponsored. Each couple is different yet we try to pass on what we have learned and how we work our RCA program. We are still fledglings at all of this but so grateful for the opportunity to stay in our coupleship.

After going to the last two ABMs and Conventions in Boston and St Louis as the delegate couple for RCA Montreal we are rotating service positions this year. However, when we saw the request to serve on the Board Sponsorship Committee we discussed it and decided yes that was another way for us to give back to the fellowship at large. So far we have attended only one conference call on March 9th. We felt so supported by what we heard that we are willing to participate in the next call on Sunday April 27th.

It seems there are many new RCA groups getting started calling in for assistance and how to work the RCA program. In addition, there are groups

like ours with such a small membership and without the time in the program needing help to work the program. How we can do that requires members to brainstorm and discuss what works and has not worked and to be available. For that we are responsible.

Please consider joining the next Board Sponsorship Committee call Sunday 1-2pm EDT April 27th. If you want more information about the committee, please contact Kate irw Dan Kdmoran2@gmail.com

In the spirit of sponsorship,
Rita irw Beth

RCA Ask-It Basket

Question: With respect to the ongoing by-mail voting, one group contact couple wrote to ask: why were the groups having to read through the complex explanation of the bylaw amendments; and wasn't the WSO becoming too bureaucratic; and why wasn't it sufficient for those members attending the annual business meeting to vote on the amendments and not to have to bring it to each group?.

Answer: Between the San Diego convention in August 2005 and the Boston convention in August 2006, there was much discussion within the Fellowship and much WSO committee work done to change the voting process at the annual business meeting: from voting by just those members able to attend the business meeting to voting by each member group with one vote per group.

At the Boston business meeting this change was made with over 75 percent of the members voting in favor of the change to delegate-couple voting. Also with a greater than 75 percent majority, those same members voted to allow by-mail voting for those groups unable to attend the business meeting. The members voting at the Boston expressed a preference for by-mail voting whenever it was feasible.

There were two reasons for these changes in the voting process: the first being a question of fairness – giving all groups the opportunity to participate; and the second relating to the spiritual foundation of the Fellowship – the recognition that better decisions might be made if reliance were to be placed on the collective group conscience of all RCA groups rather than just on those members participating in the all-day business meeting.

Delegate voting and by-mail voting were implemented for the first time at the August 2007 business meeting in St. Louis. The delegate couples at that meeting voted to send out two proposals for by-mail voting, the two proposals currently before the fellowship. If efficiency were the sole consideration, it would have been easier for the delegate couples to have decided these issues then and there.

The Structure Committee understands that many member groups may not have the time to

participate in the by-mail voting: **individual and couple recovery must come first.** We also understand that many RCA members, if not most, have little interest in the detailed operations of a non-profit corporation such as the RCA WSO.

By-mail voting simply gives every member group the opportunity to participate. We realize that some groups will simply not have the time to deal with the matters presented for by-mail voting. Some groups may choose to examine some or all of the information that has been presented and decide to vote in favor of or against the proposed changes. The decision is for each group to make. If it is of any help to the groups in making their decisions, the Structure Committee recommends voting in favor of the two proposed amendments.

Dan O’C, acting chair,
RCA WSO Structure Committee

What is Sobriety in RCA and How Do We Know When We Slip?

In A.A. it is easy to determine if a person has had an individual slip. The individual’s sobriety is measurable, and one is either sober or one is not. But in RCA it is difficult to determine what a slip is or is not. Is it an individual slip or a couple slip?

Isolation	<----->	Sobriety	<----->	Enmeshed
Dysfunctional	Dysfunctional	Functional	Dysfunctional	Dysfunctional
Total individual isolation	Parent/child relationship	Interdependence	CO-D Fear of intimacy	Total Enmeshment
Not interacting within the coupleship.	More of a parent and child relationship, checking up on the other person, manipulating and controlling.	Couples can functional separately but they can also depend one on another for love, support and nurturance.	It is safer to socialize with other couples than to be alone and intimate.	Being one person instead of two people.
Secrets, lying	Sometimes you want to be comforted as the child and sometimes you want to be the parent and control everything.	Each person can have privacy and independence yet they have the safety and security to depend on one another when appropriate.	I am CO-D because I fear being alone, that I am unlovable.	No privacy or space for the individuals. Everything we do we do as a couple. We make decisions for one another and read each other’s minds. We confuse intensity with intimacy.
Everything is private and questions are an invasion of my privacy.			I fear rejection and failure so I focus on you so I don’t have to focus on myself.	
I blame and shame you for my misery and our couple misery.				

At any point in time, our couple relationship exists somewhere on the continuum between the two extremes above of total isolation and total enmeshment. We have found that as we move towards the center line behavior above we feel more sober as a couple; however, we must always remember that we strive for spiritual progress not spiritual perfection. We try to be aware and mindful of not drifting to either of the extremes of isolation or enmeshment. One partner may be experiencing enmeshment while the other partner is isolating.

As we trudge this path of spiritual destiny, we aim for spiritual progress not spiritual perfection. We find the RCA Promises come true. We find joy and happiness, increased intimacy and acceptance while expressing our feelings, which strengthens our relationship. We are learning to face our problems, accept our limitations and to be proud of ourselves as a couple. We love and honor one another and show our mutual respect and caring for one another while still respecting one another’s uniqueness and difference. We are learning to deal with conflict and fight fairly. We are recognizing and breaking the patterns of dysfunction from our families-of-origin. We are learning how to have fun and play together. We are practicing intimacy and love and honor one another despite our individual and couple shortcomings. This is our spiritual journey.

7th Tradition Donations**Ordinary Income/Expense Jan - Mar 08****Income****Donations****7th Tradition**

Des Moines, Iowa - 55005	126.00
Eugene, OR - 77005	60.00
Ft. Worth, Tx 83020	150.00
Grand Haven, MI - 62015	162.60
Jamestown, CA - 45015	144.41
LA-Sun CLARE- 45045	35.00
Leesport, PA 78030	75.00
Minneapolis, MN - 63015	75.00
Morgantown, WV - 88005	34.70
Norwell, MA - 61020	100.00
Phoenix, AZ - 43010	74.00
Riverhead/Manorville, NY-72010	100.00
Santa Cruz, Ca 45100	100.00
Sherman Oaks, CA - 45020	185.00
St. Charles, MO - 65005	50.00
Tucson, AZ - 43020	100.00
Walnut Creek, CA 45105	500.00
7th Tradition - Other	<u>601.25</u>
Total 7th Tradition	2,672.96

Individual	2,220.74
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Donations - Other	<u>2,693.90</u>
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Total Donations	7,587.60
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Merchandise	4,728.99
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Postage and Handling	<u>745.94</u>
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Total Income	13,062.53
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Expense**Consultant**

E-mail	587.50
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WSO	<u>2,025.00</u>
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Total Consultant	2,612.50
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Insurance	481.50
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Office Supplies	39.95
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PayPal Fees	95.45
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Postage	445.36
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Printing	
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Copy	161.68
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Total Printing	161.68
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Professional fees

Bookkeeping & Accounting	275.00
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Professional fees - Other	435.00
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Total Professional fees	710.00
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Rent	1,732.11
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Taxes & Licenses	315.00
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Telephone	<u>288.33</u>
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Total Expense	6,881.88
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Net Ordinary Income	6,180.65
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Net Income	6,180.65
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THE RENEWAL FESTIVAL
Embrace the Golden Gate, Embrace Recovery
August 1, 2, 3, 2008
DOUBLETREE HOTEL SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT

835 Airport Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94010-9949

Phone: 1-650-344-5500 Fax: 1-650-340-8851 On-line or phone reservations:

<https://secure.hilton.com/en/dt/res/index.jhtml>

CONVENTION REGISTRATION:

Registration for the conference and/or meals does **not** include hotel rooms. Please contact the hotel directly to reserve a room. **All registration information is strictly confidential.**

PLEASE PRINT:

Name: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Do you want you email(s) & phone(s) on attendee list? ____ Yes ____ No

CONVENTION REGISTRATION FEES:

Early Bird Discounted Registration: Only \$39.00 per person, available until May 1, 2008

	Before June 1	On or after June 1
Registration only:	_____ \$45	_____ \$60
Meal Package:	_____ \$100	_____ \$120
Sat. Banquet only:	_____ \$50	_____ \$65
Fri. WSO RCA Lunch	_____ \$18	_____ \$20

Banquet Meal: Beef ____ Chicken ____ Vegetarian ____

If you are only sending in your registration at this time, do you plan on purchasing the Meal Package or Banquet meal at a later time? __ Yes ____ No

SORRY NO REFUNDS!!

SERVICE:

I/We are interested in providing service _____

As a leader Couple Topic we are interested in a break out meeting titled _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS PORTION WITH YOUR CHECK OR MONEY ORDER

MAILING INFORMATION FOR REGISTRATION: Registration confirmation will be e-mailed.

Program packets will be available at the registration table at time of check in.

For additional information, contact Darcy at 650 966 1776 or email darcy@alteredcouture.com

Please mail your check or money order in US funds made payable to: **RCA 2008** c/o Darcy Fowkes, 52 Woods Lane, Los Altos, CA 94023

Hotel Reservation Info:

1. On-line or phone reservations <https://secure.hilton.com/en/dt/res/index.jhtml>
2. To receive the discounted rate when registering, you must mention **RCA 2008**. The San Francisco Doubletree is Smoke-Free.
3. The special convention rate is \$129.00 per night per room.
4. Special convention rate not guaranteed after July 18th, so please make reservations early.
5. Make any special needs room arrangements directly with the hotel.