



Hand in Hand

A Publication of Recovering Couples Anonymous
World Service Organization

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

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2004 RCA Convention and Conference

Winnipeg Canada 

October 22nd – 24th, 2004

Recovery in The Heart of North America

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The 10 BEST Reasons to Attend The 2004 R.C.A convention in Winnipeg.

1. SUCH A GOOD DEAL

Winnipeg is a city of class, culture and great hospitality. The registration for the RCA convention for the entire weekend is \$75 and includes 1 lunch, 1 breakfast, all speakers' and workshops, and a 12 step meeting (MARATHON STYLE) late Friday evening.

2. LOCATION

The hub of the conference is at the NORWOOD Hotel, in the characteristic FRENCH QUARTER of Winnipeg. It's a 15-minute walk to downtown Winnipeg. Great rooms for \$79!! Be one of the 125 couples we hope will be in Winnipeg, sharing their experience, strength and hope!

3. PATRICK C.

RCA co-founder Patrick C. speaks on *Healthy Sexuality* on Friday evening. RCA Winnipeg is pleased that Patrick C. will be the keynote speaker at the RCA convention on Friday from 7 to 9 pm.

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The Year In Review

Katherine S., RCA WSB Chair, *irw* John

As I reflect on the transformation within our World Service Organization this year, I feel honored at having been able to participate. Excitement is building as we come closer to the annual convention, when we will be sharing with you the progress we've made this year. A major goal of the Trustees this year has been to place a greater reliance on the Steps, Traditions, and Tools of RCA in our efforts to serve you, and to clarify how we are going to work together, much as we, as couples, do in our 7th Step. The more we, as a Board, have incorporated these RCA principles, the more productive we have become. We have adopted the Group Conscience Process as part of our Parliamentary Procedure, have committed to adherence to the Safety Guidelines in our meetings, use the Moratorium (30 seconds of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer to reestablish our focus when feelings run high), and when there is no consensus, letting go by remanding the issue to a task force or committee instead of trying to push on and on until we get to a solution. The difference these changes have made is remarkable.

The Board and Committees have relied on the input received in the Visions 2000 Survey as a guide to meeting the Fellowship's needs. In that survey you told us that meetings were the most important RCA tool for recovery, and that meeting growth and fellowship growth were important goals. You told us that 70% of you came to RCA at the invitation of a friend. At RCAC/C, we will be sharing their approaches for building an RCA Community from areas that have had strong meetings and strong growth; where emphasis on personal recovery makes each couple a magnet for new members, and activities are planned that will give members an opportunity to play and have fun together as well as to learn together.

You asked for the Hand in Hand to be distributed quarterly. You got it. And from Communication Chair Ed, you'll get a demo of our new interactive members website and our WSO service work site. You'll hear about our Service Committees – what they do for RCA and how you can contribute.

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

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

Names:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Convention Registration

x \$75.00 CDN per person =

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

Dinner and Dance Saturday

x \$40.00 CDN per person =

Total Enclosed

Make Cheque or Money Order payable
"RCA 2004"

Sorry no refunds

COMPLETE AND MAIL THIS FORM TO:

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

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

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

The Good, the Not So Good, and the Hopeful

A 7th Tradition Report from RCA Treasurer, Jim B.

I have a few unique and new concepts in our donation category, which may interest you and/or your groups. I believe that you received the P/L statement for July/Aug from Steve. Again we're down \$700. That's for 2 months. Most of our expenses are reasonably stable. Not the same each year, but not differing too much. These include consultant, insurance, rent, postage is down, telephone etc. I have a few ideas for our perusal and consideration:

1. Our 7th tradition this past year is up from \$13,000 to \$16,400. This is good. As I said earlier, a just satisfactory donation would be \$15 per month or \$180 per group per year. Based on 100 existing groups (which I don't know), this will yield \$18,000. This is good! Based on 120 existing groups, this will yield \$21,600. This is really good. Lets remember that our overall profit for all of last year was just \$400. Of course we hope that the larger groups can offer more.
2. Now, if a group sports just 3-4 active couples, which I believe does exist, then they could meet this goal by donating just \$1, that's ONE dollar per week to the WSO per couple. If it were a group of 5-6 active couples, then they would meet this by just 60 c per week per couple to the WSO. A group of 10 couples would need only 30 c per week each. (It could be \$1 for everyone)
3. As per our individual donations, our donations were down from \$3100 to \$2800 this past year. This is not so good. And I recall that early this year 2 couples, or 2 sources gave about \$1900 alone. And so, based again on 100 couples, if EACH and EVERY couple sent an individual donation of just \$10, TEN dollars just once for the year, we would nearly double our \$2800 donation of last year. I think this is significant concept.

And so, my dear recovering couple families, I think this is worth sharing with your groups. The result I can only "turn over". But I do keep plodding, and pleading, and praying. I took this on, and by God come high water or low tide, which sure, we have all seen and felt, I'm gonna continue.

Hope, I mean HOPE to see you all in "Winterpeg" (but winter never starts until December).

Disclaimer

Articles in the *Hand in Hand* are the Experience, Strength and Hope of the individuals and groups who submitted them. Please take what you like and leave the rest.

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You said that the Blue Book was the most valuable literature. One project of the Literature Committee is a special task force that has worked on revising the Meeting Guidelines. Each revision is tested in RCA groups in Minnesota, site of some of our oldest meetings, and feedback is incorporated into the next revision. The intention is that your 2005 Blue Book will be enriched by their work.

We are not ready to take on another census like the one in 2000, but we would like an updated input on the topics that either have been previously identified as important, or on which there does not seem to have been a consensus. There are some issues that have come up again and again without being resolved. We know from coupleship recovery that some issues are unresolvable, and we know that does not mean we "don't talk." We still need to be open about our feelings, our wishes, our frustrations, and if we do not have consensus, accept that - and make a formal decision to turn it over to our Higher Power. The Forum is the time we set aside for this.

On Friday, October 22, from 1:00 to 5:00 PM, we will all meet in an assembly so that the members have an opportunity to indicate to the Trustees and Service Committees their preferences for the future direction of our fellowship. This forum will focus on the input from members and RCA groups regarding the items listed on the Survey. The Forum is a time for expressing your ideas; there will be no voting. The Trustees and Service Committees will use the input from the Forum (and inputs from the members and RCA groups that have been sent in prior to the Conference) to establish goals and strategies for the next year.

It is not too late to respond to this brief survey of four questions. It will be sent out in our Fellowship letter, in the Fall Hand in Hand, and posted on our Fellowship interactive work site, <http://rcamembers.b4ai.com/>. Please take this survey to your group for their consideration. Your group members as individuals may give input, or you may send in a single form as a group submission.

We urge your group to send a couple to the October 22, 23, 24, 2004 RCAC/C in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada to represent your group's views. But if your group is unable to send representatives, it may submit its views on the four topics in writing (300 words limit) and this will be read at the beginning of each discussion.

This year of service has been a blessing for me. I have made new friends in all parts of the world through retreats and meetings I've attended. RCA has given John and me the opportunity to live an RCA dream. I am grateful that I have been able to give something back.

Please join me in this prayer for our Fellowship:

May we all find here the love, acceptance, and sense of belonging we seek. May we be shown new ways of living and loving, and be guided to clearly see how to share this way of life with couples who still suffer.

Committee Service

Would you really like to see some positive changes in this fellowship? We need your help to make RCA strong. Even if you can't make it to the Winnipeg 2004 convention you can sign up now to help RCA! You can make a big difference by becoming a member of one of the many Service committees of RCA. Meetings have been held via teleconference this past year, and projects have been collaborated on via the internet, so if you hate sitting in under fluorescent lights in dull meetings and would rather work from home, **THIS** is the **JOB** for **YOU!** You can help RCA in your jammies! We don't care if you haven't brushed your teeth yet! We want you! We want you to check out the work we've been doing and search your hearts to help us create a better stronger RCA. Active committees are looking for your ideas, enthusiasm and support. The brief summary below lists some, but not all of the things these committees currently do. But with your talents the possibilities are endless! Send your names and applications to any committee Chair through the e-mail links.

- **Communications Committee**
Communication-committee@recovering-couples.org presently works on developing safe and effective Internet communications for gathering and sending information to and from the fellowship and puts together the quarterly Hand in Hand
HinH@recovering-couples.org.
- **Outreach Committee**
Outreach@recovering-couples.org supports new meetings and helps to spread the RCA word to the world.
- **Intergroup Committee**
Intergroup@recovering-couples.org is helping to support the development of regional Intergroups in RCA.
- **Structure Committee**
Structure-committee@recovering-couples.org supports the WSB and the fellowship by helping to clarify the rules based upon the Traditions of RCA.
- **Literature committee**
Litcom@recovering-couples.org is generating new RCA literature and updating the old.
- **Convention Support Committee**
convention-support@recovering-couples.org is helping to support the Convention planners in Winnipeg right now and will help the next year's planners too,
- **7th Tradition (Fundraising) Committee**
Fundraising@recovering-couples.org is trying to inspire us to give give give!

Please tell us what you would like to do for RCA. If you're not sure which committees your talents are suited for e-mail me at vicechair@recovering-couples.org and I'll point you in the right direction.

Thank you for your willingness to help!
Yours in Service,

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4. DINING and DANCING

The RCA dance on Saturday night at "Inn at the Forks" (which opens July 2004.) This will be a typical Winnipeg social event with a LIVE Winnipeg band. Come and ROCK 'n ROLL!! The dinner and dance is \$40 per person.

5. THE FORKS

The Inn at the Forks is a sister hotel to the Norwood. It is a 3-minute cab ride or a 15-minute walk from the Norwood Hotel to the Forks. The FORKS is a National Historic Site of Canada where the Red River and the Assiniboine River meet. The Forks is a spectacular landmark spanning 6000 years of events. It is a beautiful site to walk and check out the history; to eat sushi or ribs. Try BINDY'S roti; have chai latte at the EXPRESSO JUNCTION; buy a Guatemalan sweater or Ojibway moccasins in the FORKS MARKET; eat a TALL PRAIRIE GRASS BAKERY cinnamon bun or people watch. Plan to take in some of these sights on Friday night. Come early and enjoy our multicultural city.

6. FUN

The Winnipeg RCA is a fun group of people. Find out. To meet other friendly Winnipeggers, stay at one of the Winnipeg's bed and breakfasts. Go to

<http://www.bedandbreakfast.mb.ca/>

Any one of the B&B mansions on Yale, Westgate or Grosvenor would be a romantic place to stay and honor communication, caring and commitment in your relationship.

7. CULTURE

Winnipeg is a very cultural city. We have the MANITOBA Theatre Centre, ROYAL Winnipeg Ballet, Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Manitoba Museum and Planetarium, The Manitoba Theatre for Young People, Prairie Theatre Exchange. When you are here in October, all these cultural venues will be in full swing.

8. LOW AIR FARES

Winnipeg is cheap to fly to and many flights are direct. The airfare from Chicago to Winnipeg is from \$250 US; Los Angeles, Houston or New York is from just \$350 US.

9. EXCITING ACTIVITIES

Assiniboine Park Zoo, Jazz clubs, Inuit and Aboriginal art, Ukrainian art, hiking in Bird's Hill Park, a tour of the Royal Winnipeg Mint, home of Winnie the Pooh, the Mural Capital of Canada, all might interest you. Go to

<http://www.destinationwinnipeg.ca/>

to discover more about this Great City!

10. FELLOWSHIP, EH!

Winnipeg has 600,000 people. Add 125 RCA couples from around the world.

And that will make it "ONE GREAT CITY,EH"!

RCA WORLD SERVICE COMMITTEE APPLICATION

WELCOME

The information below will help us maximize your committee experience. It is confidential as we are an anonymous organization.

COMMITTEE:

MISSION

- To humbly operate under the principles and guidelines of our fellowship
- To fulfill the mandates of the Board of Trustees and to implement the tasks Explained in the attached sheets
- To carry forward previously assigned tasks

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS *(These apply to all committees)*

- Be an RCA member for a minimum of one (1) year and continue to work the program steps, tools and traditions.
- Have access to e-mail
- Use the Group Conscience Process and the RCA Safety Guidelines
- Be respectful of the Traditions
- Meet the special committee requirements as outlined by the committee sheet

PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR BACKGROUND:

Do you have any professional, managerial, computer, and/or research skills that you'd like to share with us? Have you served on other 12 Step committees? Are there other skills that you have that may help our committees? How would you like to be of service to RCA?

PLEASE TELL US HOW TO CONTACT YOU:

Name

Address

Phone Home

Cell

Office

e-mail:

Traveling from the US to the Convention in Canada? The following websites may prove useful to you.

<http://www.gonorthwest.com/Visitor/planning/border/border.htm>

<http://gocanada.about.com/cs/financialservices//aa041002a.htm>

7th TRADITION DONATIONS

July, August, September 2004

We regret to inform the Membership that we are unable to produce the 7th Tradition report this issue.

There is a serious problem with the office computer however it is being repaired!

Our 2003-2004 Committees

Communication Committee

- *Ed, Lenel, KC*

Convention Support Committee

- *Doug, Doreen, Jean*

Copyright Committee

- *Ed, John, Diane*

Intergroup Support Committee

- *John, Jason, Steve*

Literature Committee

- *John, Christi, Jason, KC, Lenel*

Outreach Committee

- *Doug, Doreen*

Structure Committee

- *Diane, Suzanne, Marcial, Carl*

5 Year Plan Task Force

- *John, Jason, Doug, Steve*

Previously Active committees which we would like to have active again:

7th Tradition Committee

Sponsorship Committee

Convention Silent Auction

Please bring an item or a collection of items to the convention for donation to the silent auction. As in past years the proceeds of the auction will go to RCA Suggestions:

- Recovery Gifts
- Books
- Music
- Candles
- Message oils
- Gift Certificates

SUGGESTED MEETING TOPICS Issues For Recovering Couples

10. There will be little social support for the recovering relationship in our modern society. When a couple gets into recovery, the social system around them may not comprehend or appreciate the changes both partners have to make, nor support them in their efforts.

Certainly family members or old friends who are not in recovery will have an investment in maintaining the old ways of interaction. They might discourage any changes, which do not serve them well. For example, one couple changed their anniversary date after having recommitted their vows. Their parents and other family members could not grasp this need for this change and refused to recognize it. Many of us also receive passive-aggressive remarks and insensitive comments or questions about our recovery. This unhelpful dynamic may even include children, who may not embrace the new dance their parents must now adopt. If children have grown used to their relationship to us in dysfunction, then recovery changes, which bring a couple closer together, causing them to spend more time together, might be unsettling for them. Some couples, in our loneliness, might have spent more time with a child prior to recovery. The need for this might stop in recovery. Children can demonstrate behaviors that indicate their fear of abandonment when their parents get into recovery. Obviously, couples need to assure their children that they are still loved and give them special time and attention.

Old friendships, formed during old addictive days, also may not understand the reasons for the changes in recovering couples and individuals. Conversations with them become strained. They seem superficial. Furthermore, continuing to connect with them might be a "slippery place", for some of these old friendships might also lead toward old addictive patterns.

While no one may want to do away with old friends, s/he, however, needs to be careful. Eventually, both partners will find that new recovering friends will be the ones to whom they gravitate.

Social and economic conditions may not be conducive to couple recovery. For example, nowadays, both partners may need to work. Thus, time for the relationship may be at a premium. If a couple tries to share responsibilities around the home, care for the children or elderly parents, employers may not understand the need for creative scheduling. Additionally, a couple may feel threatened by old debts or economic concerns, perhaps raising old issues about the past. Some recovering couples may find that their savings may have been depleted by old, out-of-control addictions, but with creative budgeting, they find that they can manage to live well, within their means. Ultimately a recovering couple must be ready to go to any length to recover. This could mean a willingness to make any lifestyle changes needed in order to survive. Also,

they might need to grieve the loss of family support, friendships, and even of former jobs, houses, or communities. And it may become necessary for them to remove themselves from "slippery" people, places, and things that might jeopardize their recovery.

11. If a couple doesn't work on their relationship, the same issues will surface with different partners in their next relationships. This means that they must work on their couple recovery with their current partner.

Many RCA members may have had many years of individual recovery when they met their partner. Soon, they discover that their "new" couple issues are the same as the ones they had experienced in previous relationships.

Recovering couples learn that divorce or separation and individual recovery are not answers to dealing with couple problems. One may have worked on becoming the "healthiest" person possible, but his/her relationship issues will continue to be the same, until certain issues are faced in recovery, to help them gain the gift of healing with their partner in their new relationship. However, this does not mean that one should stay in a relationship at all costs. If one's partner cannot commit to participating sincerely in mutually respectful manner, and to working RCA's program of the 3-Legged Stool of Recovery, and if the relationship is destructive, it might be a matter of emotional and/or physical safety to get out of harm's way and to work on individual recovery alone.

12. Couples will experience shame, just as individuals do. This is called "Couple-Shame." Recovering couples must be aware that their individual shame gets doubled in relationship when they become convinced that they are a "terrible couple."

They may even feel they are "terrible" friends, parents, sexual partners, communicators, managers of money, etc. They can think that they are in the worst relationship imaginable. The only solution to them, thus, may seem to be to end the relationship.

The answer for couple-shame is the same as for individual shame. Couples must tell their story to other couples and learn that they are not alone in their problems. In this way, they also can experience affirmation for themselves as couples. Over time, their relationship will heal, and they will experience gifts of intimacy that few other couples know. In these ways, their couple-shame will heal. If they understand these principles of addictive couples, they also can reduce their shame. Since they come from dysfunctional families, is it any wonder that they have had imperfect relationships? Recovering couples need to learn to give themselves a break. They do the best that they can. Greater gifts of a loving, nurturing relationship are possible, but only as couples practice the 12 Steps and grow together in their recovery, one day at a time, do they receive this gift.