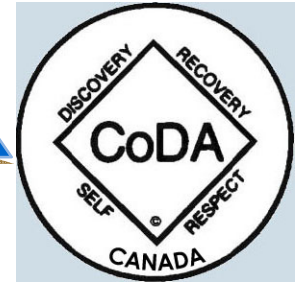


# CoDA CANADA NEWSLETTER



October 2011 • Volume 2 Issue 3

## CoDA Celebrates

# 25 Years

This year, 2011, is a milestone for the CoDA World Fellowship, celebrating its remarkable 25th year of existence. In October 22 of 1986, CoDA had its official beginning. In the early days, Ken and Mary R., cofounders of CoDA, along with other early pioneers began the first CoDA meeting in Phoenix, AZ. Other meetings followed, and CoDA began to grow.

This anniversary was announced at the Calgary Freedom CoDA Group Meeting. Immediately, a newcomer queried, "How are we celebrating it?" What a great question! Do CoDA Canadians want to celebrate a major milestone of an organization that has touched each one of us profoundly? How could a meeting celebrate this momentous occasion this year?

- Could a **special meeting specifically focused on celebrating the benefits of 25 years of experience, strength and hope** be organized? How about a cake to add to the festivities?
- Perhaps a group could plan a **special day where members plan workshops and/or meetings**. For that special day, that meeting might invite other local meetings to join in on the planning and/or participating in the festivities.
- Is it possible that groups within provincial boundaries or farther could band together and **celebrate for a day or weekend retreat**?
- For a moment let's imagine what it might be like to celebrate with **recovering codependents coming together across Canada to meet** for a weekend with workshops, speaker meetings, fellowship activities...the possibilities are endless.

### CoDA Canada

390 Homewood Avenue, Unit 2  
Sudbury, Ontario, P3E 1X1  
Skype: codacanada

October is only the beginning of CoDA's celebration of 25 years. The remainder of the year remains open for more possibilities to mark this memorable occasion. It only takes a few CoDA Canada members to get the ball rolling to start an event. Let us know if your group plans an event so that we can share your idea in the CoDA Canada Newsletter. How will your group plan to celebrate?

Another point of significant interest: **What is the history of CoDA Canada?** Where was the first CoDA meeting in Canada? How long has CoDA been in Canada? Where were the first meetings held in each province? How interesting it would be to gather more information about the history of CoDA from all the provinces! CoDA Canada history buffs and long-time members, please provide any information that you or someone you know might have about the history of your particular meeting or meetings in your area. If this topic interests you, please let us know. It would be helpful to have a representative from every province and territory to help organize this information. In the meantime, let's celebrate! Please submit any planning ideas or history pieces to: Deborah R. – [deborah.outreach@gmail.com](mailto:deborah.outreach@gmail.com)

### Inside This Issue

CoDA Celebrates .....	1
Canadian Delegates Share ....	2-3
CoDA International	
2011 CD's.....	3
Experience Saskatoon .....	4
Saskatoon Mtg Expands .....	4
CoDA Canada Emerges.....	5
Resignation.....	5
CoDA Board Member Bios..	6
Upcoming Events.....	6

## CoDA Canada Delegate Shares Experience, Strength and Hope

I had the privilege of attending the CoDA World Fellowship conference and convention in Denver, CO in July. Having just one year of CoDA recovery meant this was a big learning curve! Highlights for me:

- CoDA as a whole has a big challenge in balancing the legal implications of being a corporation and the spiritual responsibilities of staying true to the Traditions of our Fellowship. Right at the beginning of the business meeting the group was reminded that anyone present had the right to call out "THIRTY SECONDS" at any time they felt unsafe emotionally, spiritually or physically. The entire room was to stop what they were doing, be silent for thirty seconds, and then the chair would lead us in the Serenity Prayer before returning to business. Over the four days, thirty seconds was called a number of times and it was so beautiful to honour the personal power of each person, to ask for this time to recollect ourselves and ask for help in dealing with the many items on the agenda. How different it was for me for this kind of equality to be present in a business meeting! When business resumed after a "thirty seconds," it always came back "quieter" somehow.
- One of the old-timers there told me that she finds it such a spiritual experience just to watch a room of recovering codependents do business, everyone getting triggered and having to deal with all kinds of people and issues. She felt it was such evidence of a Higher Power's work in each person that the work could get done. We actually finished everything on the agenda which was truly amazing. Watching two people agree on a proposed motion on the last day, who had previously been at odds, and give each other a genuine hug was witness to the challenges and victories of recovery and service.
- Mexico, Germany, Italy, Australia, United Kingdom and Canada represented meetings outside the United States. Meeting the delegates from these countries was a great delight. Their passion and enthusiasm for CoDA and hearing snippets of the great personal help they received was very exciting! They face many challenges, literature translation and publication being a big one. Being at these meetings convinced me that CoDA literature is bread for starving inner children who are famished.
- An unexpected delight was encountering fellow Canucks who have been at work facilitating CoDA in Canada. I met the couple whose service helped me find my meeting on the CDRS website! A board member,

our newsletter designer, CoDA Canada's chair and an attendee from Ontario were further encouragements. May more Canadians who still suffer will find help this year.

- Reading a book of quotes at a bookstore, someone commented on understanding in part the greatness of God but not being able to understand the humility of God. As I thought deeply on CoDA, I was moved to realize God shows up anonymously at our meetings, just like everyone else, to help us.

I am so grateful for the help I have received.

-Verlynn A.

CoDA Canadian Delegate

## 2011 Denver Conference and Convention Synopsis

Denver was my first CoDA conference and convention. I went with a desire to learn more about what CoDA is and to find out more about how it operates. My background with service work from another 12 step program gave me some experience, but now I was able to witness tradition nine in action. Also, I wanted to see what service work at this level is like. Another added bonus was I got a chance to meet fellow Canadian CoDA members I had only spoken with on the phone. It was great to put a face to a voice. Unfortunately, there was a mix-up in my flight arrangements and I was unable to hear Deb R. share her story Sunday morning, but I am sure she did a splendid job and it is great to be able to order it on CD.

I was a bit surprised to see that there were not as many delegates as I thought there would be: only 39 people present with voting rights, so to get a quorum, 26 people had to be present. One of the highlights of the conference happened when the discussions became too much of a debate; the "30 second rule" was called; we were silent for 30 seconds, and then ended it with the Serenity Prayer. At this conference this happened several times every day. Some of the items discussed produced strong opposing viewpoints which made for some tension in the room. Once we had a 30 second time-out, it was much easier to carry on with business.

We had three motions (one which involved giving CDRS a vote and voice for the conference) before the first board report was given, followed by the QSR Report (Quarterly Service Report) which gave an overview of what happened during the previous three months. Next, the Treasurer's report, and the CoRe (CoDA Resource Publishing) report which bought one busy day to a close. The second day we heard reports from: the CoNNECTIONS, Hospitals and Institutions, the Finance Committee, and the Communication Committee. Several

motions were passed throughout the 4 days. On the third day, the Outreach Committee, the Literature Committee, the Web Coordinator Report, the Events Committee and a bit more from Finance were all presented. We also had several CoDA and CoRe Board Interviews for new positions that had to be filled. On the fourth and final day, we approved the budget, took care of some old business and elected the new officers for various positions. Overall, we covered a lot of business over the course of a very short period of time. Those who serve on board positions will meet several times throughout the year to carry on with business as it arises.

Overall, it was quite a great experience. It felt a bit like a family reunion. Some people you get along with better than others. It was very interesting to see people coming from distant places like Germany, Mexico, Hawaii, and Australia. In the evenings the committees got together to go over their motions and what business they would like to carry forward. I was very impressed by how professional everyone was and how friendly. It was clear that this would not have

been possible without many hours from countless individuals working to put a conference like this together, but it was well worth it. They did a great job. There was also a CoDA meeting held twice a day for people to go to. I did manage to get to it several times during my stay in Denver. We also celebrated a first year and a twenty year birthday during the evening. Overall, I felt it was time well spent. I did learn a lot more about what CoDA is about and how it functions. I would highly recommend going. I am looking forward to attending another one, hopefully next year.

In conclusion, we did cover a lot of work in a short time. The 30 second rule was called six times in total, and it added a degree of unity each time. We dealt with 125 actions/motions in total from start to finish.

Here is a link if you are interested in viewing all the details <http://www.coda.org/status/Motions/2011%20CSC%20Motions.htm>

Yours in service,  
Catherine K.  
CoDA Canadian Delegate

If you missed the **CoDA International 2011 Convention in Denver, CO** you can still get a piece of it, as CD's are available to purchase.

Friday Night Speaker – Masculine Concerns of Interest to Both Genders	Terry R. – MA
Saturday Night Speakers –CoDA in the Making	Mary & Ken R. – AZ (Cofounders of CoDA)
Sunday Morning Speaker-Grief & Other Work	Deborah R. – AB
Outer Space Inner Space – Friday Session	Kristen T.- NH
Family of Origin & Rescue Triangle – Friday Session	Kathy M. – NV
CoDA Board of Trustees Panel	Panel
Our Personal Movie: Projections of Our Mind	Mary R. – AZ
Changing Self Shaming Messages	Amy T. – CO
Joy Workshop	Katherine T. – CA
Feelings aren't Facts – They're Feelings	Michelle E. – NC
Healthy Relationships	Evie & Leo C. - CA
Using the Twelve Steps for Emotional and Spiritual Maturity	Karla K. – CA
Our Spiritual Dilemma	Ken R. – AZ
Equal Partners in Trust	Jim Y. – CA
Guided Meditation	Judi T.- MA
Recovery is a Journey not a Destination	David L – TX
Outer Space Inner Space – Saturday Session	Kristen T. – MA
Family of Origin & Rescue Triangle – Saturday Session	Kathy M. - NV

**Shipping & Handling**

1 item \$2 each

2 – 5 items \$4 each

6 – 10 items each

**CD's - \$8.00 each – Full Set - \$120**

\_\_\_ CD's – MP3's @ \$8 each \_\_\_

\_\_\_ Full Conference on 1 CD (mp3) \_\_\_

\_\_\_ Full CD Set @ \_\_\_

Download these other CoDA sessions @

**www.vwtapes.com**

VW Tapes

PO Box 1058

Manhattan Beach, CA 902670

(310) 648-7234

orders@vwtapes.com

## Experience, Strength & Hope Mini-Retreat

The Experience, Strength and Hope CoDA Group in Saskatoon, SK held a mini-retreat on April 15, 2011 at the home of one of the group's members. Steps were explored. Sponsors were found. A great time was had by all.

Fourteen members participated in a day of sessions on each of the 12 Steps. Individual members took responsibility for moderating roundtable, workshop-style discussions for 60-90 minutes each on a single step or group of steps. Moderators used the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions Workbook, the 12 Steps Handbook and other CoDA literature as starting points, as well as their own experience, strength and hope.

There was no fee involved and the Group was able to provide a pizza lunch for all participants from Group funds.

This one-day event generated a lot of enthusiasm within the group. There has been further discussion about having more events like this in the fall. Another possibility is a day devoted to exploring the Twelve Traditions as tools for healthy relationships.

ES&H meets Monday nights at 7:30 p.m. at Grace Westminster Church in Saskatoon.

## Saskatoon Meeting Expands and Studies Traditions

The Experience, Strength and Hope group in Saskatoon has expanded to two meetings each week. In addition to the regular discussion meeting on Mondays, ES&H now meets on Thursdays for a Step and Tradition group. Working primarily out of CoDA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions workbook, the Thursday meeting alternates between discussion of working the Steps and the application of the Twelve Traditions to personal relationships.

As a supplement to the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions workbook, the group is developing a series of study questions focused on exploring how we can work the Twelve Traditions in our relationships.

Presented here is the study sheet used at the group's inaugural Traditions session, on Tradition One:

### TRADITION ONE

***"Our common welfare should come first. Personal recovery depends on CoDA unity."***

One recovering couple interprets Tradition One, for use in relationships, as follows: "Our common welfare should come first. Personal growth within our relationship depends on Unity."

In Tradition One, the underlying spiritual principle is that of Unity. In pursuit of healthier relationships, we learn that it is sometimes necessary to set aside our personal desires in favour of what is good for the relationship as a whole. We try to learn to do this willingly and cheerfully - recognizing the importance of Unity to our own long-term welfare. If one partner's desires, opinions, or feelings come before the other's, it is not a relationship between equal partners (see the Promises). This inequity has often led us to feelings of resentment or inadequacy.

Sometimes, it can be easier to determine the meaning of the Traditions by stating what they DON'T mean. Tradition One doesn't mean that we set aside our needs. If our needs within a given relationship aren't met, that relationship is always bound to fail. Instead, we learn to differentiate between our needs and our desires. What the relationship needs is almost always more important than what we want, if we want the relationship to succeed.

Tradition One also doesn't mean that one partner can "trump" every situation by saying "I feel distanced when you..." or by saying "This drives a wedge between us." Instead, Tradition One asks us to find the middle ground - to make our decisions based on the good of the relationship.

The key question that we ask ourselves is, "Will this choice promote feelings of unity or disunity - on my partner's part or on my part?" Once we have answered this question, we are free to make an INFORMED choice.

Other questions that we can consider in working

Tradition One:

1. Why is our common welfare paramount in a relationship?
2. What kinds of actions do I take that promote Unity in my relationships?
3. What actions do I take that promote disunity in my relationships?
4. Can I tell the difference between my needs and my desires?
5. What is the connection between Tradition One and Step Three (Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God?)
6. Which of my codependent behaviours get in the way of Unity?
7. Why would I set my desires aside for the good of a relationship? When might this be necessary?
8. What actions do I feel guilty about? Is there a relationship between guilt and feelings of disunity on my part?

Ritchard I.  
Saskatoon, SK

# CoDA Canada Emerges

The CoDependents Recovery Society (CDRS) began as an organization to distribute CoDA literature at reduced prices to Canadians. Due to an increasing demand, CDRS went on to create a website to provide other services: meeting lists, a Canadian Forum, online meetings, and much additional information for recovering codependents.

Over the past 12 years, CDRS has always had one or two representatives at the CoDA World Fellowship International Conference. Recently, it was revealed that because Canada has two official languages, we could have two delegates for each language for a total of four delegates if an application was made. Given that information, Deborah R., CDRS Chairperson at that time, quickly emailed, mailed and telephoned a representative from every meeting across Canada to see if CoDA Canadians were interested in supporting the increase of delegates. Many people replied, supporting this increase and willing to participate in the application. Luc B. (Sudbury, ON), Pete N. (Kitchener, ON), and Ritchard I. (Saskatoon, SK), along with Deborah R. (Calgary, AB) volunteered to complete the application to increase the number of Canadian delegates at the CoDA International Conference. Everyone did their homework pieces, and we connected with the Dépendants Affectifs Anonymes (CoDA Quebec). The last piece of business was to submit a letter from "CoDA Canada," which did not officially exist at that time. Luc B. said, "Let's create CoDA Canada right now!" and our new group was formed. The wonderful volunteers who have committed to take on positions to create a CoDA Canada Board are as follows:

Deborah R., Chairperson

Luc B., Treasurer

Pete N., Secretary

Ritchard I., Membership Outreach

All the effort of making an application and creating a CoDA Canada is merely the beginning of much more! A more complete representation from all areas of Canada is still needed. Don I. from Victoria, Vancouver Island and Krysta H. from Halifax, NS have expressed interest in being the representatives from their areas. They are in the process of getting group conscience from each of their meetings to support their taking of this position.

The CoDA Canada Board stands firm on embracing the grass roots, inverted pyramid organizational model as used by Twelve Step Groups, including the CoDA World Fellowship. This model instructs Board Members to take their direction from the group conscience of its members. It is therefore important that there is a nominated General Service Representative (GSR) from each meeting to communicate group conscience from each meeting. This will help to connect meetings all across Canada so that ultimately, we will "...carry the message to codependents who still suffer."

## Deborah R. – Resigns as CDRS Chairperson

On September 15, 2011, Deborah R. chose to resign her position as Chairperson with Co-Dependents Recovery Society (CDRS). In CDRS, Deborah had been handling the numerous and various needs of meetings across Canada. In response to these needs, she was active in helping start CoDA Canada and in May 2011 she was asked to Chair this group as well. Both roles require significant time and effort, especially the start up of the new organization, CoDA Canada. It benefits individuals as well as organizations to have a variety of people on the Boards, bringing their diverse strengths and talents. In particular, with respect to Tradition Seven: "If one individual is doing too much, it takes away from the equal participation of others..." (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 101.) Hence, Deborah has made the decision to let go of her role as CDRS Chairperson at this time in order to better focus her efforts with CoDA Canada. She has gained much experience while participating with the CDRS Board of Directors and is most grateful for the opportunity. She looks forward to a continued working relationship with the CDRS Board Members as CoDA Canada evolves. This is an exciting time for all, as CoDA Canada grows to meet the needs of members and meetings across Canada.

*Thank you Deb for all you hard work you gave us.*

**WANTED Submissions** Do you have a story or a poem you would like to share about your recovery? We want to hear from you. Contributions should be no more than 250 - 500 words long and should reflect the Steps and Traditions as well as the principles of CoDA. Please submit contributions to [lists@cdrs.ca](mailto:lists@cdrs.ca). We reserve the right to make any changes deemed necessary for the length, editorial content and style of this newsletter.

## CoDA Canada Board Member Biographies

### Deborah R. (Calgary, AB) **Chairperson**

- Freedom CoDA Group, Calgary, AB
- CoDA Member since 1989
  - continues to be active in personal recovery with local meeting and involved in sponsor/sponsee relationships
  - initiated discussion for CoDA Canada start up and CoDA Canada Newsletter
  - past CDRS Chairperson
  - Canada Delegate at 4 World Conferences
  - CoRE Board Member (CoDA World Fellowship publishing and literature distribution arm)
  - CoDA World Fellowship outreach volunteer
  - workshop facilitator/speaker at AB: Edmonton, BC: Squamish, Loon Lake & Duncan (Island) Retreats
- CoDA US
  - various local meeting positions
  - General Service Representative (GSR),
  - county community representative,
  - county fellowship coordinator
  - speaker workshop facilitator at variety of CoDA events: CA Orange County CoDA Retreats and Fairs, Northern California Day Conferences, World Conventions: New Hampshire, Seattle CoDA World Conventions

### LUC B. (Sudbury, ON) **CoDA Canada Treasurer**

- CoDa member since 1992
- Active in Sudbury home group
- has a sponsor with whom he works steps and traditions every week.
- has sponsees in various cities, provinces and countries
- held various positions over the years: treasurer, outreach chair, telephone servant, group service representative, secretary, group chairperson, literature, communication

### Pete N. (Kitchener, ON) **Secretary**

- CoDA member since 2008
- 12 Step - Group Service Rep - 2 years (Past)
- has a sponsor and several sponsees

### Ritchard I. (Saskatoon, SK) **CoDA Canada Membership Outreach**

- Experience Strength and Hope Group - Saskatoon, SK
- CoDA member since 2003
- Served his home group as group service representative, literature coordinator, outreach contact, step study coordinator and key holder
- Workshop presenter (with his wife) on using the 12 Traditions for healthier relationships
- Passionate about 12<sup>th</sup> step work, sponsorship and the 5<sup>th</sup> Tradition

## Some Upcoming Events

We are part of a greater whole...

Please see website for more details  
<http://www.coda.org/events/calendar.htm>

**Nov 11, 12 & 13**

### **2011 NE CoDA Convention**

*Courage to Change* • Farmington, CT USA

**Nov 11, 12 & 13**

### **2011 Germany Convention**

• Überlingen, Bodensee, Germany

**Jan 13, 14 & 15**

### **2012 Georgia CoDA Retreat**

*Face Everything and Recover* • Hilton Head, SC USA

**Feb 3-10**

### **Women's Retreat**

• Hawaii, USA      Call Heather: (808)870-4050

**Feb 10, 11 & 12**

### **Intergroup Meeting**

• Hawaii, USA      Call Heather: (808)870-4050

**June 8, 9 & 10**

### **23rd Annual Philadelphia Area CoDA Retreat**

Reges Oceanfront Resort

9201 Atlantic Avenue, Wildwood Crest, NJ, USA 08260

**Please let us know what events are happening within Canada who knows who may show up if they see it in the newsletter.**

**Q.** What does a codependent have in common with God?

**A.** They both have a plan for your life.

**Q.** Why did the codependent cross the road?

**A.** To help the chicken make a decision