

## Ode to Mark Twain

Feb. 15, 2014

To quote Mark Twain, "It's easier to fool somebody than it is to convince them that they have been fooled." I'm sure this dilemma is intensified with members of the NA fellowship when it comes to the organization that has saved their life. I know this to be true because I suffered from this malady for years. I considered myself to be well informed, not because I read reports, articles and publications; but because I study them and consider the intention. This article is intended to help open your eyes about how the corporation known as NAWS is in the business of fooling the people that created it.

I think the best place to begin is where NAWS Inc. seems to flourish the most. They are running a multi-million dollar business with the status of a not for profit corporation. Their product is literature we wrote, or provided the money to have written by a professional. They are able to raise the price of our literature by a simple majority vote of the World Board members (WB's), and then they call that vote a consensus based decision. Just last month (Jan. 2014) the WB's enacted an across the board increase to the price of our literature by 10%, and our Basic Text price was increased by 5%.<sup>i</sup> Using the proposed budget from the fiscal year's 2015 & 2016 found in the Conference Approval Tract (CAT)<sup>ii</sup> that 10% equals \$1,081,102 and the 5% equals \$303,627 for a total price increase of \$1,384,729.

The vote by the 18 WB's did not stop there; they also imposed an increase in shipping rates within the United States & Canada. If you order something less than \$25 the price went up by \$1 (total shipping \$6), from \$25 to \$50 the price went up \$2 (total shipping \$9), from \$50 to \$150 increased by 2% (total shipping 17%) and orders over \$500 were increased by 2% (total shipping 8%) as well. This is the statement used to justify the shipping increase, "In the first eleven months of the 2012-2013 fiscal year, we had spent \$113,000 more for shipping than we had charged."<sup>iii</sup> Notice how this makes no reference about how this loss was incurred, - the shipment fees on purchases, shipment fees on sales or is NAWS Inc. providing free shipping to some – it's basically provided to claim that the price for shipping will need to be increased on North American shipments. If you examine the 2015 & 2016 proposed NAWS Inc. budget found in the CAT you will discover that they plan on losing \$110,097 on shipping charges. Why has the WB's, who are the voice for NAWS Inc., singled out the United States & Canada for this increase?

Delving further into the fiscal year's 2015 & 2016 proposed NAWS Inc. budget, we are able to learn about the WB's/NAWS Inc. philanthropy with our literature. They are offering \$2,771,869 in discounts and another \$417,867 in developmental subsidies & allowances. However, you can't follow the proposed budget numbers as presented in the WB's/NAWS Inc. report. They provide a subtotal amount of \$2,000,420 that makes no sense. Here is how the numbers must line up to balance out:

Recovery Literature Income	\$16,642,307
Other Inventory Income	\$4,677,273
Shipping	<u>\$1,189,316</u>
Subtotal	\$22,508,896
Discounts	-\$2,771,869
Developmental Subsidies & Allowances	<u>-\$417,867</u>
Total Gross Literature Income (less discounts)	\$19,319,160

Why is NAWS Inc. given carte blanche with \$3,189,736 in subsidies, and who are the recipients?

One very long standing question for me and The Clash has been, should we stay or should we go? The main location for NAWS Inc. is in Southern California which has some of the highest property values in the world. In 2010 *Forbes Magazine* said, "Los Angeles, is the city with the second highest rent in the country." That may be why the WB's/NAWS Inc. are planning on spending \$3,768,422 on what they call overhead. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines overhead in this way, "costs for rent, heat, electricity, etc., that a business must pay and that are not related to what the business sells". In one of our most recently approved pieces of literature IP No. 24 we learn, "Our resources are limited, so they must be used wisely."<sup>iv</sup> Is spending over \$1.8 million annually on "overhead" a wise use of our resources? The IP continues, "As members, it's our job to make sure the money we contribute [or spend on buying our literature] is used responsibly; prioritizing our needs, seeking cost-effective methods of service delivery, selecting capable and qualified trusted servants, insisting on accountability through clear financial reports..."<sup>v</sup> It appears to me that none of these things are being fulfilled by the WB's/NAWS Inc., especially when it comes to overhead at our primary service center. The Clash song warns us, "Should I stay or should I go now? If I go there will be trouble, An' if I stay it will be double, So come on and let me know". I think it's time for us to go, because I for one am sick of paying double.

Not only are we being asked to allow the WB's/NAWS Inc. to let \$3,768,422 slip through our fingers in overhead, their proposed budget includes spending \$119,501 on accounting, another \$617,352 on technology, and last but not least a whopping \$6,871,475 for personnel, bringing the grand total to \$11,376,750. In 2012 the NAWS Corporation reported that, "a total of 61 staff members were employed by NA World Services in four service centers around the world",<sup>vi</sup> the report listed five as departing staff. If the number of employees has remained at that level – reportedly more personnel have been cut - the average expense per special worker for the proposed budgeted will be \$112,677 each. This figure substantially drops when you remove the total annual salaries reported to the IRS (2011)<sup>vii</sup> of the Executive Director (ED), and the Assistant ED of \$393,457. The average annual expense per special worker then becomes \$56,339 for the remaining 54 special workers.

In the fiscal year's 2015 & 2016 proposed NAWS Inc. budget we see a few variable operational expenses that are further explained in the CAT. For instance service system \$70,000,<sup>viii</sup> book length piece – Traditions \$250,000,<sup>ix</sup> public relations roundtable \$38,000.<sup>x</sup> Additionally, the proposed budget for NAWS Inc. shows some items that the WB's are certainly aware of but we never seem to get any reports validating the expenditures. For instance under fixed operational expenses there are publications \$200,172, fellowship support \$569,034, public relations \$150,316, developmental literature \$764,682, World Service Conference (WSC) biennial meeting \$491,441, World Board (WB's) \$630,988, and the Human Resource Panel \$22,782. How much of these fixed operational expenses include a provision or expenditure for World Service staff? How are decisions made regarding travel for these fixed operational expenses? How can the WB's/NAWS Inc. propose two motions in the 2014 WSC Conference Agenda Report (CAR) to eliminate automatic funding for Region's to the WSC and seating of all alternate delegates,<sup>xi</sup> when the budget for the entire conference is \$139,547 less than the WB's budget? The WSC budget of \$491,441 includes, "expenses for the site and equipment needed for the event; hiring the parliamentarian; funding for staff, World Board, WSC Co-facilitators, and the Human Resource Panel;

and the travel expense for currently 115 delegates from around the world”,<sup>xii</sup> The WB’s budget is an allotment for eighteen members to have eight meetings, an orientation and training meeting, and the WSC itself,<sup>xiii</sup> which sounds like an item that has been double budgeted by the NAWS Corporation.

I can bring all these issues and questions to my Home Group and then to the Area Service Committee followed by Regional Service Committee (RSC) consideration. If they are approved and seen as valid concerns they can then be brought to the WSC and introduced in New Business. During this New Business portion of the WSC none of the other Regions will be prepared to vote their Regions Conscience because these considerations were never discussed at any other RSC. They will then be “straw polled” to determine a level of support, and since Regional Representatives are not prepared to speak for the rest of the Region they represent the issues and questions will not receive support. Thus it would seem futile to attempt to live up to my responsibility as a member, “to make sure the money we contribute [or spend on buying our literature] is used responsibly; prioritizing our needs, seeking cost-effective methods of service delivery, selecting capable and qualified trusted servants, insisting on accountability through clear financial reports...”<sup>xiv</sup>

I think Mark Twain was right, I should simply return to the belief that Narcotics Anonymous (A Spiritual Program) has not fooled me, it saved my life. However, the Corporation known as NAWS has managed to fool the entire fellowship into believing they run things through the Service Structure, and they have us believing that our ultimate authority is a loving God as expressed through our Group Conscience. We were a fellowship that had an office, now we seem to be an office that has a fellowship. God help us all.

---

<sup>i</sup> NAWS News, Aug. 2013 Page 4-5 [LINK](#)

<sup>ii</sup> NAWS 2014 CAT, Page 38-40 [LINK](#) (Password protected for some unknown reason, but provided)

<sup>iii</sup> NAWS News, Aug. 2013 Page 4 [LINK](#)

<sup>iv</sup> Money Matters Self-Support in NA, 2010, Page 9 [LINK](#)

<sup>v</sup> Ibid Page 10

<sup>vi</sup> 2011-2012 NAWS Annual Report, Page 1 [LINK](#)

<sup>vii</sup> NAWS IRS Form 990, 2011, Page 28 [LINK](#) or [LINK](#) and enter EIN: 953090596 at the bottom

<sup>viii</sup> NAWS 2014 CAT, Page 19-21 [LINK](#)

<sup>ix</sup> Ibid Page 22-23

<sup>x</sup> Ibid Page 24-25

<sup>xi</sup> NAWS 2014 CAR, Page 14-17 [LINK](#) (Password protected for some unknown reason, but provided)

<sup>xii</sup> NAWS 2014 CAT, Page 35 [LINK](#) (Password protected for some unknown reason, but provided)

<sup>xiii</sup> Ibid

<sup>xiv</sup> Money Matters Self-Support in NA, 2010, Page 10 [LINK](#)