April 15th, 1986

Dear WSA members:

I was glad to see Steve R.'s treasurer's report included with the most recent DB (#7). Steve takes issue with my claim that S.F. received no subsidy from the national organization for I&A until the $36 we were sent in January. He claims that New York sent us $150 during 1985. Checking my records, I see that we did indeed receive close to that amount from New York during 1985. However, since we were never told what the source of funds for those checks were, we assumed that these were from sales revenue. If, as Steve says, the $150 sent us in 1985 was all from dues, what happened to the sales revenue?

Even if we ignore that question, it is still worth noting that the $150 sent to I&A was less than 30% of the more than $500 revenue that Steve received in dues, according to his report. And only 21% of the total of dues and donations (over $700). This clearly does not conform with the spirit of the resolution passed at the Nov. 1984 conference which stipulated that I&A would be "the highest priority" for funding.

In the checks that we've received recently from New York, they've begun to indicate what the source of each check is (dues, sales, etc). Hopefully that will help to avoid some of the confusion about source of funds that we had last year.

At the Nov. 1984 conference Mort Goldberg's original resolution proposed that 75% of WSA revenue should go to I&A. This was amended, on Steve R.'s motion, to not state any exact percentage. In retrospect I believe this was a mistake. I think we have to specify an exact percentage or else it's harder to tell clearly whether the treasurer is fulfilling the mandate.

Another question that is raised by Steve's report is: When did the organization ever authorize New York to spend (approx.) 70% of the organization's revenue on "printing, mailing..." i.e. New York's own expenses? This was never approved at any conference.

To have a democratic organization, the membership must be able to formulate at least the broad outlines of the organization's budget, i.e. what is done with our own dues. Since it may be hard to accurately project exactly what the organization's revenue may be during the course of a given year, it may be that the only practical way to do this is to specify that certain percentages of available revenue are to go to certain specified functions. Thus, if (say) the membership are willing to allot 20% of revenue to pay for the DB, then the Treasurer has that mandate to give that much of the dues/donation revenue to the National Secretary to pay for the DB.

But if the membership have not approved at least the broad outlines of a budget, the national treasurer has no democratic mandate for spending any funds. This can be dealt with by requiring that a budget be formulated and approved at every annual conference. In addition, the treasurer ought to print a report in the DB quarterly so that the membership are kept aware of how much money is available and what their money is spent on.