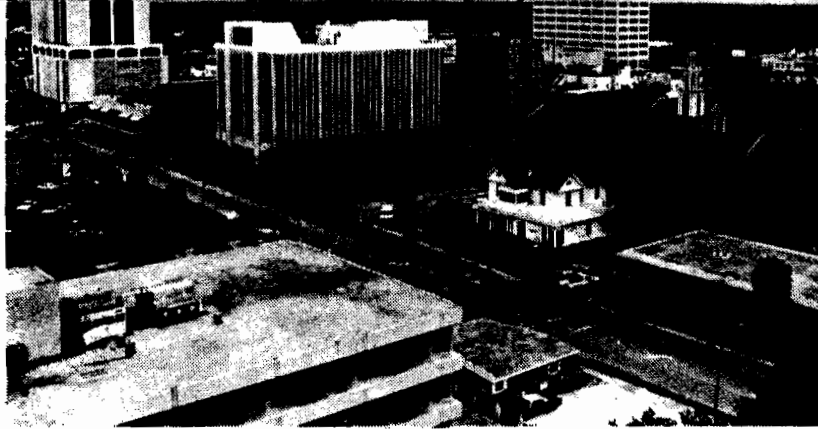


YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER  
**Clearwater Sun**

John E. Ricketts, Publisher



Downtown Clearwater in 1977

# Scientology smoke screen

FOR LOCAL Scientologists to propose renovating downtown Clearwater is like Harry Truman suggesting urban renewal for downtown Hiroshima.

In 1975 the cultists moved into our center city, and now they own sizeable chunks of it.

They lock and guard the doors of the buildings they own. From throughout the world they import young malcontents who are forbidden to meet alone or be questioned individually by the press or the public.

The Scientologists collect millions of dollars each year from their disciples, but pay not one cent in local property taxes.

The cult has used false identities, engaged in lawsuits, frightened local residents, and has made Clearwater famous as the home of one of the most suspect organizations known to man.

Board, is a smoke screen designed to cloud the vision of the local citizenry.

OVER AT city hall, Commissioner William Nunamaker criticized Commissioner Richard Tenney for going off the deep end in his remarks about the Scientologists.

Nunamaker fears that Tenney may get the city commission sued for some of his statements. The fear may be justified. But we would rather hear Tenney banging the drum against Scientology than listen to Nunamaker take the cautious approach.

Nunamaker says he is opposed to Scientology's presence in Clearwater, but that there's nothing the city commission can do as long as the Scientologists obey the letter of local laws.

That's a lot of bushwah.

Nothing is stopping the city

And now, in the face of all the above, the sect proposes to lead the way in rejuvenating downtown Clearwater.

WE SUGGEST that the best—and only—way Scientology can improve Clearwater is to move out.

Laura Wolfe, the cult member who is coordinating the alleged renewal effort, says she has the names of 30 business persons who have agreed to support the project.

She refuses to reveal the names of these persons. This reminds us of the early 1950s when Sen. Joe McCarthy waved a piece of paper and proclaimed that it contained the names of 161 or 34 (the number varied from day to day) Communists then on the staff of the U.S. State Department.

No one ever saw those names. We suspect this will also be the case with Ms. Wolfe's list.

We also believe that the renovation idea, unveiled Tuesday before the Clearwater Downtown Development

commission from passing a resolution announcing its opposition to Scientology's presence in this city.

No law prohibits a "sense of the house" statement that the commissioners regard the cult as a detriment to Clearwater's psychological and business climate.

WE ALSO hope the mayor has directed the city attorney to find out exactly what a commissioner can and cannot safely say about the Scientologists (or any other group a commissioner may find reprehensible).

It's regrettable that Tenney and Nunamaker differ on their approaches to Scientology, but it's healthy that spirited discussion has begun.

We need to hear more conversation by the commission, by the Downtown Development Board, by individual businessmen and women, by community leaders from all walks of life.

The Scientologists, like a case of cancer, must be faced. You cannot find a cure by ignoring the disease.

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