

CW Sun 12-14-79

Right from the horse's mouth

THE THOUSANDS of anti-cultists who are expected to attend the rally at 3 p.m. Saturday will have an opportunity to get cold, hard truth straight from the horse's mouth.

Addressing the rally at Jack Russell Stadium will be several persons who came to know Scientology both as members and as victims of the games that Scientologists play.

One speaker will be Paulette Cooper, author of a 1971 book that exposed Scientology for the cruel scam it is. Ms. Cooper has been sued 14 times by the cult.

Another speaker, Julie Titchbourne of Portland, Ore., joined the Scientologists and paid them \$5,000 for courses that the cult said would improve her creativity and help her with her college classwork.

When the promises fell flat, Ms. Titchbourne sued the cult for \$2 million. A few weeks ago the courts ruled in her favor. The case is now being appealed by the Scientologists, who traditionally try to spin out lawsuits just as far as possible, in the hope of bankrupting or otherwise discouraging their opponents.

Former Clearwater mayor Gabe Cazares also will tell about his harassment by the cult.

It will be a chance for Clearwater residents to hear first-hand from persons who have done battle with the Scientologists, and who therefore know them well.

We hope the rally will be well-attended and that the atmosphere will be calm. The value of the rally will be in the information that can be passed on from experts to local residents who are trying to learn and thus be better able to appreciate the seriousness of Scientology's presence in Clearwater.

GOOD NEWS came out of Boston this week in the form of a \$200 million lawsuit filed against the Scientologists.

The suit, entered in U.S. District Court, charges the cult with swindling its members and then channeling members' funds into illegal activities that violate a non-profit charter.

Boston attorney Michael Flynn says persons such as Gabe Cazares would be entitled to damage claims. The suit specifically mentions the Clearwater branch of Scientology, as well as the cult's guardian office and Sea Organization here.

It may be years before the Boston suit is settled, but its value today is that it will tie up some of the attention and funds of the Scientologists, and perhaps make them less aggressive.

The suit may also grab the attention of possible recruits to Scientology, and thus save at least a few from being bilked out of thousands of dollars.

AS MUCH as we applaud City Commissioner Richard Tenney for his anti-Scientology activity, we hope he'll take no further pot shots at other public figures who speak out about the cult.

Tenney this week criticized State Rep. Jim Smith, R-Largo, for calling for investigations into the Clearwater vs. Scientology situation by Florida's attorney general and by our local state attorney.

Smith's concerns may not be identical with Tenney's, but Smith's objective—to shed as much light as possible on the activities of Scientologists—is something all right-thinking citizens should welcome.

The last thing needed in the battle against the cult is for local leaders to begin squabbling among themselves.