

YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER
Clearwater Sun

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Small voices, steady roars

AS THE year winds down, the battle against the cult of Scientology warms up. Signs are strong that 1980 will bring many new developments.

A few days ago a group of Clearwater business leaders put their money where their mouths are and offered to buy back the old Fort Harrison Hotel from the local cult.

The offer was rejected, but perhaps the seven investors will come back with a higher bid as the weeks go by.

In approaching the Scientologists on a basis of hard cash, the businessmen show extremely good sense. Money is the name of the game the cult is in. It is what they like best. It is their most formidable weapon.

The businessmen deserve the praise and support of the Clearwater community for stepping forth and making a substantive offer to the cult.

A SECOND development of recent days is the issuance by L. Ron Hubbard, founder of Scientology, of an "Executive Directive" in which he terms 1980 as the year of expansion for the cult.

This group gives a focal point for all local citizens who wish to join in the campaign against the cult. A year ago no one was even talking about such an organization. All that was happening was further purchases by the cult of local motels and office buildings.

2. The seven businessmen who have banded together to extend cash on the barrelhead to the cult. As we pointed out above, in dealing with the Scientologists there is no substitute for money (which they adore), unless it's setting forth the truth (which they despise).

3. The people of Clearwater are no longer afraid. The two rallies held this month brought citizens out by the thousands. Men and women who previously may have trembled at the thought of showing their faces to the cult marched in full view of the Scientologists and their ever-present cameras.

4. The conviction and sentencing of nine Scientologists in a federal court in Washington, D.C. Leading the pack of Scientology members now destined for prison is Mary

The memo, which is being widely distributed to Scientologists, convinces us of a couple of things.

One, it dispels forever the myth that Hubbard is not active with the cult. Its leaders have said that the aging science-fiction writer takes no large part in Scientology activities. His directive, in contrast to that idea, sounds like the work of someone who knows where every nickel is kept.

Secondly, the memo is a kick in the head to anyone who might hope that Scientologists in Clearwater may relax their efforts.

Hubbard advises cult members everywhere to "flourish and prosper." So that takes care of that.

THIS WEEK the anti-Scientology organization, Save Sparkling Clearwater, will open up its own headquarters in an office building that used to be a Scientology book store.

SSC is raising money and recruiting volunteers to join a fulltime campaign to drive the sect out of this city.

December 1979 will probably go down as the month that the tide turned against Scientology in Clearwater.

Although a long fight may remain, at least five major things are different now than they were a year ago. All five of these happenings or trends should lend hope to anyone who looks forward to the day when the Scientologists depart.

1. Save Sparkling Clearwa-

Sue Hubbard, the wife of the founder. Just as revealing as the conviction of the nine was the virtual silence of the cult's administration with regard to the entire matter. The most the Scientologists have said is "We do not condone law-breaking." This is roughly equivalent to Richard Nixon saying, "I'm not a crook."

5. **The disappearance of grey areas in the portrait of Scientology.** Surprising as it may have seemed, not a few local residents continued—until a short time ago—to feel that despite their shoddy, deceptive tactics in 1975 when they came to Clearwater, the Scientologists may simply have been misunderstood.

Well, them days should be gone forever. As 1979 ends, no person with eyes and ears should be troubled with further reservations about how undesirable the Scientologists are for this city.

The fact of the matter is that, in dealing with the cult, no middle ground exists. In World War II a popular slogan said, "You can't do business with Hitler." The same thought applies to the cult of Scientology.

WHAT REMAINS now is for Clearwater to become even more steadfast and full of resolve than is the cult. We must hunker down for as long a haul as is needed.

A year ago there were a few small voices. Now it has swelled to a steady roar. The sound you hear is Clearwater acting like a city that believes in itself.