

YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

Clearwater Sun

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Notes on a banner day

THURSDAY WAS was a banner day for Clearwater and the American people.

Not by coincidence, it was a bad day for Scientologists.

Locally, the city commission finally got its governmental gears into action.

The commission voted to join the county in legal steps to collect taxes from the cult; to get in touch with other states to see if and how they charge religious groups for police and fire protection; to draft a bill limiting tax exemptions for religious groups; and to send city employees to Washington to bring back all available Scientology documents relating to Clearwater.

The commission also called for a congressional inquiry into the activities of Scientology.

The commission's belated gumption appeared only after thousands of residents showed up at last Saturday's anti-Scientology demonstration at City hall.

Except for Commissioner Richard Tenney, the other commissioners have pussy-footed or been silent about the Scientologists, until Thursday. Now the city fathers and mother are on the record as a group, and Clearwater's anti-

fective. But a day-to-day anti-Scientology structure must be built and maintained to serve as a focus for citizens' energies and enthusiasm.

IN WASHINGTON Thursday, a federal judge threw the book at Mary Sue Hubbard, wife of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard.

Mrs. Hubbard was sentenced to five years in prison and was fined \$10,000 for conspiring to obstruct justice.

Four other Scientologists were sentenced to four-year terms and were given \$10,000 fines.

Because of her alleged poor health, Mrs. Hubbard will remain free on bond until Dec. 17. The other defendants will be sent to jail immediately, even though all the defendants will appeal their cases.

Federal Judge Charles R. Richey paid little attention to words of contriteness that fell from the lips of the Scientologists.

The severity of the sentences and fines was an indicator of how seriously the court regarded the Scientologists' crimes of conspiring to steal government documents and then cover up the thefts.

cult firepower has been significantly increased.

WE HOPE that private citizens will follow up immediately by forming one or more bodies aimed at lawfully achieving the departure of Scientology from this city.

In the past, Clearwater citizens have shown they can organize and campaign. Specific incidents that come to mind are proposals for a mid-Pinellas parkway, a local campus of the University of South Florida and the construction of a downtown civic center.

Wisely or not, the people girded their loins and defeated all these ideas. But it took persistence and organization.

Rallies, parades, letters, telegrams—all of these are ef-

WE HOPE the court's actions will be a warning to Scientologists everywhere that their charges of governmental persecution are no excuse to break the law of the land.

We also hope that seeing high-ranking cultists marched off to prison will give heart to anyone who still fears the Scientologists, or who has any doubt in his mind about what the cult is capable of as it pursues its objectives.

The actions by the Washington court and by the Clearwater City Commission will not, by themselves, spell the end to the threat of Scientology. The cult is tough, rich and highly-motivated.

But Thursday's events were one more chink in the armor of Scientology. Now the battle goes on.