
YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

Clearwater Sun

John E. Ricketson, Publisher

James E. Zimmer, General Manager

Ron Stuart, Editor

Steve Riesenmy, Managing Editor

Robert Driver, Editorial Page Editor

W. Paul Harris, Business Manager

Robert Blackham, Advertising Director

Robert Buckler, Circulation Director

Of lawsuits and girdles

A GIRDLE is a device to keep an unfortunate situation from spreading.

A lawsuit can sometimes have the same effect.

Former Clearwater Mayor Gabe Cazares this week slapped the Scientologists with a \$1.5 million suit that, even if it takes Gabe years to collect, should have the effect of discouraging the Scientologists from the kind of bedevilment they worked against Cazares several years ago.

In his legal action, Cazares charges the cult with wrongfully suing him in 1976 to harass him and make it difficult for him to carry on his campaigns for Congress and the mayor's office.

The suit also says the Scientologists hired an attorney, Merrell Vannier, to act as a

If ridership warrants it, the cult said, the service will be continued past its April trial period.

In deciding whether or not to use the Scientology shuttle, local citizens should be reminded that their boarding the bus will help the cult worm its way deeper into the Clearwater community.

By riding the shuttle, a passenger says, "Scientology, we love you and need you and thank you for furnishing this bus."

We must presume that the bus will contain one or more Scientologists, ready to hand out cult literature and to strike up casual conversations about the weather and, of all things, how wonderful Scientology is.

Before you board, think it over.

spy against Cazares even while Vannier was representing Cazares' wife Maggie in her 1976 libel suit against the cult.

Cazares said the cult's 1976 actions constitute invasion of privacy and malicious litigation. He demands compensation for the grief the sect caused him.

Each time a victim of Scientology rises up and smites the cult with a lawsuit, another blow is struck for freedom against the tyranny and arrogance of all cults.

Each new suit forces the Scientologists to tie up more of their money in lawyers and court costs.

It encourages other victims to fight back, and it discourages the Scientologists from persecuting other persons the way they did Gabe and Maggie Cazares.

●●●

THERE'S NO such thing as a free lunch.

Or a free bus ride.

The Scientologists say they soon will be offering free bus service to Clearwater Beach on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

●●●

A FEDERAL grand jury in Tampa is again taking testimony about Scientology. That's good news.

Gabe Cazares testified before the grand jury Wednesday, and we will be hoping for word of other witnesses being called in coming days.

All of these news items—lawsuits by cult victims, the proposal to run a beach bus, and activities by a grand jury—signify the ongoing tug of war between Scientology and persons who value freedom of the human spirit.

It is a war that may keep on for years.

As the skirmishes continue, the cult, through its mouthpiece, Milt Wolfe, applies the blanket tag "political" to persons or groups that oppose Scientology, which would like people to believe it is a religion.

Perhaps he's right. Maybe the battle is essentially a political matter. Or moral. Or ethical.

One thing is certain: it's not religious.