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Man Given Refund By Scientologists

By STEPHEN ADVOKAT
Sun Staff Writer

LARGO—An 80-year-old Largo man who did not find the solution to his memory lapses in Scientology courses got his money back Tuesday.

Hours after the Clearwater Sun contacted the Church of Scientology of Florida in Miami to ask about Erich Abraham's refund, a Scientologist called the retired machinist from Milwaukee to say his money—\$3,691.73 for 60½ hours of training—would be refunded immediately. A Scientologist brought a check to his door Tuesday afternoon, Abraham said.

Abraham, a 17-year resident of Largo, had complained to Mayor Gabriel Cazares and to the Sun that the Scientology courses he took in Tampa earlier this year did not improve his memory, as he had been told they would, and that he was having difficulty getting his money back.

On May 11, the last time he asked for the money, he said, he was told after waiting for hours to speak to a Scientology official that he should go home and wait to be contacted.

When he heard nothing for nearly two weeks, he began to worry.

"I didn't want to create any trouble for anyone," Abraham said Tuesday. "I really didn't want any publicity, but I wanted my money back."

Lorraine Shape, president of the Church of

Scientology of Florida, said Monday Abraham would have to complete a special refund form. If he did so, she said, she would attend to his problem personally.

"If he follows that procedure, then the matter of a refund is a simple matter," Ms. Shape said.

But Abraham appears to have been given the royal refund treatment.

Ms. Shape called him at home shortly after she was contacted by the Sun. She asked why he had gone to the paper with his problem, and Abraham told her that he had also informed Cazares of his problem and that he and Cazares were going to bring the matter to the attention of the state attorney's office on Tuesday.

That was unnecessary, she told him. She said someone from the Tampa mission would deliver his refund immediately.

"She said it was all a misunderstanding," Abraham said. "Everybody has all these excuses. But now I am satisfied. If they had done this right away, nothing would have happened. I told her I didn't want the publicity."

"I'm sure I would have gotten my money back anyway, but I probably got it back a lot quicker because of the newspaper."

"Anyway, I don't want to talk about it anymore. I got my money back, I am completely satisfied and it's all over."

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