

# The Sun Chronicle

OL. 6 — NO. 1585

SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 1976

ATTLEBORO — NORTH ATTLEBORO, MASS.

20'

## What can you do to fight crime?

By ORESTE P. D'ARCONTE  
Sun Chronicle Local Editor

**THE ATTLEBOROS** — Several weeks ago a pair of canvassers stood in the area of the Attleboro Common and asked passersby what they thought they could do to help fight crime.

They got, says Gerard Velona, exactly the kind of response they expected: "I don't know."

Velona, a theology student from Brookline, heads a church of Scientology campaign designed to help reduce crime throughout the state. So far, Velona and his crew have visited about 40 communities. The results have been pretty much the same.

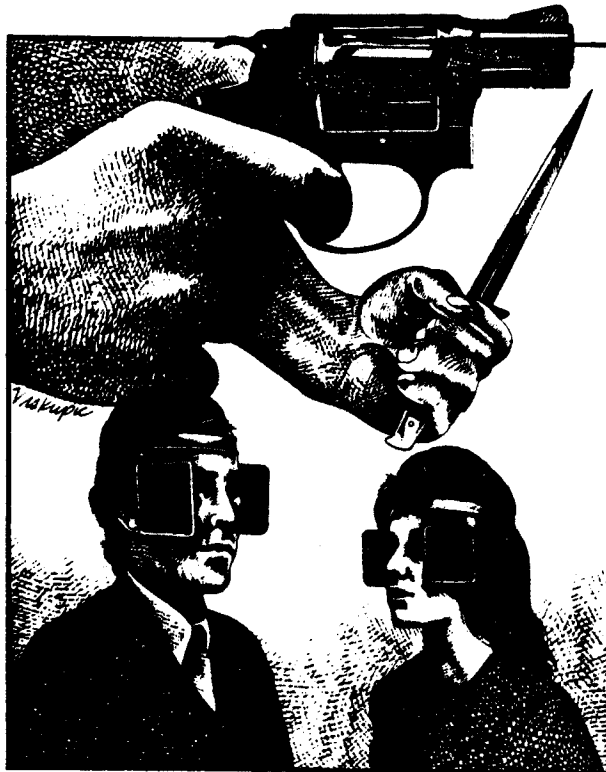
"People say, yes, they're reading about crime all around them but, no, they feel there's nothing they can do about it," says Velona. "That's just the kind of answers we suspected we'd get."

People, he says, are not educated in the ways of citizen crime-fighting. When his work is done, he plans to produce a free booklet telling people what they can do.

Generally, he says, people can be more careful, making

sure typical "break-in points" at their homes and cars are secure. And by having neighbors caring about neighbors. "The community," he says, "has to be together on this. You can't depend on the police to do everything."

In one community he checked, Velona found a difference. In Needham, each morning a group of neighbors report to the police station before going to work and go over the overnight police log. They see what's going on in



their neighborhood and elsewhere in the city. They begin to know what to look for and, in turn, tell police any strange goings-on that they've noticed.

Velona's approach, polling citizens for suggestions and ideas, and then disseminating the information to the general public, has worked in other states.

### Rate reduced

According to Velona, a similar campaign was implemented by the Church of Scientology in New York City. A sergeant of the 6th precinct of New York said that in the last three or four years, the crime rate in the area of Scientology's Fifth Avenue Church has been reduced by more than 75 per cent and during the same period, the crime rate has steadily increased in all other areas of his precinct.

The Church established "Neighborhood safety Staffs" which is believed to be the major factor in the reduction of crime in that area. The Church of Scientology in Boston has also alerted the Boston Police to thefts in progress in the Back Bay area.