

Editorials of the Sun

Silence on Scientology shows alarming apathy

Staff Writer George-Wayne Shelor was talking to Managing Editor Sam Fenton on the phone from Los Angeles, where he was covering a lawsuit brought by the Scientologists against a defector who had taken confidential sect documents.

"How many letters (to the editor) have you received so far?" Shelor asked.

"None," Fenton replied.

"None!" Shelor echoed in amazement. "What's going on?"

What, indeed!

The silence from the community on the latest revelations of the Scientologists' skulduggery is baffling.

While members of the Scientology establishment has bombarded the newspaper with letters and phone calls disseminating their propaganda, the readers have responded to the sensational revelations with a collective yawn.

Since the conversation between Shelor and Fenton, we have received letters commenting on the coverage given the Los Angeles lawsuit. But they have all been from the Scientology leadership. Not one word has come from the public.

Nothing has been said at City Commission meetings about the latest disclosures. The Pinellas-Pasco State Attorney's Office still routinely mumbles about "an ongoing investi-

gation," and remains curiously inert.

Could this be the same community that screamed bloody murder nine years ago when the Scientologists showed up?

Now that the evidence shows Clearwater has been adopted as the sect's world headquarters, you would think the community's alarm would be multiplied.

But the response seems to be: "What can we do, anyway?"

That's understandable—up to a point. Everything the city has done to uproot the Scientologists has proven futile. The latest major offensive, the charitable solicitation law, has been shot down in court and seems destined for the dust bin.

Yet the Scientologists have not won. They are under fire across the United States and in Canada, where a crucial trial is scheduled for next month.

Clearwater residents and their elected representatives should mount another attack to capitalize on the pressure being exerted on the sect elsewhere.

Letters, cards and petitions should be sent to the U.S. Justice Department and the state attorney's office, with copies to local congressmen and state legislators.

A massive public outcry at this time could be the catalyst needed to trigger official action.