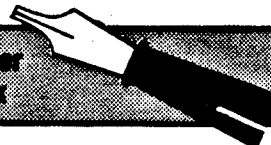


East Grinstead Courier

Dear Sir

Write to The Editor, The East Grinstead Courier
20 London Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex



The 'Big League Sales' Church

AS the perpetrator of the supposed 'hooligan antics' against the Concerned Businessman's Association at the May Fayre, could I reply to the Scientology Public Relations officer's allegations?

Worried by the Courier's recent story on the tactic of luring children into Scientology via front groups, I stopped by at the Concerned Businessman's Association stand to find whether they admitted any link to Scientology.

Asked the question, one of the scientologists on the stand said 'yes', the other simultaneously said 'no', and then they both said 'yes' together. However, they then both denied that the association was run by Scientology. As an ex-scientologist, I know it is run by The Social Coordination Bureau of the church of Scientology (SOCO). We spent the next five minutes or so trying to clarify the point; I neither 'heckled' nor 'abused', as I am sure that the Courier reporter who witnessed our conversation can verify.

I can assure Mr Fox that I would not dream of disturbing people if they were merely giving their help to get the street signs cleaned. I like clean street signs. However, this is not the true purpose of the Concerned Businessman's Association. I find its attempts to attract young people into Scientology sinister. I saw several children who could only have been six or seven years old clustered round the stall.

Mr Fox denies that Scientology uses 'high-pressure sales techniques'. However, each Scientology salesman has to read 'Big-League Sales Closing Techniques', and do rigorous exercises until he is fluent with all its major pressure tactics. Their senior salesmen are trained on a course named 'The Hard Sell Course'.

Salesmen are paid according to how much cash they take (while the other scientology staff live in poverty). Mr Fox went on to justify the £4,000 charge for the OT3 course because it is "a major course" taking "a long time". One of my friends was not unusual in taking only three days to complete this course within the church. Mr Fox tries to give the idea that the fees demanded by scientology are "donations"; they are in fact fixed prices and therefore in no way comparable to the true donations made to the Anglican, Catholic or Methodist churches, as he claims.

As to the "small number dissatisfied with the church", something like half of the membership departed in protest between 1982 and 1984. However, because of repeated and ridiculous claims of six million members, Fox discounts those who left as a "small fraction".

Mr Fox dismissed as "ridiculous" allegations that ex-members were ignored. "Disconnections" is an established, institutionalised, practice of scientology; Mr Fox must be aware of Hubbard's own Bulletin on the subject of 10 September 1983. Indeed, I am ignored almost daily on the street by former friends who are still in the church.

Mr Fox accuses the Courier of the "tatty journalist trick" of quoting Hubbard "out of context". Is Mr Fox talking about the quote: "Make money... Make money... make other people produce so as to make money"? If so, could he explain the context of this "scripture"? Or indeed the following:

Hubbard orders with regard to independent practitioners of scientology: "Harass these persons in any possible way... Tear up any meeting held (Executive Letter 27 Sept 65: 'Amprinistics') Hubbard ordered that suits be filed against such practitioners: "The purpose of the suit is to harass and discourage rather than to win. The Law can be used very easily to harass... If possible, of course, ruin him utterly".

Possibly Hubbard's most devastating public utterance is the "Fair Game Law". Scientologists claim that the policy has been discontinued. The Fair Game law stated that people labelled enemies of Scientology ("Suppressive Persons") "may be deprived of property or injured by any means by any Scientologist... May be tricked, sued or lied to or destroyed". Are these scriptures also "out of context"?

Mitch Beadie
Cranston Road
East Grinstead

From a proud Scientologist

RE your anti Scientology print of May 12 and 19. I've been a Scientologist since 1971 and am a life-member and proud of being a Scientologist.

I find it very hard to believe that a paper such as the East Grinstead Courier should lower its standards and respectability by being so obviously anti religious and intent on doing Scientology harm.

There are millions of success stories throughout the world of people who have benefitted from the application of Dianetics and Scientology emotionally and financially. For you to base your investigation on allegations of disgruntled ex-members or people who just don't like to see other people succeed in life or people with just no spiritual inclination is like putting poison in one's tea then drinking it.

For that's what you have done with the public of East Grinstead; poisoned their minds with slander against Scientology based on wilful intent to bring destruction to the church.

I suggest that you get more honest in your investigation against the church and not to rely on wilful intent to harm the church but to do like millions of other Scientologists have done and that's to visit your local Scientology Church and read some of Mr Hubbard's works starting with the book Introductory to Scientology Ethics.

When there's bad news about Scientology it always tells me somebody is printing out of context and altering the situation to suit some other vested interests.

If you honestly read Mr Hubbard's works and applied them to your paper correctly you wouldn't have to hard sell the paper or yourselves by sensationalizing critics of the past to be people in white hats and Scientology to be the baddies.

Scientology is an applied religious philosophy and is open for the public to look and see all aspects of its philosophy and administration.

Happiness can be only achieved by one's honesty Get honest and straight.

George Bryce
Crescent Road
East Grinstead

'We are part of the community'

I HAVE been a resident of East Grinstead for 14 years. In these years I have played a reasonably active part in the community and I consider myself and family very much part of the East Grinstead community. I am also a Scientologist and have been one for 18 years.

In your editorial you admit to "having one overriding interest — that of our readers and our community." Who are these community you are interested in? I am both one of your readers and one of the community, yet there is nothing I have seen of your treatment of Scientology so far that I can see concerning itself with me or the hundreds if not thousands of other members of this community who happen to be Scientologists. So far we have seen only an anti-Scientology campaign.

Where is the journalistic effort to seek to understand why so many feel that the Scientology courses are so valuable to them? Where are the interviews with Scientologists seeking to help the community understand the views and beliefs of a significant portion (I would estimate at least 5% to 10%) of the community?

Where is coverage of the accomplishments of Scientology or acknowledgement of the part Scientologists play in the community?

Your role as a community paper and its editor must surely be to give a complete picture. So far you have failed in this although, admittedly, you may never have even tried. Your work creates factions and resentment. It degrades the community and your newspaper in the process. I hope you have the journalistic integrity to see this.

I have written to you before to point out that Scientology and Scientologists are not East Grinstead's scapegoat. We do have very real problems here affecting the community including vandals, rubbish, criminals, parking, bypasses and welfare of the elderly.

For their part Scientologists seldom drink and do not take harmful drugs and are committed to a much higher than normal social responsibility by virtue of the very religious philosophy you denigrate.

Scientology has been part of this community for some 30 years and it deserves a better and more responsible press.

Perhaps I should add that I am 39 years old, married with three children. My wife and I are both honours graduates of universities and have pursued professional careers. Our philosophy we share. We are close to all our relatives and are financially well off.

Tom Shuster
Forest View Road,
East Grinstead

EDITOR'S NOTE.

We have published three stories involving allegations about the activities of the church of Scientology this year.

We judged each to be a matter of public interest and concern. In January the church was criticised for trying to recruit schoolchildren.

Three weeks ago a couple were made bankrupt after giving a total of £175,000 to the church. That again must be a cause for concern. The facts of the case left one large question unanswered: How and why does a religious philosophy cost so much money?

Last week we reported how some people had paid exorbitant rates of interest to a man to raise cash for Scientology courses and books. This again is a case of legitimate public interest.

The reaction to all of these stories reflects the genuine concern and confirms our belief that they were a matter of public interest.

This is a newspaper. We will continue to publish the facts. It is to be regretted that some people perceive this as some form of religious persecution.