

Fear and loathing in Sutton

The McLean family's fight to escape Scientology

BY JOHN SAUNDERS



The McLean family first became involved in Scientology in 1969, when Nan, an energetic grandmother, joined the cult. Her husband, Eric, their two sons and their daughter-in-law followed. Eric McLean is a soft-spoken, 52-year-old teacher of auto mechanics now on leave to work for the Ontario high-school teachers' federation. He and Nan live in an old farmhouse outside the village of Sutton, north of Toronto. By 1972, the five McLeans were pillars of the Church of Scientology. Nan drove 100 miles a day to work in its Toronto branch and she eventually was ordained a Scientology minister. Bruce McLean and his wife, Dawn, also joined the church's full-time staff. John McLean dropped out of grade 13 to join the Sea Organization, Scientology's naval arm, and served 18 months aboard the yacht *Apollo*, headquarters of L. Ron Hubbard, founder of the faith. In fact, John signed a billion-year contract with the Scientologists, who believe in reincarnation.

The McLeans fell from grace after an extended feud with leaders of the Toronto Scientology organization. In the fall of 1972, John jumped ship on a pretext and rejoined his family, who had abruptly parted company with Scientology.

On February 12 of this year, eight young people arrived in Sutton (population 1,500) carrying a black, empty coffin. They paraded it along the main street past the Riveredge Restaurant, Holborn's Hardware and the *Lake Simcoe Advocate*, finally putting it down on the cold sidewalk outside the Bank of Nova Scotia, where they held a "funeral for lost souls" and pressed leaflets on uncomprehending villagers. The leaflets, signed "The Church of Scientology of Toronto," charged that the McLean family had "betrayed all God-fearing Canadians" and was "succumbing to the mysteries of evil."

Shortly after the McLeans left Scientology, their rural neighbors had received calls from "credit investigators" sug-



Eric and Nan McLean refused to be intimidated by a symbolic funeral and other Scientology demonstrations.

gesting that Eric McLean was guilty of embezzlement and from an anonymous "outraged husband." At one stage, a former Scientology colleague stayed with the McLeans for a month, claiming that he, too, had abandoned Scientology. When he left, he tried unsuccessfully to have police lay criminal charges against his hosts.

Scientology officials deny any responsibility for the telephone calls or for the actions of the man who stayed with the McLeans. He is now back in the Scientology fold, training to be a minister.

The McLeans, who still discuss the church with any writer or broadcaster who cares to listen, might have expected trouble. Founder Hubbard issued a *Fair Game Law* in 1967 declaring that people found in a "condition of enemy" "may be deprived of property or injured by a Scientologist without discipline of the Scientologist. May be tricked, sued or lied to or destroyed."

The Rev. Bryan Levman, Canada's chief Scientologist, says all that was rescinded in 1968. But there's plenty of other evidence of Ron Hubbard's combative streak.

Perhaps the most macabre product of Hubbard's imagination is "auditing process R2-45," ostensibly a method of Scientology therapy. In readily available church literature, there is a single cryptic reference to it. "R2-45: an enormously effective process for exteriorization, but its use is frowned upon by this society at this time."

What is R2-45? It's long been rumored among ex-Scientologists to mean shooting the "patient" in the brain with a .45-calibre pistol. On a Vancouver radio show this past March, a cornered Scientology public relations man offered this explanation: "R2-45 is not an auditing process. It is simply a name given in jest by Mr. Hubbard in his writings. If a person is killed he'll leave the body... R2-45 is someone being killed and leaving the body." ❖