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f Scientology and science-writer L. Ron (above) holds it on the E-ch; according to electronics experts, is more than a meter, a device res electrical tance.

Scientology E-meter said to offer catharsis

By GEORGE-WAYNE SHELOR
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It's called the Hubbard Electrometer and is used as a spiritual guide during "auditing," a Church of Scientology practice somewhat similar to Catholic confession.

The E-meter, as it is known, is said to be capable of measuring a person's "mental state and change of state" and can pinpoint deeply rooted, previously undetected problems in the brain.

The small, simple electronic device, patented by Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard, may be the most visible of the "religious artifacts" associated with the Clearwater-based sect.

But hardly a miracle of modern science, the E-meter is nothing more than a Wheatstone bridge—commonly known as a galvanometer—which measures electrical

Did Hubbard invent device? 2A

resistance, according to electronic experts.

Authorities worldwide question not only the E-meter's validity as a religious artifact, they also wonder where the money paid for an E-meter—as much as \$6,211.10 each—goes in the non-profit sect.

A source familiar with the object and who requested anonymity recently told the *Clearwater Sun* that the components used to manufacture a standard E-meter cost about \$200.

Scientology spokesman Richard Haworth said last week that he did not know why the E-Meter is as expensive as listed in sect brochures.

(Please see * METER, next page)

* Meter

(from page 1A)

"No, I don't know," he said, noting that the device is "a highly precisioned instrument put together under controlled circumstances."

According to numerous government boards of inquiry, the needles and dials on the E-meter indicate nothing more than a person's body's resistance to a small electrical charge provided by a small dry cell battery.

When a person holds tin cans attached by wires leading to the machine, an electrical circuit is completed.

At one time, Hubbard claimed his E-meter could be used to detect and treat numerous maladies ranging from colds to cancer. However, in recent years, such claims have disappeared from Scientology literature.

Still, when used by a Scientologist to "audit" a person, the E-meter is said to reveal to the auditor a person's emotional "withholds" and is used to detect "engrams."

Engrams, according to Scientologists, are mental images of deposits on the mind, created by traumatic shock, pain or injury.

Man's mind, Hubbard states, is divided into the analytical mind, which is similar to the conscious mind in the Freudian sense, and the reactive mind, which corresponds to the unconscious.

The analytical mind is rational: it perceives, reasons and is able

to figure things out. The reactive mind, however—where the engrams are embedded—shorts out the analytical mind and causes irrational behavior.

The object of auditing on the E-meter is to bring the reactive mind under control, ridding oneself of engrams and achieving "total freedom" and eventually a condition known as "clear."

As a person continues to identify and clear himself of engrams with the aid of an E-meter, he moves up "the bridge" toward Scientology nirvana until they are pronounced "clear" and are ready to move farther up the bridge.

Part of Scientology's theology, which is based on the writings of the reclusive 73-year-old Hubbard, dictates that every person should be cleared through Scientology and Dianetics.

Hubbard also claims that auditing can increase a person's IQ at the rate of one point per hour of auditing.

At the sect's Flag Land Base bookstore in the former Fort Harrison Hotel in downtown Clearwater, E-meters range in "donation" price from \$2,738.68 to \$5211.10 for the Black Mark VI model in a leather case. During occasional sales an E-meter may be purchased locally for as little as \$1,898, according to a sect flier.

Still, prices are going up 5 percent each month, according to the

sect's January issue of "Source Magazine of the Flag Land Base." In January, E-meters were listed from \$500.98 to \$2,363.93.

But there is much more available for one interested in mastering the E-meter. A course called the "Hubbard E-meter Course" was listed in January at \$1,000. And if one is interested, there are a number of books available ranging in cost from \$14.15 for "E-meter Drills" to a \$56.52 donation for "Understanding the E-meter."

E-meter accessories are also listed, including cans (\$2.60), external "TA" counters (\$18.29) and Solo Can Separators (Solo "Space-ers") for \$2.11.

The inclusion of the Solo Space-ers—a device enabling a person to work alone on an E-meter—poses a curious question:

In his 1950 book, "Dianetics—The Modern Science of Mental Health," Hubbard states that a person is unable to audit himself: "It cannot be done. That is a flat statement and it is a scientific fact. The auditor is necessary for a large number of reasons."

However, Scientology spokesman Haworth said Thursday that there are, indeed, occasions when a Scientologist works without the aid of an auditor.

"There are solo levels in Scientology (and) they have been around for a long time," Haworth said. He said he was aware of

Hubbard's published statement but declined to elaborate on the seeming contradictions.

In a search warrant executed by the Ontario Provincial Police last year when 200,000 sect documents and other items were confiscated during a 24-hour raid, E-meters were included as material to be seized. Canadian authorities, who suspect the sect may be involved in fraud and other criminal activities, are investigating its Toronto branch.

The 158-page search warrant—the largest in Canadian history—and its volumes of appendices claim that Hubbard, the Church of Scientology of Toronto and others defrauded the public by making "representations concerning the qualities of, and benefits receivable from courses (and) E-meters, for sale at costly prices in no way related to the real value of such things."

The warrant states further that "such things being without the represented qualities and incapable of providing the represented benefits, thus by deceit, falsehood of other fraudulent means," the public was defrauded.

The search warrant, based in part on the testimony of unnamed agents, asserts that the government believes "Scientology is a profit-oriented organization, by the method of which the E-meter, an alleged 'religious artifact,' is marketed by Scientology. Due to

the high markup value of the E-meters, at times of well over 100 percent, affords further evidence of a profit-making operation.

"Further, reasonable grounds exist to believe that the said E-meter is fraudulently represented as a spiritual artifact."

The warrant alleges that the Toronto Scientologists import E-meters from the U.S. and Denmark, and pay "duty and tax on the value at which they purchased the items, rather than on the value the items are actually being sold for in Canada," which last year ranged from \$1000 to \$2,500.

The warrant lists findings challenging the validity of the E-meter by governments around the world including:

□ South Africa: "(The E-meter) is scientifically of no value in testing emotions, feelings or reactions of persons. It has no value in itself in the treatment of psychosomatic or other illnesses."

□ Australia: "None of the Scientology theories associated with, or claims made for the E-meter is justified."

And in a 1973 U.S. Court of Appeals ruling, the government found the E-meter was "misbranded" and could only be sold, used or distributed for use in bona fide religious counseling and that all E-meters must bear the following warning, permanently affixed and clearly visible:

"The E-meter is not medically

or scientifically useful for the diagnosis, treatment or prevention of any disease. It is not medically or scientifically capable of improving the health or bodily functions of anyone."

Although several Sun reporters have examined and used E-meters in recent months at Scientology centers in Clearwater, the specified warning was not visible.

But New York City lawyer Eric Lieberman said last week the court ruling affected only those E-meters under scrutiny by the court at that time, and not all E-meters in the United States.

"The ruling stated that those particular E-meters had to be destroyed or have the (disclaimers) attached," explained Lieberman, who said he has represented the sect in numerous lawsuits, including the recent one against the city of Clearwater's controversial charitable-solicitation ordinance.

"It wasn't a general proceeding as to what Dianetics and Scientology had to do throughout the United States," Lieberman said. "It was only a ruling regarding the E-meters in question."

Today, Lieberman said, E-meters are for sale and to be used by no one other than a Scientologist. Nevertheless, he pointed out, the sect has generally adhered to "the spirit of the ruling" by attaching shorter and smaller statements than the one mentioned in the federal judgment.