

REGISTRATION SERVICE
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

DATE: 2/20/89

FULL NAME Ronald Edwin Bell S.S. NO. _____
(No initials if you can possibly get full name)

ADDRESS _____

CITY Clermont STATE FL ZIP CODE 32711

DATE OF BIRTH 7/6/44 (This is important and should be exact)

APPROXIMATE AGE _____ (To be used ONLY when date of birth is not known)

RELIGION _____ NATIONALITY (Citizen of) UNITED STATES

OCCUPATION Television Technician

EDUCATION UNK.

WEIGHT 155 lbs HEIGHT 6-02 RACE CAUC.

COLOR OF HAIR Brown COLOR OF EYES Brown

ANY DISTINGUISHING PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS Sm Scars on hands

HOBBIES OR SPECIAL INTERESTS _____

MARRIED SINGLE NAME OF SPOUSE _____

CHILDREN _____
(Name, number, ages, if possible)

SCOUTING CONNECTIONS:

| UNIT # | CITY | STATE | POSITION | DATE REGISTERED | DATE RESIGNED |
|--------|-----------|-------|----------|-----------------|---------------|
| S-3 | Groveland | FL | SM | MAR 31, 1987 | |

Chartered Organization Hillier & Sons, Inc.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION N/A

INCIDENT: TYPE 2 DATE OF INCIDENT _____ RESOLUTION 2
Type Resolution

- 1=Scout Related
- 2=Non-scout related
- 3=homosexual (not specifically with youth)
- 1. Internal (only Scouts Know)
- 2. Criminal action
- 3. Court action
- 4. Probationary status
- 5. Reported to state agency

Check off list of attached documentation

- Description of incident **NOTED**
- Victim(s) statement
- media reports OCT 18 1989
- Legal proceedings
- Offender's statement JOSEPH L. ANGLIM
- Official notification of termination
- Found guilty/innocent by court

CONFIDENTIAL

Council Central Florida Signed [Signature] MAR 17 1989
SCOUT EXECUTIVE F. STARON

READY FOR FILE

JUL 19 1989

A. GRAVES

W. J. J.

July 18, 1989

Mr. Ronnie L. Carroll
Scout Executive
Central Florida Council, No. 83

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: Ronald E. Bell

Dear Ron:

Periodically, I follow up on each of our confidential file cases. The only thing we are still lacking on this file is the outcome of the legal action.

If the legal work has been completed, we would like a newspaper clipping or court record indicating the final disposition and sentencing. Thanks for your help in completing this matter.

Sincerely,

Paul Ernst, Director
Registration Service

ag

cc: Southeast Region

CONF017878

READY FOR FILE

OCT 19 1989

A. GRAYES

October 19, 1989

Mr. Ronnie-L. Carroll
Scout Executive
Central Florida Council, No. 83

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: RONALD EDWIN BELL

Dear Ron:

Thank you for the detailed information sent concerning the above Scouter. This case has been reviewed with our attorney and is now on our permanent Confidential File.

Sincerely,

Paul Ernst, Director
Registration Service

ag

cc: Southeast Region

CONF017879

Ex-Scout leader pleads no contest to charges

By Karlayne Parker

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

TAVARES — Former Boy Scout leader Ronald Bell of Clermont pleaded no contest Friday to two charges of performing lewd and lascivious acts in the presence of a minor.

As a result of a plea bargain agreement, Bell will serve 12 years on probation, including two years under house arrest.

During the house arrest, he will be required to obtain counseling and provide restitution for any medical expenses incurred by the victim's family. He also will be prohibited from any involvement with children.

Under terms agreed upon by state prosecutor Jerome Major and Circuit Judge Earle Peterson Jr., Bell also must pay a \$250 public defender lien and \$20 to the state Crimes Compensation Fund for children.

Mascotte police arrested Bell

Oct. 1 after they were told he had sex with a boy on camping trips and at Bell's Clermont home.

He originally was charged with six counts of sexual battery against a boy under 11. Those charges later were reduced to the two counts of performing lewd and lascivious acts in the presence of a minor.

Bell was suspended from his duties as a Scout leader two days after his arrest.

Ron Carroll of Orlando, executive director of the Boy Scouts of Central Florida, said Bell will never be a Scout leader again.

"I thought they would have given him a tougher sentence," he said.

Carroll said his Scouting organization has changed the way it accepts Scout leaders because of a growing number of cases involving sexually abused children.

For 75 years, the organization had relied heavily on the churches

Please see PLEADS, 7

out of context
did NOT
state this

PLEADS

From 1

or sponsoring groups to find leaders of good character.

"Before, we automatically accepted whoever they suggested," he said. But since last summer the scouting organization has re-

quired potential candidates to fill out an application requiring a Social Security number, job history, education background, youth group affiliations, convictions, drug use information and three references.

Carroll said the application information is now checked by police agencies and the state Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services.

Carroll said the application also

must be certified by the sponsoring group and the Boy Scouts of Central Florida.

"We reserve the right to deny any application no matter what the circumstances," he said. "We always do the best check we can."

When Bell was removed as a scout leader, his name was sent to Boy Scouts of America office in Texas where it was put on a permanent register.

Did NOT
say this

March 21, 1989

READY FOR FILE

MAR 21 1989

Mr. Ronnie L. Carroll
Scout Executive
Central Florida Council, No. 83

~~PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SUBJECT: RONALD E. BELL~~

Dear Ron:

We appreciate the information which you sent us concerning the above named individual. This is most helpful and will enable us to identify Mr. Bell should he attempt registration in some other location.

We would like to know if any further legal action has taken place and if there has been a conviction. This will then give us the necessary information for completing the file and refusing registration any where in the country.

Thanks for your help in this matter.

Sincerely,

Paul Ernst, Director
Registration Service

eko

cc: Southeast Region

CONF017881

P-1

ORTS # _____ AGENCY ORI # 350700

COURT CASE NUMBER: 88-1416-CFA (FELONY) MISDEMEANOR COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL ORDINANCE AGENCY CASE NUMBER
TRAFFIC JUVENILE WARRANT/CARIAS: M-88-10-1520

DEPENDANT: Last First Middle DOB SEX RACE HGT WGT HAIR EYES
BELL RONALD EDWARD 07/06/44 MALE WHITE 6-02 155 BROWN BROWN

MAILING ADDRESS: SL/P.O. Box City CLERMONT State FLORIDA Zip 32711

STREET ADDRESS: (If different) Street City SAME State SAME Zip SAME

PHONE NUMBER: Residence Business Residence Type: 1. City 2. County 3. Florida 4. Out-of-State (1) OCCUPATION: TELEVISION TECHNICIAN

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT: Street COFFMAN ELECTRONICS City MASCOTTE State FLORIDA SSN: [REDACTED]

PLACE OF BIRTH: City ALTON State ILL (Y) U.S. CITIZEN: (Y) NI U N/A ALIAS: RON SANDERS DRIVERS LICENSE NUMBER: [REDACTED]

VEHICLE TOWED BY: N/A HOLD VEHICLE FOR: N/A

ARREST DATE AND TIME: (Military) 10 / 01 / 88 AT 0740 ARREST LOCATION: MASCOTTE POLICE DEPARTMENT

| CODES | Description | | | | | | | | | | Counts | Act. Vty | Type | MTC | GIS | Statute | Bond Amount | In Arrestee to Bond Schedule |
|-------|----------------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|----------|-----------|---------|--------|----------|------|-----|-----|------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| | A. Arson | B. Burglary | C. Child Abuse | D. Domestic Violence | E. Drug | F. False Information | G. Fire | H. Fraud | I. Kidnap | J. Rape | | | | | | | | |
| | SEXUAL BATTERY | | | | | | | | | | 6 | N | N | | | 794.011(2) | NONE | (Y) N |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Y N |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Y N |

Indication of: Alcohol Influence Y (N) /unk Drug Influence Y (N) /unk Weapon Seized: Type Y (N) /unk

Juvenile Disposition: 1. Handled/Processed Within Dept. and Released 2. Turned Over to HRS/CYP 3. Incarcerated (County Jail)

JAIL LOG

INMATE NUMBER: 538-55 DATE AND TIME BOOKED: (Military) 10 / 01 / 88 AT 11:47 BOOKING OFFICER: Klump PROCESSED BY: Klump

BIN NUMBER: 108 MIRANDA BY: Klump WARRANTS: Local _____ NCIC _____ FCIC _____ HOLD FOR: _____ RELIGION: Christ

ATTORNEY: none TELEPHONE CALL LOG: (Military) 10 / 01 / 88 AT _____ Phone Number _____ MARITAL STATUS: S

NEXT OF KIN: [REDACTED] RELATION: Mother ADDRESS: [REDACTED] TELEPHONE: [REDACTED]

SCARS, MARKS, TATTOOS: sm Scars on hands INSURANCE COMPANY: none

BOND POSTED ON: _____ RETURNABLE TO COURT ON: (Military) _____ RELEASED BY: DATE & TIME (Military) _____

BOND _ A _ BOND _ B _ BOND _ C _ BOND TYPE: ROR _____ SURETY _____ CASH _____ BAIL BOND _____ CERT _____ OTHER _____

PROBABLE CAUSE AFFIDAVIT:
 (specify probable cause for each charge)
 Before Me, the undersigned authority personally appeared DON P. PAGE and PAUL A. ZUTLER who being duly sworn, alleges, on information and belief, that on the FIRST day of OCTOBER, 19 88, in LAKE County, Florida, the defendant did:

DID, OVER A PERIOD OF MONTHS RANGING APPROXIMATELY FROM SOME TIME IN JUNE UNTIL APPROXIMATELY LATE SEPTEMBER ENGAGE IN SEXUAL ANAL INTERCOURSE AND ORAL SEX WITH A MINOR CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF ELEVEN IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN THE MASCOTTE, GROVELAND, CLERMONT AREA. THE DEFENDANT DID TAKE THE VICTIM ON "CAMPING TRIPS" IN THE GROVELAND AREA AT WHICH PLACE AND TIME HE ENGAGED THE MINOR CHILD IN SEXUAL INTERCOURSE. HE DID ON OCCASION TAKE THE MINOR CHILD TO HIS HOUSE IN THE CITY OF CLERMONT, FLORIDA WHERE HE DID ENGAGE THE MINOR CHILD IN SEXUAL INTERCOURSE, BOTH OF AN ANAL AND ORAL NATURE.

34
20
20

February 7, 1989

Mr. Ronnie L. Carroll—
Scout Executive
Central Florida Council, No. 83

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: RONALD E. BELL

Dear Ronnie:

We appreciate the material which you sent us during the month of October related to the above named individual. At that time it was indicated that he had been charged with sexual battery of a minor.

Since several months have passed, we wondered if any more material has become available to you. We would like any copies of newspaper clippings or court records which would further substantiate the charges.

We are enclosing another confidential record which we would like to have completed so that we can identify Mr. Bell. This will be necessary should he attempt to register in some other location with the Boy Scouts of America.

Thanks for helping to protect the youth of America.

Sincerely,

Paul Ernst, Director
Registration Service

eko

Enclosure

cc: Southeast Region

READY TO FILE
FEB 07 1989
ERIN ORILEY

CONF017883

December 5, 1988

Mr. Ronnie L. Carroll
Scout Executive
Central Florida Council, No. 83

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT: Ronald E. Bell

Dear Ronnie:

We appreciate the material send in October concerning the above named individual. We have not heard from you since that time and wondered if any more information is now available to build our file.

We are enclosing a Confidential Record Sheet which we would like to have completed...so that we may identify Mr. Bell should he attempt association with the Boy Scouts of America in any other location.

Thanks for your help in putting together this material.

Sincerely,

Paul Ernst, Director
Registration Service

ag

Enclosure

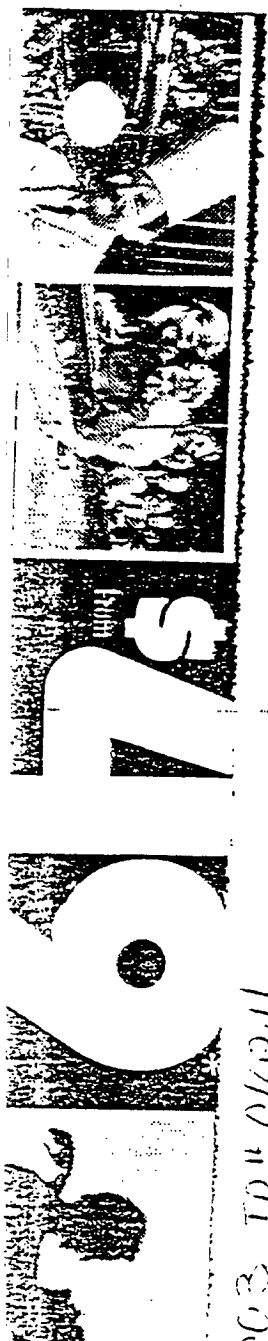
cc: Southeast Region

READY TO FILE

DEC 06 1988

ERIN O'RILEY,

CONF017884



883-5003 TOU 010211

7/1/77

10TH ANNUAL
ONAL
SHINGS

100% WOOL
 DHURRIE RUGS
 (4X6) REG. \$196
 \$98

OFFER

includes first quality carpet, sponge
 on & free delivery to your home.

| | |
|---|--|
| CADABRA" | Horizon "SPRINGTIME" |
| 88 Sq Yd. | \$12.88 Sq. Yd. |
| 1 Yd. 100% cut & loop, electrol and nylon. | Reg. \$19.88 Sq. Yd. Monsanilo 100% Nylon Silver label with STAINBLOCKER. \$5-Year WEARDAIRED Warranty. |
| VFLUENT" | Coronel "GAZEBO" |
| 88 | \$7.88 |

D-4 The Orlando Sentinel, Tuesday, October 11, 1988 ***

Ronald E. Bell

Boy Scout leader in sex case was focus of '83 investigation

By Karlayne Parker

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

TAVARES — Ronald Bell, a Boy Scout troop leader charged last week with sexual battery of a minor, was questioned by sheriff's investigators in 1983 about his behavior with a young boy, but no charges were ever filed in that case.

Bell, 44, of Clermont, is being held without bail at the Lake County Jail on charges that he had sex with a boy under the age of 11 while on camping trips and in Bell's home between June and September, court papers show. The boy was not involved in Scouting activities, according to sources close to the case.

Bell will be arraigned Oct. 26.

Mascotte Police Chief Don Page said the department is expanding its investigation of Bell. He said evidence gathered by police includes photos found at Bell's home of nude boys.

Bell was suspended as leader of Troop 3 for south Lake County when he was arrested.

Bell's mother, Marian Bell, whose license from the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services to operate a foster home was not renewed in 1984 after seven years, said she knew of the 1983 complaint against her son, but she denied he had done anything wrong. She said the latest accusations were made because Bell is single, has never been married and lives with her.

HRS officials said her license was not renewed because of concerns about other children in the Bell home, who were not placed there by the state officials. They would not disclose any further information, saying their files on juveniles are confidential.

"I'm familiar with these cases, but they are all

lies," said Mrs. Bell, 71. "There are two sides to every story, and people are twisting the sides to suit their own purpose."

About the pictures, she said, "Ron's hobby is photography. When he goes out on outings, half the kids have swim suits, the other half does not. He takes pictures of the children."

Page said one of the photos is a close-up of a boy's genital area.

In the complaint filed with the sheriff's office by a juvenile on March 2, 1983, the juvenile said he saw Bell and another boy sleeping together in a sleeping bag on a Scout camping trip.

"He had a habit of grabbing him [the victim] on the leg," the police report said. However, the investigation was dropped after the alleged victim denied doing anything with Bell. Bell also denied he made any sexual advances.

"He [Bell] does state that at times some boys do sleep with him when they have forgotten their bags. He has a double size sleeping bag," the report said.

Ron Carroll, executive director of the Central Florida Council of the Boy Scouts of America, said he has not heard any complaints about Bell.

"We work with churches and other organizations that sponsor the individual groups and hope that they select people of good character," Carroll said.

Since Sept. 1, all applicants to the Scout council have been required to furnish references. They also have been investigated through the HRS and for prior arrests.

When Bell applied as a Scout leader in the early 1980s, that policy did not exist.

Because of the charges against Bell, Magic Grow Companies has withdrawn its sponsorship of the south Lake County troop.

From 8
 10-11-88
 10-11-88

Added to CF file deleted from newspaper
 file source 100-400-002402 for NY and
 Unrecorded etc.

SUNDAY

Daily Commercial

VOL. 113 NO. 276, LEESBURG, FLORIDA

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1988 25¢

Scout leader faces charges of sex abuse

By Desiree Humphrey
Daily Commercial Staff Writer

MASCOTTE
A Boy Scout troop master was chatting with two young boys on his porch early Saturday morning when he was arrested on charges of sexual battery, police said.

The arrest came after several mothers in this small South Lake County town complained about the man, police said. Although police say Ronald E. Bell, 44, of 208 East Ave. in Clermont, will be charged with sexual battery on a child under the age of 11, police records show him initially arrested on six counts of sexual battery. Bell is being held without bail.

Mascotte Police Chief Don Page said he believes more than four boys ranging in ages from 7 to 11 may have been molested and said more charges are expected to be filed.

Because police are still investigating, they declined to say if the children participated in Boy Scout activities. According to Page, Bell took boys from Mascotte, Clermont and Groveland -- all small towns near each other and nestled among rolling hills and small lakes -- swimming, camping and fishing.

Statements reveal this man threatened the little boy. If he told, he would hit him in the head with a hoe handle or something like that," Page said. "People like this will usually pick the weaker and the quieter child. And a few times out of 10 they will threaten the boy if he tells."

Bell would not answer a TV reporter's questions, saying "not until I see a lawyer." He also refused to talk to police, Page said. When arrested, he surrendered quietly.

Please see ABUSE, A8



Staff photo by Bruce Borich

Ronald E. Bell is fingerprinted by Mascotte police officer Paul Zuller at the Mascotte police station Saturday morning.

ABUSE

Continued from A1

All six incidents listed on the arrest report involved one child, Page said. The child was not one of the two brothers found at Bell's house when police arrested him about 7:30 a.m., police said.

Page, and his investigator Paul Zutler, learned of the incidents Friday and began to search for Bell the same night.

"Yesterday, we were talking to the mother of the little victim and right away we started investigating the situation," Page said.

The child and mother were interviewed and then two doctors examined the boy.

"He had indeed been molested," Page said, adding that he believes the boy had been subjected to oral and anal intercourse.

"We searched for (Bell) with a stakeout yesterday until dark. He didn't show up and we found out where he lived," Page said. Bell was planning to pick up a group of boys in Mascotte and take them on an outing when the search began, Page said.

"We believe he had some (children) out last night because of the little boys out in his yard this morning when we made the arrest," Page said. The two brothers were interviewed by Clermont police, who assisted the Mascotte officers in the arrest.

Clermont Sgt. Mitchell Rogers said the children spent the night at the house with parents' permission. Interviews with the brothers indicated that they were not molested, Rogers said, but Clermont police have not finished their part of the investigation.

Charges of sexual abuse on a child under the age of 11 are a capital offense, which could result in life in prison or a death sentence, Zutler said. The minimum sentence is 25 years before parole is given, unless special plea agreements are made, he said.

Page, who has several small children, said the incident left him upset and he issued a warning to other parents.

"I'd like to say when anybody wants to take your children on a camping trip, even if you have known this man for a long time please have a background check on him," Page said.

"If a kid wants to tell you something or you see a change in him, please contact your law-enforcement agencies and they will be glad to look into the matter confidentially," Page said.

"I've been in this business since 1967 and I've found when they finally get caught, that they don't stay in one place too long," Page said, speaking in general about adults who sexually abuse children. "They hunt new territory, new towns to go to and people just think it's the nice guy who moved

in on the block who loves children."

But Bell, a television repairman, does not seem to fit this stereotype and long-time neighbors are shocked about the charges brought against him. According to Page, Bell is single and has no children. Neighbors in the quiet, middle-class neighborhood say he lives with his mother.

One neighbor, who said Bell's mother has lived in the house for at least 10 years, described Bell as a "nice man." Her grandson, 16, had higher praises for Bell. He has been a member of Bell's Boy Scout troop for six years.

"He's one of the best leaders I've ever seen," the boy said. "He's put up with us through some times where some other person would have quit and threw in the towel. But he stuck with us through that."

Bell oversees about nine boys who make up two patrols. Their ages range from 11 to 18 years old.

"When the rest of the guys heard about this, frankly they couldn't believe it," the boy said. "At first, they thought it was a joke. It was kind of a really big shock."

After knowing someone for six years and going on trips, he said it seems like he would have been able to detect a problem. But he said he had never seen Bell touch any of the other boys, even when he reprimanded them.

"He'll yell when he's mad at us," the boy said. "He's not a physical person."



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

COUNCIL

No. 53 Date 11-3-17

REFER TO YOUR TRANSMITTAL REPORT NO. _____

CREDIT NOTICE DEBIT NOTICE

REGISTRATION SERVICE

REGISTRATION Unit No. 50003 term _____ months

- Unit charter fee of \$20. Received \$ _____ required \$ _____
- 1 Leaders (_____ prepaid) @ \$ _____ each. Received \$ 5.00 required \$ 0
(_____ transfer)
- _____ Members (_____ transfer) @ \$ _____ each. Received \$ _____ required \$ _____
- _____ Members _____ Leaders listed on transmittal form _____ on application
- Transfers must pay \$.50 each. Expiration given _____ We have _____
- Not on transmittal report Duplicate entry No application received.
- Correction made per your letter/telephone call _____
- No reply to our defective registration notice dated _____
- Returning _____ Under Age Over Age

Copy only

BOYS' LIFE Term 6 months

- Paid for 1 subscriptions; listed 1 subscriptions. Received \$ 6.00 required \$ 3.30
- Incorrect fees: _____ subscriptions. Back issues are not available.
- Please check attached copy. Pay debit—Use credit or return with copy of the roster showing corrections needed.

Ronald E Bell deleted.

Please add or subtract the amount(s) indicated on your next transmittal in the proper column(s) and return the original.

| | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------------|
| BILLING | Unit Charter Fee | \$ _____ | Explorer | \$ _____ |
| | Tiger Cub | \$ _____ | Career Awareness Explorer | \$ _____ |
| | Cub Scout | \$ _____ | Leader | \$ _____ |
| | Boy Scout | \$ _____ | Boys' Life | \$ _____ |
| | Varsity Scout | \$ _____ | Total | \$ _____ |
| CREDITING | Unit Charter Fee | \$ _____ | Explorer | \$ _____ |
| | Tiger Cub | \$ _____ | Career Awareness Explorer | \$ _____ |
| | Cub Scout | \$ _____ | Leader | \$ <u>5.00</u> |
| | Boy Scout | \$ _____ | Boys' Life | \$ <u>3.30</u> |
| | Varsity Scout | \$ _____ | Total | \$ <u>8.30</u> |

Lake Sentinel

An Edition of The Orlando Sentinel

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Leader's past was questioned

Woman sought probe
by Boy Scout officials

By Karlayne Parker

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

TAVARES — A Leesburg Boy Scout troop leader urged Scouting officials three years ago to check background of Ron Bell, removed as a Scout leader following last week's arrest on six counts of sexual battery on a boy under age 11.

Tim Bugg, the Boy Scout field director in charge of Lake County, said Donna Richey, a Scout parent and leader of a Leesburg troop, asked him to check Bell's background in 1985.

"She came up to me after a training session in Eustis and said I should check to see if the HRS (state Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services) had a file on him," Bugg said.

"I remember calling the HRS and they told me everything is confidential and would not release any information," he said. "I shared this with Ron. We couldn't get anything definite. We didn't pursue it further."

Richey recalls the situation differently. She said that, as a former HRS administrator of the Lake County Boys Ranch in Altoona, she would not have suggested checking with HRS since she knew the agency would not disclose information because of privacy laws.

"I told them they should start a procedure similar to HRS, where they fingerprint and check for criminal records," said Richey, who also is former administrator for the 5th District Circuit Court Ad Litem program, which represents children in court.

The discussion with Bugg took place about two years after Richey and a 13-year-old boy took a complaint against the Scout leader to the State Attorney's Office, she said. Officials with the State Attorney's office say records dating to that period have been purged, indicating no action was taken.

A separate sexual battery complaint was filed against Bell at the sheriff's office in 1983 by a Scout

Please see BELL, 4

BELL

From 1

who said he saw the Scout leader and another boy sleeping in the same sleeping bag on a camping trip.

The youth involved was questioned, but said nothing improper took place. No action was taken regarding that complaint.

Bell, 44, is being held without bail in the Lake County Jail after being charged with having sex with a boy under age 11 on several occasions during camping trips and at the Bell home in Clermont.

The boy was not involved in Scout activities, say sources close to the investigation. He will be arraigned Oct. 26.

Mascotte police Chief Don Page said the department is expanding its investigation of Bell, a television repairman and youth worker for 20 years.

Bell was arrested at his Clermont home in the company of two elementary school-age children,

Page said. Evidence in the sexual battery case includes photos taken by Bell of nude boys on camping trips. One photo is of a boy's genitals, according to Page.

Bell's mother, Marian, denies the allegations against her son. She said Bell is being accused of the crime because of his lifestyle. Bell is single, has never been married and lives with her.

Mrs. Bell, 71, operated a foster home for seven years, until 1984, when HRS did not renew her license because of concerns over children other than those placed by the state living in the Bell home.

She said her son for many years has helped young children from poor backgrounds. Children often came to his television repair shops in Mascotte and Groveland after school.

Bell has been affiliated with the Boy Scouts off and on since 1972. He was suspended as Troop 3 Scout leader Oct. 3, two days after he was arrested.

The troop was disbanded at its last meeting, Oct. 5, when the troop's sponsor, Magic Grow Prop-

erties, also known as Hillary & Sons Inc., said it was dropping the group.

Ed Tierney, a former Scout assistant under Bell, said parents were surprised by Bell's arrest.

"The kids are always in groups and there are always two adults present," Tierney said. "Ron has been known to take the boys on camping trips by himself. But I'm sure the boys would have come to me if anything happened."

Tierney has known Bell for 20 years and worked with Bell at the Boys Ranch in Groveland, a Christian boys camp that burned down in 1985.

Tierney said each year the troop went on six parent-authorized Scout trips to Pine Island in Groveland, a secluded wooded camping area.

After the 1983 complaint, Tierney said, "I thought nothing of it. Ron brought sleeping bags for the boys and he never allowed them to sleep with him in his double-size sleeping bag again."

The eight members of the defunct troop will be placed in other Lake County troops, Carroll said.

Lake Sentinel

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An Edition of The Orlando Sentinel

Ex-scout leader in court today

Bell due to enter plea in sexual battery case

By Karlayne Parker

THE SENTINEL STAFF

TAVARES — A former Boy Scout leader charged with six counts of sexual battery against a boy is scheduled to be arraigned today at the Lake County Courthouse.

Ronald E. Bell, 44, is being held without bail in the Lake County Jail after he was charged with sexual battery and arrested at his Clermont home by Mascotte Police. The arraignment is scheduled for 9 a.m.

Bell will appear before a judge with his public defender to enter a plea of not guilty or guilty.

Mascotte Police Chief Don Page said police have evidence that Bell had sex with a boy under the age of 11 on camping trips and at Bell's home, where he lives with his mother, Marian Bell.

Page said the boy told police that Bell threatened him with violence if he told anyone. The boy was not a Boy Scout.

Mascotte police say evidence includes snapshots of nude boys and girls taped to his dresser mirror and videos of nude children inserted into children's movies.

Police said Bell, who had been active with the Scouts off and on since 1972, had photo albums of children and boys.

"This is the worst thing to have let him go on like this for so long," said Page. "These are kids between seven and pre-teenage years."

Bell does not have any prior arrests or convictions, police said. Yet it is not the first time he has been accused of sexual battery.

In 1983, sheriff's investigators questioned Bell about his behavior with a young boy, but no charges were filed in that case.

That same year, in a separate

Please see BELL, 6

BELL

From 1

case, a 13-year-old boy and Donna Richey, a former scout leader and state administrator for the Lake County Boys Ranch, Altoona, filed a complaint against Bell at the State Attorney's Office.

No action was taken.

Since his arrest, friends and family have come to Bell's defense, saying he is being wrongfully charged with a crime he could not have committed.

Mrs. Bell, 71, said her son is being falsely accused because he is single, has never been married and lives with her.

Some parents agree.

"I believe they have the wrong guy," said Flora Test, grandmother of a scout in Bell's former troop.

Janice Swanson, mother of two scouts aged 14 and 13 said, "I'd let the boys go camping with him now if he were let go. All the boys say he's never done anything as far as molesting kids go or anything out of line."

Janice Jeter, mother of a former scout, said, "I showed my son the stories in the newspaper and he said Ron had never done anything to him and he's never seen anything."

Milda Sandargas, the assistant district commissioner for the Central Florida Boys Scouts Council in Lake County and whose son was also a scout in Bell's troop, said she did receive complaints about Bell following his arrest and the news reports that went along with it.

When Sandargas asked the parents if their chil-

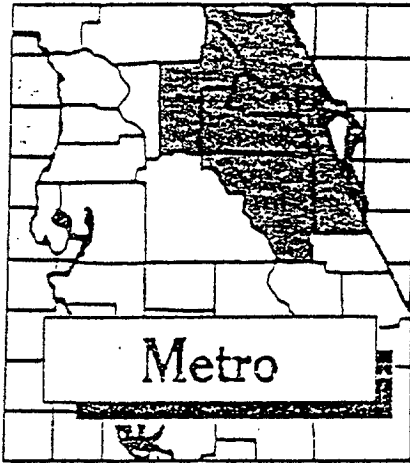
Because of the charge against Bell, Magic Grow Properties has withdrawn its sponsorship of the south Lake County troop.

Bell was suspended from his duties as scout leader two days after he was arrested. The eight boys in Troop 3 have been placed in other, Lake County troops.

dren had been involved with Bell, "They said no. There were no specifics.

"I only wish that some of those concerned individuals who have since come forth with accusations had done so prior to the media reports," said Sandargas who has been with the scout council for six years.

"Then, in essence, if these alleged accusations were proven fact, something could and would have been done to investigate and alleviate the problem that has been recurring for years, according to the newspaper reports."



Murdered girl's mom sues Duckett

COMPILED FROM STAFF REPORTS

TAVARES — The mother of Teresa McAbee, the 11-year-old Mascotte girl who was raped and murdered in May 1987, has sued the former police officer sentenced to death for the crime, as well as the town for which he worked. Dorothy McAbee on Tuesday filed a wrongful-death suit in Lake Circuit Court against James Duckett and the town of Mascotte. The suit seeks damages in excess of \$5,000. McAbee is suing on behalf of herself; her estranged husband, Clyde, of Coldwater, Miss.; and the estate of Teresa McAbee. A 12-member jury found Duckett guilty of first-degree murder and sexual battery on May 10. Circuit Judge Jerry Lockett sentenced him to death for the murder and to life in prison with no chance of parole for 25 years for the sexual battery.

LAKE HEARING

NOT GUILTY PLEA. Former Scout leader Ronald Bell pleaded not guilty Wednesday to six counts of sexual battery against a minor. Public Defender

Michael Graves entered the plea for Bell before Judge Jerry Lockett. A pretrial hearing was set for Dec. 5. Mascotte Police Chief Don Page said police have evidence that Bell had sex with a boy under age 11 on camping trips and at Bell's home. The boy is not a Scout member.

TEEN'S DEATH

FATAL SHOOTING. A 15-year-old boy who attended a DeLand school for troubled students was found dead on a sandy footpath Wednesday with a gunshot wound in the back of his head. Kendall Ward, a student at Euclid Educational Center, a school for disruptive or disinterested students, was killed between 1:30 and 2 a.m., police said. They said they have no motive or suspects. An autopsy Wednesday afternoon showed that Kendall died from a .25-caliber bullet in the brain.

PEDESTRIAN KILLED

CROSSING ROAD. A 67-year-old New York man was struck and killed Tuesday night as he tried to cross State Road 50. Steven Szado was hit twice by cars just west of Alafaya Trail after he stumbled over the median into the westbound lanes of traffic about 10:30 p.m., a spokesman for the Florida Highway Patrol said. One of the cars that hit and dragged Szado left the scene, and troopers are seeking the driver of a late-model black Isuzu Impulse. The car may have damage to the front left side. The driver is a white man, about 30 years old with dark wavy hair. He is about 5-feet, 8-inches tall and weighs about 160 pounds. The other car was driven by Christopher Fasnacht, 1836 Torrey Pines Court, Orlando. He was charged with failing to carry the proper insurance. Friends said Szado was visiting Orlando for the wedding of a friend's daughter. He had just checked into a motel and was walking across S.R. 50 to a fast-food restaurant when he was struck. Anyone with information may call the patrol at 423-6400.