

Once-secret files lead to Scout abuse suit

BY STEVE SCHMADEKE
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An Illinois man who more than 27 years ago was identified as a victim of a notorious Burbank pedophile filed suit Tuesday against him as well as the Boy Scouts, saying the group failed to protect him.

The plaintiff, who filed the lawsuit anonymously in Cook County Circuit Court, had “compartmentalized” his memories of the sexual abuse, which allegedly happened on numerous occasions in 1985 when he was a 10-year-old Boy Scout, said his at-



Thomas Hacker was a Scout leader even after abuse convictions in the '70s.

torney, Christopher Hurley.

Memories of the alleged abuse resurfaced only when the Boy Scouts of America in October released their long-secret “perversion files” under the orders of an Oregon court overseeing a civil case against the organization. The man, now married with a family, looked online through the files for

his former Scout leader, Thomas Hacker, Hurley said.

Hacker, now 76, is serving a 100-year prison sentence for sexually abusing a boy. The father of three was able to keep working as a Scout leader of a troop that served the Burbank and Oak Lawn area despite being convicted of sex crimes against youths in Indianapolis in 1970 and Mount Prospect in 1971.

Hacker told a psychiatrist he had abused more than 100 boys. A state agency found that he had abused 34 boys in Illinois. He was arrested in 1988

after parents of one of the victims contacted police.

Civil lawsuits brought in the years immediately after Hacker's conviction were settled for large amounts of money.

The Boy Scouts declined to comment, issuing a statement saying the group had not yet seen the lawsuit.

“We deeply regret that there have been times when Scouts were abused, and for that we are very sorry and extend our deepest sympathies to victims,” the statement said.

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