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Another lawsuit alleges sex abuse by Scout leader

By John Christoffersen
Associated Press

STAMFORD—A former Boy Scout filed a lawsuit yesterday accusing the Boy Scouts of America of negligence for failing to prevent a Scout leader from sexually abusing him numerous times over six years.

The lawsuit, filed in Superior Court in Stamford, was the second to accuse Scout leader Bjarne Karlsen Jr. of Milford of abusing a Scout. Jay Trinidad, a 35-year-old Seattle man, filed a lawsuit last July against Karlsen and the Boy Scouts of America.

Karlsen, 59, died in July after a drug overdose that was ruled a suicide, according to the state medical examiner's office.

In the latest case, a 41-year-old Ansonia man identified only as John Doe says the Boy Scouts allowed Karlsen to camp alone in the same tent with him on Scout outings involving Stamford Boy Scout Troop 36.

Karlsen sexually abused the Scout many times during the trips from 1976 to 1982 and supplied him with marijuana and alcohol, according to the lawsuit.

"Long before this victim was assaulted, the Boy Scouts orga-

nization knew that numerous other Boy Scout troop leaders across the country had sexually abused youth participants," said Paul Slager, attorney for the plaintiffs in both lawsuits. "There was no excuse for allowing an adult leader to spend night after night alone in a tent with a youth who was not a relative. It was a recipe for disaster and, unfortunately, the Boy Scouts allowed this disaster to happen."

Louis Salute, executive of the Connecticut Yankee Council, which oversees the Scouts, said the Boy Scouts take child abuse

seriously and have stepped up protective measures over the years.

"We do things a lot differently in today's society than we would have back then," Salute said. "Society has changed a lot. Any case of child abuse is one too many and we take it very seriously."

Salute has said the organization conducts background checks of troop leaders and has youth protection guidelines, such as not allowing adults to be alone with Scouts.

Karlsen's sister, Andrea Karlsen, said after the first law-

suit was filed that the allegations were false. A telephone message was left for her yesterday.

"It is all untrue," Andrea Karlsen said in July. "His whole life was the Boy Scouts. He helped everyone. When my father died, he became the man of the family."

Karlsen was a troop leader for about 10 years until about a decade ago, Salute said.

Trinidad agreed through his attorney to be identified. The Associated Press does not regularly identify alleged victims of sexual assault without their consent.