

# Sheriff digs for new leads after man missing for a year

MISSING, from Page 1a

never be found. Family members have ideas about who was responsible, and feel that the former sheriff did not do everything he could have.

One reason some think McClelland might have run away before deputies arrived that night was that he was on probation for a drug conviction, and because he had a knife, he might have had his probation revoked and had to spend time in prison. However, family members believe even the threat of prison would not have stopped McClelland from at least calling home to see if it was OK to return.

"I don't believe the threat of prison was that great," Sheriff Butts said. "This was his first drug offense, and I do not believe that would have kept McClelland away this long without some contact with his family."

Other things complicate the investigation, including the fact that a woman who was with McClelland that night, the only witness to the

fight other than the Pedens, died just four months later.

Details of the events of that night and the argument are pretty one-sided, and that leaves room for rumors to develop. Butts said he is looking at all the information and may consider a search warrant for the Peden property.

"We know McClelland and Peden had an argument," former Sheriff Doug Whitson said last year. "We do not know exactly what it was about. McClelland apparently took off running on foot before the deputy arrived."

Whitson said Deputy Burton Pinalto, the first officer to arrive, did not see McClelland running away. Mark Peden told him McClelland had run away.

Sheriff Butts said Sunday that the Pedens said the scuffle took place near a shop south of their house. They claimed McClelland had come at Marci with a large knife.

Mark Peden said he had a shotgun and fired it three times over McClelland's head. When that did not stop him, he told officers, he hit

him with the gun.

Heather Marie Bissett, 42, Goodland, was with McClelland, a former Union Pacific railroad track worker. Butts said Bissett and McClelland had met while both were in a rehab program, and the couple was living together at a rural home.

Bissett apparently was pushed down in the scuffle. Butts said she had driven off in McClelland's yellow pickup before deputies arrived. Deputies found her in the pickup about a mile south of Pedens' and charged her with drunk driving. Butts said she had no idea what had happened to McClelland after she left.

Whitson said Bissett told deputies she had told McClelland to get in the truck, and when he didn't, she drove off, leaving him talking to Peden in front of the shop.

Bissett died suddenly of pneumonia Monday, March 29, at the Goodland Regional Medical Center.

Deputies searched around Peden's house that night until about 3 a.m., and they went back out again the next day with dogs and a plane. The search did not turn up any sign

of McClelland. Whitson said the deputies found a set of footprints they felt were his tracks heading to the southwest, but they lost them after a quarter of a mile.

Whitson said the footprints were not from anyone involved in the search, but there was no proof they belonged to McClelland.

Butts said he went to the home of McClelland's sister, Tammie Skrdlant, where she lived with Leonard Barnes about 3 1/2 miles north of Pedens', and asked if she had seen him. Butts said he spent some time on a nearby hill watching with a night vision scope to see if McClelland was heading to his sister's.

"I saw some deer and other animals," Butts said, "but no sign of any person."

A couple of weeks later, 17 volunteers and eight deputies walked, rode and flew a seven-mile section of Beaver Creek southwest of Peden's shop, hoping to find clues to the disappearance. At the end of the day, Whitson said at least he felt the search proved McClelland was not lying in a field in that area.

Since then, the sheriff's office has followed up on a series of rumors, but there has not been any contact from McClelland.

Opinions are split about whether

he may be alive and hiding.

Whitson said he listed McClelland in the National Crime Information computer in January for break-in probation because of his disappearance. Whitson said it was a way to get him in the nationwide criminal computer system to give his disappearance the broadest possible exposure. Missing person cases don't get that kind of treatment.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby said in January that McClelland had been sentenced on Nov. 3, 2003, on charges of unlawful manufacture of a controlled substance, and possession of a narcotic with intent to sell within 1,000 feet of a school. She said he was transferred to Community Corrections, and agreed that McClelland's disappearance violated the terms of the sentence. That could mean he would face prison time if he returned, she said.

McClelland and his wife Elaine, 40, were among six people arrested on Jan. 8, 2003, and charged with the cultivation of marijuana, possession of narcotics and drug paraphernalia, and manufacturing of methamphetamine.

Selby said McClelland's attorney, Paul Oller of Hays, arranged with the Union Pacific to reinstate him and to allow him to participate

in their drug rehabilitation program, which he completed in the summer of 2003. Though he was reinstated, the railroad laid him off last November because they did not have any work.

Some people believe Jimmy McClelland is alive and will be found through a traffic stop somewhere in the country.

"I don't know what to tell his mother," Sheriff Butts said. "We need to find out what happened to bring this to a conclusion."

"Just not knowing is terrible for the family. I want to get Jimmy's picture out again, and maybe someone will remember something."

"The sightings have slowed down, but we will follow up on everything. I know that Jan and Elaine (McClelland) have checked out a couple of sightings where people thought they saw Jimmy, and there was nothing."

Butts said he hopes that keeping the case fresh in people's minds will produce a new lead. He said the case is far from being solved, and he is hoping with the public's help there, may be some new facts that give him a chance to find the answers.

The sheriff said anyone with information about the disappearance should call him at 899-4835.

## Family afraid man is not alive

FAMILY, from Page 1

She said former Cheyenne County Sheriff Ray Lee of St. Francis offered to help, and he had talked to over 100 people in Sherman County about the missing man.

She said Lee called the KBI and the FBI to try to get something more done.

"We sent the KBI all the information," she added, "but we never heard a thing."

While his mother has hope of finding Jimmy alive, she is no longer certain.

"Maybe he's alive somewhere," she said, "but I don't think so. It is a hard thing to say."

Jan McClelland said she was upset more was not done within the first few days, and thought a more thorough search of the Peden farm should have been conducted.

"I don't have any respect for Doug Whitson," she said. "I liked him, but was disappointed that he did not get a search warrant for Peden's home."

Whitson said Monday he did not get a search warrant because the argument had been at the shop and nothing happened in the house as far as he knew. He said one of the deputies did do a quick walk through of the Peden home that night.

"I know that Doug Whitson thought Jimmy would show up that night," Sheriff Butts said. "I think we all thought that at first, but I do feel some things were not handled right that first night and in the next couple of days."

"I am not sure Peden killed McClelland," Whitson said Monday, "but it would be nice to find him to answer all the questions."

His mother said reports that McClelland had violated probation were not accurate.

McClelland had undergone rehabilitation and was on probation in connection with a drug conviction, she said.

"He hadn't broken his parole," she said. "He had made all his meetings, and the parole officers said he was doing what he was supposed to do."

Elaine McClelland, Jimmy's wife, said she and their two children made it through the anniversary of his disappearance on Wednesday, but they would like to know what happened.

"He couldn't leave his kids this long," Elaine said Saturday. "He loved his kids, and I know he would have called."

"I know he would have called his mother. He never missed a Mother's

Day. I know him. I was with him for 17 years."

His wife agrees with her mother-in-law that Jimmy is probably not alive, saying that if he was he would have called home to see if it was safe to come back.

"I don't think he was in that much trouble," Elaine said, "and I know he would not stay away this long without making some sort of contact."

His mother said Jimmy's friends, who helped organize the search last year, have stayed in contact and that none of them have heard from him.

For the missing man's family, life just seems to be getting harder. Elaine said that Jenny, 16, and Tyler, 13, have been through a tough year, and that their friends keep asking them about their father.

She said she recently lost her job because Jenny, who has suffered the most, had a seizure, and she was unable to go to work.

"I am looking for a job," she said. "I have been looking around here, but have not found anything. I have enough to get through the next month, but after that I am not sure what we will do."



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SHERMAN COUNTY, KANSAS				
2004 mill levies by taxing unit—All levies listed below are taxes per \$1000 valuation				
Add the mill levies for each taxing district located within your tax unit to obtain the total composite levy for your tax unit. Tax units are indicated on your tax statement				
TAX UNITS	2003 LEVY	2004 LEVY	DIFFERENCE	
001 GOODLAND CITY (State, County, Goodland City & USD 352)	146.124	148.450	+ 2.326	
002 KANORADO CITY (State, County, USD 352, Kanorado City, SCRFD #1, Regional Library)	168.803	160.007	- 8.796	
040-GRANT TWP. (State, County, USD 352, SCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	102.191	102.060	- .131	
110-IOWA TWP. (State, County, USD 352, SCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	102.191	102.060	- .131	
111-IOWA TWP. (State, County, USD 314, SCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	103.877	101.250	- 2.627	
112-IOWA TWP. (State, County, USD 314, LCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	100.032	100.072	- .040	
080-ITASCA TWP. (State, County, USD 352, SCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	102.191	102.060	- .131	
060-LINCOLN TWP. (State, County, USD 352, SCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	102.191	102.060	- .131	
010-LLANOS TWP. (State, County, USD 352, SCRFD, Reg. Lib. & Twp.)	102.842	102.794	- .048	
011-LLANOS TWP. (State, County, USD 314, SCRFD, Reg. Lib. & Twp.)	104.528	101.984	- 2.544	
070-LOGAN TWP. (State, County, USD 352, SCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	102.191	102.060	- .131	
130-MCPHERSON TWP. (State, County, USD 352, SCRFD, Reg. Lib. & Twp)	104.525	104.460	- .065	
020-SHERMANVILLE TWP. (State, County, USD 352, SCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	102.191	102.060	- .131	
021-SHERMANVILLE TWP. (State, County, USD 314, SCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	103.877	101.250	- 2.627	
120-SMOKY TWP. (State, County, USD 352, SCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	102.191	102.060	- .131	
050-STATELINE TWP. (State, County, USD 352, SCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	102.656	102.060	- .596	
100-UNION TWP. (State, County, USD 352, SCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	102.191	102.060	- .131	
101-UNION TWP. (State, County, USD 314, SCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	103.877	101.250	- 2.627	
030-VOLTAIRE TWP. (State, County, USD 352, SCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	102.191	102.060	- .131	
090-WASHINGTON TWP. (State, County, USD 352, SCRFD, Reg. Lib.)	104.123	102.060	- 2.063	
EXAMPLES OF HOW COMPOSITE LEVIES ARE FIGURED USING THE INDIVIDUAL DISTRICT LEVIES FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS SHEET:				
<b>Taxing Unit 001</b> (Goodland) State Levy 1.500 County Levy 58.174 Goodland Levy 50.811 USD 352 Levy 37.965	<b>Taxing Unit 111</b> (Iowa) State Levy 1.500 County Levy 58.174 USD 314 Levy 37.155 SCRFD #1 Levy 3.491 Reg. Lib. Levy .930 Iowa Twp. Levy .000	<b>Taxing Unit 112</b> (Iowa) State Levy 1.500 County Levy 58.174 USD 314 37.155 LCRFD Levy 2.313 Reg. Lib. Levy .930 Iowa Twp. Levy .000	<b>Taxing Unit 010</b> (Llanos) State Levy 1.500 County Levy 58.174 USD 352 37.965 SCRFD 3.491 Reg. Lib. Levy .930 Llanos Twp. Levy .734	
Total Goodland 148.450	Total Iowa 101.250	Total Iowa 100.072	Total Llanos 102.794	
NOTE: SINCE 1998, SB41 ALLOWS FOR AN EXEMPTION OF \$20,000 ON THE MARKET VALUE OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES. THIS EXEMPTION ONLY APPLIES TO THE 20.000 MILLS ON THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S GENERAL LEVY.				
TAX LEVIES – 2004—SHERMAN COUNTY				
Total County Valuation: \$ 57,283,196 – Rate on each \$ 1,000 Assessed Valuation				
DISTRICT	2003	2004	DIFFERENCE	
STATE:	1.500	1.500	.000	
COUNTY:	58.673	58.174	- .499	
CITIES:				
GOODLAND	50.062	50.811	+ .749	
KANORADO	66.147	57.947	8.200	
TOWNSHIPS:				
LLANOS	.651	.734	+ .083	
MCPHERSON	2.334	2.400	- .066	
STATELINE	.465	0	- .465	
WASHINGTON	1.932	0	- 1.932	
STATE and COUNTY Valuation \$57,283,196				
STATE LEVIES: (ST100)	PER K.S.A.	LEVY		
State General Fund		0		
Educational Building	76-6b01	1.000		
State Institutional Bldg.	76-6b04	.500		
	TOTAL	1.500		
COUNTY LEVIES: (CO200)				
General	79-1946	12.978		
Road & Bridge	79-1946	14.949		
Noxious Weed	2-1318	.994		
County Health	65-204	.473		
Conservation District	2-1907b	.306		
Extension Council	2-610	1.716		
Election	25-2201a	.603		
Community College Tuition	71-301	.543		
County Home. Maint.	9-2106a	.432		
Historical Society	19-2651	.194		
Appraiser's Cost	19-436	1.908		
Program for the Elderly	12-1680	.954		
Free Fair	2-132	.403		
Soldier's Mem. Park	19-2803a	.231		
Cemetery	19-3105	.755		
City-County Recreation	19-2803a	.480		
Library	12-1230	.232		
County Hosp. Maint.	19-4606	5.173		
Employee Benefits	12-16,102	12.888		
Tort Liability	75-6101	.170		
Bond & Interest	10-113	1.792		
	TOTAL	58.174		
CITIES:				
GOODLAND (C001)	Valuation \$ 24,861,465			
General	12-101a	24.757		
Bond & Interest	10-113	4.531		
Library	12-1230	4.029		
Employee Benefits-City	12-16,102	15.291		
Employee Benefits-Library	12-16,102	.349		
Airport	3-113	1.854		
	TOTAL	50.811		
KANORADO (C002)	Valuation \$ 584,158			
General	12-101a	48.708		
Employee Benefits	12-16,102	9.239		
	TOTAL	57.947		
I, Janet R. Rumpel, Sherman County Clerk, do hereby certify that this levy sheet is a complete list of the 2004 tax levies on all tangible property in Sherman County, as well as the assessed valuation for each District. Copies of the budgets are available in my office.				
Janet R. Rumpel Sherman County Clerk				
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