

## WF Police, Firefighters Rescue Trapped Infant; Tragedy Averted

By FRED LECOMTE  
 and SUZETTE F. STALKER  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD - Westfield police and firefighters rescued a 16-month-old toddler Monday afternoon after the infant tumbled nearly 10 feet into a construction hole at the Tamaques Park tennis courts.

A 911 call was received at 3:57 p.m. that the boy, identified as John Butterfield of Metuchen, had fallen into the three-foot-diameter hole, according to Sergeant Scott Rodger of the Westfield Police Department. Police officers Greg Kasko, Harold Kaufield and Robert Beaton responded to the scene along with the Westfield Fire Department.

Sergeant Rodger said the youngster, who was visiting the park with his mother, Jay Giacalone-Butterfield, had been playing on a mound of dirt adjacent to the hole when the accident occurred. He said the dirt had been excavated for the purpose of installing lights around the park's tennis courts.

"Upon arrival, we immediately requested the Union County Confined Space Tactical Rescue team out of the City of Elizabeth — which specializes in rescues from confined spaces," said Westfield Fire Chief Dan Kelly. However, local authorities opted not to wait when the child became unresponsive.

"The particular situation that we were up against was that the child was wedged between a pre-cast concrete column that was in a hole that was 36 inches in diameter and the

void space between the pre-cast column of the rough opening," said Chief Kelly, noting the excavation was eight inches and nine feet below grade.

Firefighters were able to confirm that the toddler was breathing and was responsive to verbal stimuli. Westfield firefighter Michael Duels was put on a rescue rope and descended in an attempt to retrieve him; however, the first attempt was unsuccessful.



Courtesy of the WFD  
**DANGER...Infant became wedged 10 feet down in this construction hole.**

When the child became unresponsive a short time later, firefighter James Pfeiffer volunteered to have his feet tied by a rope and lowered into the shaft. A group of his fire colleagues, together with police officer Kasko, lowered him down the hole. After hearing him say, "I've got him!" they pulled Pfeiffer and the child up from the shaft.

The other firefighters included Chief Kelly, Deputy Chief Kenneth Dannevig, Deputy Chief David Kelly,

Captain Roger Sawicki, Lieutenants Anthony Tiller, Scott Miller and James Ryan, Jr., Michael Sawicki, Michael Skubish and Ben Corbin.

After being brought up from the hole, the child, who sustained scratches on his face, was given first aid treatment. Paramedics assessed the toddler and transported him to Overlook Hospital in Summit.

"It was one of great relief," said Chief Kelly. "We were glad the child was breathing and the initial assessment pointed out that he did not have any broken limbs. Naturally, we had to treat our two firefighters and send them to Overlook Hospital to be checked for respiratory or other possible injuries."

According to Chief Kelly, later that evening, a third firefighter, Michael Skubish, was treated for a knee injury suffered at the scene.

"After the successful completion of the rescue, we made an assessment of the entire location and found six open excavations," said Chief Kelly. "The town engineer was notified and responded to the scene along with the Department of Public Works (DPW)."

That evening, police and firefighters cordoned off the construction site by installing caution tape at the scene. The DPW installed construction fencing at the site.

"Heroic actions of our Westfield firefighters on Monday proved successful with the rescue of the 16-month-old male toddler," added Chief Kelly. "Their level of training paid

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Benjamin B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader  
**BILLOWING...Black smoke was visible for miles Saturday afternoon, as the fire at Bartell Farm & Garden Supply off Central Avenue in Clark was fought for hours by several fire departments.**

## NCLB Semantics Cause Row Over Edison Inter. School's Distinction

By MICHAEL POLLACK  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

The No Child Left Behind standardized testing has caused a row after *The Star-Ledger* published an August 11 article stating that Edison Intermediate School in Westfield did not achieve the standards set forth in the No Child Left Behind policy. *The Westfield Leader* published a follow-up story that echoed the claims made in that piece.

Westfield education representatives informed the *Leader* that the *Star-Ledger* article was incorrect because Edison did indeed meet its Average Yearly Progress (AYP) for 2005. AYP is a standard to make sure a child is achieving at his or her average grade level. By the 2013-2014 school year, all students must be at the proficient level of state testing. This year is the first where schools must test third through eighth graders in mathematics and reading. Come 2007, science will be required.

The NCLB standards, adopted in early January of 2002, seek to make sure that all children are afforded the best opportunity to learn and that their educators are held to a standard of excellence. Jon Zlock, a public information spokesman for the New Jersey Department of Education, provided the *Leader* with a release and chart that illustrates how the law works.

According to a press release circulated August 10 by the state Department of Education, "If a school misses AYP in any one of the 40 indicators for any test calculation after having achieved AYP in prior years, it is placed on an 'Early Warning' list. Early Warning schools face no NCLB sanctions. This is a category developed by New Jersey as a way to remind school officials that if they do not make AYP in the following year, they will be placed on the NCLB Schools In Need of Improvement List."

Edison was placed on Early Warning status last year, but did meet requirements this year, which avoided it being placed on the Schools in Need of Improvement List. Technically, according to the press release, "In 2004-2005, 376 schools were placed on the Early Warning List."

### Tracy Accepts Linden School Security Post

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD - Westfield Police Chief Bernard Tracy is expected to resign within the next few weeks to accept a job as a school security officer in Linden, *The Westfield Leader* has learned.

Chief Tracy informed Town Administrator Jim Gildea on August 18 that he had accepted the Linden job. The chief, who is on vacation through early September, has yet to submit a formal letter of retirement to the town. "I think it is fair to say that the chief will be leaving in early September," Mr. Gildea said.

Mr. Gildea said he expects to appoint an acting chief to replace Chief Tracy in the interim until the town completes the lengthy process of appointing a permanent chief. Captain Clifford Aucher is currently serving as acting chief until Chief Tracy returns from vacation.

Chief Tracy was approved on August 17 as a schools public safety officer at

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Forty-seven schools were placed in Early Warning 'Hold' status, which means that while they made AYP this year, they did not make it in the 2003-2004 school year. Schools must make AYP two years in a row in order to be removed from either the Early Warning or SINI list."

Dr. Carmen Centuolo, county superintendent, confirmed that Edison is on "Hold" status, indicating, "We should watch and see. It means that caution should be taken as we work towards progress." If a school is not fully compliant with all testing achievements, she said the "district needs to be aware and we highlight the school to put our full emphasis on it." In terms of the "Hold" status, she said, "it's nothing extremely disturbing."

When posed the question, Dr. Centuolo agreed that aspects of the NCLB are a semantics game. She said the problems are real, though, and they're not affecting the schools one might imagine.

"Most schools are having difficulty. Even Summit had a similar situation. That's a high achieving district. But the NCLB has brought the subgroup population to light."

The subgroups consist of distinctions such as "economically disadvantaged," "limited English" and "special education." Dr. Centuolo reinforced that all subgroups must meet the standard. She admitted it is "difficult when kids are sent out of district with special needs. That's why you are seeing schools try to educate in-house, so they have control."

Dr. Centuolo noted that if a child is not severely disabled, he or she must take the test.

"Then it becomes the dog chasing its tail and then you realize that's the reason behind the NCLB — because a certain subset of students aren't passing the tests. That's why the test exists."

She noted that while urban districts have their share of problems, the suburban districts face issues achieving sufficient levels with traditionally disadvantaged populations. Dr. Centuolo noted that the established standards and subgroups make it difficult for schools to achieve at the level NCLB mandates.

Park Middle School in Scotch Plains has entered its first year of Early Warning status, while Scotch Plains Fanwood High School, like

Edison, has scored proficiently on all 40 indicators this year and is on "Hold" status.

Dr. Margaret Hayes, Scotch Plains Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Instruction and Assessment, said that, "the black students did not pass the language arts requirement" and, as a result, the school is deemed in Early Warning status.

Dr. Hayes explained that Park Middle School was deficient in passing all requirements for NCLB a couple of years ago because of special education requirements. She said that after Park was found to be failing in an area, "we met as a group of administrators and we recognized that it was one of 40, but we still took it seriously."

The administrators examined the basic skills and developed a program called Reaching, Achieving, Succeeding (RAS) to aid teachers and students.

Scotch Plains Superintendent of Schools Dr. Carol Choye said she was proud of the fact that "her staff focused positively at the high school" and helped students pass the requirements. She said the staff at Park did data analysis to follow the children through the system and identify areas where extra help could be provided.

Dr. Choye wanted to avoid questions of fairness, but said, "it really isn't fair" that the high school was not recognized for the work it did. On paper, the school is merely in hold status and doesn't highlight that "a lot of teachers went over and above and stayed after to help children. We worked with the kids caught in the middle. The kids who weren't in the APs, but not in special education either, and we gave them a boost."

Dr. Choye cautioned not to over generalize the failure in the African-American subgroup. "It depends on the number in the subgroup. You may have just as many, if not more, who passed than who didn't. In Scotch Plains and Fanwood, we're proud to have a very diverse population." She noted that there could be a number of variables responsible for the failure of the African-American subgroup in Language Arts.

"Did we cover all areas of knowledge? Are some learning through reading, listening? Some learn kinesthetically. We need to explore many ways to teach students," Dr. Choye

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## Chambers' Attorney Says Chief Retaliated After 'Social Relationship' Changed

# PD Chief Tracy Says Officer Lied During Internal Probe

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD - The Town of Westfield wrapped up its case last week against Westfield Police Detective Sandra Chambers, who has been suspended with pay for allegedly having a parking ticket voided for her son and trying to cover it up by lying.

Detective Chambers' attorney has charged that Police Chief Bernard Tracy is trying to terminate the detective in retaliation after their social relationship changed.

Chief Tracy testified that Detective

Chambers' charge that Detective Lisa Perrotta had Officer Pierce void a summons for Jefferson School secretary Jill Brown was not accurate. He determined that Ms. Brown was not a friend of Detective Perrotta's but a colleague at Jefferson. Detective Perrotta teaches the Stranger Danger and bicycle safety programs at the school.

The chief stated that Detective Perrotta told him she did not know Ms. Brown's last name or her home address.

The chief said he questioned Detec-

tive Chambers' home around 10 times. Most recently, he had dropped off \$1,000 in Christmas gifts for a needy family Detective Chambers was assisting.

Mr. Abdellah questioned whether such an action could be considered work related.

"I think it is work related," the chief responded. "Because it is part of what we do; help people."

The chief said he often called Detective Chambers, and that some of those calls were made on a cell phone she gave him and paid for.

"Are you aware that there could be a claim of retaliation against you?" Mr. Abdellah asked Chief Tracy in relation to charges pending against Detective Chambers.

When asked for further details on the question by the chief, Mr. Abdellah stated: "There is an allegation that at some point you had a relationship with Detective Chambers and as a result of what she would not do, you began to retaliate against her. And the purpose of bringing this action against her is to retaliate because she wouldn't do what you wanted her to do."

"Are you aware of that? She wouldn't comply; she wouldn't submit," said Mr. Abdellah.

"That's absurd," responded Chief Tracy.

At that point, attorney James Plosia, Jr., who is representing the town in this case, objected to the line of questioning by Mr. Abdellah.

"It's not relevant for why we are here," said Mr. Plosia.

Mr. Abdellah also put into evidence a picture of Chief Tracy's arm on Detective Chambers' shoulder. It was not known when or where the photograph was taken.

Chief Tracy said he determined there was not any wrongdoing on the part of Detective Perrotta and Officer Pierce with regards to the Brown ticket void.

After looking into Detective Chambers' allegation against Detective Perrotta and after learning of a possible ticket involving Detective Chambers, Chief Tracy called Detective Chambers and informed her he was initiating an internal investigation concerning the alleged improper voiding of tickets.

"She responded by saying she had her son's ticket voided," the chief testified. "If they could do it for their friends why couldn't I?" he quoted

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Sandra Chambers



Bernard Tracy

Chambers and Special Police Officer Jonathan Pierce were both disciplined for allegedly fixing a \$20 ticket issued to Detective Chambers' son in January for overtime parking.

The chief said Officer Pierce was taken off ticket writing duties but is still working normal hours. Officer Pierce also faces a disciplinary hearing, although no date has been set at this time. The penalty he faces has also not been determined, Chief Tracy said.

The chief said Detective Chambers faces termination for lying in regard to the internal departmental investigation that was conducted by Lieutenant David Wayman. Chief Tracy did a preliminary investigation.

"I believe Officer Pierce and Detective Chambers had known that together they improperly voided summons," Chief Tracy testified. "I think that's what the evidence shows."

When questioned as to why Detective Chambers faces termination, the chief responded, "Dishonesty is the real issue."

"Jonathan (Pierce) told the truth and Detective Chambers did not," during the ticket fix investigation, said Chief Tracy.

Chief Tracy said his preliminary investigation showed that Detective

tive Perrotta on the Brown ticket. He said Captain John Morgan, the Director of Parking Services, told him the Brown meter was determined to be a timing problem in that it would not accept dimes. An outage report and void slip were subsequently issued.

"She (Detective Perrotta) was upset that her integrity was being questioned," Chief Tracy said. "She felt the statement that Jill Brown was her friend was inaccurate."

The chief said Detective Chambers and Officer Pierce were "both being treated fairly."

Chief Tracy said DVD tapes show that no conversation, as stated by Detective Chambers, could have taken place between the detective and Officer Pierce in the hallway outside the parking department regarding the Brown and Chambers tickets, as alleged by Detective Chambers.

"It just doesn't seem to have been able to have taken place in that time frame," said Chief Tracy.

Detective Chambers' attorney, Hassen Abdellah, asked Chief Tracy to describe his relationship with Detective Chambers.

"We were friends and co-workers," he responded.

Chief Tracy stated he had been to



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader  
**FIGURING THINGS OUT...Superintendent of Westfield Public Schools Dr. William Foley meets with reporter Michael Pollack to discuss the No Child Left Behind Act and the meaning of local and statewide public school test results.**

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