

POLICE The SHIELD

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TOLEDO, OHIO

MARCH 1978

McGrath To Leave June 1

Chief of Police Corrin J. McGrath announced his resignation effective June 1 at a news conference in the Safety Building on February 27.

Chief McGrath said the decision to resign was his alone and that no one had asked or pressured him to step down. The chief said he would take employment in another city.

Toledo Police Patrolmen's Association President Gary Dunn said the chief's resignation was a surprise and stated that relations between the T.P.P.A. and Chief McGrath had been improving. The T.P.P.A. under former president Ken Perry had called for the chief's resignation early last summer.

As of yet, no one is certain who will replace Chief McGrath but according to inside sources there are several front runners in line for the job.

Chief McGrath was hired by the city in 1974.

INSIDE

	Page
Letter from ICPA	
President	2
Police Pistol Range	2
Letter to Inspector	3
Safety Comm. Report	4
Kruising With Kendrick	6
Contracts Around	
The Country	8

P.D.'s Finding It Tougher To Secure Liability Policies As Civil Suits Increases

By Patrick O'Donnell
Staff Reporter of the
Wall Street Journal

The police in Mansfield, Ohio, are jittery. So are those in Charlotte, N.C., and in a growing number of other communities.

The reason: More and more insurance companies are refusing to write liability policies for police departments. Or if they do, premiums are skyrocketing, often for sharply reduced coverage. Thus shorn of some or all of their insurance, officers in many cities and towns are worrying that their personal financial futures may be on the

line every time they make an arrest, chase a suspect or answer a radio call. And many policemen concede that their protection of the public may suffer.

The insurers have become reluctant to write police coverage because in recent years, deservedly or not, more and more police are winding up in court in the unaccustomed role of defendant. "It used to be all you had to worry about was some bad guy shooting you. Now, the people you arrest are suing you," Dade County, Fla., officer says. Among the police, he adds, "There's a certain amount of justifiable paranoia."

Nobody is sure how many of the nation's estimated 400,000 policemen are sued each year. However, experts say the changing legal and social climate, which has sharply increased malpractice litigation in medicine and other fields, has created an open-season atmosphere for false-arrest and police-brutality lawsuits.

Trend May Worsen

"There has been an explosion of suits against policemen in recent years, and it will get worse," declares Kenneth Henning, a University of Georgia professor and a specialist in municipal - government problems. "People are more aware of their rights, and they want to hold a specific individual responsible — not just the system — when they feel their rights have been violated," he says.

When that happens, it can send a city's insurance company running for the bunkers. Consider the case of Mansfield, which in the year ended last April had paid \$6,934 for coverage on about 130 people (some of whom weren't police officers and thus had only limited liability exposure).

The trouble there began about a year ago when a group of

schoolchildren on a field trip trooped through the city jail. They saw, among other things, a woman being held on auto-theft charges because a routine computer check indicated that she had been driving a stolen car. But it turned out that the computer was wrong, and the charges were dropped.

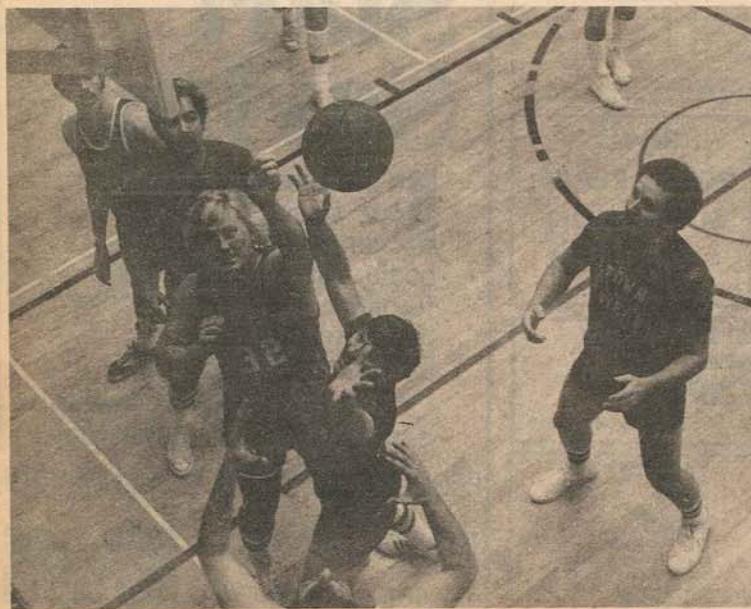
Shortly later, the woman sued, claiming she had been falsely arrested and then "exhibited like an animal in a circus cage." Her \$5 million suit named the state policemen who arrested her, the Mansfield mayor and police chief who run the jail, and International Business Machines Corp., which made the computer.

The suit was settled out of court for \$1,200, but city officials say it cost Mansfield its police liability insurance. "About 12 insurance companies have told me we're too big a risk — just because somebody sued us for \$5 million," said Clayton Long, the city's safety director, who runs the police and fire departments. "The men have been almost afraid to make an arrest since we lost our insurance in April," he adds.

Doubts Over City's Stand

Mansfield police fear that now they would have to pay attorney fees and adverse judgments out of their own pockets if they are sued, Mr. Long says. "The city says it'll back the police in court," he adds, "but we don't have anything in writing." A nervous policeman agrees. "If the guys in city hall don't like you, they could just hang you out to dry if you got sued. An insurance company couldn't do that," he says.

In many ways, the Mansfield episode is typical. Despite a few spectacular awards — like a still-contested \$12 million judgment against the U.S. Capitol Police over their handling of the 1971 May Day



Some members of the Toledo Police Patrolmen's Association played Federation basketball this season under the sponsorship of Gene's Town Tavern. In the picture above Mike Goetz reaches for a rebound.

(Cont. on Page 5)

Letter To The Editor

Safety Committee Report

ed at the point that Basic Legal Quality stress-
3) Addressee for the act of eating
Any mouse
the brave wolf, there wasn't a dry eye in the
entire forest.
As she knelt and placed a wreath in honor of the
swings before striking the fatal blow that killed
2) The woodcutter had made no warning
the wolf.
As she knelt and placed a wreath in honor of the
entire forest.
She said that, while she had indeed
reached for the woodcutter's intention, she
grateful for the woodcutter's intervention, she
overreacted.
But, at the inquest, several facts emerged:
1) The wolf had never been advised of his
rights.
2) The townspeople proclaimed the wolf with
a curse.
A woodcutter heard her cries, rushed to the
centre a horse.
The killing the wolf with
his axe. The townspeople proclaimed the wolf with
a curse.
All the village spoke of the incident at the
deception, but it was Red Riding Hood who
gave the touching tribute.
She said that, while she had indeed
reached for the woodcutter's intention, she
grateful for the woodcutter's intervention, she
overreacted.
3) Addressee for the act of eating
Basic Legal Quality stress-

Red Riding Hood Revisited

President's Desk

