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## Searchers locate girl's body

April 14, 2008

By JOSH O'GORMAN Herald Staff

WARDSBORO — Searchers have located the body of a 2-year-old girl in the same river where the bodies of her mother and sister were found the day before.

At 2:48 p.m. Sunday, search and rescue personnel found the body of Grace Waring of Wolcott, about three-tenths of a mile from where her mother and sister had been seen entering the water the day before.

Grace's body was removed from the water and transported to the Chief Medical Examiner's Office for autopsy.

Between 40 and 50 search and rescue personnel searched the river, riverbanks and surrounding woods for Grace, who was believed to have been missing since 1 a.m. Saturday, when Nicole Waring, 40, left her parents' home on Bills Road with her two daughters, Grace and 6-year-old Dakota.

Capt. David Covell, Troop D Commander with the Vermont State Police, said Nicole Waring's parents called state police in Rockingham to report Nicole, Dakota and Grace as missing.

At 11:30 a.m. Saturday, State Police Sgt. Robert McCarthy spotted Nicole Waring holding Dakota in her arms as she stood by the bank of the Wardsboro Brook about 100 yards from her parents' home.

Covell said McCarthy tried to engage Nicole Waring in an attempt to get her away from the edge of the brook, which was running faster and higher than usual due to melting snow.

Waring did not respond to McCarthy and instead entered the water. McCarthy ran toward Waring and found her standing waist-deep in the water against a large rock. As McCarthy reached out for her, Nicole Waring pushed off the rock and entered the current of the brook, police said.

According to Covell, interviews with family members indicated that Nicole Waring was "despondent."

At about 11:45 a.m. Saturday, rescue personnel recovered the body of Dakota Waring about a quarter-mile from where she and Nicole Waring had entered the water.



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**Colchester Technical Rescue workers search the Wardsboro Brook along Route 100 Sunday afternoon in Wardsboro. Searchers found the body of 2-year-old Grace Waring of Wolcott. The bodies of her mother and sister were found in the brook Saturday.**

Photo: CASSANDRA HOTALING / RUTLAND HERALD

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Rescue personnel found the body of Nicole Waring at 5:35 p.m. Saturday about three-quarters of a mile from where Dakota was found.

Rescue personnel suspended their search Saturday night due to lack of light.

On Sunday morning, rescue personnel from the state police, Upper Valley Search and Rescue, New England K-9 Search and Rescue, Rescue Inc., Stowe Mountain Rescue and Colchester Technical Rescue continued the search for Grace Waring.

Covell said the search focused on the woods around Nicole Waring's parents' home and a 6-mile stretch of the Wardsboro Branch, from where Nicole and Dakota entered the water down to where it meets the West River.

Searchers also focused on the 3.5-mile stretch of the West River, from its junction with the Wardsboro Branch to the Townshend Dam, Covell said.

Rescuers broke into groups of three, with two men holding each other's shoulders and the shoulders of a third man who probed the river bottom with a metal pole.

Covell said that with toxicology results pending, he could not say if drugs or alcohol were factors in the drownings. He said Nicole's death had not been ruled a suicide.

Covell that it would be several weeks before the State Medical Examiner's Office issued their final causes of death. Preliminary results indicated they had drowned.

Covell said Nicole Waring was married to Michael Waring and the two resided together in Wolcott.

Covell said there is no indication the Warings were estranged and that Nicole's visit to her parents "was by all accounts a standard visit," Covell said.

Covell said Michael Waring was out of state at the time of the deaths but had been notified and had returned to Vermont.

State Police's Bureau of Criminal Investigation is continuing to investigate the deaths.

Wardsboro resident Alison Brown said she had gone to school with Nicole Waring until sixth grade and described her family as well-regarded in the community.

"This is such a tragedy for such a nice family," Brown said.

Attempts to speak with Michael Waring and Nicole Waring's parents were unsuccessful.

Contact Josh O'Gorman at [josh.ogorman@rutlandherald.com](mailto:josh.ogorman@rutlandherald.com).



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