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## City & Region

### POLICE & COURTS

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Clarence bedroom fire caused by space heater

A faulty electric space heater left on in a bedroom sparked an afternoon blaze Monday that caused \$40,000 damage to a Salt Road home in the Town of Clarence, Amherst Fire Control reported.

The fire broke out shortly after 3 p.m. in the 7215 Salt Road home of Pat Jenkins.

Clarence Center firefighters arrived on scene to find a fire in an upstairs bedroom and contained it to that room in the 1 1/2 -story wood-frame Cape Cod style home.

No injuries were reported.

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Convicted drug dealer acquitted in robbery

A convicted Buffalo drug dealer was acquitted Monday on charges he robbed a common-law relative who was shot nearly 14 months ago.

Larry Willis, 24, smiled as the jury announced its verdict in the courtroom of Erie County Judge Sheila A. DiTullio following 45 minutes of deliberations. Willis, who did not testify, shook the hand of his lawyer, Paul Gordon Dell, and thanked the veteran trial attorney for his help.

Willis, who faced life in prison had he been convicted of taking part in the alleged Dec. 22, 2009, robbery and shooting of David Combs, was found not guilty of first- and second-degree robbery charges.

Combs, 36, identified Willis as one of the two men who "put a gun to my head" and stole about \$2,500 or so in gambling earnings. But Combs also said he didn't see who shot him in the head and back as he fled the two hooded robbers.

Dell said Willis is likely to be released from custody within the next month, having satisfied the time he faced on parole violation counts linked to a 2008 drug conviction.

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Three teens arrested in strong-arm robbery

Amherst police said Monday that they charged three teenagers from Buffalo and Amherst in connection with a strong-arm robbery over the weekend.

Officer Mark Dimino saw a fight on Main Street, near the Amherst-Buffalo border, shortly before 8:30 p.m. Friday. Two people involved in the incident fled on foot, but Dimino was able to detain a third person.

The officer determined that the fight was a strong-arm robbery, and his subsequent investigation led to the arrest of the three teens.

Charged with robbery, assault and petit larceny, according to police reports, were Brianna Scott, 16, of Hewitt Avenue; Kendra Stevens, 17, of Kerns Avenue; and Lorenzo Romaine, 17, of North Bailey Avenue, Amherst.

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Prescription drugs stolen during Falls burglary

NIAGARA FALLS -- Prescription painkillers were among the items stolen from a Ninth Street home during a Saturday afternoon burglary.

Someone forced open a rear apartment door and entered the home sometime between 1 and 9:50 p.m., police said. Several drawers inside were ransacked, and nearly 200 prescription Hydrocodone and Soma tablets were reported stolen.