

Explosive devices found in NT apartment on July 4

MICHAEL DEPIETRO
Tribune Editor

It was a scary scene in North Tonawanda over the holiday weekend when a street was shut-down after police found explosive devices in an apartment on Tremont Street.

According to a press release, on July 4, the North Tonawanda Police Department responded to 232 Tremont St., for what appeared to be a structure fire. When questioned, the resident initially told responding officers he had burnt food in his kitchen. Officers were suspicious of what had happened due to the large amount of smoke coming out of the apartment. With some persistence, the resident identified as Daniel Benchik, spoke with officers face to face where it was apparent he required medical attention. Benchik had burns to his hands and face. He was the only person injured as a result of the incident.

Detectives were called in to investigate the scene after several "suspicious items" were found. The Niagara County Drug Task Force officers, along with the Erie County Bomb Squad, Niagara County Hazmat, HSI and ATF,

all responded to the scene where multiple explosive devices were located inside of the apartment.

The press release said Benchik was being treated for his injuries and charges are pending until investigation is completed. As of July 8, NTPD said there have been no shareable updates in the case. Benchik is considered innocent unless or until convicted in a court of law.

During Tuesday's Common Council meeting, Krista Vince Garland, of 238 Tremont St., provided her eyewitness account of the day's events.

"We looked next door, saw some smoke coming out of our neighbor's window, looked at it for a minute, and saw our neighbor run to the back of the property with a smoke detector kind of bundled up like he was carrying a football. (He) took it to the back of the property and ditched it," Garland said. "Dennis, my husband, saw him in the front, and asked if everything was OK. He said that he had a cooking fire and that things were all right. (We) went back in, kind of watched this smoke start to go out the chimney and smoke come out the roof

vents and smoke come out the basement. And we decided we probably needed to make another phone call, and we did. And then neighbors came out. He came out immediately. First responders took care of our neighbor; he had burns. They took care of them; they paid attention to them and everything seemed pretty typical."

Soon after, as more and more crews arrived on the scene, her family went out. When they later returned, the street had been blocked off and neighbors were standing outside.

Garland went on to thank first responders and local leaders for their care and diligence in the face of the incident. She also expressed gratitude for community members for the way they came together to look after each other.

"I saw my neighbors in a way I've never seen my neighbors before. I saw my neighbors in volunteer, firefighter equipment. And I saw my neighbors blocking off my street and keeping onlookers safe and helping people to continue to stay calm while (responders) were doing their job," Garland said.

Cuomo signs legislation permitting use of municipal space for outdoor dining

Legislation extends governor's executive order; new law allows restaurants to operate on municipal sidewalks & closed streets

Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Wednesday signed legislation (S.6353-A/A.7733) that will allow restaurants to utilize municipal spaces like sidewalks and streets for outdoor dining. First granted under an executive order, this law allows restaurants to continue using these public spaces for another year as they recover from the economic devastation brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As we build New York back better than it was before, it's important that we learn from the past and capitalize on those efforts that helped so many of New York's small businesses survive amid the global pandemic," Cuomo said. "By extending the much-needed lifeline that allowed restaurants to use outdoor public spaces for seating during the pandemic, New York is ensuring that these small businesses will be able to continue to use these spaces as they work

to rebuild and support the revitalization of the Empire State."

Restaurants were especially impacted by the pandemic, with many continuing to struggle as New York recovers. The continued use of public spaces builds upon other supports provided to these establishments by the state, including the \$800 million COVID-19 Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant Program.

Initially issued in June 2020 and expiring after a year, the governor's executive order allowed restaurants and bars to serve their patrons food or beverages on-premises in outdoor space while their indoor capacity was limited. Specifically, these establishments were permitted to expand the licensed premises to use public space such as sidewalks or closed streets, subject to reasonable limitations and procedures set by the State Liquor Authority and the

safety and supervision plans of the local municipality.

A press release stated, "With the conclusion of the declared disaster emergency, the executive orders must be codified by the Legislature to continue in effect or rely on other existing regulatory power of a state agency. In this case, the legislation was necessary to allow the state Liquor Authority the discretion to continue the use of this space without prior approval."

"Restaurant usage of outdoor public space must meet all federal, state and local laws, rules and guidance, according to the signed legislation. Restaurants must also have a temporary use permit from the municipality, which is tasked with ensuring the public space is used in a safe, orderly manner. New applicants will need to provide community notification in a manner consistent state Alcoholic Beverage Control Law."

State Parks Niagara River Greenway Standing Committee releases 2021 schedule

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Niagara River Greenway Standing Committee has released its schedule of 2021 meetings – which will be held only if there are new business items to review. Meetings will take place at DeVeaux Woods State Park, unless otherwise noticed, at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 25, Oct. 13 and Dec. 1.

Press releases will be sent with updates regarding each meeting and more information can be found at <https://parks.ny.gov/newsroom/meeting-notices/>.

The State Parks Standing Committee receives funds from New

York Power Authority as part of a settlement agreement related to the 50-year license received by NYPA in 2007 for the operation of the Niagara Power Project. In addition to the State Parks Standing Committee, three other standing committees were created to disperse funds those groups received in other settlement agreements with NYPA: Greenway Ecological Standing Committee, Host Community Greenway Fund Standing Committee, and the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee.

The Niagara River Greenway Commission is a public benefit corporation established by Chap-

ter 460 of the laws of 2004, and charged with the planning and development of a greenway of interconnected parks, river access points and waterfront trails along the Niagara River from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario at the site of the historic Fort Niagara.

To learn more about the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation log onto www.nysparks.state.ny.us. To learn more information about the commission, log onto www.niagararivergreenway.com. For more information about NYPA and the relicensing of the Niagara project, visit <http://niagara.nypa.gov>.

2 LOCATIONS

GENTLEMEN'S CLUB BARBER SHOP 1040 Payne Ave. North Tonawanda • 716-990-9149

SENIOR HAIRCUT SPECIAL \$8.00
8-10AM Tues.-Fri.

10AM-7PM Mon.-Fri. | 7AM-3PM Sat.

Owner: Kyle Kabel Cash & Walk-Ins Only

GENTLEMEN'S CLUB BARBER SHOP 5839 Buffalo St. Sanborn • 716-804-4363

SENIOR HAIRCUT ALL DAY \$10.00

ALL OTHER CUTS \$12.00

SUMMER SATURDAY SPECIAL \$6.00

Sun. & Mon. Closed | 10AM-6PM Tues.-Fri. | 9AM-2PM Sat.

Cash & Walk-Ins Only

Call Your Local Farmers Agent to Insure Your Home, Auto, Life & Business Today.

WE ARE INSURANCE. WE ARE FARMERS.
716.405.7420

PAUL HUTCHINS
Your Local Agent
245 PORTAGE RD
LEWISTON, NY 14092-1710
PHUTCHINS@FARMERSAGENT.COM

FARMERS INSURANCE
Auto | Home | Life | Business

HAVE KLEEN WINDOWS YEAR-ROUND!

Kleen Windows, Inc.
www.kleenwindows.com
773-7580
"We're the guys in the white shirts"

- WINDOWS
- SKYLIGHTS
- MIRRORS
- GUTTERS

CALL TODAY FOR ADDITIONAL DISCOUNTS
716-773-7580

\$25 OFF NEW PROGRAMS

SPRING, SUMMER, FALL

COMPUTER PROBLEMS?

Geeks on Site
Call Now for a FREE Diagnosis
1-866-848-0045

Friendly Certified Computer Repair Experts

Simply mention coupon code **42513** and get

\$20 OFF

any service you need!

One time use only. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other coupon or offer. *Chopper offer good until December 31, 2021. *Not for any service except subscription fees. Must mention coupon at time of sale.

Donate Your Car & Help Grant A Child's Wish

Help Local Children And Get Free & Easy Towing

Visit WheelsForWishes.org or call (877)-798-9474

Benefiting **Make-A-Wish**

Car Donation Foundation d/b/a Wheels For Wishes. To learn more about our programs or financial information, call (213) 948-2000 or visit www.wheelsforwishes.org

GREATER WESTERN NEW YORK

New State?
Autonomous Zone?
or Something Else...

What's Your Choice?

Join us this JULY 15 at 7:30pm for...

A Midsummer Night's (Virtual) Town Meeting

Do you want the private link? Register for free at...

GREATERWESTERNNEWYORK.ORG