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Man guilty of arson, abuse

Suffered chest pains before jury verdict

by **Dave Racher**

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Waiting for a jury to deliberate his fate in a domestic-abuse and arson case gave Leonard Hicks chest pains.

Hicks, 45, began holding his chest and wincing yesterday. He said he felt like he was having a heart attack.

So a rescue squad was called, and he was taken to a hospital for treatment.

While Hicks was being examined, the jury announced it had reached a verdict.

Rather than wait for Hicks' return, Common Pleas Judge Kathryn Streeter Lewis decided to take the verdict.

The panel found him guilty of terrorizing his former girlfriend, Susan Tyson, and setting fire to the Euphrasia House, on Logan Street near Germantown Avenue, where she had been living in March, 1999.

Hicks, of Fairhill Street near Huntingdon, was acquitted of setting fire to Tyson's new apartment building on Price Street near Wakefield, several hours before the Euphrasia House blaze, which caused about \$50,000 in damage.

No one was injured in the fires, said Assistant District Attorney Theresa Brunson.

Lewis sent sheriff's deputies to the hospital to pick up Hicks after he passed a physical, and he was taken to prison to await sentencing.

Brunson said that before the first fire, Hicks tried to run Tyson down in his car while she was walking to a Germantown Avenue bus stop.

Hicks first walked up to Tyson and asked to talk with her about reconciliation. She refused.

"I might as well kill you now," Hicks said.

Hicks then got into his car and drove up onto the sidewalk trying to ram Tyson, a Red Cross nurse, Brunson said.

Tyson escaped injury by jumping aside.

"He was like a simmering pot from the time she broke up with him," said Brunson.

"The pot boiled over after she just refused to have any contact with him," he said. ■