



Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA SINCE 1903

Inside Today Delta firefighters save woman and two dogs from burning home. » INTERIOR, A4

Man charged with wife's murder

By Weston Morrow
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A 25-year-old Fairbanks man was charged with first-degree murder Wednesday for allegedly murdering his wife at their home on McGrath Road earlier this week.

Jason Gautam stands accused of killing his wife, Tamara Santori, by shooting her in the head Monday. Gautam turned himself in at the Fairbanks Police Department on Monday afternoon.

According to charging docu-

ments, Gautam waived his Miranda rights and told a police investigator he had shot his wife two or three times in the head. He told investigators he had been contemplating suicide when his wife came home. He told police he knew she had been cheating on him and that the two got into a verbal dispute, and he blacked out and shot her, charging docu-



Gautam

ments state.

Alaska State Troopers first learned of the shooting at 12:41 p.m. when someone from the Office of Child Services called asking if troopers had received any reports of a murder-suicide involving Gautam and Santori. The caller told troopers that OCS had been informed by a school that a friend of the couple would be picking up their children from school because Gautam had shot his wife and then shot himself.

Fairbanks police learned of the shooting about 30 minutes

later when a worker from Sheridan Apartments walked into the department to report a homicide.

The man told police that a woman, Teresa Gautam, had walked into the apartment office and frantically stated there had been a shooting. The staff member drove her to Gautam's and Santori's home on McGrath Road, a single story trailer.

The man told police that when he entered the trailer he found Santori's body as well as a loaded firearm. Gautam was still in the trailer and said he planned to

turn himself in, according to the man's report.

About 10 minutes after the man gave his report to police, Gautam appeared at the department and turned himself in to officers. Gautam asked police "to take his shoes and belt because he wasn't sure what he was going to do to himself," charging documents state.

Gautam also allegedly posted online following the shooting, stating that he had shot his wife.

MURDER » A5

GOOD MORNING



The weather.

Partly cloudy today.
High today 31
Low tonight 18

WEATHER » A9

Aurora forecast.

Auroral activity will be moderate. Weather permitting, displays will be visible overhead from Barrow to Talkeetna.

This information is provided by aurora forecasters at the Geophysical Institute at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. For more information about the aurora, visit <http://www.gialaska.edu/AuroraForecast>

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FOOTBALL AWARDS

Lathrop duo named Railbelt conference players of the year.

SPORTS
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SOURDOUGH JACK:

"Does my outhouse count as a permafrost tunnel? I could fix it up real nice with \$1.5 million."



CHILLY RIDE



Dj Tyson rides on the Farmers Loop bike path on Wednesday. ERIN CORNELIUSSEN/NEWS-MINER

UAF lands \$1.5 million grant for permafrost tunnel and exhibit

By Jeff Richardson
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A dusty permafrost tunnel near Fox will become the focus of a traveling exhibit in the next few years, with a goal of providing a real-world window into the

issues behind climate change.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks Geophysical Institute has landed a \$1.5 million federal grant to expand the use of the underground tunnel as a public teaching tool. For the past half-century the tunnel has been

used as a research area for mining, cold-weather studies and other disciplines.

The tunnel provides a frozen summary of the geological conditions that have shaped much

TUNNEL » A5

Man sentenced for shooting 18-year-old

By Robin Wood
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A man who shot a woman in the face had a two-year prison sentence plea agreement accepted Tuesday in Fairbanks Superior Court.

Edward E. Ginnis, 29, pleaded guilty in June to third-degree assault. Superior Court Judge Douglas Blankenship accepted the agreement, sentencing Ginnis to four years in prison, with two years suspended.

In March 2013, Ginnis shot then-18-year-old Teil Diaz between the eyes with a .22-caliber revolver at a University West apartment. He testified the shooting was an accident, and that at the time he believed the gun was a replica lighter. Diaz survived, but suffered serious lifelong injuries. She appeared and attempted to speak in court.

Ginnis sat with his head hung during the two-hour hearing, occasionally wiping his eyes on

the sleeve of his orange prison jumpsuit.

Fairbanks District Attorney Michael Gray said a charge of third-degree assault is determined by culpable mental status — whether it was reckless conduct or criminal negligence. "What we have here is criminally negligent conduct. We can't prove over that," Gray said.

Gray added that if the state could prove in any way that

SENTENCE » A5

Begich asks for review of 'Fairbanks Four' case

Senator requests Civil Rights Division action

By Sam Friedman
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U.S. Senator Mark Begich has asked the federal government to review the convictions of four men jailed since 1997 for a Fairbanks murder.

In a letter dated Oct. 2 and announced in a news release Wednesday morning, Begich asked for a "formal Civil Rights Division" review of the four men convicted of killing Fairbanks teenager John Hartman.

"Allegations of prosecutorial misconduct and coercion, along with evidence uncovered in recent years ... have cast serious doubt on the original convictions," Begich said in the letter to outgoing U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder.

Both Alaska senators now favor a federal review. Alaska's other senator, Lisa Murkowski, previously wrote to Holder about the Hartman case in October 2013. In that letter, she didn't formally request a review but said she wanted "no stone be left unturned" in the case. Murkowski's spokesman Matt Felling said Wednesday that Murkowski wants formal Civil Rights Division review of the case. It's her understanding that Department of Justice is moving toward or already engaged in this review, he said.

Hartman, 15, was found badly beaten with fatal wounds in October 1997 at the corner of Ninth Avenue and Barnette. George Frese, Kevin Pease, Marvin Roberts and Eugene Vent were convicted in three different jury trials and given sentences of between 33 and 79 years. Their advocates call the group the "Fairbanks Four."

Begich spokeswoman Heather Handyside said Wednesday that

HARTMAN » A5

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Help us make 2015 an entertaining and colorful year!

Submit your photo of life in Interior Alaska and it might make it into our 2015 calendar. Our calendar, which includes dates of local events and activities, makes a great holiday gift. Calendars will be available for sale by Thanksgiving Day.

Send your photo to contest@newsminer.com by October 31.

Photos from 2014 only, please. Submissions must include photographer contact information for verification.

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