

FAIRBANKS

Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA SINCE 1903

Inside Today

Former Fairbanks gun dealer sentenced for illegal weapons possession. » INTERIOR, A6

Groups want gov. to reverse adoption decision

By Matt Buxton
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JUNEAU — Many Alaska Native organizations are calling on Gov. Bill Walker and Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott to make good on promises to improve state and tribal relationships by joining them in asking the Alaska Supreme Court to reverse its decision in a case about the adoption of an Alaska Native child.

Tanana Chiefs Conference, the Alaska Federation of Natives and 12 other groups want the court to revisit a September decision allowing an Alaska Native infant to be adopted by non-Native parents in Anchorage because her grandmother, who lived in Tununak, didn't officially file to adopt her.

The case, Native Village of Tununak v. State, was decided in a 3-2 vote where the majority cited a U.S. Supreme Court decision about the Indian Child Welfare Act, which is designed to keep Native American children in their communities or with family when possible.

NATIVE GROUPS » A7

GOOD MORNING



The weather.

Partly cloudy with temps not likely reaching above zero.

High today 0

Low tonight -22

WEATHER » A9

Aurora forecast.

Auroral activity will be low. Weather permitting, low displays will be visible overhead from Barrow to Fairbanks.

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.gi.alaska.edu/Aurora-Forecast>

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CANADA BASED, AFRICAN ROOTS

African Guitar Summit kicks off Interior concerts tonight and comes to Fairbanks on Friday evening.

LATITUDE 65

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SOURDOUGH JACK: "This sure ain't Brazil. I'm lucky to get a shower a week."

Schools inquiry violates law

Teachers asked not to discuss internal investigation with anyone other than union

By Weston Morrow
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Internal investigation methods practiced within the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District have put staff on edge and may have violated federal labor law, according to teachers.

Letters sent to teachers show investigators suppressed teachers' rights to speak, an apparent violation of labor law, by implying teachers could not discuss the fact they were being investigated with anyone other than their union representative or the investigators themselves.

Recordings of one teacher's dealings with the Labor Rela-

tions Department show investigators misled him about his options and kept him in the dark about why he was being investigated.

The tapes also show investigators telling the teacher he could not see any of the evidence presented against him in a simple professional practices complaint.

One teacher's case

John Yordy, a teacher in the Fairbanks school district, provided the Daily News-Miner with recordings of several of his interactions with labor relations investigators from the last few months.

ONLINE » Reference related documents with this story online, including the letter sent to teachers.

» www.newsminer.com

Internal investigations can be started for almost any form of complaint. Reasons can range from the relatively benign, such as an accusation that a teacher said something unprofessional to a colleague or broke with established procedure, to the more serious, such as an accusation that a teacher hit a student or maintained an inappropriate relationship with a student.

In the Fairbanks district, when

labor relations personnel decide to investigate a teacher, they send the teacher a letter of intent to investigate. The letter sent to Yordy by the district implied he could not discuss the investigation with anyone.

"The investigatory process is confidential, and should not be discussed with others. All questions and/or concerns with the matter should be forwarded to your union representative and should not be discussed outside of our scheduled meeting," the letter states.

Federal labor law prohibits such language.

LABOR » A7

Remembering serum runners



Josephine Roberts watches dog teams come in and leave the checkpoint at the community center from her home on Wednesday in Tanana. Roberts, 93, is the oldest woman in Tanana, and her father, Edgar Nollner, was a serum runner. This is the second time Tanana has served as a checkpoint in the Iditarod and is the third checkpoint in the 2015 race. Lack of snow on parts of the trail caused the race to begin in Fairbanks this year for the second time since it began in 1973.

ERIN CORNELIUSSEN/NEWS-MINER

Descendants of serum runners Johnny Folger and Sam Joseph live in Tanana

By Casey Grove
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TANANA — The heroes of dog mushing's past and present met this week in this Interior Alaska village near the confluence of the Tanana and Yukon rivers.

At least in spirit.

The jacket-clad race teams parked outside the community hall howled and barked along with the local village dogs a short couple of blocks away Tuesday and Wednesday. And the 43rd running of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, the sport's Super Bowl, blurred a little bit more with the 1925 diphtheria serum run to Nome.

Abuzz about the Iditarod, residents of Tanana also talk-

ONLINE » Stay up to date on Iditarod coverage online » www.newsminer.com On Twitter » [@newsminer](https://twitter.com/newsminer) On Facebook » www.facebook.com/fairbanksDNM

INSIDE » Updates on race, Sass disqualification » A4-A5

ed about two local men who helped save many lives in Nome in 1925, Johnny Folger and Sam Joseph. Their descendants, along with the daughter and niece of serum mushers from Galena, Edgar and George Nollner, still live in Tanana.

"Everybody was proud of those guys," said Roy Folger, 89, who was Johnny's son and, after Johnny died when Roy was 5, became Joseph's stepson. "Both of those guys are my heroes."

The race and the serum

run share the same historic Iditarod Trail, named for the village, and many icons. Still, some race aficionados will point out that the two are different: Joe Redington Sr., the "father of the Iditarod," and two schoolteachers, Gleo Huyck and Tom Johnson, took a 25-mile race to honor another serum run hero, Leonhard Seppala, and extended it to Nome, 1,000 miles, fundraising for a hefty purse.

However, it is the '25 serum run, in which a dog sled relay of diphtheria antitoxin across

Alaska likely saved the lives of thousands of children in the Nome area, is what first captured the imaginations of millions around the world who dreamed of dog mushing in the Last Frontier. Starting in Nenana, 20 mushers and about 150 dogs relayed a wrapped 20-pound container holding doses of the serum 674 miles to Nome, none of them traveling more than 100 miles.

Folger had the third leg, from Manley Hot Springs to Fish Lake. Joseph took it from there to Tanana. Titus Nikolai then took the serum from Tanana the 34 miles to the next musher, waiting in Kallands.

TANANA » A4

Public testifies on proposed school board budget

By Weston Morrow
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Laughs were had, applause was given and some tears were shed as parents, school staff and community members advocated the removal of certain budget cuts before the Fairbanks North Star Borough School Board on Wednesday.

The school district is facing an \$11 million budget gap for its Fiscal 2016 budget if

the state Legislature does not increase funding beyond what is allocated in Gov. Bill Walker's proposed budget.

Superintendent Karen Gaborik released her proposed budget in February, and the Citizens Budget Review Committee has spent the last several weeks pouring over it and providing recommendations. The school board plans to vote to approve its budget later this month.

About 100 people filled the executive boardroom at the district's downtown office Wednesday evening, many of them patiently awaiting their opportunity to address the board for two minutes about the budget.

Public testimony focused largely on preventing proposed cuts to instructional technology teachers, a district-wide art teacher and a general music teacher.

Tristan Hovest, a first-year band teacher at Lathrop High School, testified on behalf of music teachers. The proposed budget would eliminate one general music teacher next year as well as one district-wide art teacher.

As a new, non-tenured teacher in the district, Hovest would be one of the first teachers to go should a cut to music stay.

SCHOOLS » A7