

# Menka is robbery victim

Over \$35,000 worth of jewelry, Over 200 one-of-a-kind pieces representing a whole winter's output were stolen from leading Athabascan Jewelry Designer Leonard Menka in Fairbanks on August 13.

According to a report in the All-Alaska Weekly, someone broke into Menka's van in downtown Fairbanks while he was at breakfast. The jewelry, mostly women's rings, pendants, and bracelets with fossil ivory stones and a lot of silverwork, was in a brown leather satchel partly under the seat of Menka's vehicle when it was taken, the paper reported.

Menka, 32, originally from Koyukuk and a graduate of Brigham Young University in Utah, has asked for help in retrieving his stolen property.

Each of the pieces contains his signature, 2 L's (one regular and one backward) with a crossbar in the middle. Also taken was some turquoise jewelry Menka acquired from a New Mexico trader.

Menka is well known throughout Alaska. The nephew of Fairbanks Jeweler Ralph Purdue, he attended law school for one and a half years before going full time into jewelry design.

Menka designed the belt buckle decorated with nuggets and diamonds awarded to current winner of the Iditarod Ra o Nome, Rick Swenson.