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D2 TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2010 3B

SOUTH FLORIDA EXTRA

AROUND SOUTH FLORIDA

**• HIALEAH GARDENS
Police officer among
4 facing drug charges**

From Miami Herald Wire Services
A Hialeah Gardens police officer and three other Miami-Dade men have been charged with conspiring to buy more than 100 marijuana plants and distribute the pot, according to an indictment.
Lawrence Perez, 41, a veteran detective, was granted a \$50,000 corporate surety bond Monday in Miami federal court. His arraignment is set for next week.
Also charged: Carlos Santurun Teran, who is in custody, and Ray Alvarez and Jesus Mancha Guerra, who have not been arrested.
—JAY WEAVER

**• DEERFIELD BEACH
BEATING VICTIM APPEARS ON 'TODAY'**

Despite enduring three brain surgeries in the past six months, beating victim Josie Lou Ratley walked and talked like any other 15-year-old during a Monday morning profile on NBC's Today show.
And in another sign of normalcy that parents of teenagers will recognize, Ratley told a reporter over pizza that she doesn't want to be seen with her mother at an upcoming concert.
But after what prosecutors say was a savage beating March 17 by Wayne Treacy, 15, the former Deerfield Beach Middle School student can neither read nor draw as the case could.

Treacy had received text messages that day from Ratley's cell phone that infuriated him. Since the assault and his arrest, Treacy has been jailed and is awaiting trial on a charge of first-degree attempted murder.
Treacy pleaded not guilty to the attempted murder charge, and his lawyer has focused on mental health issues in preparing a defense.
Today showed Ratley's slow progress with an educational therapist who prompted her to identify colors and objects.
—SUN SENTINEL

**• TURNPIKE EXTENSION
LANE CLOSURES MAY CAUSE DELAYS**

Lane closures due to repairs on the Florida's Turnpike Homestead Extension may cause delays this weekend for motorists traveling north from Homestead and the Florida Keys.
Beginning 9 p.m. Friday, through 6 a.m. Monday, only one SunPass open-road-tolling gantry will remain open. One SunPass-only lane and two SunPass/cash lanes also will remain open at the toll plaza.
Crews will be removing and replacing asphalt and concrete pavement underneath the tolling gantry as part of ongoing construction to convert the southern 47 miles of the Homestead Extension into an all-electronic open road tolling facility.
—CHRISTINA VEIGA

**• EVERGLADES
U.S. SUGAR SUES CORPUS OF ENGINEERS**

U.S. Sugar has filed a federal lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, alleging the Corps failed to open public records the company requested over a year ago under the Freedom of Information Act.
Although attorneys for the company refused to comment on the lawsuit filed Saturday, many of the documents in the company's request, filed on Aug. 4, 2009, pertain to rock mining in the Everglades Agricultural Area, especially at the Lake Harbor Quarry.
—PALM BEACH POST

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MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Repeal of park fee advances

■ A committee of Miami-Dade commissioners narrowly approved a plan to repeal parking fees at some county parks.

By CHRISTINA VEIGA
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A plan to charge parking fees at some Miami-Dade County parks — which drew ire from soccer moms and other frequent park users — may be on its way to being repealed.

A committee of county commissioners on Monday back-tracked on implementing the \$5 per car fee, set to go into effect Oct. 1, after scores of residents called and e-mailed in protest.

The fee was passed as part of the county budget adopted last September to help close an \$8 million gap in the Parks and Recreation budget. But the County Commissioner's Recreation, Culture and Tourism Committee on Monday voted 3-2 to repeal the fee, leaving the department with another \$500,000 budget hole.

Commissioners Javier Souto, Bruno Barrios and Rebecca Sosa voted to repeal the fee. Sally Heyman and Katy Sorenson voted against the measure.

Souto sponsored the ordinance to do away with the fee, calling it a regressive tax that would affect families.

lies. Souto said the fee may discourage families — already hard hit by the Great Recession — from visiting county parks. And when kids don't have a place to play, they may get into trouble, he said.

"The best vaccine against crime is sports," Souto said. "If we're going to hurt those families who are taking their kids to the parks, maybe we'll have more crime."

WEEKENDS, HOLIDAYS

The fee would be charged on weekends and holidays at A.D. Barnes and Tropical parks in West Miami-Dade; Kendall Hammock, Indian Park, Kendall Soccer Park, Larry and Penny Thompson Park in South Miami-Dade; and a portion of Amelia Earhart Park in Hialeah.

Those parks were chosen because they are large, popular and expensive to maintain, parks officials said. The county's Parks and Recreation department has been hard hit by budget cuts in recent years.

Already, 74 positions have been cut. Repealing the fee would translate into another 20 employees, probably from grounds maintenance, losing their jobs, department director Jack Kardys said.

"Without that fee, the deterioration may be significant," Kardys said.

after the vote. "If a bathroom isn't clean enough, or a ball field isn't good enough to play on and there's litter, you run that risk."

Some county parks already charge parking fees. Kardys said 14 percent — or \$3.5 million — of the Parks and Recreation Budget comes from parking fees generated at seven county parks, including Crandon Park in Key Biscayne and Haulover Beach Park in Miami Beach.

Commissioners Heyman and Sorenson said they voted against the measure to appeal the fee because the county needs the money to properly maintain its parks. They also cited exceptions that would exclude residents who are part of a fee-based program, such as soccer leagues, from paying for parking.

'BUDGET CRUNCH'

"In a budget crunch situation that we have, I want commissioners to say, 'OK, what else are we going to give up?'" Sorenson said after the vote.

Heyman said many county parks already charge entrance fees and the parks are still frequently used. "I think of it as a user's fee," she said.

Souto said the full commission will vote on the ordinance at the next commission meeting Sept. 21 at County Hall, 111 NW First St.

PLUCKED FROM CANAL



MIAMI HERALD/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Broward Sheriff Fire Rescue and Southwest Ranches volunteer firefighters help Rivera, a 19-year-old horse, get back on her feet after she was stuck in a Southwest Ranches canal on Monday afternoon. Rivera's owners found her partially submerged in the 17900 block of Southwest 68th Court. The horse's body was floating in the water and her head was resting on the edge of the canal. It wasn't known how Rivera got into the canal, but she did not appear to have sustained any injuries.

THE COURTS

Two plead not guilty in arms to West Bank

■ A federal magistrate denied bond for a Palestinian man but granted bail for a Cuban migrant charged with scheming to buy stolen weapons to send to the West Bank.

By JAY WEAVER
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Two men charged with conspiring to buy a cache of stolen weapons and explosives to ship to the West Bank pleaded not guilty Monday in Miami federal court, where one was granted a bond and the other detained before trial.

A federal magistrate found that Abdulaziz Hamayel, 23, was a danger to the community because the charges involve "substantial and very dangerous weapons."

Kashyap Patel, the assistant federal public defender representing Hamayel, asked the judge to allow his client to live under house arrest before trial and pay a modest bond, saying his family doesn't have a lot of money. But Magistrate Chris McAlilly said the Palestinian man was a flight risk because he has a family in the West Bank where he recently visited with his father before the son's arrest in Miami late August.

The judge also noted that Hamayel, a Hialeah Senior High dropout, failed to appear at two state court hearings on a 2008 battery charge, alleging that he hit his estranged wife, who lives with their 2-year-old son in West Miami.

McAlilly took a different stand on Yann Aguila Urday, 24, granting the Cuban migrant a \$2,000 corporate surety bond after prosecutors and his defense attorney reached an agreement. He has a wife and 1-year-old daughter who live in Miami Springs.

Aguila, a delivery worker for a Hialeah tile supplier, will have a hard time coming up with the money to make bail, his defense attorney Ana Thomas, told the judge. To be released, he would have to make a "non-refundable down payment

of \$3,750 and secure the bond with some type of collateral.

That Aguila was granted bail indicates he may have had a lesser role in the alleged scheme to purchase the stolen weapons and explosives from undercover police officers working with an FBI counterterrorism task force.

"If you read between the lines of the criminal complaint, there are a lot of holes in the allegations," Thomas said after Monday's hearing.

According to two FBI complaints, it was Aguila who first reached out to a confidential government source in April 2009 on

behalf to the community because the charges involve "substantial and very dangerous weapons."

Hamayel contacted the source and requested 300 M-16 rifles, 9mm handguns, Uzzi submachine guns, silencers, grenades and remote-controlled detonators, indicating that he would be able to pay in advance.

Later that April, Hamayel asked the government informant if he had found a potential supplier. Hamayel said he had a "contact" in New York who was a "member of his group" and had done similar transactions in the past.

The following month, the informant set up a meeting with Hamayel and Aguila so they could meet an undercover police officer posing as the supplier. Hamayel told the supplier that he was interested in buying the weapons to send to "his people," the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank.

Hamayel and Aguila met several times with the undercover cop and a second police officer posing as a weapons broker between May and June 2009 to discuss logistics, the complaints said.

In June, one officer showed Hamayel a variety of weapons, explosives and remote-controlled detonators. The complaints said the purpose of the "weapons class" was to provide a "visual sampling."

SCOTT ROTHSTEIN PONZI CASE

Rothstein's right-hand woman may face 10 years

By PETER FRANCESCINA
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Federal sentencing guidelines for Ponzi schemes for right-hand woman, Debra Villegas, call for a number of aggravating factors, including that Villegas was part of a sophisticated money laundering operation.

A federal judge sentenced Rothstein's right-hand woman, Debra Villegas, to 10 years in prison for her role in a \$1.4 billion investment fraud scheme.

Villegas, 45, pleaded guilty to a single count of money-laundering conspiracy in June. While the Ponzi scheme ran for 10 years in prison, a presentence report recently completed by probation officials set out recommendations that called for more than that.

Villegas' attorney, Robert Stickney, filed objections to the presentence report on Saturday. He did not spell out the exact prison time that the report recommends to the judge, but wrote that it was more than 10 years. He declined to be more specific when contacted; the report is not public.

Federal prosecutors officials reached their recommendation by considering more than 10 factors, including that Villegas was part of a sophisticated money laundering operation.

As part of her guilty plea, Villegas told the judge she helped Rothstein because he said he was in trouble with the Mafia. Stickney wrote that Villegas believed Rothstein was laundering money for one individual and "was unaware that she was in the midst of a Ponzi report on Saturday. He did not spell out the exact prison time that the report recommends to the judge, but wrote that it was more than 10 years. He declined to be more specific when contacted; the report is not public.