

AROUND SOUTH FLORIDA WITH ELGIN JONES 09-15-11



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BANK LAYOFFS

Bank of America may cut between 10 and 14 percent of its workforce, which could mean up to 30,000 employees. The company has already closed 63 branch locations and another 750 could be on the chopping block. CEO **Brian Moynihan** announced a major management shake-up was underway but did not confirm the layoffs.

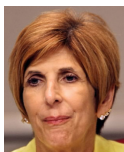
Palm Beach County

SOME FRIEND



Quinton O. West, 21, of West Palm Beach is in jail for allegedly shooting his friend in the hip and trying to pistol-whip him. His bail has been set at \$250,000. According to the police report, West asked his friend **Anthony Ortiz**, 20, to accompany him to his apartment. Once there, West brandished a handgun and tried to hit Ortiz with it. During a struggle, West dropped the gun. He picked it up and shot Ortiz in the hip as Ortiz was fleeing. Ortiz managed to get away and called police. He has no explanation for West's attack.

GUN BAN



West Palm Beach Mayor **Jeri Muoio** has issued an executive order banning guns from City Hall. But the order is in conflict with a new Florida law that takes effect on Oct. 1 that allows gun owners to carry their weapons on public property, including city halls. That legislation prohibits local governments from regulating or passing gun laws and local officials who violate the law are subject to a \$5,000 fine and removal from office. Muoio cited the safety of residents for her action and said she disagrees with the new law. Now the country is watching to see if she sticks to her convictions at the risk of being fined and removed from office.

Broward County

MISSING WORKERS



Several public construction projects are underway in northwest Fort Lauderdale but we may have to issue an Amber Alert to find any black workers on them. Area residents are concerned they are being systematically denied job opportunities on these projects. Several municipalities give preferences to residents for employment opportunities in their cities. Some require contractors to hire a certain percentage of residents on publicly funded projects, as well. It's a touchy subject but it's something that has to be addressed.

FUGITIVE JAILED



Roger A. Miller, 58, of Margate, who, authorities said, fled to Thailand in 2009 after being accused of operating a \$2.7 million Ponzi scheme from the Oriole Golf Club in Margate, is now in a Broward County jail. Miller was wanted as an international fugitive and was taken in custody by Thailand officials last week and extradited to the U. S.

MURDER SETTLEMENT



The family of 15-year-old **Amanda Collette**, who was killed while attending classes at Dillard High School in 2008, has settled a negligence lawsuit with the Broward School District for \$525,000. **Teah Wimberly**, also a 15-year-old female student, shot Collette in the back in a school hallway. Wimberly was upset because Collette rejected her romantic advances. According to the lawsuit, Collette told a teacher that Wimberly had a gun and had threatened to kill her. The teacher denied this and was cleared of wrongdoing. Wimberly was convicted of second-degree murder in 2010 and is serving a 25-year prison sentence.

FIGHTING BACK



Broward Sheriff's Deputy **Andrea Penoyer**, one of the stars of the TLC Network reality program *Police Women of Broward County*, has hired attorney **Jeremy Kroll** to represent her. Penoyer is defending herself against a motion filed by attorney **Gordon Weekes** of the Broward Public Defender's Office. Weekes wants Penoyer held in contempt for refusing to answer questions during a deposition about an arrest she made that was taped by the show.

A judge has ruled she will have to answer defense attorneys' questions and, if she doesn't, she could face sanctions. Defense attorneys are now preparing to issue subpoenas to several BSO employees, including those in the media relations department and other deputies involved in the show but who never appear on camera. Ouch!

TAXING DEBATE



Led by former Mayor **Jean Robb**, Deerfield Beach voters have collected more than 6,200 signatures seeking to overturn a 10 percent utility tax. City commissioners were cool to the idea of rescinding the tax, which is scheduled to take effect in October. Opponents of the tax want to see it placed on the ballot in a public referendum so voters can decide the issue. Good job.

Miami-Dade County

ANOTHER LAWSUIT



Former Homestead Deputy City Manager **Johanna Faddis** has filed a lawsuit against the city claiming her privacy was violated when the city released her private e-mails and text messages which were on a city-issued Blackberry cell phone. The text messages included some sent from her boss, then City Manager **Mike Shehadeh** that included romantic references and overtures. According to her lawsuit, the messages from Shehadeh were "unwanted." Her attorney, Kelsay Patterson, said Faddis ignored Shehadeh's messages and the the city should have viewed them as sexual harassment but did not do so. She is seeking \$350,000.

FRAUD ARREST



Ruth Reveron, owner of the T & R Rehab and Diagnostic Center therapy clinic in Hialeah, is charged in an alleged million-dollar Medicare fraud scheme. Authorities allege Reveron forged patient evaluations and filed false medical claims through her company between 2006 and 2009. She faces five years in prison and up to \$5 million in fines if convicted.

CONFLICTING POSITIONS



City of Homestead Housing Authority Board Member **Lois Jones** had sought a legal opinion to determine if a conflict of interest exists among some board members and city officials who have had business relationships. Claiming it would be a waste of money, a majority of the board voted to bar Jones from seeking an opinion from the housing authority's attorney. Something smells here. Any questionable relationships or business dealings should be openly addressed. Furthermore, as a public official, Jones can and should consult the Florida Attorney General's Office and request an opinion. She does not need her board's approval to do so. An Attorney General's Opinion would clear up the matter once and for all and it would not cost the housing authority anything.

FAIR DISTRICTS



Federal Judge Ursula Ungaro has thrown out a lawsuit filed by U.S. Rep. **Corrine Brown**, D-Florida, and **Mario Diaz-Balart**, R-Florida, that challenged a state constitutional amendment that governs how voting districts are drawn in the state. Amendment 6, which voters approved in 2010, prohibits districts being drawn to protect a person or party. Districts must now be drawn with boundaries that are consistent with city and/or county lines. This is a good law that makes sense. Brown and Diaz-Balart say they will appeal.

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