

Torch drive launched

By **RICK ABRAMS**
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A group of Cuban-American Jaycees meet today with Miami City Manager Paul Andrews to discuss a Latin fund-raising drive to rebuild the John F. Kennedy Torch of Friendship.

William Friexas, president of the Jaycees chapter, said the meeting is to "coordinate a whole effort of the Latin community so that the taxpayers won't have to foot the bill.

"We don't know how much it's going to cost," said Friexas, "but the Latin-American builders and the Latin community want to raise the money and supply the manpower."

The torch, erected in 1964, was smashed Friday when three men allegedly backed a rented U-Haul truck into it in protest against closer U.S. relations with Cuba.

The three are out on bond on charges of malicious destruction of private property, and aggravated assault. They are Conrado Rogriguez, 55, of 560 SE 2nd St., Hialeah; Israel Pino, 38, of 134 NW 10th Ave., and Eduardo Macaya, 24, of 801 NW 47th Ave.

Assistant Miami city manager Andy Crouch said a group of engineers from the city's public works department would visit the scene at Bayfront Park today to estimate the damage.

One city commissioner has estimated the damages to be around \$15,000-\$20,000," although Crouch said that "seemed a little high."

Meanwhile, Friexas says the Cuban-American Jaycees want to start a fund, with all donations being sent to "City of Miami, Torch of Freedom Fund."

"The men who did this were Latins — and this was not the proper thing to do in a community where we have been working all these years to reach an understanding with the American people," Friexas said.

"While I'm personally against recognizing Castro, I don't think what these men did was the proper way to protest. It would be the same thing if two or three Americans went down to the Bay of Pigs statue at 8th Street and 13th Avenue and tried to destroy it. It doesn't help things any," Friexas said.