



## OPPORTUNITY STILL ROVING ...

Defying expectations, the Mars rover has set the record for off-world driving. THE WIRE PAGE 1

## UNBEATEN AND UNHEARD OF

Nancy Erickson's untold story of the Toledo Troopers, the first members of the Women's Football Foundation Hall of Fame.



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### PUBLISHER'S INBOX

## The hour grows late

**C**olossal challenges face us. Instead of solutions, we hear harsh rhetoric and personal attacks by the people who want to be Florida's leaders.



David  
**DUNN-RANKIN**  
PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER

I've borrowed very liberally for this column from the recently published Leroy Collins Institute: Tougher Choices Shaping Florida's Future. They have good ideas we need to consider.

Compared to the rest of the country, Florida has relatively fewer high-skill, high-wage jobs and relatively more low-skill, low-wage jobs. No matter how hard local and state economic development tries, we still remain a low-wage state, dependent on servicing retirees and tourists.

Florida's reliance on retirees and tourists comes at a price. The demands of older residents and tourists are disproportionately linked to lower-paid service jobs. We have an economy that is dramatically out of balance.

The better we do attracting tourists and retirees, the more lower-paid service jobs we create. While cheap labor is great for tourists and retirees, it is awful for those trying to raise a family or those who invest in college and come home unable to find a job commensurate with their education.

Like the rest of the country, Florida has seen a hollowing out of its middle-wage jobs, but the decline has been stronger in Florida than in other states. If you are part of the working class in Florida and it seems like we've still not fully escaped from the Great Recession, you are right. As our only real strategy, Florida is waiting for baby boomer retirees to come so we can hire blue collar workers to build more retiree homes.

One solution to fix an out-of-balance economy, focused on low-skill, low-wage jobs with a hollowed-out middle class, is to focus on excellence in education. Unfortunately, our leaders in Florida continue to choose not to invest in education as a way to fix our out-of-balance state economy.

In K-12 education, funding per student and teacher salaries lag behind not only the south, but the nation as well. We fund education about 20 percent less per capita than the national average.

Our education funding per student is basically the same as it was nine years ago. State funding for K-12 public schools actually shrank in the new state budget.

In higher education, the sum of state appropriations and net tuition ranked dead last in the U.S. in fiscal year 2012. Particularly troublesome is that the younger generation in Florida is less likely to have a college degree than older cohorts and is far below those of that age living in other states.

The trends of labor market polarization and baby boomer retirements suggest growing demands on Medicaid in the future, a program that is already the single largest expenditure in the state.

Congestion in Florida's urban areas is among the worst in the country.

These challenges facing us are a result of decades of state leadership who have said Florida is cheap and they are darned proud of it. That seems sadly inappropriate in a competitive global economy that feeds on high-skill jobs.

Lee Roy Collins once said, "Ours is a generation in which great decisions can no longer be passed on to the next. The hour grows late, and you and I have work to do."

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# Beach bacteria claims life

## Two cases, one death in Sarasota County

By IAN ROSS  
STAFF WRITER

A middle-aged patient died in Sarasota County after contracting an ocean-borne bacterial infection through an open wound, according to the Florida Department of Health.

The bacteria, *Vibrio vulnificus*, is present in coastal waters — especially during the summer when water temperatures are warmer — and in filter-feeding shellfish like oysters, mussels, clams and scallops. It can be contracted through an

open cut when someone is swimming in the ocean, or by eating raw shellfish.

So far this year, at least 12 people have been infected by the bacteria, and at least three have died. In 2013, there were 41 cases and 11 deaths.

The deceased Sarasota patient was one of two infected by the bacteria in Sarasota in July. In Charlotte County, the health department reported two cases, one in April and one in May, which were treated successfully. In all four cases, the patients contracted the infection through the skin.

Sarasota County Health Department

epidemiologist Michael Drennon said while many people who swim in the ocean may be exposed to the bacteria, those most at risk of contracting it are those with already weakened immune systems.

"I would say exposure is probably very common, we just don't see a lot of cases of it," he said. "In both the cases we had, the individuals had compromised immune systems — so that made them more at risk for developing the illness."

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## Quite the find



SUN PHOTO BY TAMI GARCIA

Averiella Connor, 4, dons a pair of safety goggles as she dusts off an excavation block to find fossils during a dinosaur party at the North Port Library, part of the library's free summer programs for kids. See more photos, page 12.

## Jail gripes gobble staff time

By ADAM KREGER  
STAFF WRITER

Inmates at the Charlotte County Jail file thousands of grievances each year. But while the facility's population has risen to record numbers this month, the amount of complaints and lawsuits filed by inmates has remained steady.

Charlotte County Sheriff's Capt. Melissa Turney, the operations commander at the jail, points out staff is working hard to keep it that way.

"A lot of times, inmates will write frivolous complaints or file frivolous lawsuits," she said. "But we seriously review and investigate every one of them."

Inmates have the right to file a complaint about almost anything, but many issues — like if an inmate receives cold food that is supposed to be hot, for example — can be resolved at a correctional-officer level, Turney added. However determined or disgruntled individuals at the jail often file multiple grievances, keeping jail officials busy.

Turney used one recent inmate as an example of why officials spend so much time looking into complaints. (She could not reveal the inmate's name.)

"He started off complaining that some of his property was dismissed," Turney said, pointing out the incident made its way up the chain of command to the administrative lieutenants, who determined the property in question was contraband and disposed of properly.

After that, Turney said the same inmate filed complaints about his medical treatment, his dental treatment, his dealings with a jail detective, his ability to practice religion, commissary costs, his classification status, his administrative confinement, law library access, visitation rights,

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## Pasta Bar for a Cure heads to Englewood

By DEBBIE FLESSNER  
SUN CORRESPONDENT

Ataxia telangiectasia is not a disease name that just rolls off the tongue. But as tough as it is to say, it is much more difficult for a child who suffers from it.

While you may not know someone with A-T, you might know someone with muscular dystrophy, muscular sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, immune deficiency syndrome or various kinds

of blood cancer, all symptoms of which A-T children may experience. It is such a rare disease, that much research still needs to be conducted in order to even be able to treat it.

The Wobbly Feet Foundation, so named because of the difficulty walking that A-T presents for many of the children who suffer from it, exists for the sole purpose of



PHOTO PROVIDED BY SAMANTHA DZEMBO

Connor Dzembo's parents, Nick and Samantha, founded the Wobbly Feet Foundation to help fund research for their son's condition, ataxia telangiectasia.

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CHARLIE SAYS ...  
You had me at pasta.