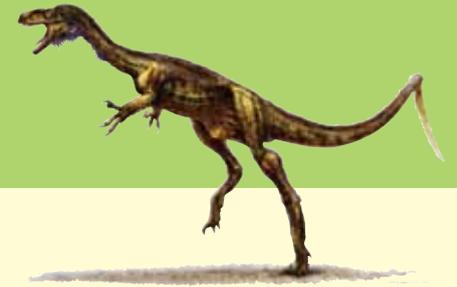




YAKKING ABOUT THE NEWS

A weekly wrap-up for young readers



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Groundhogs Galore

February 2 is Groundhog Day. Each year, the folks in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, celebrate this day in a big way. It has become a huge Phil festival, in honor of their celebrity groundhog. It draws many visitors to the small town. It began in 1887, thanks to many German settlers who brought the tradition of a February forecast from Europe. The legend? If the groundhog comes out on a sunny day and sees his shadow, he goes back to his burrow and there are six more weeks of winter. If he doesn't see his shadow, then an early spring is on the way. Here in Michigan, the Howell Nature Center, home to Wapi the beaver, which you read about last week, also has its own predictor, Woody, at left. More fun facts and even groundhog songs are on www.groundhog.org.



Dino Discoveries

There's a new dinosaur name to learn for the Yak – Eodromaeus (ee-oh-dro-may-us). It means “dawn runner.” The dinosaur discovery and name was reported in a recent issue of the journal, Science, and by the University of Chicago.

“It really is the earliest look we have at the long line of meat eaters that would ultimately culminate in Tyrannosaurus rex near the end of the dinosaur era,” said Paul Sereno, University of Chicago paleontologist (Pay-LEE-on-toll-uh-jist), or fossil scientist, said in the university's media announcement. “Who could foretell

what evolution had in store for the descendants of this pint-sized, fleet-footed predator?”

This little runner wasn't much bigger than a small dog – weighing ten to fifteen pounds, and about four-feet in length. Although tiny, it was believed to be plenty fierce. You could call him a tiny ancestor of the giant T-rex.

The fossil was found in Argentina along with another tiny dino, Eoraptor, which may have been the ancestor of early plant-eaters.

KIDS MAKING NEWS

Destiny To Sing

Ryan Destiny Irons is having a sweet 16th year. The Detroit teen just won a singing contest in January to attend the red carpet premiere in Los Angeles of Justin Bieber's new movie, “Never Say Never.”

We had a chance to talk with Ryan by phone, in between classes at West Bloomfield High School, where she is a junior.

Ryan said she first heard about the contest, sponsored by Paramount Pictures with 98.7 AMP Radio and Oakland Mall, from her choir teacher, Ms. Hawk. Then she got a call that she was picked to audition at Oakland Mall.

Ryan said she didn't need to think long about the song to sing – and she didn't have to practice either. “I love ‘Baby’ by Justin Bieber,” she said.

Ryan has performed a lot but she said, “I was still a bit nervous. I knew a whole lot of people there, not just me, had a lot of talent.”

When she found out she won, “It was ridiculous, I had no words,” she said.

The prize means Ryan will be flying to the “Never Say Never” movie premiere – bringing along her mom and two friends who sing with

her in a group called New Limit. New Limit has been singing together since the three girls were in elementary school. You may hear more about them later, as the group has been auditioning for “America's Got Talent.” Stay tuned!

Ryan wants to pursue a singing career. “Follow your dreams,” she says, “and don't ever stop believing in yourself – ever!”

You can follow Ryan's music on twitter at [@newlimitmusic](https://twitter.com/newlimitmusic).

Berkshire Bieber

Daniel Honet also competed and earned the runner-up title. Daniel is an 8th grader at Berkshire Middle School. The 13-year-old from West Bloomfield is a Bieber fan, too, and had no trouble picking his song, “Never Say Never.”

Daniel has performed in plays during summer camp and is getting ready to audition for “Thoroughly Modern Millie,” at Berkshire. He hopes to have a music career, too, and says when he sings – “I make it personal.” He thinks that's good advice for other performers, too!

By Cathy Collison



Photo by Liria Ivezaj

Winner Ryan Destiny Irons, right, with runner-up Daniel Honet.