

Animal advocates' food drive is very successful

By Diana Zimmerman

A pet food drive at the Puget Island Fire Station on Saturday was more successful than the Wahkiakum Animal Advocates Group (WAAG) volunteers could have imagined.

So successful that their next pet food drive, which was tentatively set for March, may be postponed a little longer.

They don't have the storage space to do another drive too soon, Treasurer Lorrie Fink said, but when the Helping Hand food bank stocks get low, they will plan another event.

"Everybody has a soft spot for a pet," Fink said. "People would stop and share their stories of animals, present and past, and how this is so needed, and they've wanted it to happen for a long time. One lady said she had been here since 1962, and that they needed it even then."

The drive was set to begin at 10 a.m., but the steady stream of visitors began around 9:40 a.m., and didn't let up until WAAG had over a thousand pounds of dry dog and cat food, 350 cans of dog and cat food, about 50 pounds of dog biscuits and treats, 30 pouches of cat treats, 70 pounds of kitty litter, seven crates, 10 beds, 20 blankets, 23 pet dishes, and a bunch of leashes, collars, and toys.

"One man even gave us his stimulus check," Fink said, "and it was heartwarming to know that even people who were in need gave."



Wahkiakum Animal Advocates Group (WAAG) volunteers Jenny Martin, Lorrie Fink, Rebecca Hompe, and Anita Orchin celebrated a successful pet food drive on Saturday. More than a \$1,000 in money and supplies were donated in WAAG's first pet food drive on Saturday. They will use the donations to keep the Helping Hand food bank pet shelves stocked. Courtesy photos.



Elementary class wants state dinosaur

Washington State Journal Staff

Washington State may soon have a new state dinosaur, thanks to the efforts of an elementary school class and the Washington State Legislature.

The proposed state dinosaur is *Suciasaurus Rex*, named for a fossil fragment found in 2012 on Sucia Island in San Juan Islands. The fossil is a 17-inch piece of the dinosaur's upper leg and dates to about 80 million years ago. It is the only dinosaur fossil ever found in Washington State.

HB 1067, the bill to recognize *Suciasaurus*, was introduced this year by Melanie Morgan, D-Tacoma, on behalf of a class at Elmhurst Elementary in the Franklin Pierce School District, who learned about the fossil and took steps to have it recognized by the state Legislature. The bill was introduced last session, passed the House by a wide margin but did not get a hearing in the state Senate. Morgan reintroduced the bill this session.

"This bill is more than just about a dinosaur," Morgan said at a hearing Jan. 27. "It's our formal recognition and appreciation for the hard work, preparation, creativity, and the drive of these students who are now in the sixth grade."

*Suciasaurus* was a two-legged carnivore about half the size of its relative *Tyrannosaurus Rex* and lived about 12 million years before its famous cousin. It originally stalked its prey between Baja Mexico and Northern California. The fossil came to rest in the San Juan Islands after land masses drifted north over eons.

Twelve states and Washington D.C. also have official state dinosaurs. Washington already has a state fossil. It is the Columbian mammoth.

*The Washington State Journal is a non-profit news website managed by the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation. Learn more at wastatejournal.org.*



Meet Our Seniors

Paige Mace

By Diana Zimmerman

If you are looking for Paige Mace, she'll be in one of two places: the gym or the woods near her home.

Paige picked up a basketball the first year she could, and has been stealing, looking for the assist, and driving fearlessly to the basket ever since.

"I play basketball for 12 out of 12 months a year," she said, when asked about other sports or hobbies.

As an eighth grader, Mace got called up to the Mule varsity team. She counts herself lucky to have played with Peyton Souvenir, who graduated in 2017 and now stars with Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho.

"I remember going to state with Peyton," she said. "She pushed me to get where I am, to be the starting point guard and the girl to watch. Getting to be on the state floor with her was an amazing experience."

It's been hard this year without her usual winter season, but Paige hasn't lost any time, playing for an AAU team and traveling to Indiana, Arizona, and Idaho for tournaments.

She's also committed to play for Lower Columbia College for the next two years, with plans to get a degree in business administration.

To be sure, if she's not in the gym, she's out in the woods.

"I spend pretty much all day outside," Paige said. "I live in the woods. I ride my dirt bike a lot and explore."

She's an experienced hunter.

"My whole entire family hunts," Paige said. "My dad got me into it when I was little. I'd go out all the time when he was supposed to watch me. I loved it. I loved shooting guns. When I finally got old enough, I took my test, and started killing stuff every year and never stopped."

Even when it's not hunting season, Paige is out in the woods, watching.

"It's fun to see the animals' lifestyles," she said. "You can go out and watch them whenever you want. Right now I'm watching a forked horn. I have three different bulls spotted that I watch every night."

In the last five years, Paige estimates that she has bagged six deer and two elk. Some day she hopes to add bear, cougar, and bobcat to her list.

"I should have got a bobcat a few years back on Christmas Day, but I let my sister shoot it instead," Paige said. "I was nice back then."

Paige is the daughter of Ty and Amber Mace.



Damion Curl

By Diana Zimmerman

Every weekend, Damion Curl heads over to DeBriae logging to wash the pickups that come in at the end of the week, as well as 14 log trucks, service rigs, and dump trucks.

It's quite an opportunity for this future mechanic.

"It's what I want to become in my life," Damion said. "I'm a really hands on learner. I like to get my hands dirty. Growing up, I would build a lot with LEGO bricks. When my dad got quads, I'd work on them with him, and help him run our personal vehicles."

"I remember there was something wrong with my brother's quad," he continued. "My dad said to go work on it. I figured it out. There is a certain joy on the other side when you get it running."

He knows there is an auto/diesel mechanic program at Lower Columbia College, but he's keeping his options open for now.

Damion is finishing his final year of school at home. He enjoys the remote learning, because it gives him a bit of control over his own schedule.

"I know a lot of people who wish they were going remote," he said. "They have to do homework a little later than I can. I have all day. Whenever I want to do it."

Still he has missed his friends, who mean so very much to him. Fortunately, he gets to see them now that football has finally started, a relief to this active young man, who usually plays three sports a year.

"I'm definitely glad to get out of the house to do something different besides school and work," he said.

Damion has been playing baseball his whole life, and is something of a utility player, willing to play anywhere the coaches put him. His baseball coach, Marc Niemeyer, is also one of his favorite teachers.

"Mr. Niemeyer is always there for me," Damion said. "He's always there to push me and make sure I'm doing the best I can in all my classes, and even in life. Sports too. He's a great guy."

The Curl family has spent a lot of time fishing on the river together, and five years ago, Damion earned his hunter's safety card and got his own muzzleloader. When he's not doing that, he'll walk out with his dad, older brother, and a neighbor during archery season, or accompany his brother during another season, modern.

Damion is the son of James and Michelle Curl.



Taylor Sauer

By Diana Zimmerman

Taylor Sauer's favorite hour of the day is spent in the office, as a teacher's assistant. It's a bit like an internship, and it allows her some creative freedom. As part of ASB leadership, she sometimes uses the period to work on projects and plan for committees.

She has a lot to be proud of, whether it's planning the Veterans' Day assembly, Christmas activities, or a project that improved life for many students at Wahkiakum High School.

The locker room showers have always been communal, but when Taylor and two other students decided they wanted to create more privacy, they actually made it happen, constructing stalls with help from her dad, Chris.

"We thought the showers would create a more comfortable environment that a lot of students don't have at the school," Taylor said. "Some kids don't get to shower at home. A survey said a lot of kids would use the showers if they had privacy."

They did, too. Last year students began showing up before school to shower, and once again to use them after morning practices and after games.

When Taylor is not at school, she's picking up shifts at the grocery store, or spending time with friends. She is particularly excited to finally begin volleyball practice this week.

"I think that all the players on the team this year are very like-minded. We have really strong team chemistry on and off the court. I'm really excited for that to work in our favor," she said.

Taylor will also turn out for track and field, and while she may waffle on the hurdles event, she'll be looking for a personal record in the long jump, and running a leg of the 4x200 relay.

Taylor has been accepted to Washington State University. She plans to study business and psychology, and possibly go on to work in human resources, or maybe fashion merchandising.

There are dreams of New York City, whether for two months or two years, to soak in the quick pace of the city, and a few of the shows.

She loves the theater. Now that *Hamilton* has been filmed, she's seen it multiple times. She also had the opportunity to see *Dear Evan Hansen* on one school field trip, and *The New Colossus* on another.

Taylor, who loves to start her day with Red Bull spritzer from Julie's Java, is the daughter of Angi Sauer and Chris Sauer.



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