

NEWS RELEASE

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Friends of the Library Fall Luncheon Presents Paleontologist Mary Schweitzer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dr. Mary Schweitzer, a North Carolina State University assistant professor and paleontologist who has a joint appointment with the Department of Marine, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences and the North Carolina Museum of Natural History, will be the guest speaker at the NC State Friends of the Library's annual Fall Luncheon. Schweitzer's presentation, "Exceptional Preservation in *Tyrannosaurus Rex*," will describe her discovery of organic soft tissue in dinosaur fossils, a startling finding that made international headlines earlier this year.

The luncheon will be held at NC State's McKimmon Center from noon to 1:30 p.m. on Oct. 24. Tickets must be purchased in advance, preferably by Oct. 19.

In the March 25, 2005, edition of the journal *Science*, Schweitzer described how she and her technician, Jennifer Wittmeyer, isolated soft tissue from the leg bone of a 68-million-year-old *T. rex*. Not only was the pliable tissue intact, but when examined microscopically, the bone was found to contain structures resembling blood vessels and cells. Schweitzer duplicated her findings with several additional dinosaur specimens, turning conventional scientific wisdom on its head. Scientists had believed that no organic materials could be preserved beyond 100,000 years, let alone 60 million.

Three months later, Schweitzer and a team of colleagues at NC State and Montana State University published additional details revealing that the *T. rex* was a young, egg-producing female. Inside the dinosaur's broken femur, the scientists had discovered medullary bone, which is found in present-day female birds only during ovulation, supplying the calcium necessary to form eggshells. The finding not only suggests a new way of determining the sex of dinosaurs, but also adds weight to the widely accepted theory that today's birds descended from them.

Another highlight of the luncheon will be the presentation of the 17th annual NCSU Libraries Faculty Award. The award is given to an NC State faculty member who has contributed consistently or notably to the operation and development of the NCSU Libraries.

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For ticket information, call the Friends of the Library at 919/515-2841. For more information on the Fall Luncheon, visit the Friends' Web site at www.lib.ncsu.edu/friends/.