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Thursday, November 23, 2006

## Meet Jane Dino: An oldie but goodie

Patti Conley, Times Staff  
11/22/2006

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The Times / Chad Bartlett

PITTSBURGH - He's Matt Lamanna, an ent paleontologist at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Oakland.

She's Jane, a tweener Tyrannosaurus rex, a legged beauty of a dinosaur who made her debut at the museum Tuesday morning just in time for the holidays.

Jane, deemed one of the most complete juvenile Tyrannosaurus rex dinosaurs ever found, casts an imposing shadow over the entrance hall.

Her head, turned deftly to the left, boasts deep eye sockets and a strong lower jawbone with 34 razor-sharp teeth.

She's a sleek 21 feet long, which surely gave her the length 60 million years ago to wear her 1,200 pounds weight well. She'd be perfect, but for a bulge on a bone on her left foot.

Lamanna, assistant curator of the museum's section of vertebrate paleontology, said the bulge is evidence of an infection and that Jane might have walked with a limp.

Not that a limp matters much because this juvenile T-rex is the proud find of the Burpee Museum of Natural History in Rockford, Ill. In the fall of 2001, a 14-person expedition team discovered the fossilized bones in the Hell Creek Formation in the arid badlands of southeastern Montana.

They began unearthing the bones in 2002 and found about 50 percent of the skeleton. By 2005, the skeleton had been cleaned and hardened and ready for display at the Burpee Museum.

The Jane on display at the Carnegie is a polyester resin cast made and mounted by Research Casting International in Ontario, Canada.

Jane's mystique is enhanced by the fact that paleontologists can't determine whether this T-rex is a male or female, but folks at the Rockford named it Jane after Jane Solem, a Burpee benefactor.

Jane, the researchers figure, was about 11 years old and about half the length of an adult T-rex.

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"It's half as long as an adult T-rex from nose to tail but 3/4 as tall," Lamanna said.

Jane probably wouldn't have grown much taller than the 7 1/2 foot height from the hip down, he added.

Lamanna said that juvenile T-rex's may have been able to move as fast as a racehorse at 20 to 30 miles per hour, although Jane's probable infection may have affected that speed.

At adulthood, a T-rex would have weighed 12,000 pounds and wouldn't have been a speed demon.

What's fascinating about Jane, Lamanna said, is the skeleton's excellent condition. Scientists were able to see tiny tooth serrations and holes the nerves and blood vessels passed through.

That's more than enough to make the holidays happy for a paleontologist and T-rex fans all around the Pittsburgh area.

Patti Conley can be reached at pconley@timesonline.com.

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