

My REPTILES Magazine Editorial Minions

Two editors are integral to every issue of REPTILES magazine.

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Here I am with my fish and reptile magazines editorial staff. Stephanie Starr and Eric Syverson are to the right of me. Also, that's Ben Weiner, ReptileChannel's web editor, on the far right.

I've been wanting to give a shout-out to my editorial staff on REPTILES magazine for awhile now, but first, a brief description of the editorial hierarchy on the magazine:

The group editor – that would be me – is the lead editor on the magazine. This means I get to sit in my office all day, ordering ivory backscratchers online and sipping vintage wine while my staff editors run themselves ragged putting the magazine together. Sometimes I may have to whip them.

Ha ha! Of course this is an exaggeration. Because ivory's illegal to use for such things as backscratchers, the ones I use are now made of sandalwood. They don't work as well and aren't as sturdy as ivory, but they smell much nicer.

The title "Group Editor" means that I oversee more than one magazine in BowTie's stable. I oversee several, in addition to REPTILES. The animal titles I'm on are Reptiles USA, Aquarium Fish International, Aquarium USA, Freshwater and Marine Aquarium, Marine Fish and Reef USA. I'm also the group editor on two other titles that are a little different than the usual animal magazines we publish. These are Motorcycle Consumer News and Auto Restorer. These last two are available by subscription only and are not on newsstands. They are entirely subscriber supported, in that they contain no advertising. All the other magazines rely on three avenues for income: subscription, newsstand sales and advertising.

I'm much more hands-on with REPTILES than any of these other titles. Reptiles are my primary interest and I've been on the magazine since the beginning, after all -- than any of the other titles. Luckily every one of these has competent editors who handle the day-to-day duties affiliated with putting out magazines. My involvement is most often on a managerial level rather than a "nuts and bolts" level in getting the magazines out the door.

My editorial staff on REPTILES is comprised of two people. Stephanie Starr is the managing editor. In other words, she's my Number One when it comes to putting the magazine together. Steph and I work closely together in lining up the articles and planning the issues. She also works closely with all the contributors who supply photos and text. If you were to ever write an article for REPTILES, chances are you would be working with Steph at some point. In addition to lining things up she also edits, proofreads, submits photos for processing, hounds contributors regularly and searches for authors to write articles that we would like to publish. She also writes the "Who's Who" column every month.

Speaking of articles, the ones you see in the magazine result from a couple of different ways. A writer may pitch an idea to us and we'll say go ahead and write it or we may have an idea ourselves and then we'll search for somebody to write it. The latter type is most often animal specific. For instance, we might realize it's been a long time since we ran an article about leopard tortoises. We'll schedule one for an upcoming issue and then we'll approach potential authors.

Steph also "dummies" the magazine every month. This is what we call the process of laying out the pages, determining where the articles will go and where the ads will go. It's like doing a big puzzle and assembling all the pieces based on various factors, such as length of article text and the number of photos in each article, the size of ads, and advertiser requests (some want to go in specific articles, on specific pages, etc.).

The managing editor, as you can see, does a lot of stuff. Putting out REPTILES would be much more of a hassle for me without Steph. She returned to BowTie in December 2007 after having worked here once before – she was my managing editor years ago on Aquarium Fish – and I'm definitely glad she came back.

My other editor is Eric Syverson, who is the magazine's associate editor. Eric started out at BowTie as an intern after he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia. After he completed his internship I hired him full time on REPTILES in November 2006, as an assistant editor.

Eric's another integral editorial cog. In addition to editing and proofreading articles, he writes the "Reptile Retailer Spotlight" column every month, and also writes a lot of "News From the Reptile Realm." He, too, has a lot of contact with contributors, including readers who win contests and companies that sponsor columns. Eric also handles our contributor

payments each month, a fact that I'm sure our authors and photographers appreciate.

And that's pretty much who puts together every issue of REPTILES, at least editorially. Of course many other people in other departments are involved in the magazine. There is the production department, manufacturing department, consumer marketing department, design department, classified advertising department, display ad sales department...there are lots of departments, as you can see, and that's just to put out the magazine. Distributing it into stores involves a whole bunch of other people.

But in this blog I just wanted to give a shout out to the two other magazine editors who work with me every day to get every issue of REPTILES out the door. Thanks, Steph and Eric!

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