

"Living With Reptiles" Picks

One editor's top-five "Living With Reptiles" stories for 2009.

September 14, 2009

In the Sept. 4 blog, I briefly described how I fit into this magazine. I talk to people for news stories, retailer profiles and contests, but that's not all. Some of you might have gathered from the Sept. 9 blog that I take show pictures, too. It's true, but I'm not the only one. I also edit and help magazine contributors with their writing, and my favorite place to do that is in the "Living With Reptiles" column.

Found in the very back of the magazine, this column is the last hooray of every issue. It's like the exclamation point to an expressive sentence or the Friday to the regular workweek. It's one of my favorite columns if you can't tell.

Readers like you write these stories, and there never seems to be a shortage of good submissions to choose from, which is sometimes tough for REPTILES magazine editors because we can only select 12 a year. But I'm getting off point. The truth of the matter is it never ceases to amaze me how many ways herps can touch people's lives, and some of our readers do a great job of putting that into words.

So in the spirit of sharing, below are my top five "Living With Reptiles" stories of this year. Those of you who would like to share your favorites, please do. And anyone interested in submitting stories for the column can find instructions on this website. "Dinner Becomes Miracle Whip," October 2009. Linda C. Brown's story about a missing corn snake morph has all the right elements for a great read. It has mystery (what happened to the snake?), it has humor (names such as Killer and Dinner), and it pops at the end. Good stories reward readers for finishing them. This is a perfect example. "Towel Trouble," December 2009. This story isn't out yet, but editors have the ability to see a month or two into the magazine's future. Author Petra Spiess narrates her story in a way that puts you in her shoes as she tries to save a Burmese python from giving itself a stomach ache. It's written so well I just had to include it. "Rhino Romp," September 2009. Wendy Townsend's story goes beyond a simple narrative piece. It describes a brief sliver in time without much drama, but drama isn't really the goal. This story tries to capture the feeling of interaction between iguanas and humans. Writing about intangible concepts is difficult, but Wendy steps up to the challenge. Plus she skillfully weaves in tips on iguana care. I was impressed. "Dancing Phenom," April 2009. How can a slider such as Carrie Guenther's Gertie not make someone's top-five list? The turtle does the twist. A mental picture of that alone can get me through the toughest of days. "Shelled Inheritance," July 2009. William Brown's story covers a lot of ground: William's first impressions of Gregory the desert tortoise, his transfer to a new home and his role in a new family. But perhaps what it does best is it effectively drives home a point often printed in this magazine: Tortoises are a long-term commitment.

That does it for me, folks. Russ will be back at the end of the week, so my short stay on the blogosphere is over. Take care, and keep reading.

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