

THE YOUNGEST SUBSCRIBER

BY JENNY MONTGOMERY

When sharing about how we develop the editorial content of the magazine, I usually explain our approach as a “two-headed monster.” As you might have guessed, Jenny’s the other head of this editorial monster, and so, without further ado, I’m pleased to turn this issue’s editorial over to her.

—Guy Langevin

At a photo expo last fall, Guy and I were chatting with people who stopped by the Photo Life booth when I glanced over to my left and saw a little girl looking in our direction with interest. I smiled and waved, and she tugged at her dad’s arm to get his attention, pointing in our direction. The two came over to check out the magazine. She was probably about seven years old and certainly the youngest person I’ve seen take a real interest in the magazine. She immediately wanted to take a closer look at the image that had gotten her attention: the rabbit photo from Jon Reaves’ article in the August/September 2018 issue.

Noticing her affinity for animals, I asked if she takes photos sometimes and she nodded. I showed her the rest of that issue, which also included an interview with animal rights photographer Jo-Anne McArthur. Flipping through the pages, I told her about how Jo-Anne makes photos of animals to help protect them and how other photographers like Paul Nicklen and Cristina Mittermeier also use photography for the good of animals and the environment. As she studied the images, her dad told us that she’s a twin. He mentioned that he always tells both girls that they can do anything they want to and that they can be bosses too.

Seeing her interest, her dad subscribed. When I offered her a free issue, she chose the one with Jon’s rabbit photo. After wrapping things up, the two said goodbye and walked off together to explore the rest of the expo.

The ordinary act of subscribing to a magazine was so much more than that in this instance. A little girl followed her curiosity, and her dad fully supported her. It was touching and inspiring to witness. But, I admit, it feels like a cliffhanger: I’m left wondering what’s next for her. Will her interest in photography continue over the next five, ten or twenty years? Will she follow in the footsteps of Jo-Anne McArthur, Cristina Mittermeier, or any of the other amazing women whose work she’ll encounter in the pages of the magazine?

In honour of International Women’s Day on March 8, I’d like to express my thanks to all the female photographers out there making a difference in the world and fighting for a place at the table. If you’d like to learn more about a few of these exceptional women, be sure to check out Amber Bracken’s article on p. 36 and our interview with Shelley Niro on p. 22—as well as the rest of the issue, of course! And if I had one wish for International Women’s Day this year, it would be for this young subscriber and her twin to grow up truly believing that they can do anything they want.

THE QUESTION

What photo projects would you attempt if you knew you wouldn’t fail? Send your responses to glangevin@photonlife.com.



Jenny Montgomery

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