

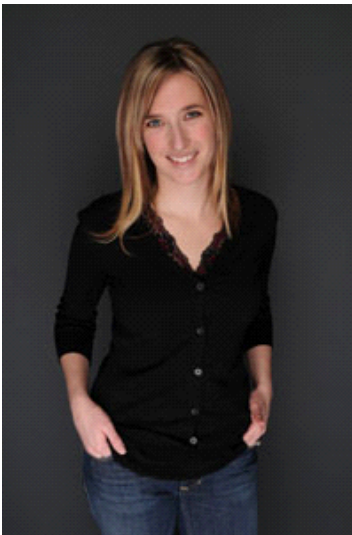
GROWERTALKS

Columns

3/15/2010

Behind the Scenes

Jennifer Zurko



With Jennifer Duffield White off to graduate school, we decided to use her “welcome-to-the-issue” spot to introduce the Ball Publishing staff, culminating with Jennifer Zurko, our new staff editor, whom we’ve hired to replace the old Jen (who will continue to do freelance writing for us). It takes more than an editor and a few freelance contributors to create such a top-notch magazine every month, so here’s a chance to get to learn a little about the other folks that make GrowerTalks possible.

Your title and current responsibilities at Ball Publishing: “Sales/Trade Show Coordinator—my responsibilities involve providing sales support to our Advertising Account Managers, whether it be coordinating ad lists, preparing insertion orders, media kits or sending our reader service and advertiser emails. In addition to my sales functions, I also coordinate Ball Publishing’s trade show exhibits, maintain our online trade show calendar, manage the New Product and Product Profiles sections, and so much more.”

How long have you worked with Ball Publishing? “Five years this March.”

Something personal about yourself (but not TOO personal): “For starters, it’s the simple things in life that make me happy. I’m blessed with an amazing husband, two wonderful parents that raised me and my six siblings (I’m the oldest of seven), and I have a beautiful new niece who never fails to bring a smile to my face.”

You worked in an ad agency before coming to Ball Publishing. How has that experience helped you in your current role? “It was a small family-owned agency, so I was exposed to all facets of the business. Not only did it provide plenty of hands-on marketing experience, but my title of Assistant Account Executive shared many similar responsibilities that prepared me for my current role at Ball Publishing.”

What do you like most about working at Ball Publishing? “Our finished product. There is nothing more satisfying than having a tangible result of our collective efforts each month.”

What's the weirdest thing anyone's ever asked you to do? "Help Saran-Wrap everything in Luke Nicholas' office while he was out of town ... after work hours, of course."

Many of the Ball Publishing staffers tease you about your organizational skills—we heard that the priest at your wedding even mentioned it in his sermon. Is there a trick to maintaining order out of the Ball Publishing craziness? "Yes, I'm a real-life Monica Geller from the sitcom 'Friends'. I'm more productive and focused when things are clean, organized and prioritized. I would be lost without my Outlook reminders, Excel spreadsheets and color-coded highlighters and labels."

People would be surprised you are: "Not really organized."

What's it like living in the same neighborhood as editor Chris Beytes? "Besides the fact that he's always stealing my container ideas and he surveys me and our neighbors on our gardening habits twice a year, it's not as bad as one would think. All jokes aside, Chris and Laurie are great neighbors."

You come from a large, Italian, close-knit family. How do they compare to the Ball Publishing family? "They, too, are loud and love to eat. Growing up in a large family has taught me that in order to be successful you must have a solid foundation, work hard, be willing to compromise and enjoy each other's company. But most of all, a family is only as strong as its weakest link—you need all the pieces of the puzzle to make it work."

Your garden at home? "Last summer, my husband and I tackled an ambitious outdoor makeover, all perennials. We're pleased with the results and enjoy the compliments from our neighbors. I watch too much HGTV and flip through lots of home magazines, so our garden is a work in progress."

Your ideal day at work: "To accomplish everything on my To-Do list at 100% of my ability with minimal interruptions. Add a toffee-nut latte and an Asiago cheese bagel into the mix and I'm a happy girl." **GT**