

From the Editor's Desk

MY CHILDHOOD was a kennel stuffed with fine memories and filled with good dogs. More often than not, my father was the proud owner of a well-trained hunting companion. The dog was always a Springer Spaniel. I cherish those formative hunts as a budding sportsman and am thankful for Mandy, the sidekick I credit with flushing my first ruffed grouse. And, many flushes and subsequent flops, when I experienced my first bird in hand. Furry friends were not confined to the outdoors, for there was another impatiently waiting in the house. Comical as it was loyal, the family addition was a short-haired, ginger dachshund named Gretel. Our Oscar Meyer guard dog fervently protected and loved her family.

Decades and a dog or two later, I was sworn in as a Deputy Game Warden with the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Initially, my interaction with the K-9 program was limited. Years into my time as a deputy game warden, my mentor matriculated to the position as a K-9 handler and investigator. I saw firsthand how well K-9 Storm gathered crucial evidence. Storm (and Larry) would put on unforgettable demonstrations to the public, including Boy Scouts, elementary students and a statewide writing organization. All were impressed. My personal admiration and respect for canines was affirmed.

Every kid needs a dog. My daughter Leah begged year after year. One Christmas, Santa finally found a perfect fit. A mid-December morning found a mysterious address tucked into the boughs of our Christmas tree. Our family of four excitedly punched in the coordinates and enjoyed a snowy, holiday drive. Once there, my daughter gleefully knocked on the front door of a cozy home tucked deep into the woods.

Paws That Enforce the Laws



As the door opened, Leah was trampled by a six-pack of long-haired miniature weiner dogs. The little blonde female pup that stood so lovingly on Leah's chest instantly became a family member. Leah endearingly named her Sunny. Never has there been a dog with a bigger heart or stinkier breath. Fast forward more than five years, Sunny still brightens every single day in our home. All seven pounds of her melt into one's lap like there's nowhere else on earth to be. While it is true she tests eardrums and patience in equal measure, Sunny also serves as a constant reminder to live life to the fullest. Be welcoming. Tell those you love that you love them. Better yet, show them!

This issue is for the dogs. IGW springs into 2026 with canines. If you attended

last year's conference, then you undoubtedly met (or heard) Oliver, IGW Manager Marion Hoffman's sidekick. If not, see Oliver in our Canines & Columnists photo collage. Better yet, attend this year's conference in Nebraska and meet Oliver.

In addition to our staff's furry photos, many pages are dedicated to dogs. Joshua Wolff's column *Hoxsey's Heritage* continues to entertain. He relays a fine family memory involving a special dog and deer from IGW's founder, Don Hastings. *Marshall Law* shares a ride-along spent with Larry Hergenroeder. Most readers know Larry as our NAWEAOA President. I am lucky to know him as a friend and local game warden. Specifically, Hergenroeder is a Special Investigator/K-9 Handler for the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

International Digest shares a cautionary tale for dog owners. Even Terry Hedges' *Bits & Pieces* harrowing tale inserts a dog as a minor character. It wasn't too difficult to inspire British Columbia's Frank deBoon to focus on wagging tails and pen yet another poem for IGW. Impeccable timing, NAWEAOA Museum just sent out a press release found in *Behind the Badge*. Our organization announced the launch of a K-9 Memorial. Thank you Sheila!

Keep fighting the good fight...I'm in your corner. ↗

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NAWEAOA is a 9000 member organization of Wildlife and Fisheries enforcement officers from across North America. The association began at a meeting of 16 Wildlife Officers from the U.S. and Canada in Great Falls, Montana in 1980. Other associations for wildlife officers existed, but this was the first to actively solicit membership from all officers in North America.

What can NAWEAOA do for you? NAWEAOA as a group of dedicated wildlife law enforcement professionals is committed to wildlife protection and to the public we serve. NAWEAOA supports the activities of many major conservation organizations through membership and active participation. If you are a Fish and Wildlife Officer, you can be part of the NAWEAOA team today by becoming a member. Let us share the benefits of membership with you! If you are a Natural Resource Program Administrator, you can improve your program by sending your officers to NAWEAOA conferences and training programs, or let us help you in hosting one yourself.

IGW's Canine Partners



CANINES and COLUMNISTS

1. Advertising manager Carlos Gomez and Sophie.
2. Steve Beltran and family with Hazel and Harper.
3. Joshua Wolff and Golden Doodle "Kai."
4. IGW manager Marion Hoffman and Oliver pose for alternate cover
5. Kirk Kiefer's daughter Alyssa and Mya.
6. Nancy Foley with Cali and Chica.
7. Editor Marshall with Kimba and Sunny.



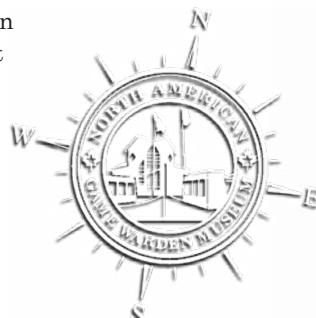


K9 Memorial Exhibit newest addition to The North American Game Warden Museum

The North American Game Warden Museum is proud to announce that its Board of Directors recently approved a new memorial and exhibit. Fundraising efforts are now underway to build a K9 Memorial and Educational Display at our location in Dunseith, ND.

Currently, K9s are not recognized at the museum, and this project is a meaningful and positive addition. This memorial will be established with several fallen K9s from across the United States and continue as a place to honor and recognize all North American Conservation Law Enforcement working dogs lost in the line of duty. Game wardens from the United States and Canada have already committed to donating retired equipment that will be used as part of the educational display.

Please direct any individual or company that may be interested in financially supporting this memorial and educational display, to gamewardenmuseum@gmail.com.



* Artist rendering/proposals pending

The 2025 NAWEOA Officer of the Year and IGW Columnist **KIRK KIEFER** & the 2025 NAWEOA Loyal Partner Award winner **JASON KELLER & K-9 SCOUT** were recently recognized by the Ohio Senate for their honorable achievements.



GOOD
/ NEWS



INTERNATIONAL
Game
Warden