

i OUR IOWA

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IOWA EYE-CATCHERS

*Favorite photos from our readers...
and the stories behind them.*



Stocking Up for the Freeze

AS THE WEATHER COOLS and winter approaches, squirrels all over the state store food to survive the coming season. Joe McEwan found this furry fella hanging outside his dad's home in Emmetsburg. "My dad fed the squirrels that morning, and this hungry guest was waiting around outside the patio window for a second helping on this subzero day."



An Endless Duty

"PHEW, THAT WAS TOUGH!" this kiddo's face seems to say. "My grandson Hunter was at our house and wanted to shovel snow so no one would slip and fall," shares Deb Shoning of West Des Moines. "He quickly decided that sweeping was much easier!"

Making Christmas Memories

"DECORATING the Christmas tree is a favorite family tradition in our house," writes Andrea Sauser of Independence. "Reagan, age 6, Savannah, 4, and Raelynn, 2, put on their pajamas and we turned on Christmas music to make the evening special."



Playful Snow Pals

"MY GRANDSONS were having fun playing in the snow the day I took this picture," explains Rhonda Leonard of Logan. "Caleb is the little one, Wyatt is in green and Landon's in blue. We're lucky that we get to see these boys a lot—they all live within a few minutes of our farm!"



Rewarding Morning Ride

A WINTER EXCURSION revealed a new perspective to this explorer. "My wife and I were out taking pictures on this frosty morning," reports K.D. Burkett of New Providence. "We turned off the highway onto a dirt road and were rewarded with this view. I enjoy the textures and bold colors in this photo."

GOT AN EYE-POPPIN' PICTURE? If you have an appealing photo of Iowa's beautiful scenery or that depicts Iowa life, send it to: "Iowa Eye-Catchers", *Our Iowa*, 1510 Buckeye Ave., Ames IA 50010. Or email it to: editors@OurIowaMagazine.com and put "Eye-Catchers" in the subject line.

Vibrant Hues of Winter

COLOR THE WIND is a dazzling festival of incredible kites on frozen Clear Lake. "I love that this event is so simple, yet so beautiful," says Brian Abeling of West Des Moines. "Watching the smiles and giggles from kids and adults alike, you'll forget you're standing on a frozen lake in the middle of an Iowa winter!"



Getting a Taste of the Season

CATCHING SNOWFLAKES is practically a rite of passage for youngsters. "Grayson was only 2 years old in this picture," says his mom, Laura Baker of Harlan. "It was the first snowfall of the season, and we had a blast catching flakes on our tongues together."





The Inseparable Explorers And Other Dog Tales

*Readers share memories of their favorite pups
and the joy they brought to people around them.*

MY FATHER was an avid outdoorsman. He was a child of the Depression, so any wild game he brought home was a welcome addition to the table, and he carried his love of hunting into adulthood.

Dad's fondest wish was to own an Irish setter to take with him on his pheasant hunts. When I was around 11 years old, Dad got his wish—a beautiful male pup with a wavy deep-red coat and a tongue that hung out the side of his mouth. We named him "Irish". He grew into a great hunter and a great companion to me.

My friend Sally lived up the street and had a brown and white dog named "Brownie". It was love at first sight for Irish and Brownie.

The two dogs developed a routine. Every morning, Irish would head up the street and plop down in Sally's driveway, waiting patiently for his sweetheart. Then the two would go for a day of hunting in farm fields surrounding our small town.

About the time the dismissal bell would ring at school, the two dogs would return home to greet us.

One winter day, Irish was the only one there to meet us. We weren't too concerned the first evening, but when another day went by with still no Brownie, we were worried. Sally and I had terrible

visions of her in various kinds of trouble.

Irish left and returned alone for 2 more days. Finally on day 5, looking gaunt and dirty but wiggling with happiness, Brownie arrived back home with Irish leading the way.

We were thrilled to see her, but we wished she could talk and tell us where she had been! Just a few weeks later, we got our answer.

After a heavy snowstorm, a local farmer made a little extra money by clearing out residents' driveways. This was 1960 and no one owned such a thing as a snowblower, so Dad flagged down the farmer to clear our drive.

Once the farmer had finished, Dad paid him and, as is the case in any small town, you absolutely have to visit a bit before you leave.

The farmer told Dad, "Oh, by the way, your dog was out at my place a couple weeks back. It was the darndest thing. I noticed him sitting next to my stack of firewood. He left before dark and I figured that was the last I'd see of him, but by golly he was back again the next morning.

"After a couple days, I finally decided to see what he was up to. Turns out he was keeping watch over your neighbor's dog. She was trapped inside the woodpile!

FRESH SNOWFALL not only appeals to kids—it also brings out Brian Abeling's mastiff "Dakota" for a play day in West Des Moines.

I got her out, and the two of them took off for town as fast as they could."

Mystery solved! Sally and I were so proud of Irish. Without him we wouldn't have had a happy ending.

—Barbara Striegel, Keswick



OUR FAVORITE family dog was "Scruffy", a bearded collie who never caught on that he was not our fourth child.

He played all the games with the neighborhood kids, including hide-and-seek. When it was time to hide, he would hastily dig a small hole in the ground and duck his head in it, exposing his backside and wagging tail.

When they were playing inside, the kids would dress Scruffy in their clothes, or throw a blanket over him, claiming "capture". He would immediately lay down and play dead.

At one point, we also had a family of guinea pigs. In a small fenced cage outside, the babies would romp around and crawl all over Scruffy. It was not unusual to see him stand and shake with little guinea pigs falling from his fur.

When work was scarce in our area, our family lived and traveled in a fifth-wheel trailer, and Scruffy made friends along the way.

At one campground, there was a perfect climbing tree with large limbs nearly touching the ground. As the kids climbed the tree, they couldn't find the dog until they realized that he, too, was in the tree alongside them!

In Washington, Scruffy met his new best friend, "Rex". Through those two, we became friends with Rex's owners. From there, both our families traveled to California, where there was work and schools for the kids.

Scruffy and Rex are both gone now, but I'm still in touch with the friends we made through our friendly pup.

—Barb Neal Hutchins, Marion



MY DOG "Smoke" came into my life in 1959. His mother was a German shepherd and his dad was unknown. Smoke had a black mouth and a black fur coat.

I was living on a farm that I rented, in an old house with no plumbing. Smoke and I were side by side whenever I was →

Side Note: You can't teach an old dog new tricks. Why? Maybe the first ones were for your pleasure and not his.