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# Greyhound Friends for Life
RESCUE ✦ ADOPTION ✦ ADVOCACY

**Fall Greetings to Our Adopters and Supporters!**
**We hope that you had a great summer and a Happy Halloween!**

Here are the topics for this issue of the Newsletter:
Remembering Norman Simmons
Thank You!
Funding GFFL's Mission
Changes to our Board of Directors
GFFL Website
2026 Calendars
2026 Reunion
Dogs Looking for Homes

## Remembering Norman Simmons

GFFL lost a good friend in April. Norman Simmons died on April 23, 2025 at the age of 93. Unfortunately, we didn't know about this until September. Norm and his wife, Patty, who died back in 2010, were active volunteers with the group from the early days of the Greyhound Protection League and Greyhound Friends for Life. After Patty died, Norman stayed active, organizing the group for the annual Los Altos Pet Parade and attending other Meet and Greets on the Peninsula.

Here is a link to a lovely article in the local Los Altos paper about them.

Although Norman hadn't had greyhounds for the past many years, he always tried to make it to our reunions. We will miss him.

As we approach Thanksgiving, we wanted to thank so many of our volunteers and donors. We are getting more of our dogs now from shelters in SoCal and we couldn't get them up here without help from Paula Ottesen, Jolise Ferrier, and Katy Christenson for getting them out of the various shelters and to Eric Kelley and JoVae for fostering them in SoCal until they can be transported up north to us. And we couldn't get them up here without the help of transporters Paula Ottesen, JoVae Ferrier, Deb Ward, Rich and Linda Torres, Dennis and Theresa Pearson, and Joseph Boyle. And for the dogs coming in from Australia, we are indebted to Lisa Curtis and Marc Canicenza for meeting those dogs when they arrive at SFO and transporting them to Marni's foster facility.

We are also thankful to our foster homes, although we always need MORE! Thanks to Judy Cabarrus for fostering Maggie and Hallie, Morgan Kotur for fostering Titan, Suzanne Ferriera for fostering Beatrice and Cy, Kara Turney for fostering Muffin, and Mike Sullivan (who has also helped with transports) for fostering Cuppacino.
We are very grateful to our volunteers who come to Marni's to help walk and socialize our foster dogs. Margaret and Tim Lynch, Wendy Masten, and Lee Ann Yeager come every week help with the dogs.

And many thanks, again, to Sophia Mitchell for putting the contents of the newsletter into the MailChimp format and getting them sent out!

## Funding GFFL's Mission

As you know, Marni was able to make the move from her home of over 10 years (after serious issues with a new neighbor) to a new property because of generous donations through GoFundMe at the end of last year to pay for fencing and other renovations to make it safe for our foster dogs. We were fortunate that Marni's parents were able to spend a couple of months helping her with the move and with a lot of manual labor on the property! And we can't forget the beautiful platforms and steps that Steve Kadar built so that the dogs in the dog cottage could use their dog doors and get to their outside spaces!

But 2025 has been financially tough for many people and this has affected overall donations. And because we didn't have a reunion this year, that source of funding was not there, either. We are very, very grateful for people who have donated, especially those who have set up monthly donations. If everyone receiving this newsletter set up a monthly donation of $10.00 (or more, whatever is comfortable), it would provide a financial cushion. Even though we have raised our adoption fee, veterinary care, medications, and dog food keeps going up. It's hard to keep up and we keep having to go into our savings to meet costs.

Here's how: https://www.greyhoundfriendsforlife.org/how-to-donate-to-gffl/

## Changes to Our Board of Directors

We have been fortunate to have some wonderful people on our board for many years. But we knew that it was time to bring in some new people who would have new ideas and new energy.

Michele Czaja, who has been on the board since the early days of the Greyhound Protection League, has indicated that she is ready to leave. She has been an invaluable source of knowledge about the history of rescue and putting together the newsletter until the past few years. She will still be a representative in the Carmel/Monterey area. Thank you, Michele, for your years of contribution to the group and your historical perspective on GFFL and sighthound rescue!

Marni, Julie Carroll, and I remain on the board.

We welcome three new board members – Wendy Masten, John Gillis, and John's wife, Gina Armanini. Below are brief bios about them and their involvement with the group. Wendy lives in Santa Rosa; John and Gina live in Sonoma.

**Wendy Masten**
I have always had a deep love for animals. As a teenager, I worked with Thoroughbreds and volunteered at the racetrack. My interest in sighthounds led me and my husband to welcome our first whippet, Chase, into our lives.
In 2015, my journey with GFFL began when I adopted my first greyhound, Nessa. Through Nessa, I discovered the GFFL community—and I never looked back. I fondly remember my beloved greyhounds, Bodhi and Raven, who have crossed the bridge, and today share my life with Indigo and my chestnut Forever Foster, 13-year-old Glampaw E.

**John Gillis**
With the exception of a period in my early twenties, I've had dogs and/or cats in every place I've lived. Growing up, it was a given that pets would be part of the family, even when living abroad in Southeast Asia. Shortly after I met my now-wife, Gina, at the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco, we both fell in love with Italian Greyhounds and eventually brought two into our life together soon after moving to Glen Ellen in the Sonoma Valley. Unfortunately, we lost Ollie in 2021, but we remained committed to the rescue going forward. This led to another IG (Rocco) from the Napa animal shelter, followed by Greyhound Uma, Saluki mix Alfie, and finally whippet Ollie, all from GFFL. Simply put: they are our fur kids, and we unconditionally love them to bits. I'm honored and excited by the prospect of helping GFFL find loving homes for more of these quirky, gentle creatures and to be part of such a dedicated and passionate group!

**Gina Armanini**
After attending Santa Clara University and later the Academy of Art, I made the decision to transition into the culinary field. I graduated from the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco, where I met my husband, John. In the mid-90s we moved to Glen Ellen to be the chefs at The Girl and the Fig, where we began to forge a lasting connection with the local culinary community and adopted our first sighthounds, two Italian Greyhounds named Ollie and Rocco. Ollie was adopted from Napa Animal Shelter, and Rocco from a 911 we closed the restaurant and moved back to San Francisco where John shifted toward wine importing and I moved into food service management with a large corporate vendor managing for high end Senior living communities and as a Director for the western region before retiring in 2023. As passionate dog lovers, we've been fortunate to have been "sighthound parents" for many years. Our family currently consists of three rescue dogs—a Greyhound named Uma, a Whippet named Ollie, and an Italian Greyhound named Rocco, all of whom bring immense joy to our lives. We met Barbara after adopting Uma, and she has played a pivotal role in our journey, helping us find Ollie and reinforcing our appreciation for the GFFL mission. I look forward to collaborating with the GFFL community and contributing to the meaningful work GFFL does for these amazing dogs.

## Can You Help with Our Webpage?

As part of the GFFL reset, we would really like to find someone who will work on updating the website, giving it new look, and making it more streamlined and user friendly. We have some great ideas from graphic designer/adopter Tom Rocha, but we need someone to implement these ideas.

Do we have anyone out there with mad website development skills that would like to take on this project? Let Barbara or Marni know!

## 2026 GFFL Calendars Are Now Available




Order yours now at our online store.

https://gfflstore.org/shop/pls/products/2026-gffl-calendar

With many thanks to Constance and Lenora Oakes for gathering photos and putting together our calendars for the past two years!

## 2026 GFFL Reunion
## Save the Date: June 6, 2025

Save the Date! We are applying to reserve Miller-Knox Regional Park in Point Richmond on Saturday, June 6 for next year's reunion (same place as 2 years ago). We will need lots of volunteers to organize and run this event, so be prepared to help if we want to do this. I can't do it alone!

## Dogs Looking for Homes

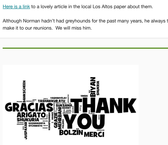
### *Jewel, Diego, and Boka*



We have several dogs who have been with us for a long time. We have been getting dogs from a guy up north who has been trying to get dogs away from a guy in SoCal who has many dogs and puppies on his property. He has lost control of the dogs, who keep breeding. Beatrice and Eddie came from this place but they were young enough to socialize pretty quickly and they are now in great homes. The older dogs, however, are not socialized and they are requiring a lot of time and work to get them to the point where they can be adopted. Jewel, Diego, and Boka came from this place (Jewel is the white greyhound in the photo). We recently brought in 3 more dogs from the same place – the two girls, Nala and Celia, were much better socialized, but the male, Javier, is still very shy. Check them out on the website. Our contact is trying to find out how many more dogs are on the property and get them all out. It will require several groups to step up and take some of them.

If we have potential adopters out there who have a very secure yard and would like to work with one of these dogs, I can tell you from experience that it is an incredibly rewarding task. But it does take making a commitment of time and patience and allowing a dog time and space to trust.

### *Takoda*



And we still have Takoda. I don't understand why because he is a lovely dog, affectionate with people, does fine with medium to large dogs, and walks really nicely on leash. Why isn't he in a home?

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