



"Until man extends the circle of his compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace..." Albert Schweitzer

This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Elwin Hodgins.

Elwin passed away on February 20, 2008, leaving behind a legacy of compassion for animals and a rare dedication to helping people as well. His contribution to **Greyhound Companions of New Mexico** was immeasurable. He devoted much of his time to fostering and also educating the public on the plight of the racing greyhound.

Elwin also touched the lives of many with his work as a volunteer for **Southwest Canine Corps of Volunteers (SCCV)**, an award-winning **Albuquerque** pet therapy program. Visiting hospitals and nursing homes to share his indefatigable, upbeat outlook on life, Elwin brought smiles and comfort to all he met.

Elwin's greyhound, **Spirit**, came into his life when he became involved in her rescue and lengthy rehabilitation. (To read Spirit's story, please see the front page story of the Spring/Summer 2007 issue of *GCNM News* which can be found at www.gcnm.org under *GCNM News*.) Spirit's time with Elwin was cut short by the aggressive cancer which claimed his life.

Spirit has been placed in a loving home with **Cynthia** and **Michael Mueller** of **Edgewood, New Mexico**, to join their other two greyhounds, **Cherokee** and **Shea**.



Elwin Hodgins, Spirit, and Sherry Mangold

Elwin made the world a better place. His memory will live on in the work we do to protect greyhounds and in the many other arenas where he made a difference. We miss you, Elwin.

In Memory of "Kelly" Mathis

Fifteen years ago, at three months of age, two greyhound puppies were abandoned on the side of the highway in **Clovis, NM**. **GCNM** was contacted for their rescue. Covered with ticks, it took the better part of a day to remove them once we got the dogs to Albuquerque. With veterinary care and TLC, they were soon ready for placement.

Their first introduction to the public was at a large event at the **Albuquerque Convention Center** where GCNM had been invited to exhibit at a booth. **Kent** and **Sara Mathis** and daughter,

Heather, came to visit that day and walked the puppies around the floor of the event. They left that day with **Kelly** in tow, with the intention of fostering her.

When a potential adopter inquired about seeing Kelly, Heather was already too attached to let go. That was the beginning of Kelly's long, happy life in the Mathis household.

For fifteen years, she was one of the most well-known ambassadors for GCNM and made many



Kelly Mathis

appearances on TV, radio, and a multitude of events and adoption clinics. Kelly proved to be particularly adept in agility classes at **Acoma Training Center**, after having completed obedience class with flying colors. She was one of the class favorites as she was so eager to please.

Kelly succumbed to multiple age-related health problems on March 24, 2008. Many will remember her for her playful antics but most will have an image in their minds of Kelly's fuzzy face peering at them over the gate at **All Sports Trophies** where she spent much of her time greeting customers. She will be greatly missed.

Greyhound Companions of New Mexico, Inc. (GCNM) is a licensed, non-profit organization concerned for the welfare of racing greyhounds. Thousands of greyhounds bred for racing are destroyed and suffer heinous injuries annually. Our mission is twofold in that we find adoptive homes for failed racers in addition to actively campaigning for their humane treatment. Holding the racing industry accountable for actions which threaten the safety and welfare of racing greyhounds is of paramount importance and we vow to uphold that pledge. All our work is done by volunteers. We have no paid staff.

Board of Directors:

Judy K. Paulsen, President
Sara J. Mathis, Treasurer
Barbara J. Wells, Secretary
Robert K. Mathis

New Mexico Greyhound Sanctuary in Planning Stage

North of **Santa Fe, New Mexico** is a 130-acre sanctuary for animals who may otherwise have perished. The abandoned, the abused, the sick, the old, and the suffering find a place of refuge here at **The Heart and Soul Animal Sanctuary**. Animals here do not live in cages, but rather in a home environment where they are fed, groomed, loved, and treated like the family companions they deserve to be.

Now a new project is under development at Heart and Soul: **The Greyhound Sanctuary**.

The Greyhound Sanctuary is the brainchild of **Kathy Pallis**, one of our most dedicated volunteers. Kathy began volunteering for **Greyhound Companions of New Mexico** after learning about our efforts to educate the public on the plight of the racing greyhound. She has fostered many greyhounds for GCNM and is our northern New Mexico team leader for organizing adoption clinics and other events in the area.

The Greyhound Sanctuary will provide a haven for greyhounds that have been retired from racing and are old, sick, and in need of special attention. It will also provide housing to greyhounds that are awaiting adoption through Greyhound Companions of New Mexico. The land for this facility is located on The Heart and Soul Animal Sanctuary property.

If you would like to volunteer in any capacity for this exciting project, please contact Kathy Pallis via email: palliskc@comcast.net.



Kathy Pallis with Her Greyhounds

Greyhound Advocacy and Adoption – A History

By Susan Netboy

Looking Back

Today, as we lovingly indulge our pet greyhound's every need, care for foster dogs, schedule time for meet and greets and all the other tasks involved in greyhound adoption, it's difficult to even imagine that less than two decades ago 50,000 of these magnificent, docile creatures were summarily killed every year. Those were the days when the climate was such that the president of the American Greyhound Track Operators Association could unabashedly say to *People Magazine*, "The animals must be disposed of. It's an economic thing." At the time, there was not a breed of dog in America who was more in need of advocacy than the racing greyhound.

Astoundingly, for the first 70 years of dog racing that was the prevailing attitude held not only by those in the greyhound racing industry, but also by the majority of humane societies who considered the greyhound to be a dangerous, unadoptable animal. Consequently, dog pound incinerators in the vicinity of dog tracks were choked with the bodies of unwanted greyhounds; research facilities were provided a steady supply of victims donated or sold by members of the dog racing industry; and the services of kill-truck drivers were in constant demand. At some tracks, the bodies of losing dogs were stacked up in plain view outside the kennel compound. Few outside the racing industry knew, and no one cared.

During the 1980s, the betting public had become enthralled with the speed of the long dog. Politicians and state governments also had a stake in the sleek racing dogs – cash and lots of it. Wallowing in campaign contributions from wealthy track owners, legislators instituted an open-door policy to any palm-greasing racing lobbyist who came calling. State governments reveled in the new-found source of revenue for state coffers – never giving a moment's thought to the greyhounds who just kept dying.

Society was primed for the meteoric rise of dog racing in America. At its height in 1990, 61,000

greyhounds were brought into the world to keep a steady stream of "fresh hides" (as they were crassly referred to), readily available for North America's 60 dog tracks. Everyone involved was making money and the over-breeding of racing greyhounds was the lynchpin to success. Sadly, the silence of the animal-welfare community had provided the industry with an unfettered path to unprecedented over-breeding and nationwide expansion. But the heightened interest in greyhound racing invited a new kind of breeder into the industry's midst – the small-scale "backyard" greyhound breeder. The kind who developed a personal relationship with their pups. The kind whose income did not depend solely on the success or failure of their most recent litter. The kind who, eventually, could not stomach euthanizing another healthy three-year old dog that they had raised from puppyhood. The kind whose advocacy for the racing greyhound would contribute to a movement that would ultimately bring a multi-billion dollar industry to its knees.

The Advent of Greyhound Advocacy and Adoption

During the latter half of the 1980s, a few fledgling advocacy/adoption groups emerged in various parts of the country. The struggles were many, creating interest in the greyhound as a pet, refuting misconceptions about greyhound temperament. And a host of other challenges, not the least of which was money. These were folks who by and large had no connection to the racing industry and wanted no part of it, except for the dogs. Having seen the worst of the worst, they spoke the unbridled truth about the plight of the racing greyhound. It was a time before there was pressure from the racing industry to expunge the words "rescue, save and advocacy" from the vernacular. A time when everyone involved in greyhound adoption considered themselves advocates for the dogs – including the handful of greyhound breeders who were pushing for reform.

The pro-adoption breeders ultimately opted to form a new greyhound adoption organization, but their numbers were few so relationships were fostered with rescue organizations outside the industry. The big hurdle would be to obtain permission and financial support from the greyhound racing industry. The industry was quick to recognize the dangers posed by adoption and the intrusion of outsiders, but slow to grasp the fact that its very survival would depend on its response to this new concept. If this fledgling effort for industry-supported adoption was to be considered, concessions by adoption groups would have to be made. The code of silence that had long been the industry's standard of acceptance would have to be met. Although the language adopted was not quite that explicit, it accomplished the purpose: In return for an annual grant of \$1,000 per chapter, each would have to agree to operate in support of the industry and issue no negative quotes about greyhound racing to the news media. Money in exchange for silence – not a wholly unreasonable demand – especially from a business that could ill-afford scrutiny. The stipulation became known as “neutrality” or what one might call “the thin grey line” between those whose focus would be strictly limited to finding homes for greyhounds, and those



*Rusty Tomany in December 2006
(Picture Unrelated to Story)*

who believed that little change would occur without the freedom to speak about the stark realities facing tens of thousands of racing greyhounds. Ultimately, everyone found a niche where their efforts could make a difference.

In the early 1990s most members of the racing industry were complacent with the status quo. They took care of business in the same way they had for generations – separate the chaff from the wheat and get rid of it in the most expeditious manner. After all, you couldn't

succeed in greyhound racing with a farm or kennel full of losers; besides, there had been no negative consequences to that business model for decades. But times were changing... greyhounds were seen walking on-leash down city streets, wagging their tails and offering kisses when greeting strangers and romping with children in backyards. Some were even graying from the novelty of old age. The public began to take notice that racing greyhounds were not just a commodity; they were loving, affectionate pets. It seemed that with every pet greyhound that stepped into the limelight, the allure of greyhound racing dimmed bit by bit.

But it wasn't just the general public who began to notice.

The Mainstream Media Gets Involved

For 70 years the dog racing industry had enjoyed a free ride completely beyond the scrutiny of the mainstream press. Sports writers had extolled the attributes of the day's big winner and written glowing promotional pieces about their local dog tracks. The sub-culture beneath the glitz and glamour of the clubhouse had never been explored. Now, the press was brimming with curiosity. Fueled with press releases, statistics and information provided by greyhound advocates, inquisitive reporters were

beginning to ask questions – questions for which the industry didn't have any viable public-relations responses. And the most stinging inquiry of all: “What is the fate of the tens of thousands of greyhounds that aren't being adopted?”

The floodgates had opened. Over the next five years, hundreds of adoption articles appeared in newspapers across the country, and each included a reference to the number of greyhounds that were destroyed annually. Major media pieces focused on the plight of the

racing greyhound – *Life Magazine, The Miami Herald, Inside Edition, CBS News, People, National Geographic, Penthouse, Tucson Citizen, CNBC, The Crusaders, I Witness Video, The Boston Globe, CNN, the Associated Press*. And greyhound abuse cases that had previously been relegated to a few lines on page 58 were fodder for headline news. The public's long slumber was finally over; but unfortunately the nightmare for the majority of racing greyhounds would continue for many years to come.

The public scrutiny forced change within the racing industry as more people came to recognize that the old way was no longer acceptable. In some areas of the country, trainers began to hold onto dogs until they could be taken in by an adoption group. And although the industry's financial support for adoption was minuscule, and limited to industry-friendly groups, it did indicate that the racing industry was beginning to come on board.

The tipping point in terms of major industry change occurred in 1992, after the Chandler Heights, Arizona, massacre took center stage in newspapers all over the country. The public outrage that surfaced after the discovery of 143 greyhounds who had been shot to death shook the industry to its core. This, along with a number of other high-profile abuse cases – dead and dying greyhounds in Key West, Yuma, Coeur d'Alene, Cherry Lake, Tucson, Summerfield, Dowling Park, Ballinger and Pensacola – seared the plight of the racing greyhound into the entire country's consciousness. It also forced an American Greyhound Council spokesperson to issue the following declaration to his people: "We must face up to reality. We have a terrible image. And we can't expect that image to be whitewashed by rhetoric or tokenism." Roger Caras, president of the ASPCA, was the first to test the sincerity of the statement. The ASPCA came away with an AGC grant of \$100,000 that was earmarked for adoption groups – irrespective of their position on greyhound racing – though these monies were not distributed among all eligible groups.

The Greyhound Adoption Movement Flourishes

Adoption organizations of all stripes flourished and multiplied throughout the country. Everyone pulled together for the sake of the dogs, especially during track closings and other crises. The threat that adoption groups who dared to speak out against the racing industry would not get access to greyhounds proved utterly ineffective. The reality was, and is, that trainers need to move losing dogs in order to make room for potential winners. Most trainers didn't really care who took them off their hands. An increasing number of trainers welcomed the opportunity to be a part of something genuinely positive for the dogs. And out of it emerged a few true industry heroes; people who would hold dogs for adoption regardless of cost, inconvenience and pressure to opt for other alternatives.

Almost all adoption groups shared a common goal: To save as many greyhounds as possible. We became a part of a movement that over the next 15 years would unfold as the most successful single-breed rescue effort in history. With adoption numbers rising, and a decline in industry profits forcing a decrease in breeding, fewer greyhounds were being destroyed. The racing industry boosted financial support for adoption programs affiliated with race tracks and emphasized its concern for the welfare of the dogs. But in spite of these efforts, redemption for the dog racing industry remained elusive; particularly as evidence of greyhounds in research facilities, and other cruel means of disposal, continued to surface.

By the mid-nineties, it was evident that the greyhound racing industry had more to worry about than its tarnished image. The entire gambling industry was changing. Indian gaming, riverboat and off-shore gambling were booming, leaving dog racing little more than a few scraps of the gambling pie. Profits were down from one end of the country to the other, and the downward spiral was apparent at all levels of the industry. Dog tracks and breeding farms were cutting their losses and shutting down. The expansion of simulcast venues failed to adequately reverse the downward

trend. Now the press was focused on the financial decline of the dog racing industry.

The Call to Arms

Double-edged as it may have been, greyhound adoption provided the only positive publicity the industry had experienced in years. But there was imminent danger in the increasing power of adoption groups. If the various groups ever united in the recognition that to a large degree the very fate of the racing industry was in their hands, a decades-old way of life would come to a crashing halt. The interface between adoption and advocacy would have to be dealt with. In 1997 the American Greyhound Council and the National Greyhound Association signed on with a public relations firm that represented the fur industry and animal research corporations. Their expertise was in advising clients in the animal-use business who found themselves mired in controversy. Their adeptness at justifying the indefensible was legendary.

Talking points and catch phrases were formulated. Buzz words like “extremists, terrorists and animal-rights whackos” were introduced to characterize the opposition. It was a virtual declaration of war, designed to discredit and marginalize greyhound welfare advocates. From a cold-blooded business perspective, it was a smart move on the part of the racing industry. Pressure from a relatively small number of greyhound advocates had been amazingly effective, and one can hardly blame the industry for trying to defend itself. In the desperate struggle for survival, it really didn't matter that their derogatory epithets didn't represent the truth which, as they say, is the first casualty of war.

But it wasn't enough to have industry spokespersons engaging in name calling; industry-controlled adoption organizations

would also have to take up the call to arms. To remain in the industry's good graces, track adoption programs, satellites in non-racing states and other like-minded organizations would have to take on the defense and promotion of the dog racing industry.

The Great Divide

Compliance was not difficult to establish, especially with the scare tactics and wholesale nonsense that was injected into the rumor mill: “All the dogs will be killed if anyone speaks out against racing. Greyhound racing is a ‘political’ issue; non-profit organizations are not allowed to have an opinion. Greyhounds will become extinct without dog racing.” Leadership for this

new adversarial approach to greyhound adoption was not hard to come by. Those working in the trenches were so overwhelmed trying to save dogs that they never looked up to notice what was going on at the top. Some were more than willing to become water carriers for the industry. A witch hunt to ferret-out and blacklist “anti-racing” adoption organizations failed to

silence the opposition, or to prevent access to the dogs, but it did serve to fracture the adoption movement and fuel hostilities. Eventually, the middle ground and the comfort of “neutrality” were erased – everyone was pigeon-holed as either “pro-racing” or “anti-racing.” And the rhetoric was ramped up on both sides of the issue.

The racing industry experienced a certain amount of relief as the century came to a close. The press had tempered its focus and adoption stories had become passé. But the hard-core animal-rights community who had no connection to greyhound adoption, and had previously stayed out of the fray, still smelled blood in the water. A frontal assault against dog racing was launched in the year 2000 with a ballot initiative to ban greyhound racing in



Littermates
(Picture Unrelated to Story)

Massachusetts. Fearing this threat was a harbinger of 21st century values, racetrack owners from all over the country poured millions of dollars into a campaign opposing the ban. Although the initiative failed by a razor-thin margin, it forced everyone in the adoption community to further refine their positions. Some stood shoulder to shoulder with the industry in vocal opposition to the ban; others lent both vocal and financial support in favor of the initiative.

A Look at the Future

The industry was right. The 21st century did bring change and none of it has proven beneficial to greyhound racing in America. Additional track closings have reduced the number of dog tracks to 34. The industry's assertion that "nearly all 'adoptable' greyhounds are adopted" continues to be undermined by the discovery of greyhound bodies and the disappearance of designated pets from racetrack kennels. And so, the interminable haggling over numbers and terminology drones on. However, the final chapter will not be written by either "pro-" or "anti-racing" factions, but rather by the very force that once served as an excuse for killing greyhounds – the harsh, cold-hearted reality of bottom-line economics.

The live-racing product which brought so much wealth to a few, and so much misery and death to hundreds of thousands of greyhounds, is nearing the finish line. The goose that laid so many golden eggs for greyhound breeders is now laying poker chips and slot machines for track owners whose interest is money, not greyhounds. It's only a matter of time before

state governments change gambling laws, and release the racing greyhound from its servitude to state government. At least casino patrons are *willing* victims of corporate greed and state budget deficits.

As greyhound lovers, should we not all welcome that day? The day when we no longer face the heartbreak of saving some and leaving others behind; when the greyhound no longer needs the voice of an advocate, because he has the same chances for a long and happy life that every other breed enjoys. And when that day comes, the magnificent greyhound breed will – just as it has for centuries – survive the transition and continue to grace our sofas and bring love and joy into our lives.

About the author: As a founding member of Northern California Sighthound Rescue, Susan became involved in greyhound rescue in 1986; she briefly worked with Greyhound Pets of America in the late 1980s. Her first encounter with the greyhound racing industry evolved out of an effort to obtain the release of racing greyhounds from Letterman Army Institute of Research and eleven other research facilities in California and Arizona. The resulting revelations about the system of dog racing and the state of greyhound welfare left her with an indelible impression – silence was not an option. In 1991, she founded the Greyhound Protection League, a national advocacy voice for racing greyhounds and Greyhound Friends for Life, a California greyhound rescue organization.

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Training People Who Blame the Dog

By Judy Kody Paulsen

- "My greyhound won't stop stealing food off the countertop!"
- "My greyhound would rather go to the bathroom in the house, and the reason I know that is because *after* I take him/her outside, s/he comes back in and goes in the house and sometimes it's when I'm *right there!*"
- "My greyhound keeps destroying things in the house and it's not just when I'm gone...."
- "My greyhound insists on getting me up in the middle of the night to go outside."
- "My greyhound wakes up in the middle of the night to play."

- “My greyhound jumps all over me when we’re getting ready to go for a walk.”
- “My greyhound growls when we touch him while he’s lying down.”
- “My greyhound gets very agitated when I first get home from work.”
- “My greyhound pushes the other dogs aside when they want my attention.”
- “My greyhound only wants to eat doggy goodies or people food.”
- “My greyhound.....(fill in the blank)

Okay, you get the picture? It’s safe to say that with all the above situations, the dog is doing what s/he has been allowed to do or has been given insufficient signals to discourage undesirable behavior.

Dogs don’t *unlearn* behaviors without human intervention. Dogs don’t learn desirable behaviors without *consistent* human guidance and training. Problem is, who will train the people? *People must implement changes in their own behavior before they can expect changes in their dogs.*

Defining boundaries for a dog is a must. Consistency in enforcing rules for the dog and for every member of the household who interacts with the dog is the key to success. If only one person in the household is the disciplinarian in all or most instances, and other members of the family are allowing or encouraging unwanted behaviors, the dog most certainly will be confused and will not be able to determine when it’s okay to behave in a certain manner and when it is not.

Training *people* is what it’s all about; just ask any professional animal behaviorist. It has long been known that physical punishment and compulsion training are less likely to produce favorable results in dog training than good communication coupled with positive reinforcement. But first, people must learn to speak “DOG.”



Shori and Chaussé Halvorson
(Picture Unrelated to Story)

Communicating successfully with your dog takes time and willingness for you to learn. Trying to see the world through your dog’s eyes is an especially valuable tool.

Knowing why a dog is behaving badly is a good start, but unfortunately, many folks can’t (or won’t) look beyond the bad behavior to see the cause. In most instances, a dog will do what is innate. When in training, some dogs appear to “get it” almost on their own, while others need frequent reinforcement.

Dogs who don’t learn easily are often considered “difficult” or “stupid” or “rebellious” and often get relegated to the back yard rather than given more attention and guidance. This only produces a lonely dog who is more likely to develop negative behavioral traits which

become increasingly harder to reverse. People may have less patience with these dogs and are not as likely to want to spend time in training sessions with them.

So, please, before you give up on your greyhound, evaluate your own handling of the situation. Dogs deserve the time and understanding to help them adapt to house rules. This especially holds true for ex-racing greyhounds who’ve never been exposed to anything even similar to household manners. It can take months of effort and lots of patience when integrating any dog into a household, but ex-racing greyhounds can be particularly challenging.

Remember, retired racers come from environments unlike any other dog which goes into an adoption network, and may need more time to learn how to be a welcome member of the family.

Training the dog is easy once the people are trained!

Author's Note: Answers to many greyhound behavioral problems can be found in the articles on our website at <http://www.gcnm.org/behavior.html>. And for those who feel their dogs prefer relieving themselves inside the house, here's a tip: When you let your dog outside to "go," you need to be sure s/he "goes" before letting him/her back in. The last turnout of the evening should be timed right before you go to bed, and let the dog out first thing in the morning upon arising. Distractions outdoors may take precedence over the dog's need to relieve itself, so be sure s/he has the opportunity to "go" before you call him/her back in.

The easiest solution to this is to install a dog door and be sure your dog has access to it at all times. Most dogs grow accustomed to whatever schedule the household has adopted, but please don't expect your new dog to understand the rules without some help. Be patient with your retired racer – they've only known one turnout schedule most of their lives. They are not difficult to housebreak, but they do need help in adjusting.



Greyhound Sitter

Want to get away for a weekend every now and then, but don't want to board your greyhounds? There's another option for you and all you need to do is make a donation to **Greyhound Companions of New Mexico** and set up a time with **Kathy Pallis** to deliver your greyhounds to her home.

Your greyhounds will receive special attention in Kathy's home while you are away. If you have plans that can't include the dogs, and your plans fall during Friday through Monday, give Kathy a call and make an appointment. She is located in **Eldorado**, just north of **Santa Fe**.

Kathy can be reached at 505-466-4481 or email palliskc@comcast.net.



A Visit to Marilyn Varnberg's "Grey Haven"

By Judy Kody Paulsen

Marilyn Varnberg is a name known to many people involved in greyhound rescue. But most *don't* know what her work entails. In a recent visit to **Grey Haven** – Marilyn's sanctuary for ex-racing greyhounds – I had the opportunity to observe her dedication to this phenomenal project.

Spanish moss clings to the branches of massive trees that cast their shadows onto the property below. Located in the "dog patch" area outside **Ocala, Florida**, this farm is a fortuitous destination for greyhounds, as this is where their transformation begins.

The old, broken, sick, and weary ex-racers come here for rehabilitation and for some, it is their final destination as there aren't enough folks willing to take on the responsibilities Marilyn so willingly accepts.

One year ago, **Bob Varnberg**, loving husband, father, and greyhound guardian extraordinaire, passed away leaving a void for Marilyn and the dogs, but somehow she has managed to pull it all together and keep it going. Able to accept fewer dogs now, Marilyn still manages to take in more special-needs greyhounds per year

than most rescue groups will see in their entire existence.

Marilyn never suspected that her adoption of one greyhound 13 years ago would evolve into a nationally recognized effort to protect greyhounds and provide for the most unfortunate. She was smitten when she met her first greyhound, **Sport**, at a fair in **Orlando, Florida**. When she adopted Sport she was living the typical, idyllic, Florida lifestyle in a ranch-style home with pool. Like many who've founded greyhound rescue groups, Marilyn had no inkling she soon would be obsessed with these magnificent, soulful dogs.

Soon, it became evident that greyhounds would be playing a much larger part in her life. Three houses and many hounds later, Marilyn and Bob finally stumbled upon the ideal property for their purpose: a defunct greyhound breeding farm in **Sparr, Florida**. Pouring time and money into their efforts to improve the property, Bob and Marilyn went to work on the dog buildings first, leaving their own modest living quarters for last.

Marilyn began to learn more and more about racing and the dogs bred to keep the racing industry alive. Most disturbing to her were the countless stories she heard about the "brood mamas" and the broken-legged racers. The wheels began to turn as she contemplated ways to help the dogs cast aside by the racing industry; the ones most adoption programs couldn't afford to fix and most often were destroyed.

Reaching out to people who knew the fundraising ropes, Marilyn and Bob began their quest to become a sanctuary for the least fortunate racers. Founders of **Greyhound Adoptions of Florida**, they had begun their mission as an adoption program which soon evolved into a full-fledged rescue of mostly special-needs greyhounds.

Having been a successful realtor at one time, Marilyn's entire life now revolves around her rescues. Most animal rescuers know how grueling a day can be, but when the animals are at your home 24/7, a day can be a lot more demanding. Feeding, keeping runs and bedding clean, medicating, transporting, evaluating new arrivals, fielding calls from volunteers and adopters, administrative duties – the list is a long one.



Marilyn Standing in Archway of Freedom's Garden

My visit to Grey Haven was spent marveling at the smooth routines to which Marilyn and her charges have adapted. The relative ease with which she completes every task belies the amount of energy that goes into this monumental undertaking.

Three-legged greyhounds move gracefully about, negotiating ramps and doorways with ease. Greyhounds with epilepsy amble about and in moments of clarity, romp with toys. Old broods with massive mammary tumors tease the others and interact like youngsters during lengthy turnouts. New arrivals integrate quickly into the pack and develop an almost instant bond with Marilyn. Seemingly unaware of their muzzles – a necessity when large groups of racers intermingle – these dogs are conspicuously at ease.

Blissful, pointy faces peer up from all angles patiently waiting for signals from Marilyn. Time for a pill? No problem, they stand in line and wait their turn. Time to go to bed? Each knows where to head – some to crates, some to fluffy beds on the floor or futons in the house.

Grey Haven houses approximately 30 greyhounds. Only steps away from Marilyn's front door, two tidy buildings provide comfortable accommodations for her rescues. Those requiring the most vigilance live inside the house with Marilyn and they are turned out together as one group: **Honey**, one of the geriatric hounds, has a neurological condition

requiring medication. **Dodie** was the worst “spook” ever encountered at Grey Haven, but she now cautiously approaches strangers, testing her new-found confidence. **Yoyo** has epilepsy and was returned by an adoption group who didn’t want to deal with her “illness.” **Luke** is a striking blue fawn found on a breeding farm with the skin ripped from one leg. His rehabilitation took months of special bandaging and wound care and he also has epilepsy. **Dash** has epilepsy and was discovered in a home in **Alabama** which had been collecting greyhounds under the pretense of being an adoption program. The dogs found in the home were severely malnourished and suffering from many resulting maladies. **Zoey** was found on a breeding farm with a fractured pelvis, but she now appears to be living a normal life. **Roper** had a leg amputated after unsuccessful surgery to repair a broken hock. **Phoebe** had a severely broken hock and came to Grey Haven needing extensive surgery, but eventually ended up losing the leg after two attempts to save it.

And then there’s **Jerry**. Jerry was found on a breeding farm at the tender age of ten months



Jerry, Amputee

with his left rear leg shattered so badly that his hip socket was destroyed. The injury was old. To protect his badly broken leg and hip, Jerry took to lying only on one side in the dirt of the farm. Infection from severe pressure sores invaded the tissue and muscle on the “good” side and required extensive surgical procedures. An epi-gastric flap, which is a large flap of skin taken from the belly and has its own blood supply, was necessary to cover the gaping hole left by the infected pressure sores. And there was still the shattered leg on the other side that needed attention.

After multiple surgeries to mend the badly infected areas, Jerry had recovered enough to endure amputation of the shattered leg on the opposite side. Many might ask why one would pour so much time, effort, and money into saving the life of one greyhound. If you’ve ever been in a position to make decisions regarding the life of an animal in which you’ve invested countless hours of emotion and energy, you’ll appreciate what happened here. It’s impossible to give up after each little success. And Jerry proved to be well worth the effort and time. Looking at Jerry now it’s unmistakable that this dog has undergone extensive repair. The nipple on his hip is evidence of the flap of skin transplanted from his chest, but it’s a loving reminder of this dog’s will to live and of the dedication of the many people who saw to it that he survived.

It’s nearly impossible to comprehend the vast amount of work it has taken to create this haven for greyhounds and to care for its residents.

I was curious about the area which appeared to be a cemetery. The arched entrance bore the name **Freedom’s Garden**. A stroll through the garden with Marilyn produced tears and moving accounts of each greyhound memorialized within the boundaries of this little piece of paradise. I couldn’t help but think of all the ex-racing greyhounds tossed into landfills without the dignity of remembrance.

Meditating in Freedom’s Garden is a luxury at Grey Haven – one rarely taken by Marilyn as there is little time to relax. The memorial garden was named for a loose greyhound that had successfully evaded would-be



Memorial Sculpture

captors. For three years, she ran free in the countryside and proved to be a capable provider for herself until she wandered into the roadway and was killed

by an oncoming car. Marilyn had felt such compassion for this dog, although it was never determined from where she came. She was always referred to as “**Freedom**” and in her honor, the garden was named.

Freedom’s Garden now harbors the remains of many greyhounds who’ve managed to survive long enough to make it to Grey Haven’s gateway. Statues, wind chimes, headstones, various flora, and a pond lie along the path wending its way through the garden. The arched entry, the pathway through the names of many greyhounds who’ve come and gone – symbolic of Marilyn’s life.

After a long day of shadowing Marilyn and immersing myself in the breed to which I, too, am dedicated, I sat in awe of all I’d seen. Exhausted from observing Marilyn’s tireless pursuit of caring for the greyhounds all day, I found a spot on the floor since all the futons were occupied. Thinking the day was over and we could relax, I realized there was more to do as I heard Marilyn announce, “Time for pills!” I finally drifted off to bed, knowing I didn’t have the fortitude to stay the course. Last thing I

remember, Marilyn was turning dogs out again, and I was positioning myself between two rescued whippets nestled under the covers.

Without Grey Haven, Marilyn Varnberg, and her supporters, there would be a lot more greyhounds crossing the Rainbow Bridge prematurely. It’s reassuring to know there’s a place for broken, sick, and old greyhounds, but it’s disheartening to know the ones at Grey Haven are but a very small fraction of the thousands every year that are considered collateral damage by the racing industry.

As long as there is racing, there will be shocking numbers of greyhounds injured and killed for the sake of entertainment. For information on how you can make a difference legislatively and help end the abuse of greyhound racing, contact GREY2K USA by email at info@grey2kusa.org or call 866-247-3925. Visit their website at www.GREY2KUSA.org for information.

We can make a difference, but only if we put forth the effort.

Reunion Postponed

Don’t worry, we’ll be back at it again, but for this year, the GCNM reunion is on hold. We are taking the time to evaluate other options for fundraisers. For eleven years, our reunion has been a blast and a very successful fundraiser, but it’s time to plan something bigger and better!

If you were planning on donating anything for our raffle and silent auction, please hang on to the items! Set them aside and mark them “For The Greyhounds!” We’ll be needing them for our next big event, which will be in 2009. That gives everyone a lot more time to gather items, too!

Please don’t forget about us when it comes to making donations to your favorite charities this year! We have bills to pay and lots of greyhounds to rescue and, like always, will have to rely on donations. Remember we are a volunteer-only-program; we have no paid staff. 100% of your donations go to helping the greyhounds.

Feel free to submit ideas for a 2009 fund raiser to info@gcnm.org!

If you’re looking for an opportunity to get together with other greyhounds and their people, please consider participating in the group walks. See story below for contacts for these walks.

Group Greyhound Walks

As mentioned in the last *GCNM News*, we are organizing group walks so that adopters and their greyhounds can get out and spread the word about greyhounds. Right now, some of the suggestions we have are Old Town Plaza in Albuquerque; Santa Fe Plaza; the various growers' markets; and public parks.

Our Santa Fe organizer is **Janice Wrhel** and she can be reached at 505-466-3483 or 505-603-0964 or email at **greylover1@netzero.net**. Our Albuquerque organizer is **Patricia McKay** and her phone # is 505-268-8705 or email **omworks@aol.com**. Patricia is new to our group and is anxious to meet our people and greyhounds, so let's give her a big welcome by joining the walks she will be organizing.

Big Thank You

To **Josie Hamlen** and **Lori Thorp** for donating all materials and creating our beautiful donation coats. These coats have made a huge impact on the donations we receive whenever our volunteers are working events.

Josie and Luther Hamlen



SALE, SALE! 2008 GCNM Calendars Now \$5.00 Each

We still have the 2008 GCNM calendars to sell and even though the year is half over, they are still great items to have. *The photos in this calendar are suitable for framing.* Please help us help the greyhounds, buy one or more calendars today! Call All Sports Trophies at 505-268-2436 to have yours mailed to you or drop by the store at 2939 Monte Vista, N.E., Albuquerque, NM. This will be the last issue of the GCNM calendar which could make it a collector's item! Get yours today!



In Memory of:

"Arly"	1996-2007	Diane and Earl Moore
"Tara"	1996-2007	Vern and Karen Jeffries
"Tex"	1992-2008	Carl and Alice Geiger
"Daphne"	1995-2008	Lynn Begalla/Sheri Morris
"Jackson"	2001-2008	Darcy Bushnell/Kris Osnes
"Jose"	1997-2008	Kay and Harry Moore
"Kelly"	1993-2008	Kent & Sara Mathis/Heather Fredrickson
"Maggie"	?-2008	Cathy Scoblionko

Italian Greyhound Rescue

16 years ago, Greyhound Companions of New Mexico began a mission to rescue retired racing greyhounds. A few Italian greyhounds were among the mix over the years, but suddenly it seems there are more than we can handle.

So that we may focus on our original goal, we have asked that someone else take over the task of rescuing and placing Italian greyhounds.

Kathy Chilcoat has had Italian greyhounds since 1991 and began actively rescuing in 2003. She is located in Los Alamos, NM, and does placements and rescues statewide. Her knowledge on the breed is extensive.

If you are looking to adopt an Italian greyhound now or in the future, please give Kathy a call at 505-662-9635 or you can email her at katchil1@msn.com.

Available Dogs:

Cowboy

Cowboy is a three-year-old charmer of a boy. A true gentleman with a great personality. He gets along great with dogs and is cat safe. This boy is a real gem!



Cry Donna

Cry Donna will be four in June. She loves to give kisses and is a stunning beauty. This happy little girl is exceptionally smart and is a great candidate for a therapy dog. Not cat tested.



Otis

Otis is a seven-year-old male who was returned from his previous home. He's been returned twice now, though no fault of his - just bad luck. Otis gets along great with other dogs and cats, too! This guy deserves a forever home that will make him part of the family as he has a lot of love to give.



Vienna

Vienna is a four-year-old very happy female who is extremely affectionate. She loves to play. Vienna needs a permanent home soon. Please consider adopting this friendly, outgoing girl.



Calendar Project

Last time I was at a meeting, I was the only one who pulled out a pen and calendar when I needed to jot down a date and time! Everyone else handily whipped out their Blackberries, iPhones, and other digital devices to consult their appointment schedules.

With this in mind, we have decided not to publish future GCNM calendars. We want to thank those who submitted photos in years past, and congratulate those whose hounds were featured in the calendar.



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**If you want to help the Greyhounds,
send donations to:**

GCNM
P.O. Box 22053
Albuquerque, NM 87154

Remember, no donation is too small!

Inside This Issue

Greyhound Advocacy and Adoption – A History By Susan Netboy	3
Training People Who Blame the Dog By Judy Paulsen	7
A Visit to Marilyn Varnberg’s “Grey Haven” ...	9
And Much More!	