



# The Greater Gainesville Dog Fanciers' Association, Inc.

March 2026

Newsletter for Dog Lovers

## G.G.D.F.A.

P.O. Box 358332 Gainesville,  
FL 32635-8332

[www.ggdfa.org](http://www.ggdfa.org)

### General Meetings:

7:30 pm on the  
2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month at  
PINE GROVE Baptist Church  
4200 NW 39th Ave  
Gainesville, FL  
*Board meetings precede.*

### Club Officers

President — Denise Gaboury

[cedargambol@gmail.com](mailto:cedargambol@gmail.com)

1st VP — Pam Rice

2nd VP — Macy Van Cleaver

Secretary — Joyce De Braganca

Treasurer — Doris Horton

Club Directors:

Kathy Davis

Marge Saucier

Sue Sutton

Susan Iserhardt

Newsletter Editor: Ashley Sanders

[gatorsanders@gmail.com](mailto:gatorsanders@gmail.com)

Membership Chair: Kathy Davis

Website Manager: Barb Copping



*St. Francis Vet Care News Team Griffin & Moe*

### *In this month's edition...*

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### **IMPORTANT NOTES**

*Have you got a great picture for our next newsletter cover? Or, an idea or topic you would like to see? Please share! [gatorsanders@gmail.com](mailto:gatorsanders@gmail.com)*



## Bracco Italiano joins Pennsylvania Wilderness Search and Rescue Unit

[www.akc.org/expert-advice/news/bracco-italiano-pawsar-unit/](http://www.akc.org/expert-advice/news/bracco-italiano-pawsar-unit/)

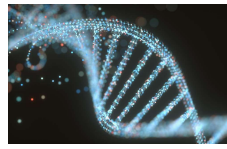
Elizabeth Jennings found a way to bond with her Bracco Italiano “Stevie” that also lets them give back to their community. The duo is a part of the Pennsylvania Wildlife Search and Rescue (PaWSAR), a volunteer-based group that helps safely return missing individuals to their families.

After her mom passed away, Jennings wanted a new, positive activity to channel her energy into. Through PaWSAR she quickly fell in love with SAR, working first as a ground team member. In June 2024, she brought home her first Bracco Italiano. Through Stevie, she learned firsthand just how important proper breeding and early socialization are, especially for working dogs. In October, after evaluation by the PaWSAR K9 captain, Stevie started training with the team.

German Shepherds and Golden Retrievers are the most common dogs used for SAR, but Stevie is proving that other breeds are up to the challenge. Bracco's are known as bird dogs that can adapt to all types of hunting. Staying on task despite the drive to chase critters is one thing they are working on. Stevie is learning to follow a scent trail on different surfaces as part of her training for Trailing certification through either the International Police Working Dog Association or the North American Police Work Dog Association.

Serving 25 counties in Pennsylvania, PaWSAR has 5 certified K9s and 7 in training. Besides Trailing, K9s may be certified for Human Remains (land or water) and Air Scent. Training is always ongoing. In 2024, members completed 7,457 hours of training. They also find time for community education programs and events.

The AKC proudly honors SARs dogs through the Urban and Wilderness SAR title programs.



## Science News

### *Genetic clues behind golden retriever personality*

[www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2026/03/260306224229.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2026/03/260306224229.htm)

Researchers at the University of Cambridge have uncovered new insights into the emotional lives of dogs, helping explain why some golden retrievers are more anxious, energetic, or aggressive than others.

The scientists studied the behavioral profiles and DNA of 1,300 golden retrievers. The dogs' owners provided detailed survey responses describing their pets' habits and reactions. Matching these to the genetic information uncovered specific genes associated with traits such as trainability, activity level, fear of unfamiliar people, and aggression toward other dogs. When the team compared these results with human genetic studies, they found that twelve of the genes linked to behavior in golden retrievers are also tied to emotional traits and behavior in people.

The study specifically identified a connection between trainability in golden retrievers and a gene known as ROMO1. In humans, this gene has been linked to intelligence and emotional sensitivity. Because of this link, researchers say dog training may involve more than simply reinforcing desired actions. A dog's emotional state may also play an important role in how easily it learns. The genes identified in the study do not directly cause a specific behavior or emotion. Instead, they affect broader systems that regulate mood and behavioral responses. One example involves dogs that display 'non-social fear' (being afraid of things such as buses or hoovers). The researchers found a gene linked to this trait that, in humans, is associated with irritability, emotional sensitivity, and 'seeing the doctor for nerves or anxiety.'

The discovery suggests dogs and humans share biological roots for emotions and behavior.



## Dogs and the Law

### USDA, DOJ, DHS, and HHS Launch Coordinated Effort to Crackdown on Chronic Dog Welfare Violators

[www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2026/02/18/usda-doj-dhs-and-hhs-launch-coordinated-effort-crackdown-chronic-dog-welfare-violators](http://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2026/02/18/usda-doj-dhs-and-hhs-launch-coordinated-effort-crackdown-chronic-dog-welfare-violators)

Together, four federal agencies are taking historic actions to hold chronic companion animal welfare violators accountable. Today, dogs are the most popular pet in the United States, with 65.1 million households owning a pet dog. About half of pet owners (51%) not only consider their pets to be a part of their family but say they are as much a part of their family as a human member.

*"If you are breeding dogs and not meeting the Animal Welfare Act's humane standards of care, your time is up. We will not allow a handful of bad actors to tarnish the reputation of responsible American breeders or compromise the humane treatment of animals."* – Secretary of Agriculture Rollins.

Although compliance with the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) among facilities that breed dogs has risen from an average of 67% in 2015 to over 92% in 2025, several breeding facilities continue to tarnish the industry with recurring and chronic violations. To address this, USDA will:

- Root out bad actors with a history of noncompliance and deploy and expand Animal Care's compliance and enforcement specialist team to aggressively identify and investigate unlicensed activities under the AWA.
- Improve consistency with AWA inspections through increased inspector training, compliance tracking, and processing.
- Expand information sharing with Federal and state partners and help state and local partners pursue enforcement action against breeders who do not fall under USDA's authority but impact the welfare of dogs.

On February 18, 2026, USDA opened a 30-day Request for Information (RFI) to allow the public and stakeholders the opportunity to provide input on the current standards governing the humane care of dogs under the AWA.

[www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/02/17/2026-03077/standards-for-the-care-of-breeding-female-dogs-and-exercise-and-socialization-of-dogs](http://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/02/17/2026-03077/standards-for-the-care-of-breeding-female-dogs-and-exercise-and-socialization-of-dogs)

### Spring Fever

Extra sunlight and warmer weather boost energy levels, which can bring the return of the "zoomies" and dogs might become more alert or reactive to their environment.

Distractions such as birds or squirrels are also on the rise and the influx of spring smells (plants, blooming flowers, emerging wildlife) can trigger intense sniffing behavior, which is great mental stimulation.

Spring is also a time for shedding as dogs blow out those winter coats, particularly double-coated breeds like Huskies, Golden Retrievers, and Collies. This is not just due to warming weather. Canine coats respond to changes in daylight. Keep in mind that a coat serves as an insulator, keeping heat in during the cold months, but keeping heat out in the summer. Shaving double-coated breeds in particular is generally not recommended. Regular brushing is the best way to keep coats healthy.





## *Links and Info...*

### **March Featured Link: Oh Hey, Dog ([ohheydog.org](http://ohheydog.org))**

In addition to supporting dogs and their Guardians with education, guidance, and the support needed to understand even challenging behaviors in dogs, Oh Hey, Dog is a community with a great calendar of events for getting together with other humans and dogs.

### **St. Francis Vet Care** – provides compassionate veterinary care for those in need.

St. Francis was recently featured local media:

Ilene Silverman Show: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=AU85jsGI-9k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AU85jsGI-9k)

WUFT Greater Good series: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtp7j-QwROo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtp7j-QwROo)

Support their mission at: [www.stfrancisevetcare.org/donate](http://www.stfrancisevetcare.org/donate)

Find out more at: [www.stfrancisevetcare.org/](http://www.stfrancisevetcare.org/)

Follow on socials @StFrancisVetCare

### **Marion-Alachua Dog Training Association** – AKC listed training club.

MADTA offers training classes in home obedience and for competition venues of Obedience, Rally, Scent Work, and Agility; hosts competition trials in Obedience, Rally, Agility, Scent work, Fetch and Coursing (FastCat); hosts Dog Related Seminars in training methods, dog conditioning, and dog Wellness.

Find out more at: <https://madta.org/>

### **AKC Links:**

- Getting Started in Dog Sports: [www.akc.org/expert-advice/sports/get-started-in-dog-sports-and-events](http://www.akc.org/expert-advice/sports/get-started-in-dog-sports-and-events) – With over 22,000 events each year, AKC dog sports truly offer something for everyone and every dog.
- Event Search: [webapps.akc.org/event-search/#/search](http://webapps.akc.org/event-search/#/search) – Allows you to search by state and/or event type.

### **GGDFA Training Classes:**

**Contact: Denise Gaboury**

**352-316-4543**

**Location: Oak Hall School**

**(Covered and Lighted)**

**Tower Road, Gainesville**

**Thursdays, 6:00 pm by arrangement**



## **Meeting Notes (Digest Minutes)...**

**Tuesday February 10, 2026**

### **Board Meeting Highlights:**

Treasurers report addressed some annual business costs and mostly included show recap. Going forward, Doris will submit a typed report that can be accepted at the meetings to reduce the need to capture everything in notes during the meeting.

Per AKC, we will not be eligible for a 3 day show for 2026 due to the show in SC the same weekend and less than the 500-mile distance rule. Choices are to:

- continue with a 2-day show,
- see if we can get approval for a Friday with specialties only and then all breed on Sat and Sun,
- change the date of the show but due to weekends and weather that is not feasible at this time,
- Or be open to a new club wanting to come in with us on Thurs and Fri.

The Rally/Obedience draw was notably strong because of the judges; Macy will select the judges for 2027.

### **General Meeting Notes:**

Board meeting report.

No additional business.

### **Membership:**

Kristen Iannuzzi was voted in.