

Paws to Dance



The Newsletter of the Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc.
August, 2006

Freestyle Retreat: Artistry and the Vision

By Shari Bryant

More than thirty handlers and their canine partners came to Mebane, North Carolina on June 23-25 to learn about and share their ideas on artistry and the vision of freestyle. The weekend started with a Welcoming Social at the hotel on Thursday. This was a great opportunity to see old friends and meet some new ones. Classes were held on Friday and Saturday and included a wide variety of subjects from keeping yourself and your canine partner in shape to choreography to handling and attire. The only downside was it was not possible to take all of the classes that were offered. The Friday evening banquet and meeting were wonderful and a great opportunity to socialize. Sunday's adjudicated match and run-through were very interesting and a lot of fun to watch.

This was my third CFF retreat and I wondered whether there would be much new to learn. I thought at the very least, the retreat would be a great opportunity to visit with people I don't get to see very often and to brush up on some of the things I have learned over the past 5 years. Well, I learned so many *new* things that I'm still trying to sort them all out. Here are a few of the ideas and insights I found to be interesting.

Honoring the Judges— although not specifically judged, honoring is the judge's first impression of you and your dog. When entering the ring to honor the judge you should start at the back corner. Move across the back of the ring to the center. Turn and move up the ring towards the judges to approximately halfway. When moving from honoring the judge to the first shape, show your dog at his best. When showing in obedience, I always turned into my dogs when moving between exercises to keep them from getting distracted or walking out of the ring. However, I realized this doesn't show my dog to his best advantage. Also, after you set up for the first shape, keep your eyes and focus on your dog when cuing the music steward.

Attire – wear an outfit that compliments your dog. Being from an obedience background, I always heard – wear the same color as your dog so it's more difficult for the judge to see crooked sits, etc. I'm not sure that really worked, but wearing the same color as your dog really does obscure the dog. Fay Taylor demonstrated this when she wore a solid black outfit with her small, black Manchester terrier. It was very difficult to see the dog. Also, be careful about accessories to your outfit. Faye added a bright pink and white scarf around her neck with the black outfit. This immediately drew my

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From Your President

Fall is fast approaching and with everything that is gearing up to go with CFF this fall it's hard to know where to start.

Yes, we missed those of you unable to attend the Retreat. Once again a superb team of dedicated volunteers led us through a fantastic weekend. Everyone shared and celebrated, listened, watched, and learned. There was renewed energy, the doors to our creativity were opened and with new breath we celebrated the wonder of our canine companions. It takes many hands to craft such a unity of purpose with a common and shared energy, dynamic if you will, to create the chemistry in a nurturing environment benefiting humans and canines. And the simple truth gleaned from the wonders of that weekend in June comes down to:

IT REALLY IS

ALL ABOUT THE DOG.

Thank you all it was an awesome weekend

The next exciting event will be the "members only" section of our web site. It has been a slow and sometimes tedious process, but the Board and Jim Moore are excited. The most recent word received is a September 1 unveiling. (God willing and if the creeks don't rise). This is your section. Please help and guide us. Without your input we can only guess. E-mail the Board with your suggestions, thoughts or perhaps your willingness to take on a specific job relative to one of the many on going or future projects CFF has planned. .

For instance, how would you like the Forum Section formatted? Do you want a single discussion question for the week, 2 weeks, what! How do you want it monitored. Do you want to discuss training problems, music, theory, concepts, definitions, or all of the above and more? Help us to help you. It is impossible to share information in a vacuum. Please remember we are here to serve you but we are all volunteers.

Your Board meets once a month and the dates are posted on the CFF web calendar. Our meetings are by conference call. If you wish to bring something to the Board's attention please submit your points clearly and as objectively as possible and send it to "The Board" through the Web site. We are here to serve you. This is a trial balloon, an improvisational dance between the Board and the membership. Look at what we have accomplished in 12 years and let's see what extraordinary things we can accomplish.

That's about it for now. Pixie and Domini are demanding training time and Carl needs the computer.

Stay healthy and train with joy,

Joan.

Taking Time to Breathe

by Judy Gamet

How many times have you been under stress and found that you weren't really breathing? I can guarantee, it's a habit for many handlers. If dogs can detect cancer, epileptic seizures or heart attacks prior to their happening, your dog knows when you are breathing or not. What is this telling our partner? "We are in big trouble here!"

I'm training for my Shutzhund title, which requires executing very challenging obedience. Those of you who are familiar with obedience titling have trained for your figure eight, heeling around two people. In the Shutzhund world, you perform an off-lead, figure eight around a group of people who are moving around and talking. Maybe breathing at this point would be a good thing? Knowing that I would probably resort to bad habits when under stress and once again hold my breath, I decided to choreograph my breathing. If I were holding my breath or breathing shallowly prior to this exercise, now is my opportunity to clear the slate and let my dog know that we are just fine, by breathing. This is a chance to get centered again, no matter
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Up-Coming Events

You won't want to miss it!

September 24: Adjudicated match and run -throughs, CFF fall show site, Stafford, VA

November 4-5: Dances with Woofs show, Rapid City, SD

November 18: CFF fall show, Stafford, VA

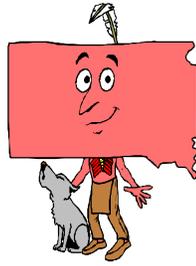
December 2: Gold Coast show, Napa, CA



Guild News—Staccato Notes

Dances With Woofs *South Dakota*

By Dawn Madge



WHEW! 4,000 miles later!! But what a Retreat!! I had a really good time, learned a lot, met new friends and saw old friends I really miss. A huge THANK YOU to all who worked so hard to make the retreat possible. It was greatly appreciated. Instructors, you did a terrific job!! I know it isn't easy, trust me, I'm a teacher. It was great being able to train with so many trainers and so many terrific dogs!! My girls and I had fun. Susan, having little dogs, the insight you gave to everyone was wonderful. To many of you who live on the east coast, I'm very envious. I'd love to be able to drive a few hours and be at a show or workshop. Out here, it seems we have to drive forever to get to someplace. Three hundred or four hundred miles is nothing. It takes me seven hours to get to the Denver area where most of my venues are!! We drove 4,000 miles to attend the retreat and get home, but it was worth it!! Now, we are getting ready for our show in November. Come west ye dogs, come west!!

Canis Major Guild

by Julia Gregory



Here in Chattanooga, it's amazing to see the changes brought on by the freestyle competition held here last April. Nobody's doing the same thing anymore! Old dogs are retired from regular classes and preparing for Veteran's or FEO. New dogs are coming on. Unlikely braces are forming. EVERYONE is choosing new music, even for competition at the same level as before. Brand new folks are getting started, choosing music,

training moves, thinking about shapes. It's downright exciting!

Several of us were inspired and energized by attending the retreat and that has fueled our creative fires. We're looking forward to our community's biggest dog celebration, Dog Daze on August 27. We just wish we didn't have to demo in the heat! There will be demo opportunities in the fall at vet clinics, Girl Scout workshops and schools, so we'll have plenty of opportunities to practice for the CFF show in November. The oddest "demo" I've experienced so far, was during a recent "un-birthday" party for my 19 ½ year old daughter. Her friends kept coming into the kitchen asking to see the dogs do their "tricks". Isn't this fun?

First Florida Freestylers Guild

by Gaea Mitchel



Three members of First Florida Freestyle Guild were able to attend the third CFF Retreat, and BOY did we have fun! We wish the others could have come, but someone had to stay home and be the adult. We hurried home to share what we learned, and hopefully some of the enthusiasm and support, with those who stayed behind. With some of the ideas gleaned from the retreat, we have already started several new routines and are hoping to move some others to new heights.

Misha Guild, Utah

By Susan Colledge



What a great job everyone did on the retreat!!! I enjoyed so much seeing everyone again and having a weekend of helpful presentations. Congratulations to those who worked so hard - it was absolutely wonderful!

The Misha Guild is working to polish our performances for a demo at the Intermountain Therapy Animal's big gala in September. All the "big wigs" in Salt Lake City will be there.

Hello to everyone from all of us here.



Sirius Guild

"Where Every Dog Is A Star!"
Nan Marks

Guild News More Staccato Notes

The Sirius Guild celebrated mid summer with heavy attendance at the CFF Retreat in Mebane North Carolina and an associated Guild meeting. Inspired by the learning and excitement of the retreat a key focus of the meeting revolved around how we could build on and enhance shows in the Guild area. The Guild members are eagerly looking forward to the CFF show in November and there will be an adjudicated match on September 24th at Pup N Iron. Perfect timing for anyone hoping to compete in November as well as a great opportunity to get feedback on a new routine or to simply come and see what it is all about. We have a terrific start on next spring's show. Kay Richards and David Brobst have volunteered to be trial chair and trial secretary respectively along with Verna Allanson and Joanie Brobst as co chairs of trophies and Betty Swenson handling hospitality. A key focus for the guild in the next year will be trying to involve more folks to serve as assistants to these positions so they can learn and step into the role the next year. Several other volunteers stepped up for other roles as the meeting progressed but there are still plenty of chances to help make this a great show. One valuable gift of the retreat was the chance to meet with people from so many areas and from other guilds and learn from their successes. In that context there was extensive discussion of the experience with 2 day trials and general consensus that the experience with the Tennessee and Florida trials has been excellent. The Guild is eager to work with CFF to explore developing a two day trial opportunity. Another key focus over the next months will be building on the wonderful experience and talent of the Guild members by identifying more opportunities to come together to learn from each other.

The Sirius Guild will sponsor a Seminar immediately following the CFF Trial to be held on Saturday, November 18th, 2006. The Seminar will feature Kay Richards, Kristin Sicotte & Jim Moore. The seminar will cost \$35 and will cover Music and Artistry. The Seminar will follow the CFF Trial. For more information, contact Kay Richards e-mail to: Kay@KayRichards.com

The Gold Coast Freestyle Guild

by Judy Gamet



Stop Everything! News Flash! Mark your calendars for the 2nd annual CFF Holiday Freestyle Festival, Saturday, December 2, 2006 in Napa, California. This will be a titling celebration event! Premium lists will be available late September. Don't wait to start training, begin working on those rou-

tines NOW. To get your name on the mailing list for this event, be sure your information is on the CFF membership list. I will be mailing premium lists to all of you who live from South Dakota west. If you live in the Eastern half of the country, send me your information and I will be sure to include you in the mailing... For more information, feel free to contact me.

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attention to the scarf because of the brightness of the scarf and the stark contrast with the rest of her outfit. She finally resolved the problem by getting her white rat terrier – now the black outfit (without the pink scarf) was perfect. When selecting outfits, be aware of patterns and bright colors. Joan Tennille demonstrated these and it was amazing how distracting patterns and bright colors could be. These really drew my attention away from the dog. Finally pay attention to jewelry; dangling earrings and shiny watches also can be very distracting.

Handling – it is amazing how a simple change in how you handle your dog can make a significant difference in the presentation. In one class, we were performing an exercise in which the dog was to remain stationary and the handler was to move around the dog. One handler placed her dog in a stand-stay and walked around her dog. As she moved around the dog, she had her hand outstretched (palm down) over the top of her dog. Kristin Sicotte suggested turning her hand so the palm was up as she walked around the dog. She said it would appear now as if the handler was saying “here, look at my dog” instead of “baptizing” the dog. That simple change did significantly improve the presentation.

Listen to the dog – in the same exercise, another handler also placed her dog in a stand-stay and moved around the dog. The front end of the dog moved with the handler while the hindquarters stayed in place (essentially a pivot on the hindquarters). The handler made a couple of attempts to perform the move as she intended (with the dog stationary), but the dog continued to pivot. Those watching commented they thought the dog moving with the handler looked very nice.

Rules of the Game –It was informative to learn more about the requirements of each level and what the judges look for when scoring a routine. I learn by watching, and have spent countless hours watching the competition trial videos. I pay particular attention to those handlers and

dogs that have been awarded a title. In Level II, many of the titled routines had more complex movements (e.g., backing, laterals). So, all of my Level II routines have had these more complex movements. However, the key emphasis in Levels I and II is demonstrating the dog’s movement at a trot suits the rhythm of the music and the use of space. Adding the more complex movements doesn’t get you any bonus points and may actually lower your score if these complex movements are not done precisely.

Tricks of the Trade – Dog trainers are such creative people! Susan Colledge used a phone book wrapped in duct tape to teach dogs to move their hindquarters independently of their forequarters. By teaching the dog to stand on the phone book with his front paws, you can teach the dog to move his hindquarters around. This should be very helpful for teaching pivots or circles in front position.

It is impossible to summarize the 3-day retreat in a couple of pages, but I hope that these insights give you an idea of the artistry and vision that was shared by those that attended the retreat.

Last, but certainly not least, it takes three to make a successful event – the organizers, the instructors, and the participants. Thank you to each for making the third retreat a success. The facility and food were excellent. Each of the instructors did a wonderful job sharing her knowledge and experience and helped us to learn new things. I really appreciated the class hand-outs. These made it possible for me to focus on what the instructor was saying and allowed me to watch the handlers and their dogs rather than trying to take notes. Also, thank you to the participants for sharing your dogs and your creativity.



The Dog of My Heart, The Heart of a Dog

By Julia Gregory

(Author's note: After reading this article, look around your house. I'll bet you have such a dog as this. If not, keep doing freestyle and you will.)

Last April 30, my 10 year old Cardigan Welsh Corgi, freestyle partner of three years, reached down deep in his soul, trusted me and connected with me long enough to earn his Level III freestyle title after 13 months of struggling to do so. That's Bombur, the dog of my heart. The day before, I wouldn't have given you a plug nickel for his chances to do such a thing. SOMETHING had him so badly spooked that our performance was simply pathetic. He behaved as if there were land mines in the performance space. Perhaps a large, corgi-eating monster was lurking behind the flower pots. His alpha had clearly lost her mind, had brought us into enemy territory and his vote was for a hasty retreat to safety. In spite of this perceived danger, Bombur eventually loosened up enough to finish the routine without leaving the performance space. On the advice of wiser heads than mine, I spent the evening and next morning just being with my dog, relaxing and talking quietly and confidently of the beautiful picture we could make if he'd just do this thing for me. We were simply together. It's important to Bombur to just be with me, not shut away in another room. When we next entered the performance space, he was a little tentative. "Oh, no.", I thought. "Not again. Please, not again." And then I remembered that I had a job, both as freestyle partner and alpha. My job was to protect and support. Well, we were perfectly safe, so I began to try to sell him on the routine. "You know what to do. You're gorgeous when you do it. C'mon! Let's show 'em!" The little dog bought what I was selling and a magical thing happened. He grew two inches taller. His eyes lit up from inside and an invisible fiber of light connected his heart to mine and tethered us together more surely than any collar and lead ever could. I offered him my whole heart for those two minutes and he delivered his part with graciousness and style. I didn't think I could be prouder. I was wrong.

Earlier that spring, we were invited to be one of two dogs on a team to help a local school, Brainerd Baptist School, break a world's record. The record the students had chosen was The Longest Human Dog Tunnel. A dog club in England had run three dogs through a tunnel (picture agility here) fashioned of the legs of 222 people standing in a line with their feet planted roughly 2 ½ feet apart. The students in Chattanooga were shooting for 250 people and most of them would be the students at the school. The dogs on the team were chosen for agility experience, tolerance of children and lack of leg. We practiced several times with various PE classes, running the dogs through successively longer and longer lines of spraddle-legged children. Everyone at the school knew the dogs' names, ages and favorite treat. I really didn't grasp what a big deal this was until we

arrived at the school on May 18, the date set for the record breaking attempt. There were three TV stations, the newspaper, two judges certified by Guinness and a mass of humanity ready to line up and engulf my dog! By now, Bombur had experimented in practice with every possible strategy for not completing the run. He had refused, run by and popped out from between some closely spaced little legs ... and sometimes he had completed the run too. I figured our chances of success to be about 60%. The children lined up. We flipped for who would go first. Me! Bombur and I started to walk up and down the line of kids as we had done at every practice, but this time the kids were excited and nervous themselves. They began to chant the dogs' names. "Bom-BUR! Bom-BUR! Bom-BUR!" It sounded like a primitive war cry. My little dog started to show his reaction to combat. The head went down. The tail went down. Oh, no. Not again. AND THEN I REMEMBERED. We have a relationship. We had already proved that once and we could show 'em again. So I began to sell the run. "C'mon, buddy! You can do it! You're the corgi. You're the dog of my heart." And the little dog bought it again. We took our position at the head of the tunnel and waited for the PE teacher's signal. Her hand dropped. I let go Bombur's collar and asked him to "go through" (a freestyle command, actually!). And he went ... faster than he had ever gone before. I had hung back to forestall a refusal and found myself having to hustle my hardest to catch my dog. I ran and shouted encouraging words. Bombur ran and never considered any outcome besides blasting out the other end into the lens of a TV camera and into the heart of every kid at Brainerd Baptist. My God, I was proud of that dog! The next evening, at dusk, I sat in the door of my back porch watching the dogs have a sniff around the yard. Bombur paused and alerted to a noise in the woods. The grace and pure honesty of his dog-ness at that moment made words rip into my mind like a summer thunderstorm. The result appears below.

THE HEART OF A DOG

for Bombur

The heart of a dog is a blazing beacon often shrouded by anxiety, buffoonery or gluttony. But every rare now and again, a few of us who happen to be paying attention at the right time are witness to the blinding light of loyalty, determination and courage. It is a light so bright that it brings tears to our eyes as we feel the undeserved honor of being its focus.

Epilogue: The final count of people in the line forming the Chattanooga Human Dog Tunnel was 309. As a reward for his teamwork, I bought Bombur six Indian Runner ducks to boss around the back yard. I think he likes having staff.

A Picture's Worth a Thousand Words

So here's a novel about the retreat!

By Jeanine Brown



CANINE FREESTYLE FEDERATION, INC. *FREESTYLE COMPETITION*

at

Pup 'N Iron Canine Fitness & Learning Center

Stafford, VA

Saturday, November 18, 2006

This show starts at 9:00 AM

THIS IS INDOOR SHOW

Freestyle Workshop in the afternoon
With
Jim Moore, Kay Richards and Kristin Sicotte

Food Available Nearby

For information: www.canine-freestyle.org or 804-883-1174



DIRECTIONS

From the North: I-95 South to exit 140 Stafford Rt. 630 Make a left from exit ramp and to East on Rt 630 (Courthouse Road) to the first traffic light Turn right o US Rt. 1 South and proceed 3.4 miles to a left on Perchwood Drive. There is a Chevron station across from Barnes Furniture at this corner. Take the first left and drive straight back to the set of stone front buildings Pup 'N Iron is on the right Unit # 111.

From the South: I 95 North to exit 136 for Stafford Regional Airport. Go to stop light at end of the exit. Make a right following signs for US Rt. 1 Turn right onto US Route 1 North. Go about 2 miles to a right on Perchwood Drive. There is a Chevron station across from Barnes Furniture at this corner. Take the first left and drive straight back to the set of stone front buildings Pup 'N Iron is on the right Unit # 111.

CANINE FREESTYLE FEDERATION,
INC.

Freestyle Adjudicated
Match
And Run Thru

at
Pup 'N Iron Canine Fitness &
Learning Center

Stafford, VA

Sunday,

**September 24,
2006**

Match starts at 9:30 AM

THIS IS INDOOR MATCH

Food Available Nearby

For information: www.canine-freestyle.org or 804-
883-1174



It's time to send in your trophy pledges for the CFF Fall Show to be held Saturday, November 18, 2006. Please consider supporting the sport by donating a trophy or donating to the general trophy fund!

Trophy Given For:

(example: Highest Scoring Doodlehound in Level II)

Description of Trophy:

Offered By:

Donation to the General Trophy Fund: Amount
\$_____ Make check payable to CFF, Inc.

Name:

Address:_____

City:_____

State:_____ Zip:_____

Email:_____

Mail your pledge to:

CFF Trophies

: 14430 Overlook Ridge Lane
Beaverdam, VA 23015-1781

You can deliver your trophies to the above

Thank you!
Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc.



Board News

Revisions to the website have kept the board busy. It is hoped that the following will be included:

- List of committee chairs and members and purpose of committee.
- List of judges and e-mail addressed and levels for which they have qualified
- Membership addresses and e-mails
- Forms to include:
 - a. Guild reports
 - b. Event applications
 - c. Guild applications
 - d. Judge application

Education

- a. Retreat 2008
- b. Explanation of required moves with short clip of movement and/or pictures of movements
- c. Explanation of choreographic focus for each level

Archives

Paws to Dance

Guilds - definition – start up instructions and more

The Guilds will be asked to submit any items for the web site by the 10th of each month.

The mini seminars have been successful and the suggestion was made that they be taped. Attendance has ranged from 10 to 26.

Coming soon ... CFF Members Only Section

CFF will be rolling out a new section of the Canine-Freestyle.org website. There will be a great deal of useful information and tools for groups and individuals just getting started as well as for those who've been around a while. We expect to have a new and improved Chat List to replace the CFFreestyle list that was recently closed down. The new area will also include the current CFF member list. Please let us know if you do not wish your contact information shown on the membership roster in the Members Only section. As many other clubs have done, CFF will be making this accessible only to members via the logon and password that we will be emailing to you shortly. If all the technical work goes as expected, we hope to have this information to you within a few weeks.

If you wish your information to be kept private and not available to CFF members, please contact me, Brenda Clymire, Membership Secretary at heypresto@verizon.net or by phone

540-548-2104 **immediately**. We need to get this information removed before the site goes online. Also, if you did not provide us with your email when you completed the membership application or if you think you need to update it do contact me with that information. All email should indicate in the Subject line that the email is about CFF, as I do not open email I can't identify. If you do not have an email address, yet have some other access to the internet and want a logon and password let me know that too.

We look forward to seeing you online very soon!

Brenda Clymire
Membership Secretary
10603 Seven Oaks Dr.
Spotsylvania, VA 22553
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Humbled by My Dog

A Recent Exchange on the CFF Chat List

Thanks to those of you who made suggestions for my gait challenge with my young rottweiler. My dogs are always teaching me, and I am very humbled from this lesson. For those of you who remember my training problem, I was concerned with trying to change a pace into a slow trot in a pace change section of my routine. Even though my dog and I are clicker savvy, I didn't think she would understand if I were to click for a gait change. Several members of my Guild took on this challenge to help me with this training. My dog and I worked on it just once.

This week I attempted the "wait" to a "slow trot" to a "fast trot" going forward, and she did it beautifully. Later the understanding came to me that gait changes are as clear to dogs as walking, running, skipping, galloping are to humans. Of course she understood when we were clicking for a trot! It was just beyond me think she'd understand. I know now not to put limits on my dog's ability to reason. What a great lesson to learn! Let's get training...

Judy Gamet

Gold Coast Freestyle Guild

LATER:

I have had several dogs who waited patiently for me to find a way to make things clear for them, so they could do what I wanted. Imagine the DOG with the clicker, quietly BEGGING me to offer another cue, and another, until I found one that worked for her! :-) Keep up the good work.

Gaea Mitchel

First Florida Freestylers

Breathe, continued from page 2

what had happened in the prior exercises.

In the world of modern or contemporary dance, a world from which both Joan Tennille and I come, breath has another function. As a dancer, you learn to emphasize dynamics ranges within your movement phrase by the use of a forceful or very gentle inhale or exhale. It becomes a very strong performance tool. What does this have to do with canine freestyle? Everything! No matter how good a team is technically, without the use of contrasting dynamics, the performance can be monotonous. Using movement phrases that contrast the use of subtle, gentle teamwork building into a crescendo of power or vice versa, will not soon be forgotten in the minds of the audience or judge. I am lucky to own working dogs which inherently possess a full range of dynamics, not only as dogs, but as moving athletes. I will never forget the tears running down my face as I watched a video of Carol Maupin and Chase, using the full spectrum of dynamic range within their routine. I hold the essence of their performance as a goal I strive for continuously. I found that using my breath is the key.

As we took the outside circle of our figure eight I'd breathe in strong and deep, which became a signal to my dog to "drive forward", or what many obedience handlers refer to as "hurry". As we took the left circle, I slowly and calmly exhaled, with an "ahhh" feeling, backing off my dog's drive, which many handlers refer to as "easy". Ah-Ha! I should use that concept in my freestyle performance! When I want to express a more powerful dynamic, consistently use my breath to indicate that to my dog in training, and the "ahhh" releasing breath when I want quiet, gentle yet tuned in movement.

Breathing is not only important from a physiological standpoint, but being aware of your breathing is important to your dog's mental and emotional peace of mind. Choreograph it as you would a cue. Whether in obedience or canine freestyle, breathing can become one of your most powerful tools.

CFF, Inc.
c/o Julia M. Gregory
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McDonald, TN 37353

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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