

Paws to Dance



The Newsletter of the Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc.
November, 2007

The Freestyle Journey Retreat 2008 - A Class Act

by Julia Gregory

What seems like a very long time ago, (in reality only four years) I wrote my first article for the *Paws to Dance* immediately after my Cardigan Welsh Corgi, Bombur earned our very first freestyle title – a Level II in Alexandria, Virginia. In that article (*Apex of the Triangle*, November 2003) I explored the journey Bombur and I made together from the first determination to perform to the glory of finding that magic connection and soaring around the performance space together.

Now, four years later I find myself anticipating another equally satisfying journey in freestyle ... Retreat 2008. The first concern of those attending retreat is “What classes will be offered?” The line-up looks promising.

This retreat will feature a two-track format to help handlers identify which classes will be most productive for their current dog at his/her current stage of training and relationship. The two tracks are “novice” and “advanced”. Some classes will be pertinent for everyone, regardless of experience. What follows is a list of brief descriptions. More information is available in the retreat flier that will be mailed to you (if you haven't already picked one up at the Stafford, Virginia titling event). Want to know more about the instructors? See the retreat flier and watch the next *Paws to Dance*! Naturally, this far in advance of the event, changes may take place without notice.

Presentation and Artistry (novice) Kristin Sicotte: We will be using phrases inspired by the concepts of space and movement. Learn to enhance the team's movement to create visually pleasing designs.

Presentation and Artistry (advanced) Wendy Ely: Open the door to develop 1. a movement vocabulary 2. artistic movement 3. a visually pleasing design 4. showcasing your dog.

Creative Work (novice) Kristin Sicotte/Joan Tennille: Learn how to enhance movement, build images, create shapes and form relationships.

Creative Work (advanced) Kristin Sicotte/Joan Tennille: Explore the limits of creativity through improvisation.

Music Search (novice/all) Jim Moore: Learn sources for new music.

Attention (all) Sally Kirschenman/Fay Taylor: The lack of attention is the root cause of most mistakes made in performance! Learn some ways to fix it!

Proofing (novice/advanced) Betty Swenson: Build your dog's confidence (and your own!) so that the team can do its job regardless of the environment.

Yoga (all) Be Hudson: This ancient discipline of body and breath control helps a handler improve her own movement.

Continued on page 5

From Your President

CFF has experienced one of the busiest falls ever. Since the last *Paws to Dance* a successful Adjudicated Match and run thru was held at Pup 'N Iron in Fredericksburg, VA. The number of participants and the quality of the work was very impressive. Thanks to Renee Filep and the Sirius Guild for sponsoring this opportunity. Kristin Sicotte followed next with an outstanding two-day workshop in Rapid City, SD. Kristin is also developing interest in canine freestyle classes in Minnesota and at last report will be starting a class early in 2008, watch the web site for more information. The weekend after the workshop in SD Ann Holder conducted an exciting Therapy Dog workshop here in Virginia, see the article on page 6. Ann's creativity and enthusiasm along with Pippin's amusing antics enthralled all the participants. It was one of the most imaginative seminars we have had. Thanks Ann for sharing your wealth of knowledge and donating all the net proceeds to the First Florida Freestyle Guild. Ann also began teaching a freestyle class in Florida during the summer.

Now we have our first back-to-back titling events here in Virginia, and appears to have one of our largest entries. The Gold Coast Freestyle Guild will be holding a titling event and workshop on Saturday December 1st. Plus our Board has been working hard on finalizing the program for the 2008 Retreat in Chattanooga, TN, see front-page article. The retreat program has two tracks and will start of with a titling event on Friday morning April 25th I encourage everyone to mark their calendars and make plans to attend this weekend

On page 11 of this issue of *Paws to Dance* is the dues notice for 2008. Check the date on the upper right corner of the address label on your newsletter, if it shows 12/31/2007 your dues are due. Please remit them to Brandy Clymire. Also on that page is the ballot for election of officers and directors for CFF, please complete and return your ballot, also to Brandy Clymire. .

Wow I am tired just listing what has been going on. Thank you all for your hard work and dedication to our sport

Joan

Up-Coming Events

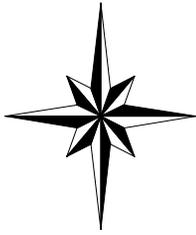
You won't want to miss it!

**November 10-11: Titling Event,
Stafford, VA**

**December 1: Titling event,
Napa, CA, see page 10**

**April 25-27, 2008: Freestyle
Retreat IV,
Chattanooga, TN, see page 1**

Guild News—Staccato Notes



Sirius Guild

"Where Every Dog Is A Star!"
Nan Marks

The wonder of the brilliant dogstar has led to many beliefs over the years. Some thought that when it rose almost in conjunction with Sun the combination produced the great heat of mid to late summer (hence the dog days) while in ancient Egypt the New Year began with the return of Sirius. The star itself is a brilliant white with a tinge of blue but when low on the horizon it seems to flicker and splinter with all the colors of the rainbow. Only 8.7 light years away and one of the brightest near stars it has always been a doorway for people to gaze at the night sky and come in touch with the wonders of the universe. To me there are many parallels to what I saw as the Sirius Guild and friends met on September 23 at Pup N Iron in Fredericksburg for an adjudication and run through. One of the gifts of freestyle is its openness to adapting to a great diversity of dogs seeking only that they each shine brilliantly with their own shades of light. Thus the day brought us many routines each unique to that canine partner and team and each showing the wonder that partnering can bring. Many thanks to the adjudicators, scribes, and stewards, who gave generously of their time, to Joan and Carl who as usual did an amazing job keeping things running (Carl even arranged to give all who wanted a video of their performance), to our wonderful sound man Jim, and to all the others who volunteered or simply pitched in when they saw a need. Now it is on with smiles bright and tails wagging to enjoy the two day show in partnership with CFF at Pup N Iron on November 10 and 11. We hope to see many of you there.

Canis Major Guild

by Julia Gregory



What is it about fall in the south?! I guess we're all so grateful to be able to breathe the air outside again that we schedule a million outdoor activities and half of them require dogs! Canis Major certainly was busy getting ready for our time in the spotlight at the Hamilton County Fair! It's the best venue we've had to do demonstrations yet. Now, granted, we worked on slightly uneven grass spiked with horse manure (wave goodbye to attention!) and by the afternoon demo hour, the temperature was no longer cool, BUT we had room for a standard performance space and the sound system allowed audience and performers both to hear the music all at the same time. These are not conditions we enjoy frequently! We discovered, by accident, a format for showing freestyle that we'll continue to use in the future. All but two of our freestyle dogs fell ill or were called out of town by Sunday, so we decided to use those two to "fill the time" by showing required and optional moves one at a time. Both dogs went out on the field and just did whatever the emcee asked for. Once our "Intro to Freestyle" was finished, the music came on and each dog performed his routine in turn. Once the audience knew what to look for, they seemed to enjoy the performances more. At least they stayed in the bleachers in the heat longer.

Two carloads of us had the precious opportunity to travel to Virginia in September and train to be CFF judges. While we were with Joan, we had lessons and each of us left with new inspirations and insights. My goodness, this sport can wrap up your whole body and soul and take you places you've never been before! Between lessons and training, it was a strenuous weekend. We were amazed by Joan's stamina. She never flagged and we drove home with our tongues dragging the ground.

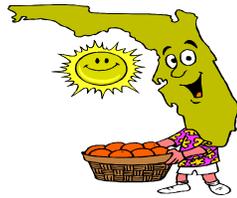
Many of us have prepared for the titling event in Virginia. Few of us are attending. Some of us can't keep our dogs healthy and sound and others recognize that our dogs simply aren't ready. It's disappointing when you've looked forward to "playing dogs" with your out-of-town friends, but we'll have to save it for another day.

Perhaps that is why we hope even harder than usual, that MANY of you will come and participate in the CFF titling event and fourth biennial freestyle retreat here in Chattanooga next April. We have some special treats planned. Come see!

Guild News More Staccato Notes

First Florida Freestylers Guild

by Gaea Mitchel



No earth shattering news from Florida. We are all at one awkward stage or another; bringing up a new dog, going into a new (and unexplored) level, learning to juggle between two very different dogs.... It is rare that we all make it to a guild meeting, so each has a unique flavor.

One month Cathy Nirenberg may be there, if not on the road with her husband doing the dog show circuit with their hand-made leads and other fine gear. Keep an eye out for Gear To Go, probably coming to a show near you.

Another month Ann Holder can make it, though she stays busy with family and running the Suncoast Therapy Dog group. Her dogs usually earn the high honors for hours served in any given year. And this year she drove to Virginia to share her ideas on training to entertain in assisted living facilities.

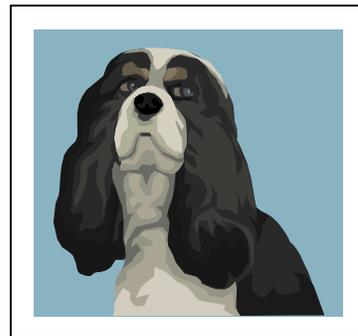
Elaine Smith fits freestyle into a schedule overflowing with the demands of her special education, language challenged students, this year in a new school. Add a fiance to the mix, and we're fortunate to have her when she can squeeze in a guild meeting.

Cynthia Campbell keeps a delicate balance between a heavy work load and the loving care of her aging dog population, and is starting a new dog, an older Cairn terrier with no previous obedience training.

They are making good progress, but it takes time.

Our newest member, Priscilla (I'm sorry, I've lost your last name, Priscilla) has found her music, but her dogs are at an early training stage so she's waiting to choreograph. As for me, I'm finding it very hard to switch between a Rottweiler and a Cavalier. The expectation of precision is wildly different between the two, and my speed and stride length need to change drastically.

So we meet as often as we can, and whoever is there, we share our challenges and our solutions. With the varied backgrounds, sometimes we can think far out of the box, and we do come up with some great ideas. The one constant is that, when we part ways until the next month (or the next) we have moved just a bit farther on our path in this wonderful, lyrical sport. The guild structure is brilliant!



Misha Guild, Utah

By Susan Colledge

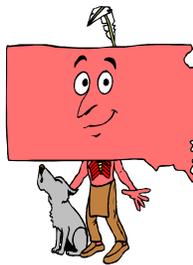


Well, the Misha guild continues to get together on Friday evenings. We have taken a couple weeks off. October 13-14 was the Boise show that we all went to and the weekend before I was at a WONDERFUL CFF workshop in South Dakota (See the Dances With Woofs guild report).

In September Tessa performed at the Yorkie Nationals.

Dances With Woofs South Dakota

By Dawn Madge



WOW, did we ever have a GREAT workshop here on October 6-7 with Kristin Sicotte!! It was awesome. The theme was Building Blocks: The Relationship between Music and Choreography. We learned a ton about picking music, developing choreographic skills through creative work and the relationship between the music, the choreography and the team. Kristin was absolutely wonderful and we all appreciated her. And to think she is within driving distance from us!! Only about 500 miles! That's pretty close out here!!! The workshop was small, but mighty; attended by Dawn Madge and the Doxies, Susan Colledge with Tessa (Yorkie), Donna Dugger and her Goldens, Susan Anderson (Border Collie), Peggy Behrends (Mixed Breed) and Barb Olson complete with miniature poodle. We are looking toward a match early summer!! We will keep everyone posted. Freestyle lives here!!

Just A Thought...

As some of you know, I am a big advocate of "change the way you look at things, the things you look at change". One of my biggest mentors, Lanny Bassham, an Olympic Gold Medalist, reminds me that I should worry about the things that I have control of, and don't worry about the rest.

In preparing for competition this year, I have a very different "thought". Since I can't control the outcome, whether my routines receive a qualifying score, whether my dogs are going to bring their "A" game or not that particular day, whether the judges will feel my routines have the artistic quality that I strive for... I have changed my thought to only this: "My dogs deserve to take the floor!"

In order to get to this place in thought, it does require hours and hours of practice. You can't expect to excel unless you know in your heart that you've put in the time. Your dog deserves that peace of mind as well. Let's go train!

Judy Gamet, Training Director
Gold Coast Freestyle Guild

Continued from page 1

Ring Nerves (all) Julia Gregory: Overcome the nervousness that can spoil a well-trained and well-prepared performance.

Why Dogs Should Dance: The Neurobiology of Music and Canine Freestyle (all) Sue Ann Lesser: This lecture will speculate on why, from a neurological standpoint, the Level IV CFF dogs are such superb athletes.

Judges' Panel (all): CFF judges respond to questions and share their perspectives on the "perfect performance".

Technical Stations (all) Here is an opportunity to learn training tips for both required and optional moves.

Tai Chi (all) Tim Russell: This martial art promotes balance, breathing and coordination. Use it to improve your movement skills to enhance your dog's movement.

Master Class (all) Joan Tennille: A working session for both handler and dog, this class is a recapitulation of the weekend through movement.

Trouble-shooting (all) Get help with specific challenges along your freestyle journey.

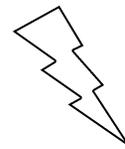
Therapy Dog Seminar

By Ann Holder

I want to thank CFF for giving me the opportunity to share my freestyle techniques for therapy dogs through a workshop held in Virginia during October. Pippin, the other half of my therapy dog team and I, packed our bags and a car full of props for the long drive to Virginia. We were excited and eager to share what we do with some new friends.

The morning of the workshop dawned bright, sunny and rather brisk; a nice change for this Florida resident. A wonderful group of therapy dog teams attended from two major therapy dog groups in Virginia. They were eager to learn and take back ideas to share with their fellow members. We began with some stationary tricks and interspersed them with training skills in retrieving and targeting so that the dogs would have a break and a change of focus. The teams worked hard throughout the morning, learning and improving their techniques. We broke for lunch and a rest time for the dogs. During this period, the handlers each constructed a prop for a targeting trick they would work on during the afternoon. That way they would have something to take home to keep them motivated to continue training and to show off to their friends for Halloween. It was a great success. Having their own prop really sparked them to make an extra effort and by the end of the afternoon all the dogs were well started on learning the trick. We did some improvisations with acting out Nursery Rhymes, making up skits, and experimented with various holiday themed props to get them thinking creatively. The big joke of the day was where Ann managed to find all the stuff we used — Dollar stores! -- and they vowed to become addicted to checking out their local dollar outlets. Everyone seemed to have a good time and left happily clutching their source book of ideas we had covered. I was a tired but happy instructor at the end of the day. It was such fun to see them light up and begin to be creative, share their ideas, and enjoy the relationship with their dogs.

I am indebted to my best friend, Pippin, for performing so untiringly all day until late afternoon when he tangled with The Most Humongous, Scariest Horsefly from Outer Space that he had ever seen, but that's another story! I was really proud of him! Therapy dog people give so much that it was nice to be able to give to them for a change. Thanks, CFF for sponsoring my trip and allowing Pippin and me to share our special kind of freestyle with others.



FREESTYLE TECHNIQUES FOR PET THERAPY NURSING HOME VISITS

By Ann Holder

I have been involved with pet therapy for over 30 years. Dogs have a universal appeal. They are warm and furry, energetic, enthusiastic about life, and highly trainable. Most elderly patients have owned dogs at one time or another in their life and they miss the contact with another living creature. Humans crave touching and dogs with their unconditional love readily fill this need. Even those patients that do not wish to physically touch an animal can enjoy watching the animal's antics and benefit from the interaction. Laughter releases good chemicals in the brain so people feel better. It also brings staff and patients together in a shared pleasurable experience that fosters better communication and results in better patient care.

A large area of interest exists for using canine freestyle for therapy dog visits. Most people think of the obvious use, putting on a demonstration or show for a nursing home. This can be quite a challenge for the following reasons

Space in a dayroom or activity room is always limited. There is never room for a full size performance space. This means re-working your choreography for a limited space which is hard to do since you will not know ahead of time how many wheelchairs, walkers, staff, patients, and visitors will be crowded into a room. Usually, patients are lined up all around the edge of a room presenting your dog with the intimidating presence of an audience on all four sides. You might develop an introductory routine that can be done in a very small area but many competitors are not interested in training more than one performance routine at a time.

You will have to deal with **difficult footing**—polished, waxed, slippery floors; the burning friction of indoor/outdoor carpeting on dog footpads; and/or the food stained/ body fluid stained smelly carpeting that draws dog noses like a bee to honey.

Room temperature control can also be a problem. The facility may be air-conditioned but you can bet that the temperature will be a lot higher than normal because the seniors do not like cold air or drafts. In the winter, the heat will be blasting.

Always keep in mind that some elderly patients hide **food, medications**, and other non-desirable items in their clothes, chairs, etc.

Some nursing home visits are **strictly room to room** with most patients confined to beds, again with little or no space for a routine.

Music is an essential part of performing a routine so that means dragging along a boom box, extension cords, and anything else you might require.

Canine Freestyle: I propose that a freestyler interested in therapy dog visits take a new look at the training that we do. Freestyle is movement, forward, backward, sideways, and around. Movement is choreographed or organized to tell a story, the story of our dog's best attributes, his skills, intelligence, athleticism, beauty, spirit and any other quality we want to show. Freestyle is training evidenced by the dog learning focused and interactive attention, physical responses to cues and signals, mastering phrases set apart by pauses to allow the audience to appreciate the performance. Freestyle expresses the joy found in the relationship between dog and handler, the oneness of spirit that comes from working together; building a unique bond that only exists between you and your dog.

There is a way to incorporate all these skills into pet therapy and that is through training

Tricks: Let us look at how tricks fit into and embody most of the qualities of freestyle. Tricks meet the definition of movement, that is, movement can either be forward, backward, sideways and around. The movement can take place at various levels, show changes of pace, or hold a position to emphasize ora shape

design. In other words Tricks are composed of Movements. Thus, Tricks can easily be choreographed or organized to tell a story or carry out a theme. Tricks can be developed using a dog's skills in retrieving, targeting, scent work, and agility, bringing everything together to use in a new manner. Tricks help the dog to develop interactive, sustained attention. Tricks extend a dog's vocabulary of commands and skills and can be incorporated into other sports. Tricks enhance the bond between dog and owner because they are easily taught with a positive, light hearted, fun approach, not with a heavy emphasis on obeying. There are no restrictions on using food rewards. Tricks provide a proofing experience to get the dog used to performing in a variety of places and situations which will help your freestyle. In order to be successful, tricks do not need to depend on precise positions such as Heel and Front, as do regular Obedience and Rally exercises. Tricks are fun and promote a sense of well being, offer humor to the audience, relieve stress through laughter, and even if the dog messes up, are successful at reaching people. Tricks also bring instant gratification to the handler because people think you are such a good trainer and your dog is amazing!

As an obedience instructor for over 25 years, tricks have always had an important place in my training classes. I always challenge my classes to teach a new trick each week while working on obedience skills. This keeps the dog's attitude up and ensures lots of praise for the dog which enhances the team bond. Tricks classes are the most requested class in our dog club. In my tricks class, I like to divide tricks into four general categories:

Movement: Spins in both directions, down, roll over, shake with either paw, wave, crawl, beg, walk on back legs, jump through a hoop or over a stick, High five (really High four but you know what I am referring to), High ten (both paws,), Bow, Pray, etc.

Targeting: Touch with a paw, touch with a nose, go to a spot, push, pull

Retrieve: Take an object, carry an object, go get an object and bring it back, take an object and put it someplace,

Scent work: find an article; choose one item from a pile

The list of possibilities is endless. Watch your dog and capture cute positions, moves, and actions as you see them happening in daily life. (A clicker is the ideal tool for marking this behavior.) Then incorporate them into your repertoire by reinforcing them and giving them a name. The more your dog learns, the more it is capable of learning and your success will keep you motivated to teach more. When you have taught a variety of tricks and have a degree of reliability in different surroundings you are ready to move on to the next step.

Tricks can be organized or choreographed around a theme such as a holiday, a poem or nursery rhyme, a song, or an idea. Get your creative juices flowing! If you are visiting nursing home residents, choose "old time" music or songs that will be familiar to them. Go back to their earliest days and think about nursery rhymes. Libraries are a good source of books of nursery rhymes. Look in the Juvenile section, 398.8. Everyone remembers Pat-A Cake, Ring-Around-the Rosey, but there are many more rhymes that lend themselves to dog tricks.

Depending on the time of year, think about holidays that may be coming up. Take Easter for example. Think, what do we do for Easter? Make a list—bunnies, eggs, egg hunt, fancy hats, new clothes, church, baby animals, are some of the ideas you will come up with. Put together some tricks that illustrate one or more of your ideas. Maybe you want to hide eggs and have your dog find them. Your dog will need to know how to retrieve an egg. Where do you want the dog to put the egg? Perhaps in a basket, a wagon, a hat? Teach your dog to carry the basket of eggs or pull the wagon of eggs by the handle, or climb in the hat with the eggs (small dog). Keep it short! Don't have your dog find a dozen eggs. Three to five is plenty and leaves the audience wanting more. You now have choreographed a little play with a theme. Don't forget to add that "Take a bow!" at the end.

Decide what you will add to the routine with your comments. You will need words to set the stage and get your

audience focused. Remember that many seniors do not hear well so keep it simple and direct and reasonably loud. Set the stage with your comments and then help the story unfold by giving the dog its cues in a soft voice. Remember that even though you have carefully choreographed this routine, it is always going to be an improvisation because you are dealing with a dog, not a robot! You will definitely be challenged at some point, some place, to think on your feet and hold it all together with adlibs when your dog gets creatively carried away!

Teach the component parts and you are ready to take your show on the road. Keep your props simple and small as you will most likely carry them with you from room to room. A great place to look for items that can be used as dog props is a dollar store. Toy departments also have inexpensive items for toddlers and babies that work well with dog paws. Be sure to write down your little scenario in a notebook along with the props you need, your commands for the various tricks, and your conversation that brings it all together. I keep all the props, script and accessories in a labeled plastic box for easy storage. As your dog's repertoire grows, you will be glad you have a list because you will be rotating out seasonal themes and replacing them with new ideas. You will be amazed at how well your dog remembers a scenario even when it has been a year since it was performed. It only takes one or two practice sessions to freshen up an old trick and you are ready to take it on the road again.

Keep your little plays short because, like children, many seniors lose focus quickly. Movement will keep their attention. A wave Hello! and a Bow at the end is always good for applause. For a bed to bed visit, a simple nursery rhyme like Jack Be Nimble is enough.

Here is a sample scenario:

Rhyme: Jack Be Nimble
Props: candle in unbreakable candle holder
Enter room and introduce your dog. Have dog wave Hello to patient. Ask patient if he/she remembers the rhyme Jack Be Nimble and say it with them. Tell them your dog can act out the rhyme. Jack (Substitute your dog's name) be nimble: Dog can rollover, or spin in both directions, etc. Jack be quick: Dog runs in circle around candlestick Jack jump over the candlestick: Dog jumps over candlestick, goes into a beg/sit-up, then takes a bow.

Say a Prayer
The most popular and most requested trick is to say a prayer for the patient. This is a good ending and no matter if your dog is a good pray-er (keeps head bowed a long time) or a short pray-er (head pops up fast) with your humorous comments, the patient will love it and you will be called upon to pray by staff, patients and visitors every time they see you and your dog.

I hope I have challenged you to take a new look at tricks. Having fun with your dog and sharing the joy of your





Gold Coast Freestyle Guild Presents:

3rd Holiday Freestyle Festival!

Join us for a day of Canine Freestyle in the spirit of the Holidays.

Saturday, Dec. 1, 2007

Location: Napa Valley Dog Training Club
68 Coombs St.
Napa, CA

Titling Show “Celebrating Life”

begins at 10:00 am

Classes offered: Levels 1-4, Veterans, & For Exhibition Only

Judges: Marge Hetrick & Kay Richards

Closing date: Nov. 16



CFF Canine Freestyle Workshop

(to follow after lunch)

All levels of experience are welcome!

“What If”

What is the meaning of Artistry?

How does it relate to Design, Dynamics, Rhythm, and
Motivation?

Explore the relationships and how to evoke emotion from your
audience.

Closing date for this workshop: Nov. 26

Premium lists and registration forms for the workshop;

available by e-mail, contact: Judy Gamet

(Judy@Dogscandance.com)

or by calling: 707-449-1715

Ballot

Canine Freestyle Federation. Inc. Annual Election

No additional nominations were received to the slate of candidates presented in the August 2007 newsletter. The Constitution and By-laws read "The election shall be by mail ballot from among those nominated. Please take the time to mark your ballot and return it by December 31, 2007. You must use the original ballot below with your mailing label on the reverse side. Households with multiple members may duplicate the ballot as necessary but must include the original ballot with the mailing label.

Please mail ballots to:
Brandy Clymire
Membership Chair
10603 Seven Oaks Drive
Spotsylvania, VA 22553

Vice President ____ Jeanine Brown

Director ____ Kristin Sicotte

Recording Secretary ____ Sally Kirschenman

Director ____ Fay Taylor

XX

2008 CFF Annual Dues Notice

Dues are \$ 25.00 Please renew today!
(The date in the upper right corner of the mailing label on this newsletter indicates when your present membership expires)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Please make checks payable to CFF, Inc and mail to
Brandy Clymire, Membership Chair
10603 Seven Oaks Drive
Spotsylvania, VA 22553

In May 1998 CFF files an Application for Recognition of Exemption under 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code with the IRS. The IRS granted CFF's request in 1999 as exempt from federal income taxes. CFF dues are not deductible for federal income tax purposes as a charitable contribution.

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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