

Paws to Dance



The Newsletter of the Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc.
May, 2008

My first Retreat OR Traveling with Thelma and Louise

(The names have been changed to protect the innocent)

Hi I'm, Rock and I'm the Boxer puppy who was at the retreat. I was the one traveling with the really good looking Azawakh. This was my first exposure to a long car ride, a hotel room and a CFF gathering. I wanted to share some of my experiences.

On Thursday morning Thelma and her elegant Azawakh, Felaou, arrived at my home sometime in the middle of the night. Louise and Thelma packed the car....and then repacked the car, as Louise brought a lot of stuff. Felaou, and I played in the front yard and got to know each other better.

In no time we were on the road. At first I noticed that Felaou seemed a bit nervous in the car. I have to admit that Thelma drove like she was in the Indy 500. Finally we all settled in. Seventeen hours later, the ever illusive I-39 interstate and no success at snuggling with the Azawakh, we arrived in Chattanooga, TN.

Thelma and Louise unloaded the car while Felaou and I checked out the hotel. I had never been in a hotel room so I had to sniff every nook and cranny. Felaou jumped from bed to bed fluffing the pillows and bed spreads. She was a pro.

We settled in for a relaxing night when suddenly I heard a noise. There were voices outside and my services as a guard dog were needed.....ALL NIGHT LONG. This would surely impress my Azawakh and soon I would get that cuddle I so longed for.

The next morning we were off to the show. Louise was driving and Thelma was navigating. We ended up missing our destination and touring a lovely section of Georgia. Finally getting back on track we made it just in time for the show. Boy was it ever great.

That afternoon the retreat started off with a bang. There was an informative judge's panel and then we broke off into two groups for the attention and ring nerves classes. The day ended with a great party and an opportunity to make new friends, chat with old ones and of course eat.

The next day we were in a new building. It started with a lecture by Sue Ann Lesser DVM on the "Virtuoso". Hey that might be me someday as I started this dancing thing early. We then were treated to a packed day of classes to include Presentation and Artistry, Creative Work, Proofing, Music

Continued on page 5

From Your President

Thank you, each and everyone, instructors, participants, assistants, videographers, handlers, dogs, food gatherers, presenters, clean-up crews, scribes, stewards, judges, organizers, put-up and takers-down, spectators, exhibitors, and the list goes on and on. It takes the gifts and talents of many combined with a spirit of giving and sharing to make a volunteer based organization such as ours continue to grow and develop. It is the uniqueness of that spirit coupled with the passion we have for our discipline which creates the environment for all of us to come together, creating just the right chemistry to produce such an outstanding weekend as we had in Chattanooga. To name each of you individually is impossible. It took each of us plus our wonderful dogs to create such a memorable weekend. After all it is "All about the Dog". The joy and wonder of the weekend inspired and warmed me for weeks. WOW!

On another note, Verna Alanson and I are meeting this week to set up the forum aspect of our members' only section of the Web site. Please check in after June 1 for directions for participating in the forum discussions.

Have a great summer and keep training. Remember we have back to back titling events in Virginia in November and Sue Ann Lesser will be presenting a lecture on Rhythm.

Joan

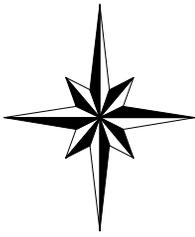
The Book Review

WHY DOGS SHOULD DANCE The Neurobiology of Music and Canine Freestyle by Sue Ann Lesser, DVM, ACAC, CVSMT

For those of us devoted to CFF freestyle, this is a book we have long hoped and waited for. We have known in our hearts that the combination of training and music brings out the best in our dogs but we didn't have the knowledge or understanding to know how it happens and why. In this book, Dr. Lesser presents a comprehensive study of how dogs perceive music, how CFF freestyle capitalizes on the natural learning progression of dogs, and ties it all together to produce canine athletes. It is the justification we have hoped for. It is our reason for being CFF.

This is not an easy book for everyone to comprehend but Dr. Lesser carefully lays the foundations for understanding by taking the reader gently, step by step through the basics of CFF Canine freestyle, and the definitions of musical terms for those of us with less than optimal music education. She covers all aspects of understanding the components of music and the very complicated functions of the brains of both humans and canines in perceiving music. She leads the reader to an understanding of how music is perceived and the effect music has on musculature, emotions and learning ability.

Dr. Lesser's research of neurobiological studies shows how the focus of each CFF freestyle level builds on the ability of the canine body and brain to learn increasingly difficult motor skills, develop attention, muscle balance and athleticism. Dr. Lesser points out that when the correct music matches the rhythm of the dog and the CFF level of performance, the team increases focus, lowers



Sirius Guild

"Where Every Dog Is A Star!"
Nan Marks

Spring in the land of the Sirius Guild never ceases to amaze this transplanted New Englander. It is a long period of blossoming, unfurling of new leaves, and growth. There is beauty in each step of the process and seeing it build over time is a great joy. During this period are several key initiatives for the Guild or its members that offer similar chances for growth and flowering in the partnership of the dance. A freestyle demonstration at the Baltimore County Kennel Club Show in April gave several members the opportunity to show the team work and beauty of our sport. Many guild members drove happily off to Tennessee for what I have heard was the best retreat ever! While a death in the family kept me from attending our Guild commitment to each other and sharing insight means, I know, that the knowledge from this conference will be shared generously by the attendees with those who were unable to go. Plans are already afoot to make the combined Sirius Guild and CFF two day show in November a splendid event. In the nearer term Pepper Guzman is organizing some Guild members in doing a freestyle demonstration at an event for the Montgomery County Humane Society on May 18. Finally in our individual training relationships let it always be Spring.

Another source reports that MANY raffle tickets were sold and the response for basket donations was terrific. Lots of new music and new routines are being coordinated.



Canis Major Guild

by Julia Gregory
jmg@tnaqua.org



Canis Major members have been working hard on two fronts; preparing to compete and preparing for Retreat (poetic!).

We'll have four members presenting six routines at the upcoming titling event. We're happy enough to have the home court advantage, but we also know the limitations of our building and we aren't looking forward to trying to present our dogs at their best with some of the limitations of the space. The HVAC roars like a hurricane, so we'll have to choose between hearing the music and cool air ... hmmm. We never noticed before, but the lights throw weird shadows on the back wall and just last week, Fay hit the metal paneling with her engagement ring and it was so loud that for our multiple dog team routine, we're having to sit the dogs six feet forward of the wall because Patch won't go near it! Don't you love daily challenges?

Preparing for Retreat IS a lot of work, but it's like getting ready for a big party. We're excited to have our friends coming to visit and play and we just want everything to go smoothly. It's a big responsibility and we're flattered to have been entrusted with it. And to tell the truth, we don't have to do everything. The board and helpers (like Jim Moore and Cameron Foster) and instructors are also working hard to make things right. We love being part of that team! We'll provide an update after Retreat.

We want to express a special "thank you" to CFF for shouldering responsibility for the titling event. That would have been one thing too many and we appreciate the save.

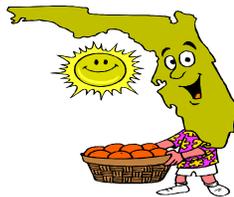
Guild News More Staccato Notes

Continued from Canis Major, page 3

Later That Spring: Wow! What a great time! So many large hearts and strong backs! Fay Taylor and Patch covered themselves with glory by titling at Level II. Not bad for a rescued rat terrier with a broken leg and the zoomies! In addition, regarding the loud, scary wall that altered the multi-dog team routine ... by the time of the event, Patch took Fay very close to that wall in the performance, and she had to bring him out a couple of feet so that they would be where Julia and Milo expected to find them. For that confidence Patch showed in Fay she is extremely grateful. Thank you all so much for coming to see us!

First Florida Freestylers Guild

by Gaea Mitchel



First Florida Freestyle Guild was well represented at the CFF Retreat, and we felt an infusion of enthusiasm which we hope will carry back home and be spread among the rest of our members. We have found another location for our monthly meetings, and will hopefully be able to gather on a more regular basis again.

We were thrilled to have two of our member teams title at the competition in Chattanooga. Elaine Smith and her striking Belgian terverren, Rhyme earned their Level II title. Ann Holder and her talented poodle Pippin earned their Level III title. In addition, they demonstrated one of the many skits they perform for the Space Coast Therapy Dog program at facilities around Central Florida. What a treat to see our friends in action!

Misha Guild, Utah

By Susan Colledge



Our guild has a new member so we are up to 4 now. We are working on doing a demo the first of May at a retirement center in Ogden. Joan and I are also looking forward to attending the retreat. I'm sure it will get us energized.



CAROLINA CANINE FREESTYLE GUILD



By Shari Bryant

As I write this, it is less than a week before the Retreat and four of us plan to attend. We continue to plan for a couple of fund-raising seminars in 2009. We have selected a number of speakers and are in the process of contacting them and making arrangements. Also, a few of us have been meeting a couple times a month to select music and work on routines. We have a few new people that have joined us for these sessions and seem to be interested in freestyle. Our next meeting/training session is scheduled for mid-May.



Rock's Review, continued from page 1

Search, Yoga, Training for a Brace and Technical Stations. We gathered at the end of the day to share what we learned.

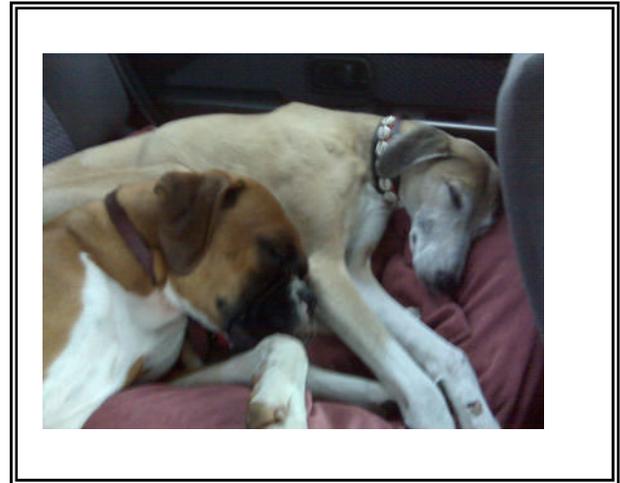
That evening Thelma and Louise decided to take us for a walk along the Tennessee River. We needed to blow off some steam and as usual "T" and "L" had no idea where they were going. We pulled into what looked like a small gravel parking lot. Thelma went to check it out but just as she got back in the car a police officer with lights flashing blocked us in. I of course took this opportunity to display my fierce guard dog abilities as the officer approached. The officer questioned Thelma and Louise about their activities and wanted to know if they possessed drugs or alcohol. Thelma politely responded "no" despite full knowledge of the industrial size bottle of "Rescue Remedy" stuffed under her seat. The nice young officer redirected us to a suitable dog walking area and we enjoyed a romp along the river.

The final day of retreat was met with great joy and some sadness. I could tell that Thelma and Louise had learned so much and would definitely miss the fellowship of their free-style friends. We had the amazing opportunity to participate in a "Journey with Joan" and I was inspired to make one last ditch effort to impress my always lovely Azawakh. I begged Louise to trust me so she took me off lead. As Louise and I started our phrase I tried my hand at choreography. Sorry Joan your phrase needed a little "tweaking" from a young Boxer. I bounded off in the opposite direction displaying all my best moves before joining up with Louise again. We finished our closing shape and I could tell Louise was proud. I glanced over to make eye contact with my Azawakh and she nodded in approval.

We finished the day with Rhythm and Music Selection as well as Technical Stations. After we said our sad good byes we hit the road. Despite seventeen hours of driving, the ever illusive I-39 interstate, a detour through down town Chicago at midnight and the driving snow storm we hit once in Minnesota, we arrived home safely

Thank you to all who participated, planned and executed this amazing retreat....we will definitely see you in two years.

Gas per gallon \$3.87, Retreat registration \$160.00, A cuddle with my Azawakh on the way home.....priceless.



Retired

by Nan Marks

I've seen this word in many forms: accepting (usually defeat); withdrawing from the endeavor.

I saw it in November at the freestyle competition describing what I elected to do. It gave me pause. It should have. What I chose to do was, for me, a big, big deal. To many perhaps it would not be but I suspect I speak to those who will understand. What I did, mid-performance on Sunday, was to caress my dog, call her to heel, bow, and leave the performance area. I will always be grateful for the applause, Verne Foster's thumbs up, and the judges' understanding smiles.

I entered Sunday's event with high hopes. Saturday had not been all I wished but I knew Sally was what I call a "second day dog". She is more comfortable when she has worked through some issues of strange terrain and stranger me.

As we began, things went wrong quickly. She hesitated, then overshot, then went over the top barking. I was embarrassed and, to use the vernacular, seriously "stressed out.." In my defense I'd say that in large part that was because I'd hoped to show how truly wonderful Sally is.

What I'd lost in that equation is the heart of freestyle. It is not just training, not just the skills you've taught and your dog has learned, it is the trust and confidence that let you come together as one. When it is achieved, and at each show I see wonderful examples of that union, it is extraordinary. When it is not, as was my case in November, it is time to stop and work through why. I have some insights and the gift of our community is that I also have wonderful input from others. We will be back. But today I feel sorrow and pride. Sorrow because I can see things that would have enhanced my partnership with Sally which I wish I'd done but pride because I saw she was not happy and I honored that and retired.

I wrote a poem for Sally at the first retreat to which I will not subject the world. That said, two lines of it capture my thoughts.

"But at the end, when the dance was through
It was enough that it was us two"

In this arena more than any dog sport I know we put our relationship on the line. What a gift. What a challenge.



The Retreat Numbers Game

- 1819.60 Number of miles to and from Long Island, NY to Chattanooga, TN
- 99.72 Number of gallons of diesel fuel consumed
- 18.25 Average miles per gallon in my big van while going 65-70 mph and using A/C.
- 5 Number of hotels that I stayed in during The Journey
- 4 Number of hotel chains that I stayed in
- 3 Number of days totally enjoying the Spirit of Fellowship in Freestyle
- 2 Number of times I came across other freestylers in my travels
- 1 ONE FABULOUS TIME!!!
PRICELESS!!!!

Submitted by Sue Ann Lesser, DVM

Rhythm of Life

Rhythm is a powerful thing. Since the birth of my son Niko I have experienced a renewed sense of rhythm. When you are seriously sleep deprived and exhausted beyond belief it's the one thing that you can count on.

The normal rhythm of life as I knew it was gone. There was a new rhythm emerging in my hazy awareness. This new rhythm included the infant sleep/wake cycle, the even paced suck of a nursing baby, and the swaying and rocking to comfort him. I have watched my son pat his hand on my arm as he calms himself to sleep and have spent many a moment listening to the relaxing sound of his breathing or the repetitive attempts at a new sound or giggle.

I have been more aware of the rhythm of life because of Niko. Rhythm is so natural to babies. Why as adults do we lose this awareness or appreciation for such a powerful, organic force?

In Canine freestyle "rhythm is the great organizer". The rhythm of the music matched to the rhythm of the dog at a trot, and the handler moving with but not on the beat ties these three very different elements together.

So with my renewed sense of rhythm and my continued desire to understand my dogs better I tried an experiment. At first I just paid attention to the sound or rhythm each dog made as they trotted across the wood floor upstairs (usually on their way to raid the garbage can). I knew exactly which dog was headed for the trash by the very different gait rhythm they had.

Next I took each dog outside and tried yet again to listen for the rhythm they produced as they trotted on a different surface. Then I tried to walk with my dogs and finally progressed to a heeling exercise each time listening closely for their rhythm.

What I discovered was that I had incorporated or adopted my first freestyle dog's rhythm as a part of my very own. That is why we "click" so well. I also discovered that when I focused on the rhythm of my other dogs as we practiced our heeling patterns I felt more relaxed and had a greater sense of oneness, almost a Zen like ex-

perience. The dog's seemed to enjoy it as well.

So for those of you who "can't hear the music", I challenge you first to listen to the rhythm of your dog.

Kristin Sicotte



It's About the Dog

by Joan Tennille

Co-founder

Canine Freestyle Federation

Canine Freestyle will change your perceptions about training. It is not about training exercises, tricks or steps. It is about training movement behaviors yours and the dog's and to share that joy with others. It is learning to present your dog to his best advantage to others creatively and artistically with music. It is a celebration of dog work expressing to others through movement the joy and delight you have in working and training together.

I also believe that our training discipline is exceptional and successfully prepares the team for presentation and performance.

Canine Freestyle Federation Titling Event

Friday April 25, 2008

What a titling event.! Many many thanks to the competitors for sharing their dogs with all of us. Thank you to the judges, Susan Colledge, Wendy Ely, Marge Hetrick, Ann Holder, Sally Kirschenman, Gaea Mitchel, and Betty Swenson who did such a fine job. Your time and effort is greatly appreciated. We had a number of folks who were scribes, tally scribes, ring stewards and did trophies. All of them contributed to this being a highly successful weekend. Special thanks again go to our music man Jim Moore , to our videographer Cameron Foster and to Jeanine Brown for the trophies.

Level II Team

First Place Julia M. Gregory's Pug Wildhaven's Grinnin' Milo, RN, CFF III, CFF IT

And

Fay Taylor's Rat Terrier Taylormade Patchwork, RE, CFF IT, CFF II, TDI

Level IIA

First Place Renee Filep's Border Collie Radiant's Chili Will Do TDI, CGC

Second Place Linda Maddox's Bull Terrier Stellar Tom Sawyer

Level IIB

First Place Elaine Smith's Belgian Tervuren CH Starbright Once Upon a Time, CD

NEW TITLE

Second Place Sue Ann Lesser's Doberman Pinscher Muellers Bootleg vTriadel RA, CD

NEW TITLE

Third Place Fay Taylor's Rat Terrier Taylormade Patchwork CGC, TDI, RE, CFF IT

NEW TITLE

Fourth Place Marge Hetrick's Standard Poodle Gretara Not Tonight

Level III

First Place Wendy & Clausen Ely's Belgian Tervuren Chateau Blanc's Full Sail

CFFII **NEW TITLE**

Second Place Ann Holder's Toy Poodle Cajun Rebel Pipsqueak, CD, RE, CFF II

NEW TITLE

Third Place Janet McBrien's Welsh Terrier Datawelsh Everlasting Cash JE,CGC, CFFIT,

NA, OAJ, CFF II

Level IV

First Place Betty Swenson's Border Collie U-CD Lacy's Yahtzee CD, HSAs, CFFII

NEW TITLE

Second Place Gaea Mitchel's Cavalier King Charles Spaniel U-ACH Lewiswood Coppelia

Fianna, CD RE, AX, MXJ,CFFII, CFF IIT

Third Place Elaine Smith's Mixed Breed Smith's Itching To Go, CFF IV

Fourth Place Shari & Duane Bryant's Whippet GraceGift Sky's The Limit, CFFIII

Veterans

First Place Julia Gregory's Cardigan Welsh Corgi McLea's Bashful Bombur

Second Place Fay Taylor's Shetland Sheepdog U-CDX Wildrose Marquis Secret UD, CGC,

TDI AXJ, OA, CFFIIB, CFF II

Highest Artistic Score

Wendy & Clausen Ely's Belgian Tervuren Chateau Blanc's Full Sail CFFIII

(get out your hankie!)

Being a veterinarian, I had been called to examine a ten-year-old Irish Wolfhound named Belker. The dog's owners, Ron, his wife, Lisa, and their little boy, Shane, were all very attached to Belker, and they were hoping for a miracle.

I examined Belker and found he was dying of cancer. I told the family we couldn't do anything for Belker, and offered to perform the euthanasia procedure for the old dog in their home.

As we made arrangements, Ron and Lisa told me they thought it would be good for six-year-old Shane to observe the procedure. They felt as though Shane might learn something from the experience.

The next day, I felt the familiar catch in my throat as Belker's family surrounded him. Shane seemed so calm, petting the old dog for the last time, that I wondered if he understood what was going on. Within a few minutes, Belker slipped peacefully away.

The little boy seemed to accept Belker's transition without any difficulty or confusion. We sat together for a while after Belker's death, wondering aloud about the sad fact that animal lives are shorter than human lives. Shane, who had been listening quietly, piped up, 'I know why.' Startled, we all turned to him. What came out of his mouth next stunned me. I'd never heard a more comforting explanation.

He said, 'People are born so that they can learn how to live a good life -- like loving everybody all the time and being nice, right?' The six-year-old continued, 'Well, dogs already know how to do that, so they don't have to stay as long.'

Editor's Note: I wish I knew to whom to credit this, but I do not. Whoever you are ... thank you!



The Book Review, continued from page 2

stress, and achieves better performance because the dog is allowed to develop neurologically in a pattern that builds complexity. As dogs progress through the CFF levels the complexity of the music increases to match the increasing neurological development needed for complex technical skills. By Level IV, this process culminates in superbly conditioned canine athletes with an incredible bond with their handlers bringing artistry to the equation.

Artistry has always been a difficult subject to explain. Dr. Lesser stresses that life is about movement, movement expresses feelings and emotion, movement relates to the use of the space and the team moving through space in relation to the music and to each other. When all these factors come together, artistry is produced. It is the sum of all the parts which creates a bigger picture out of the joy the team displays in working together.

In summary, the training progression of CFF freestyle combined with the handler/dog bond and the correct use of music provides the dog with the mental and physical stimulation, the physical conditioning and balance, and the well-being it needs to live a long, healthy life. It may be the best thing we can do for our beloved dogs.

Ann Holder

The book may be ordered from Michael Berecka; Black Diamond Productions; 20 Burgess Avenue; South Huntington, NY 11746. Cost is \$ 25.00 plus \$ 5.50 for priority mail.

Label

Use this form if there are any pets in your household.

L A B E L H E R E	Your first name and initial	Last name
	Pet's first name and initial	Pet's pet name
	Home address	
	City, town or post office, state, and ZIP code	

Pet Election Campaign ▶ Check here if you want \$1 to go to a fund to elect a dog or cat president. ▶

Income

Your Pet's Contribution to Your Household

1	How cute is your pet, on a scale of 1 to 10? ▶ <input type="checkbox"/> Multiply by 100 and enter here	1	
2	2	Number of times a day you pet, play with, or talk to your pet	2
3	3	Number of times a child has claimed your pet ate his/her homework	3
4	4	Number of times your pet has protected you or your home (from a real or imagined threat)	4
5	5	Number of times your pet has eaten food someone didn't want	5
6	6	Snookums Tax: Total number of nicknames for your pet	6
7	7	Add up the numbers in lines 1–6 and multiply by \$10,000. This is your total Pet Tax ▶	7

Adjustments

Expenses You Can Deduct

8	8	Food: Estimated yearly cost of meals, snacks, and scraps eaten by your pet		
9	9	Grooming: Number of hours you spend grooming or thinking about grooming your pet, or cleaning its cage or tank. Multiply by \$10		
10	10	10	Number of squeaky toys, scratching posts, and hamster wheels in your home. Multiply by \$5.	
11	11	11	Hours a week spent exercising the animal. Multiply by \$10 (or \$20 for walks when the temperature is 32°F or below)	
12	12	12	Total amount spent on obedience training, veterinarians, therapists, and gifts for angry neighbors	
13	13	13	Add up the numbers in lines 8–12. These are your total Pet Expenses ▶	

Damages Incurred by Pet

14	14	14	How many times did your pet throw up or have an "accident" in your house?	
15	15	15	How many pieces of furniture or clothing has your pet destroyed?	
16	16	16	Piranha Credit: Number of other household pets destroyed by this pet	
17	17	17	Add up the numbers in lines 14–16 and multiply by \$100. This is your total Damages Credit ▶	

Calculate Your Pet Tax

18	18	18	Add up the numbers in lines 13 and 17	
19	19	19	If line 18 is more than line 7, subtract line 7 from line 18. This is the amount of your refund ▶	
			Choose form of payment: <input type="checkbox"/> cash <input type="checkbox"/> equivalent in pet food <input type="checkbox"/> a new pet	
20	20	20	If line 18 is less than line 7, subtract line 18 from line 7. This is the amount you owe ▶	

For details on how to pay, see publication K9-433228873VZ9998TP.

Sign Here



Your signature	Date
Your pet's signature (or paw print, nose print, or piece of dander, feather, or scale)	Date

WARNING: The penalty for falsifying information is cleaning up poop at the local pound for 300 hours a week.



Editor's Corner

Huge thanks go to the people who made this issue of the *Paws to Dance* possible. First and foremost, the guild reporters, who send us news of freestyle in their corners of the country. Thanks go too, always to Joan Tennille who guides us from the helm in word and deed. Kristin Sicotte did double duty with two articles. Leila Widgren sent the very funny tax return form opposite. Thanks for another laugh ("The Numbers Game") to Sue Ann Lesser. Nan Marks shared her heart with us in "Retired". This newsletter is made possible by the generosity of these members who share their thoughts with us in spite of their misgivings ... "I can't really write", "Maybe it's not good enough", "If this is stupid, don't use it". I've done this for four years and have never received a contribution I couldn't use. Don't be shy. Send 'em on!

Julia Gregory



YOU MIGHT BE A FREESTYLER IF ...

...you train your pace to match your dog and select your garments to contrast with him and both accommodations make you smile.

Submitted by Nan Marks

Basket Raffle Winners

Guilds and individuals donated a 8 baskets to the raffle. Over 800 tickets were sold and the winners were:

D.C. Freestyle Class Basket	Nan Marks
President's Basket	Fay Taylor
Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild	Mimi Nevitt
Sirius Guild	Andrea Jones
Canis Major Guild	Barbara Long
Dances With Woofs Guild	Julia Stege
Ann Holder Gardening	Carol Wetzel
First Florida Freestyle Guild	Cinni Verhjin

Thank you to everyone who donated baskets and bought tickets.

Up-Coming Events

You won't want to miss it!

Freestyle seminar
June 28-29
Lacrosse, WI

Adjudicated Match and Run-throughs
September 21
Fredericksburg, VA

Two-day Titling Event
November 8-9
Fredericksburg, VA

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Inside This Issue

My First Retreat.....p. 1	Titling Event Results.....p. 8
From Your President.....p. 2	Cyber-food for Thought.....p.9
The Book Review.....p. 2	W-K9, Individual Pet Tax Return.....p.10
Guild News, Staccato Notes.....p. 3 - 4	Editor’s Corner.....p. 11
Retired.....p. 6	You Might Be a Freestyler Ifp. 11
The Retreat Numbers Game.....p 6	Up-Coming Events.....p. 11
Rhythm of Life.....p. 7	Raffle Basket Winners.....p. 11

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