

Paws to Dance



The Newsletter of the Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc.
August 2010

The Quest for Inspiration

By Elaine Smith-Nabors

As a budding new freestyler I always wondered where Joan got her inspiration. It seemed that she had created something amazing out of nothing. It has taken some time, but I think I understand where to find inspiration. Lucky for all of us CFFers, Joan has done a lot of the work for us, but in order to truly teach and understand CFF freestyle, I believe one must find a source of inspiration.

I find inspiration for teaching my classes from several different sources. The people inspire me. I participate in the forum and discuss the concepts and explore the ways in which people perceive them. Discussion in guild class leads to deepen my understanding and it helps me to really dissect my understanding as well as helping me to open my eyes to what others have to say. In fact, one of the discussions that we had the other day, had to do with a very interesting twist on heel position. Instead of the dog's shoulder being aligned with the handler's pant seam and the dog also facing in the same direction as the handler, we placed the dog's shoulder at the pant seam but he was facing the opposite direction as the handler moved backwards. It was an interesting take on heel position and it made for some intriguing discussion. It was Ann Holder, a guild member and judge who initiated the idea. It inspired me. It absolutely shoved me out of the creative rut that I so often place myself in. Joan is a wealth of inspiration. When she gets hold of me, she makes the creative rut disappear altogether, at least until I find it again. The things that lady can do with chairs, is truly amazing to me. My guild members can always tell when I have had my Joan fix because we are always going to try something that makes them really grow creatively. My favorite is the exercise where everyone must create an opening shape and then change to a closing shape while sitting in the chair. The dogs always do the silliest things when we do that one!! It creates the most amazing visual effects and it forces people to work creatively. It is an inspiration. I could fill this entire article with ways that Joan inspires me, but I feel the need to include something that I believe inspires Joan.

I am very inspired by the dogs!! I believe the dogs are an enormous inspiration for Joan, after all why else would she have worked so hard to create this sport if not for the dogs! When time and weather allow, I do a great deal of working with my dogs. While training or improvising, I often find things that are weak or interesting that the dogs present to me. What the dogs reveal to me often becomes the inspiration for my next lesson. I will give you an example. My Tervuren, Rhyme, is a close worker. He very much likes to work with me in all senses of the word. In fact, I believe he would be insanely happy if he could crawl into my skin and share it with me all day long!! I am not complaining, because having a velcro dog is certainly a gift, but as we have advanced and are now in level four, *continued on page 3*

From Your President

The Birth of a Freestyle Team is a Process

By Gaea Mitchel

Recently I have heard several CFF friends voicing concern that, trying to start again with a new dog, they are not feeling a connection. Some question the suitability of the new dog for the sport, others doubt their ability to choreograph and perform, fearing their past successes were due not to their own creativity but somehow dependent on that original dog. (I of course may fit in several of these categories.) It's a sad fact but true, that if we want to continue to enjoy freestyle, and to grow and continue our journey, we will have to change partners to continue the dance. That in no way means abandoning a faithful and cherished partner, or the memory of him. It means taking the basic concepts we learned from the first, but being open to the development of another and probably very different relationship with the next dog.

The birth of a freestyle team is always a process requiring time and focus. The challenges vary from one to the next in often unexpected ways, differing as much as the individuals involved, and emotions and expectations can cloud the process even more. We must be aware of the unique abilities and personalities, and open to trying the familiar concepts from different perspectives.

If CFF freestyle is new to you, but you and your dog are seasoned competitors in obedience, rally or agility, your greatest challenge may well be learning the concepts of choreography, and learning to watch the dog for inspiration in building your movement vocabulary. Your technical skills will have to wait for your artistic and creative ability to catch up. Patience and regular classes with your local guild or a skilled instructor will speed your progress.

The seasoned freestyler can encounter other, equally daunting challenges. Having forged a relationship with one dog (and few will argue the incredible depth and power of that rela-

tionship), the handler is now faced with starting all over. For a period of time your entire focus in freestyle has revolved around the original dog's strengths, skills and personality. Mesh with the new dog?....not so much! You may have been working on basic skills- heeling, backing, pivots and more- but try as you will there is not the feeling of togetherness, of the right fit. There is no set method for overcoming this frustrating dilemma. Somehow handler and dog must establish a relationship of respect and trust. The movement vocabulary will have to change somewhat to play to the dog's strengths and skills. You will find yourself adding new movements, discarding others, and possibly speaking with a different accent. The new dog's personality will invite a different oneness, and the handler must be willing to accept this. Be patient with your dog and yourself. But remember, nothing will invalidate or disrespect the original dog. The first dog has broken important ground and made many aspects of the sport easier to transfer to your new partner.

SLATE OF OFFICERS

The nominating committee has presented the following slate for the next three-year term:

Vice President: Susan Colledge
Secretary: Sally Kirschenman
Board (education): Joan Tennille
Board (guilds): Renee Filep

The board thanks the members of the committee: Brandy Clymire, Elaine Nabors, Cathy Nirenberg, and alternate Betty Swenson. We offer our thanks also to the candidates for agreeing to devote their time and energy to the business of CFF.

Additional nominations may be made in writing to the Membership Chair signed by any five members in good standing provided that the person so nominated shall present to the Membership Chair a written statement signifying willingness to be a candidate at the time of the nomination. Such additional nominations must be received by the Membership Chair on or before October 1st. No person may be a candidate for more than one position.

Guild News—Staccato Notes

Continued from page 1

the artistry must be displayed through contrasts. In other words, I have a creative challenge at hand. It is also a training challenge and that is what makes it truly exciting. After some thought, my original inspiration Rhyme's desire to work closely to me, evolves into a lesson for my guild. The lesson's main idea will be to creatively overcome the dog's natural tendencies while working to show contrast. Interestingly enough, each dog displays different natural tendencies. In our guild we have dogs that insist on working with distance between them and their handlers. We have dogs that are very quick to move from place to place and others who do everything slowly. The idea is to explore the dogs tendencies and train for an opposite and see what you get and if it something worth using in the future. All of that came from working with my dog as an inspiration.

The main reason that I wanted to write this article was demonstrate to you the tools that you have at your fingertips to help you to find inspiration in your freestyle journey. There are many more such as the website, shows, seminars, the Learning Center, classes, videos and demos, but since we are all so very spread apart and the economy can make it challenging to attend all the functions, I wanted to show you how observation, participation and discussion can be excellent sources of inspiration for all of us!



Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild

By Shari Bryant

The Guild is focusing on the upcoming titling events on November 6 and 7 that we are co-hosting with the Sirius Guild at Durham Kennel Club (DKC) in Durham, N.C. For anyone that would like an opportunity to perform at the site prior to the show, we have a Show and Go planned at DKC on Saturday, September 11. Also, freestyle classes are periodically held at DKC on weekend mornings from 10 am to Noon. The Freestyle 2 class is for individual work such as run-throughs. So, anyone interested in doing a run-through is welcome to come to any one (or more) of the Freestyle 2 classes. Cost is \$10.00 for each class. The dates are September 12 (the day after the Show and Go), September 25, October 10, and October 23. If you are interested in attending any of the Freestyle 2 classes, please pre-register so we know how many people will be in the class and can plan accordingly. Send the date(s) you are interested in attending, that you will be attending the Freestyle 2 class, and your phone number to Adele Monroe (whippets@nc.rr.com).

Canis Major Guild

By Julia Gregory



Here in the tri-state area of Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama, we're just trying to stay cool enough to stay healthy! If it can't be trained indoors, it hasn't been trained! We're not certain how our colleagues in Florida do this year in and year out! We're lucky to have the support of the Obedience Club of Chattanooga so that we can use that facility for classes and practice. A couple of our old regulars have drifted away, but a couple of new folks are showing an interest in the sport. One is from just north of Atlanta and we hope will help us organize some activity down there. You'll hear a bit from the other in her piece about "Toto". We are looking forward to sharing the joy of freestyle with all of you in North Carolina in November.

Guild News More Staccato Notes



Misha Guild, Utah

By Susan Colledge

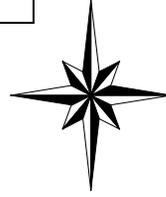
We have 3 new students. I think everyone had met Rita who was in Virginia and then was transferred to Hill Air Force Base here. The other two new dogs haven't had even basic obedience so a lot of our time is spent on the fundamentals. We're excited to welcome these new teams to our small group. We may also have a demo coming up in September at the Davis County Fair. There are a few details to work out. It would be at an obedience and rally show. I'm not sure of the footing (grass, mats, or dirt) and if it is outdoors we'll have to take into consideration the heat (it's been over 100 here lately - but it should be a little cooler in September.)

SIRIUS GUILD continued

"If we TRUST them, they will shine!" has become my new mantra. Hopefully I will remember this when in Durham this November!

For those of you who really like to plan ahead, I'm also beginning to organize the 2nd Annual Freestyle Holiday Celebration for December. This is an opportunity to come out and perform (or just watch) freestyle performances to holiday themed music. As we did last year, the audience will vote for their favorite performance and that team will decide which dog-related charity the proceeds will be donated to. So, if you're not working on a routine for Durham, get out that Christmas music and start "doodling"!

Looking forward to visiting with many of you at the upcoming events- Renee



Sirius Guild

"Where Every Dog Is A Star!"

By Renee Filip

Despite high temperatures and humidity, the Sirius Guild has been very busy since the retreat! In addition to classes and getting ready for our titling event coming up this fall with our North Carolina neighbors, we've had a Guild meeting at a new facility and done a demo at the Warrenton Kennel Club's annual match.

The Guild meeting was held at Colonial K-9, in Stafford, VA. We had a great class, where Marge guided us through presentation heelwork, Brandy gave us a beautiful, flowing phrase and I challenged everyone with some wacky creative work. We saw awesome dog work from beginners; Cinda with her shepherd, Sheri and her sheltie, and Christine and her beagle partner and some real "thinking outside the box" from experienced members Sally, Betty and Janet. It's a wonderful facility, and the owner, Theresa, is very excited about fostering a relationship with CFF. We will be having run-throughs on September 25, two weeks after NC's run through. See Box on page 7 for more information

Janet McBrien and I discovered that our dogs deal with extreme heat better than we do when we did an info-demo at Warrenton Kennel Club's breed and obedience match on July 25th. We followed the police dog demo, so we were able to emphasize the contrast of working versus creative, fun training. The club was very pleased and promised to post a link to the CFF website on their site so hopefully we can generate new membership. Some of the audience were "terrier people", so they were duly impressed that Janet was working Nicholas off-lead and outdoors. It made me realize how important our attitude is when performing in a new place.



By Marcia Barkley

We are just BUZZING with new energy out here in California ...

We had a Guild meeting on May 30th, our first in awhile, and had good attendance, over 50%. The day turned out to be too warm to work the dogs, but we covered quite a number of topics in our discussion. Several of us had the opportunity to actually meet face-to-face for the first time, and that, of course, has value all by itself. We're trying to come up with a second meeting date in the next few months.

One of the decisions made at this meeting was that we needed a new logo, something that would better reflect what our Guild – and CFF – is about. We held a contest, and what you see above is our winner. The wonderful surprise about this contest was the many, many really good ideas that came out. Choosing a winner was very difficult. We wanted something that reflected music, and dogs, and our affiliation with CFF ... something that had an element of California (that inspired the hills/mountains) ... something that shows the fun of canine freestyle, without being too cute ... something that would be easy to read and understand and would lend itself to many different uses (shirts or t-shirts are in our future!). We hope you like our new design as much as we do!

We had a great turn out at a recent “show and go” event, filling all the time slots available, and raising funds for our annual show ... which was recently approved, and judges identified, for December 4th and 5th.

We've also invited Kristin Sicotte to present a choreography seminar here. That's set for September 11th and 12th, in Napa, and we are very,

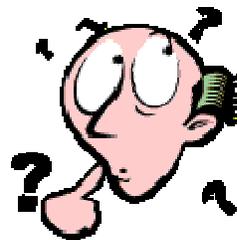
very excited. It's a chance for us to get a different perspective; to raise funds for December; and to market CFF to freestylers not yet familiar with the skill and artistry of CFF.

Last but not least, we're using a Yahoo! group as a way to communicate to everyone without filling up email inboxes, and it is proving to have been a really good decision. This kind of easy communication is vital to staying in touch and sharing ideas, and it's turning out to be a very effective way to support a general uptick in energy and Guild participation. Another “show & go” is already planned for mid-August, and we are aiming to have at least one more beyond that, perhaps two, before our December competition. We have a couple of new members, and more people are becoming involved in making things *happen* in California!

When did THAT happen?

I never heard of that before!

Do you ever feel as if you've missed something? Never let it happen again! Check the CFF Forum on the Members Page of the CFF website <http://www.canine-freestyle.org/> and stay up-to-the-minute with breaking CFF news.



RULE CHANGES

The board met on 27 June 2010. There were substantive revisions to the rules, effective 1 September. New wording is presented in bold.

We recognize the fact that there are totally different challenges, both technical and choreographic, between individual performances and those performed by a team or brace. The following change in Eligibility (page 8) replaces the paragraph beginning "The level at which a multiple-dog team competes" The chart will be removed.

A multiple-dog Team or Brace entry may enter at any level at which any one of the dogs has not earned the Team or Brace title. If one of the dogs has a title at that level, the dog may compete as part of the entry but will not earn another title. If any handler in a Team, or the Brace handler, has previously earned a title at Level II or higher, individually or as part of a multiple-dog entry, a level II Team entry must show at the II-B level.

If a dog earns a Team or Brace title at Level II or higher, it may not enter Level I as an individual entry. Otherwise, earning a Team or Brace title does not affect a dog's eligibility to enter individual dog classes. For example, if a dog earns a Level II Team title as its first CFF title, the dog may be shown as an individual in Level II (A or B, III, or IV. To enter Level IV Team or Brace, all dogs on the team must have exhibited previously in CFF at a lower level.

An addition has been made to the Competition Guidelines, page 5, following the paragraph beginning "The non-regular class for veterans..." This is to allow a dog to continue to enjoy the activity while recognizing that physical restrictions are not strictly age-related. It does not open the door for dogs that are obviously ill or in pain to perform.

A handler may request, due to the dog's physical limitations, an exception to the age restriction for Veterans class. Notification must be made to the show secretary before the start of the event. Once moved to Veterans, all rules pertaining to Veterans will then apply.

Toto's Not In Kansas!

By Amy Sandy
Canis Major Guild

Editor's Note: Lexi is a spritely young miniature schnauzer who shares her home with Amy.

Early this spring, when Lexi reprised her role as Toto, she came alive on opening night in front of a live audience. During rehearsals she mostly wanted to have fun and eat treats. Now it was down to business. One thing I noticed was that she remembered much of her role from two and a half years ago-- with one major difference. She remembered to follow the main characters down the yellow brick road as they sang and danced. This time, however, instead of just a mad scramble across the stage, she watched them and coordinated her movements with theirs. She was, quite on her own, using her agility and freestyle training to her advantage, and for the improvement of the production! Go Lexi!

She also made some improvisational on-stage appearances. She had gotten to know the actress who played both Miss Gulch and the wicked witch. One evening, during the scene in which Miss Gulch had lost Toto and was back at the farm looking for her and talking to Uncle Henry, Miss Gulch appeared on stage saying, "Where is that dratted dog?" and was discussing this issue with Uncle Henry when Lexi got away from Dorothy backstage and ran right up to Miss Gulch. Miss Gulch looked down and lost it with laughter while Lexi just stood there looking up at her. Uncle Henry finally recovered enough to point at her and say, "Why, there's that dratted dog!" As if on cue, Lexi turned and ran back off stage. The audience loved it.

Finally, I noticed Lexi running off stage, to me, a lot. I would shoo her back on stage, but soon, off she would come again. I decided to change tactics. The next time she ran off stage to me, I looked down at her and told her what a good dog she was and what a great job she was doing. She gave me that great doggie smile of hers, wiggled all over, turned and ran back on stage for the rest of the scene. Freestyle has made Lexi and me a more effective team ... at lots of things!

Freestyle Run Thrus

September 25, 2010

Noon to 2:30 PM

Colonial K 9

30 Big Spring Lane

Stafford, VA 22554

540-657-4597

www.colonialK9.com

First run \$ 10 for 10 minutes

Second run \$ 5 for 5 minutes

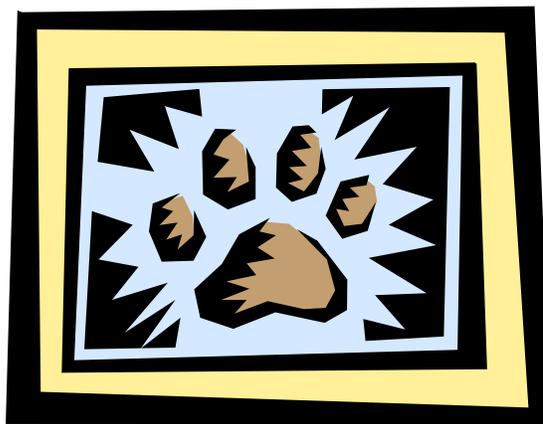
Adjudication (comments on your routine) will be available from Betty Swenson and Joan Tennille, if requested.

Video taping will be available by Carl if you provide the mini DVD, Carl will have some available for purchase.

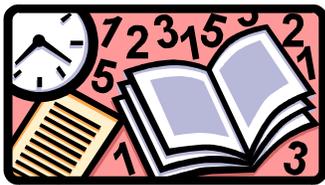
Please bring your music on CD or iPOD

Please pre-register with Renee at

Luvmyzap@yahoo.com by 7 PM 9/18. Include how



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Renee's

Reading Reflections

Summer vacation... its like New Year's Eve for teachers. And as such, I have a Summer Resolution each year. For 2010, it's the year of GETTING UNFINISHED STUFF ON MY DESK DONE. I'm ashamed to admit that several years ago, I discussed the idea of a "Book Review" feature with our over-worked Paws editor, Julia. So, fellow freestylers, here is my first installment and a major hurdle towards clearing some room on my desk. I'll be rating the books on a "paws up" system, suggested telepathically by Chili, although I'm going to use 10 as my top rating, rather than 8, since the math is easier.

The first book I'd like to opine on is one at the top of my list of "dog" books- **Merle's Door** by Ted Kerasote. The full title is actually "**Merle's Door: Lesson from a Freethinking Dog**". This book opened my mind and heart (pun intended) to how dog training and living with dogs should be meshed. So often, people think of training as something that is done in a separate place and time, with specific equipment or treats. Ted Kerasote discusses that developing a relationship with a dog is not about training, but **partnership**; and not about methods, but **attitude**. He recommends adopting a willingness to remove the leash and allow the dog to learn on its own. This, for me, was an "a-ha" moment, because isn't that what CFF freestyle is about too?!? If we use the dog's tempo, they become our partner and naturally heel. If we allow them to express their opinion about movement and music, they give us rapt attention and "oneness".

Now, Kerasote believes in an actual, physical dog door- as he says, to allow the dog to be able to explore and become a part of their physical environment as their ancestors did. Of course, he lived in a community surrounded by parkland and spent much time in "back country". Most of us live in neighborhoods with things like, oh... cars, garbage, kicking livestock, ignorant children, etc. In all practicality, we can't just let our dogs wander

around. But, we could open up their world of experiences, the *emotional, mental, and creative* terrain, to develop and expand the dog's potential. I agree completely with Kerasote, when he states in his Prologue "dogs might lead happier lives if we changed some of our behavior rather than always trying to change theirs."

Something that didn't strike me until I was through the book a second time (which is something I rarely take the time to do despite my intentions), is how Kerasote integrates information and theory effortlessly with out falling into lecture and preaching, or worse yet, text-book mode. There is a humor to his observations. And Kerasote also does a fine job of sharing his dog, Merle, with us. Yes, there is some anthropomorphizing, and he likes to speak French to his dog, but Merle is presented in an honest manner, wonderful and sometimes not. A typical example of the depth of their connection, and many more can be found sprinkled throughout the book, is:

"I'd put my hand on his head and feel my frustration ebb away, my blood pressure go down- just like all the books say happens when a dog touches us- and simultaneously, I'd feel him go easy under my hands, the soothing back and forth, wordlessly but strong: *I am here. So am I. I am glad. Me too.*"

So... on to the hard part... rating. I give this book an overall rating of 9 out of 10 "paws up":

3 "paws up" for the overall likeability of our hero, Merle

3 for the ideas about dog behavior and training

2 for the quality and depth of information
2 for humor and overall story line,

BUT -1 for the protracted, overly long demise of Merle, which I must admit, I skipped when reading for the second time and requires me to add another rating... this is a 10 out of 10 Kleenex Box book, so be forewarned!

In closing, I whole-heartedly recommend reading "Merle's Door", although maybe not in public. If you would like to discuss this book with me, let's chat on the forum. Allow me one final quote from Ted Kerasote... "*I smell elk. Where? In those trees. Lead on.*"

First Annual Canine Freestyle Seminar



The Joy of Freestyle featuring *Joan Tennille*

October 9 and 10, 2010

Pittsburgh, PA

(412) 373-DOGS (3647)

www.canineconceptspgh.com

The following topics will be covered:

Perceptions and Motivations
It's All About the Dog
Movement Talks
The Empty Canvas
Rhythm
The New Entity: The Team
Creating a Presentation
Finding the Fun in Training
The Importance of Honor and Respect
Celebrating the Free in Freestyle

Sign-up Form

<i>Sign up for:</i>	<i>Price</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Working Entry	125.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am a CFF member.	25.00 discount
<input type="checkbox"/> Auditor's fee per day	45.00

Total:

Name _____

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Method of Payment

- Check Payable to "Canine Concepts"
 Visa MasterCard

Credit Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Saturday

8:00-9:00 Set Up

9:00-4:00 Training

6:00 Group Dinner

Sunday

8:00-12:00 Training

12:00-2:00 "Show and Go"

CFF members receive a \$25.00 discount if registering
before September 15, 2010.

Canine Concepts
1418 Frey Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15235

**** Cancellations after September 15 subject to \$50.00
non-refundable fee. NO refunds after October 1,
2010.**

Freestyle Show and Go

When: Saturday, September 11, 2010
From 10 am to 5 pm

Where: Durham Kennel Club
7813 Guess Road
Hillsborough, NC 27712



Cost: \$5.00 per run-through

Note: The performance space will be 40 x 48 ft, same as for the show in November.

Registration: On-site registration will be from 10 am to 2 pm. Preregistration is highly encouraged; send an e-mail to Adele Monroe (whippets@nc.rr.com) or call (919) 596-0613 and leave a message. Preregistered participants get priority for run-throughs.

Please provide the following information:

Your name and name of dog(s)

Number of run-throughs that you want to do. A run-through without the dog and a run-through with the dog counts as 2 run-throughs.

Time preference, if you have one, for each run-through (e.g., 10:30 to noon; noon to 2 pm; 2 to 5 pm).

If you plan to attend the Sunday morning class

Run-throughs will begin around 10:15 a.m. Those that preregister and express a time preference will be scheduled first.

Bring your music on either a CD-ROM (labeled with your name) or in an iPod that can plug into a boom box. Bring a camcorder if you want your routine videoed, and we will find someone to film you.

Durham Kennel Club will be offering its Freestyle 2 class on Sunday, September 12, 2010, from 10 am to noon (fee to DKC, \$10). This will be another opportunity to practice your routine at the show site. If you are interested in participating in the Freestyle 2 class, please indicate that in your preregistration to Adele.

Directions to Durham Kennel Club:

Take I-85 to Durham, NC.

Take Exit #175, Guess Road (NC Route 157).

Northbound, turn left at end of exit; southbound, turn right at end of exit.

Go north on Guess Road for about 8.5 miles.

Turn right at the blue Durham Kennel Club sign.

Hotels (pet information accurate as of June 26, 2010, but please confirm pet policy before making reservation):

Super 8 (pet fee, \$6/night; no limit)

2337 Guess Road, Durham, NC 27705

919-286-7746

I-85, Exit 175 (9 miles from show site)

Red Roof Inn (no pet fee; 30-pound limit)

1915 North Pointe Drive, Durham, NC 27705

919-471-9882

I-85, Exit 175 (8 miles from show site)

Carolina Duke Motor Inn (pet fee, \$10/night; no limit)

2517 Guess Road, Durham, NC 27705

919-286-0771

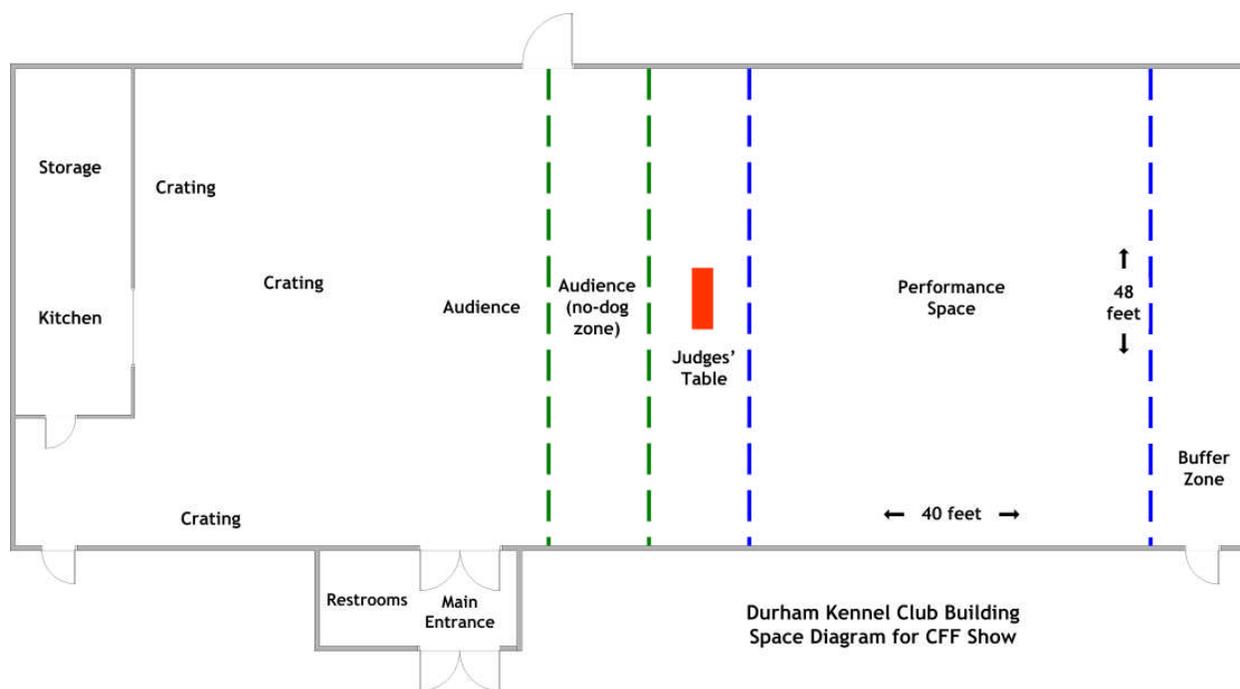
I-85, Exit 175 (9 miles from show site)

La Quinta Inn (no pet fee or deposit, no weight limit)

4414 Durham-Chapel Hill Boulevard, Durham, NC 27707

919-401-9660

I-85, Exit 174A toward Chapel Hill (14 miles from show site)



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

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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CFF Board of Directors

President

Gaea Mitchel
2902 Terry Road
Tallahassee, FL 32312
850-385-7875
gemitchel@earthlink.net

Vice President

Jeanine Brown
12 Gatlin Court
Durham, NC 27707
919-489-0013
jajbrown@nc.rr.com

Treasurer

Carl Tennille
14430 Overlook Ridge Lane
Beaverdam, VA 23015
804-883-1174
ctennille@aol.com

Recording Secretary

Sally Kirschenman
5743 N, 16th Street
Arlington, VA 22205
703-536-7450
skirsch122@verizon.net

Membership Chair

Brandy Clymire
10603 Seven Oaks Drive
Spotsylvania, VA 22553
heypreston@verizon.net

Director

Ann Holder
945 Indian River Drive
Cocoa, FL 32922
rxdogs@aol.com

Director

Kristin Sicotte
2703 Briar Court SW
Rochester, MN 55902
kdammen@yahoo.com

Director

Fay Taylor
809 Fairmont Avenue
Signal Mountain, TN 37377
geofay@bellsouth.net

Board Advisor & Founding President

Joan Tennille
14430 Overlook Ridge Lane
Beaverdam, VA 23015
ctennille@aol.com