

Paws to Dance



The Newsletter of the Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc.
May 2011

New in the CFF Hall of Fame: Peli

By Joan Tennille

Cavaliers are in my opinion, remarkable creatures. It could be that I'm just a bit prejudiced. On the other hand, it probably has something to do with their royal title! For one thing, Cavaliers do not think they are dogs. They believe they are humans and just happen to have four legs. They regard their capacity to command as their right for who else in the room has the royal right to claim title? Then there are the expressive eyes, apparently it's in their genetic background. They have a look for just about every possibility or situation you can think of. Couple this with that swishing tail which is constantly in motion. I sometimes wonder if the tail is just the remnant of royal capes and trains worn in King Charles day. It's as if they carry an invisible royal purple robe and the swishing tail is the train sashaying back and forth requiring focus and attention from all. I have never seen a cavalier move without the swishing of the tail. Could it be they can't
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By Elaine Nabors

When I think about the team of Gaea and Peli, I think of gentle grace. The swishing of Peli's hair as it floats in the gentle breeze of the team's movement is mesmerizing. The sincere appreciation that is expressed in the eyes of both Gaea and Peli as they look at one another transforms you to a gentle depth that is shared with only the most magical teams. The CFF Hall of Fame seems to be a natural part of their exceptional journey. Peli started

this journey as a wiggly furball with big paws to fill, quite literally. Gaea's partners had always been Rotties and quite honestly, that was the image that most of us saw when we looked at Gaea and imagined a dog beside her. The thing that none of us realized at the time was that Peli knew exactly what she was doing and where she was taking Gaea. It would be the ride of Gaea's life. Peli and Gaea earned High Artistic in Level IV three times, but what is really amazing about that is that they did it consecutively and in the highest level that the Federation has to

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Peli and her handler, Gaea

From Your President

In the nine years that I have been active in CFF freestyle I have learned so much, gaining creative insight into the sport through watching and participating in improvs, creative studies, and titling events. Our judges' education has been especially helpful in opening my eyes to the artistry of the discipline. In that time I have seen a remarkable growth in the quality of dogwork, especially in the area of artistry and creativity.

Many of you have heard about the amazing events that occurred at the recent Titling Event held in Chattanooga. I feel so fortunate to have been present to see, live and in person, the first ever CFF performance to earn a score of 10. Yes, Elaine and Rhyme smashed that barrier with four tens on Saturday, then returned on Sunday and earned six! I wish you all could have been there.

Predictably, Elaine asked several of us if we thought this would "cheapen" scores, leading to the awarding of a ten at the drop of a hat. It is characteristic of her modesty and humility that she would wonder if she deserved the scores. My feeling is that it may in fact make the next ten *harder* to achieve. Unless another freestyle team finds the remarkable confluence of perfect music, impeccable precision and inspired choreography, it is unlikely that tens will flow freely from the pens of judges. Those of us who were there have a remembered picture of perfection that will be hard to match, and we certainly wouldn't want to cheapen Elaine and Rhyme's scores by handing out the highest scores for the close-but-no-cigar performance. So don't worry, Elaine. You and Rhyme have not lowered the standard, you have raised the bar!

Gaea Mitchell



Sirius Guild

"Where Every Dog Is A Star!"
By Renee Filep



I've finally gotten some sleep, caught up on schoolwork and unpacked the car from the fabulous trip to Chattanooga last weekend. What a wonderful trial- great dogs and great people! There is nothing like a freestyle trial to refill your creative bucket. As always it was great to visit, albeit too briefly, with fellow freestylers. It was also a pleasure to see so many new teams, and their enthusiasm reminded me to celebrate the joy of being with my dog and sharing him with others.

As I write this, Joan Tennille and several guild members are getting ready to do our annual demonstration at the breed show in Timonium, Maryland. We are also organizing a seminar with Phyllis Geroux, a chiropractic veterinarian on conditioning and keeping performance dogs performing. Our next guild meeting is scheduled for June, and will be a potluck picnic at Joan and Carl's house. Please watch the forum for upcoming details on these, as well as information on a run-thru at Colonial K9 and our November trial with our southern neighbors, Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild.

Canis Major Guild

By Julia Gregory



We are SO GRATEFUL here in the Canis Major Guild. Let me count the ways ...

1. To have had the opportunity to host another celebration of freestyle with the help of the First Florida Freestylers Guild. Thank you, Sisters!
2. To have talented new members who are willing to take a risk and share their wonderful dogs with us. Thank you Amy and Kathy!
3. To have this grand sport that feeds our souls and let's others see the beautiful hearts of our dogs. Thank you, Joan!
4. To have passed unscathed through the terrible

First Florida Freestylers Guild

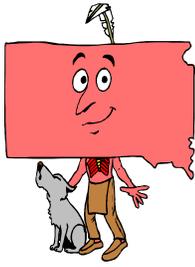
by Elaine Smith Nabors



Whew, another successful trial down with our friends in Tennessee!! The FFF guild has been very busy preparing for the trial that is just past. It was an amazing event full of dog work and sharing. The routines were downright impressive and we had folks from as far away as Pittsburg!! It was fun watching the instructors stand on the sidelines cheering quietly for their students. Boy, they had a lot to cheer about! The scores in all the levels reached new heights and it just goes to show what Joan's conceptual teaching produces over time. Every trial brings a new evolution and we all wonder when this sport will stop growing. I believe that thanks to its clever design, it will continue to grow indefinitely. Joan Tennille is responsible for that clever design. The weekend offered education as well as tremendous performances. Our judges graciously offered to hold a workshop that expanded everyone's understanding of all of the five critical elements and how they are judged. The judges even helped to develop everyone's eye through practice and discussion. Thank you Joan, Brandy, Sally and Betty for giving your time and expertise to the show as well as for the workshop. We enjoyed having Jim Moore as our music man, Cameron as our videographer, Carl Tennille as our everything-man and Jim Poor as our photographer. They truly make the show run smoothly and flawlessly. Thank you to all the scribes and stewards as well as those who contributed to the goody bags and trophies for the trial. We just completed a basket raffle at a local obedience club and we are gearing up for the next guild meeting on May 21st. We are tired, but inspired by the recent events!!

storms of this spring though our hearts are heavy for our neighbors who have lost so much. Thank you, Great Protector!

Guild News More Staccato Notes



Dances With Woofs South Dakota

By Dawn Madge

Hi everyone! Greetings from cowboy country! We are ready for spring!!! We went to an all breed show in Nebraska on a recent weekend and it was 84 degrees on Saturday and snowing, blowing and 34 degrees on Sunday morning! Such is life on the plains. We continue to work hard on our routines in hopes of having a show. We put on two demos at retirement/nursing facilities this month. These prove to be great opportunities to work on our opening shapes, various moves in our routines and as always, heeling and attention. There is never a lot of space to work in, but the people love it, always want us to come back, and we leave with warm, fuzzy feelings. Many thanks to Peggy Behrens and her dogs Kayla and her new little mini Dachshund, Simon, Barb Olson and Derby, Mary Welker and Gretchen, Dawn (one of Peggy's students) and her dog Juneau, and of course my kids: Holly, Chloe and Doogie. I have been, as a guest instructor, working with 4-H kids for the past five weeks. I help them with basic obedience skills and teach them a little about Freestyle. I'm looking forward to July as the Doxies and I will be attending the Elaine Smith-Nabors seminar. I'm so looking forward to seeing everyone. Until then, happy trails to you!

By Marcia Barkley



Things are relatively quiet here at the moment, but various teams have been working toward their particular goals ... some of us starting from scratch with new routines, some of us striving toward greater mastery of precision in movement, some of us exploring creativity. Some of us are working with new dogs, most of which are just entering adolescence, so some class and training sessions are pretty entertaining! We elected the year's officers in January: Debbie Crain, President; Marcia Barkley, Secretary; Lori Jackson, Treasurer; Leanne Neufeld, Training Director. That January meeting gave us an opportunity to do some creative work, and it was fun to see how many different opinions there were about how "the guinea pig team" might "tweak" one simple phrase! We had another meeting in early April, where the main agenda item was our annual titling event; we also examined a handful of routines from one of last year's show DVDs, looking at them from the perspective of the judging standards for Teamwork, as we strive to improve our performances. In early May we'll have Joan Tennille with us for a day, and that promises to be valuable in *SO* many ways. We're aiming for a "show and go" in June, to help us all do sort of a "where are we now that the year is half over" reality check (and raise a little money toward our next titling event!).



Exploring the Balance: A Study in Creating Choreographic Depth Through the "What If"

with Elaine Smith-Nabors

July 30 and 31, 2011

Felicité Latané Animal Sanctuary Mebane, North Carolina

As of April 24, only two working spots are left, but there are unlimited audit spots.

contact: Shari Bryant at Lunar61@aol.com or 336-449-7103

Hey, LOOK! A New Guild!



By Eugenie & Kasie Podojil

The North Coast Freestyle Federation Guild enthusiastically held their first meeting as a provisional guild on March 18, 2011 at Canine Affair Center in Chesterland, Ohio. What an exciting time for us -- getting organized as a guild, discussing our goals and dreams, and building the guild and freestyle into becoming a well-recognized dog activity in the area!

Our guild is currently having practice sessions every week, following the on-going introductory freestyle classes. During our session, we continue to work on picking out music as well as working on opening shapes, technical skills, improvisations, and choreography for our fleet-footed canines. Leila Widgren, our President, has begun videotaping members as they work, which has proven to be a valuable learning tool. Being able to view the movements with our dogs enables us to see what looks good and what doesn't, what works and what doesn't, and has helped us in choreographing our routines. This "reality video" has triggered many revelations that what we may "feel" should be a beautiful movement, may indeed not be!

Over the winter months, Leila led us in sessions focusing on the choreographic concepts listed in the judge's book and we did improv based on the concepts. Janet Dayton recently led us in a session on opening shapes. We did a lot of "what ifs" for our starting "poses" and Leila took numerous still shots so we could see the differences in locations in the performance space and the picture that we are creating for our audiences. Our follow-up sessions have focused on how to move out of our opening shapes and improv-ing to our music selections.

In March, Janet Dayton led an overview of what CFF Freestyle is for Kids & K-9s, a local 4-H club. Janet and Rain shared their current routine and Leila, Ollie, and Gambie doodled to their music to give the 4-H'ers a feel for what a single and brace routine might look like. Janet and Leila helped the 4-H'ers to learn tuggers and then each of the young people got to work with them to plan, create, and perform a 60 second, three and four member team routine. The 4-H'ers were enthused to learn about and experience CFF freestyle.

We have two upcoming demonstrations, for which members are currently preparing. The PAWS Adoption Event in May and Working Dog Weekend in June will give us the opportunity to promote freestyle to larger audiences.

It is with sadness that we report the sudden passing, at age 12, of Janet Dayton's beloved greyhound, Pearl. As well as performing alone with Janet, Pearl teamed with Rain to grace the performance arena with the flowing beauty of the greyhound brace. Pearl was a gentle lady who teamed with Janet at the beginning of her freestyle journey at the 2008 retreat. Pearl has a special place in our hearts, is missed by all, and remembered fondly. Dance with the angels Pearly Jane!

With spring slowly arriving in northeastern Ohio, we welcome the renewed energy it always brings ... and we welcome the new challenges and joys we are experiencing with our dogs as we embrace canine freestyle.



continued from page 1 - Joan Tennille

move without it? Perhaps it swishes that way as an expression of the joy they experience working and being with you.

Peli is an ideal nominee for the Canine Freestyle Hall of Fame because she has given her all consistently throughout her career. She has produced, with her partner, Gaea Mitchel, an amazing amount of choreographic work coupled with admirable artistic performances. When you view the biographical DVD of their journey you sense the power of their relationship expressed through the choreography. As Peli changed, a result of her illness, Gaea creatively found the movement material to enhance and support her partner. The artistry of their performance never diminished. The movement vocabulary changed and consequently the need for greater creativity in the choreography and the manner in which it was expressed. This is an incredible team.

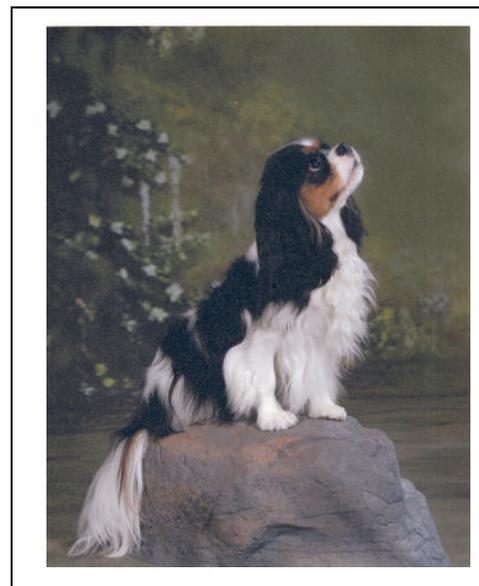
Peli's illness prevented this team from attempting the third leg to earn the title, champion. However, she gave it a good try by getting her first and second of the three legs in one weekend; an incredible feat and the first time ever. It is my honor as the creator of Canine Freestyle and a Federation founder to present Hall of Fame member Cavalier King Charles Spaniel U-ACH Lewiswood Coppelia Fianna CD,RE,AX,NF, CFFIV, CFFII TEAM, RTD, TT ... a remarkable little girl.

Note: Once again Cameron has worked his magic to produce a biography of Gaea and Peli sharing and celebrating their journey. If you would like to purchase a copy, contact Carl Tennille whose contact information is on the address page of this newsletter.



continued from page 1—Elaine Nabors

offer. Peli and Gaea also earned two legs towards their CFF Championship, the most prestigious award that the Federation offers at this time. That means that they earned 80 or more points in Level IV, twice!! Quite an accomplishment! I think the sacrifice following a medical diagnosis is the thing that really defines the respect that this team has for each other and is the real definition of CFF freestyle. You see, Peli was diagnosed with a degenerative neurological disorder that is intermittently painful and compromises her stamina and coordination. Gaea had a hard decision to make, but her actions demonstrate true love and respect for her partner. Instead of pursuing the last leg of the CFF Championship that was knocking on the door, Gaea chose to respect her exceptional girl and showed her in veterans. It was a mixed bag for all of Peli's fans. We certainly understood why it was the right decision for the team, but we wanted the title we felt they so richly deserved. In our hearts, they are and will always be CFF Champions. We all know an exceptional team when we see them. They command your attention and you are never disappointed by what they have to share. Their openness to one another allowed for this exceptional team to arise and to continue to set the CFF bar soaring. Peli is not the first Cavalier to join the ranks of CFF Hall of Fame, but I know that Claire certainly welcomes her with open paws.



**Canine Freestyle Federation Titling Event
Sponsored by the Canis Major Guild
Saturday April 16, 2011**

Level I

First Place Sandra Dehoux's Shetland Sheepdog Casia's Arctic Blue Conquest **NEW TITLE**
Second Place Pam Lewis' Samoyed Critique's Magical Crystal

Level I Team

First Place Lucy McCloskey's Border Collie Hamilton's Mystic Lord of the Dance
Pam Lewis' Samoyed Critique's Magical Crystal

Level IIA

First Place Barbara Ettrich's Vizsla WindStrom's Raiz'n The Pace **NEW TITLE**
Second Place Marilyn Hulme's Beagle Lanbur Wild Pandemonium **NEW TITLE**
Third Place Lucy McCloskey's Border Collie Hamilton's Mystic Lord of the Dance
Fourth Place Nancy Craig's Shetland Sheepdog Nancy's Ray of Sunshine

Level IIB

First Place Janet McBrien's Welsh Terrier Brightluck's Bold Dash for Cash **NEW TITLE**
Second Place Darla Jackson's Laekenois Belgian Shepherd Windjammers Passions Blessed Segen **NEW TITLE**
Third Place Fay Taylor's Manchester Terrier Ch Taylormade Titus

Level III

First Place Renee Filep's Border Collie Radiant's I'll Zig U Can Zag

Level IV

First Place Elaine Smith-Nabors' Belgian Tervuren Ch Starbright Once Upon a Time **CFF CHAMPION**
Second Place Betty Swenson s Border Collie HTCH UCDX Lacy's Yahtzee **CFF CHAMPION**
Third Place Julia Gregory's Pug Wildhaven's Grinnin' Milo

Highest Artistic Score

Elaine Smith-Nabors' Belgian Tervuren Ch Starbright Once Upon a Time

**Canine Freestyle Federation Titling Event
Sponsored by the First Florida Freestyle Guild
Sunday April 17, 2011**

Level I

First Place Sandra Dehoux's Shetland Sheepdog Casia's Arctic Blue Conquest
Second Place Pam Lewis' Samoyed Critique's Magical Crystal

Level I Team

First Place Lucy McCloskey's Border Collie Hamilton's Mystic Lord of the Dance
Pam Lewis' Samoyed Critique's Magical Crystal

Level IIA

First Place Leonor & Douglas Kasten's Giant Schnauzer Kenro's Zesty Ziva David **NEW TITLE**
Second Place Marilyn Hulme's Beagle Lanbur Wild Pandemonium
Third Place Amy Sandy's Miniature Schnauzer Lexi **NEW TITLE**
Fourth Place Lucy McCloskey's Border Collie Hamilton's Mystic Lord of the Dance

Level IIB

First Place Janet McBrien's Welsh Terrier Brightluck's Bold Dash for Cash
Second Place Darla Jackson's Laekenois Belgian Shepherd Windjammers Passions Blessed Segen
Third Place Fay Taylor's Manchester Terrier Ch Taylormade Titus
Fourth Place Brenda Clymire's Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Cyclone Victorious Glorious

Level II Brace

First Place Kathy Rakestraw's Greyhound Crones Blazing Sunshine
Lab Mix Rakestraw's Diamond in the Ruff

Level III

First Place Beth Berry's Chihuahua Emma Louise **NEW TITLE**
Second Place Renee Filep's Border Collie Radiant's I'll Zig U Can Zag **NEW TITLE**

Level IV

First Place Elaine Smith-Nabors' Belgian Tervuren Ch Starbright Once Upon a Time
Second Place Julia Gregory's Pug Wildhaven's Grinnin' Milo

Highest Artistic Score

Elaine Smith-Nabors' Belgian Tervuren Ch Starbright Once Upon a Time

Grail Award

Elaine Smith-Nabors' Belgian Tervuren Ch Starbright Once Upon a Time

**The Freestyle Journey
By Elaine Smith-Nabors
Canine Freestyle Seminar**

June 18-19th

A Good Dog's Life

33 Hidden Acres Drive, Asheville, NC

828-667-3221

The ultimate dog and human experience.

The bond is best described as pure joy.

Movement talks are you listening?

Space- The Empty Canvas

Choreography- The Power of Relationships

Blending Conceptual Training w/Technical Skills

Creativity- Learn to Look for the Wiggle Room

Forming a Guild to Continue the Journey

The seminar will be presented by Elaine Smith-Nabors who has advanced titles in obedience and freestyle and was elected to the CFF Hall of Fame. Elaine has been a CFF judge for 6 years and she was the founder of the First Florida Freestylers Guild in Jacksonville, FL. She is the Training Director for the guild and was an instructor at a CFF Retreat. See pages 2,9 and 11 for more about Elaine.

**THIS IS A PERFECT EXPERIENCE FOR BEGINNING FREESTYLERS!
A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE MORE EXPERIENCED TO
“BRING IT ALL TOGETHER”**

**DON'T DELAY, REGISTER TODAY!
THIS SEMINAR WILL BE CLOSING VERY SOON!**

CFF members receive a \$20 discount / \$195 for working teams and \$125 for auditors.
working teams - two days only / auditors - one or both days
It is advisable that working teams have novice Rally skills but no one will be turned away.

To receive a registration form and additional information about the seminar contact Mary Lightner, mzlight1@gmail.com or call 888-311-6808.

Exploring the “What If?”

Thoughts about choreography that will be developed in the upcoming workshops in Asheville, NC in June and Mebane, NC in July.

This is part of a conversation conducted by telephone in April between Elaine Nabors and Julia Gregory

Julia: How do you start the choreographic process?

Elaine: I have a couple of muses that I’ll mention in a bit. It’s really important to say first that choreography is never a process that can be rushed, a bit like a poet or writer or painter. It sounds a little hokey, but I have to just wait for it to come to me. I can’t say, “Today I’m going to choreograph!” I’d be fooling myself if I thought it was going to happen that way. I have to be inspired by something. Quite often, it’s something my dog has offered me, not just while working, but while moving and interacting with the other dogs too. I watch my dogs a lot. I’ll see something I like and say, “Wait a minute, let me go get a piece of cheese!” Then I see if I can make that movement happen with me in the picture. Sometimes it just can’t be applied to myself. I have to ask, “Can we do this together or is it a dog on dog thing?” Sometimes I’m pleasantly surprised and can use the movement. Sometimes, such a movement doesn’t look exactly the same with me as it did with just the dogs, but I can use it anyway. Sometimes my inspiration is a student or I’m inspired by a conversation with a fellow freestyler in a lesson or presentation. Recently, we were doing a lesson with the guild on pauses. A lot of new ideas came out of everyone’s work and remarks.

Julia: So once you have an idea, how does the process continue?

Elaine: I tend to choreograph bits and pieces of my routine. I may very well choreograph the middle and the end long before I have the beginning figured out. The bits and pieces almost always come from portions of improv I’ve done with my dog. I have a freestyle concept in mind that is my motivation for the improv. It may have been a crazy idea, but it almost always morphs into something else that I can use.

I also keep my notebook close. I have to write down the movement phrases I create because I’m a visual learner. However, I depend upon video more than the written word during the process of creating a routine. I drive my poor guild crazy because I’m always out there video taping. For example, recently I had four opening phrases. All would work, but I wanted the best of them so I videotaped them and took them to guild and asked them to vote. Everyone who voted gave reasons for their choices that were valid. They had really good information to share. It was a close race. First and second places were only one vote apart. I had to watch the video to make my final decision. In the end, I chose the one in second place, but that was because

the movement was truly married to that phrase in the Music.

Once the routine is set in stone; once it’s part of my skin, I write it down. Now I don’t need to have it written, but if I ever want to go back and demo it or something, I have it.

Julia: How do you control the “What If” and not fly off into the unreality of some “special effects dog” in your mind’s eye?

Elaine: I guess because I do most of my creating physically, I don’t have that issue. I don’t do much visualizing before I’ve tried a movement. I do more of it kinesthetically with my animal. The “what if” blossoms from the movement with my dog. That’s not to say that I don’t ever listen to a piece of music and wonder what I could do with a part of it. When that happens, I put the music on and move around to it. The freestyle concept and the dog’s movement marry. There’s no need to control it because I’m physically doing it with the dog.

Julia: What will you offer at the workshops that will make us want to attend?

Elaine: What I hope to convey to people is that as an organization we’re different because we offer depth. CFF performances, as a whole, offer layers and we’re limitless in possibilities.

There are two major components to CFF freestyle that I want people to understand. They are separate and need to be handled equally, though second might be more important than the first. The first is technical skill, the dog work. The second is the choreographic understanding. The choreography is driven by conceptual understanding. We must learn the skill of developing phrasing; phrasing with depth. The first half is important because it’s sort of the paint, the canvas, the set of tools that you need. The second is the same as the poet’s or the musician’s or the painter’s interpretation and use of those tools in their own creative and unique way.

Sometimes we have people show up with good tools in their hands, but they don’t understand what to do with them. They think that we’re using them in a haphazard way ... stringing them together. But what you end up with then, is a stick figure; a kindergarten drawing. There’s no depth.

Julia: Don’t painters have to start their creative process somewhere? Even if it’s with stick figures?

Elaine: Yes, but if you want to be a painter, you can’t stay there. Great painters can’t stay where they are. They can’t stay in their comfort zone if they want to grow in their art.

Julia: So how does that happen?

Elaine: The second part, the choreographic understanding, doesn’t come as quickly as the first and you have to be patient and keep working.

You can have no dog or a young puppy that can’t work yet. The work on creativity should never stop. It’s continual. It never stops. There’s no end to it. There’s no end to your understanding. It only gets deeper. How many canine sports can say that?

A FREESTYLE TRILOGY

by Ann Holder

THE BEGINNING

A little over two years ago, with the encouragement and support of Joan Tennille, I began my journey into teaching freestyle. At that time, CFF had just launched the Performance Learning Center. Here at my fingertips was all the material I needed to begin a class. The lesson plans, carefully laid out, with technical skills, creative work, and artistic performance goals became my lifeline. I followed them faithfully, taking the time to adjust them to my student's individual situations and moving forward only when I felt the lesson had been mastered. All my classes were based on the training discipline—teaching concepts, natural movement, use of rhythm, space, and energy with the definition of canine freestyle always clear in my mind. We did lots of “What ifs?” and improvisations to get students thinking about the intent/motivation they wanted to showcase. I suggested that they write down each phrase they produced as part of their creative homework. Once we had covered the first series of lessons, it was an easy step to begin to teach how to choreograph a routine. For the most part, my students explored music choices and found their own music with the help of the class. They referred back to their notebooks for phrases they had created, floor patterns that illustrated a motivation, shapes and designs they had created. Phrase by phrase, they choreographed their own routines. Each week, the class discussed each other's work, offered suggestions and tips from an audience view point and the routines gradually took shape. Once the actual movement designs were chosen and trained, we began focusing on enhancing and supporting the dog, handler body cues, a smooth flow to the movements, crispness and clarity of line.

THE PRESENT

As the time for the trial came closer, we began focusing on performance skills, softening gestures, tweaking movement designs that didn't

quite work, clarifying things for both the dog and the handler and always striving for that picture of oneness. We held a fashion show in class where everyone brought outfits they were considering wearing and we looked at them critically. Proper fit, colors to complement the dog, ease of handler movement in both clothing and footwear. We laughed a lot as we went through the possibilities and helped each other select the final outfit. We talked about the effectiveness of simplicity—no dangling jewelry, no flowy scarves, jackets, sleeves, or huge pant legs to distract the dog and audience. We practiced warm-ups, entering, honoring, and moving to opening position as well as closing shape and honoring the audience. Performance heeling exercises were always a part of each class. As the date of competition drew near, we stopped doing the complete finished routine and only practiced rough spots as needed. No detail was left untouched. Despite all the practice, there were butterflies galore on the first day of competition. I am proud to say that they remembered everything from class and did an excellent job of representing Level II canine freestyle. The joy on their faces when they received their placements was clear for all to see.

THE FUTURE

I am told that all the way home, the tired exhibitors were listening to music for Level III! That is enthusiasm! Now the work begins anew! It is a big jump from Level II to Level III. After a week off, we will begin classes again and start discussing the focus of Level III. Our classes will once again consist of lectures, discussions, technical training, creative work and artistic exercises—the tried and true format of the CFF training discipline.

Am I going to change anything? Absolutely not! The Performance Learning Center proved highly successful. Why mess with success? The Performance Learning Center is like having Joan Tennille in your back pocket, available to fall back on whenever you have a problem. I highly recommend it to anyone thinking of teaching a freestyle class.

A Recipe for Perfect 10

by Elaine Smith-Nabors

Ingredients Needed:

1 open-minded dog and handler team
4 cups of Joan Tennille's choreographic brew
2 pounds of conceptual discussion, carefully processed
3 1/2 tablespoons of technical skill, thoroughly blended with creative juices
1 whole song, gently trimmed and edited by Jim Moore
2 teaspoons of phrase development, allow to sit and mature
2 1/2 cups of "What if" marinade, stir often
3 1/2 teaspoons of intent and motivation
2 tablespoons of contrast powder for flavor and richness
1 1/2 cups of continued education and experience syrup
Several pinches of inspiration powder from Betty Swenson, Kristen Sicotte, and Mary Sullivan

Be aware that in order for the recipe to truly reach its potential, a great deal of support is needed along the way. It is recommended that support be derived from Elaine Gracchi (Mom), Chad Nabors (husband), Gaea Mitchel, Ann Holder, Beth Berry, and Joan Tennille. If the recipe seems to start to sag or lose the intended form, insert support from one or more of the sources mentioned above.

40 X 50 foot space for proper serving and presentation

Serving size is an unlimited willing audience

The base for this recipe is Joan Tennille's choreographic brew. It is your most important ingredient. Without it, this recipe will not work. Place Joan's choreographic brew in a large space, slowly add conceptual discussion to the brew 1/2 pound at a time. Be sure to process the conceptual discussion completely because otherwise it will not blend with the brew and rise appropriately. Once the choreographic brew and conceptual discussion have been combined, massage gently and set them aside.

Now, combine the tablespoons of technical skill and creative juices with the "What if" marinade. These ingredients must be given time to ferment. Set them to the side, but take the time to revisit them often to be sure that they are reaching maturity.

Hopefully, you have been searching for the perfect whole song to use. Sometimes finding the right one can take time and therefore it should never be rushed. Try to find a song that has the right bones. You will be able to trim the excess fat and remove the pieces that you don't need with Jim's help, but you need to have enough quality to work with at the start. Once you believe you have found the right fit for your dog, inspect it carefully. Look for places that could offer the choreographic depth that you are seeking and those areas that do not. Think about the recipe as a

whole and whether the song will support your end goal or not. Combine the whole song with the intent and motivation until there is a thick sauce. Look at the song again and if the sauce did not properly thicken, you may want to consider a new song. Once you have found the right song, send it to Jim and ask him to trim it for you. His abilities are pure perfection.

Take the now risen choreographic brew and conceptual discussion portions of the recipe and add the phrase development. If you have worked the phrase development into maturity, the result should produce a layered look when combined with the other ingredients. The layers must receive the delicate balance of what they need in order for them to continue to grow and not become flat. You may need to add some support. Drizzle the continued education and experience syrup between the layers and allow the syrup to form a glaze.

Now check your mixture of technical skills and creative juices combined with the "What if" marinade. Check for lumps in the technical skills. Carefully beat the lumps out of the mixture until smooth and uniform. This should have an icing-like consistency when you are done.

Take the dog and handler team and gently wrap them in the layered pastry created from the Joan's choreographic brew and the conceptual discussion. Be sure that you insert support where needed. Place slices of the edited song that was crafted by Jim between the pastry layers. Drizzle extra continued education and experience syrup as needed. Use a spatula to cover the outside of the layers, without removing the layered look, with a thick layer of technical and "What if" marinade. Sprinkle the entire result with a generous helping of contrast powder and top it off with several pinches of inspiration powder. Enjoy the results!

I had some fun writing this article and I hope you enjoyed reading it. I was trying to get an important message across about the critical role that we all play in the creative process of CFF. Many of the dog sports are designed to be trained and accomplished alone, but ours is not. CFF marries the technical and the creative into a beautifully balanced presentation that is a celebration of the human dog relationship. I thought of a recipe because it also has the elements of raw materials and artistic expression. I am not a cook so those of you that are, may have chuckled at the impossibilities that I offered from that perspective, but I hope you enjoyed it anyway. Thank you, my CFF family, for helping to add to my recipe.

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