

# Paws to Dance



The Newsletter of the Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc.  
May 2013

## Northern Hospitality

By Renee Filep

The North Coast Canine Freestyle Guild held their first titling event on May 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> and it was a unanimous success! Leila Widgren, NCCF President told me her goal was to make people wonder why they didn't come to Ohio sooner. Not only did I think that, but left already planning my next trip back!

Prior to the titling event, the guild really did a lot of prep work- we received detailed directions, a guide to local hotels with ratings based on visits, price and dog "friendliness", weather conditions and traffic alerts. We even received pictures of the performance space, the back curtain and ariel views of the facility. I felt like my every travel need was anticipated.

When my intrepid traveling companion Janet McBrien and I checked into our motel, goodie bags were waiting for us at the front desk. Then fabulous larger-than-life sized dancing dog signs lead us to the facility. Upon checking in at the event, we didn't get goodie bags, we got **SHOPPING** bags filled with goodies. There was also a banquet of snacks ranging from fruit, cheese and crackers to many delicious homemade cakes, cakes and more cakes! Additionally, the North Coast Guild awarded custom made charm bracelets to everyone who titled at the event. Saturday's festivities ended with a fabulous group dinner at a local restaurant where we all enjoyed the companionship of fellow freestylers.

Despite all this, the highlight for me was experiencing how comfortable the North Coast Guild was with each other. They worked together as an amaz-

ing team. Everyone stepped up to the plate and gave it their all- from donations, to creating the fabulous signs to organizing the raffles and prizes. The North Coast Canine Freestyle Guild is a team of sisters, united in their enthusiasm and dedication to the sport. Yes, they are **HERE**. The North Coast Guild has put themselves on the freestyle map in a grand and glorious way. I, for one, am looking forward to my next visit.

## A Message from Your President

My recent trip to the North Coast Guild's first Titling Event was delightful, and once again it was inspiring to be with other Federation members, some old friends and some new ones. Our newest guild is brimming with enthusiasm and talent, and they couldn't have given a warmer welcome to those exhibitors who traveled north to join the fun. Hospitality was attentive to the needs of the judges and support staff, the facility was small but well organized, and I think I can safely say that a good time was had by all.

We were reminded over the weekend how important family support can be to the success of a Titling Event. The founders of North Coast Guild each have a wonderful sister who were involved in getting the work done. Janet Dayton's sister Lois and Leila Widgren's sister Claudia were involved in many ways in organizing before and helping during the event, and my presence there was certainly more focused on my job that weekend thanks to my sister Julia's willingness to care for my big dogs while I traveled and judged. I'm sure there were many other freestylers who were able to participate more fully thanks to

their own family supporters. We need to remember how much we benefit from these kind folks, and tell them how much they mean to us and to the sport.

And as always, we need to show our gratitude and support to this and every new guild, for joining our ranks and helping to spread our sport to new areas, allowing all of us to enjoy more and varied opportunities to indulge in our passion for the sport.

Gaea Mitchel

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## Dancing With My Stars - Finley and Hartley

Greetings all. My name is Linda Tufvesson from Gillette, Wyoming and I am a true Canine Freestyle "Newbie". About a year ago I was looking for a new dog event for my seven year old Sussex Spaniel, Finley. He had completed his RAE title and his Novice obedience title and did not seem real interested in continuing in Open obedience. Dawn Madge from the Dances With Woofs Guild, Rapid City, South Dakota, approached me and asked if I might be interested in Canine Freestyle. I had attended a workshop several years ago that Dawn presented in Gillette and have known Dawn for several years through my work in obedience. I said, "Why not give it a try?" I took a six week-long class last spring and was hooked. Since then there is a core of four of us who have worked all winter learning freestyle skills, picking music, and starting to work on routines getting ready for a competition next spring in Rapid City.

I have two Sussex Spaniels, Finley and Hartley, that I am training. They have the same parents, and are just from different litters. My guess is that Sussex Spaniels are very rare in Canine Freestyle. They are a unique dog that has a very distinct personality that becomes very obvious as you watch them move and perform.

So I sat down and looked at what strengths we had that would carry over to freestyle. First of all both dogs have competed and trained in obedience and rally. They have very focused, brisk, attentive heeling. They have very good rear end awareness. For rally they need to be able to make very tight inside and outside turns and circles so we have trained for rear end movement and awareness. Serpentine are done in rally. They also have good lateral movement

and the ability to perform turns and pivots comes from our obedience work. They were both clicker trained and liked learning new skills with the clicker. So for Level II work we felt we had many of the necessary skills in place - at least on the left side.

So we jumped in with all ten feet and decided to give this new event a try. First of all selecting music was a challenge. Finley's movement is a "rolling/rumbling" gait. Hartley, on the other hand, has bounce to her step. With both dogs we found several songs that would work, but when you hit "the right song" that was it and it was obvious. You could go back and try other songs but they would let me know that they were not happy. They wanted their song back - as I said unique personalities coming through! That "stubbed tail wag" would disappear.

The next trick was to convince them that being on the right side was a good place to be. Having done so much obedience work, right side work was like trying to learn a foreign language. Hurray for the clicker!

Then the next step was identifying the skills that show off my unique dogs and putting them together. I had to learn that on any turn where the dogs had to move away from me I had to slow down, pause, or take very short steps as I came out of the turn so I did not leave my dog in the dust and force them to run to catch up with me. In obedience it was always "keep moving" as they never had to change sides or turn away from me. Finding skills that fit in with a rolling/rumbling gait that highlight that type of movement was a challenge. Dawn and my classmates are such great resources for suggestions and honest feedback. I can tell right away whether that was a good move to use just by looking at their faces. With a Sussex a move or skill either brings a smile to the face of the audience or a quizzical look. There is little ground in between. My freestyle friends are great at reminding me what dog's strengths are and suggesting ways to put those skills together. Some of the skills their dogs can do that look so cool are things that make a Sussex look very awkward. As much as I would like to do them - they don't fit my dog.

What has been the most fun is that a new and different type of relationship has developed with each dog. We are becoming a team - learning new skills together - becoming so excited when we both have our act together so

that we actually get the skill or phrase done well. I have to learn new skills - teach those to each dog and then work on teamwork with each dog to show off those skills. Right now I am probably the weak link in the chain. My cues and movements have to be on time - my body language has to be encouraging to the dog. But when it all comes together - what a thrill! It makes us both smile!

Hopefully right now you are smiling as you read the article as it has reminded you of a struggle and triumph you have had with one of your dogs. I know I haven't told you anything you don't already know, but maybe it has brought back fond memories from your "newbie days". All sports depend on new blood coming in so don't forget to encourage us newbies. Teach us to enjoy the success we have along the way, keep reminding us how to laugh at our mistakes and realize that it is the journey we take with our dogs that counts and deserves the celebrating.

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## ***Judges' Notes***

JUDGES REPORT ON THE NORTH COAST  
CANINE FREESTYLE GUILD TRIAL  
Brandy Clymire, Gaea Mitchel, Elaine Nabors,  
Betty Swenson

Compiled by Ann Holder, Judging Chair

The judges were unanimous in stating that the show was well organized and ran smoothly both days. The facility was adequate, very comfortable and quite calm. There was plenty of parking, the trophies were nice and there were an adequate number of volunteers available to support all aspects of the show. Despite having dogs crated in the room, the dogs were quiet and an effort had been made to block the line of sight of the crating area so there were no disturbances. The judges' hotel was quite satisfactory and the in-hotel restaurant was convenient and excellent. The judges were pleased to see such a good entry for a first trial. The beginning exhibitors were well prepared and showed an understanding of our definition and the concepts.

Level I and II:

- "Good use of space"
- "Clear and crisp lines"
- "Nice contrasts between straight and curved lines"
- "Music fit the natural rhythms of the dog and showed their personality."
- "Pauses were present and helped to organize the work and add drama and enhancement."
- "Level I leash handling was very good."
- "Handler attire was appropriate and the teams looked very nice. Most people chose to wear black but other colors are allowed and can be encouraged."

- "Some exhibitors were on the beat most of the time which detracted from the overall quality of the creative and artistic work."
- "When the music ends the exhibitor's performance should end. The exhibitor should recognize the music is coming to the end and bring the performance to a close, not continue on."
- "Some pauses were in the wrong place; were overly long as if waiting for a music cue and bordered on being poses. Poses cause the routine to become handler oriented which affects artistry negatively."
- "Exhibitors should maintain eye contact with dog when cueing music steward. Looking away breaks the oneness."
- "There was a certain sameness to the routines choreographically. We suggest the guild might consider bringing in some instructors or mentors from other areas to stimulate creativity and help each team to find its own voice and style which is required as one moves forward."

Level III and IV:

- "There was a noticeable lack of development of opening shapes into first phrase of choreography and that affected the choreographic and artistic scores."
- "Music at the upper levels requires a structural relationship to the choreography. It needs richness, color and drama that was not present in some exhibitor's choice."

“Some rushing/crowding the dog in laterals and backing. Tight spins and turns that might have flowed better if given a little more space.”

Overall, it was a very successful trial. We were impressed with the competence and training skills of the teams in their first competition. They showed great potential and we look forward to seeing them in the future.

## Guild News—Staccato Notes



By Pat Rapaport

Hello from sunny but still cool North Carolina. Our guild has *not* been sleeping over this winter and now that spring is here we are off and running. A change has occurred with our officers. Barbara Long resigned as Guild President due to other significant responsibilities. We also lost Jeanine Brown as Training Director because she and her husband moved to the mid-western part of the US. Barbara and Jeanine’s contributions to our guild were greatly appreciated! According to the Bylaws, Trish Koontz, who was the acting Secretary, is now our President. Dee Wallis has graciously agreed to be Secretary and we are very fortunate to have Diane Holleman step in as Training Director. Congratulations to our new officers and trainer.

The Guild and the Durham Kennel Club have been offering Introductory and Advanced freestyle classes monthly with Joan Tennille as the instructor. What a gift it is to have Joan teach these classes which are filled with her wisdom and framed by her unique teaching style. Students are learning technique, choreography, and artistry through exploration of the concepts and definitions. The combination of intense concentration, lovely dog/human teamwork, and laughter which abounds in the classes leaves no doubt that participants are loving every moment.

We’re very excited about two upcoming events! Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild is in the final planning stages for a 2-day weekend seminar with Elaine Nabors-Smith. The dates are July 12-13 with more information on seminar content and registration to follow very soon on the Foundation website. We expect spots to fill very quickly so keep a watch out for the detailed email notice that all CFF members will receive.

The second event we are happy to be involved in planning with Co-host Sirius Guild is the Titling Event to be held in Virginia on the first weekend in November. Keep a watch on the website and your email for details and the premium. Hope to see many of our Freestyle friends at one or both of the upcoming events!



Joan Tennille teaching freestyle class in North Carolina.





By Sue Osborn

Gold Coast Freestyle Guild (GCFG) is now holding monthly meetings. Doing so provides us with

more opportunities to share tips on training and performance to members to foster a better understanding of the Federation's choreographic concepts. Also, by meeting more often, we can better advance our support to and further encourage in-depth collaboration with more canine freestyle enthusiasts in our community and thus grow our membership!

To enrich and enhance the training portion of our meetings, Marcia Barkley, GCFG Training Chair and successful dog trainer, has been extremely thorough and thoughtful in the provision and presentation of training ideas at our meetings. She is an amazing source of the artistry, creativity, music knowledge and technical skills found in CFF!

As we grow our guild this year, we have been and will be attentively seeking out opportunities to perform, give demos, host seminars, and spread the word through dog trials and workshops in related venues. In March, Gold Coast members attended a Show and Go in Santa Rosa. In October, several of our members will be putting on a demonstration in Sacramento.

The Show and Go event in Santa Rosa was sponsored by both Redwood Empire Doggy Dancers and Gold Coast and was a great opportunity for us to perform in front of an audience (always a big bonus) in a new venue. It was also a chance to see the joy and dedication demonstrated by other dog dancing teams and of course, it was good exposure for Gold Coast!

On October 19, we will be demonstrating and performing for the Homeward Bound Kibble & Bids event at the California Automobile Museum in Sacramento. Gold Coast will staff a table, provided by Homeward Bound, to hand out brochures and show dog-dancing videos. Plus, Homeward Bound will

give our guild free publicity in local media, on posters and on their website!

Finally, we have just created a brochure for our guild. Having our own brochure will be a great tool to give to prospective members, for use at education tables, and for creating overall awareness of our group in the community.

By Eugenie & Kasie Podojil



The winter has flown by in northeastern Ohio for the NCCF Guild (And "flying by" with our winters is not a bad thing!) as we prepared for hosting our very first titling event ... and the very first titling event in Ohio! The energy has flowed!

An introductory freestyle class was held (six sessions) as well, with four teams learning the basics and proudly demonstrating their new-found expertise in our Evening of Sharing on February 22nd.

Preparing our partners for their routines and organizing for the May 4th and 5th weekend has made freestyle omnipresent in our minds and hearts. We'll welcome all to sharing in the joy of freestyle -- a grand time guaranteed!

## Guild News More Staccato Notes



By Kathy Noble

Spring has finally arrived in the Mid-Atlantic region, and the biggest news at present for the Sirius Guild is that everyone is really getting serious (so sorry; I just couldn't help adding the pun!) about planning for the joint trial with North Carolina in November. At the meeting in April, duties were set up for the smooth running of the trial (those of you lucky enough to have been involved in the running of a trial know all about that!) and to make it the best possible experience for dogs and handlers. Sirius Guild members have attended trials all over the country, so we know that we have a lot to measure up to, and we are anxious to meet the challenge. In the meantime, some members are off to Ohio for the May trial there (good luck, All!) as well as preparing their own routines for the November trial, working with their dogs in order to achieve the next level of performance and at the same time remembering that we are all in this sport for the fun of it. The joy of working together with our canine partners to achieve "that connection" and to show the world through choreography the beauty of our individual dog is why we do it, and the effort, the "getting there" is the thing that keeps us moving ahead with pleasure. Speaking of pleasure and training, I had the great pleasure of spending a day at the Dolphin Research Center in Marathon Key, Florida, in March, and being able to watch the interaction of the handlers and the dolphins

was a huge pleasure for me. The learning goes both ways there, and the joy for both dolphin and handler is obvious. Each dolphin has some kind of interaction with people each day, including play training for medical treatments that might be necessary in future, and of course, all training with a dolphin has to be positive. All the dolphins in the facility were either born in captivity, have been rescued or retired from other facilities, or are wild rescues who were deemed unfit for release. One youngster, Jax, was the victim of a bull shark attack, and is missing parts of his dorsal and tail fins. They know it was a bull shark by the size and shape of the huge wound on his side. He was about eight months old at the time of the attack, and they couldn't find his mother. Since dolphins stay with their mothers for two to three years to learn all they need to know in order to survive in the wild, he couldn't be released when he was healed. His favorite thing to do during the daily music session, where the dolphins are encouraged to offer whatever behaviors they want--and what an exciting free-for-all that is--is to "play shark", swimming around the lagoon with that side to side movement of a shark, as opposed to the graceful arching swimming style of the dolphin. During the course of that day I was constantly reminded of my own joy when working in concert with my dog, and seeing/feeling her joy as well. It is the best kind of "high", for sure, and a pleasure we who are lucky enough to be involved in this sport of Freestyle all appreciate and enjoy.

# Canine Freestyle Federation Titling Events

## Sponsored by the North Coast Canine Freestylers

**Saturday May 4, 2013**

### Level I

**First Place** Shari Bryant's Silken Windhound Siendo's  
New Hope River

**Second Place** Kate Gibbons' Sheltie Mix Sylvia

### Level II

**First Place** Sue Ann Branstein's All American Saily Lady

**Second Place** Beverly Milo's Standard Poodle Raspberry  
Woods Cedars Ohana Lelo

**Third Place** Janet Dayton's Greyhound Lark

**Fourth Place** Sue Ann Branstein's Papillon Domino's  
Little Caesar

### Level II B

**First Place** Sally Kirschenman's Old English Sheepdog  
Seathwaites Angel Unaware

**Second Place** Marian Hardy's Toy Poodle Ping

### Level II Brace

**First Place** Beverly Milo's Standard Poodles Raspberry  
Woods Cedars Ohana Lelo and  
Raspberry Woods Cedars Magic Meranova

### Level III

**First Place** Janet McBrien's Welsh Terrier Brightluck's  
Smart Dashing Alex M **NEW TITLE**

**Second Place** Barbara Long's Gordon Setter Stonemist  
Time Is On My Side

### Level IV

**First Place** Renee Filep 's Border Collie Radiant's Chili  
Will Do

### Highest Artistic Score

Janet McBrien's Welsh Terrier Brightluck's Smart  
Dashing Alex M

### North Coast Canine Freestyler Award

(highest scoring first time exhibitor)

Sue Ann Branstein's All American Saily Lady

The event was held at the Canine Affair Center in Chesterland, Ohio. The judges were; Brandy Clymire, Gaea Mitchel, Elaine Nabors-Smith and Betty Swenson. A huge thank you goes out to the members of the North Coast Canine Freestylers who put so much effort into making this event a tremendous success.

**Sunday May 5, 2013**

### Level I

**First Place** Kate Gibbons' Sheltie Mix Sylvia **NEW TITLE**

**Second Place** Shari Bryant's Silken Windhound Siendo's  
New Hope River

### Level II

**First Place** Janet Dayton's Greyhound Lark **NEW TITLE**

**Second Place** Sue Ann Branstein's All American Saily  
Lady **NEW TITLE**

**Third Place** Sue Ann Branstein's Papillon Domino's Little  
Caesar

**Fourth Place** Beverly Milo's Standard Poodle Raspberry  
Woods Cedars Ohana Lelo

### Level II B

**First Place** Sally Kirschenman's Old English Sheepdog  
Seathwaites Angel Unaware

**Second Place** Marian Hardy's Toy Poodle Ping

### Level II Brace

**First Place** Beverly Milo's Standard Poodles Raspberry  
Woods Cedars Ohana Lelo and  
Raspberry Woods Cedars Magic Meranova

### Level III

**First Place** Janet McBrien's Welsh Terrier Brightluck's  
Smart Dashing Alex M

**Second Place** Barbara Long's Gordon Setter Stonemist  
Time Is On My Side

### Level IV

**First Place** Betty Swenson's Border Collie HTCH U-CDX  
Lacy's Yahtzee

**Second Place** Renee Filep 's Border Collie Radiant's Chili  
Will Do

### Highest Artistic Score

Betty Swenson's Border Collie HTCH U-CDX Lacy's  
Yahtzee

This is Betty's sixth Highest Artistic Award and she  
awarded the sterling silver G Clef necklace

### North Coast Canine Freestyler Award

(highest scoring first time exhibitor)

Sue Ann Branstein's All American Saily Lady

### High Score of the Weekend Award

Janet McBrien's Welsh Terrier Brightluck's Smart Dashing  
Alex M

**CFF, Inc.**  
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