

Paws to Dance



The Newsletter of the Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc.
February 2017

A Safe Space

Janet Dayton

Where does one go when the unthinkable happens?

Monday, July 27, 2015 was a beautiful, warm, sunny day. The kind of day N.E. Ohioans wait for all winter. It was the day that changed my life forever. The day the world changed forever.

My sister, Lois and I had taken the dogs for a nice creek walk. We had fun. Now I was about to leave for a yoga class when my neighbor informed me the police were looking for a gunman. We were told to lock doors and windows, close garages, and stay inside. It felt weird. It felt scary. I went to yoga and Lois stayed home. People at yoga were talking about it. I listened to the radio in the car after class. A woman had been killed on Ravenna Road. My best friend; a sister friend, Peggy lived on Ravenna a half mile from my house. Bridget's sister lived on Ravenna. I called Lois. She confirmed the report. I called Peggy's cell. No answer. I called Peggy's home. No answer. Once home I watched the T.V. There was a dog. It looked like a greyhound; Peggy's greyhound Kart. The camera panned to the left. There was yellow police tape in front of Peggy's

house. I started calling people. No answers. Panic. Horror. A few minutes later Janice called me back. She worked with Peggy for the city of Willoughby. She also had greyhounds in the past. I told her what I had seen on the T. V. She said she just listened to a voice mail from the Willoughby mayor. In an instant everything changed forever. She told me it was Peggy. I said, "It's not Peggy." "Yes, it is," Janice said in a calm low tone. "It's not Peggy." "Yes, it is." Over and over we went. I told Janice I was going over to the house.

Cars lined the streets, people gathered on the lawns across from the house, a priest, and police. I found Bill, Peggy's husband. I wrapped my arms around him. He wrapped his arms around me. We stood; tight, encircled. Bill was sucking in air. Tears. "You take Kart," he said. "I got him," I told him. "You take Kart." "I got him. Peggy and I talked about it," I said.

We stood for hours in the yards staring at the house. I made phone calls to family and friends. Detectives would come and ask Bill questions. Victim Advocates kept offering water, peanut butter cheese crackers, and a folding lawn chair. Lois, Janice and her husband Bob, and I linked arms and stood

together as the priest spoke. A neighbor offered the use of their bathroom. I asked about Kart and was told he was taken to a nearby veterinary clinic by firemen. I asked one of the Victim's Advocates if I could go get Kart and was told not yet. She alluded he might need to be processed for evidence. Kart was in the house when the incident happened. We called the barn where Mac, Peggy's horse was boarded to make sure they knew. As I stood there, I thought about the randomness of it all. It could have been the house next door instead of Peg's and those people would be standing on the lawn staring.

We stood. We waited. We watched Peggy's body go into the ambulance. The ambulance pulled into a neighbor's drive way. We gathered around. The doors opened. We looked inside; a body under white sheets. The priest spoke. The doors closed. Peggy was gone. Numb.

Tuesday our guild was to do a demo for the Cerebral Palsy Association of Cleveland. I decided to go. I was shaky and numb. We all made it through. The guild was so supportive. Later that evening Leila drove me to my agility class. Numb. Numbness was the prevailing feeling for months. We picked Kart up on Wednesday. He was so happy to see us. Calling hours were on Friday and funeral on Saturday. Nothing made sense. I now knew Evil. This thing had happened in my city, in my neighborhood, to someone I not only knew, but to my friend. Someone I loved.

Bond was set. We waited for the Grand

Jury. October we had a memorial walk for Peg. December brought the indictments. March a plea hearing and the writing of victim impact statements. April was the sentencing. Numb. Nothing made sense. How did this thing happen? How did Peggy get murdered in her own home? Bill and Rick, Peggy's brother said we now belonged to a club we didn't want to join and can never leave. Peggy paid our dues with her life. She had been raped and shot three times.

It was hard coming home; opening the door to what? Sometimes it still is. Going to a movie or play was and is uncomfortable. Walking in the parks or neighborhood can be uneasy; being at work felt strange. People would and still do say the dumbest things to me. Nothing was the same. I missed Peggy. I will never stop missing Peggy.

I found I could hardly wait for Friday nights; the night we have our guild classes. I pushed to have a beginner class. We started the classes in mid-August. I get to the building before anyone else. I set up the space. Kart liked to wander around on the floor and I would work with him. He was ten and had two amputated toes and a healed broken toe. His gait was off, but we had fun and I enjoyed working with him. My goal was to show him in our titling event, but as the months went by I knew that wasn't going to happen; a sad realization. Kart is another whole story to tell. Many hearts helped him.

Joan was here in June 2016 for instructor training for Leila and me. It wasn't until then when we had to

submit a lesson plan I realized what I had been doing. I chose to do my lesson on the performance space. The place I found to go to when the unthinkable happened was the performance space. It had not changed. I realized I think of the space as an actual place; a place to go. It had become my safe space. I knew now why I needed the beginner class to start so soon and why I could hardly wait for Friday nights. The space made sense when nothing else did. The space does not have questions; only possibilities.

I take Peggy with me when I am in the performance space. Kart is there too. Sadly, Kart went to be with Peggy in June the day after Joan left. My girls, Peggy, Kart, and I are safe in the space of the performance space.

P.S. If any one of you has had an experience with murder, please contact me. I would like to talk with you. As you know, we belong to the same club.



**Kart and Janet
In their Safe Space.**

Editor's note: I chose to use this photo as it seems to show the disruption of their lives, while still letting us see the beauty they shared in their relationship. gm

**First Florida Freestylers Guild
Canine Freestyle Federation
Titling Event**

March 18, 2017

March 19, 2017

**Canine Star Training Academy
3815 N. U.S. 1, Cocoa Commercial
Center, Cocoa, FL**

The First Florida Freestylers Guild is sponsoring a joyful celebration of CanineFreestyle DogWork. Dogs and humans are equal partners in the magical presentations each day. Through a creative and artistic work choreographed with music, each team entered in the event will share a training journey and the very special connection the partners have with one another. Please join us - spectators are most welcome and guaranteed lots of inspiration!

**In the Moment
Update**

To date we have had two Events that included the In the Moment class, the pass/fail exploration of improvs. Each time we have solicited feedback from those present, both participants and spectators. The participants have asked to watch the other entries, and the spectators want to know what the concept and intent are. So, at the Event in Florida in March, there will be a single intent for all entries, announced to the spectators, and participants will be allowed to watch all the other entries perform their improvs. It's fun to fine-tune a new class!

Guild News

**First Florida
Freestylers
Guild
Labrador Lark
assisted by Wendy
Keighley**



It was a nice cool Florida January day. I thought we may go for a nice walk in the neighborhood, see if any new dogs have moved in or check out the squirrel population, but no. I heard my 'Doggie Bag' and my collar and leash moving, but instead of a walk we went for a car ride. Wendy did it again, took me to Canine Star Training Academy. Thursdays is our day to go there, what is going on? Then I saw all my Freestyle friends, Miss Ann was there so I knew it was a special training day. To get us all up and moving around there was a session where we all walked to music with our handlers and we had to really concentrate on the space of the ring and where the pylons were located be sure the routines were all going to be in the right places at the right time. The handlers and dogs have to now focus carefully as we have our Trial coming up soon on March 18th and 19th this year.

Then it was time for the dogs to really shine and they did. The handlers having been working very hard to fit their music to the routine and the routine to the music, to start and end at the right time! That is not an easy thing to do. There was plenty of opportunity to revise and review and possibly make changes.

Then we all took a break and went into our crates for a nap while the members sat around and discussed the details on the upcoming trial. We do have four judges who have kindly agreed to travel to Florida, and we are very grateful for that. Many other things were talked about, I heard food mentioned, but not for us dogs! We worked a little more after lunch before the meeting ended. There were thirteen dogs present today. The handlers talked for a while and everyone was very happy to have had a really good time today. Everyone was grateful for the help and encouragement, not only from Miss Ann but all of the members who were happy to freely share their knowledge and experience. Everyone was there for each other and I overheard a member say it was a wonderful meeting.

Something else made it special. Miss Lee had made us all red and white and blue patriotic collars so we wore them to have our pictures taken! Thank you so much, I am happy to be an all



American dog!

Oh did I mention the nice cool Florida winter day was in the mid 80 degrees?

North Star Notes

Kate An Hunter



The days are getting longer and the temps are warmer, so we are thinking spring. The guild is working hard to get ready for the event in Ohio where we have members who will be competing at all levels.



Snickers doing her own improv on a frozen lake.

Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild

Gaea Mitchel



Our guild has been quiet over the holidays and into the winter, but individuals are staying busy teaching, training and planning. We have a monthly on-going class in Durham, and now a weekly introduction/beginner class as well, taught by Trish Koontz. Barbara long continues to offer a weekly class at her training center. The influx of new students into the guild is recharging our batteries, and adding momentum to our efforts. The guild is hoping to collaborate with Sirius Guild to share a weekend Titling Event in November.

Sirius Guild checked in to say there had been no real activity for them, though I think the snow shoveling should count for a lot.

Canis Major is experimenting with a group of military veterans, with a basic class based on DogWork but billed as building relationship with their dogs. SHHhhh! The guys don't know. They'd never dream of doing anything prissy!

North Coast gets credit for our lead article. Thank you, Janet.

Meet the New Directors!

Michele Meloy **Vice President/Events**

I grew up and went to college in SE Wisconsin. I married my husband Jim in 1994 and we moved that same year to Durham, NC where we still live. We have two dogs, Abby, an All American from the Durham streets and Cowboy, a rescue Australian Cattle Dog. Dog training, dog sports and dog play have been a large part of my life for many years. I work in the accounting field and I love Canine Freestyle as it challenges me to discover the artistic side of me that I hope exists somewhere in my organized, structured, practical mind.



Betty Swenson **Director/Guilds**

Betty Swenson, DVM has been participating in dog sports with her Border Collies since 1978. Her six dogs have together earned over 40 AKC titles, including OTCH, UDX, MX, MXJ, TDJ, HXAs, and HIBs. She has been an active member of the AKC affiliated clubs Richmond Dog Obedience Club, Border Collie Society of America, and Piedmont Border Collie Association for over 20 years. Her dogs have also competed and

titled in other venues, including UKC, AHBA, USBCHA, and ASCA. In 1999 she enrolled in a CFF Freestyle class taught by Joan Tennille at Richmond Dog Obedience Club and was soon exhibiting in Canine Freestyle Federation (CFF) events. She became a CFF judge in 2001 and a Board member in 2016. Her dog Gromit was awarded the first CFF Championship title in 2003; her dog Yahtzee is the only dog to date to have earned the Championship title twice; she has retired the Founders Challenge Trophy for Highest Artistic Score three times.



Amy Reinhart **Director/Communications**

Amy hails from central Florida, and has been an active member of the Federation for a number of years.



Titling Event May 6-7, 2017

Canine Affair Center
Chesterland, OH

Co-hosted by North Coast Canine
Freestylers
and
North Star Notes Guild



Editor's Cluttered Desk



Remember, this newsletter is YOURS! It needs to represent the Guilds, and YOU, the individual members of the Federation. Feel free to share your experiences in DogWork; your first seminar or titling event, something you and your canine partner have learned, or the solid trusting relationship between you as you pursue your DogWork journey. And photos; you know you love photos. Send some of your partner, or your Guild friends. Let me know who is in the photo, who took it, and what is happening in the photo. These submissions may not find room in the very next issue, but one or more might be just the snippet needed to blend into a future one and inform or amuse our readers. Just send them to me and lets see where they take us! gemitchele@earthlink.net, or snail mail to 489 Dulcimer Ln, Waynesville NC 28786. Paws to Dance will be the better for it.

gm



**Paws to Dance
c/o Gaea Mitchel
489 Dulcimer Ln
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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Coming Events

Titling Event Cocoa, FL, March 18-19, 2017
Titling Event Chesterland, OH, May 6-7, 2017

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