

Paws to Dance



The Newsletter of the Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc.

August 2020

The Follow Through

By Janet Dayton

Now that the Boys of Summer are back (sort of), it is time for a baseball analogy. Have you ever heard the phrase, “You throw like a girl”? Maybe a sexist comment, but we know what it means; an unproductive throw or pitch of a ball. So why is the pitch unproductive?

If you analyze a pitch, the start of the sequence to release the ball starts well before the ball leaves the fingertips of the pitcher. The momentum and energy flow through the pitchers body starting from the feet, knees, thighs, hips, torso, neck, chin, head, shoulder, arm, elbow, wrist, hand, and fingers. The pitcher follows all of that energy through to the fingertips, where it is released. The action of the pitch is not complete unless the pitcher follows it through to the end of the sequence, otherwise it fails. Finesse is involved. If the hips, aren’t pointed in the right direction or the fingers aren’t aligned on the ball correctly or any number of subtle movements, it fails. The power comes not from the wrist and hand, but from farther down the body. The pitcher directs the path of the energy to maximize speed and accuracy. The pitcher makes the pitch count by following through. The motion and energy is controlled. Look up videos on pitching mechanics and watch. The slow motion action is fascinating. Listen to the commentary.

So what does this have to do with what we do with our dogs in CFF? A few years ago we had a nice guy

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in our class. He was “throwing away” his signals and his dog was clueless as to what he wanted. His signals were thoughtless, not committed, and nondescript; he threw them “like a girl.” We tried to explain what he was doing, but it didn’t make sense to him. That is when I thought of a pitcher throwing a pitch. I figured our student, being a guy and all could relate to the analogy of a pitcher pitching a baseball. We told him he needed to follow the cue all the way through, as a pitcher throws a pitch.

We have all seen a handler throw away a signal and the dog doesn’t perform the action. Next, the handler tries the signal again and sometimes again and even again. Each try becomes more quick and desperate. Guess what? The dog still doesn’t know what the handler wants. The intent fails. I know I have done it. Bless my dogs for putting up with me.

We, as the human half of the team need to make sure our partners understands what is being asked of them. A cue should not be ambiguous. We need to support our dogs by following through to the end of the cue sequence, all the way to our fingertips. Be cognizant of your cues. Where does the energy and action start from? Where and how should their path go? Where should they end? Are your cues subtle enough so they don’t detract from your performance, from your dog? Have you finessed your movements?

The next time you work or compete with your dog, don’t “throw like a girl” with your signals and cues, support and follow through. Your dog will appreciate it and the picture you make will be even better.

Report of the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee, consisting of Kathy Noble (chair), Marian Hardy, and Shari Bryant, recruited the following slate of nominees for the CFF Board of Directors positions needing to be filled in January 2021:

President – Betty Swenson

Treasurer – Carl Tennille

Director/Judges – Janet Dayton

Membership Secretary – Lin Spodak

Nominations from the floor will be accepted by the President (Brenda Jameson) until October 1, 2020, and must be accompanied by a note of acceptance from the nominee (e-mail is acceptable). Ballots will be included in the November Paws to Dance.

Looking for a Way to Give Back to our Sport? Consider Becoming a Judge!

By Betty Swenson

We all make judgments, whenever we watch a performance – I liked this, I didn’t like that. The training that CFF offers for our judges helps us to understand and communicate the reasons for those opinions. The process of

critiquing the performances of others improves one's ability to craft one's own routines. It also strengthens the bond we have with other members of our small, specialized dog training community. The thrill of following an individual dog's career from Level I or II up through Level IV is hard to describe.

CFF has available a detailed judging protocol book for training new judges and refreshing more experienced ones. Another part of the training includes watching videos of past performances then discussing them with other judges, plus 'shadow judging' live at titling events. The score sheets have been designed to help each judge comes up with the numerical score for each aspect of the routine

It is a bit intimidating to contemplate the responsibility of scoring one's friends' performances, but I can honestly say that I have never encountered an exhibitor who was rude, argumentative, or acting disgruntled in any way. Most are genuinely interested in the judges' opinions.

Other positive aspects of the job include getting to travel (expenses paid) to other guilds and see how they do things. It is generally feasible to exhibit one's own dog at least one day of a two-day show. CFF gives each judge a copy of the DVD for the event, and the guilds also give each of us a really nice judge's gift. The hospitality is great!

If you have an interest in becoming a CFF judge, contact me (bswenson@bettyandjim.info) and we can get the process started. Or if you know of someone you think has a good eye for evaluating performances, send me her name. I won't tell who ratted her out.

For Judges and Prospective Judges

By Betty Swenson

There is a new feature on the CFF website (much thanks to Brandy Jameson) for judges and those interested in becoming judges. A video of a performance from a past competition has been put up in the members' area. The performance will have scored well in a particular aspect of judging, e.g., 'teamwork'. Judges & those interested in becoming judges are asked to watch the routine and make comments under the video about that particular aspect of judging. My hope is that discussion will ensue. After one week (give or take), we will move on, either to another performance or a different aspect of that same performance. The link to access this has been sent to current judges. If you are interested in training to be a judge, email me at: bswenson@bettyandjim.info and I will send you the link.

North Coast Canine Freestylers Guild

By Janet Dayton



First off, we are all well. Living in a pandemic is an anxious experience, but we are moving forward as safe as we can. Here in Ohio things began to open up in May. June, we restarted our CFF classes and have been having a great time with our new student Deb and her standard poodle Malachi. Most dog events/competitions have resumed with precautions and protocols. Running an agility course with a mask on has been interesting. It has been nice to get back to normal activities. The weekend

of July 25 & 26 we had a trifecta of sorts. Deb and Malachi earned his Ranger 1 title and 3 Q's toward Ranger 2 in C-Wags nosework. Diana and her greyhound, Willow earned their AKC Tracking Dog title and I was the tracklayer. How cool was that! My Lark earned her AKC rally advanced title. Bridget's dogs, Lava and London earned personal best high points in K9 Frisbee Toss and Fetch in July. Way to go teams.



Malachi



Willow



Lark

For this edition, Bridget Telencio is our subject for the “get to know us” member profile.

What breed(s)? *Papillion, Dalmatian, Belgian Tervuren, and Rough Collie.*

How many dogs have you had in your life? *10*

Any other pets? *Cats, cockatiels, fish, horses, and chickens*

How did you get involved with CFF? *Janet's interest piqued mine.*

Best moment with CFF? *The first trial I competed in. I feel like I worked really hard, not like when I won all the stuff. Harder at the beginning. The dogs still have to learn stuff, but after the first time you get a feel for it. It is such a different sport. I always remember the first.*

Do you have a goal you are working towards in CFF? *Getting to class.*

What do you hope people see when you work your dog in a CFF routine? *I hope they see the dog, Lava, and not me.*

Why do you have a dog in your life? *Fulfill a void. Enjoy them and when I meet and do things with dog people.*

What behavior was hardest to train your dog to do? *I think the dumbbell with Lance. The whole sequence of the dumbbell retrieves. He only liked one toy and it wasn't a dumbbell. He didn't want to hold it. The concept was really hard for him.*

Hobbies/Interests? *I like trying new dog events. I have done obedience, agility, FastCat, dock diving, road dog, tracking, disc, Mondioring, weight pull, and flyball. I like to listen to books. Tik Tok videos make me laugh. Howard Stern, 4 wheeling, and swimming.*

Job(s)? *Babysitting, tree company receptionist, factory work-- boat motors Mercury Marine—Bravo line building gears, speaker factory speaker boxes. My sister had a deli and I was the main cook, manager, and then owned it. Currently, the lead receptionist for a veterinarian clinic.*

Favorite song(s)? Why? *Anything by Alanis Morissette. I think she is an empowering woman, made me think I could have a voice. Music in general. My parents listened to a lot of music when I was a kid and I still like that today.*

Favorite book(s)? Why? *I like Brandon Sanderson. I like his The Stormlight Archive series and The Mistborn saga.*

If you could go anywhere, where would you go? *Right now England, wanting to go for a long time. Japan sounds interesting.*

Do you have a hero or special person you admire? *No not really, admire people in general, not just one.*

What makes you happy? *Being able to sleep and being on my deck and walking. I broke my leg back in March and just now able to get back to doing normal things.*

Sirius Guild

By Mary Sullivan

Because of the pandemic and an extremely hot summer, Sirius Guild has not been training much. The Silver Spring, MD class has enjoyed "meeting" weekly on Zoom. We catch up socially and discuss freestyle, too. We met once in earlier, cooler summer at Kathy Noble's large property to work the dogs a little near novel sights, sounds, and smells. (Kathy has horses!) We hope to visit her home again in the near future. All visiting is outside, at a distance, and with masks.



Several members attended the online class held by North Carolina on July 25. Both attendees reported they learned a lot. The following is from Lin Spodak.

*"Seven videos were shown ranging from 1A to advanced Level 4. After each video, comments were given on the performances which revealed to me what judges are looking for at each level. Words like **Contrast** and **Intent** were clarified through both demonstrations and comments. As a beginner, I heard and saw concrete ideas of criteria and value in each level. The critiques were extremely helpful, because they provided by example clearer definition of concepts than just written words. Watching a performance and listening to the critiques afterward fixed in my mind what I need to include in a routine. I plan to watch the other classes online to reinforce the requirements and concepts I learned from this class."*

All of us at Sirius Guild send our thoughts and best wishes for our freestyle family at this time of disrupted lives. May you stay healthy and happy.



Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild

By Shari Bryant

Since we have not been able to meet at Durham Kennel Club for our monthly freestyle class, we decided to move to a virtual class. In early June, we did a class on Zoom. In the class, we watched several presentation videos and discussed the first section of the Level I & II score sheet – Technical. In late June, we did a class that focused on the second section of the Level I & II score sheet – Teamwork. In July, we focused on the third section – Choreography. We will be doing another class focusing on choreography at the end of August. As we gained skill in doing the Zoom class, we have opened the class to any CFF member. If you are interested in attending any of the future Zoom classes, please let me know (Lunar61@aol.com), and I will send you a notification when a new Zoom class is scheduled. Also, we are recording each of the Zoom classes and posting the recording in the Members section of the CFF website. So, if you missed one of the classes, you can find it on the website.

From Barbara Long:

On Sunday, August 2, I offered an Intro to Canine Freestyle Dogwork® talk, via Zoom, to members of the Triangle Area Dog Trainers Association (TADA). We are a group of professional trainers in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area. We help each other out with referrals and recommendations through Facebook. The monthly meeting is held in different locations around the Triangle and any member can host a topic of interest.

I offered to host the August meeting and had seven Zoom attendees. I talked about the basics of Dogwork® and gave them information about the various levels and requirements. We discussed motivation, music, use of space, and movement vocabulary. I showed the group some videos of Level II performances. Afterwards I took one concept - movement consists of straight lines or curved lines - and demonstrated the C and V exercise with Ambrose. Then each person got a chance to try it with their dog on Zoom. It was fun to see the variations the trainers came up with including the Dalmatian who did the V between his handler's legs!

At the end of the class one attendee said that she had no idea how much thought goes into a Freestyle routine. Two of the trainers said that they would be interested in trying more with their dogs. I hope that they do so they can experience the joy and richness of our sport.

Rickie Morrison's Keno is studying to be a future freestyle dog.



Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild & Sirius Guild Trials

By Kathy Noble & Shari Bryant

The Board of Directors continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation and to consider everyone's safety. Because the situation with COVID-19 continues to develop and change on almost a daily basis, we are continuing to move forward with the trial plans. The Board will make a decision on whether to hold the trial at the September Board meeting. A decision to hold the trial will be based on governmental recommendations, safety considerations, and whether our members feel comfortable entering and we have enough entries to support the trial.

Mark Your Calendars – Upcoming Events

October 31 – November 1, 2020

Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild & Sirius Guild Titling Events

Winston-Salem Dog Training Club

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

More information coming soon.

March 19 – 21, 2021

Canine Freestyle Federation DogWork® Jamboree

Winston Salem Dog Training Club

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

More information coming soon.



Paws to Dance
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

Upcoming Events

Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild & Sirius Guild Titling Event, Winston-Salem, NC; October 31-November 1, 2020

Canine Freestyle Federation DogWork® Jamboree in Winston-Salem, NC; March 19-21, 2021

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