

# Paws to Dance



The Newsletter of the Canine Freestyle Federation, Inc.

August 2021

## Judges' Meeting

By Janet Dayton

The judges attended a Zoom meeting on August 7, 2021. As the meeting progressed, it was suggested the comments made should be shared with the membership. The first half of the meeting the judges responded to discussion questions and during the second half videos were viewed. Below are the judges' responses to the questions and video viewing. The intent of sharing these comments is to help the membership prepare their performances.

Responses to discussion questions:

*What do you think of the following quote? There's nothing wrong with enjoying looking at the surface of the ocean itself, except that when you finally see what goes on underwater, you realize that you've been missing the whole point of the ocean. Staying on the surface all the time is like going to the circus and staring at the outside of the tent. – Dave Barry.*

- There is value that judges are participants in the sport. We all know what goes into putting on a performance. It increases empathy of what goes into a performance.
- Don't judge a book by the cover. Look within to find truth; don't be superficial.
- When watching a performance as a member of the audience you get to enjoy it. However, as a judge you have to look at the five categories. You might see the whole

## Table of Contents

<b>Judges' Meeting.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>North Coast Canine Freestylers Guild .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Sirius Guild .....</b>	<b>6</b>

performance as a spectator, but you must look under the surface to judge each category. Judges look at all components of the performance

- As a judge, one cannot look too far underwater. If you know the history of the handler or dog it cannot be taken into account. A judge must score what is seen, not score about what is known about the history. Therefore, you don't want to look too deep.
- If you know of a hardship and you see within the choreography, artistry, and relationship solutions to that hardship then it should reflect positively on teamwork. However, it is hard not to get wrapped up in the history.

*What do you expect to see in a performance? What do you want to see?*

- Want to see joy. Want to see a team having fun. Some teams are very elegant. Some teams bring you to tears. Want to feel something when seeing a performance.

- For all levels, want to have a positive emotional reaction. In the lower levels, want to see a happy, working, engaged dog with a handler that is sensitive to the dog's needs and supporting the dog's performance. In the upper levels, want to see dynamics. If a team can show something that has never been seen before that is great.
- Want to see the handler supporting the dog, and the dog giving the handler attention. It should be two members of the team always together or aware of each other and responding to each other moment by moment. However, this does not necessarily mean constant eye contact.
- Favorite performances are where the team appears to have forgotten they were competing. They are just having fun with each other, connected, and moving from one phrase to another smoothly. They are in the "pink bubble". Sometimes it is not the best technically, but the team is just having fun.
- Want to see joy. Also, movement that is natural, organic, not forced and feel the music and choreography was appropriate for team, but not too complicated.
- Often it is more of an emotional thing than a technical thing. No one said look at the precise pivots or fronts. However, if it is poor technically, then there will be little emotional response. Must balance the technical with emotional.

*How much does an outfit or piece of music influence your scoring?*

- Outfits can distract from the performance. Sometimes it is hard to look past the outfit because it infringes on the performance, particularly shoes. Not wearing socks with shoes can be distracting. White socks in black shoes can be distracting. Select shoes to go

with the dog. For example, a black dog with white feet. Wear white shoes with dog and then compare to black shoes. The white on the dog's feet will show up better with black shoes.

- Does it distract from the dog? If I didn't notice before it was mentioned, then it must be okay. This applies to attire, music and choreography. I want to be riveted to the dog with occasional nods to the handler. It's all about the dog. Need to have someone watch you to tell you those things. If you don't have someone, then you need to video and watch yourself.
- The smaller the dog the more important shoes and socks are. Also, too casual dress can be interpreted as disrespectful.
- Wearing a cardigan or blazer that flaps in dogs face. Skirts are okay, but prefer it if the tights match the skirt. Also, the skirt should be long enough or short enough to not interfere with the dog.
- Rhinestones on back pocket of jeans. May appear nice, but can be a distraction.
- Music choices can be a distraction particularly if it has been used in a previous performance, the version of music distracts from the performance, or the editing is poor. However, nobody owns the music. The general consensus has been if music was used by someone still active in CFF freestyle, then it is a courtesy to contact the person to see if it is okay to use the music. Often the music is edited differently. Also, a different dog, different editing, and several years later it is not an issue.

Video viewing comments:

*Level I*

- Keep the lead loose.
- Keep the dog on the side of the judges and audience as much as possible.

*Level II*

- Edit music properly. Poorly edited music can be a distraction.
- Select music that suits the dog.
- Be aware of doing movement and then simply moving (heeling) from point A to point B.
- Be aware of stride length and poses.

*Level III*

- Quiet handling particularly with small dogs.
- If possible, consider floor and wall color in selection of attire.
- If cue is missed, move on. Do not continue to repeat the missed cue.

- Repeat movements within a performance. For example, if dog does a nice backing in heel, repeat that movement later in the performance.
- When asking a dog to back, the dog should move first. Avoid walking into the dog.

*Level IV*

- Handlers should be aware of their position on the floor and avoid standing with their back to the judges and audience.
- Be aware of inorganic movements – ones where the dog does not look good doing the movement.
- Stress in the handler can affect the dog which will affect the performance.

If you have any questions for the judges, submit your question(s) to Shari Bryant, Newsletter Editor, at [Lunar61@aol.com](mailto:Lunar61@aol.com). Your question(s) will be forwarded to the judges to answer in future newsletters.

---

## \*\*\*ANNOUNCEMENT\*\*\*

Unfortunately, the Sirius Guild and Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild freestyle titling events scheduled for November 6 and 7, 2021 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina have been canceled. The city is doing sewer construction adjacent to the facility where the trials are held. We have been informed the facility will not be accessible that weekend because of the construction schedule.

The Sirius Guild and Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild now plan to host a one-day titling event on Friday, March 18, 2022 prior to the start of the Jamboree. More details will be available later this year.

We hope you will be able to join us for that titling event and the Jamboree!



## North Coast Canine Freestylers Guild

By Janet Dayton

We have been keeping busy and enjoying summer. Our guild did a demo for the Erie Kennel Club, in Erie, Pennsylvania. A couple of their members came to our titling event last May and wanted to know more. Leila, Bridget, Diana, and I went with our dogs to give the demo. We had a video presentation and then shared our routines. Dogs did a fabulous job as did the humans. My 5-month-old puppy, Airy had her CFF debut performance. One lady told me Airy was a "pistol." There seems to be a very real interest in the beginner classes. If we have classes, it means up to an hour and a half drive one way for some of us to get there. The hope is to get them started and they will want to continue.

Some sad and happy news. Malachi, Deb English's standard poodle unexpectedly made a journey to the Bridge. Malachi and Deb were an awesome team and we were looking forward to seeing them in the future. Malachi was a great companion for Deb competing in several dog sports. Enter Raphael, Deb's new standard poodle puppy. It will be fun to see where Raphael and Deb go. Welcome, Raphael!

London, Bridget's teravuren earned his Open Agility standard title. Willow and Diana competed at the AKC Rally National. I was invited to go and it was a neat experience. Lark, my girl, earned her Open Jumpers title. Way to go teams!



London



Willow and Diana



Lark

Our member profile is Sue Ann Branstein.

**What breed(s) have you had?** Currently 3 Papillons Little Caesar, Peppermint Patti, Taxi and Mix Breed Suzie Q (Chihuahua/mini short haired Dachshund/Cocker Spaniel/Pekinese). Previous years Beagle Snooie Marie, Cocker Spaniel Sweet Cinnamon Heart, German Shepherd Mix (Saidy Lady) and other mix breed (Gingersnap).

**How many dogs have you had in your life?** In my adult life – 8 – never enough dogs.

**Any other pets?** No

**How did you get involved with CFF?** I used to play around with Saidy Lady and then I heard about the group forming locally.

**Best moment with CFF?** Performing with Saidy Lady.

**Do you have a goal you are working towards in CFF?** Currently to be able to get back in the swing of dog activities and when I can do CFF again, I just want the dog/dogs to want to play and have fun with me.

**What do you hope people see when you work your dog in a CFF routine?** That we are both having a good time.

**Why do you have a dog in your life?** Why wouldn't I have a dog in my life? Nothing would be as enjoyable without a dog or dogs.

**What behavior was hardest to train your dog to do?** This is in regard to 3 different dogs – a stay, no barking when excited, and no sniffing the ground while working.

**Hobbies/Interests?** Various activities with my dogs, scrapbooking, cardmaking, sewing, arts & crafts in general.

**Job(s)?** Retired

**Favorite song(s)?** Why? No favorite

**Favorite book(s)?** Why? No favorite

**If you could go anywhere, where would you go?** Nowhere special. I like being home with my dogs and family.

**Do you have a hero or special person you admire?** No.

**What makes you happy?** Just keeping busy on a daily basis and spending time with my dogs, family and friends.



## Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild

By Shari Bryant

We held two more Zoom classes. Both classes focused on technical skills. The first was on backing and pivots, the second was on laterals. The recordings of both of these classes will be posted to the Members' section of the CFF website in the near future. If you are interested in attending any of the future Zoom classes, please contact Shari Bryant ([Lunar61@aol.com](mailto:Lunar61@aol.com)), and notification will be sent when a new Zoom class is scheduled.

Unfortunately, we have had to cancel our titling event with Sirius Guild on November 6 and 7 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina due to city sewer construction. We are planning to co-host a one-day titling event with Sirius Guild in Winston-Salem on Friday, March 18, 2022 before the start of the Jamboree. More information will be available later this year.

---

## Sirius Guild

By Mary Sullivan

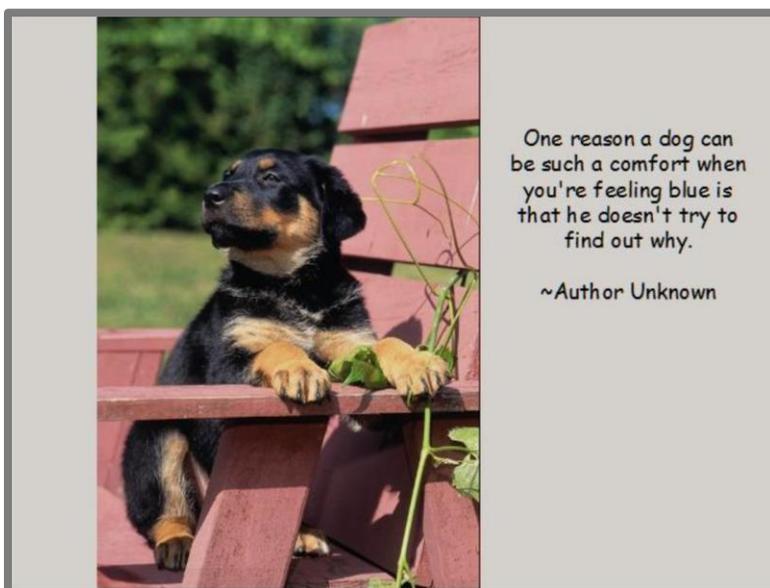
During our Silver Spring, MD class last Friday, we discussed how to keep our freestyle dogs motivated while creating, learning, and practicing a show routine. As one who balances worries about too much drilling with fears of not training enough, I am open to suggestions. During training with my dog, I have mastered the art of surprise foolishness. Journey has grown up with me jumping out from behind doors, stealthily creeping up stairs, and sudden bursts of dog-rump-goosing during training, all in an effort to maintain his watchfulness and sense of play. With some dogs, my actions might be frightening, but Journey retaliates with joy and bum (mine) nipping. It wakes him up and reminds him to keep his eyes on me. Training is fun!



The difficulty, however, is transferring this joy to a performance, where battles of butt biting is discouraged. I struggle with how to tone down physical reinforcement during practice and still motivate the dog in the ring. J is very motivated by food but that also is verboten in the ring. My classmates suggested 1) more ad-libbing during training and performance, so the dog doesn't know what is coming next and/or feels free to do something he wants to do. This could work in the lower levels but could be worrying in the upper levels with added requirements. 2) Pacing is important. Creating a routine which places "fun stuff" at strategic moments in a routine can work. Journey is very motivated to run, so distance stays and recalls are fun for him (and sometimes painful to my behind). 3) Changing how a requirement is performed may help a dog who is uneasy, uncomfortable, or less skilled. For example, back the dog 2 steps at a time instead of many steps. 4) Training bits and pieces of a routine to other music, in different areas of a ring or even in a different locale, or in a different order than in the planned routine, can keep a dog interested. 5) Perhaps of most importance, is not to constantly practice the WHOLE routine. Even though I find it reassuring to endlessly repeat the whole shebang, Butt-Biter does NOT.

With some effort and some foolishness, we can contribute to the common goal: the joy of freestyle!

---



**\*\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\*\***

*Canine Freestyle Federation*

*DogWork<sup>®</sup> Jamboree*

---

---

*March 18 – 20, 2022*

*Winston-Salem Dog Training Club*

*Winston-Salem, North Carolina*

- Friday, March 18 from 3 pm to 8 pm  
Canine Freestyle Federation meeting, social hour and dinner, video of the original four teams and demos
- Saturday, March 19 from 9 am to 4 pm  
Explore choreography, artistry and music from Level I through Level IV. Participants will be given a phrase to develop at the level appropriate for their dog. Several teams will be selected to demonstrate the phrase at each level. Discuss music and how to select music for each level.
- Sunday, March 20 from 9 am to Noon  
Participants will develop a phrase for their dog using puzzle cards. A judges panel will provide updates on judging and answer participant's questions.
- A registration form is available on the Canine Freestyle Federation website ([www.canine-freestyle.org](http://www.canine-freestyle.org)).

Paws to Dance  
c/o Shari Bryant  
627 Morgan Summers Road  
Gibsonville, NC 27249

## FIRST CLASS MAIL

### Upcoming Events

Carolina Canine Freestyle Guild & Sirius Guild Titling Event, Winston-Salem, NC, March 18, 2022

Canine Freestyle Federation DogWork® Jamboree, Winston-Salem, NC, March 18-20, 2022

### Canine Freestyle Federation Board of Directors

**President**

Betty Swenson  
5904 Ridge Rd  
Richmond, VA 23227  
[bswenson@bettyandjim.info](mailto:bswenson@bettyandjim.info)

**Vice President**

Leila Widgren  
6684 Connecticut  
Colony Cir  
Mentor OH 44060  
[lawidgren@oh.rr.com](mailto:lawidgren@oh.rr.com)

**Secretary**

Shari Bryant  
P.O. Box 129  
Sedalia, NC  
27342  
[Lunar61@aol.com](mailto:Lunar61@aol.com)

**Treasurer**

Carl Tennille  
14430 Overlook Ridge  
Ln  
Beaverdam, VA  
23015  
[carl23015@gmail.com](mailto:carl23015@gmail.com)

**Membership**

Diana Simpson  
9948 High Country Dr.  
Chardon, OH 44024  
[Disi74@roadrunner.com](mailto:Disi74@roadrunner.com)

**Education**

Julia Gregory  
222 Parks Rd  
McDonald, TN 37353  
[jmg@tnaqua.org](mailto:jmg@tnaqua.org)

**Judges**

Janet Dayton  
818 Marshall Dr.  
Painesville, OH 44077  
[jadayton@oh.rr.com](mailto:jadayton@oh.rr.com)

**Guilds**

Kathy Noble  
P.O. Box 112  
Boysds, MD 20841  
[kathyninmd@aol.com](mailto:kathyninmd@aol.com)

**Communications**

Jeanine Johnson-Brown  
9101 Decatur Ave S  
Bloomington, MN 55438  
[Jajbrown54@gmail.com](mailto:Jajbrown54@gmail.com)