

NZDJA



Some advice & humour

by Lavina Diamanti

For my final column after a crazy, eventful year, I asked some of our senior judges three questions: **1** What is the best piece of advice you received during your judging career? **2** What would you advise a new judge just starting on their judging journey? **3** What is the funniest or most unusual experience that you have had whilst judging? Here are their responses.

Jean McErlane

1. The most memorable piece of advice was from Ernie Schache: "If you are going to make a mistake get on and do it. Don't dither around."
2. Do your homework, study, study, study and watch experienced judges and good breeders. Talk to them.
3. My first judging trip to India many years ago provided many incidents. We were there two weeks and did New Delhi show then travelled by train north to Jalunder. There was an Australian judge and myself and the day before the show the club provided van and driver and he took us to the Golden Temple which had been bombed. On the way through the jungle the driver said "If the van breaks down stay in the van — this is terrorist area". We obeyed! The show was held in a sports stadium with grandstands and armed soldiers right around the top level. I was judging Labradors and there was a commotion on the grandstand and my steward said "that's the Police Chief and these are his Labradors". The following week the Police Chief was assassinated on Lucknow Station. It was an interesting judging trip.

Gary Doyle

1. When making a decision, make it quick. At least then it looks like you know what you are doing.
2. Ignore the handler, judge the dog.
3. A young and well-developed young lady with a strapless top and unruly dog was losing control of the animal and what little there was of her top, my steward stepped up quickly beside me and said "toss you to see who helps with the dog or the top".

Stephen Meredith

1. When unsure of your placings, make a quick decision. Do not stand and agonise as it gives the exhibitors the impression that you do not know what you're doing.
2. Do not chat to the exhibitors. Smile and be friendly by all means but make the day all about the dogs.
3. While judging a Labrador Ribbon Parade, I had a class of four male Open Dogs. I placed them from one to four, with the first dog in the line being placed fourth. As he was leaving the ring behind the other three, the lady who was placed third decided to kneel down behind her dog. As the fourth placed dog passed her he cocked his leg over her back. She was soaked because the novice owner of this dog decided to stop to let the dog finish. The scream from the lady who was urinated on was ear-splitting and the laughter from around the ring was infectious. She came up to me to ask what she could do. In an attempt to make light of the situation, I told her

it was better to be 'peed' on than be 'peed' off. She accepted the situation and saw the funny side of what happened.

Lyn Carleton

1. Enjoy your judging. And judge the dogs in front of you: do not worry about who is on the end of the lead.
2. Learn as much as you can about each and every breed you are going to be judging. Large breed entries or minor breed entries, everyone deserves the same attention. Go home from judging, knowing you did your very best and were happy with your decisions.
3. A few funny moments over the years, but one that comes to mind is when an exhibitor came in the ring with a Rough Coat Collie and the handler was on two walking sticks! Made it pretty impossible to judge the dog and assess good movement with sticks flying about!

And finally, a funny moment from **Kathleen Hardwick**:

I was judging in California on a 40°C day, in the middle of the day, no humidity and very pleasant. I was judging a very large number of Rhodesian Ridgebacks, enjoying myself and the dogs. I had got through to Open Bitch and as the handler went round the ring at a reasonable speed, the bitch came to a complete stop under a tree, the only piece of shade halfway round the ring. The handler did a complete somersault, then picked himself up and continued. I couldn't help but laugh along with the exhibitors. When the same handler came in with his 'Specials Dog' I laughingly asked if this one could complete the circuit in one attempt. His reply: "He just better! I've already lost the button off my jacket, and I don't want to lose any more vital pieces of wardrobe!" His dignity was restored with his Best of Breed win with said dog.

We wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and hope that you are able to spend it with friends and family be they two legged or four.

Happy judging. 🐾

Important Dates

31 January 2022	Application close off
22 March 2022	Theory exams
9-10 July	South Island Practicals
16-17th July	North Island Practicals

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