

## **REPORT TO COLOR GUARD ADVISORY BOARD Steering Committee Meeting**

This year presented fewer challenges as far as immediate shifts in approach. The items of concern were more patterned over years and would be the focus of conversations centered on the Judge Summit. Besides the few logistical issues that occur yearly as a function of the committee, most of the time was spent discussing and planning the Judge Summit. Emphasis was placed in creating a report from the Judge Summit as more useful information to the Instructor community.

Items other than Judge training that discussed at Steering Committee Meeting:

- Sheet Adjustments:
  - Eliminate expanded spread guidelines for A and RA IA sheets
    - Creates inconsistent application
    - Encourages old “trickle-up” issues
  - Eliminate Descriptors on front of sheets
    - ‘Guides language that is not proper for numeric neighborhoods as suggested
    - Confusing for international applications
    - Conflicts with Ratings system in place
  - Reformat the Criteria Reference to a more graphic approach
    - Shirley had worked up prototypes
    - Holes in criteria would be covered at later date as we worked to establish symmetry between sub-captions (Done at August meeting between Curtis-Shirley-Karl then later approved by committee)
- Dale Discussed new A class structure and possibilities with new facilities and Scheduling
- Review Process
- Insight Sheets
- Shirlee project to create worksheet and self assessment guide
  - Programming/Design/Vocabulary building
  - Matters of taste- this year expected to be a challenge
  - Groups taking on too much or too heavy of a subject matter for performers- shallow/plastic
- Webinars for Steering Committee to talk directly to young instructors
  - Pre/Mid/Late Season
- 7 member panel possibilities-
  - ‘Need more cross captioned judges- up and down cross
  - Provides a proxy non working member – more customer service to units
  - ‘Will experiment this year with those judges we know can cross captions
- E-Adjudicate/WGI-Certify
  - Level 100 and 200 are geared towards judging in general
  - Level 300 is where most of the WGI information that benefits Circuit partners
    - At end of 300 there will be a certification of WGI System
    - 400 series will be the WGI Judge Academy
      - New Applicants required to have complete 1/2/3 first
      - Include a Championship requirement

- 500 Series will be the philosophy paper and any Roster training items- Specific to WGI Roster ONLY
  - Home studies
  - Judge Partners

#### 4-Corners into Judge Summit

We are seeing the rewards of work done in the last 5-6 years towards performance of the day and caption integrity through the use of scoring priorities, We will continue to build on this success.

Through the 4-corners survey we still see perennial items that we've recognized and addressed that need more time for reinforcement through the season. We see that many of our issues still point to the confusion (on part of Instructors) around choreographic choice, challenge, and achievement in the design and programming processes (the misconception that these considerations are the responsibility of the IA EQ and MVT judges). We know that it is upstairs that is responsible for choice beyond skills and that these captions are home to most of our judges that don't come from Movement or Equipment backgrounds. This "Hardwired" barrier to acknowledging EQ and MVT fully has been identified first in the recent propensity- preference- pet peeves studies.

We are clear that judges make up for any lack of current experience by studying, staying curious & enthusiastic, and being a proponent/patron of the activity. Our challenge is to get them curious and enthusiastic about the Equipment and Movement Aspects of their captions.

This guides our longer vision of working to increase awareness of Equipment and Movement as our DNA in the total judging community. The commentary, recognition and reward must be proportionate to the efforts that designers and choreographers place on choreographic choice relative to programming and design. With the passive online tool *WGI Certify* in place, we would be able to require our Roster to "certify" in Equipment and Movement. This will allow judges to work at their own rate and let us establish a common starting point from which we can build skills in the future. This will also allow us to create that same threshold for all upcoming Academy Students as well, creating strength at the entry level.

Setting Judges up for this eventual challenge guided much of the choices for the Judge Summit. We wanted to carry them through an organic approach to observing and talking about equipment and movement. Our aim is to give them a leg-up WITHOUT creating an environment that highlighted any individual vulnerability. It will be important to lead exploiting their curiosity and enthusiasm into the studies before delivering the expectation of the certification aspects. We did not want to announce the certification requirements before the meeting, as this would color the tone and perhaps create an initial resistance to our approach and desired goal.

**Long-Term Goals (3year)**

- **Have Judge Commentary, Recognition, & Reward of Equipment and Movement efforts be proportionate to the energy placed on Equipment and Movement by Designers and Choreographers**
- **Entire Roster having a standardized awareness of our DNA; Equipment and Movement.**
- **All New GE and DA Judges coming into the Roster with a heightened awareness of Equipment and Movement**
- **All New IA judges should have a standardized understanding of both IA captions with their chosen caption being their “specialty”.**
- **Get more of the Roster to cross captions so we can explore different assignment models in order to service Units and Sponsors better**

**Goals for 2017**

1. **Increased percentages of commentary, recognition and reward of Equipment and Movement in upstairs captions**
  - a. **Lapses in excellence can no longer be the primary impetus for Equipment and Movement Commentary.**
2. **Using performance studies, give judges a leg-up on the upcoming training requirements through group discovery and conversations.**
  - a. **Exploit the curiosity, inherent to quality judges, to get them enthusiastic about seeing Equipment and Movement**
3. **Use the loose format of the training sessions to deliver years of IA points of emphasis that would need to factor into GE and DA’s heightened awareness of EQ and MVT.**
4. **Explore the 7-person panel idea to weigh viability.**

Thank You

-Karl Lowe

Chairman- WGI Color Guard Steering Committee

## **REPORT TO COLOR GUARD ADVISORY BOARD 2016 WGI JUDGE SUMMIT “Initial Steps Towards Integrated Judging”**

Let me start by clearing up a common misconception:

Judges do not establish trends or fashion in our activity. Training items are initiated by the Color Guard Advisory Board, Color Guard Steering Committee, Judge Administrative Team and WGI Staff. We work to address items of concern based on last year's (and previous year's) challenges to judge performance and by acknowledging issues on the horizon as presented by Unit performances. We do our best to anticipate challenges in order to serve units better/sooner. It is NEVER the goal of Judge Summits to create new parameters to Units' creative choices by any narrowing of acceptance relative to scoring. We work to stay broad and inclusive, letting units ultimately lead the direction of the activity. By the nature of the competitive process, judges will always be in a reactionary position to the new challenges presented by units each year. Our goal is to insure that judges are prepared to respond quickly to these challenges instead of waiting for the yearly training cycle and the following season.

I have used the Summit Schedule as the template to walk you through the sessions.

### **Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Icebreaker game identifying:

- Pet Peeves
- Propensities
- Preferences

The results of this ice-breaker revealed that propensities we long expected were prevalent. HOWEVER; This also revealed that there was a significant self awareness and effort to balance these specialties with other considerations of their caption. Many of the pet peeves are typical qualities of young instructors that aren't strategic with their choices, ignoring the performers' abilities and strengths in favor of vanity or ego-bound choices.

---

### **“Philosophy Paper” Power Point Presentation**

This is the document that serves as reminders of any shifts in focus or any new tools for 2017. This document is referenced by the WGI Roster and is also sent to WGI' Circuit Partners.

- The most significant shift is the re-formatting of the back of the judge sheet “Criteria Reference” .

---

Descriptor “Bloom”

- This was an exploration to find descriptors of different levels of challenge/achievement.
- Found words with nuanced differences that fit these various levels
- Better tools for scoring relative commentary that also provide needed clues to instructors.

**Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**

1. “Tablet Talk!” – Russ Courtney and Dale
  - New Tablet Guidelines
  - Trouble shooting and updating
  - Tablets issued out for Season

---

**“Where it All Begins” Parts 1&2 and “Mapping Our DNA” Parts 1&2 -**

The Overreaching goal of the next sessions is to get GE and DA more comfortable talking about movement and equipment. Understanding the inner workings of how IA analyses and values what it is the performer is doing. This, in turn, will provide conversations inside captions on how to apply this new awareness. The initial step is to simply be able to talk about movement and equipment. I was clear not to provide too many destinations because you are dealing with captions that “like to work ahead” and ultimately will still filter through their own experience and set of standards if allowed, perhaps defeating the purpose of the exercise and diminishing the goal. It was important to get the room on a level playing field and assure them that the answers would come later. It is difficult for judges, in general, to take this leap of faith without already knowing the expected result (this is a pitfall of being an expert). I asked that they “get on the bus knowing they will be returned safely back “. This is one of the common differences in how designers and performers work compared to judges. This is a difficult challenge in our judge culture. I was pleased at their willingness to participate. As with all things, we operate in percentages.

Because the volumes of information being processed while watching a group (especially on first viewings) is so overwhelming, we have a tendency to latch on to the familiar in those instances, weather it be familiar moves that fit into common terminology or looking at excellence first because the inconsistencies are much easier to see. So many in our culture will hang their hat on looking primarily at achievement first. We want to be clear that it is perceived that, in some cases, the level of comfort is guiding the commentary, impression and ultimately the reward. Our eventual goal for today is to simply get them talking about movement and equipment in general terms so that they can eventually see the contributions of movement and equipment that are already built in to their specific captions. Hoping this will affect commentary/ impression, ultimately helping to judge their captions more fully. Caption managers have laid the ground work for this over the last 2 years.

A secondary goal of these sessions is to get Judges united in their appreciation for the DNA aspects of our activity (Equipment and Movement). **We will be implementing a certification requirement for all judges** that will carry them through a study plan for both Equipment and Movement (something that Instructors on the Steering Committee have felt strongly about for some years now)- This plan will be implemented over the next year and will shift our standard for incoming judges as well. This was announced at the end of the Summit and will be implemented once logistics are in place.

A third consideration for this emphasis is that we will be exploring 7-person panels (at one day regionals). This will allow for better customer service to units and show sponsors. This will require that we have a number of judges able to work across captions. This is especially helpful when judges are able to cross between upstairs and downstairs captions. We are hoping that this integrated approach will allow for ease of assignments as well as increased exposure during the season.

Today we started this process understanding that it will likely be 3 or so years to see the larger benefit of our efforts. If we can start increasing the commentary concerning Equipment and Movement in percentages for 2017, we will have succeeded in these initial steps.

The following is a brief list of essential steps taken using our two performing groups.

#### Set up

Judges are grouped in panels with 1 Eq-1 Mvt-1 DA-2 GE Judges- Room is set informally with chairs set in paneled groups and a performance space cleared in front of room. (no tables)

-Because we are asking Upstairs judges to explore, we have to ask them ignore their personal reference points to start at "ZERO." In order to do this, we have to cover much info that is basic to the IA captions. You will see this below.

"Where it All Begins" - Part 1 –Karl Steering Committee and Judge Admin Team

Before we watch performers...(Karl leads)

- Connecting into your own body (breathing and guided visualization)
- Projecting yourself into the physicality of the performer
- **Empathetic vs. Sympathetic** observation of movement
- Prioritization of commentary
- Different starting points of performers today relative to our starting points from when most of us "judges" came in to the activity
- Comparing patterns in identifying skills. Comparing the viewpoint of the "technician" and that of the performer/choreographer ("How hard is that to clean?" vs. "How hard is that to do/achieve?"). Using the ability to sympathize, in order to project yourself into the physicality of the performer, will help observers 'feel' the difference.
- Being clear that the inability to do or even to empathize observable movement does not keep us from digging deeper and appreciating more through our ability to sympathize
- Forgive the "how" for now!

- **Using 4 Dancers from UNLV – 2 Pieces @ 2 minutes each**
- Observational studies with Dancers from UNLV – contemporary piece #1**
  - Watched the entire piece first – with the challenge of finding 3 descriptors (impressions)
  - Discussed impressions- not established at the start but allowing impression to progress and evolve over time. 3 distinctly different descriptors can still be valid
  - Isolated the first third of the piece- had Movement judges act as experts and do running commentary to model for the others in their panels
  - Did the segment- again allowing other judges to run commentary with the MVT Judges listening
  - Panels had discussions amongst themselves to discuss challenges and word choices
  - Pointed out a couple of things in the segment that were “noteworthy” that should have been given priority in commentary.....discussed why they were remarkable and how you might talk about it
  - Had one of the members “teach” a segment so that we could hear how movement was communicated between performers....
  - Talked about the lack of terms when dancers communicated to each other and how the loosening of the language allowed for understanding as performers learn from each other
  - Worked through the next third of the piece- asking the ‘non movement’ judges to take the lead in commentary
  - Allowed panels to discuss
  - Asked reflections from Caption Managers (expert view)
  - Repeated 2<sup>nd</sup> third with Movement Judges running commentary- Discussed challenges
  - Watched the last third and discussed phrasing and had judges identify phrases as they watched
    - We discussed that some identified phrasing in music or whole counts and others identified by choreographic shifts. Discussed being open to phrasing being up to choreographer /designer even if the choice may initially be seen as unmusical. Watching over the longer groups of connected phrases often give the clue to the logic of the choreographic phrasing.
  - Discussed how skills linked over time connect into phrases and that phrases over time create the total vocabulary
  - Discussed the difference between vocabulary and choreography- analysis of skills vs. the total sensibility of the movement and its form.
  - Pointed out a couple of connections between phrases that were closer to “transitional” and saw how they were used as choreographic opportunities instead of direct/immediate transition. (window into crafting –fodder for later caption sessions)

- Worked to recognize choreographic device of “motif” that was used in the piece- Explored how the motif was presented in different speeds throughout the piece. (fodder for later caption sessions)

#### BREAK

**Part 2 was centered on the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece-** The premise called for partners to be attached by a long piece of fabric.

- Watched the entire piece with the challenge of gathering 3 impression descriptors
- Watched again with these descriptors in mind
- The nature of the connected performers opened up several conversations that have been points of emphasis in previous years...
  - Many of the descriptors called for us to address different levels of kinesthetic awareness. **Simultaneous- Informed – Interrelated –Interdependent**
  - How these words feed into “**risk**” in the World Classes
  - Used that conversation to impress that: **In good design- All choices relate!** Compared this “responsibility of the designer” to a more random “**coincidental**” approach to weaker Design.
  - Barriers to sightline to the body (i.e. -fabric blocking leg line) Does not excuse the judge from digging deeper – **The absence of proof does not forgive the examination of evidence** to value the what and how!
- Watched the first half with non-movement judges taking the lead in running commentary
- Let panels discuss challenges
- Let Movement Judges Model viewing the 1<sup>st</sup> half again
- Viewed 2<sup>nd</sup> half with Movement Judges modeling commentary
- Talked about instances where performers were challenged by the fabric and how the attachment of performers impacted the challenge of certain skills
- Viewed 2<sup>nd</sup> half with Non-movement judges practicing commentary
- Panels discussed challenges
- Viewed the entire piece with ALL Judges practicing commentary.
- Removed Fabric and watched the piece without the concrete connection of the performers
- Discussed the performers’ perspective with the ease of performance and the lack of “logistical distractions”
- Discussed the value of the premise of the attached fabric (Fodder for captions specific distinctions)
- Discussed how the absence of the fabric may have revealed greater expressive opportunities by the performers. This reveals the initial question of approach for designers: **Do the performers facilitate the choreography? OR...Does the choreography facilitate the performers?** (fodder for later caption conversations)

#### Break

- REVISITED Piece #1- Giving each performer an object to hold as they danced. Objects were:
  - Scarf
  - Wrapping Paper Tube
  - “Pool Noodle”



- Gallon Jug - half filled with water
- Challenged performers to use the object as much as they felt comfortable.
- Viewed Piece #1 with objects in hands-
- Discussed each performers effort and asked each performer about their challenges, compromises, opportunities, influence on expression, that were created by the object-
- Continued to discuss what motivated some of the choices made concerning the objects and the **QUALITY of Movement**
- Discussed how the objects increased the awareness of individual to the group as some objects take more space, potentially impacting those performers around them. Also how this may have created choreographic opportunity if allowed to practice to create these 'moments' (moving from 'simultaneous' to 'interrelated/interdependent')
- Discussed fluid vs. fixed aspects of the objects (applied later in Equipment session) and how this opened or restricted choices.
- You saw/heard the judges find moments that were "noteworthy" in the explorations of the dancers with these objects- 'Proof we were getting somewhere!

### "Scoring Scenarios" –William Warren and Shirley

Throughout the 2016 Season and via a post Season Survey, the Judge Admin team gathered examples of scoring scenarios that reveled challenges to the new scoring priorities (2 years old). After returning from Lunch, we broke up the formatting of the performance-based studies with an interactive classroom study centered on these Scoring Scenarios. Judges were grouped into "table teams" and given these different scenarios that had created challenges the year before.

Before the scenarios, there was a review:

- Scoring priorities
  - Ranking
  - Spreading
  - Profiling
  - Rating
- New layout of Criteria Reference
- The Captions have not changed!

Some Items covered in scenarios:

- Shifts in process from Regional Season to Championship qualifying rounds
- Managing tight neighborhoods
- Box 3 guards- Early/Mid/Late season
- Commentary during Preliminary rounds- similarity of guards creating redundancy in commentary over time and how to "reset"
- Numeric tolerances across rounds
- Number matching commentary
- Tight neighborhoods – Helping Staffs to understand when groups flip-flop.

- Championships progressive rounds (A Class Prelims to Semis) are similar lengths however guards will have fewer differences – how this impacts scoring and numbers management
  - Discussion of **Variety-Range-Depth**
- 

“Mapping Our DNA” - Part 1 & 2- This was the EQUIPMENT portion of the performance-based studies (notes above)

Karl Prepped:

- Studies do not “endorse” specific style, technique, approach, or specific unit.
- Technique vs. training vs. style
- Families of skills when thinking of Variety and Range
  - Dexterity
  - Agility
  - Strength
- Discussed how the quick evolution of Equipment and Movement is related to the elimination of the age rules in Independent World Class (Karl theory).
  - This has been a bit of a detriment to upstairs considerations and the development of new Designers as performers move into staff positions without going through the archetypal apprenticeships that came through the process of “aging-out”. Instructors move straight from performing into directorships of major programs without the full(er) understanding of design and programming.
- The “trap” of not having a “dance feature” and how the designer /choreographer must still make those choices of skills through the equipment vocabulary to cover those bases (typically covered in those “non-equipment” moments).
- Discussed the physical properties of Equipment and the obligation of the choreographer to explore all options that each piece provides through its physical property (key to variety)
  - Discussed use of props (from earlier study), and how the presence of the prop itself does NOT create variety But it is the expanded choreographic opportunity that an implement (prop) provides BECAUSE of its different physical properties. **It is the further exploration that matters, NOT the object!**
- As Movement/Dance evolves away from shapes and the transition between shapes being defined as movement, and more into directing energy through qualities, we have to understand that equipment does NOT have the option of not being a shape. We will always look at it as an angle, position, fixed in space and directly compared in multiples. There is a potential disconnect from the exploration of movement relative to the exploration of equipment because of the physically static/concrete aspect of the equipment itself. We should be prepared as designers work to reconcile what might seem to be limited potential from the equipment to adjust to the newer outlooks in movement.
  - This may have a secondary impact on the impression that, though we have grown from an equipment standpoint (skills) there seems to be a stagnation of exploration of style. I ask that we be prepared to see the pitfalls of that reboot of exploration as choreographers make new choices.

## Performances:

### Piece #1 – Flag Duet - Written at A-Class Pacing of skills and level of difficulty

- Watched and gathered impressions
- Had Equipment judges run commentary
- Discussed in panels
- Ran with Non-Equipment Judges running commentary
- Discussed challenges
- Skills were paced so that you could easily name them as they happened

### Piece #2 – Rifle Duet – Written at Open/World pacing and skill level

- Gathered impressions
- Talked about the pacing of skills and how that shifts through the class
- Pacing and connection of skills is as much an indicator of points of development as the skills themselves- This aspect is shortchanged by the old “Accounting of Skills” approach to judging.
- Talked about performers ability to “see” faster as an indicator of higher points of development –
  - Meaningful skills linked in challenging ways over time
  - Ability to see/respond faster provides choreographic opportunities
- Challenging Connections and frequency of skills being indicators of depth
- Had one performer teach the other so we could hear the language used in communicating equipment work.
  - Lack of “terms” and use of qualities and common words
  - Talked about the challenges faced by judges that don’t have an equipment background as they talk about equipment.
    - Assured them that I would take the brunt of language from Instructors, if they would simply commit to talking more about equipment even without having the ‘proper’ words. A risk worth taking and a necessary step to get us where we want to be in 2019-2020.

### Piece #3 –Quartet (2 Flags and 2 Rifles)

- Prepped by talking about layering and having to split focus
- The use of “Scanning the floor” to assess the entirety and to let Instructor know you are engaged as you look wider
  - Wide to tight “shot” – shifting awareness in different settings (formats)
- Watched with Non-Equipment Judges taking the lead in commentary
- Discussed challenges
- Let Equipment Judges model commentary
- Talked to each member about moments in the piece that challenged them and why (increase awareness as we **sympathize with the performer** in order to understand the challenges and achievements of the moment)
- Discussed how choreographic choice can influence direction of movement and ultimately design choice (fodder for Caption conversations)
- Discussed the gamble of difficult nuanced moves placed as 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> focus and the expectation to comment
  - This feeds into the Digging Deeper Conversation

- Does not forgive the instructor to adjust expectation in those moments as there are guidelines for sampling (fodder for Caption)
  - Explored on one of the performers, the ability to perform in different qualities (with guidance) and how that impacted the look (aesthetic/sensibilities) of the choreography and how it may have impacted the impression of depth.
  - Explored how layering and speeds were used to influence hierarchy in this quick-change environment
  - Discussed layering of parts and how parts relate (Interrelationship)
- 

#### Judges Split Upstairs and Downstairs:

- Apply earlier observations into Caption Considerations
  - Discuss application in future
  - Down:
    - Misclassified units
      - Instructors talking about personnel issues/special circumstances unrelated to the performance
    - Being candid about Vocabulary being below class standards
    - Reading through poor programming and staging of focus
    - Need to inform units of the scoring priorities and how numbers and placement can fluctuate between prelims and finals
  - Up:
    - Efforts to recognize the “why” behind choreographic choice (as a window into seeing the role of choreography in design and program)
    - “New” does not necessarily mean “fresh” or “innovative”
      - Exploration comes with risk and is often “messy”
    - Discussed the pitfalls of familiarity – rebooting and watching with fresh eyes EVERYTIME!
    - Finding commentary during moments of weak design, low interest, & minimal effect.
- 

#### Meet with Managers

- Go through any caption specific items - William/Warren list from 2016 Season
  - Set up January’s follow-up studies
- 

#### Wrap up and Goodbye! - Curtis

- Cross-caption integration – encourage 2<sup>nd</sup> Captions
- Assignments (7-man panels)
- Eventual cross-caption requirements via *WGI-Certify* – **ALL Judges**
  - GE Judges to take Movement track and Equipment track
  - DA Judges to take Movement track and Equipment track

- IA-MVT Judges to take Equipment track
- IA EQ Judges to take Movement track
- Timeline determined later pending logistics and Board approval
- Good Bye!

Thank You-

Karl Lowe – WGI Color Guard Education Coordinator