



*(The following is a post on the CFA New Bee List from Diana Nelson to a new exhibitor. Her advice is valuable for ALL new exhibitors, and is reprinted here with her permission)*

**You will learn so much by going to your first show and showing a cat. There is simply no other way to duplicate that experience other than to do it.**

If you view your very first showing experience as the incredible learning/teaching tool that it can be it might be a bit easier.

**You are going to the show to:**

- Watch how others exhibit your breed
- See what your competition looks like, learn to assess your breed
- Watch how your cat reacts to judging, you might have the most fabulous cat in the world but if the judges can't handle it, oh well .....
- See where you can make improvements
- Meet others in your breed, get input and develop relationships
- Talk to the public, expand your world
- Shop at the fabulous vendors
- Take yourself out of your usual comfort zone and explore a new venue

You are not there necessarily to win ribbons! If you can see the value of just being there you will have a positive experience at every show.

**At shows I have learned the following:**

- Who I like in my breed and who to avoid
- What advice to follow or not
- What everyone else is showing and the direction my breed is taking
- How my cats react on the judging table
- That I am a cat show addict, I love the social aspect of the show, I go even when I am not actively showing a cat
- There are nasty folks in every breed but the nice people outnumber them thank goodness
- That there are some judges I just adore, not because they final my cats (sometimes they do) but for the way they handle my cats. They are sooooo patient with the kittens and the uncer-tain ones. I love those judges.
- There are some judges that I will not let my touch my cats ever again, thank goodness they are very very few in number
- That my attitude will affect how my cat shows that day. If I am \*up\* so is she and vice versa.
- Winning is fun but it takes a lot more character to be a good second or third or none at all finisher than to be a winner, that's the easy part
- That you never know who you are talking to: I have met some of the nicest future cat owners and some folks I ended up mentoring on the show scene. Wonderful people.
- That I can have as much fun as I want to. Cat shows are a place where the \*different\* or \*outrageous\* is normal. We have the sphynx and the Persian, how much more extreme can you get?

So go to the show. Don't take any criticism personally. And the nasty folks are like that to everyone, thank goodness we don't have to go home with them.

*continued*



## *ADVICE TO A NEW EXHIBITOR (CONT.)*

But the wonderful folks will give you the shirt off their back, literally. We had an out of town exhibitor arrive in Portland, OR at a show. Her luggage did not. Within three minutes of an announcement, she had extra cage curtains, a litterbox, food and water dishes, toys, bedding, etc. Everything she needed to exhibit that day. Someone even offered a change of clothing if she needed that, they were the approximate same size. Her luggage arrived that night. She was clearly overwhelmed.

So go to the show. Have fun no matter what. And you will learn.