



# WE think

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF WOMEN EXHIBITORS

*STAMPSHOW 2007 in Portland, Oregon hosted WE meetings and seminars. This one, conducted by Janet Klug and Denise Stotts, addresses a fundamental concern for all beginning exhibitors.*

## Guide to Overcoming intimidation



**Let's face the facts.** There aren't many women in the world of philately, and there are even fewer women engaged in the sport of philatelic exhibiting. Consider:

- Fewer than 15% of APS members are women
- Only 6% of APS accredited judges are women (8 out of 131).\*
- The number of women judges probably correlates to the number of women exhibitors

But hey! Being a minority is a good thing! It makes us a lot more sensitive to the feelings of other minorities within the hobby, right? If it doesn't, it should.

But being a minority is also a bad thing. It is easy to become isolated and discouraged when you think you are "all alone." It is easy to become intimidated!

**How we become intimidated.** Others may purposefully or unconsciously intimidate us. It is not uncommon to feel intimidated by stamp dealers, other collectors, philatelic judges, show committees or club and society

officers and members. Many of these people are completely unaware that they may be intimidating and will probably be aghast to learn that you feel intimidated by them.

So stand your ground. If you feel uncomfortable, let the person know. They may actually appreciate it, and at the very least you will be doing a favor to others who feel intimidated by these same people.

It is impossible to control the actions of others beyond letting them know how you feel, but we can control how we make ourselves feel!

Sometimes we are our own worst enemies, and we are the cause of our feelings of intimidation. Lots of things keep us from doing the things we want to do:

**Fear!** Especially fear of failure.

**Shyness!**

**Lack of something!** (Knowledge, money, confidence, etc.)

So what does this have to do with exhibiting?

*Intimidation and fear prevent us from doing what we want to do!*

**So what can we do about it? Overcome the fear.**

*"We have nothing to fear but fear itself."*

~~Franklin D. Roosevelt

A variety of techniques can be used to overcome fear. The easiest is finding a kindred soul with whom to commiserate when fear freezes you into inaction. Look for a mentor who will make you feel comfortable. WE is full of women just like you who have felt intimidated and have overcome that feeling.

Make certain you celebrate every success. It doesn't matter if it is a small achievement or a large one. You did good. Celebrate!

Build your confidence by showing your exhibit at smaller shows. Sometimes being a big fish in a small pond will help overcome those nagging feelings of inadequacy.

Once you gain a little confidence, become a mentor for others who are just entering into the exhibiting scene.

New exhibitors appreciate personalized attention. You did, didn't you? Helping others builds your own confidence.

Recognize that everyone – even the most intimidating person you have come up against –

was once a beginner, and was probably just as intimidated as you were. If THEY can do it, so can you!

Shyness can stop you in your tracks, but exhibiting is a perfect way to overcome that. Introduce yourself by name to a dealer or another customer at a dealer's table the next time you go to a stamp show. Ask other collectors what they collect, and help them look. You will instantaneously gain a new friend. Collectors love talking about what they collect, so strike up conversations at shows and club meetings. And once you have done that, celebrate your success. You did good!

If you are beating yourself up because of something you lack or perceive you lack, do something about it.

Money can be a huge obstacle. Choose a subject to collect and exhibit that fits within your budget. This may mean downsizing your grand ideas and being creative. It is a challenge to overcome; not a reason to quit. Remember: Award-winning exhibits have been created on incredibly modest budgets. If you want to exhibit, you can.

What's that? You say you lack

A young orangutan with a speech bubble. The speech bubble contains the text: "You want me to exhibit???", "Are you NUTS???", and "Are you NUTS???".

You want me to exhibit???  
Are you NUTS???  
Are you NUTS???

knowledge. Hey, we all did at the beginning. Whether it is philatelic knowledge, knowledge of subject or even exhibiting techniques, this is the easiest obstacle to overcome. Read. Join specialty societies. Use the American Philatelic Research Library ([www.stamplibrary.org](http://www.stamplibrary.org)) Ask other collectors and dealers for help. Find a mentor. Go to museums and archives. Google, and then Google some more. Build your confidence, step by step. Confidence comes with successes, both large and small. Success comes from ability. Ability comes from practice. Practice springs from desire, and that desire comes from passion. Philatelic exhibiting is a passion.

### Keys to success

*Set realistic goals.* So what if you didn't win a gold medal? Did you have fun doing the exhibit? Do you love your subject? Don't beat yourself up.

*Enjoy what you do.* This is a **HOBBY**. If it is stressful, you aren't doing it right. Chill!  
*Make new friends.* This is the **BEST** reason for exhibiting! Immersing yourself in your hobby through exhibiting is an amazing experience. Time flies. Worries disappear. And it's a lot cheaper than therapy!

### Exhibiting is fun!

\* 1997 was the last time a woman was accredited as an APS judge.

**TERMINATE THE TIMIDITY**  
What's the worst that could happen?



If you enter your exhibit in a show, something bad could happen. *Really?*

### WHAT?

You might be embarrassed.  
You might be disappointed.  
You might feel dumb.

### SO WHAT?!?!

**EVERYBODY** has felt embarrassed, disappointed and dumb!

"I think I can! I think I can! I think I can!"

THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD