

PCNY Luncheon
New York City's Top Photo Editors
September 23, 2003

Madge Stager, Chief Enterprise Photo Editor, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS: Good afternoon, it's nice to be here. The Associated Press, as I'm sure you know, is the world's largest newsgathering organization, so we're slightly different in our needs than newspapers and magazines. If you get the picture to us, we will get it to the newspapers and the magazines. And the best way to do that is to do your homework. I totally agree with that. Don't get the name of somebody at the AP and then just send them faxes and pictures for the rest of your career. We move around a lot. You need to refresh, to know who it is that you need to talk to. There's different desks, there's different bureaus, in New York City there's the Metro Desk. I will sometimes get a PR person that will call me because somebody gave them my name and they just want to send me the information. And when I say, "I'm not the right person." "Oh, but I just have to call the AP!" and they just want to get off the phone. So, their event never gets covered because they've called the person who doesn't care, basically.

The other thing is to make pictures electronic, no prints, no slides. It's the last century; you need to come into this one. If we go to an event, if you do something where you're going to make other pictures available it really needs to be on disk or it needs to be done email. Quality is imperative. If you do things electronically they need to be high quality images. We can always make an image smaller, we cannot make it larger. If we get some kind of loose quality, small JPEG we're not going to be able to transmit it.

I have a little list of things because when I told the folks at the AP I was coming they had, "Oh! Tell them this, tell them that!" So hopefully I won't take longer than the three or four minutes, I'll just go down the list.

If it's possible to have a website where pictures are posted then we can go and get them. A lot of the entertainment people have that.

Selection is imperative. Do not only make book covers and album covers available because there are copyright issues and we are not going to be able to use those, they are the work of another photographer. If there are restrictions on the pictures that you offer it has to be mentioned right up front. Otherwise we have to call, we have to try to track you down. That's the other pet peeve: return your phone calls, lot of people seem to have problems with that.

Please don't alter images electronically. Do not take things out, or people, or put them in, if there's a publication that wants to do that that is their prerogative. It is not the AP policy and you will be found out. The cloned cats: for whatever reason, the university PR decided to clone out the clock that was hanging on the wall in the picture of the cloned kittens. The picture went out there, it was found out, it had to be eliminated and now that PR firm is right up on our list of people to watch. Your reputation is even more important than your clients', in my opinion.

For people, if you can make people available to us, if you're representing somebody, handouts are not always the best way to go. Don't promise that we're getting exclusives. We're the AP; we know that you're not really giving us exclusives. You might give us an outtake that nobody else is getting, but we know that it's the Post and the Daily News and the New York Times. If you're honest with us you have a lot better

chance of finding somebody that's going to be receptive and happy when you call and not just, kind of, blowing it off.

Remember deadlines. If you have something, because nowadays entertainment, science, business stuff happens on deadlines. People are named the CEO of some big company or a famous couple breaks up, if you've got something to offer remember deadlines. Don't just put them out there, find out about deadlines, call and ask if you don't know. There's always somebody that you can find.

And that's pretty much the end of the list. If there are any questions I'm sure that we'll take them. Thank you very much.