

PCNY presents

THE NEW YORK BUREAU: NEWSPAPERS

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Martha Moore's bio:

News reporter for USA TODAY. Has covered all kinds of subjects from politics and media to plane crashes and 9/11. Joined USA TODAY in 1989, has been a Knight-Bagehot Fellow in economics and business journalism at Columbia U. Received Clarion Award for investigative series in 2003 for stories on the World Trade Center terrorist attack. Graduated from Yale University; lives in NYC with her family.

REMARKS: Thanks. I was just telling Josh that when I walked into this room I realized that I hadn't been in this room since I was an advertising and marketing reporter and I was here for a luncheon of the International Motor Press Association, which I was briefly a member of, and there were two women in the room and we were both wearing the same dress.

Anyway, this is *USA Today*, the paper that I write for, which I hope that you have seen as we are widely on sale in New York City. We're a little bit different than the other papers represented here in that we're not technically an out-of-town newspaper. As you know, we call ourselves "The Nation's Newspaper." We are a national newspaper and we're nobody's local newspaper. We're everybody's paper and we're nobody's local paper. So as you may know, we're the largest circulation paper in the country. We sell about 2.3 million copies a day. On weekends, for the Friday edition we sell as many as three million copies. I recently found out that in Manhattan we outsell *Newsday*, which I found very exciting because even though we're the largest paper in the country I still have a lot of trouble getting the New York cops to return my call.

What you need to know when you pitch *USA Today*, like everyone else at this table, to make *USA Today* a New York story needs to be not just for people in New York. New York is, you know, the capital of the world, as we all know, thank you Mayor Bloomberg, and there is a lot of inherent interest in what happens in New York among our readership as there is in the entire country, but for many stories there really needs to be a reason why our readers in Ohio and Florida and everywhere else in the country should go past the lead to the story. So please keep that in mind when you are pitching us.

We have 24 people in our New York bureau including three news reporters, such as myself, we also have reporters from all of our four sections: News, Money, Life and Sports. There are reporters who cover the financial markets, the advertising and marketing industry, media business, personal finance, telecommunications and then people like the TV reporters, theater critic, celebrity reporters and feature reporters. Almost everybody reports to an editor who is at *USA Today's* headquarters in Washington, which makes the bureau a little bit like study hall because there's no editors around, but it means there's no assigning editor in New York so that makes it harder to pitch us in New York because you have to know who covers what. And to do that, you have to read the paper. I'm sorry, but you *have to* read the paper. If you aren't reading the paper and you pitch us we can tell. I don't mean to sound *strict*, but please read the paper if you want to pitch the paper.

Email is the best way to reach us, there is no good time after 3:00 to call a reporter, so it's probably not a good idea. Since I'm a news reporter I cover a really big range of topics from 9/11 to elephants with tuberculosis, so it's easier for me to say what I personally *don't* cover. I don't do a lot of spot news, we don't have the news hole for it and there aren't a lot of spot news events that are big enough, that will rate news hole in our paper. Speeches, awards, launches, initiatives, opening of initiatives, openings of anything are not usually something that are spot news stories for us. I don't cover the U.N., that's handled by our foreign desk. I frequently get pitches from people or calls from nonprofits about something going on at the U.N. but that's not my turf, unfortunately. I don't personally don't do stories that don't have a really strong news angle like public safety or public money or the economy or a disaster or the threat of terrorism or something like that. There are reporters in our New York bureau who cover many softer topics or more feature-y topics and those are the people to whom those pitches should go. I do like to write about trends, some of the things Lisa mentioned about potty parity and things like that are just good stories that any reporter would like to jump on and those are certainly stories I like to cover. I like to write about things that are happening in New York that are about to happen everywhere else or are going to happen everywhere else because it's happening in New York. Or I like to write about things that are happening in New York and can *only* happen in New York for reasons that are a little more complicated and interesting than Cindy Adams' saying, "Only in New York!"

A survey or a study is much more likely to make our paper if we get it first. It may be the only way that a survey or study will make our paper is if we get it first.

I think spotting a story for *USA Today* is a little bit of a knack. It doesn't have anything to do with how short or long you think the story should be, it has to do with how intriguing and how informative it is, how relevant it is to people in everyday life, how much it's going to grab them and make them talk about the topic and make them think about the topic. It's a little bit "you know it when you see it," but I think if you read the paper consistently it's certainly something that everybody can get.

Thanks a lot.