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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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FOR RELEASE IF DESIRED

TO ART EDITORS
TO CITY EDITORS
TO PICTURE EDITORS
TO SPECIAL EDITORS

Dear Sirs:

Several weeks ago I sent you a postcard "ballot" listing qualities desirable and undesirable in publicity people. I sent out approximately 750 ballots and received returns of almost half that number. Apparently newspaper people have suffered long and in silence from press agents and publicity counsels. Many additional faults and virtues were listed and some of the "voters" even took time to write me letters on the sins of publicity people.

The following qualities took first, second, and third places:

- | <u>Undesirable</u> | <u>Desirable</u> |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Inaccuracy | 1. Honesty |
| 2. Exaggeration | 2. Anticipating editorial needs |
| 3. Pressure-by-Pull | 3. Impartiality |

In weighted figures (compiled by a statistician) the count was as follows:

- | <u>Undesirable</u> | <u>Desirable</u> |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Exaggeration | 1. Honesty |
| 2. Inaccuracy | 2. Promptness |
| 3. Incompleteness | 3. Adequate Preparation |
| 4. Misrepresentation | 4. Anticipating editorial needs |
| 5. Pressure-by-Pull | 5. Thoroughness |
| 6. Greed | 6. Impartiality |
| 7. Nagging | 7. Supplementary material |

Undesirable qualities written in on the ballots: too long articles; publicity, not news; sloppy construction; ballyhoo; pseudo-artistic; irrelevant or unimportant detail; poor journalistic judgment; synthetic hooey; lack of imagination in dealing with subject; vagueness; overuse of adjectives.

Desirable qualities written in: news sense; human interest; good leads; regional angles; concise facts; good mechanical preparation of copy, i.e. leaving blank half-page at top for insertion of slug lines and leads by newspaper editor or writer; sense of humor; brief synopsis of entire release including dates given in headline or short opening paragraph.

The information and figures obtained from the "balloting" have been passed on to the members of the American Association of Museums and will, I hope, result in better press releases--at least from museums.

Thank you for your contribution to this enlargement of knowledge among publicity people.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Newmeyer

Sarah Newmeyer
Publicity Director