The Rate for the Job

How members can get Apple discounts
LONDON Freelance Branch Committee member Nicci Talbot has, with the NUJ Freelance Office, negotiated to reinstate discounts for NUJ members on Apple products. These range from 6 per cent to 10 per cent depending on what you’re buying. More details are at www.nuj.org.uk/about/membership-benefits/apple-store – you’ll need to get an NUJ member login.

THIS MONTH’S Rates for the Job is an eclectic mix of work – perhaps reflecting journalists’ need to supplement core income by breaking out into new fields.

Thinking about work for a company you’ve not dealt with before? Look at the Rate for the Job to find out what companies in similar niches have paid. Then aim higher. You can submit rates online at www.londonfreelance.org/rates – please give not only the basic rate (e.g. for First British Serial rights) but extra payments negotiated for extra uses, like the Web. These are shown as (eg) £400+100. Rates marked X are, in the editor’s fallible opinion, below par. Treat all rates as minima, even perhaps the happy ◊ few.

Broadcasting: LBC radio, presenting one-hour show – if you are Nigel Farage (according to Private Eye) £32,000 for 5 shows a week = £1230; BBC Radio 4, producer day, 8 hours £190; Voice of America Turkey, 5 minute live update on Brexit £100.

Photography: Southbank galleries, 10 silver bromide prints £12,000; Mentorn media, video footage, length unspecified £800; New Internationalist, one photo £65 and two photos, print use only £50 and two photos, print plus web £50; Belfast Telegraph, single news photograph for print edition only £25 and single news photograph for use online £15 XXX.

Shifts: subbing a magazine translated into English from French, £8,000 words in total £2300 X, Afrika Confidential, unspecified day (writing? editing?) £185; Money Saving Expert, writing/editing day £170; Mail on Sunday, unspecified day (writing? editing?) £150 X, Self-published book, copy-editing – took 29 hours – per hour £35.

Teaching: A Cambridge University college, half-day teaching the business of freelancing, travel paid, lunch provided £300.

Words, per 1000: Major music label, 800-word musician biography @ £400 £500; Frieze, art review, 700 words @ £180 = £257; Frieze, art review outside UK, 2 editors £180; ARTnews, art review outside UK + 1 edit and a couple of emails – all rights to publisher £150.

Words, other: Telegraph, one story £60 XXXX.

Photographers! Help! MANY thanks to those who submitted the rates here. We need more! The NUJ is updating the Freelance Fees Guide and we have to base this on reported rates. So please visit www.londonfreelance.org/rates/submit and let us know the rates you’ve received for five recent jobs – the good, the bad and the indifferent – in strict confidence.

The Trireme

This month’s Trireme Award, for “the worst terms since I was last chained to the oars,” in the words of one freelance…, goes to the Belfast Telegraph, paying just £15 for use of a photo online.

Work for local papers ‘as important as the nationals’, Dutch court to be told

TWO DUTCH freelance journalists – writer Britt van Uem and photographer Ruud Rogier – have taken their former client, regional news publisher Persgroep (“Press Group”) to court in Amsterdam over their €15-an-hour fees.

The plaintiffs, supported by the NUJ’s sister union the Nederlandsche Vereniging van Journalisten (NVJ), demand they receive a higher rate equivalent to those paid by national newspapers.

In the first case of its kind, they argue that their work for the locals has the same “importance to society” as work for national newspapers. Their contractual arrangements with Persgroep are complicated by a licence that now gives Persgroep rights to the resale of photos for the first week after publication.

Britt and Ruud say it is in practical terms not possible to negotiate with Persgroep, which has an effective monopoly. The submission notes that Persgroep’s most recent annual profit was 15 per cent, or €126 million – while they make 13 cents a word or €42 euros an hour.

Their case is based on the Auteurscontractenwet (Authors’ Contracts Act), which states that remuneration for a commission must be “fair” and if necessary a judge can determine what is fair. Belgian journalists in the Dutch-speaking region of Flanders are also watching the case with interest, as Persgroep is a big player there as well. The judgement is expected on 17 May.

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Last-minute European Parliament elections!

AS PREDICTED in the April Freelance, the European Parliament (EP19) election – scheduled for Thursday 23 May in the UK – has indeed got more complicated. This print edition has missed the deadlines for voter registration: if you met them, we commend to you the EP19 manifesto by the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ, of which the NUJ is a part) at www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1903efj.html – it calls for a revival of a free and pluralistic media in Europe.

Fair Pay for Freelancers

LFB’s APRIL meeting heard from Anna Codrea-Rado, who has been a freelance for two years after being made redundant from Vice. She’s been running The Professional Freelancer weekly newsletter – theprofessionalfreelancer.substack.com – “as I’m learning”.

Payment issues became apparent to Anna very quickly. At the beginning of this year, when The Pool website closed, freelances were left thousands of pounds out of pocket. So Anna started a campaign around Fair Pay for Freelancers – www.bit.ly/fairpayforfreelancers – the campaign’s demands include an end to payment on publication, strengthened law on late payments, and the abolition of “bottlenecks” such as those around the timewasting bureaucracy of having to get a purchase order number before you can get paid.

The campaign has an open letter, which over 1000 have signed. This has been featured in Press Gazette, the Financial Times and elsewhere.

Anna (not yet an NUJ member at the time of writing) asked LFB how she could work with NUJ.

She is seeking to explore how its institutional support could be lent to engage media organisations to get them to adhere to the above “asks”. These, as Anna points out, are very basic rights, some of them set in law and just being ignored.

LFB’s joint Branch Secretary Phil Sutcliffe said of Anna’s The Professional Freelancer newsletter that “as a freelance for 40 years” he finds he can still learn from it and welcomed Anna “as an ally”.

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• For existing help from this Branch on late payment and claiming compensation and interest on overdue bills see www.londonfreelance.org/interest.html