The Rate for the Job

This month’s Trireme Award for “the worst terms since I was last chained to the oars” goes to the Inland Waterways Association, whose six-month PR and journalism internship for two to five days a week pays expenses only “where appropriate.” See also the Journalism Screwed blog (http://journalismsscrewed.tumblr.com) for numerous worse examples, such as the (regrettably anonymous) “2p per word” ad.

We now record rates paid in Euro as well. Rates marked X are, in the editor’s fallible opinion, below par. Treat all rates as minima, even perhaps the happy few.

Broadcasting: Al Jazeera TV Reporter day shift on contract (so includes time off element) £337.50; ABC radio (USA) 29-minute documentary (10 interviews) – no travel exxes £1000; BBC World Service programme, 8-minute item including 4 interviewees, no exxes, all rights £290; Inside Story Pandurty – 25 mins including car pick up 1.5 hours £250; DW-Radio (Germany), 6-minute radio feature Euros 227; BBC World Service 30-minute simultaneous recording £180; BBC Radio day feature (features) exxes paid £150, half day £75 X; Radio France International 4-minute feature Euros 124; Nursing Standard podcast £100; Channel 4 News expert interview £60 X.

Shifts: The Architect’s Journal subbing day £150; ENDs Report subbing day, unchanged from 2000, £140; Haymarket titles subbing day £150.

It’s for charidee?

A NEW development could lead to a more optimistic landscape for local news start-ups. A campaign by Lord Phillips of Sudbury seems to have persuaded the Charities Commission to allow local news start-ups to register as charities.

Third Sector reported that the Charities Commission had “referred the matter to its board for a decision” and that “It is the commission’s view that the production of a community newspaper may be capable of being recognised as a charitable purpose”, which would make local news start-ups eligible to apply for grant funding and “in-kind” benefits – charities get many services at reduced rates, and a lot of local councils have a stock of buildings that they make available at below market rents, but only to organisations with charitable status.

Watch this space for updates on developments at the Charities Commission. See our report on journalism as a social enterprise at www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1003coop.html and the story of Magnet on page 1.

The Ecologist

Working Tax Credit puzzle

We have heard from a freelance who receives Working Tax Credit and who was contacted by the WTC compliance office requesting proof they’d been working the current required minimum of 30 hours a week. Another freelance also investigated by the compliance office was told by them they’d carried out 16,000 compliance checks of late, with more to come. Meanwhile, the Department for Work and Pensions has proposed a new “Universal Credit” to replace Jobseeker’s Allowance, Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Disability benefits and more.

The Freelance is still struggling to get its heads round the implications for the many freelance journalists on Tax Credits. Freelances on Tax Credit are advised to ensure they have documentary evidence of working at least 30 hours a week.

See the online version at www.londonfreelance.org/fl/1202tax.html for resources and advice on Working Tax Credit. LBF expects to start campaigning around this issues in the near future: watch this space.

iBastard?

The End User License Agreement (EULA) for Apple’s new iBooks Author free new software seems not only to restrict what users can legally do with it but, according to ZDNet (znetbooks.notlong.com), would appear also to restrict its output – the e-books that the user produces using the software. ZDNet described it as being a bit like Microsoft deciding what images you can project at it as being a bit like Microsoft deciding not to distribute your work. ZDNet suspect “sloppy lawyering” rather than deliberate greed. One author told the Freelance that they thought no serious professional writer would be using any free software to publish e-books anyway.

Strike alert

NUJ members at Trinity Mirror, the Guardian and the Financial Times have authorised the union to call ballots on possible strike action. Members at Thomson Reuters were due to have struck on 9 and 10 February, and at Newsquest on 13 February. Watch nuj.org.uk for further strike dates, on which you may find yourself unavailable. Freelances who suffer hardship as a result of being unavailable should contact the striking chapel. Meanwhile national papers have announced cut-backs on casuals’ shifts. News International is offering an exit payment and the Independent a choice between an exit payment and continuing to do fewer shifts. The Guardian is reported to be cutting half its shifts. The Freelance Office is doing its best to support members with claims for “exit payments.”