FREELANCE folio

E-NEWS FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS of THE FREELANCE FORUM

FEBRUARY 2008

FREELANCE FORUM
PO Box 250024
Atlanta, GA 30325
www.freelanceforum.org

Annual Membership Dues:
Individual – $85
Couples/Partners – $150
Student – $60

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Is a contract really a pain?
A huge freelance migraine?
Then come to the meeting
There's plenty of seating
And be amazed at the knowledge you'll gain!
–Jon Lee Andersen

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH MEETING

The Thing about Contracts

BY JON LEE ANDERSEN, THE ANDERSEN LAW FIRM

Contracts are essential to every business, and freelancing is no exception. Although viewed by many as mysterious, lengthy, boring and incomprehensible (and I have seen some that really *are* incomprehensible), a proper contract makes almost all transactions go better. Each freelancer should have a contract form for his or her particular field of endeavor. The February meeting's presentation will focus on the essentials of a contract, the maybe's of a contract, and the no-no's of a contract. And since your presenter is a lawyer with a soft spot for freelancers, there might even be a little legal advice sprinkled around for free.

WHEN: February 7, 6:15–8:30 pm WHERE: The Creative Circus
ADDRESS: 812 Lambert Drive (near the I-85 Monroe Drive exit)
ADMISSION: FREE for Members/Guests $15 *(check or cash only, please)*

SEE LAST PAGE FOR DETAILED MAP AND DIRECTIONS TO CREATIVE CIRCUS

January Meeting Recap

Groups Discuss Pricing, Business Practices

GRAPHIC ARTISTS: Notetaker: Linda McCulloch; submitted by Jerry Silvestrini. Group was a mix of agency/studio and corporate designers; 25% do both, 33% work for non-profits.

Q: Should designers charge by the page for layout work or the same amount for all tasks?
A: Time is time.

Comments: Designers do a lot of hourly work and base job estimates on that relevant rate. Designers charge $100 per page for newsletters (layout, writing, editing). Some have difficulty estimating time for a project and also time-tracking.

Suggestions: Consider raising rates; keep accurate time sheets to better determine average time that a project will take; estimate low-high range for job, then give client high end; for client with low per-hour ceiling, double estimated time when bidding.

If not that interested in job, or the client seems difficult, give a high estimate (and be well compensated for the trouble); try to avoid quoting an hourly rate, and use

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David Batley

Designers weaving (dreamy) ideas for business.

Editors' Notes: ***Soozy G. Miller*** *has joined* ***Honey Judith Rubin*** *as Folio co-editor. We will co-produce each issue, a change from the old format of taking turns each month. This way, the work and pressures can be shared each month and our individual business needs can be more easily addressed. We ask that you always send your submissions to us both.*

We are also asking your input and ideas for how the Folio can better meet your individual needs, and be a marketing tool for the group at large.

We appreciate your support.

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January Recap *continued from page 1*

experience and speed as justification for the estimate; itemize project into separate, varying rates to justify the whole.

Q: How to raise prices?
A: The first of the year or at the beginning of a new project are good times (learn when the client's fiscal year begins). Let client know that you have other projects; it increases your value. Explain your creative process and educate the client so they understand the rate. Raise rates on everything if busy; negotiate more when business is slow. Consider minimum (i.e., $200) for all jobs. Try inquiring about the amount the client has budgeted for the project.

Q: How many revisions in the estimate?
A: One to three rounds, if minor.

Comments: Put acceptable number of revisions in the contract or state no revisions. Put in the contract that you bill at an hourly rate separately for revisions or give new estimate for additional revisions.

Q: What about negotiating in meetings?
A: Be clear, and be confident of your value.

Q: What if the client keeps asking for projects to be done for less?
A: Raise your initial price so you can come down a bit.

Q: How do designers find new clients that will pay what a project is worth?
A: Keep trying; be prepared to walk if others don't perceive your value.

General conclusion: Graphic Artists Guild pricing guidelines are on the high end for Atlanta because they are more geared towards New York clients.

WRITERS: Compiled and submitted by Georgia Dzurica, Kathy Couch, Kathleen Kite-Powell and Paul Glickstein. Twenty-five writers were divided into two groups. All but two are in marcom/advertising.

David Batley

Rate synopsis: The 2007 hourly rate range: $20 to more than $100 (high is $150, average is $86.60). This is regardless of project. The suggested "day rate": add $10 to normal hourly rate and assume a 10-hour day.

Half identified $50–$100 as the prospect walk-away rate range. Some charge 50% more for weekend work, 150% for holidays or 200% for rushes

Revelations and observations: Fixed-price jobs can be more lucrative than charging by the hour. If you do the job faster than your estimate, you keep the difference and, therefore, earn a higher hourly rate.

Always ask if the prospect has a budget before wasting time on someone who isn't realistic. You may find out you can charge more than you expected, or use the info to make a counteroffer if there's a discrepancy. On big jobs, get the money up front!

If you must negotiate price, never concede without getting something of value in return (reduced job scope, fewer revisions, more time, a small add-on project, etc.). Lowballing a first project "to get the business" sets up the wrong expectations for future

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David Batley

Writers crafting their best ideas for success.

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Got an item or suggestion for the Folio? Have you won an award, landed a new acccount, had a baby? Contact one of our Folio editors:

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We want to hear from you!

January Recap *continued from page 2*

David Batley

Writers finding just the right words.

work. Spec work is taboo. Clients demanding very low prices are often hard to work with. Projects that are referrals and requests from friends may be red flags for slow pay or "no-pay."

Agencies are resisting paying full price (yet mark up 100% and then say "you'll get paid when we get paid"). Some writers cut their rate 15–40% to accommodate this and others don't work with agencies.

Many get an advance before starting, even for rush jobs. Some ideas: Tell the client that the work is priced lower if paid up front; give clients a choice of either paying one-half or full fee up front; offer discounts (5% for early payment, 2% for guaranteed volume). Regular work trumps a slightly higher rate.

Suggestions for time-tracking: Keep time manually and round to the nearest 15 minutes; use inexpensive software such as Traxtime or On the Job. This helps with future estimating, too.

Don't give up-front volume discounts. When prospects say "We have lots more work" to get a lower price, this usually means they don't.

Comments on contracts: Penalty for payments after 30 days is not useful or enforceable. Try to limit the number of revisions in the estimate, or use "not-to-exceed" language to limit time spent on a job. Testimonial requests should be part of the invoicing process. With today's time-compressed scheduling, it's harder to charge rush fees. One person bundles a rush charge into the project price without identifying it. One doesn't charge good clients, but puts "rush charges waived" on the invoice. A couple of people include their estimating time in the job.

At least one person no longer will work for magazines that "pay on publication," only for those that "pay on acceptance."

Many people find raising their rates uncomfortable. Some send out annual rate increase announcements. Others simply quote the higher rate to new customers and keep existing clients at the old rate for longer periods.

Costs are going up, but writers are afraid to increase prices as the work thins. Technical writers see firms again putting writers on salary and cutting back on outsourcing. Several people noticed drop-offs in work, and that may mean a recession is coming.

Most were not asking who the competition is, and that's the only way to find out that there are x-number of out-of-towners who have come in charging higher rates.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: Notetaker: Jan Stittleburg. Group consisted of five members and three visitors, including an illustrator.

Comments and observations: Prefer project-by-project rates (rather than hourly), but base estimate on a good hourly rate that includes non-shooting time and costs of running a business: marketing, bookwork, upgrades and new equipment, etc.

Rates range from $300–$1800 per day, based on the client; larger corporation is charged more than a non-profit, and is based on end-use.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Jan Stittleburg

From the very beginning, when the Founding Mothers first started the Freelance Forum, it has been a volunteer organization. I, personally, have shunned volunteering like a cat shuns water.

When I first joined, I was told to volunteer. Get on a committee, they said, and you will make connections, meet prospects, make new contacts, and so on. Things will start to happen. Of course, I would have none of that. I just wanted to show up at meetings and eat little rolled up sandwiches.

I didn't even know there was an Executive Board until then-president Laura Heck called and asked me to volunteer to be vice president. This was the easy job, I was told. All I had to do was attend the board meetings, which was dinner, and report on the messages received on the Forum's voice mail. Easy peasy, lemon squeezy. So, I volunteered. And now, I drive the bus!

Everyone tells me that I'll be a good president because I don't mind standing up in front of 50 people and goofing off. But, I figure the real art of being president is to delegate responsibility. Well, it comes down to this: if you want to get the most out of an organization, take on some small responsibility. Sometimes it's a pain, and sometimes there are scalding hot deadlines that take priority. But, the big rewards await the people who are most useful, who are indispensable, who volunteer. And I'm not talking about getting a $25 gift card (although those are also appreciated). Go on and make yourself useful. I want you!

Right now, we need a co-volunteer to be Food Czar. It's an easy gig. All you have to do is periodically pass around a clipboard at a meeting and then call on the people who volunteer to make sure they remember to bring food and drinks. This is your big chance to easy fame and fortune. Everyone loves the Food Czar. You can do it. Contact me and we'll get you on your way to connections, prospects, and riches.

That's all for now.

—Your president, Jerry Silvestrini

January Recap *continued from page 3*

Digital processing fees range from $2.00 per image to $30.00 per shot, depending on the type of shot. Portrait work generates more images for client selection; product or architectural shot is generally a one-of-a-kind image. Additional retouching average is $75 per hour.

Travel rate is generally half of the day rate (for overnight travel), plus expenses.

Slow payers should be offered a payment schedule; the last resort is to send paper invoices by registered mail.

Spec work should be avoided at all costs.

Credit line should be required with the photo on all editorial photography, since it pays so much less than commercial photography.

Keep a paper trail for every project as insurance for possible law suits.

A portrait photography package is generally sold before any shots are taken. With weddings, only an estimated 10% of the shots captured are sold, and they are the "formula" shots, not candids. With the advent of better digital point-and-shoot cameras, it has become harder to educate the client on the value of professional photography; photographers still spend a lot of time educating clients on copyright laws and use of images.

Part of becoming a great photographer is knowing when to stop editing and retouching.

David Batley

Photographers capturing just the right ideas.

PUT THE SOURCEBOOK TO WORK FOR YOU!

The 2008–2009 edition of the Freelance Forum Sourcebook makes an excellent leave-behind for clients and prospects—just highlight your listing (or ad).
If you need an extra copy or two (dozen), contact **Jan Stittleburg** at 770-931-8170 or ***photofx@bellsouth.net.***

Marketing Committee Report

Catching the Eyes of Prospects

BY BARBARA WILKES

Last year the Freelance Forum marketing committee worked on several fronts to promote our image and advertise our members' diverse talent and capabilities. The work aimed at bringing members new business included:

- Exploration of additional outreach tactics and an action plan
- Print ads in two issues of *Oz Magazine*, a hotlink from www.ozonline.tv to our site, and a listing write-up and ad in the 2007–2008 Creative Index
- News releases distributed to the business press and trade journals covering Atlanta's creative community to announce events and personnel news
- Sponsorship of the Business Marketing Association, Atlanta Ad Club, and the Atlanta Integrated Marketing Summit (exposure included signage, mini-presentations/brief mention at meetings, hotlinks to our site, a discounted Summit admission fee, distribution of Sourcebooks, half-off meeting cards, bookmarks, and direct mail samples)
- Marketing messages in the opening section of the Sourcebook, an ad promoting our November Portfolio Show, and fulfilling prospective buyers' requests for Sourcebooks and capturing contact information for list-building
- A Georgia State University graphic design class presentation
- Website revamps (wording for marketing points aimed at creative buyers, case studies, customer testimonials, client lists, navigation changes, and new meta-tags to increase search engine optimization)

The committee helped make the Freelance Forum a well-recognized and respected creative services source among prospective buyers. Marketing committee members included **Sandy Barth**, **Paul Glickstein**, **Honey Judith Rubin**, **Stan Schnitzer**, **Robin Sherman**, **Barbara Wilkes** and marketing Chair **Irene Hatchett.** Presentation subcommittee members were **Keith Bishop**, **Sandy Barth**, **Paul Glickstein**, **Linda McCulloch**, **Jennifer Medina** and **Stan Schnitzer.** In addition, **Kellie Frissell** pitched in to design one of the three ads produced.

The group hopes last year's hard work will pay off throughout 2008, attracting business that members can grow into profitable, long-term client relationships.

MEMBER NEWS

Linda McCulloch

Tired of drawing just with your mouse?

Get your drawing mojo back with this top-level figure drawing class with a live nude professional model. Meetings are twice a month every other Monday, 7 to 9 pm, at the studio of **Linda McCulloch** and **Michael Gaston** in Tucker. The extremely reasonable fee must be paid in advance for blocks of four sessions. There are still a couple of openings for members committed for the long term ... this is not for drop-ins. Call Linda at 770-493-7154 or email ***linda@greatdesignthatworks.com.***

We are very sorry to report the recent passing of Jan Stittleburg's father, Martin Gutekunst. We extend our condolences to Jan and her family.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Maureen McCarthy, marketing & project management

Jo Odio, writer

Tori Press, graphic designer

Julie Simon, writer

Emily Soares, writer

Robert Solomon, writer

Marcia Wasserman, art director/graphic designer

Diane Watson, photographer

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DIRECTIONS TO CREATIVE CIRCUS

FROM DOWNTOWN HEADING NORTH ON PIEDMONT: North of Ansley Mall, turn right onto Cheshire Bridge Rd. Go approximately 2/10 of a mile to Manchester St (at Roxx Tavern) on your left. Turn left and follow Manchester until it ends at Lambert and turn right. Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

FROM BUCKHEAD HEADING SOUTH ON PIEDMONT: Continue south past Lindbergh and go under I-85 overpass. Turn left at the first light past I-85 onto Lambert. Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

FROM CHESHIRE BRIDGE/LAVISTA ROADS: On Cheshire Bridge from Lavista, go approximately 1 mile south toward Piedmont Rd. Turn right onto Manchester St (at Roxx Tavern, just past NAPA Auto Parts). Follow Manchester till it ends at Lambert and turn right. Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

FROM I-85 NORTHBOUND: Take exit 86 (Monroe/Piedmont/Buford Hwy). Coming off the I-85 exit ramp take the first exit (Monroe/Piedmont). Go left at the light, then take an almost immediate left at the BP Station onto Piedmont Circle. At the next light, cross Piedmont Rd onto Lambert (staying to the right of the yellow highway barrels). Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

FROM I-85 SOUTHBOUND: Take the Lenox/ Cheshire Bridge exit (Exit 86); turn left at the end of the ramp onto Cheshire Bridge. Continue 1.3 miles to Manchester St and turn right (at Roxx Tavern and just past NAPA Auto Parts). Follow Manchester till it ends at Lambert and turn right. Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

OR: Take the Peachtree Rd exit (Exit 88) onto the access road. Take the first exit (Armour/ Monroe). At the end of the ramp go left to the next light and turn left onto Monroe. Turn left at the BP Station onto Piedmont Circle. At the next light, cross Piedmont Rd onto Lambert (staying to the right of the yellow highway barrels). Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

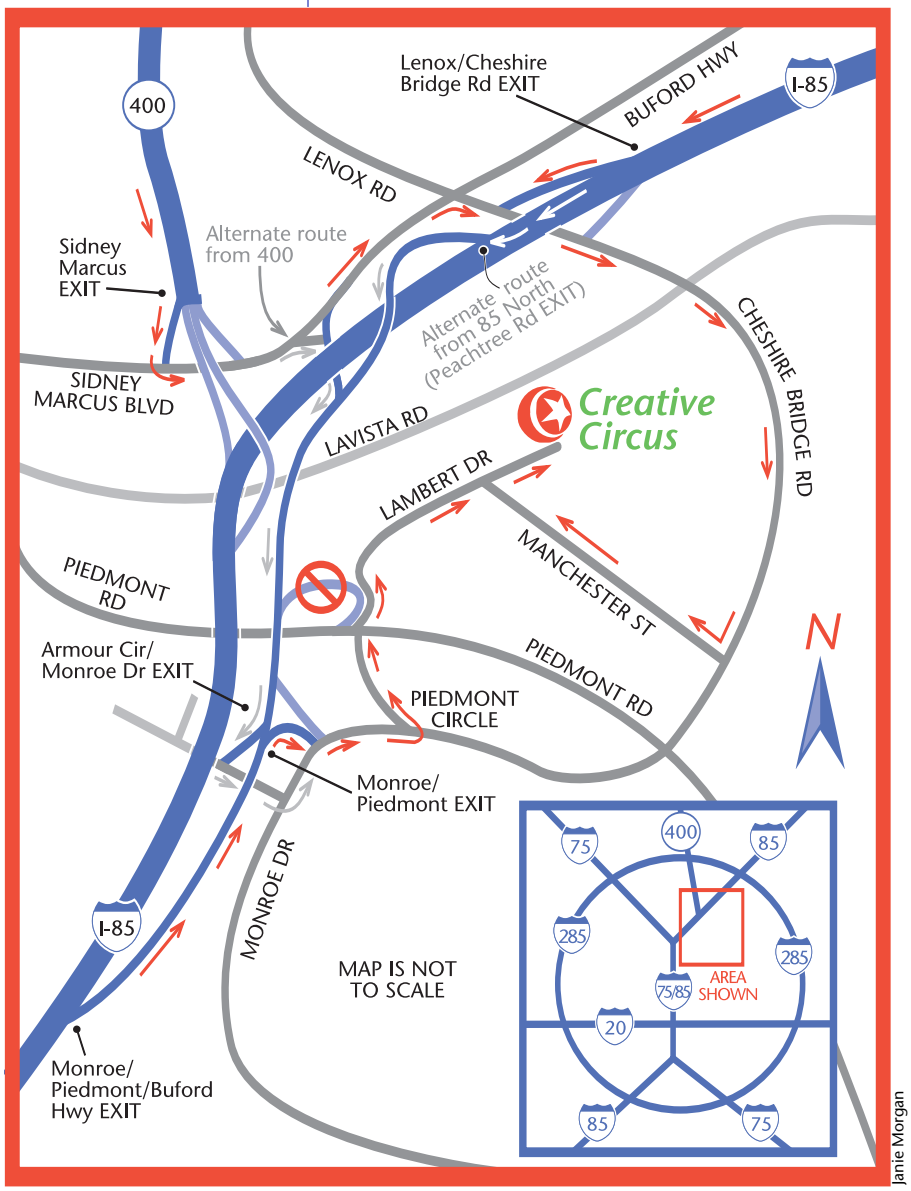
FROM GA 400 SOUTHBOUND: Take the Sidney Marcus exit. At the end of the ramp go left onto Sidney Marcus. Turn left onto Buford Highway. Turn right at the next light onto Cheshire Bridge. Continue 1.4 miles to Manchester St and turn right (at Roxx Tavern and just past NAPA Auto Parts). Follow Manchester till it ends at Lambert and turn right. Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

FROM I-75 SOUTHBOUND: Take the I-85 North ramp. Stay in the right-hand lane once on I-85. Go approximately 1 mile to the Monroe/ Piedmont/ Buford Hwy exit (Exit 86). Coming off the I-85 exit ramp take the first exit (Monroe/ Piedmont). Go left at the light, then take an almost immediate left at the BP Station onto Piedmont Circle. At the next light, cross Piedmont Rd onto Lambert (staying to the right of the yellow highway barrels). Creative Circus is the purple building at the end of Lambert on the left.

REMINDER:

For security reasons, Creative Circus has asked that we enter and leave the school through the Main Entrance only.

Thanks for respecting the wishes of our generous host!



Janie Morgan