

THE CABLE RELEASE

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Organized for the mutual advancement and enjoyment of photography .

NEW YORK CITY PHOTOGRAPY RULES

Some of you may be aware of the various rules that appeared after 9/11. Bill Imhof of Monmouth Camera Club gave several reports to the Delegates regarding the banning of taking photographs of the bridges that ring the city. What many of us didn't realize was the fact that the City proposed a new set of regulations that, if adopted, would have effected banned the amateur and most professional photographers from shooting in and around the City.

Bill, on behalf of his club, wrote an impassioned letter to the Commissioner of the City's Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting regarding this rule proposal. He made it available to the Federation's member clubs and, I'm sure, several piggy-backed on this letter to support the positions Bill put forth. The City backed down, not necessarily because of Bill's letter, but rather because of a public outcry.

We are pleased to present Bill's letter and the story [see Page 3] which appeared in The New York Times on August 4th detailing the City's "change of heart.

July 19, 2007

Ms. Katherine Oliver
Commissioner
Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting
1697 Broadway - 6th Floor
New York, NY 10019

Dear Ms. Oliver:

Re: **Proposed New Rules for Photographers**

We are writing, as active amateur photographers, to request that your office carefully consider the potential negative impacts on amateur photographers and the city, of any new rules, regulations and restrictions on the taking of photographs in New York City. Our understanding of the current proposal, as outlined in the New York Times on June 29th would effectively preclude our members from making group visits to New York for photographic purposes. . . We were especially saddened to note the implication in the article that the proposed rules were prepared with little or no input from those in the photographic community.

The Monmouth Camera Club is a non-profit organization of amateur photographers which was founded in 1985 and currently has approximately 25 members. None of our members is a professional photographer.

Ours is one of approximately 25 camera clubs in the state of New Jersey with better than 1,000 individual members in total. The city and state of New York also have numerous camera clubs who would be even more significantly impacted by the proposed regulations.

The mission of the Monmouth Camera Club is to advance the technical and artistic skills of our members and to encourage their individual growth as photographers. In support of that mission, our club makes group excursions to places of photographic interest throughout the year. In the past year, this has included several trips to New York City by groups of several members to walk around and photograph interesting areas such as Rockefeller Center, Battery Park, Central Park, Times Square, etc.

The proposed regulations, as outlined in the New York Times would "require any group of two or more people who want to use a camera in a single public location for more than a half hour to get a city permit and insurance." The article goes on to say: "The same requirements would apply to any group of five or more people who plan to use a tripod in a public location for more than 10 minutes, including the time it takes to set up the equipment."

The proposed regulations, as outlined in the New York Times would "require any group of two or more people who want to use a camera in a single public location for more than a half hour to get a city permit and insurance." The article goes on to say: "The same requirements would apply to any group of five or more people who plan to use a tripod in a public location for more than 10 minutes, including the time it takes to set up the equipment."

Clearly, our Camera Club's excursions to New York for photography would be impacted by the proposed regulations. We would, invariably, exceed the two person limitation and, in most cases, many of our members would use tripods. Taking quality, artistic photographs is a process which takes time and those members using tripods would invariably exceed the proposed 10 minute limitation.

The net result of the proposed regulations, if promulgated in their current form, would be to preclude our club from making photographic trips to New York City in the future. As a non-profit organization with a limited budget, we could not justify insurance premiums for one or two trips a year to New York for a limited number of our members. Additionally, the process of applying for a permit might also prove difficult as many of our trips are relatively ad-hoc with little advance lead time to apply for the required permit. Sadly, our members would lose the opportunity to hone their skills in some of the best locations in the region. The city would lose the economic value of the members' visits and, more importantly, the ongoing publicity value of the images as they are exhibited by the members in exhibitions and salons throughout the area and, in fact, across the globe.

As you proceed with the process of refining and promulgating the proposed regulations, we request that any final rules:

Clearly state the purpose and objectives of the proposed rules to provide a context for both compliance and enforcement.

Be as specific as possible in the requirements to prevent confusion by the public and the authorities.

Be limited in scope to only those facilities or locations which (a) are potential prime targets for terrorists and (b) do not already have extensive information and images available to the public in books, videos, etc..

Exempt recognized amateur camera clubs from the requirements to provide insurance.

Guarantee a simple and time efficient process for securing permits, if in fact the final rules retain the permit requirement.

In closing, please understand that we fully support any and all reasonable efforts by the city to maintain security in these troubled times. However, we point out that virtually all of the iconic location in New York City, including its bridges, buildings and public gathering places, are all well documented in both written and photographic form in encyclopedias, books, videos and other media which are readily accessible to the public. Placing new and burdensome restrictions on photographers at this point in time would appear to have little true value for purposes of security.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments and look forward, hopefully, to continuing our excursions to New York.

Yours very truly,

William L. Imhof
Monmouth Camera Club

cc: Photographic Society of America
Oklahoma City, OK

New Jersey Federation of Camera Clubs
Watchung, NJ

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The New York Times

August 4, 2007

After Protests, City Agrees to Rewrite Proposed Rules on Photography Permits

By DIANE CARDWELL

Responding to an outcry that included a passionate Internet campaign and a satiric rap video, city officials yesterday backed off proposed new rules that could have forced tourists taking snapshots in Times Square and filmmakers capturing that only-in-New-York street scene to obtain permits and \$1 million in liability insurance.

In announcing the move, officials at the Mayor's Office of Film, Theater and Broadcasting said they would redraft the rules, intended to apply to commercial film and photography productions, to address complaints that they could be too broadly applied. They will then release the revised rules for public comment.

"It appears that the mayor's office on film has come to their senses," said Eileen Clancy, a member of a group formed to protest the rules. "Clearly, they did not anticipate the way in which the rules were likely to affect so many different groups of people."

Katherine Oliver, the film office commissioner, said in a statement, "We appreciate the feedback and collaboration of the production community in the city and look forward to revising our proposal." The proposed rules would have required any group of two or more people using a camera in a public location for more than half an hour, and any group of five or more people using a tripod for more than 10 minutes, to get a permit and insurance. Press photographers and students would not be affected, officials said.

Officials at the mayor's film office originally agreed to write the rules as part of a settlement in April of a lawsuit brought by the New York Civil Liberties Union on behalf of Rakesh Sharma, a documentary filmmaker who was detained by the police in 2005 after using a hand-held video camera in Midtown. Told that he was required to have a permit to film on city property, Mr. Sharma later pursued one and discovered that there were no written guidelines on how permits were granted, according to the lawsuit.

City officials at first staunchly defended the draft regulations when they were released for comment in May, saying that they were intended to set standards for professionals and that there were few if any instances in which casual photographers or filmmakers would be affected.

But criticism mounted over the months, with opponents arguing that all manner of unobtrusive visual recording would be unfairly, and even unconstitutionally, restricted.

"If I joined a small group of bird-watchers, I would only be able to photograph a bird for less than 10 minutes under the proposed regulation changes," D. Bruce Yolton, a photographer who studies and chronicles red-tailed hawks on his blog, urbanhawks.b;ogs.com, wrote to the film office. "Due to the random nature of birding photography, the bird would be gone before a permit could be issued."

One group of opponents, a comedy troupe called Olde English, created a hip-hop video that its members submitted as public comment to the film office and sent to the civil liberties union, which posted it on its Web site.

"Proposin' new rules to try to get rid of me/A million in insurance just to cover liabilities!/From Little Italy all the way to Harlem/Bloomberg's jealous 'cause our movies won't star him," the group raps in

the video, shot in several outdoor locations that would require a permit under the proposed rules.

David Segal, a member of the group, said they had been making videos together since they were students at Bard College and were now doing so professionally, on a "very low budget."

"And that only came after making hundreds of videos with no budget," he said. "We know that ourselves, we wouldn't be able to do it had we not been able to film before these rules started getting talked about."

The city's withdrawal represents a victory for a hastily formed advocacy group called Picture New York, which gathered more than 31,000 signatures for an online petition protesting the rules.

"We have everyone from actually extraordinarily famous fine-art photographers and filmmakers signing the petition to one man who identified himself as a garbage-man and a band photographer," Ms. Clancy, a member of the group and a video analyst who monitors police conduct, said at a news conference yesterday.

Donna Lieberman, executive director of the civil liberties union, also praised the decision, saying that the effort was helped by the "huge group of New Yorkers" who are able to move quickly and creatively "to push back when the city clamps down and represses free speech."

She also sounded a note of caution, saying that her organization would keep pressure on the city to make sure "that photographers and filmmakers can take pictures without a permit and without \$1 million of insurance as long as they're not interfering with anybody else going about their business."

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**WHAT'S HAPPENIN' AT NJFCC MEMBER CLUBS
IN
SEPTEMBER 2007?**

Club	Location	Date	Topic	Judge or Speaker
Camera Naturalist	Somerset Co. Env Ed. Center	9/13	Back to Club Night/ New projector Guide	
		9/27	Open and Assigned Competition Topic: Macro	Tom Icklan
Central NJ	Ray Dwier Centre Groveville	9/6	Competition: Light and White	TBA
Cranbury "Digital"	Princeton Ballet School - Cranbury	9/12	Regular Meeting	
		9/26	Competition: Urban Landscapes	TBA
Cranford/Millburn	Spanish Tavern Mountainside	9/10	Getting Ready for Competition You Be the Judge	
	Bauer Comm. Center Milburn	9/24	Flowers	TBA
Essex	Caldwell United Methodist Church	9/6	TBA	
		9/20	TBA	
Gateway	Staten Island	9/19	Results of the "Battle of the Sexes" Competition	
Greenbriar @ Whittingham	G@W Towne Centre Monroe Township	9/5	TBA	
		9/19	Open and Themed Competition Topic: TBA	
Hillcrest	Phillipsburg Pilgrim Presby. Church	9/10	Competition	TBA
		9/24	Judge's Training	TBA
HUB	Mountain Lakes Library	TBA		
Livingston	Sr./Comm. Center Livingston	TBA		
		TBA		
Mapleshade/Moorestown	Mapleshade Municipal Building	9/11	"Philadelphia Our Heritage of Freedom" Competition: Digital A and B - Open	Terri Klaw
Monmouth	Colt's Neck Reformed Church	9/20	Organizational Meeting	
		9/27	"Her Point of View"	Joel Morgovsky
Morris	AT&T Building Florham Park	TBA		
		TBA		
Ocean County	Lakewood High School	9/11	"This Is PSA"	
		9/18	"Africa"	
		9/25		

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WHAT'S HAPPENIN' AT NJFCC MEMBER CLUBS
IN
SEPTEMBER, 2007?
[CONTINUED]

<u>Club</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Judge or Speaker</u>
Palisades	Palisades Medical Center	TBA		
Photographers of Sussex County	Sussex Co. Fairgrounds	9/17	Results of Assignments: Body Parts	
Photographic Soc. of So. Jersey	ACUA Bldg. Egg Harbor	TBA		
Photographic Soc of Vineland	Christ Church Newfield	9/6	Open-Open Scavenger Hunt List Distributed	
Plainfield	Provident Bank Fanwood	9/6	PSA Pictorial	
		9/19	Competition: NJFCC Pictorial	
Princeton Photography Club	The 1860's House Skillman	9/20	"Summer Through Your Lens"	
Raritan Photographic Society	Library East Brunswick	9/20	Open Competition	
	EB High School	9/27	Shooting the Best Image Possible	Brian Szabo
Ridgewood	Women's Club Wyckoff	9/5	Executive Committee	
		9/12	Program #1 "Images of China"	Maggio Molina
		9/19	Pictorial Competition #1	Dennis Golin
		9/26	Nature Competition #1	Joe Thomas
Somerset County	Co. Library Bridgewater	9/11	Show and Tell	
		0/25	"Camera Handling and Operation - Part I"	Ed Barry
South Brunswick	South Brunswick Public Library	9/5	TBA	
South Jersey	Medford Leas Community Center	9/19	Awards Night Slide and Print Competition	Gretchen Rector
Teaneck	Roda Rec Center Teaneck	TBA		
	Villa Roberto West Passaic	TNA		
		TBA		
		TBA		
Tri - County	Nutley High School	TBA		
		TBA		
		TBA		
		TBA		
Vailsburg	Springfield	TBA		