

# DRAFTING CLUB BYLAWS

The ByLaws of a camera club may be aptly described as the framework which supports the organizational and operational machinery. During the early stages of a newly-formed group, when it usually functions on an informal basis, such regulatory guides are often deemed unnecessary. However, as the club grows in size and extends the scope of its activities, the need for establishing a set of rules readily becomes apparent. The ByLaws, if properly drafted and followed, will contribute greatly to the efficient and smooth operation of any club.

Operating under Bylaws has proved to be efficient, flexible and time-saving. It minimizes unnecessary and lengthy discussion of club business at meetings and allows members to devote more time to photographic activities. Yet it does not deprive individuals of their rightful voice in club activities.

Unfortunately, in some instances, adopting such regulations does not produce the desired result. The average club member often fails to understand its meaning and soon loses interest in seeing that principles are closely followed. This, in turn, results in the failure of all members to share equally in the responsibility of a club's operation.

This undesirable situation can easily be avoided by drafting ByLaws that are concise, easily understood, and readily put into operation. Each club has its own particular problems and requirements. Nevertheless, in most instances, the essential features of workable ByLaws are simple and relatively few in number. It is impossible to include provisions for every contingency. Only the most important ones should be covered. After all, it is assumed that club officials are competent to cope with routine problems as they arise. It is unwise to hamper them with needless legislative shackles. The sample presents a concise form of ByLaws can be used by most newly-formed clubs of average size (25 to 50 members). It is easy to modify it to fit individual requirements. While some additions and elaboration may be necessary, avoid superfluous and flowery phraseology.

Note that these sample ByLaws place much of the responsibility for club operation in the hands of an Executive Board (it may also be termed a Board of Directors, Governing Board or Executive Committee). The size of a governing body, as well as the method of its selection, will depend on the number of club members. It is wise; however, to have a majority of the Executive Board elected, not appointed. In the sample Bylaws, the Board is composed of four elected officers, the past president, and four appointed chairs.

Because of constantly changing conditions, provision should be made for revising the ByLaws when deemed necessary. However, such changes should be kept to a minimum. An Executive Board, set up as suggested, helps to eliminate the necessity of frequent amendments.

Be sure that a quorum of the club's membership approves the original ByLaws as well as subsequent amendments. Also, provide all members with a copy of the document. Today, posting a copy of the club ByLaws on the club web site is more customary.

A local chapter of the National Association of Parliamentarians may be able to provide guidance in preparing your club's ByLaws.

In summary, the ByLaws of a camera club are aids to orderly management. They provide the necessary democratic process by which the interests of all members will be equally and fairly represented. The shorter and clearer the rules, the better chance they have of being faithfully followed. In no case should these guiding principles hamper the aims and ideals of the club.

# **SAMPLE ByLaws Of An "AVERAGE" CAMERA CLUB**

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_

## **NAME**

## **ARTICLE I**

This organization shall be known as the "Average" Camera Club.

## **AIMS**

## **ARTICLE II**

The object of the "Average" Camera Club shall be the enjoyment, mastery, and furtherance of photography through cooperation, effort, and good fellowship.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

## **ARTICLE III**

Any person seriously interested in photography may apply for membership. Application blanks shall be provided by the Membership Committee. Membership of any person may be suspended, when sufficient reasons exist, by action of the club Executive Board. The suspended member shall have the right to appeal suspension, in which case the action of the Executive Board shall be upheld or rescinded by a majority vote of the Membership.

## **OFFICERS**

## **ARTICLE IV**

The following officers shall be elected by the membership: (1) President, (2) Vice President, (3) Secretary, and (4) Treasurer.

## **MEETINGS**

## **ARTICLE V**

Regular meetings of the club shall have place, date, and time stipulated by the Executive Board.

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

## **ARTICLE VI**

The management of the club shall be directed by an Executive Board composed of the elected Officers (Article IV), the Chairs of the standing committees, and the Past President ex-officio. The Executive Board shall meet as often as necessary to transact the business of the club. Five members of the Board will constitute a quorum.

## **COMMITTEES**

## **ARTICLE VII**

The following standing committees shall be established to conduct club activities: (1) Program, (2) Membership, (3) House, (4) Exhibitions and Contests. Chairpersons of standing committees shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Board. Special committees may be appointed by the President as required and discharged by the Preident when they have completed their assignments.

## **PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

## **ARTICLE VIII**

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Club in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the Club may adopt.

## **FINANCE**

## **ARTICLE IX**

The initiation fee and monthly dues shall be set by the Executive Board. The fiscal year for the club shall be set by the Executive Board. Annual reports will be rendered to the members.

## **DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

## **ARTICLE X**

Duties of the President shall be: To preside at all club meetings and Executive Board meetings; to appoint chairpersons of all committees; to act as club spokesperson; to generally supervise and keep in touch with all club activities.

Duties of the Vice President shall be: To assume the duties of the President in his/her absence; to act on the Executive Board.

Duties of the Secretary shall be: to keep records of the minutes of all meetings; to notify members of special meetings and events; to conduct correspondence of club; to prepare ballots for elections; to act as club director on the Executive Board.

Duties of the Treasurer shall be to maintain financial records of the club, keeping custody thereof, and to act as club director on the Executive Board.

## **DUTIES OF COMMITTEES**

## **ARTICLE XI**

The activities of club committees shall be determined by the Executive Board. The activities decided upon shall thereafter be carried out by the committee chairs and the members appointed by the chair to the respective committees.

Standing committee chairs shall periodically prepare reports of activities and progress for presentation to the Executive Board or to the membership at club meetings, and shall act as club directors on the Executive Board.

## **AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**

## **ARTICLE XII**

These ByLaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Club by a two-thirds vote, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting.

## **QUORUM**

## **ARTICLE XIII**

A Quorum of the membership for the purpose of conducting club business shall consist of not less than one-third of the entire membership.

## **ELECTIONS**

## **ARTICLE XIV**

Election of club officers shall be held annually. The President shall appoint a Nominating Committee composed of three members not on the Executive Board. The committee will prepare a single slate of officers and obtain the agreement from the nominees to serve if elected. The Chair shall present the slate at the annual meeting. Additional nominations can be made from the floor.

No officer can be re-elected to the same post for more than two consecutive terms.

Vacancies in the club offices shall be filled by Presidential appointment, subject to approval by the Executive Board. Vacancy of the President's office shall be filled by advancement of the Vice President.