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# Handgun owners irate over having names published online

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Dozens of readers have taken issue with The Journal News over its decision to run a list of pistol permit holders in Westchester and Rockland counties as part of a wider investigative article.

The names of more than 30,000 licensed handgun owners were posted online as part of "Falling Through the Cracks," the paper's Dec. 10 report that found that thousands of registered handguns were unaccounted for because there is no system to secure the weapons of permit holders who die. The articles can be found by clicking the "Gun Control" icon at [www.lohud.com](http://www.lohud.com).

Some readers, particularly those on the list of licensed pistol owners, suggested that the newspaper erred in publishing the names. They said it may target their homes for theft, although the paper did not publish their home addresses.

The New York State Rifle and Pistol Association reacted by posting what it thought were home addresses and telephone numbers of newspaper staff members. The list inadvertently included addresses of people not associated with the newspaper or the articles.

The association pulled that list from its Web site on Friday.

Some pistol owners remain irate at the newspaper.

"I just question the judgment," said Rockland pistol permit holder Rich Himes. "As far as I'm concerned, I've done everything legally. I've been fingerprinted and everything's on record. And I understand Freedom of Information. But maybe because we can publish information, maybe it's not always a good idea."

The lists were obtained by the newspaper through Freedom of Information Law requests. State pistol permits are public records, as are the names and home addresses of all permit holders. The Journal News chose to withhold the street addresses. Instead, only the names and municipalities where the permit holders live were published.

"The Constitution gives people the right to own guns in this country, and it also gives people the right to know whether they own a gun or not," said Henry Freeman, editor and vice president/news at The Journal News. "This is a public record. People have a right to know that."

"We did take it into consideration and did not publish your street address, which is also public information."

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