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Acquiring Hands-On Research

Where did we turn for answers before the Internet? Until a move, we had a handsome bound collection of Encyclopedia Britannica books occupying two full shelves of a bookcase that also has mysteriously disappeared from our study.

Somehow I didn't mind that the books required an update volume annually.

Remember Encarta? Another Microsoft product that gracefully led us into the digital era that proved useful and expensive to keep up.

Those were good for general knowledge but as boating writers, where did you turn for research? The Internet is without question our generation's Industrial Revolution in the timeline of advancements.

My guess is that you still are looking for answers in some familiar places besides the Internet - your collection of sources, trusted industry veterans who can put you in touch with the right technician or designer. And that's why I'm turning to you for help.

Every year NMMA commissions BWI for assembling judging panels for the Innovation Awards at IBEX in September and the Miami Interna-



Pedal-electric hybrid concept boat, design by Manuel Schneider

tional Boat Show in February. In the past decade we've implemented our own innovation in handling entries, and lightening the load on our volunteer judges. By mixing half the panel with veterans who've judged before with members who bring fresh eyes and category specific experience, the task becomes fun, witty at times, and I dare say competitive.

IBEX is around the corner and we're looking for BWI members who may have a bit more technical background compared to feature writing. You don't have to be a walking encyclopedia - none of us are. Well, maybe one. Like playing along with Jeopardy during the dinner hour, it seems there is always one category where you shine and together the team of judges shares knowledge, insight and

helps decide what really is going to have an impact in boating.

The innovations shown or unveiled at IBEX are typically a step ahead of what the boating consumer or the balance of industry participants will see later in the fall in Ft. Lauderdale or

winter in Miami. Last year, these ranged from completely new powerplants to advanced instrument clusters, leading edge audio components to heightened air conditioning systems, and products to help builders, boatyards and dealers do a better job serving customers. It is indeed a look at least to the immediate future.

Need further enticement?

Airfare, hotel, and at least one round of Kentucky Bourbon Barrel Beer is covered. Send me an email and I can answer additional questions. IBEX focuses on the future of boat building, and purely from a story lead perspective, you will walk away with a dozen or more ideas for you to pitch rather than be assigned.

You can reach me at Alan@wendtproductions.com.

*Alan Wendt
BWI President*

Ethanol Increases Cause Concern

In late May the Environmental Protection Agency announced its latest targets for the Renewable Fuel Standard, which determines ethanol blending requirements for the nation's fuel supply. The standard calls for increases in renewable fuel

blending over the next several years. The U.S. Department of Agriculture also announced that it would invest \$100 million to install new blender pumps at fuel stations throughout the U.S. If finalized, the blend wall will be breached next year

resulting in widespread increased availability of E15 in the market. Small engine and outdoor engine product makers, including marine engine manufacturers, worry that more ethanol at the gas pump will contribute significantly to the opportunity for consumer misfueling, particularly for boaters, as an estimated 97 percent fill up at retail gas stations.

Many in the boating industry oppose the proposed in-

creased levels; corn growers and ethanol producers say the EPA hasn't gone far enough to satisfy regulations on the books. Targets set by the plan, "Will make it increasingly difficult for consumers to obtain low-ethanol and ethanol-free fuel blends required to run many engines successfully and will further promote the expansion of E15 -- a known harmful fuel to marine and off road engines," said NMMA's Nicole Vasilaros, vice president of legal and federal affairs. "If the EPA must continue to stand by the introduction of high ethanol blended fuels, at the very least it should engage in widespread public outreach efforts to educate consumers on the problems they may face including engine damage, voided warranties and costly repairs."

Consumers need to be educated about fuel blends, according to recent polls by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI). Results show Americans choose gasoline on price, and do not pay much attention to pump warning labels. Polls show 63

percent of Americans will use the least expensive grade of gasoline. In addition, 74 percent say they are not sure if it's legal to put high level (over 10 percent) ethanol gas into small engines. By Federal law, it is illegal to use higher ethanol fuel in outdoor and marine engines.

"Unfortunately, decision-making at the fuel pump is getting more complicated, as higher ethanol blended fuels are becoming available," says Kris Kiser, CEO and president of OPEI. "As an industry, we have supported consumer education through our Look Before You Pump [www.lookbeforeyouump.com] campaign. But the EPA could -- and should -- do more."

EPA is seeking comments on the proposal until July 27. For marine industry perspective, go to www.votervoice.net/NMMA/Campaigns/41081/Respond.



Fuel selection at the pump: clear as mud. Image: Consumer Reports



New Markets Group Encourages Image Use

The Recreational Boating Leadership Council's New Markets Task Force is encouraging media and boating businesses to tailor messages and images to appeal to demographic groups underrepresented in boating today. They suggest warm and welcoming images that show Americans of diverse ethnic and racial origins enjoying the boating experience and lifestyle will reflect positively on publications and businesses and serve as an invitation to the groups portrayed.

To find images that can be used in this regard, go to http://images.nmma.org:8085/ethnic_lifestyle/#!/ and <http://takemefishing.org/general/about-rbff/programs-and-materials/national-campaign/photo-library/>.



Boaters & Bikers Take Freedom Ride

The second Boaterz 'n Bikerz Hull of a Tour: "The Freedom Ride" brought together a few dozen media and marine industry executives for an historic 2000-mile, nine-day boating and motorcycling adventure from Sarasota, FL to Washington D.C. Participants could ride a leg or two or the full route, which included scenic backroads up the east coast, coupled with boating stops at Freedom Boat Club locations in Sarasota and Saint Augustine, FL; Savannah, GA; Myrtle Beach, SC; and Annapolis, MD.

Organized and produced by BWI member Wanda Kenton Smith and routed by Road Captain Jim Krueger of Regal Marine, title sponsor was Freedom Boat Club with media sponsor *Soundings Trade Only*. Kenton Smith, columnist for *STO*, blogged and posted pictures daily.

Several Freedom Boat Clubs hosted waterfront barbecues or meals en route. At

the Annapolis club, boat rides enhanced a performance by the Blue Angels as part of the U.S. Naval Academy's annual commissioning ceremonies.

Boating magazine's John Page Williams and *Yachting*'s John Wooldridge joined the riders for these festivities. In keeping with its theme, riders visited other historic sites including the U.S.S. Yorktown in Charleston, SC; the Wright Brothers National Memorial in Kill Devil Hills, NC; Williamsburg, VA; the Gettysburg Battlefield; and Monticello in Charlottesville, VA.

A highlight for many was active participation in Rolling Thunder, a ride from the Pentagon to the Viet Nam Memorial Wall. The largest peaceful demonstration in the country, 900,000 motorcycles rode in the parade held Memorial Day weekend



Bikers assemble at a Freedom Boat Club marina before heading off to a day's cruise.

to raise awareness of POWs, MIAs and pay tribute to veterans and the military.

Besides marine industry editorial coverage, the event was picked up and featured in news sites throughout the U.S. and in several countries abroad. BWI member and event rider Marilyn DeMartini, owner of PR Power, is writing two features for motorcycle media *Thunder Press*, while Kenton Smith is writing a feature for *Born to Ride* magazine, which has already included coverage in its Women's World edition.

New Boat Sales Gain 6.4%

NMMA's recently issued 2014 Recreational Boating Statistical Abstract reports growth for the \$35.4 billion U.S. recreational boating industry, with an estimated 171,500 new powerboats sold in 2014, an increase of 6.4 percent over 2013.

"We're seeing sales increases across a number of boat categories with the largest increase from smaller fiberglass and aluminum outboard powerboats," said NMMA president Thom

Dammrich. "Marine manufacturers have been introducing smaller, more versatile boats at lower price points that can be used for activities from fishing to cruising with family and friends, making boating accessible for newcomers."

In other categories, new sailboats sold at retail increased 33.9 percent to 7,500 units and new personal watercraft sales increased 21.6 percent to 47,900 units.

Leading states in 2014 sales of new powerboat, motor,

trailer and accessories, were: Florida, \$2.3 billion, up 22.5% from 2013; Texas, \$1.3 billion, up 11.9%; Michigan, \$762.4 million, up 13.1%; Minnesota, \$601.5 million, up 3.9%; New York, \$597.8 million, up 7.3%; North Carolina, \$580.2 million, up 16.9%; Wisconsin, \$560.3 million, up 2.9%; California, \$546.8 million, up 20.9%; Louisiana, \$529.9 million, up 11%; Alabama: \$457.7 million, up 19.6%.

Contact Kelly Kaylor, kkaylor@nmma.org.

Active & Associate Member News

Helme Honored with Sail Leadership Award

Sally Helme, publisher of *Cruising World* and *Sailing World* magazines, has been honored with the 2015 Leadership in Women's Sailing Award. Presented by National Women's Sailing Association and BoatUS, the honor recognizes an individual with a record of achievement in inspiring, educating, and enriching

tional, Inc. for a new brand, creative campaign and website to be launched this year. Citing 55 years of show growth, "The 56th year is going to be the most amazing ever and we wanted to go out with a new look and feel to reflect our vision," said Efrem "Skip" Zimbalist III, president of Show Management. "As an international award-winning advertising and marketing firm that has been working in the marine industry for over 30 years and for the last nine years with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, Starmark is positioned as the best creative group for the work."

Pierson Grant, also a BWI member, will continue managing publicity, media relations, social media, and other PR functions for all boat shows produced by Show Management, including FLIBS, scheduled for November 5 to 9.

Verdon Will Judge New Builder Award

International Boat Industry magazine and the Marine Equipment Trade Show, held in Amsterdam in November, are joining to stage the inaugural Boat Builder Awards for Business Achievement. IBI's U.S. editor Michael Verdon, who has been writing about boats since 1983 and reported on many shipyards in North America and Europe, will serve as one of seven judges. Nominations from the industry for the six categories of awards are open through August. Details at www.boatbuilderawards.com.

Corke Moving to BoatUS Magazine

Mark Corke has taken the Associate Editor position at *BoatUS Magazine* following freelance work for the past five years. His blog, www.onboardwithmark-corke.com, will continue, but will be separate, and not connected to his other work endeavors. In addition to freelance writing, Corke says he has been doing an increasing amount of boat survey work, which he plans to continue, and is a member of the Society of Accredited Marine Surveyors. Earlier, he was senior editor of *Sail* magazine's hands-on Boatworks publication, has worked for the BBC, written four DIY books, skippered two round-the-world yachts, and holds the Guinness World Record for the fastest round-trip crossing of the English Channel in a kayak.



Mark Corke



NWSA Conference Co-Chair Scottie Robinson (from l.), Sally Helme, Women's Sailing Foundation President Linda Newland, Conference Co-Chair Joan Thayer.
Photo: Susan Ogan.

the lives of women through sailing. The award was presented in early June. Helme, the first female publisher in the sailing industry, has advocated for positive depictions of women in magazines, showing them in leadership roles on boats, on boards, in competitions, and in photos and articles to inspire and illustrate the many challenging aspects of sailing. She is a past president of Sail America, has served on the boards of Sail Newport and US Sailing, and is a current vice president of Marine Marketers of America.

Starmark Rebranding Lauderdale Show

Show Management, Inc., producer of the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show (FLIBS), has chosen BWI member Starmark Interna-

Martin Flory Group Adds New Client

To increase its exposure within the marine industries, West Valley, UT-based FCI Watermakers has hired Martin Flory Group. FCI builds desalination equipment in the U.S. with products installed on recreational, commercial and military watercraft, oil rigs, islands and resorts. Contact info@martinflory.com.

Supporting Member News

IBEX Show Calls For Innovation Entries

The IBEX Innovation Awards, judged by members of BWI, acknowledge the importance of technological advancement. The Innovation Awards are considered one of the marine industry's most prestigious honors, and winners will be announced during the Industry Awards Breakfast held on the first morning of IBEX in Louisville, KY September 15. Entrants enjoy special recognition and heightened promotions and press at IBEX and beyond. Products entered in the Innovation Awards program are displayed all three days of the show on Innovation Way, located inside the IBEX exhibit hall. Deadline to enter is August 12. For details, go to <http://ibexshow.com/innovation-awards-exhib.php>.

Sober Skipper Effort Gets Sea Tow Push

The Sea Tow Foundation is taking its Designated Skipper campaign across the U.S. Supported by a grant from the Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund, the goal is to help eliminate boating under the influence (BUI) and alcohol-related accidents on the water while keeping boating fun for everyone. The marketing campaign includes social media, print advertising, digital advertising, email marketing, video and audio public service announcements (PSAs), as well as free pam-



phlets, stickers, posters, wristbands and other cool giveaways placed in areas where boaters will see and pick them up. For details and to participate, visit www.DesignatedSkipper.com.

Ultimate Fish "Dream" Powered by Mercury

Mercury Marine and Major League Fishing have teamed up to offer 30 fishing enthusiasts an "Ultimate Dream" weekend in October. Winners of the Sweepstakes will receive airfare to Orlando, FL, hotel accommodations, meals, a guided half-day of fishing with a pro angler, giveaways from Major League Fishing, and \$250 Bass Pro Shops gift cards. Nitro boats featuring 150 h.p. Mercury outboards will take the winners to the fishing spots. Visit www.majorleaguefishing.com for details. Contact Steve Fleming, Steve.Fleming@mercmarine.com.

NMEA Awards Revamped, Expanded

Several changes are being made for the National Marine Electronics Association annual product awards program designed to expand and improve the selection process. The program has two components: Product Awards chosen by members and the Technology Award selected by an independent panel of judges. Winners will be named at the NMEA International Marine Electronics Conference & Expo in Baltimore, MD, September 29 - October 1. Among the changes to the program are

online voting and the addition of seven product categories. The Technology Award honors a single product considered to be the most innovative. Ben Ellison of Panbo.com and AIM publications will chair the judges, who will include Bill Bishop of TheMarineInstallersRant.com and Jim Fullilove of *Marine Electronics Journal*, all active members of BWI. Contact Mark Reedenauer, mreedenaue@nmea.org.

Council Presents ACR With Horizon Award

The National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) has named ACR Electronics recipient of the 2015 Horizon Award for support of NSBC's Saved by the Beacon National Campaign, which is designed to educate recreational boaters about the importance of 406 MHz beacons and how to use them correctly in the case of a boating emergency.

The award is presented to individuals and organizations whose vision advances safer boating. ACR helped develop the Saved by the Beacon logo and content for the campaign, available at www.savedbythebeacon.com.



NSBC's Executive Director, Rachel Johnson (2nd from r.), presents the Horizon Award to ACR's President Gerry Angeli as Paul Steward (l.) and Nichole Kalil look on.

Top U.S. Boat & Fish Spots

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The Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) and its Take Me Fishing campaign have unveiled the 2015 Top 100 Family-Friendly Places to Fish and Boat, which ranks Florida's Everglades National Park as the No. 1 place to fish and boat in the U.S. As part of a sweepstakes, anglers and boaters cast more than 91,000 votes online to help develop the latest list.

Criteria for the Top 100 included having a public body of water within an hour of a major city, good fishing opportunities, and family-friendly amenities. Common fish species cited included bass, crappie, bluegill and trout, often in public places that were stocked with fish. Amenities adding to the sites are playgrounds and campgrounds, picnic areas, restrooms and parking spaces. Desired options for places to cast a line are fishing piers and boat ramps to allow launching. Recommendations by other anglers of "best fishing spots" were also counted.

The Top 10 Spots are:

1. Everglades National Park, FL
2. Bahia Honda State Park, Big Pine Key, FL
3. Blue Springs State Park,



Everglades National Park (above), Keystone State Park (below).



4. Kissimmee State Park, Lake Wales, FL
5. Keystone State Park, Derry, PA
6. Clear Lake State Park, Kelseyville, CA
7. Skyway Fishing Pier State Park, St Petersburg, FL
8. Galveston Island State Park, Galveston, TX
9. Presque Isle State Park, Erie, PA
10. Lackawanna State Park, North Abington, PA

Further Fishing Facts:

- The Everglades - ranked number five last year - was joined by four of its fellow

Floridians in the top 10 list this year; the state held the same number of top 10 spots as last year.

•In addition to Florida, other states that appeared in the top 10 two years in a row are California and Texas.

•Pennsylvania only appeared in the top 10 once last year, but the state secured three spots on the new list.

•In fact, Pennsylvania tied with Florida and California in having the most appearances on the list, as each state appeared seven times.

For more detail on the top spots, go to <http://takeme.fishing.org/community/americas-top-family-fishing-and-boating-spots/?emailid=1>.

Contact Stephanie Vatalaro, svatalaro@rbff.org.



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Send items to be considered for publication to Greg Proteau, info@bwi.org. All information contained herein is meant for the use of members, is in their best interest, and appears in as true and accurate a form as possible.

Membership in BWI is open to anyone involved in the recreational boating industry. Active members are generally writers, editors, photographers and broadcasters. Associate members are generally P.R. or communications firms. Supporting members are usually manufacturers or ad agencies.

