



THIS TOO SHALL PASS

by Charlie Levine, BWI President

I think boaters will come out of this with energized enthusiasm.

As I sit at the keyboard to write this column, a quote from Donald Rumsfeld, the former Secretary of Defense, comes to mind: "We know there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don't know we don't know."

The year was off to a very promising start with boat registrations up and boat sales showing gains nearly across the board. Exhibitors at the Miami and New York boat shows reported robust boat sales and overall projections for the year looked favorable. On a personal level, I'd been bumped up into the President role at BWI and took on a new role as the Executive Editor at Power & Motoryacht. All signs were pointing to an incredible year.

Then everything went off the rails.

As the coronavirus closures and stay-at-home orders started to

ramp up in early March, I, like many boaters in the South, thought it was a perfect time to use the boat. According to the World Health Organization, fresh air does a body good and the weather in Florida has been absolutely gorgeous.

My family and I took to the water and ended up at our local sandbar. I dropped the hook on the fringes. The scene was not unlike Memorial Day Weekend. Most folks were big on beer drinking and not so big on social distancing.

Across the entire state, a bunch of bad apples ruined a very needed exercise for all of us. The local news showed videos of big raft-ups and a blatant disregard for the rules. It didn't take long for officials to shut down launch ramps and marinas. But you can still use your boat. Each state and county have different regulations, but many boatyards are open as 'essential businesses' and if you tie up to a private dock, no one can tell you not to go boating.

Just don't turn it into a party. Keep the crew to your family. The people you've been shutting in with.

I know you're worried about the boating industry and how it will weather this storm, me too.

Layoffs and furloughs aside, my gut is telling me that come June 20, the first day of summer, boaters will be back to doing what they've always done, finding a way to get out on the water.

Be safe and keep the faith. You can reach me at editorialoutfitters@gmail.com.

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NMMA COVID-19 ACTION CENTER

The National Marine Manufacturers Association has called on the federal government to take action and help marine manufacturers respond to COVID-19. In addition, NMMA is aligned with organizations including the National Association of Manufacturers, US Chamber of Commerce, the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable and others to ensure our industry's voice is heard.

Information including state and federal resources, event cancellations/rescheduling and general updates can be found at [Action Center on the NMMA website](#).

BLACKWELL RETIRES, BRADLEY STEPS IN

NMMA announced that Carl Blackwell, longtime chief marketing officer and president of Discover Boating, has stepped down as of the end of March. The move comes as the Discover Boating campaign reaches key milestones and hits its stride in attracting new boaters to the boating lifestyle. The association has tapped Ellen Bradley, NMMA chief communications officer, to lead both marketing and communications.

CONSUMERS CONFUSED ABOUT FUEL PRODUCT OFFERINGS

Consumers remain confused about the multiple fuel product offerings in the marketplace, says a new study commissioned by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) and conducted online by The Harris Poll among over 3,000 U.S. adults. The study, which has been conducted annually for seven years, shows lack of education, inadequate labeling and dangerous marketing tactics around new fuel products, such as higher ethanol-blended gasoline, are likely causing consumers to mis-fuel. For the full story, see the [NMMA Currents Newsletter](#).

2019 NEPTUNE AWARDS

Marine Marketers of America (MMA) announced the winners of the 2019 Neptune Awards for Marine Marketing Excellence at the Miami International Boat Show. This year's awards drew 150 entries in 20 categories. More than 50 marketing professionals from throughout the industry served as judges. Among the winners are some of our Supporting Members including Seakeeper, Mercury Marine, Volvo Penta and RBFF. For a full listing of winners, visit the [Marine Marketers of America](#).

MEMBER NEWS

New Tech Center for Suzuki

Suzuki Motor of America announced plans for its Suzuki Marine Technical Center scheduled to be built on a 20-acre waterfront property in Panama City, Florida. While the official launch date for this project is still unknown, Suzuki is currently finishing renovations on existing buildings on the property and plans to work in collaboration with U.S.-based boat and accessory manufacturers to develop and improve its products (currently outboard motors from 2.5 to 350 horsepower). The location was previously used for Marine Transportation's Logistical Headquarters (MT) and a Florida State University Research Facility. Contact Dean Corbisier at Dean.Corbisier@suz.com.

Siren Marine, Mag Bay & ZF Partner

With Siren Marine's Connected Boat System installed on the Mag Bay 42 Express Sportfish, boaters will be able to connect with their vessels providing enhanced security and peace-of-mind. This is a three-way partnership, which adds global marine propulsion leader, ZF, with their Connected ZF Experience. Contact Ron Ballanti at ron@strike-zone.net.

Martin Flory Adds New Website, Clients

Martin Flory Group, serving the recreational and commercial marine, RV and outdoor segments, has launched a new website. The domain remains www.martinflory.com and is said to provide media easy access to ready-to-publish editorial copy

and high-resolution images. Several marine firms have hired the agency to lead their public relations efforts: Jaguar Powerboats, maker of family and fishing catamarans; Liqui Moly USA, supplier of engine oil, fuel additives and lubricants; Sweden's SF Marina that engineers and manufactures marine structures; and Capria S.A. offering dry stacking cranes and boat launching systems. Contact Kelly Flory at kelly@martinflory.com.

NMEA Adds Theft Prevention

In a strategic move, NMEA has added educational information about preventing theft and improving vessel security to the next version of the NMEA 0400 Installation Standard, scheduled for release later in 2020. The additions outline best practices that make removal of a display from the vessel more difficult. A second section details the proper installation of vessel security systems, which adds an additional level of protection to the vessel in the event of a vandalism, burglary, or theft attempt. Contact Mark Reedenauer at mreedenaue@nmea.org.



Artist's rendering of Suzuki's anticipated new tech center.

CALENDAR & EVENTS

ABYC Schedules Educator Conference

The American Boat and Yacht Council announces the "Marine Service Technology: Educator Training Conference" to be held July 21-23, 2020 in Annapolis, MD. The two-and-a-half day conference is designed for high school and post-secondary instructors and administrators who either are teaching, or are thinking about teaching, marine service technology in their schools. The agenda will include professional development topics, hands-on work with training aids and marine products, shop setup, useful software and resources to teach marine service technology, and information on the state of the workforce. Contact Shannon Aronson at saronson@abycinc.org.

Women's East Coast Confab

Beginning and experienced women sailors can join the National Women's Sailing Association 19th Annual Women's Sailing Conference, June 6, 2020, at the Corinthian Yacht Club in Marblehead. The event, which features hands-on land- and water-based workshops and seminars, offers women opportunity to learn or hone sailing skills, network with other female sailors from all over the country and gain the confidence necessary to become a valuable crew member or knowledgeable skipper. Financial support provided by Black Rock Sailing School and BoatUS, Contact Scott Croft at SCroft@BoatUS.com.

2020 NMEA/RTCM Conference Moves to Florida

NMEA and RTCM have agreed to hold their 2020 international convention together at the Doubletree by Hilton at Universal Studios, Orlando, Florida on Sept. 21 - 25, 2020, with the exposition portion of the event being held Sept. 22 and 23. Registration for the annual event will open in mid-May. For additional information visit www.nmea.org or www.rtcn.org or contact the NMEA office at (410) 975-9425, or RTCM at (703) 527-2000.

ABC Congress Canceled

The American Boating Congress in Washington, D.C. on May 12-14, 2020 has been cancelled. More information to follow when available.

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WELCOME

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