



WRITE LIKE A JEDI

Think about diversity as you cover boats and fishing.

by Charlie Levine, BWI President

It's been a challenging year. Scratch that, it's been downright insane. I'm glad 2020 is almost in the wake. The one silver lining in all of the pandemic madness was a surge in new boat sales, which were up nine percent on the year. We also saw an influx of 87,000 first time boat buyers, another very positive thing to come out of an absolutely crazy year. But when you dig into the numbers, it's very evident that one thing has not changed: The mass majority of boat owners are white men.

The number of women first-time boat buyers went up just one percent in 2020. As for first-time ethnic minority boat buyers, it was flat. That's a troubling statistic that needs more attention.

A few years back I interviewed Ish Monroe, a black professional bass fisherman. Ish has a long list of sponsors and career winnings totaling \$2.2 million. But all of that success almost didn't happen. He told me that when he was a kid, he subscribed to every fishing magazine he could get his hands on and watched every fishing show he could find. But he never saw anyone who looked like him in a magazine or on TV. So he

didn't think a black kid from the outskirts of San Francisco could ever become a pro angler. Ish got a job at a tackle shop and that opened some doors for him to realize his dream. But it made me think about these potential new boaters who pick up our publications, or most likely, come across our websites. What if they don't see anyone who looks like they do? That's not exactly the best way to roll out the welcome mat.

To grow boating long term, it's time to think like a Jedi. Earlier this year, Active Interest Media, the publisher of Power & Motoryacht, Sail, Anglers Journal, Soundings and several other titles, launched a JEDI initiative. The acronym stands for justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, and I volunteered to be a part of it. We outlined several goals, but the two main ones are 1) creating an open and diverse workplace and 2) to do a better job representing the diversity that already exists in our communities within our publications.

When thinking like a Jedi, remember that diversity goes beyond racial or ethnic groups.

Consider gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, socioeconomic status and age when brainstorming story ideas. There are many interesting boaters and groups out there worthy of a story. Just recently I wrote a piece about Lexi Youngberg, a 27-year-old woman who lost her leg in a boating accident. She never let her disability get in the way of her dreams. She now runs an organization called Brave the Wave, which teaches people with a range of disabilities how to wakesurf and wakeboard. Talking to Lexi was inspiring. When I hung up the phone, I felt like I'd just finished a Tony Robbins seminar. Keep your eyes and ears open to profile people like Lexi Youngberg and let's do our part to diversify the collective boating portfolio.

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WRITING CONTEST DEADLINE NEARLY UPON US

With a December 31 deadline, BWI's Annual Writing Contest always sees a flurry of entries in the final weeks of the year. The goal of the Contest is to award all prizes in all categories. Category definitions are included in the contest brochure. With no Miami boat show meeting in February 2021, this year's presentation will be in a virtual format the details of which will be posted in January. Deadline for entries is December 31, 2020.

All details are included in a brochure posted at <https://www.bwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BWI-Contest-20.pdf>. The electronic entry form (<https://bwi.org/bwicontest>) provides the process for uploading entries, "doing the paperwork," and paying dues by check or PayPal or through a publisher.



Contest Categories & Sponsors

Entries are being accepted in 15 categories which translates to \$15,000 available in prize awards.

1. Boating Columns – sponsored by KVH Industries, Inc.
2. Boating Lifestyles – sponsored by Discover Boating
3. Boating Profiles – sponsored by ZF Marine
4. Boating Travel or Destinations – sponsored by Kicker Marine Audio
5. Boating Adventures – sponsored by Yamaha Marine
6. Boating Photography – sponsored by Freedom Boat Club
7. Environmental Awareness & Education – sponsored by Torqeedo Inc.
8. Fishing – sponsored by Suzuki Motor Corporation
9. Boating Issues, News and Analysis – sponsored by Mercury Marine
10. The Business of Boating – sponsored by BRP
11. Seamanship, Rescue & Safety – sponsored by Sea Tow Services International
12. Boat Tests & Reviews – sponsored by Volvo Penta
13. Gear, Electronics & Product Tests – sponsored by Xantrex Mission Critical Electronics
14. Boat Projects, Renovations & Retrofits – sponsored by Boats Group
15. Boating Videos – sponsored by Boat Owners Assn. of US

BWI BOARD OF DIRECTORS - CANDIDATE APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

Elections for BWI Directors will be held in mid-January 2021. Seats (that carry three-year terms) are coming open. Active and Associate members may run for Directors spots, and active and associate members will be asked to vote in the election.

Candidates need to provide a brief summary (100 words), by December 20, of their experience, qualifications and ideas to help BWI grow. For more information, contact Zuzana Prochazka newbwiinfo@gmail.com.

MARKETING AWARDS SEEK ENTRIES

Marine Marketers of America (MMA) is accepting entries for the 2020 Neptune Awards competition. The annual contest, now in its 13th year, is open to any company or organization producing and publishing marine industry marketing in calendar year 2020.

Entries will be accepted through January 15, 2021. Crystal Neptune awards will be presented in 21 categories during a virtual event hosted in February. New for this year is a special category for "Best Pandemic Marketing Effort," to recognize the creative ways marine marketers addressed the unique challenges of connecting with consumers during COVID times.

A link to the new Neptune Awards entry portal and complete program details are available at www.marinemarketersofamerica.org.

BWI ACTIVE INTEREST MEDIA BOATING JOURNALIST SCHOLARSHIP

Accepting applications through January 15, 2021.

College students studying journalism, creative writing, film or communications are encouraged to apply for the \$3,000 BWI Active Interest Media Boating Journalist Scholarship. The scholarship will be awarded to undergraduate college students who demonstrates a passion for the field of boating media and showcases a clear career goal in the areas of writing, photography, broadcasting or video production.



The BWI Active Interest Media Boating Journalist Scholarship was created in 2018 to honor undergraduate college and encourage them to pursue a career in the recreational marine media.

"Sponsoring the scholarship fits within our vision of attracting talented college graduates to enter the boating media as their profession," says Gary DeSanctis, President of the AIM Marine Group, title sponsor of the scholarship. "We need a new crop to come up behind us that can meet the demands of the changing media landscape."

Applicants must be enrolled in an undergraduate college or university program and submit an application by January 15, 2021. All interested students are encouraged to download an application at <https://www.bwi.org/scholarship-fund/> or reach out to Scholarship Committee Chair Robert Beringer at robertberinger@yahoo.com. Winners will be announced in a special virtual presentation presented to the boating industry in February.

"Winning the BWI scholarship was the first time I was formally recognized for my work as a marine journalist, and that was when it really became evident that this is something I could do as a career," says Carly Sisson, the first recipient of the first BWI scholarship. "I felt much more confident about entering this industry fulltime after graduating with some credentials under my belt."

MEMBER NEWS

SEA TOW FOUNDATION PRESENTS BOAT SAFETY AWARDS

The Sea Tow Foundation and its North American Sober Skipper Advisory Council announced winners of the National Boating Industry Safety Awards which recognize the best boating safety work in the for-profit sector of the recreational boating industry. Sponsored by KICKER Marine Audio, the six top contest winners were revealed in a special awards recognition segment held during the Marine Retailer Association of America's virtual Dealer Week on December 10, 2020.

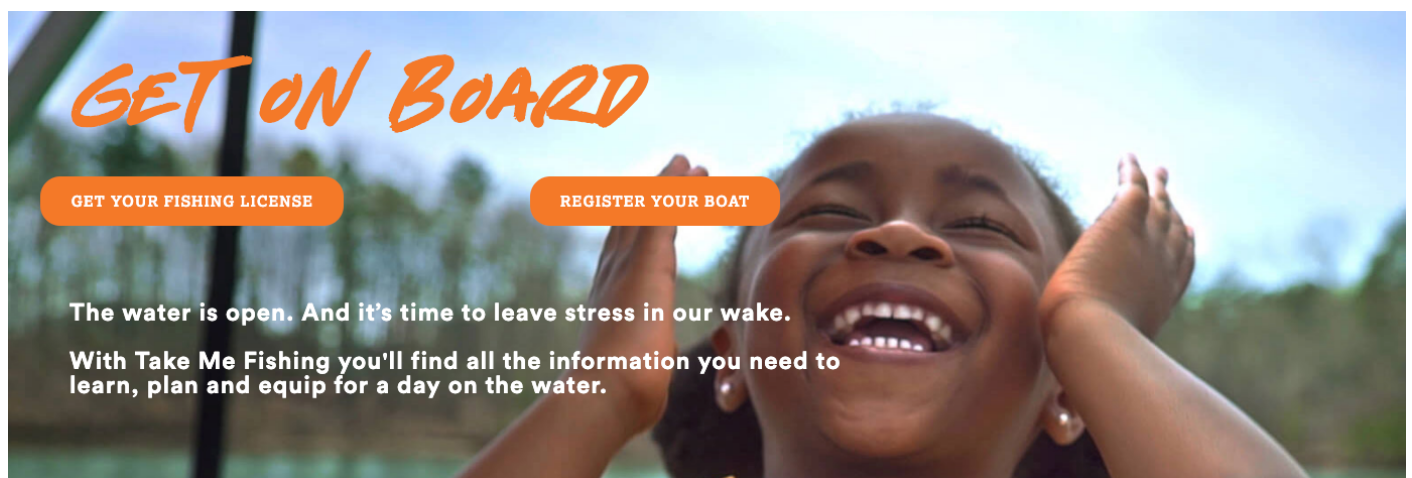


The Top Powerboat Manufacturer Award was presented for the second year to Sea Ray Boats. Another repeat winner is MarineMax who took home top honors in a new category for the Top Marine Retailer with More Than Three Locations. Another new category was Top Marine Retailer with One to Three Locations, won by Bridge Marina of Lake Hopatcong, NJ. And finally, another new category for 2020 was the Top Gear & Equipment Manufacturer Award won by FELL Marine.

RBFF EASES REGISTRATION LINKS TO FISHING AND BOAT REGISTRATION

A website plugin is now on the websites of 88 brands. The tool, which brings license and registration information straight to the users of any consumer-facing website, recorded 111,000 sessions in the month of October. Among others, Amazon has added the plugin to its site. A click directs consumers to the proper state agency pages to purchase fishing licenses and register boats, ultimately leading to more funds for conservation efforts and more links to referrals to readers and customers.

Access the plugin at TakeMeFishing.org/websiteplugin.



CALENDAR & EVENTS

Updates on Winter Boat Shows

Boot Dusseldorf

RESCHEDULED: The world's largest indoor boat show, which welcomes 250,000 attendees annually, is rescheduled as a live event for April 17-25, 2021.

Boot.com

Miami Boat Show

Cancelled for February 2021.

MiamiBoatShow.com

Minneapolis Boat Show

Cancelled for January 2021.

MinneapolisBoatShow.com

St. Petersburg Power & Sailboat

In person, now Jan. 14-17, 2021.

Stpeteboatshow.com

Seattle Boat Show

Now a virtual event - Jan. 28-31.

Seattleboatshow.com

Judges Needed for BWI Writing Contest



Contest judges, drawn from the membership to determine the winners, are always needed. Please volunteer for this important and rewarding Contest function. You cannot judge a category you are entering.

Send an email with Categories you can judge to Zuzana Prochazka at info@bwi.org.

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The BWI Journal is produced by and for members of Boating Writers International and can be found at www.bwi.org. Send items to be considered for publication to Zuzana Prochazka, 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, videographers and broadcasters. Associate members are generally PR or communications firms. Supporting members are usually manufacturers or marine organizations.

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Happy
holidays
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