



INFLUENCE THIS

We're here to entertain, not influence. Right?

by Charlie Levine, BWI President

Over the summer I posted a photo to Instagram of me tossing my six-year-old son in the air at the beach. We were on vacation near St. Pete on the Gulf Coast of Florida with lovely, sugar-sand beaches and some of the best sunsets in the Sunshine State.

Much to my surprise, an apparel/sunglass company posted a comment on the photo, asking if I would like to collaborate with them. Was I entering the stage of influencer stardom? Would this company send me free swag and maybe even cash to use their products?

I admit, I was kind of excited or flattered, but being the ever-skeptical writer that I am, I seriously doubted any potential riches. After all, I only have 488 followers, and most of the stuff I post is either something I've barbecued, caught in the ocean or a cute photo of my boys. (Check me out at @chazlevine if you're into that sort of thing).

I mean how many companies would want me, with my 45-year-old dad bod beaming extra pale, out there promoting their products? But I was curious, so I took the bait and responded. Turns out the offer wasn't quite so juicy. The company said they would give me 30 percent off of

their products if I posted photos of their stuff and tagged them. I responded, saying I wasn't in the market for new glasses or apparel and that's when I realized I wasn't even communicating with a person. Every response I got was obviously automated. Some business model, I thought, they pray on people's desires to look cool on social media to sell cheap sunglasses. Well, they do it because it works.

Influencers are nothing new. Athletes, celebrities, models, successful businesspeople... they've been endorsing products forever. But now regular folks can hit influencer status if they play the game and build up their base of followers. I'd like to think that I don't make buying decisions based on what some schlump with 100,000 followers is pimping, but I do value user feedback. I've often bought a certain brand of fishing line or a specific lure because a buddy said it served him well, and truthfully, I like buying that stuff. I read reviews on everything from footwear to hamburger joints. Opinions and experiences matter, but the most paramount factor in all of that is trust. Can you trust the source?

Social media apps sell your time or "impressions" to advertisers, and they use data to deliver very targeted messages. The problem is, the click bait they recommend is

often pure garbage (especially during election years!) and there's hardly any policing going on. But we still click on it. Studies show that falsehoods and conspiracy theories get more clicks than true, factual news. Consumers, however, are growing tired of it. I recently deleted Facebook from my phone and it felt wonderful. As people continue to get turned off to social media's shaky business practices, I think there's opportunity for us content creators. People, especially boaters, want entertaining content that fuels their passion. This is our chance to grab that person. Readers want more than viral videos, they want substance, and good content will always win in the long run.

Folks won't go buy a pair of sunglasses because I posted about them, but they will probably read a story about the time I got stuck in Bimini for three days with only \$200 in my pocket and the keys to a golfcart. At least that's my take.

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BWI WRITING CONTEST SPONSORS REUP

It's getting to be that time of year again with the Writing Contest taking shape. Notices went out to Supporting Members this month and many have already responded that they will continue their support of BWI's flagship event. Once again, we expect to have 15 categories that cover a variety of topics in the industry. For our writers, it's time to start planning your entries and for our sponsors – thank you and please reply to reserve your spot in the 2020 Contest.

NEW SIGNAGE FOR RESPONSIBLE BOATING

The Water Sports Industry Association (WSIA) is offering recreational boating industry businesses new aluminum Wake Responsibly signs at no charge. If interested in obtaining one or several, please email info@wsia.net with your request.

The Wake Responsibly campaign educates homeowners and boaters about courteous behavior to ensure every moment on the lake is safe and enjoyable for all.



NMEA NAMES 2020 PRODUCT OF EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

Following the NMEA Virtual Education Week, a total of 19 products received top honors and the NMEA Manufacturer of the Year went to Garmin on September 26.

NMEA normally awards a Best New Product Award and an NMEA Technology Award based on in-person judging at the Annual NMEA Conference and Expo. "Because of the pandemic these awards could not be awarded this year," said Mark Reedenauer, NMEA President and Executive Director. "NMEA plans to reinstate these awards in 2021 when the NMEA Conference and Expo is scheduled to be held as a live, in-person event in Anaheim, California."

Read the [full press release here](#).

IBEX INNOVATION AWARDS

IBEX 2020 was held as a digital event and the Innovation Awards were announced on opening day, September 27. Read the [NMMA press release on the winners here](#).

ACTIVE INTEREST MEDIA SIGNS ON AS TITLE SPONSOR OF BWI SCHOLARSHIP

Active Interest Media (AIM), publisher Power & Motoryacht, Soundings, Yachts International, Sail, Soundings Trade Only, Anglers Journal and PassageMaker, has stepped up to the plate as the title sponsor of the annual BWI college scholarship fund.

The BWI Active Interest Media Boating Journalist Scholarship will award a total of \$3,000 to undergraduate college students who demonstrate a passion for the field of boating media and showcase a clear career goal in the areas of writing, photography, broadcasting, or film.

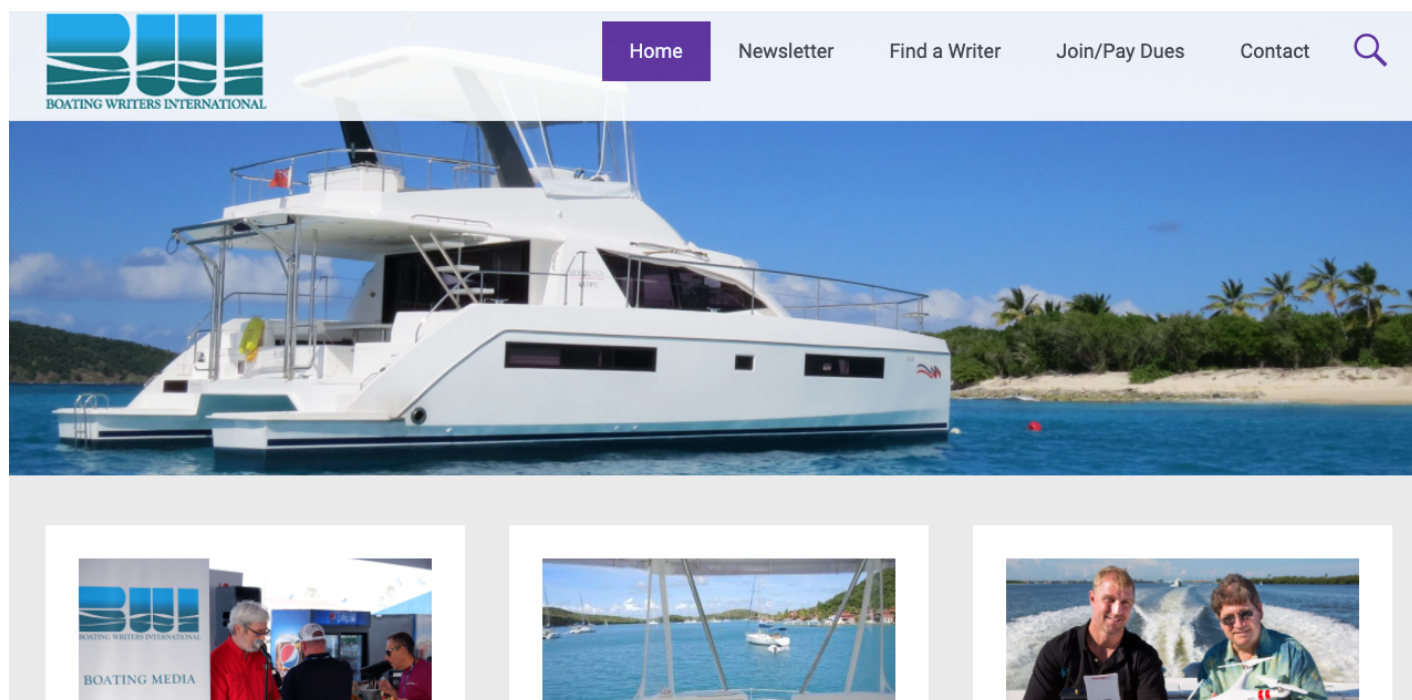
“Sponsoring the scholarship fits within our vision of attracting talented college graduates to enter the boating media as their profession,” says Gary DeSanctis, President of the AIM Marine Group. We need a new crop to come up behind us that can meet the demands of the changing media landscape.”

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 bwi.org/scholarship-fund or reach out to Scholarship Committee Chair Robert Beringer at robertberinger@yahoo.com. Winners will be announced at the 2021 Miami International Boat Show.

NEW BWI.ORG LAUNCHED

The [new site](http://bwi.org) has launched and although it's still a work in progress (certain PDFs and photos will be switched out), it's up and available to all members.

The online directory is an opt-in, self-managed directory designed to connect our Active, Associate and Supporting Members for available job opportunities. To update or add yourself, go to <https://www.bwi.org/writers/login00.php> and enter (or create) your login. If you don't remember your login, email Zuzana Prochazka at newbwiinfo@gmail.com. Don't create a new account if you're already listed.



MEMBER NEWS

LIFECYCLE SOLUTIONS FOR FIBERGLASS BOATS

BoatUS highlighted a new video having to do with the issue of disposal of old recreational boats: [Facing the Legacy: Lifecycle Solutions for Fiberglass Boats](#). The short video shares the compelling story of how efforts evolved into a first-in-the-nation boat recycling project and how end-of-life fiberglass boat hulls are processed into material for use in cement manufacturing.

The Rhode Island Marine Trade Industry Association aims to grow this recycling program across the U.S. with a novel pilot program. Completed in 2019, phase 1 of the project included collecting 20 tons of recycled recreational boat material, processing it, and supplying the product to concrete plants. The recycled boat material is used both as an energy source and as a filler for concrete manufacturing. Phase 2 will include an economic analysis of the pilot program to help determine long-term feasibility, legislation opportunities and regulations supportive of fiberglass boat recycling.



ABYC STANDARDS WEEK

The American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC), the nonprofit organization that develops safety standards for the design, construction, maintenance and repair of recreational boats, announced its [12th Annual Standards Week](#) will be extended and held virtually, Jan. 5-21, 2021. What has usually taken place over a week of day-long meetings will be extended to four weeks.



CALENDAR & EVENTS

Updates on Fall Boat Shows

Here's the latest but remember, the only constant is change.

St. Petersburg

Power & Sailboat Show

Normally held the first week of December, the next St. Pete show has shifted to a month later – now Jan. 14-17, 2021.

Stpeteboatshow.com

Boat & Fun Berlin

The Berlin Boat Show, which was set to be held Nov. 19-22 has been officially canceled.

Boot-berlin.com

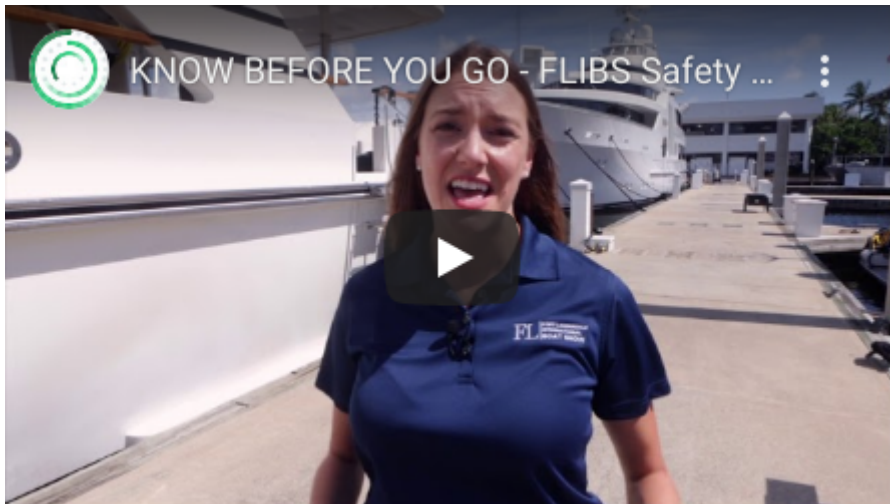
International Workboat Show

The show announced on Oct. 8 that it will be cancelled for 2020. Instead, there are plans to launch digital content in partnership with Workboat Magazine.

Workboatshow.com

FLIBS

Still scheduled as a live event: October 28-Nov 1. FLIBS.com



Boot Dusseldorf

The world's largest indoor boat show, which welcomes 250,000 attendees annually, is still scheduled as a live event for January 2021.

Boot.com

New York Boat Show

Currently still scheduled for Jan. 27-31, 2021 at the Javits Center.

NYBoatShow.com

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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.

WELCOME

New Members

John Mazurkiewicz

South Bend, IN

Associate

One more thing...

