



## SPONTANEOUS PUBLICITY

*by Brady Kay, BWI President*

Each summer the new BWI directory is released to the members and whenever I think about it going out, I can't help but recall just how excited Steve Martin's character gets in the 1979 movie "The Jerk" when he discovers his name is in the latest phonebook.

To refresh your memory, after turning to page 73, Navin Johnson starts shouting, "The new phonebook is here, the new phonebook is here... I'm somebody now, millions of people look at this book every day. This is the kind of spontaneous publicity - your name in print - that makes people. I'm in print. Things are going to start happening to me now."

I realize few BWI members (if any) get nearly this excited for the annual directory, but when you think about it there is a lot of value to this complete listing of those in our industry...even if it's just digital and not in print like a phonebook. (If you're too young to know what a phone book is, just Google it, sigh.)

This year there has been a lot of behind-the-scenes work going into the new version of the BWI directory with changes that will simplify the process and create a

more user-friendly format for everyone involved. Simply put, it will be easier than ever to check your own information to make sure it's completely accurate and up to date. Alan Jones, a current BWI board member and former president, shares the importance of networking in a newsletter message this month that really drives home the value of not only being a part of the directory, but also keeping your information current.

For freelancers, the directory is a great way to be discovered when editors are looking for help in a specific region or for a certain topic. With this new version you just have to check boxes to update your profile and to highlight your skills. There is even a section to list all the publications, websites, stations, etc., where your work has been showcased, which is another great way to get noticed.

The reach of the BWI directory is greater than you might realize and in order for it to be the most beneficial, we do need your help in making sure the information is accurate. When prompted through an email next month, be sure you take the time to check and update your own member listing. And like Steve Martin, things are sure to start happening for you because you will be a somebody when the new directory is released.



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# GETTING BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

When Boating World Magazine shut down—without warning—the day before Thanksgiving in 2019, for the first time in 25 years I found myself without a job. And I'm not going to lie, it was a gut-punch. Over the years, I had seen others in similar situations and tried to put myself in their place but until it happened to me, I couldn't fully appreciate what it was like.

To make matters worse, my wife and I were scheduled to go on a spendy vacation to New Orleans a few weeks later with friends and it seems like madness to go, given the

circumstances. That's when I got my first bit of help from a BWI friend who told me, "Go, have a good time and don't worry about the money. It'll be good for you and things will work out."



On the way there, I was Googling Antoine's to see if they had any coupons (ha!) and was quietly freaking out until I opened an email that was an invitation to work the Discover Boating Experience booth demonstrating high-tech products at six upcoming boat shows. The offer came about thanks to a recommendation from another BWI member and it saved my bacon at the time. It certainly changed the tone of my vacation.

Starting over again as a freelancer in 2020 after a quarter-century of having a steady gig was a scary prospect but every couple of weeks I would get an email from a BWI member giving me an e-introduction that would lead to more work or someone would tell me about a gig they couldn't take and give me the name of someone to call. Later, a supporting member of BWI offered me work writing informational blogs for their website.

You see where this is going.

The bottom line is that in our relatively small industry, relationships are everything. And I can honestly say if it were not for the friendships and connections I made within Boating Writers International over the decades, I would have been screwed.

Sometimes I'm asked for advice from young writers or those new to the marine industry and a few standard nuggets I pass along are to be friendly and helpful to everyone...even those you consider to be the competition. Also, try to meet as many people as possible and not just in a business setting. At press events and shows, the best time to get to know people is after the event when the pressure is off. Even if you have pressing work to do, after dinner head to the bar, even if you don't drink. This time spent networking with peers and members of the industry is the most productive you will ever spend.

While some people might join BWI just for the writing contest, the real benefit is the friendships and connections you make. Not every industry is like ours. I've been to automotive press events and some of the members of their press were downright catty toward one another. Ours is a special fraternity that I'm proud to be a part of.

Thanks for being there for me when I needed you most.

*Alan Jones is past president of BWI and current board member.*

# NEW PROCESSES COMING TO BWI REGISTRATION AND ANNUAL DIRECTORY

Be on the lookout for an email in August that will ask you to login to BWI on a new platform. We're transitioning to a new database which will be the ideal time to check and update your record and decide whether or not you want your information to be public so editors looking for writers can search and find you for possible work assignments.

Note: the current "online directory" is a member-updated subset of our membership and it will be going away. Please don't spend time updating that one now. Your existing information will be sourced from our administrative directory which is also the one from which we create the database and the annual directory PDF that will be coming out in late August. More information coming.

## U.S.C.G. 2020 REPORT ON RECREATIONAL BOATING STATISTICS

The U.S.C.G reports that accidents, fatalities and injuries were up over 2019 with the primary driving factor for the increase in deaths most likely resulting from a significant increase in boating activity. The report revealed that there were 767 boating fatalities nationwide in 2020, a 25.1 percent increase from 2019.



From 2019 to 2020, the total number of accidents increased 26.3 percent (4,168 to 5,265), and the number of non-fatal injured victims increased 24.7 percent (2,559 to 3,191). There is evidence that boating activity increased significantly during the pandemic, from reports of increased boat sales, insurance policies taken out, insurance claims, and calls for towing assistance.

Alcohol continued to be the leading known contributing factor in fatal boating accidents in 2020, accounting for over 100 deaths, or 18 percent of total fatalities.

The report also shows that in 2020:

- Boats headed out more frequently and with more passengers.
- The fatality rate was 6.5 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels, the highest in the program's recent history. This rate represents a 25 percent increase from last year's fatality rate of 5.2 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels.
- Property damage totaled about \$62.5 million.
- Operator inattention, operator inexperience, improper lookout, excessive speed, and machinery failure ranked as the top five primary contributing factors in accidents.
- Where the cause of death was known, 75 percent of fatal boating accident victims drowned. Of those drowning victims with reported life jacket usage, 86 percent were not wearing a life jacket.

More boats on crowded waterways, more new boaters with less experience and a continued issue with boating under the influence has taken a heavy toll on the industry. We've all written our share of "how to" and educational content lately but we have a long way to go given these numbers. Let's keep the focus on making boating accessible and safe to all.



# MEMBER NEWS

## NMEA POSTS SCHEDULE FOR CONFERENCE & EXPO

*Manufacturer training, technical sessions, panel discussions & installer training.*

The National Marine Electronics Association (NMEA) is inviting all members and marine professionals to the annual international Marine Electronics Conference & Expo at the Orlando Doubletree Hotel at Universal Studios in Orlando, FL, Sept. 20–24. Registration is now open for the largest industry trade event focusing strictly on marine electronics.

The week-long gathering includes manufacturer technical training sessions on Monday, Thursday, and Friday by the following NMEA manufacturer companies: FLIR, Raymarine, Fusion, IRIS, KVH, JL Audio, Airmar, Boning, GOST, Analytic Systems, Vesper, Seatronx, SI-TEX, Wave WiFi, Shadow-Caster, Intellian, Maretron, Nobeltec, Hatteland, Cobham, Clarion, Furuno, Garmin, and Simrad/Lowrance/B&G.

In addition to manufacturer trainings, the technology seminars below will be presented on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings before the expo hall opens at 1:30pm.

- **Modernizing AIS**
- **Business Sense LIVE**
- **Sell Safety with Your Marine Electronics**
- **Email Marketing, Google Business, and Social Media**
- **Get Ready for OneNet—The High-Bandwidth Marine Ethernet Solution**
- **Space and the Future of Satellite Communications**
- **NMEA 2000 Certification Process**
- **Sonar Technology Panel**
- **Engage with your local trade school**
- **Specialty Diagnostic Tools**
- **The Art of Hands-on Connectors**

For full schedule details on the NMEA Conference & Expo, or to register, visit [www.expo.nmea.org](http://www.expo.nmea.org) or call (410) 975-9425.

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## WELCOME

### Active Members

Alfred Boer  
Assendelft, Netherlands

Steve Mitchell  
Seattle, WA

### New Supporting Members

Discover Battery  
Mathew Campbell

Makers of: Lithium & lead acid batteries for marine applications. Gasoline & diesel starting batteries, deep cycle house batteries, trolling motor batteries.

British Columbia, Canada

## CALENDAR & EVENTS

*Stay tuned for upcoming announcements.*