



THE BOAT SHOW ROLLERCOASTER RIDE

by Brady Kay, BWI President

As a kid I loved the thrill of riding on an amusement park rollercoaster. The higher and the more unpredictable the turns, the better. It's a true thrill-seeking high like nothing else when you're finally tall enough to get on the ride. Now that I'm older with my own kids, I'm more into the "just endure the ride" mindset as I hold on tight and hope the uncertainty ends soon. It's kind of funny how life can change so rapidly. It's also easy to see why our lives and careers are often compared to a rollercoaster.

While walking the Fort Lauderdale Boat Show last month, I got the impression boat shows had finally turned the corner and despite the ongoing pandemic, things were starting to feel a little more normal. Unless you attended FLIBS 2020 you can't really appreciate the drastic difference as last year's show was a little eerie with a frightening drop in exhibitors as well as attendees.

So there I was last month, soaking up the Florida sun with other marine journalists enjoying a couple of media press conferences and simply appreciating that boat shows

were officially back! Then the NMMA sent out an email last week and I re-boarded the rollercoaster. Bad news traveled quickly as it was announced that the NMMA is canceling five of its major boat shows in early 2022. I guess I should have seen it coming after the Detroit Boat Show was quietly cancelled, but still, I was really looking forward to the return of the Chicago Boat Show in January among others.

No one can predict the future of boat shows or even our industry for that matter, but instead of trying to endure the changes I'm choosing to embrace them. The Miami Boat Show is still on the calendar for February and I'm looking forward to meeting in-person with all of you for our annual BWI Breakfast on the morning of the show open. It will give us all a chance to mingle (from a socially acceptable distance) as marine journalists and receive awards from our annual writing contest. And yes, that's a shameless plug and a reminder to start submitting your entries before the end of the year deadline.

When we get closer to the February 16 start date for the Miami Show, we'll pass along

he specific details of our breakfast, but for now plan on attending because like a rollercoaster, no one is able to predict what might be around the next corner for us so let's all just enjoy the ride.

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REACHING THE NEXT GENERATION OF DIVERSE BOATERS

The world is changing. Scratch that—the world has *changed*. Not only has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we work, live, and play, but the United States as a whole is more diverse than ever before. Millennials make up almost 22 percent of the population, with Gen Z at 20 percent. But diversity doesn't stop with age. When we think about the next generation (NextGen) of boaters, we also need to consider diversity of race, culture, gender, and sexual orientation.



For many across our industry, these new consumers ignite a mounting “fear of the unknown.” However, the question isn't *if* or *when* these new consumers will change “the way it's always been done”—because they will, and they already have—but *how* will they change it.

One of my all-time favorite quotes is: “Everything you've ever wanted is sitting on the other side of fear.” As an industry, we need to remember that with this new consumer, and this “fear,” comes opportunity.

A new kind of boater has already emerged. They're here. They're already engaged and actively listening. They've met us halfway, and their interest in the outdoors and recreational boating has never been higher. As an industry, and particularly as writers, editors, and content creators, now it's our move. It's our turn to do more and do better. It's our turn to meet them halfway.

As we produce content for various brands across the industry, here's a few things to consider as we all make strides to speak to NextGen boaters:

Content is *still* king. Think consumer-first.

While Google doesn't share its search volume numbers, Hubspot estimates that there are approximately 63,000 search queries every second, translating to 5.6 billion searches per day and approximately 2 trillion global searches per year.

So, what does this mean for us? Well, it means that consumers are used to getting the information that they need whenever they need it, usually in a matter of seconds. And they have *a lot* of questions. When consumers need information about boats and boating, they turn to Google. Plain and simple. (YouTube also plays a major role). They have questions, and we need to provide them with those answers.

Aside from answering the fundamental questions about seamanship, safety, boat reviews, maintenance tips, and so on, let's not forget that we need to entertain them, entice them, and provoke that tried-and-true feeling of “FOMO,” if they're not already on the water. Social media, with strategic targeting, can be our best friend here.

NextGen consumers are interacting with products differently—they crave experiences.

Research has shown that 56 percent of consumers between the ages of 18-34 want to experience a product before buying it. Not to mention, 57 percent of consumers 18-34 expect immediate availability when purchasing.

Before fully committing to purchasing a boat, ask yourself, how can we better support these new boaters in their very first experiences with our products and the boating lifestyle? It's no surprise that Brunswick's Freedom Boat Club and Boatsetter's peer-to-peer marketplace have both seen incredible performance since the start of the pandemic. What do both companies have in common? They're selling the experience. -- **cont. on pg. 03...**

...cont. from pg. 02 -- Boat shows and smaller, experiential activations present a powerful method for delivering on the experience side of things, giving consumers a way to get their first taste of the boating lifestyle. But show producers like the NMMA and Informa both need our help—as content creators—to magnify our industry’s voice and uncover new ways to reach NextGen consumers.

NextGen consumers want to see themselves in our content and advertising.

Websites, social media, videos, advertising, catalogs, magazines, signage, you name it... Imagery is everywhere. And it’s powerful. There’s a reason they say, “an image is worth a thousand words.”

If we’re going to *talk the talk*, we have to *walk the walk*. Whether it’s a photoshoot for your own online or print publication, or a production for a contracted brand or manufacturer, across the board we should be more conscious and intentional in truly showcasing a diverse population of boaters.

Kim Koditek is 2nd Vice President on the BWI Board of Directors, former Director of Content Marketing for the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), and current Head of Content Marketing for Boatsetter.

MEMBER NEWS

BWI WRITING CONTEST LAUNCHES FOR 2021

BWI's Annual Writing Contest marks its 29th year to recognize exceptional creativity in boating journalism, photography and videography. Entries are being accepted in 15 categories which translates to \$15,000 available in prize awards. This [electronic entry form](#) provides the process for uploading entries and paying dues.

Starting this year, only BWI members are eligible to enter. As a member, you get two free entries. Additional entries are \$30 apiece. Entries in all categories are welcome in a digital-only format—including blogs and on-line videos—or traditional print sources. Category definitions are included in the [contest brochure](#)—it will be updated with current sponsors but last year’s version will give you all the details.

PLEASE – contact Zuzana at newbwiinfo@gmail.com to **volunteer to judge**. We need 45 judges in addition to our 15 chairs.

The contest recognizes the best marine writing and imaging and presents cash awards to first- (\$500), second- (\$300) and third-place (\$200) scorers in each category. Each year, the awards are presented at the Miami International Boat Show during the BWI Annual Meeting in February.

Contest Categories

Boating Columns
Boating Lifestyles
Boating Profiles
Travel or Destinations
Boating Adventures
Boating Photography
Environmental Awareness & Education
Fishing

Boating Issues, News and Analysis
The Business of Boating
Rescue & Safety
Boat Tests & Reviews
Gear, Electronics & Product Tests
Boat Projects, Renovations & Retrofits
Boating Videos



CANDIDATES SOUGHT FOR BWI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elections for BWI Directors will be held in mid-Jan. 2022. Two seats (that carries a three-year term) are coming open. Active and Associate members may run for director spots, and active and associate members will be asked to vote in the election. Those who think they'd like to serve are encouraged to run. Duties include participation in two in-person director meetings per year (no expenses paid), usually held in conjunction with the Miami and Ft. Lauderdale boat shows, availability for as-needed conference calls (2-4 per year), committee work, and serving as a BWI Writing Contest category chair. For more information, contact Zuzana Prochazka newbwiinfo@gmail.com.



Candidates need to provide a brief summary (100 words by December 20) of their experience, qualifications and ideas to help BWI grow. Summaries are reviewed by the nominating committee which consists of the current President, Immediate Past President and Executive Director. A ballot will be available when voting commences in January.

ABYC MARINE LAW SYMPOSIUM AGENDA AND SPEAKERS ANNOUNCED

The American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC) has announced the agenda and speaker lineup for the fifth annual Marine Law Symposium, "Product, Professional and Personal Liability," Jan. 11, 2022, at the Francis Marion Hotel in Charleston, South Carolina.



"We are thrilled to be back in person for the 2022 Marine Law Symposium with an excellent speaker lineup," said John Adey, ABYC president. The agenda includes case studies of accident investigations and litigations that impact today's verdicts, evidence and expert testimony tips, and common liability risks with prevention steps. Six continuing education credits will be awarded to attendees.

The 2022 Marine Law Symposium speakers:

- Raúl Chacón Jr. - MG+M The Law Firm
- Peter Chisholm - Mercury Marine
- William Daley - CED Technologies
- Gregory Davis - Davis Marine Consulting Associates
- Patrick Duggan - Merrimac Insurance
- Stephen Ellenbecker - Johnson & Bell
- Christina Paul - K&L Gates LLP
- Jeffery Smith - Honigman LLP
- Robert Taylor - Design Research Engineering (DRE)

The symposium content is essential for surveyors, manufacturers, insurance personnel, lawyers, compliance professionals, expert witnesses, consultants and anyone looking to get into the marine industry.

Contact: Shannon Aronson, saronson@abycinc.org, 410-990-4460 x105.

CALENDAR & EVENTS

Updates on Fall/Winter Boat Shows

NMMA announced the postponement of the 2022 Progressive Insurance Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Nashville, and St. Louis boat shows to 2023. Supply chain disruptions and low boat inventory are said to be the cause.

In other news, the following are still set to take place:

International Workboat Show

Still scheduled as an in-person event December 1-3.
New Orleans. Workboatshow.com



St. Petersburg Power and Sailboat Show

The 44th annual show will take place in St. Petersburg Florida on January 20-23, 2022.
Stpeteboatshow.com



Boot Dusseldorf

The world's largest indoor boat show, which welcomes 250,000 attendees annually, is scheduled as a live event for January 2022. Boot.com



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WELCOME

Active Members

None for now!



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