



YOU CAN'T PUT A PRICE ON IT

by Brady Kay, BWI President

When I first heard the quoted dollar amount, I figured there must have been some type of a communication mix up. I know, a marine journalist getting confused, not likely, but something wasn't quite right. I was trying to secure a microphone for our BWI breakfast at the Miami Boat Show. Simple as that.

I remember seeing the quote and thinking it looked off since I was not interested in buying the audio equipment, but rather just looking to rent the setup for about an hour. Turns out I just drastically underestimated the cost of doing business at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

Watching all expenditures is one of the major responsibilities you have to worry about when you're at the helm of BWI as the president of a nonprofit organization. So, forgive me if I come across as a little cheap, but I think I could have added theatre surround sound to my home for what the audio/visual rental cost.

With this kind of a markup, I started getting a little worried about the quality of our

breakfast. Would we have actual orange juice or just an orange juice soaked napkin to dab the corners of our mouths? Despite the cost concerns we went all in and had a well-attended BWI breakfast the opening day of the Miami Boat Show. And let's be honest, if it wasn't for Yamaha stepping up to sponsor the event, we would have been asking if Informa had some type of a layaway plan.

Despite my original cost concerns, it wasn't until the supporting, associate and active members, as well as the contest sponsors, started showing up that my perspective changed. I began to see the real value this annual meeting provides that was surely missed when the show was canceled last year. In some ways our BWI breakfast was like a family reunion since for some journalists it had been two long years since we had all seen each other. I was no longer focused on the cost, but instead I was seeing only the benefits.

I wish all of the current BWI members could have been there, but I realize the challenges going on right now. I get it, maybe next year. I wanted

so badly to end our meeting with a mic drop, but I failed to sign up for the A/V insurance so decided against it. Instead, I ended with a simple thank you to those in attendance.



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GETTING "UNSTUCK"

We've all been there. Staring at a blank screen, waiting for inspiration to strike. You have an assignment with a fast-approaching deadline, and you just...can't...seem...to get started. You drum your fingers on the desk, sharpen a box or two of pencils, chat up the Jehovah's Witnesses at your front door — *anything* to distract you from the fact that you don't know what to write.

Given that writer's block is pretty much a universal affliction, we all eventually find ways to get unstuck and get on with the job. When I can't get my brain and/or keyboard fingers out of neutral, I use a couple of tactics to get back on track.



For example, it's common to strive for the perfect lede, that sentence or two that makes it all but impossible for the reader to not keep reading. Consequently, we often sit there paralyzed in the starting gate, when there is a whole race to be run. When this happens to me, I'll skip over the lede and dive into the rest of the story. We tend to think of writing as a linear process, but I've found that "skipping ahead" helps take some pressure off and gets me past the blockage. Frequently, that slam-dunk lede hits me two or three paragraphs in. Sometimes, I also benefit from a quick walk to get some fresh air, or a change of scenery by taking my laptop outdoors. A soak in a hot tub is like a sensory deprivation tank, and often brings ideas into my head.

BWI board member Lenny Rudow says that on those "rare occasions" where he does get stuck, he'll take a break and just work on another assignment. I guess that's one advantage of having a full dance card. Another very busy writer these days, board member Alan Jones, likes to jump out of bed at 4 a.m. and immediately start writing, before he can get distracted by emails, phone calls and the like. "It's more like channeling than writing, but it works. And studies have shown that people are at their most creative right when they wake up," said Jones. I'm not up at 4 am unless there's a fishing rod in my hands, so I'll just take his word.

Although some people thrive on it, most don't create well under pressure. If procrastination means you have to finish a story the day of the deadline, the added pressure can be an obstacle. Writing something when you want to do it, rather than when you have to, can be very liberating.

As I said, we all have our ways, some more effective than others. I encourage you to chat with your BWI brethren; you might learn some new ways of getting unstuck.

Ron Ballanti is a long time BWI board member and founder of Strike Zone Communications.

BWI ANNUAL CONTEST

The winners of the 2021 BWI Annual Contest were announced at the BWI membership meeting and awards breakfast on February 16 in Miami. We had 273 entries by 95 entrants and we awarded 30 Certificates of Merit. **More details in the press release.** Congratulations to all. Also, a great big thanks to all the chairs and judges as well as our 15 contest sponsors who made it all possible. As they say, the check (and plaque) are in the mail.



Group of BWI Contest Winners in attendance at Awards Breakfast.

BWI T-SHIRTS

Because you're a current member, we want to give you a free BWI T-shirt like the ones the board members were wearing in Miami. Thanks to the generosity of Techron Marine Fuel System Treatment from Chevron, all you have to pay is the shipping, which is \$5.75 (U.S. only). Just sign into your BWI account by going to www.bwi.org/memberDB/tshirt.php, select the T-shirt size you want and one will be mailed directly to you. It's really that simple.



BWI Board of Directors

BWI NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Two open seats have been filled by Ron Ballanti and Alan Jones. The new slate of officers continues with Brady Kay (second year president), Kim Koditek, (1st vice president) and Ben Stein (2nd vice president). Congratulations to all.

BWI SCHOLARSHIP FUND OBTAINS SPONSOR, NAMES 2021 SCHOLAR

Robert Beringer awarded the "Boating Writers International-Active Interest Media Boating Journalistic Scholarship Award" to Jack Brackin, a junior majoring in Media Production at the University of Florida in Gainesville. The award was announced at the BWI membership meeting and awards breakfast in Miami this month.

BWI Contest Categories & Sponsors

Once again, a big "THANK YOU" to all our contest sponsors:

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



BWI.ORG UPDATES

Many updates are in the works but most who are working on these are still on the road or swamped so please be patient as we add new info on directors, contest and the directory. Thank you.

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WELCOME

New Members

Andrew Parkinson

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Illmore Marine

United Kingdom

Spring



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