



JOIN US IN MIAMI FOR OUR BWI BREAKFAST & CONTEST RESULTS

by Brady Kay, BWI President

Attention all BWI members, if you're planning on coming to the Miami Boat Show in February, start it off right on the first day by attending our annual BWI Breakfast before the show opens.

We will hold it in the newly remodeled Miami Beach Convention Center on Wednesday, February 16, on the second floor in room 217/218. We'll kick it off at 7:45 a.m. with breakfast, thanks to Yamaha Marine who will once again be our breakfast sponsor.

Not to date myself, but when I first signed up for the association, you had to have a BWI member vouch for you in order to become a member. Getting "endorsed" was a pain, but at the same time it felt very exclusive to be a new member. I wasn't sure what to expect when I attended my first BWI Breakfast at the Miami boat show years ago, but I can tell you that I was a little nervous. Would there be secret handshakes? Would I get a members-only suit jacket with patches on the elbows when I walked in the door? (Okay, now I am dating myself). I was new

to the industry and hadn't been in very many clubs, so I had a lot of questions, and in reality, probably a lot of anxiety as I prepared to walk into the meeting room inside the old Miami Beach Convention Center for the first time.

I don't recall what I was hoping to get out of the actual meeting, but what I found were friendly members who welcomed a baby-faced boating journalist who didn't know a single person in the room. I could talk boats, so that's what I did to help myself fit in with industry veterans who clearly were more established than I was.

With over 20 years now in the boating industry I've found one thing to be absolutely true – boaters in general are some of the friendliest and most helpful people you'll ever meet, and that especially includes marine journalists. I got more out of my first meeting than just a free pastry, which was all I was going for. I now have true industry friends and countless memories of fun experiences, all because I dared to take a step into my first BWI meeting.

As you're planning your boat show schedules for Miami, make sure to include the BWI Breakfast. Sorry, no secret handshakes, but we will be announcing the winners of our annual BWI Writing Contest while getting reacquainted with industry friends, so you won't want to miss out.

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POLISHING YOUR VIRTUAL PRESENCE

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, the most valuable networking a boating writer could enjoy was giving a handshake and a smile at a boat show. Hopefully, in-person meet-and-greets will once again become the way we're introduced to new writers, editors, manufacturers, and PR people. But come what may, the Zooms, Google Hangouts, and Teams Meetings which have supplanted the real thing won't be going away any time soon.



At this point in time nearly every professional in the country has been forced to adapt to virtual meetings to one degree or another and if you call in by phone every time a computer and a webcam are involved, you begin stick out. Yet I've noticed that while all of the in-house corporate types of the marine world (read: your clients and your potential clients) have adapted to virtual meetings, many of us old-school writers have remained in our analog silos.

True, in some cases poor connectivity can prevent you from participating whether you want to or not. But when your connection is glitchy you can almost always sign in virtually, leave your camera off, explain the situation, and speak via the computer. You usually get a better audio result that way as opposed calling in, especially if you're calling in on a cell line that's not rock-solid, and everyone in the meeting understands why your smiling face isn't in view.

A big no-no to keep in mind is failing to mute yourself whenever you're not talking. That goes whether you're on camera or not. Sure, it's entertaining when the dog darts through the camera's view, but it's not at all entertaining when incessant barking makes it hard for everyone to understand each other. And those feedback loops — ouch! Calling in and talking on a speaker phone is a double-whammy in this regard because it often leads to problems with certain platforms the moment you un-mute yourself.

What about turning off the visual? Some people are quick to turn the camera off during meetings unless they're speaking. You'll get mixed feedback on this, as some people consider it the norm and others take it as a slight. So, this is one thing you need to feel out as you engage in meetings with different groups run by different people. Sometimes it's appropriate, but sometimes you risk coming off as a bit rude if you click the camera off every time you take a gulp of coffee.

While we're on the topic of visuals, don't forget that the value in virtual meetings as opposed to old-school telephone conferences is that everyone can see your face and read your body language as well as hearing your voice. So try to set up your webcam with a good view. You don't want to have a window or a bright light behind you, which can turn your image into a silhouette surrounded by glare. And make sure there's sufficient distance between you and the camera, or other attendees may end up counting your nose-hairs.

Yes, I know, these darn Zooms are a paltry shadow of real, live, in-person meetings and networking. I've found myself looking forward to boat shows more than ever before, after years of faux introductions and computo-collabs. But even when (if?) society ever gets back to normal, it's clear that virtual meetings are here to stay. So we'd better get used to them — and we'd better get good at them, too.

Lenny Rudow is a long time BWI board member and a past president.

PRESS ROOM AT MIBS

BWI has been working with Informa on securing a press room at MIBS but we don't have a room number at this time. We hope to publish another email to writers with event/press conference info (first week February) and will include the press room number then. Stay tuned.

BWI ANNUAL CONTEST & AWARDS PRESENTATION

The BWI Annual Contest for 2021 wrapped, as in all years, at midnight on Dec 31 (PST). We had 273 entries from 95 entrants. The winners in 15 categories (which translates to \$15,000 in prize awards) will be announced at the Miami Boat Show on Wednesday, February 16. MIBS starts a day earlier now that Informa is producing it and runs through Sunday.

The BWI annual breakfast will be held the first day, Feb. 16, at 7:45am at the convention center room #217/218. Coffee and a light breakfast will be available courtesy of Yamaha Marine.

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 BOARD OF DIRECTORS – ELECTIONS

The ballots for elections for BWI Directors have been sent out. If you haven't yet voted, please take just a minute to do so. Results will be announced at the BWI Miami breakfast.



MEMBER NEWS

ABYC VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING & RESCHEDULED LAW SYMPOSIUM

ABYC has confirmed new dates for the 2022 Marine Law Symposium and ABYC's annual meeting, following a postponement due to mounting public health concerns. The annual meeting will be held virtually Feb. 8, 2022, 8 at 5:30 p.m. EST. Registration is free at www.abycinc.org/annualmeeting.

The Marine Law Symposium will take place April 6 in Providence, Rhode Island. Registration is open at www.abycmarinelaw.com.

CALENDAR & EVENTS

Updates on Fall/Winter Boat Shows

Boot Dusseldorf

The world's largest indoor boat show that was to be held January 22-30, 2022 was cancelled. Boot.com

Vene 22 Bat Helsinki

Finland boat show to be held second week February has been cancelled.

Miami Boat Show

MIBS is set for February 16-20, 2022 at the newly opened convention center and several other venues. The show is being re-branded as well as relocated so stay tuned. Miamiboatshow.com

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WELCOME

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Gregg Mansfield
Ventura, CA

Parker Misko
Hermitage, PA

Tonya Russell
Woodbury, NJ

Bert Vermeer
Sidney, BC Canada

Hal Weis
Houston, TX

Melissa White
Olympia, WA

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