



IN IT TO WIN IT

by Brady Kay, BWI President

I'm not sure how closely you follow the lottery, but someone recently received a nice holiday bonus. Nothing gets people talking like a record \$2.04 billion Powerball payout. Of course, you always hear the argument from someone who actually complains about having to pay taxes on the winnings if they somehow manage to win. Now that's a "problem" I wouldn't mind dealing with. Just say'n.

Despite the unbelievable odds, the mindset of most of those playing is, "Someone has to win the lottery so it might as well be me."

I love the optimism, I really do, but the recent odds of winning were estimated at 1 in 292.2 million. Yikes! You'd be better off betting on the Harlem Globtrotters to lose. Those aren't the kind of odds most people want to face and I can't say I blame them.

While the payout is, well let's just say it's significantly less than the lottery, there is something I feel is worth entering to win with much better odds and that's our annual BWI contest.

As an active member you receive two free entries into the contest to showcase your writing, photography or video skills. Entering gives you a chance to win money if you're one of the top three in the 15 different categories.

Don't get me wrong, the money is nice and the plaque is a great reminder of your accomplishments, but I feel being recognized by your peers for your outstanding work is arguably the greatest reward and the best reason to enter.

Our contest is now open with a final date of December 31 to submit your work so as a journalist this one deadline you especially don't want to miss. And as NHL Hockey Hall of Famer Wayne Gretzky once said, "You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take."

Simply put, you can only win and be recognized if you enter the contest so what are you waiting for? Someone has to win, so it might as well be you.



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HOW TO WIN THE ANNUAL BWI CONTEST

One of the best feelings of the year for a marine writer/photographer/videographer is to hear your name called when the winners of the annual BWI Contest are announced. Getting the check that goes with the plaque isn't bad either. And perhaps one of the lowest points occurs when your name isn't called. Winning a contest is perhaps the best advertising a writer can have, especially for freelancers or staffers looking to make a move. And winning or placing in several awards in one year will receive extra notice.



I've been a judge and a chair for the Boating Travel and Destinations category and others many times and it's been a rewarding experience.

I love reading about places I've never cruised to and my bucket list grows every year. But it also gives me insight as to what judges look for and value when considering an article in our contest. I asked a couple of judges for their tips for winning.

Enter your best work

The judges have a daunting task. Many categories have 25 or more entries to wade through. After a while, they all start to look alike. So, we tend to separate them on the first superficial read-through into two stacks: (1) competitive (2) clearly not competitive. The ones in category two will get a cursory reading and an average score. The others will get more attention and more careful scoring.

Don't rely too much on a clever lead

The judges are looking at the overall article and assign scores for each criterion. Thus, the lead is only one of ten questions. The other nine criteria are equally important: "How well does it fit this category?" "Are there errors?" "How does it flow logically from one paragraph to the next?" "How well does it accomplish its purpose?"

Volunteer to be a judge

Volunteer to be a judge in a category in which you are not entering. (The rules don't allow you to judge if you have an entry). You'll learn a lot of useful lessons about the judging process, which you can apply next year.

Read the winning entries

Every year, BWI post links to articles, videos, and photos that have won prizes. Reading them is not only entertaining and informative, but it gives you a great insight into what resonates with judges.

Start thinking about the contest in January

This coming year, keep your eyes open for story ideas you think will be great candidates for the contest. If an editor gives you a generous deadline, use that opportunity to take the time to keep tweaking an article until it's perfect. Add more detail, more color, choose words with the utmost discrimination...and use spellchecker! And never use more than one exclamation point per article!

The lead paragraph matters

Jim Rhodes makes a good point that a clever first paragraph but it probably won't win the contest by itself without good writing to back it up. It is however, the easiest way for a judge to quickly decide an entry is destined for the no-need-to-read-it-twice file. Carefully craft the first paragraph to hook the reader into continuing to read on. I probably spend five times more effort on the lead (I'm not a lede guy) than on any other paragraph; it sets the tone and the expectations. **Cont. on page 3...**

Cont. from page 2...

Spray some buckshot

Only entering a couple of articles/videos/photos makes it difficult to be a consistent winner. It's hard to always know what will strike the judges' fancy so enter as many articles as you think might have a chance. Many of us write lots of articles for a variety of publications and it's easy to miss one that could be a contender. Go over each category carefully and try to remember if you have one that fits.

Make sure to follow all the directions

Carefully read what is required and make sure you are complying. One of the most often repeated miscues is failing to obscure your name or image.

Good luck this year!

Alan Jones is a BWI past president, and a current member of BWI Board of Directors.

MEMBER NEWS

DON'T MISS THE DEADLINE: BWI ANNUAL CONTEST 2022 NOW OPEN

BWI's Annual Contest marks its 30th year and is accepting entries until December 31, 2022. The contest recognizes 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](#) details the process.

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 [2022 contest brochure](#).

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-January 2023. Three seats (that carry a three-year term) are coming open. Active members may run for director spots and will be asked to vote in the election. Duties include participation at 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 15, 2022) 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.

GET YOUR BWI T-SHIRT FOR MIBS

Because you're a current member, we want to give you a free BWI T-shirt. 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 to you. Those wearing their BWI T-shirts at the BWI breakfast at MIBS will be entered in a special drawing.

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WELCOME

New Members

Adam Cove
Boston, MA

Alison O'Leary
Worcester, MA

Marissa Neely
Aptos, CA

Nica Waters
Norton, VT

Suntex Marinas
Dallas, TX
Supporting Member

BOAT SHOWS

Boot Dusseldorf

January 21-29, 2023.
Boot.com

MIBS

February 15-19, 2023.
Miamiboatshow.com

Happy
holidays

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 newbwiinfo@gmail.com. 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. Supporting members are usually manufacturers or marine organizations.