



YOU CAN BET ON IT

by Brady Kay, BWI President

As I made my way toward the crowded restaurant from the parking lot, I couldn't help but feel all eyes were on me. Yes, I received a few stares and I noticed a couple of kids pointing in my general direction, but mostly people just had puzzled looks on their faces as I tried to quickly make my way to the table to meet up with my friends for dinner.

I took my sea and laughter immediately broke out at our table. I was being greeted with some very big grins and it was clearly obvious. It was no longer just a feeling I was having; all eyes in this Mexican restaurant were on me and that was painfully obvious for anyone to see.

Oh, did I forget to mention I was wearing an orange life jacket snugly around my neck? And not a comfortable, proper fitting life jacket either. Clearly "one size fits all" is just a marketing myth.

If you're wondering why I was wearing one of those cheap orange life jackets to dinner I'd say that's a fair and reasonable question to ask. Let's just say I was on the wrong end of a football bet and let's just leave it at that. When I originally agreed to the silly wager, I liked my chances and felt it was as close to a sure bet as you can

get. However, if you're looking for better odds of success, bet on something less risky, such as renewing your BWI membership.

Due to the annual contest, many BWI memberships expire around this time of year with most renewing just before the December 15 contest close deadline. Our contest is one of the bigger benefits to being a member, but regardless if you feel you have something "worthy" to enter the contest this year I would urge you to not let your membership expire.

Besides the two free entries into the contest, each year your membership includes two BWI breakfasts/raffles (Miami Boat Show and Fort Lauderdale Boat Show), networking opportunities, a listing in the BWI directory, eligibility to judge the NMMA Innovation Awards, a BWI t-shirt and more. Renewing your membership might be perceived as a gamble to some, but based on the years I have been a member I can honestly say with a hundred percent assurance it has paid off like no other bet I've ever made.

My friends and I all had a good laugh at dinner that night as I did my best to be a good sport about wearing that life jacket the entire



time. Plus the "experience" lives on as the photos continue to circulate among those in our friendship group who weren't with us that night. As awkward as it was, it won't deter me from making another silly bet like this again. But if you're looking for better odds, bet on BWI, and take advantage of all this organization has to offer you as a marine journalist.

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AND THE WINNER IS...

The 2023 BWI Annual Contest is officially open, which means it's time again for members to gather their best articles, photos and videos and enter them into one of 16 award categories. This also means it's time for our annual "How to Win an Award" article.

How can members recognize which of their articles have a legitimate shot at taking home a prize? Although I've won a handful of awards myself (OK, nine but who's counting?), I sought out the advice of a member who's won so many plaques and checks over the years we've considered rebranding the event as the "Lenny Rudow Invitational."

"First off, your article has to have a killer lead," Rudow advised.

Technically, the lead counts for 10% of the overall score, but it truly carries more weight than that because it sets the tone for the whole story. "The lead and the entire first paragraph must grab the judge and draw him or her in. If this doesn't happen, it won't matter how great the rest of the copy is."

Although you're being judged on writing, it's also true that presentation matters. "As a judge, it drives me crazy to see a sloppily scanned story with names and titles scratched out," said Rudow. "Take the time to make a good clean pdf of your story."

I'll add my own tip to this; do not redact the pictures because, like it or not, strong imagery can't help but influence overall impressions of the article.

It's also important to carefully consider which category you enter, as articles may fit more than one. My personal measuring stick is to choose a category where my article is likely to stand out from the others. For example, an article I'd written about a very interesting fisherman was a good fit for the Fishing category, however, I felt it would stand out against other more typical entries in the Profiles category. That hunch paid off.

"Make sure you communicate with the publication editors early on to see if they are entering any of your articles, and if so, in which categories," said Rudow. "In the past, I've found that editors had already entered articles for me — and not the ones I would have chosen for the category. You don't want to get shut out of a category (maximum 2 entries by 1 author) by an editor who thinks he or she is doing you a favor."

Don't be afraid to enter multiple articles, even if you don't think every one is a prize winner. Many award recipients have told me that their prize stories were ones they considered "filler" entries. You just never know what might strike a chord with the judges. BWI Active Member dues allow you to enter two articles at no cost — but I know many prolific journalists who have found paying the tab for additional entries to be a worthwhile investment. "It's a numbers game," adds Rudow.

Don't forget to enter early and often — and good luck.

Ron Ballanti is the founder of Strike Zone Communications and a current member of the BWI Board.



GENERAL NEWS

BWI 31ST ANNUAL CONTEST NOW OPEN - CLOSES DEC. 15

1. The 2023 contest (and all subsequent ones) opened November 15 and closes December 15. This moves the contest up two weeks so don't miss out.

2. Yamaha is sponsoring a 16th category - "Women in Boating". This category will feature women who are actively involved in boating or programs.

The contest recognizes exceptional creativity in boating journalism, photography and videography. Entries are being accepted in 16 categories which translates to \$16,000 available in prize awards. This electronic [entry form](#) details the process.

Only BWI Active 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 and sponsors are detailed in the [contest brochure](#).

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

PLEASE - contact Steve Davis (steve@southernboating.com) to volunteer to judge. We need 48 judges in addition to our 16 chairs.

Contest Categories

- Boating Columns - sponsored by KVH Industries, Inc.
- Boating Lifestyles - sponsored by Discover Boating
- Boating Profiles - sponsored by Nautical Ventures
- Boating Travel or Destinations - sponsored by Dometic
- Boating Adventures - sponsored by Yamaha Marine
- Boating Photography - sponsored by ePropulsion
- 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 by Mission Critical Electronics
- Boat Projects, Renovations & Retrofits - sponsored by Boats Group
- Boating Videos - sponsored by Boat Owners Association of US
- Women in Boating - sponsored by Marine Business Unit/Yamaha Watercraft



FEAR OF MISSING OUT - HERE'S WHAT YOU MISSED AT THE BWI TECHNOLOGY BREAKFAST 2023

The second annual BWI Technology Breakfast was held at FLIBS on the South Beach Lady on Thursday, October 26. Four generous sponsors joined a group of writers and supporting members for presentations. Speakers included Dave Dunne of Garmin, Jim McGowan of Raymarine, Sean Chapman of Navico, and Mikele D'Arcangelo of ACR.

The information was great and the prizes were off the hook. Here's what you missed winning:

- Raymarine Axiom+ 9" MFD w/ Augmented Reality \$2,579
 - Navico 7" NSX w/ Active Imaging 3-in-1 Transducer \$1,299
 - Garmin ECHOMAP Ultra 2 Series \$3100
 - ACR ResQLink AIS PLB \$516
 - Sunglasses by Skeleton Optics \$359
 - Sea Tow Gold Membership \$199
 - BWI Gift VISA Card \$100
- Adam Quandt
Chris Perera
Jim Fullilove
Jim Hendricks
Zuzana Prochazka
Scott Way
Kevin Falvey

LAST CHANCE: GET YOUR BWI T-SHIRTS FOR MIBS

Kevin won \$100 because he wore his BWI T-shirt and because you're a current member, we want to give you a free BWI T-shirt too. 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.

Those wearing their BWI T-shirts at the BWI Technology Breakfast at FLIBS and at the Contest Breakfast at MIBS are eligible for a special (additional) prize drawing.



MARINE COPYWRITER NEEDED

Mariner Liability Insurance for Professional Mariners is looking for a writer.

Details:

We are looking for an experienced maritime writer to support current event articles as well as short phone interviews with captains to help provided original content on our website. Open-ended questions will be provided for the interviews, and you will simply write an informative article from the discussion. You must be an experienced writer with a firm understanding of maritime business to speak to this audience in an informative way. It's all about getting quality original content for our website from someone with expertise in maritime writing.

LENGTH OF ARTICLE: As long as it needs to be to fully explain the story. 500-1000 words.

FREQUENCY: Every other month PAYMENT: To be discussed.

WEBSITE: [Mariner Liability Insurance For Professional Mariners \(360coveragepros.com\)](http://MarinerLiabilityInsuranceForProfessionalMariners.com)

CONTACT: Brooke Benedict Valenti at brooke_benedictvalenti@360CoveragePros.com



MEMBER NEWS

ALLBRIGHT JOINS MARTIN FLORY GROUP

Martin Flory Group has added Paige Allbright in ongoing business development/sales. In her new role, Allbright will build on the strategic position MFG has as a trusted partner to clients, media, and industry stakeholders. Kelly Flory has retired.

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WELCOME

New Members

SUPPORTING

Nautical Ventures

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Boat Blurb

*Chris Perera
Brockville, Canada*

ACTIVE

Luca D'Ambrosio

Varazze, Italy

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.