



## FOR THE LOVE OF BWI

by Brady Kay, BWI President

I'm sure everyone has a favorite Valentine's Day memory, but as a BWI member it's about to be topped! That's right, where else would you rather be on Valentine's Day than attending the annual BWI Contest Breakfast?! Okay, maybe that was a little too strong, let me try again.

Since the Miami Boat Show always falls on February 14 and your significant other has learned to accept this, you might as well kick off "Singles Awareness Day" and the first day of the Florida show with your friends at BWI.

The annual BWI Breakfast will be held on Wednesday, February 14 at the Miami Beach Convention Center on the second floor in rooms 217/218.

If you were able to successfully navigate the maze the last two years and find the meeting room that was tucked away down the hall and just a brisk walk from daylight, then I have some very good news for you. Our breakfast will be held in the same room, so hopefully you'll be able to find it once again.

We'll kick it off at 7:45 a.m. and speaking of not changing, something else hasn't changed

and that's Yamaha's unwavering support. Dating back to when our BWI breakfast was held on a windy dock in the shadow of a hurricane-ravaged Miami Marine Stadium eyesore on Virginia Key, Yamaha stepped up to sponsor our annual breakfast and they've been graciously doing it every year since. Without their support we'd probably have to raise our annual membership dues this year and we know how that would go over so thank you Yamaha for your continued support.

Come for a free pastry and coffee (street value over \$50 at most boat shows) and then socialize with other BWI members as you catch up with industry friends. We'll also announce the winners from the Annual BWI contest and hand out checks and plaques before ending our meeting with our extremely popular raffle.

The raffling of top prizes—which this year include a Suzuki 6 hp outboard and other amazing prizes—is a fun way to get your Valentine's Day started. And remember, wear your BWI T-shirt to breakfast to be entered into a separate and additional prize drawing.

See you in Miami!



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# TRAVEL TIPS FROM THE SELF-PROCLAIMED MASTER

Cheap travel is a hobby of mine that borders on obsession. I can't stand the thought of paying a penny more for rooms, rental cars, or airline tickets than I have to, even when it's not my money. Over the years, this has saved me and the companies I've represented many thousands of dollars.

## How to Get There

Learn what airlines fly into your home airport to get the cheapest flights. In the last decade, there has been a boom in start-ups of low-cost, limited-service airlines, like Jet Blue, Spirit, and Breeze, that aren't listed on websites like Expedia. Usually, the scheme offers a low fare but charges for everything else, like advance seat selections, boarding passes printed at the airport, and even carry-on bags. The key is to read ALL the fine print. One caveat is that their limited service can put you in a bind if the flight is canceled because there might not be another flight to book you on.



When traveling to boat shows like FLIBS or MIBS, check the prices to all three major airports: PBI, FLL, and MIA, and book the cheapest one. A fantastic train service called Tri-Rail connects all three cities for an average cost of around \$5. And when you get off at one of the airport stops, a bus is waiting to take you to the airport.

## Where to Stay

When I add a couple of days to a trip overseas for sightseeing, I invariably book a room in someone's house or apartment on Airbnb and have never had a bad experience. The most I've ever spent on one of these is \$60 a night, and the host usually proves invaluable for sightseeing tips. I used to use them at shows like MIBS, but the extra fees have gotten ridiculous, so make sure you see the total price and amenities offered. Also, be careful to notice what isn't there.

At the big boat shows, I book using Hotwire's Hot Rate deals and wait until the last minute because the closer to the day of rental the cheaper they are. Plus, they are non-refundable. The catch is that you don't know the hotel's name until you book it, which is a dealbreaker for some people. But there's a workaround.

The first step is to go to the filter section, put in parameters like the desired area, hotel class, and guest ratings, and sort them using the lowest price first tab. Then, you'll likely see some labeled Hot Rate Deals, often 50% off or more. Ensure you look at the total price in a smaller font (of course!). Click on the deal you want to investigate, such as a 4-star hotel with at least 4.2+ out of 5 guest rating, and you'll see a tab that says, "What hotel will I get?" Click on that, and it will usually show that it will be one of three potential hotels. Sometimes, you can narrow down the field by the hotel ratings because one of those will have a lower rating than the deal promised. If not, click on the "go to details" tab, and at the top, you'll see a picture of a blurred room with the caption "click to reveal actual hotel photo." Then, go to the websites of all three potential hotels and click on room photos. You'll usually be able to find an exact match, and that's the one you are getting.

## Car Rentals

I usually go to Kayak for car rentals and can find a pretty good deal on the "normal" rental agencies (Hotwire also offers Hot Rate car deals). Two years ago, at FLIBS, I saw an off-brand agency offering cars for \$5 a day with a total three-day cost of \$28 at a time when most were going for \$60 a day plus extra fees. I saw the low customer ratings and knew there was a catch. **Cont. on page 3...**

**Cont. from page 2...** So, I went to the customer reviews and read a bunch and found out there were several things you had to have, like proof of car insurance from only certain companies with really high coverages, like \$150,000 of Comprehensive and Collision. And they wanted two forms of government ID...etc. The scam was that if you didn't meet their requirements, you had to buy their insurance, which cost as much as \$80 a day. I bumped my insurance coverages up for one month, which was surprisingly cheap, brought my passport for the second ID, and ensured I had everything else covered. They only rented me a car at the advertised rate car after a phone call to the manager. As I said, cheap travel is a game to me, and a win like this is good entertainment.

### **Miami on the Cheap**

If you are broke for this year's Miami Boat Show and need a cheap bed on South Beach, book a stay at the Freehand Hotel/hostel, a clean, hip property with a pool surrounded by lush gardens that also features the Broken Shaker bar, which makes most of the top five South Beach lists. Of course, you might have three other roommates in the college dorm-like rooms but a three-night stay during the show, with taxes, is \$108. Just for a goof, I did it one year and it was awesome.

*Alan Jones is a long time BWI board member and past president. He's also responsible for procuring most of the great prizes we raffle off at every MIBS and FLIBS.*

## **GENERAL NEWS**

### **BWI ANNUAL CONTEST & MIAMI BREAKFAST**

We now have the winners of the BWI Annual Contest for 2023. We had 245 entries from 75 entrants. The winners in 16 categories (which translates to \$16,000 in prize awards from our generous sponsors) will be announced in Miami -Wednesday, February 14 in room 217/218 starting at 7:45 a.m.

Be sure to bring your badges - it's possible you will need them to enter the building. Also, we've not been told which door will be open so please - come early in case we're all circling and looking for an unlocked door. We do what we can for our writers but the info we have - is all we have.

### **PRESS ROOM AT MIBS**

The media center will be located in the SW Corner of the lobby of the convention center as it was last year.

### **LAST CHANCE - NO KIDDING GET YOUR BWI T-SHIRT FOR MIBS**

Kevin Falvey won \$100 because he wore his BWI T-shirt to our FLIBS breakfast last October so get yours today because the program shuts down January 31, 2024.

Thanks to the generosity of Techron Marine Fuel System Treatment from Chevron, all you pay is shipping, which is \$5.75 (U.S. only).

Just sign into your BWI account by going to [www.bwi.org/memberDB/tshirt.php](http://www.bwi.org/memberDB/tshirt.php), select the T-shirt size you want and one will be mailed directly to you.



## MEMBER NEWS

# SUZUKI MARINE HIRES KATE DONADIO AS MARKETING MANAGER

Suzuki Marine USA today announced the hiring of Kate Donadio for the newly established position of Marketing Manager. Her addition will bring talent and energy to Suzuki Marine's "all-star" marketing team, helping Suzuki Marine increase industry and consumer awareness for its leading line-up of 4-stroke outboard motors ranging from 2.5 to 350 horsepower. P: 813-687-7200 E: [obmediarelations@suz.com](mailto:obmediarelations@suz.com)

## UPCOMING BOATS SHOWS

### Discover Boating Miami International Boat Show (DBMIBS)

February 14-18, 2024 - [miamiboatshow.com](http://miamiboatshow.com).



### BWI Officers

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## WELCOME

### New Members

#### SUPPORTING

#### ASA Electronics

Brent Barrow

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[asaelectronics.com](http://asaelectronics.com)

Elkhart, Indiana

#### ACTIVE

#### Tom Schilichter

Southold, NY

The BWI Journal is produced by and for members of Boating Writers International and can be found at [www.bwi.org](http://www.bwi.org). Send items to be considered for publication to [newbwiinfo@gmail.com](mailto: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.