



FLIBS RECAP & CONTEST

by Ben Stein, BWI President

I've just returned from Fort Lauderdale and BWI's Third Annual Technology Breakfast. Given that the bulk of my coverage is on marine technology, this breakfast is especially near and dear to my heart. I was thrilled to see many of our members there and hope next year to see even more. We gave out nearly \$5,000 in prizes and heard from Avikus, Garmin, Navico, and Raymarine. Additionally, I'm thrilled to announce that Seakeeper has joined as a Presenting Sponsor for 2025.

There's not much time to rest as some of us prepare to make the trip over to Amsterdam for METSTRADe and hopefully all of us are preparing for the BWI writing contest. The contest gives members the opportunity to be recognized for our excellent work and put up to \$500 per category win into our pockets.

The contest kicks off on November 15 and will remain open for entries until December 15. Please note that like last year, the contest closes on December 15th. We won't be able to accept entries after this date in order to give our judges enough time to read, evaluate, and score all of the entries.

With \$16,000 in prizes awarded in 16 different categories, the contest is one of the biggest benefits you receive as a BWI member. So, if you have something you consider "worthy" of consideration by your peers, go ahead and make sure your membership is current and paid-up. Without a current membership, you won't be able to enter. But, the good news is, as a member, you get two entries into the contest. Additional entries are \$30 each. A bit later in the newsletter, you will find all the contest details.

Perhaps you caught above where I mentioned that all entries are judged by your peers. Further, you may wonder how the judges are picked. Well, I'm here to tell you that if you have entered the contest in the past, or enter this year, you just might hear from Steve Davis, the contest chair.

If you haven't judged before, this year would be a good year to change that. Contact Steve Davis at steve@southernboating.com.

A total of 48 judges and 16 category chairs are needed to judge the awards each year. We tend to tap the same people year after year. It would be wonderful to bring some new people and fresh perspectives into the awards this year.

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YOU CAN'T WIN IF YOU'RE NOT IN

A common phrase often heard is, "When I win the lottery I'm going to..." followed by some unrealistic scenario of gaining something that is perceived to be unattainable otherwise. While it would be nice to win, in reality most people who dream of hitting the \$1 million jackpot never actually play. Now let's be clear, I'm not encouraging anyone to "invest" their paycheck in the lottery system, but rather making a point that you can't possibly expect to win anything if you don't ever play.



The Boating Writers International contest that is held annually has extremely better odds than any lottery out there. The contest recognizes journalists for their literary and artistic work related to the maritime way of life. Judged by your peers, it's a good feeling to get a pat on the back for a feature or column you've written, a photo you've taken, or a video you've compiled. Oh yeah, and besides the recognition, you also win some money! Last year, \$16,000 in cash prizes were awarded thanks to our generous sponsors who continue to support BWI.

You've already done the work, so why not enter something you're especially proud of? The best tip I can offer is to enter more than just the two freebies you get for being a BWI member. As a past judge I'm often amazed at the slim margin between a winning entry and one that just misses out on a top three finish. Judges are given specific criteria from which to score each entry, such as complexity, author's knowledge of the subject, use of language, structure, transitions, story flow, originality, and "Does it entertain? Educate? Inspire?" The more categories and submissions you enter, the better your odds that the panel of judges will rank your work high enough to win. (2 per category per person)

Another tip is to send readable electronic files. I know a pet peeve for the judges is to receive a scan of printed pages that are visually difficult to read. Nothing is printed without a digital PDF file these days, so you know you could get one if you try. As a judge, even though you try to base your scores solely on the writing quality, if you're squinting and straining to read the words, it's hard to overlook.

The last tip has nothing to do with actually winning, but it's still worth mentioning. BWI is run by a board of volunteers and could always use more help. Volunteer your time to be a judge and before you let the thought of, "I'm too busy" creep into your head, understand that so is everyone else. If nothing else, it will give you a better perspective on what it takes to win so you'll be that much better off for next year's contest.

The BWI annual contest opens this month with awards presented at the Miami International Boat Show in February. If you'd like to win, you need to get in!

Brady Kay is a past BWI president and the executive editor of Pontoon & Deck Boat Magazine.

GENERAL NEWS

BWI 32ND ANNUAL CONTEST OPENS NOVEMBER 15 — CLOSES DECEMBER 15, 2024

The 2024 contest (and all subsequent ones) opens November 15 and closes December 15.

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.

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
- Boating Lifestyles
- Boating Profiles
- Boating Travel or Destinations
- Boating Adventures
- Boating Photography
- Environmental Awareness & Education
- Fishing
- Boating Issues, News and Analysis
- The Business of Boating
- Seamanship, Rescue & Safety
- Boat Tests & Reviews
- Gear, Electronics & Product Tests
- Boat Projects, Renovations & Retrofits
- Boating Videos
- Women in Boating

FEAR OF MISSING OUT - HERE'S WHAT YOU MISSED AT THE BWI TECHNOLOGY BREAKFAST 2024

The third annual BWI Technology Breakfast was a hit as it was held at FLIBS on the South Beach Lady on Thursday, October 31. Four generous sponsors joined a group of writers and supporting members for presentations. Sponsors included **Avikus, Garmin, Navico** and **Raymarine**.

We're excited to welcome **SEAKEEPER** as the new Presenting Sponsor starting in 2025!



CANDIDATES SOUGHT FOR BWI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elections for BWI Directors will be held in mid-January 2025. Several seats (that each 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 Contest category chair. For more information, contact Zuzana Prochazka - newbwiinfo@gmail.com.

Candidates need to provide a brief summary (100 words) by December 20, 2024 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.

BWI IS SOCIAL

Boating Writers International is looking to expand its presence on social media to help promote its members as they're working hard on the water. We offer them new ways to get connected to editors, boat builders, and all things that might be interesting to marine media folk.

Be sure to give follow us on Instagram @boating_writers_international, on Facebook at Boating Writers International and on LinkedIn @boating-writers-international.

Don't forget to tag us in your posts, too, so we can share and repost your stuff! The more we're connected, the more we can keep the world informed about what's happening on the water. For questions, contact Pete McDonald at pete.mcdonald@firebrand.com.

BWI Officers

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Brady Kay - Immediate Past Pres.

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WELCOME

New Members

ACTIVE

Thomas Dammrich

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Anna Davison

Green Cove Springs, FL

Charles Scott

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SUPPORTING

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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.