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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Boating Journalists Recognized for Best Writing & Imaging

Miami, FL February 12, 2025 – Boating and fishing journalists, photographers and videographers were recognized today during the annual breakfast meeting of Boating Writers International (BWI). This event kicked off the 2025 Discover Boating Miami International Boat Show.

In BWI's 2024 Contest, presentations in 16 contest categories representing \$16,000 in cash awards were made to first (\$500), second (\$300) and third (\$200) place scorers. Cash award recipients also received a recognition plaque noting their "Excellence in creating compelling content about boating through entertaining, educational and inspiring journalism."

This year's BWI Awards (presented now for 32 years) attracted 78 participants submitting 275 entries. In addition to cash awards, 28 Certificates of Merit were presented. Each of the categories (noted below along with sponsors) was judged by four active journalists.

Results:

Boating Lifestyles – sponsored by Discover Boating

1st "[A Christmas Story](#)" by Chris Dixon (PMY)

2nd "[Engine\(less\)](#)" by Craig Moodie (Points East)

3rd "[Season's End](#)" by Craig Moodie (Points East)

Judge Ann Hoffner said, "Boat ownership is often portrayed either wistfully or enviously as something attainable by only the rich or mechanically handy. A Christmas Story instead creates an aura of both familiarity and delight as a young boy starts small on his own boat life with the help of his parents. I'm partial to the author's style of writing, which is expressive but doesn't get in its own way."

Merit Awards:

"More Than a Dash of Grit" by Charles Doane (SAIL)

"A New Path" by Kim Kavin (Soundings)

Boating Photography – sponsored by Duree & Co.

1st "[Spinnaker \(5506\)](#)" by Matthew Cohen (BoatUS)

2nd "[Snow Goose Migrates South](#)" by Onne van der Wal (Soundings)

3rd "[Boom with a View](#)" by Charles Scott (SAIL)

Judge David Lyman observed, "This photograph is a surprise; it captures the lyrical flow of motion as the wind goes out of a sail and we scramble to get it aboard before it ends up in the water."

Merit Award:

"Cape Dory under the Stars" by Nick Croken (SAIL)

Boating Issues, News and Analysis – sponsored by Mercury Marine

1st "[Jumping on the Starwagon](#)" by Hugo Kugiya (SAIL)

2nd "[Twisting in the Wind](#)" by Chris Dixon (PMY)

3rd "[Rule No. 1: Look Up](#)" by Kim Kavin (Yachting)

Chair Jim Fullilove said, "The 'seismic' emergence of Starlink technology and its fast-growing adaptation among sailors as aptly described in "Jumping on the Starwagon" has impacted everything from improved boating safety measures to facilitating enhanced remote work capabilities, from promoting and inspiring longer, round-trip cruise voyages to attracting younger enthusiasts to the sailing lifestyle. This well-researched article delivers a compelling read about a truly breakthrough development being advanced by sailors in ports and waterways throughout the world."

Merit Awards:

"Cruisers Caught in Florida Anchoring Ban" by Richard Armstrong (BoatUS)

"Fearsome Flotsam" by Stephen Blakely (Workboat Magazine)

Environmental Awareness & Education – sponsored by ePropulsion

1st "[Hydrogen Power for Boats](#)" by Randy Vance (Boating)

2nd "[Going to the Birds](#)" by Pim Van Hemmen (Soundings)

3rd "[Atlantic Fisheries Update](#)" by Kelsey Bonham (BoatUS)

"The author breaks down a complex boat system into easy-to-understand explanations of the chemistry and physics behind hydrogen propulsion while keeping the focus grounded in real world constraints to widespread application," wrote judge Rich Armstrong

Merit Awards:

"Move Over Solar and Wind Power" by Frank Lanier (Southern Boating)

"Clean, Drain and Dry" by Rick Shackleton (Boating)

Seamanship, Rescue & Safety – sponsored by Sea Tow Services International

1st "[So, You Want to be a Captain?](#)" by Chris Dixon (PMY)

2nd "[Lessons from Alliance](#)" by Lydia Mullan (SAIL)

3rd "[Safety with Marine Parts](#)" by Joe Rode (Speedboat)

Judge Theresa Nicholson says: "So, You Want to be a Captain?" is a firsthand experience of the long-held dream and persistent pursuit of obtaining a Captain's License. The author's detailed description of his personal experience, along with his excellent research and lively story telling made for an interesting and entertaining, and winning, piece. Thanks Captain!"

Merit Awards:

"Jumping In" by Vincent Daniello (Boating)

"In Good Hands" by Kim Kavin (Yachting)

"Night Sailing and Sleep Deprivation" by Ann Hoffner (Ocean Voyager)

Boat Tests & Reviews – sponsored by Volvo Penta

1st "[The Pontoon Boat Evolution](#)" by Richard Armstrong (BoatUS)

2nd "[Above the Fray](#)" by Jeffrey Moser

3rd "[X Yachts XC 47](#)" by Adam Cove (SAIL Magazine)

"I appreciated the use of quotes and the author's foundational knowledge about the segment. The author properly presented that they knew a lot about everything from helms to hulls." - Judge Ross Tibbits

Merit Awards: none

Fishing – sponsored by Suzuki Marine USA

1st "[Fall Madness](#)" by Bill Sisson (Anglers Journal)

2nd "[Taking a Bow](#)" by Joe Sills (Anglers Journal)

3rd "[The Art of Eeling](#)" by Bill Sisson (Anglers Journal)

Judge Pim Van Hemmen said, "The author uses beautiful prose that makes you see the birds, feel the wind and smell the fish. After reading this, even a non-fisherman will want to catch some stripers, suck down some cold ones afterwards, and talk about the one that got away."

Merit Award:

"Fantasy Island" by Ron Ballanti (Anglers Journal)

"Slaying Dragons" by Charlie Levine (Anglers Journal)

Gear, Electronics & Product Tests – sponsored by Xantrex/Mission Critical Electronics

1st "[Ax the Wax](#)" by Lenny Rudow (BoatUS)

2nd "[The Seabed in 3D: No Glasses Required](#)" by Michael Longman (BoatUS)

3rd "[Driving Force](#)" by Kevin Falvey (Saltwater Sportsman)

Chair Kim Kavin said, "Ax the Wax" managed to make a comparison of ceramic coatings for boat maintenance into a truly entertaining read. The reporting is original and thorough, and the writer presents the information in a way that makes you want to keep reading. A great job all around."

Merit Awards:

"Cox 350 Diesel Outboard/Boat Talk" by Chris Caswell (Saltwater Sportsman)

"Brave New World on the Water" by Richard Armstrong (BoatUS)

"Power Players" by Charles Plueddeman (Soundings)

Boat Projects, Renovations & Retrofits - sponsored by Boats Group

1st "[Callouses and Curses](#)" by Chris Dixon (PMY)

2nd "[A New Balance](#)" by Christopher Birch (SAIL Magazine)

3rd "[How \(Not\) to Install Your Own Marine Electronics](#)" by Pim Van Hemmen (Soundings)

Detailed account of son and father restoring an old boat -- result is not only a good-as-

new boat, but kid learns a lot about fixing things, figuring things out and dealing with setbacks -- sometimes by self-medicating with sushi. Nicely written, plenty of details, no holding back of the difficult bits. Good reading for fathers and sons. First class; I think it's a winner. Judge Mike Smith

Merit Awards:

"All Decked Out" by Lenny Rudow (BoatUS)

Boating Videos – sponsored by Boat Owners Association of the U.S.

1st "[Albemarle 30 Express Fishing Boat Review](#)" by Lenny Rudow (FishTalk Magazine)

2nd "[Boat Review: Monterey Elite 30](#)" by Randy Vance (Boating)

3rd "[How to Customize a Fishing Boat](#)" by Lenny Rudow (FishTalk Magazine)

Chair Zuzana Prochazka said, "The Albemarle 30 review was concise and to the point, outlining features and benefits in an easy and approachable flow that was a pleasure to watch."

Merit Awards:

"Volvo Penta Twin Forward Drive" by Pete McDonald (Boating)

"Bayliner Element E18" by Kaylie Jasinski (PropTalk Magazine)

"We Used ALL of Furuno's Marine Electronics. So Did We Find Fish?" by Stacey Wigmore (BoatUS)

The Business of Boating – sponsored by BRP

1st "[Slip Differentials](#)" by Eric Colby (Soundings Trade Only)

2nd "[Sportfish USA](#)" by Chris Dixon (PMY)

3rd "[New Boater Bubble](#)" by Alan Jones (Soundings Trade Only)

Judge Jeff Hemmel said, "Catching the reader's attention right off the bat with the significant costs of two cyber-attacks on major players in the boating market, How To Play Smart Defense went on to explain the complexities of cyber-crime then to offer real, practical tips that businesses use to protect themselves."

Merit Award:

"Making the Big Move" by Gary Reich (Soundings Trade Only)

"Share & Share Alike" by Pete McDonald (Boating)

Boating Columns – sponsored by KVH Industries

1st "[Setting Sail 2 \(Back to School, et al\)](#)" by Wendy Mitman Clarke (SAIL)

2nd "[Between Fish \(The Edge of Possibility, et al\)](#)" by Bill Sisson (Anglers Journal)

3rd "[Setting Sail 1 \(Humble Pie, et al\)](#)" by Wendy Mitman Clarke (SAIL)

Judge Tom Schlichter said, "These columns were interesting and well-written, with concise yet strong leads. The author's voice is loud and clear in each story, drawing heavily upon personal experience and a superior knowledge of sailing without being preachy. I found all three stories made for enjoyable, entertaining and informative reading."

Merit Awards:

"Dash of Salt" by Chris Caswell (Passagemaker)

"Rhumb Lines" by Darrell Nicholson (Practical Sailor)

"Weighing in 2024" by Charlie Levine (Anglers Journal)

Boating Travel or Destinations – sponsored by Dometic

1st "[Searching for Farley](#)" by Christopher Birch (SAIL)

2nd "[A Tall Ship Tale](#)" by Charles Scott (SAIL)

3rd "[The Hidden Gift](#)" by Kia Koropp (SAIL)

Judge Robert Beringer commented, "Searching for Farley: The author cleverly juxtaposes a voyage to Newfoundland with an homage to writer Farley Mowat and his many seminal books about sailing the Canadian Maritime Provinces. The reader rides along as they cruise to small and abandoned villages, waterfalls and fjords, seeing for themselves the places that inspired the "Sage of Burgeo", and meeting the many people who call this special place home."

Merit Awards: none

Boating Profiles – sponsored by Nautical Ventures

1st "[Glued Together](#)" by Pim Van Hemmen (Soundings)

2nd "[An Obsessive Sort of Sailor](#)" by Charles Doane (SAIL)

3rd "[Sword Fight](#)" by Jeff Hemmel

Chair Pete McDonald noted, "This engaging story of the Gougeon brothers brings history and personality to the boat construction process. You know you're dealing with a good writer when he or she can craft a really compelling narrative around epoxy."

Merit Awards: None

Boating Adventures – sponsored by Yamaha Marine Group

1st "[A Eulogy for Alliance](#)" by Lydia Mullan (SAIL Magazine)

2nd "[Hurricane Comin'](#)" by David Lyman (Caribbean Currents)

3rd "[Father Watch Son Watch](#)" by Stephen Titus (SAIL Magazine)

Judge Tristan Rutherford said A Eulogy for Alliance was "a storm-powered adventure that braved the elements to deliver a uniquely engaging story."

Merit Award:

"Three Women in a Boat" by Brianna Randall (The Guardian)

"Snow Goose Migrates South" by Jeff Hull (BoatUS)

Women in Boating – sponsored by Yamaha Marine Business Unit/Yamaha Watercraft

1st "[Sails Like a Girl Lives Like a Wolf](#)" by Norris Comer (SAIL)

2nd "[Lightning in a Bottle](#)" by Lydia Mullan (SAIL)

3rd "[Around the World with 500,000 Friends](#)" by Kelsey Bonham (BoatUS)

Judge Adam Cove explained Sails Like a Girl "Captures the essence of fear, bravery, and all the emotions that lay between. I felt connected to the subject and a part of her world."

Merit Award:

"Northern Exposure: Sailing Montana's Flathead Lake" by Brianna Randall (Cruising World)

"Courage, The Classic and Chemo" by Joe Sills (Bassmaster Magazine)

About BWI

BWI is a non-profit professional organization consisting of writers, editors, publishers, photographers, public relations specialists and others in the communications profession associated with the boating industry. Members include active marine journalists across the U.S., Canada and around the world. For more information, visit www.bwi.org.