



READY, AIM, FLIBS!

by Ben Stein, BWI President

If you are a marine journalist, summer drawing to a close and fall beginning can only mean one thing. The start of boat show season. If you're like me, you are gearing up for a busy fall of boat shows, product announcements, and manufacturer events. Allow me to make a pitch for an hour of your time at this year's Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show. The third annual Boating Writers International Technology Breakfast will take place Thursday, October 31st from 8:00 to 9:30 am on the *South Beach Lady*.

The FLIBS technology breakfast includes presentations from four companies highlighting their use of technology to deliver premier products to the boating public. The morning will start with breakfast followed by short presentations. All BWI members, both active and supporting, are encouraged to join us on the *South Beach Lady*.

The breakfast provides an opportunity to catch up with your colleagues, chat about industry developments, and hear brief technology presentations from our sponsors. The presenters will highlight their latest technology, including products being introduced very soon at IBEX.

If the promise of learning about the latest technology isn't enough to entice you to get to the show a little early, perhaps the raffle prizes will help. We aren't talking about floating keychains and pens. In previous years, prize values exceeded \$5,000. Prizes have included smart watches, thermal cameras, chart plotters and more. This year's prizes haven't been finalized yet, but we certainly expect similarly generous offerings.

The raffle is open to all current active members of BWI. Just a heads up, with several sizeable prizes up for grabs, your odds are pretty darn good. Several BWI members are going to win these prizes and it might just as well be you. But, you will have to be present to win, so add the breakfast to your calendar, set your alarm, flash your credentials to gain early access to show, and join us!



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BE THERE OR BEWARE

I have heard several of my fellow writers say, "If no one is paying my way to the show, I'm not going." While I understand it, I think this is a huge mistake. Despite the expense, if you are a professional boating writer, there are several good reasons for attending at least a couple of big boat shows like FLIBS each year.

Network with Industry Professionals

The Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show (FLIBS) is the quintessential networking show. Because the boats are herded together like cattle at a state fair, there are few opportunities to do boat tests, so why bother?

Because those attending this show are the ones your livelihood depends upon. Go to every press event, cocktail party and special event like the BWI Technology Breakfast. Hang out afterward, introduce yourself and do a lot of listening. I take lots of people's photos showing their name tags. It's an excellent way to keep everyone straight and link a face to a name.

Be Seen

At the events mentioned above, there are editors there who assign work. Find out who these people are and offer your services. The fact they see you at the show lets them know you are serious and keeps your name on their radar. Ask what they are looking for in new content.

Find Story Ideas

Whenever I see new things at the show, I ask myself, "Would this make a good article?" Take photos of all the latest boats and try to discern trends that might not be readily apparent. Every editor loves a good "10 New Trends in Boating" article.

Collect Social Media Fodder

FLIBS is a target-rich environment for short videos and photos you can post online. Look for unusual things, spray lots of buckshot and pay attention to lighting.

Get Free Stuff

Here's another plug for the BWI Technology Breakfast, held Thursday morning on the South Beach Lady (see details in this newsletter be;pw). In addition to networking and learning about new tech, there's always a treasure trove of free stuff raffled off to BWI members. Last year, we gave away more than \$8,000 worth of prizes!

How to Save Money at This Year's FLIBS

The most significant travel tidbit about this year's show is that car rental prices are dirt cheap! If you go to a travel site like Hotwire and punch in the dates for the show, you'll see prices as low as \$6 a day. But beware; these rates are for shady rental agencies like Economy Rent a Car with ridiculous requirements like requiring written proof of huge insurance coverage minimums up to \$300,000, two forms of ID and other hoops needed to decline their high-priced insurance. However, there are Hot Rate deals for known agencies like Enterprise, Hertz, and National for as low as \$12 a day, which is a hell of a deal and will eliminate a lot of Uber trips. I park at the convention center garage, which is \$20.

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The biggest mistake I see many writers make is thinking their accommodations must be close to the show itself. It doesn't matter if I am paying my way or want to save my company some money; I'm not paying more than \$100 if I can help it. But I'm not staying at a dump either, which sometimes happens when others make my arrangements. I always stay outside the show zone and book in areas like North Fort Lauderdale, Lauderdale-by-the-Sea and Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport. I am more concerned with guest ratings than how many stars it has. Check the total price, which is often hidden, and make sure there's no outrageous resort fee or a cost for parking.

For a complete list of my travel tips, click on this link to an article I wrote last year about Miami's show, which is relevant for FLIBS.

See you there!

Alan Jones is a current BWI board member and past president.

GENERAL NEWS

3RD ANNUAL BWI TECHNOLOGY BREAKFAST AT FLIBS 2024

If you missed it last year, you're going to want to put it on your schedule for next month. The Third Annual BWI Technology Breakfast at FLIB will be held at 8am on Thursday, October 31 aboard the South Beach Lady which will be located on the Face Dock inside the FLIBS show. Come upstairs to airconditioned comfort and a free breakfast along with great tech information from our sponsors which this year include Avikus, Garmin, Navico and Raymarine.

We will be done before the show opens - promise. Don't be late and bring some business cards for the great raffle because you'll NEVER HAVE BETTER ODDS OF WINNING! And if you have a BWI T-shirt, wear it and be entered into an exclusive drawing to win a \$100 gift card.

BWI IS GOING 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 us a follow 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.

THE 2024-2025 DIRECTORY IS OUT

All members should have received an email with link to the BWI Annual Directory the first week of September. This is reference material for all members in good standing and it's an exclusive benefit so please don't share this information. Thanks to all ad sponsors/advertisers - we are always grateful for your continued support.

BWI 32ND ANNUAL CONTEST OPENS NOVEMBER 15 AND 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



MEMBER NEWS

RUSHTON GREGORY COMMUNICATIONS SIGNS EV MARITIME

RGC announced it has been retained by EV Maritime to provide public relations services for the international commercial marine market. The agency will assist EV Maritime with new partnership and expansion announcements and to spread the company's environmental message.

Founded by prominent New Zealand marine industry leaders, EV Maritime specializes in the inshore commercial maritime sector. Their long-term mission is to decarbonize the harbor cities of the world, starting with ferries.

ABYC STREAMLINES COURSES

The American Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC) announced the launch of its new Marine Engines and Fuel Systems Certification course, a comprehensive program that combines the previously separate Gasoline Engines and Diesel Engines certifications into a single, streamlined certification. The [first interactive online course](#) will be held Oct. 8-24, running three days a week for three weeks from 3 to 4:30 p.m. ET.

BOATUS FOUNDATION: CALL FOR VOLUNTEER REVIEWERS FOR NEW GRANT PROGRAM TO REMOVE ABANDONED DERELICT VESSELS

The BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water is seeking a diverse panel of volunteers who will serve as peer reviewers between December 2024 and July 2025.

Environmentally conscientious individuals with diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply for national effort to clean our waterways. Reviewers will be part of this national effort to improve the environment and remove unsightly vessels from our waters. Volunteers with backgrounds in marine debris management, the boating industry, education, non-profits, government agencies, marketing and outreach, grant management, financial analysis, project evaluation, impact assessment, as well as legal or regulatory fields are encouraged to apply. Reviewers are asked to commit to at least one review cycle (two to three months) with an expected time commitment of 25 hours per cycle that includes independent review of proposals and virtual meetings.

Volunteers are encouraged to sign up by visiting [BoatUS Foundation](#). The deadline to apply is November 1, 2024.



Derelict sailboat just outside Beaufort Harbor. BoatUS Foundation NOAA Grant to remove derelict vessels and fishing nets from Beaufort Harbor in Beaufort, North Carolina. November 2018 working with TowBoatUS Beaufort © BoatUS Foundation

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WELCOME

New Members

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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.