

# BWI 2025 ANNUAL CONTEST

## Details 2025

- **CONTEST OPENS NOVEMBER 15!**  
Submit entries ASAP!
- **Deadline for entries is December 15, 2025!**
- Members continue to receive the first two entries for free.
- 16 categories mean a total of \$16,000 in cash awards will be presented.
- Submissions are made by an all-electronic for-mat where PDFs and/or URLs are uploaded by category. Files are then available, also electronically, to judges. To access the "Entry Form" go to <http://www.bwi.org/bwicontest>.
- The obscuring rule means any mention of author, publication and date or his/her image within the article, text or captions will disqualify the entry. See methods to obscure this information on page 2.
- Winning entries and authors will be verified prior to presentation of awards. Rerun submissions from earlier years are ineligible.
- 2025-26 Member Dues, required for Contest participation, may be paid at time of entry via PayPal.
- AI generated content, in whole or in part, is strictly prohibited.

## Celebrating the Best of Writing & Imaging



*2024 BWI Contest winners attending the award breakfast; Photo by Ron Ballanti.*

Boating Writers International's Annual Contest, now in its 33<sup>rd</sup> year, is open for entries. The online entry form provides the process for uploading the entry, "doing the paper-work," and paying dues by check or PayPal.

Sixteen categories are open for entries this year and represent \$16,000 in cash awards.

Entries in all categories (except Boating Videos) are welcome from digital-only or print sources. Category definitions are detailed on page 3.

The 2025 BWI Contest recognizes the best marine journalists in the world and presents cash awards to first- (\$500), second- (\$300) and third-place (\$200) scorers. Awards are presented mid-February 2026 at the Miami International Boat Show.

Each winner also receives a handsome recognition plaque noting "Excellence in creating compelling stories about the boating lifestyle through entertaining, educational and inspiring journalism."

Certificates of Merit are presented to those who score closely to third-place winners are deemed for recognition by the judging panels.

Judges are always needed from the membership to determine the winners. Please volunteer for this important and rewarding Contest function; however, you cannot judge a category you are entering (see additional details inside in the "Judges & Judging" section).

## Contest Basics

All submissions for the current contest must be published in 2025 (deadline for entries is December 15, 2025). Each of the 16 categories will be judged by four active journalists in the first few weeks of the New Year.



BWI members may submit two entries for free and must be members during the year the article was published with 2025-2026 dues paid. Additional entries are \$30 a piece.

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## How To Enter the Contest

### Where to Find the Entry Form?

To access the digital Contest entry form, go to <http://www.bwi.org/bwicontest>.

### Reduce PDF Size

Reducing your PDF file size will make it easier and faster to upload entries and for judges to download them. File upload size is limited to 90 megabytes.

There are a number of instructional websites offering how-tos to reduce file size. Several of these are listed on the entry form.

### Sponsor Details

Sponsors pay the prize money plus administrative expenses to cover the costs of running the contest and for the personalization of award plaques. Sponsors are not involved in any way in the judging of any categories. Sponsors for 2025 can be found on page 4.

Use the digital Entry Form (link to left) to fill in your information: name and contact information, member status, article title, publication (or website), date, etc. Have your entries ready to upload as PDF files or have URL links ready to post (see “obscuring” suggestions below).

Plan to fill in the entry form with this information at one time to simplify the process;

select a Category for each submission; use the “add another entry” button if you are entering more than one article; follow any special instructions that may appear, (e.g., those for the “Columns” category) on the entry form and in the rules.

If you wish to add another entry later, you can do so by starting at the beginning of the form and meeting the December 15 deadline.

Tell us how you will pay your 2025 dues and charges for extra entries (if any). You can do it at the same time as entering (with PayPal/credit card).

If it's more complicated than that, please send details to [info@bwi.org](mailto:info@bwi.org). To guarantee entry, payments should be done at time of upload.

## Uploading Files, Obscuring Names, etc.

Working with PDFs (scanning from print copies or gaining them from a publication) will generally be easier to alter to meet the “obscuring name, etc.” requirement since many members have software (e.g., Adobe Acrobat) to hide names, dates, etc.

URL images will likely require help from tech dudes or publication art departments since they need to be copied, altered (obscured) and assigned a new URL to

lead to the obscured entry.

If you have the original print (or web) article (or can print it out), it can be obscured the old-fashioned way (with a Sharpie), scanned, made into a PDF file and posted.

If you don't have a scanner, a nearby FedEx/Kinkos or Office Depot could do it for you and provide the file. Be aware these stores sometimes want to see the author name on the article before

altering and scanning/copying.

If you already have the PDF as it appeared in print (or online) and have Acrobat, you can alter and save the obscured file. (Go to Tools, then Comment & Markup, select “Text Box Tool,” draw boxes around the info you want to obscure, then resave the document.) If you had earlier scanned a hard copy article, you could also do this if it was saved as a PDF.

## Judges Wanted, Qualifications

Each category is judged by four individuals (a chairperson and three others) drawn from the membership of BWI. It's a great way stay abreast of what's trending in the boating and writing world. Here are the key rules to serve as a Contest Judge:

- A BWI member cannot judge a particular category in which he or she has entered.
- You cannot judge an entry if you have a conflict of interest (for instance, if you played a part in editing the copy, or if the writer is a close associate).
- You can recuse yourself from judging an entry without penalizing the writer, since scores of the other three judges are averaged instead of summed.

Please volunteer. Send an email with Categories you can judge to Zuzana Prochazka at [info@bwi.org](mailto:info@bwi.org).

# Contest Categories & Definitions

**Boating Columns** will recognize excellence in communicating ideas or information about a broad range of boating topics in shorter pieces (about 1,000–1,200 words) that appear regularly in the same publication, under the same heading and written by the same writer; longer columns should be entered in other categories. Each entry will comprise three columns published in the same calendar year (see rules next page).

**Boating Lifestyles** will recognize excellence in communicating the aura, benefits, value and enjoyment that reflects the overall experience of recreational powerboating or sailing.

**Boating Profiles** will recognize excellence in personality-driven features about a person, couple, team or group notable for expertise, impact, uniqueness or good works in recreational powerboating, sailing or fishing.

**Boating Travel or Destinations** will recognize excellence in communicating a cruise or charter to a boating destination, or a review of a destination itself.

**Boating Adventures** will recognize excellence in writing about adventures onboard a boat (not ashore). Eligible stories include pieces about sail- or powerboat racing, long distance cruising, predicted log events or passagemaking. Fishing and land-based

boating activities are not eligible for this category.

**Environmental Awareness & Education** will recognize excellence in communicating efforts and issues that foster aquatic sustainability and conservation practices, education programs, waterway access improvement, and industry advances to reduce material or energy impacts.

**Fishing** will recognize excellence in communicating techniques, value, enjoyment and/or instruction of fishing from boats in fresh or saltwater.

**Boating Issues, News and Analysis** will recognize excellence in communicating and/or analyzing news, issues and ideas that affect the boating public. Enter this category if the focus is for consumers.

**The Business of Boating** will recognize excellence in communicating and/or analyzing news, events or trends about the boating industry. Enter this category if the "trade side" is the focus of the article.

**Seamanship, Rescue and Safety** will recognize excellence in stories that depict seamanship, rescue or safety - including actual rescue events, preventive maintenance or heroic actions.

**Boat Tests & Reviews** will recognize excellence in test reports of new boats or reviews of new or extensively rebuilt yachts.

**Gear, Electronics & Product Tests** will recognize excellence in reviews, tests and broad-themed stories of all marine products, including electronics and engines (but not full boat tests).

**Boat Projects, Renovations & Retrofits** will recognize excellence in explaining boat projects, maintenance or makeovers accomplished by professionals or Do-It-Yourselfers including repowering, electronic or navigation updating, galley or head remodels, etc. resulting in improved performance, safety or creature comforts for boat operators.

**Boating Videos** will recognize entertaining and informative work showcasing the entrant's journalistic ability, creativity and knowledge of the subject of the video. Entries may include videos such as "YouTube" and similar postings and those on social media sites. The "obscuring" rule is not applicable in the "Boating Video" category.



**Boating Photography** will recognize excellence in still photography that enhances the written word, captures the beauty of recreational boating, or portrays the exhilaration and challenges that make boating such a unique recreational lifestyle. Photographs must be part of a published article (either print or online), a cover or photo spread. Each image counts as one entry.

**Women in Boating** will recognize excellence in communication about women in boating. This can include articles about women who are involved in the sport of boating, women who are in the boating industry, or programs that further the participation of women in boating.

## BWI Contact Information

[info@bwi.org](mailto:info@bwi.org)

[www.bwi.org](http://www.bwi.org)

Santa Ana, CA USA

# BWI 2025 ANNUAL CONTEST RULES

## 2025 Contest Sponsors

**Boating Columns** – sponsored by KVH Industries, Inc.

**Boating Lifestyles** – sponsored by Discover Boating

**Boating Profiles** – sponsored by Nautical Ventures

**Boating Travel or Destination** – sponsored by Dometic

**Boating Adventures** – sponsored by Yamaha Marine Group

**Boating Photography** – sponsored by Duree & Co.

**Environmental Awareness & Education** – sponsored by ePropulsion

**Fishing** – sponsored by Suzuki Marine USA

**Boating Issues, News and Analysis** – sponsored by Mercury Marine

**The Business of Boating** – sponsored by BRP Marine

**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 the U.S.

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

### AWARDS:

Each category of the contest will name three winners. All winners will receive a presentation plaque and cash prize. First place will receive \$500. Second place will receive \$300. Third place will receive \$200. Certificates of Merit are made to writers who are judged to score closely to third-place winners. The judges' decisions are final.

### ENTRIES:

- All entries must be published with datelines in calendar year 2025. Redated, republished and/or retitled entries are ineligible.
- Members may submit up to two entries for free (a benefit of BWI membership) with **a maximum of two entries in any category**. Both entries are eligible for prizes. Members who wish to submit more entries must send \$30 for each above two.

•Entries are submitted through an "Entry Form" page at [www.bwi.org/bwicontest](http://www.bwi.org/bwicontest).

•In the "Boating Columns" category, three columns must be submitted and will be counted as one entry.

•Byline, author, author image, name of publication, and date must be obscured from entries, including any mention made within the article text or captions. **Failure to obscure this information completely will disqualify the entry.** (This requirement is not applicable for the "Boat Videos" category.)

- Entries in all categories are welcome from digital-only or print sources (except Boating Videos).
- A minimum of 10 entries in an individual category must be received by the deadline date for a category to be considered valid. If fewer than 10 entries are received, the category will not be judged.
- If judges determine the entry does not fit the category, the entry will be disqualified.
- Entries must be received by December 15, 2025.**

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Entries must be submitted by individual members, or in the name of the member, not in the name of a publication.
- BWI dues for 2025 can be paid at the time of entry (via PayPal).

•**Only two stories/photos may be submitted per category** (in the "Boating Columns" category, three columns are counted as one entry. Two "Columns" entries, or six total columns presented as two sets of three, are permitted).

- A story may only be entered once in the contest, so select the one category that best fits it. If a story appears in more than one category, one will be disqualified.
- In the event of co-authorship, only one name is included on the plaque as well as on the prize money check. For recognition at the award ceremony, please enter co-author name(s) in the "Description" box on the entry form.

### GUIDELINES:

- BWI is not responsible for entries that are late, lost or unreceivable through problems with electronic delivery methods.
- Public relations, marketing and promotional materials are ineligible. Any story written about a product or service in which the author has a personal, professional or financial stake will be disqualified.
- Award plaques and checks will be made out to individual members, not publications.