



A CHANGING OF THE GUARD

by Ben Stein, BWI President

Allow me to begin my final message as BWI president with an apology for the number of clichés likely to follow. It is difficult for me to believe that it has already been nearly two years since I took over the presidency from Brady Kay. I hope that I have done a credible job of filling Brady's shoes, though I think we all know that isn't actually possible physically or metaphorically.

I'm not going to lie and tell you that being president of BWI is nothing but fun. The reality is that, at times, the presidency is frustrating, challenging, and even a little depressing. However, in a small industry with many headwinds, BWI remains a healthy organization and provides several critical functions. But, those headwinds I mentioned are part of what make leading BWI challenging.

I hesitate to count how many publications have closed their doors and ceased to publish in the last five years. Whatever the count, the reality is that our industry is contracting and we're seeing our colleagues displaced and opportunities closed. In part, owing to the changes in titles, I have had the opportunity to play matchmaker a few times recently.

In that process, I've been able to see talented journalists paired with interesting opportunities in the industry. Playing even a small role in a colleague landing a new opportunity is likely the most fun I've had as president of BWI.

As I look back on my time as president of BWI, I am very happy to be handing over the reins of a healthy and sustainable organization to the next president. We have the support of many amazing industry partners. During my tenure, we have cemented partnerships with presenting sponsors for both our Fort Lauderdale and Miami breakfasts. I owe a debt of gratitude to Seakeeper for their commitment to supporting the Fort Lauderdale technology breakfast and to Suzuki for taking on the Miami breakfast.

While we're talking about Miami, Suzuki is committed to upping the game on the breakfast there. I hope you'll join us there to spend time with your colleagues and see who won the BWI annual awards and this year you might also want to join us for a full hot meal.

In closing, I would like to thank the BWI board and membership for*Cont. on page 2*



Inside this issue:

Page 02

General News
BWI Awards Breakfast

Page 03

MIBS Press Room
New Members

trusting me to lead the organization these last two years. I hope I have done the role proud. I got involved with BWI's board as I got to know the organization and came to believe I had something to contribute. I hope a few of you reading this will realize that you too have something to contribute and will also make the decision to get involved. As for me, I'm not going anywhere. I now join the board as the past president and work to support our new president.

Ben Stein
BWI President

GENERAL NEWS

BWI BOARD OF DIRECTORS - VOTE NOW

Please vote now for candidates for BWI's open director seats. Ballot in separate email.

NO ADDRESS - NO CHECK

If you won't be at MIBS for the awards breakfast (see below), any money won and your plaque will be drop shipped to the address on your BWI database record. Please, log in now and make sure all your info is updated.

BWI CONTEST AWARDS BREAKFAST AT MIBS

We have the winners of the 2025 BWI Annual Contest and thanks to Suzuki Marine USA, we will hold the awards ceremony breakfast on **Wednesday, February 11 at 7:45 in the convention center in room 217/218** - same as last year. All members including Active and Supporting as well as Sponsors are welcome to attend.

Suzuki is putting out quite a good spread with full hot breakfast so don't miss out!

For the 2025 contest, we had 315 entries from 82 entrants. The winners in 16 categories (which translates to \$16,000 in prize awards from our generous sponsors) will be announced and plaques and checks handed out in Miami.

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.

A big THANK YOU once again to all our BWI Annual Contest Category Sponsors. You make all this possible!

Contest Categories & Our Wonderful Sponsors

- Boating Columns - by KVH Industries, Inc.
- Boating Lifestyles - by Discover Boating
- Boating Profiles - by Nautical Ventures
- Boating Travel or Destinations - by Dometic
- Boating Adventures - by Yamaha Marine Group
- Boating Photography - by Raymarine-FLIR
- Environmental Awareness & Education - by Prospeed
- Fishing - by Suzuki Marine USA
- Boating Issues, News and Analysis - by Mercury Marine
- The Business of Boating - by BRP Marine
- Seamanship, Rescue & Safety - by Sea Tow Services International
- Boat Tests & Reviews - by Volvo Penta
- Gear, Electronics & Product Tests - by Furuno Marine Electronics
- Boat Projects, Renovations & Retrofits - by Boats Group
- Boating Videos - by Boat Owners Association of the US
- Women in Boating - by Marine Business Unit/Yamaha Watercraft

PRESS ROOM AT MIBS

The media center will be located in the SW corner of the lobby of the convention center in the Lincoln Ballroom, across from where it was last year.

BWI IS SOCIAL!

BWI has an expanded presence on social media. 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.



WELCOME

New Members

ACTIVE

Matthew Hahn

St. Peters, MO

Bob Krieg

Bradenton, FL

BWI Officers

President
Ben Stein

ben.stein@panbo.com

1st Vice President
Steve Davis ('28)

sdsails@gmail.com

2nd Vice President
Pete McDonald ('27)

pete.mcdonald@firecrown.com

Executive Director

Zuzana Prochazka

newbwiinfo@gmail.com

BWI Directors

Lenny Rudow ('26)

ultangler@gmail.com

Ron Ballanti ('28)

ron@strike-zone.net

Alan Jones ('26)

boatscribe@comcast.net

Kim Koditek ('26)

Kim.koditek20@gmail.com

Kelsey Bonham ('28)

kbonham@geico.com

Brady Kay - Immediate Past Pres.

blk@harrispublishing.com

Happy
New Year
2026

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.