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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Boating Journalists Recognized for Best Writing & Imaging

Miami, FL February 11, 2026 – 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 2026 Discover Boating Miami International Boat Show.

In BWI's 2025 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 33 years) attracted 82 participants submitting 315 entries. In addition to cash awards, 18 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 ["True Blue"](#) by Jan Hein (Classic Boat)

2nd ["Rum, Reefs and Revelry"](#) by David Lyman (Cruising World)

3rd ["Confessions of a Rag Sailor"](#) by Craig Moodie (Cruising World)

Judge Christopher Birch said, *"Matching the writing style to the subject matter can be the extra ingredient that moves a story from good to great."*

Merit Award: "Trailer Tales" by Norris Comer (Power & Motoryacht)

Boating Photography – sponsored by Raymarine-FLIR

1st ["Turning Point"](#) by Vincent Daniello (Passagemaker)

2nd ["Sailing Reflections"](#)(no name) by Matthew Cohen (Soundings)

3rd ["Cruising World Cover"](#) by Onne van der Wal (Cruising World)

Judge Dori Arrington said, *"Turning Point's photo was amazing. Composition, lighting and originality - it had it all. A tough subject to photograph."*

Boating Issues, News and Analysis – sponsored by Mercury Marine

1st ["Making a Stand"](#) by Gary Reich (Soundings Trade Only)

2nd ["How Much is My Boat Worth"](#) by Michael Vatalaro (BoatUS)

3rd ["History in the Making"](#) by Kim Kavin (Soundings)

Judge Chris Dixon said, *"A really interesting, well-written piece on an obscure, but vital piece of the boating equation."*

Merit Award: "What Does Made in America Mean" by Kelsey Bonham Bailey (BoatUS)

“Proposed Budget Would Impact” by Rich Armstrong (BoatUS)

Environmental Awareness & Education – sponsored by Prospeed®

1st [“Sailing on the Winds of Climate Change”](#) by Joe Sills (Forbes)

2nd [“The Future of Teak”](#) by Adam Cove (SAIL)

3rd [“The Carbon Conundrum”](#) by Tim Murphy (BoatUS)

Judge Bob Arrington says, *“One of the best leads. A very descriptive piece. Excellent blending of travel, climate and economics.”*

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

1st [“Electronics Make Me Safer”](#) by Jim Hendricks (Boating Magazine)

2nd [“Survival Gear Savvy”](#) by Vincent Daniello (Passagemaker)

3rd [“Railing for Safety”](#) by Chris Caswell (Passagemaker)

Judge Jeff Werner said, *“Rarely does one read an article that attracts the reader’s attention, flows effortlessly, provides complete authority and offers solutions.”*

Boat Tests & Reviews – sponsored by Volvo Penta

1st [“Boreal 70”](#) by Adam Cove (SAIL)

2nd [“Quiet Luxury”](#) by Jeffrey Moser (Passagemaker)

3rd [“XR 41 Review”](#) by Adam Cove (SAIL)

Chair Rich Armstrong noted, *“The reader is drawn into this thorough stem-to-stern inspection of an expedition sailing yacht designed and built to be the perfect adventure yacht.”*

Merit Awards: “Sportsman Open 262 Center Console Review” by Alan Jones (BoatMart)

“Nordic Boats Come in from the Cold” by Michael Longman (BoatUS)

Fishing – sponsored by Suzuki Marine USA

1st [“Midstream in Montana”](#) by Charlie Levine (Anglers Journal)

2nd [“The Bluefin of Donegal Bay”](#) by David Conway (Saltwater Sportsman)

3rd [“Where the Sea Meets the Sky”](#) by Charlie Levine (Anglers Journal)

Judge Gary Caputi said, *“An exceptionally well written story that blends fishing and time on a very special river with the challenges of the approach of advancing years.”*

Merit Award: “All About Albacore Part I: The Catch” by Norris Comer (Best4Boats)

Gear, Electronics & Product Tests – sponsored by Furuno Marine Electronics

1st [“The Tower in a Box”](#) by Pim Van Hemmen (Soundings)

2nd [“Live-Action Sonar”](#) by Ron Ballanti (Marine Electronics Journal)

3rd [“Rock Steady”](#) by Rich Armstrong (BoatUS)

Chair Kim Kavin said *“This is real storytelling about something you don’t often see real storytelling about: the T-top. Solid reporting, interesting writing, all the hallmarks of a standout feature.”*

Merit Award: “The Starlink Juggernaut” by Arnie Hammerman (BoatUS)

Boat Projects, Renovations & Retrofits - sponsored by Boats Group

1st [“Renewing the Rib”](#) by Pim Van Hemmen (Soundings)

2nd [“101 Years of Newt”](#) by Norris Comer (Passagemaker)

3rd [“Links You Can Rely On”](#) by Frank Lanier (BoatUS)

Judge Tristan Rutherford said, *“The author combined humor, tenacity and a whole heap of love to give a humble boat a careful makeover.”*

Merit Awards: “Rescue Revival” by Vincent Daniello (Boating)

“By the Son, For the Father” by Chris Dixon (Power & Motoryacht)

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

1st [“Waleka: A Last Great Place”](#) by Charlie Levine (Anglers Journal)

2nd [“The Wingmen”](#) by Kevin Falvey (Wakeboarding)

3rd [“7 Mind-Blowing Ways Driving a Boat is Different than a Car”](#) by Michael Vatalaro (BoatUS)

Judge Jeff Butler said, *“Beautiful cinematography from wide shots to close-ups. Excellence all around.”*

The Business of Boating – sponsored by BRP Marine

1st [“Product Pipeline”](#) by Gary Reich (Soundings Trade Only)

2nd [“How to Build a Good Life in Boats”](#) by Tim Murphy (BoatUS)

3rd [“Working It Out”](#) by Pim Van Hemmen (Soundings)

Judge Kelsey Bonham Bailey commented, *“This author transformed a series of factory tours into a colorful, engaging narrative, including well-researched company histories and lively descriptions of factory floors.”*

Merit Award: “It Started with Shoes” by Gary Reich (Soundings Trade Only)

Boating Columns – sponsored by KVH Industries

1st [“Dash of Salt”](#) by Chris Caswell (Passagemaker)

2nd [“Life Aboard”](#) by Bob Arrington (Power & Motoryacht)

3rd [“Notes from the Cockpit”](#) by Lenny Rudow (Fishtalk Magazine)

Chair Ron Ballanti said, *“I learned a lot through the author’s shared experiences and even found myself chuckling out loud as I read.”*

Merit Award: “Weighing In” by Charlie Levine (Anglers Journal)

Boating Travel or Destinations – sponsored by Dometic

1st [“Irish Entrance”](#) by Herb McCormick (BoatUS)

2nd [“In Search of Mantas in Wild Polynesia”](#) by Brianna Randall (SAIL)

3rd [“Sailing the Sea of Gods”](#) by Zuzana Prochazka (SAIL)

Judge Carol Bareuther said, *“This pulls you in at the start with the time-honored ‘small world’ tradition of the sailing community, leading to an incredible adventure.”*

Merit Awards: “Misty Moments” by Herb McCormick (Cruising World)

“Underwater Oasis” by Kia Koropp (Cruising World)

Boating Profiles – sponsored by Nautical Ventures

1st [“Brothers Who Build”](#) by Herb McCormick (BoatUS)

2nd [“Passing of the Torch”](#) by Pim Van Hemmen (Soundings)

3rd [“Vendee Victory”](#) by Lydia Mullan (SAIL)

Judge Tim Murphy noted, *“A really interesting read explaining how the use of new tech led to the creation of an innovative marine product.”*

Merit Awards: “Last of the Melonseeds” by Stephen Blakely (Classic Boat)

“Karl Kruger is Not Extreme” by Norris Comer (Soundings)

Boating Adventures – sponsored by Yamaha Marine Group

1st [“The Long Road to Newport”](#) by Lydia Mullan (SAIL)

2nd [“One Wild Cat”](#) by Adam Cove (SAIL)

3rd [“Cargo Under Canvas”](#) by Shanan Wolfe (SAIL)

Chair John Burnham commented, *“The author skillfully draws readers into the slow-motion adventure through anecdotes ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous and reminds herself in the process of all she loves about bluewater sailboat racing.”*

Merit Awards: “Between Two Worlds” by Marissa Neely (Cruising World)

“Women Wayfinders” by Brianna Randall (SAIL)

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

1st [“On Point”](#) by Shanan Wolfe (SAIL)

2nd [“And Then The Boom Fell Off”](#) by Brianna Randall (Adventure Journal)

3rd [“The Survivor”](#) by Wendy Mitman Clarke (SAIL)

Judge Stacey Wigmore said. *“The article was written in a distinctive way that put the reader there on the boat, experiencing the highs and lows, as well as lessons learned, right alongside the author.”*

Merit Award: “End of an Era Straight into the Learning Curve” by Kia Koropp (Latitude 38)

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.