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IBEX ANNOUNCES PANEL OF JUDGES FOR 2017 INNOVATION AWARDS

Awards to be Presented During Industry Breakfast Featuring Olympian Jim Craig

TAMPA, FL, August 8, 2017 – The 2017 Innovation Awards, managed by the [National Marine Manufacturers Association](#) (NMMA) and judged by [Boating Writers International](#) (BWI), will be presented at the [International BoatBuilders' Exhibition and Conference](#) (IBEX) during the annual Industry Breakfast on Tuesday, September 19, 7:30 am - 9:30 am in the Grand Ballroom at the Tampa Waterside Marriott Hotel. Eight judges with extensive technical boating product background are expected to review the nearly 90 new products submitted for IBEX's 2017 Innovation Awards, and all products entered will be on display throughout the duration of IBEX along Innovation Way, located inside the exhibit hall at the Tampa Convention Center.

The Innovation Awards honor achievement in product development in 13 areas of the marine industry: Boatbuilding Methods & Materials; Deck Equipment & Hardware; Furnishings & Interior Parts; Mechanical Systems; Electrical Systems; Inboard Engines; Outboard Engines; Boatyard and Dealer Hardware and Software; Propulsion Parts, Propellers; Boat Care and Maintenance; OEM Electronics; Trailers, Parts and Trailer Accessories; and Safety Equipment.

"IBEX is the perfect place for marine professionals to learn about the latest technology, services, and products in an industry that is becoming more and more innovative," says Anne Dunbar, IBEX Show Director. "Rewarding ingenuity and honoring excellence is what the IBEX Innovation Awards stand for, and we look forward to recognizing this year's award recipients during the Industry Breakfast."

The panel of judges for the 2017 IBEX Innovation Awards are:

- **Alan Wendt (Chair):** Past President of Boating Writers International and contributing writer for Lakeland Boating & Southern Boating, Yacht Rendezvous Event Planner for Manufacturer based customer cruises.
- **Zuzana Prochaska (Co-Chair):** Writer and photographer who freelances for over a dozen boating and travel magazines. A USCG 100 Ton Master, Prochaska is the founder of Zescapes.com, a charter and flotilla organizer. She has served on the board of Boating Writers International for the past 12 years and heads up judging panels evaluating new boats and gear in the U.S. and abroad.
- **Charlie Levine:** Editor and publisher of *FishTrack.com* and *Buoyweather.com*, which provides weather, fishing charts and a database of articles for offshore anglers and mariners. Levine has worked as a journalist in the recreational marine industry for 18 years and is Second Vice President of Boating Writers International.
- **Brady Kay:** Executive editor of *Pontoon & Deck Boat*, *Houseboat* and *Great Lakes Boating* magazines and has served as an Innovation Award Judge on a couple of occasions. Kay recently

earned a 2017 Grand Award from Apex Awards and has been a member of Boating Writers International for nearly 20 years.

- **Craig Ritchie:** Ritchie began his career writing consumer boat tests and industry trade content in the late 1980s as the assistant editor at *Boat Guide* and *Boating Business* magazines, which serve the Canadian market. Almost three decades later, Ritchie still contributes to both of them – along with trade titles like *Boating Industry*, *Boating Industry Canada*, *Marine Business* (Australia) and *International Boat Industry* (worldwide).
- **Nigel Calder:** Author of the 'Boatowner's Mechanical and Electrical Manual', 'Marine Diesel Engines', 'Cuba: A Cruising Guide', and several other titles. Calder is a technical contributor and editor for various boating magazines; a member of the ABYC's 'Electrical PTC'; and a researcher into high efficiency energy systems for boats.
- **Ben Ellison:** Editor of *Panbo*, The Marine Electronics Hub – Ellison has been a sailor, power boater, do-it-yourselfer and apparently incurable boat nut since the early 70's. This fall, he will again cruise and test his way south from Maine aboard an elaborately equipped Duffy 37 named *Gizmo*.
- **Melissa Wood:** Associate editor for *Professional BoatBuilder* magazine and an editor for national trade magazines covering commercial fishing and seafood. Based in Portland, Maine, Wood is also a freelance writer primarily focused on issues affecting coastal communities.

"Judging the Innovation Awards is like peering through a looking glass into the future of boating, providing an opportunity to see brilliant minds in our industry at work combining new technology with inspirational design," said Alan Wendt, Chair of Judging Panel and Past President of Boating Writers International.

Attendees to the IBEX Show can join hundreds of marine industry colleagues at the popular IBEX Industry Breakfast held on the opening morning. The program includes the State of the Industry address, delivered by NMMA President Thom Dammrich, followed by several short presentations of important industry awards including the IBEX Innovation Awards. Jim Craig, 1980 "Miracle on Ice" USA Olympic Hockey team goalie, will deliver this year's Keynote address. Tickets are \$35/per person. To register for IBEX and the Industry Breakfast, [click here](#).

About the International BoatBuilder' Exhibition & Conference (IBEX)

IBEX, Where Better Boats Begin (www.ibexshow.com), is the marine industry's largest technical trade event in North America and is powered globally by **METSTRADE**, the world's leading platform and community for professionals in the leisure marine equipment industry. IBEX is owned and produced by the **National Marine Manufacturers Association**(www.nmma.org) and **RAI Amsterdam** (www.rai.nl). The 2017 IBEX is scheduled to take place at the Tampa Convention Center, September 19 - 21, in Tampa, FL USA. For more information, please visit www.ibexshow.com.

About Boating Writers International (BWI)

BWI is a professional organization consisting of writers, editors, publishers, photographers, broadcasters, public relations specialists and others in the communications profession associated with the boating industry. Members are active marine journalists across the United States, Canada, Europe and beyond. Visit www.bwi.org for details.