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NEWS ABOUT THE MARINE INDUSTRY IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA AND TAMPA BAY

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A CASE FOR OPTIMISM

John Good -- Can anyone imagine when we rang in the new year where we would be today? Our January Charlotte County Boat Show was a great show. Sales reports and attendance were strong and we were all looking ahead to another strong boating season. Even our March Bonita Springs Boat Show, held literally the week before the country shut down, was better than we might have hoped.

Yet, here we are in the middle of a pandemic crisis that no one (despite what the politicians say) imagined would have such an impact on every level of our lives. We are all reeling, but we are also surviving. As business owners and as people, we are doing our best to get to the other side of this disaster.

In general, the marine industry on Florida's west coast has fared reasonably well. I'd like to think the association played some small role in working to keep many boat ramps and most marine businesses open during the initial phase of the shutdown. Many thanks to a great job by our lobbyists, Joe Mazurkiewicz here at home and Missy Timmins in Tallahassee.

I have spoken with many of our members in the last few days and, on balance, the marine industry seems to be pushing through better than many others. A manufacturer who, despite strong demand, laid off most of their work force to comply with CDC guidelines. After some rearranging of the factory floor and going to shifts, they have now brought back 2/3 of their staff and business continues to be strong.

Nearly every dealer I have spoken with has had challenges to operate within guidelines, but adjustments were made. Service departments, parts departments and fuel docks continue to operate and business is good. Showrooms are closed, but phone, internet, and "by-appointment" sales continue. Sure, sales are down, but there is enough activity to

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working as possible. There is truly a sense that we are in this together and will push through it together.

Whats it all mean? Where do we go from here? What's going to happen through the summer and into the Fall? Who knows! What we do know is that people who love boats are not going to stop boating and eventually those boats need to be serviced and the itch for something new is in our DNA. In fact, our industry, at least on the west coast, is faring far better than most others. While we are operating at a reduced level, we are still in business, our prospects to survive through this are pretty darn good and assuming this pandemic reaches some equilibrium sooner than later, there is reason for optimism into the future.

We are all in this together and when life returns to some level of normal, there is real hope that we have all learned, or have been reminded of, the importance of being better neighbors. As an association, we will continue to monitor the ever-changing political scene and will continue to communicate and pass along information of interest. We ask that you do the same and keep us informed of anything that might be of help to others. We are posting information regularly on our Facebook group. If you have not joined, please go to facebook.com/groups/swfmia.

If you need us, please e-mail, text or call.



**MANY THANKS TO
OUR CREATIVE
AGENCY PARTNER**

Since 2011, SWFMIA has had the good fortune of working with Pearl. A SWFMIA member, Pearl is a small advertising/marketing agency that has a lot of experience in boating and the leisure industry. Scott Quorollo and his team developed and maintain both our swfmia.com and goboatingflorida.com (GBF) web sites and our very successful GBF Facebook page. They also assist us with our Boat Show marketing efforts and numerous other projects through the year.

They play a major role in the growth of our association and usually do not get the credit they deserve.

Scott asked if we would reach out to our membership on their behalf, and while it is not something we normally do, in this case we are more than happy to help. For the last four years they have been the agency for Bayliner Boats, and were under a contract that restricted their ability to help other boating companies. Because Bayliner's parent company

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Scott has asked that we let the membership know that Pearl is seeking new clients and simply asks to be considered if any members are looking for help with marketing, advertising, photo and video production, etc. He is an avid fisherman and boater, and has represented many boating companies, giving him a unique perspective in delivering a boating message.



MIKE JACKSON

Few people are more recognizable to most of us in the marine industry on the west coast than the Florida Mariner's Mike Jackson. Mike is a vocal advocate for and a friend to boating. He is very active in our association and played a key role in the formation of the Tampa Bay Marine Industries Association.

Mike is battling cancer and has begun chemo treatments in the midst of this pandemic. See below a note from his good friend and musician Eric Stone. If you can, please consider donating to Mike's medical fund.

Please help raise money for my best friend, Thomas Michael Jackson. He's a very giving person and would do anything in the world for anyone. He starts Chemotherapy on Monday for cancer. His immune system is weak, and he is at high risk for getting Covid-19 which in his condition could be a death sentence. If you help me raise the full amount I'll send everyone who donates free downloads of ALL my music. I will also do a LIVESTREAM "Thank You" concert.

Here's the link to donate.

https://www.facebook.com/donate/3809383432435527/?fundraiser_source=external_url



\$1,000.00 scholarships Awarded Annually

Application Deadline- June 1st, 2020

The Southwest Florida Marine Industries Association (SWFMIA) is offering scholarships to graduating seniors of Association members and their employees.

The Captain Ed Hansen Scholarship and the Tom Nichols Scholarship are awarded each year in memory of two of the Association's most active and respected members. Additional scholarships are awarded if funding is available at the discretion of Board of Directors.

Scholarship awards are \$1,000.00 each. Students may apply each academic year for a maximum of four academic years following their high school graduation. Each subsequent year is subject to Board approval.

SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFICATIONS:

- Graduating High School Seniors or students enrolled in a college or post-secondary trade or vocational school (Must be within four years following high school graduation)
- Child or spouse of SWFMIA/TBMIA member business employee
- 3.0 or higher GPA on 4.0 Scale
- Must display and provide confirmation of strong work ethic, school attendance, civic and extracurricular activities, and leadership skills

To Apply:

- Apply On-Line <https://swfmia.com/scholarship-opportunities/>
- Application must be filled out in Full
- 500 word Essay detailing educational and future occupational goals
- Letter of Recommendation from teacher, administrator or employer
- E-mail essay and letter to info@swfmia.com (include your name and contact info)

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SWFMIA member Adam Botana

is running for The Florida House of Representatives, District 76. Adam's family owns Baywater Boat Club in Bonita Springs. Adam has been active in our association for many years and we look forward to having another friend in Tallahassee advocating for boating. The SWFMIA board has approved a \$1,000 donation to Adam's Campaign.

**Donations can be made at
adambotana.com**



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