



CAPSTAN- VOL. VI | JANUARY 2026

Industry News

ABBRA and IBEX 2025-- During IBEX 2025 in Tampa, FL, October 7–9, ABBRA delivered five educational seminars that resonated strongly with industry professionals. Sessions were well attended, and participants consistently praised the quality and applicability of the content.

ABBRA seminar topics included:

- **Better Bidding:** Turning an Estimate into a Polished Proposal (Speakers: Sam Howell from Langan Design Partners and JB Turner from Front Street Shipyard)
- **Boatyard Management Challenges:** A Roundtable Discussion (Panel: Trevor Davis from Safe Harbor Great Island, John Fitzgerald from Saunders Yachtworks, and Andy Tyska from Bristol Marine)
- **The Perils of Paint:** Creating Consistency in Yacht Coatings (Speakers: Juan Carlos España from Peake Coating and Bill Robishaw from Front Street Shipyard)
- **Outstanding Outsourcing:** Integrating Subcontractors into Your Team (Speakers: Colin Kiley from Alliance Marine Holdings and Zack Parrish from TDW Marine (The Diesel Workshop))
- **Boatyard Ethics:** A Few Golden Rules (Speakers: Todd Lochner from Lochner Law Firm and Chad Morse from Ashbreez Boatworks, LLC)

ABBRA board member Seth McGonigal (Saunders Yachtworks) represented ABBRA at Student Career Day, giving an overview of ABBRA programs alongside representatives

from ABYC, NMEA, NMMA, and SNAME. Students from technical schools in the Tampa Bay region participated.

Another ABBRA board member, Nicole Jacques (Rhumbline Communications) moderated the seminar sessions. She was ABBRA's representative on the IBEX Educational Committee and recruited speakers for the ABBRA seminars.

A key to our success was our collaboration with Patty Lawrence, IBEX Education Director, who provides pre-event speaker coordination and critical on-site support.

Thank you to all who generously gave their time and talent to making ABBRA's participation in IBEX 2025 a success. We're gearing up for an equally strong showing at [IBEX 2026](#), October 6–8. **Mark your calendar—and join us!**

Two of our members were featured in a recent article from *Soundings* by Kim Kavin, which explored how thoughtful refits can enhance a boat's performance without compromising efficiency or seaworthiness. Drawing on real-world experiences, the piece highlights how refit conversations are increasingly holistic, focusing on balance rather than simply increasing speed.

The article also underscores the important role marine professionals play in guiding owners through what is realistically achievable for their vessel. By helping clients understand design limitations and trade-offs, refit experts ensure upgrades align with the boat's platform and long-term use—sometimes even leading owners to consider a different vessel better suited to their goals. [Read the full article here.](#)



Congratulations to **Erich Schmidt of Charleston Yacht** and **Kevin Flew of Safe Harbor Marinas** for their new designation of Certified Marine Service Manager (CMSM).

ABBRA offers the only extensive leadership training for boatyard operators that provides an industry-recognized credential (**Certified Marine Service Manager**) for qualified applicants. The course is sponsored by ABBRA and was created to enhance the professional image of marine service personnel working in today's busy, dynamic, and technologically advanced boatyards. Its purpose is to uphold the highest standards and support the professional development of boatyard owners, operators, service managers, and the next generation of marine service leaders.



The next **Marine Service Managers Course** will be held **February 22–26, 2026**, in **Newport, RI**. [Register here.](#)

Growing the ABBRA Community, One Social at a Time



Come to a Membership Social in 2026!

To strengthen our community and highlight the collaboration that drives the success of the marine industry, ABBRA is facilitating membership socials at the Newport International Boat Show and IBEX. We held our first socials in 2025 at both locations, with approximately 25-30 attendees at each one. These casual, connection-focused gatherings are **open to both members and non-members**, making them a great opportunity to connect, learn more about ABBRA, and expand your industry network.

We would love for you to join us, so save the dates for the 2026 socials!

ABBRA Membership Social, Newport International Boat Show 2026 September 16, 2026, 5-7 p.m. Location to be announced.

ABBRA Membership Social, IBEX 2026
October 6, 2026, 5-7 p.m. Location to be announced.

We deeply appreciate the support from our 2025 sponsors who made the gatherings possible, including **Bristol Marine** and **Bluewater Supply**.

Check back for 2026 dates

Thank you to our sponsors!



ABBAGARD

ABBAGARD is ABBRA's exclusive insurance program, designed specifically for boatbuilders, boatyards, marinas, and marine service providers. Administered by Starkweather & Shepley, a nationally recognized insurance brokerage with deep marine-industry expertise, the program delivers comprehensive coverage built to address the distinct risks of marine operations.

ABBAGARD coverage may include ocean marine, property, liability, hauling and launching, storage (afloat and ashore), slip and mooring rentals, dealers' inventory, transit, and business property and casualty protection. Beyond insurance, the program emphasizes proactive risk management, loss-control services, and access to industry-specific expertise—helping members protect their assets, reduce exposure, and operate with confidence.

What sets ABBAGARD apart:

Coverage is custom-designed for the unique exposures of marine service and boatyard operations—areas often overlooked by standard business insurance.

Members receive added value through bundled loss-control services, independent facility surveys, and potential premium credits for participating in ABBRA training and continuing education programs.

The program is available to small, mid-sized, and large members, providing businesses of all sizes access to coverage, pricing, and risk-management support typically reserved for larger operations.

For marine businesses seeking to safeguard their operations while leveraging industry-specific insight and support, ABBAGARD offers a powerful combination of specialized insurance, risk management, and member benefits.

[Learn more about our member referral program and FREE audit.](#)



Why Join ABBRA?

The American Boat Builders & Repairers Association (ABBRA) is the only national trade association dedicated to boatyards, repairers, and marine service professionals. Membership connects you to a powerful network, exclusive training, and industry leadership opportunities.

Membership Benefits

Professional Growth & Training

- Exclusive access to ABBRA's flagship training, the Marine Service Manager Course™, plus technical seminars and leadership workshops.
- Learn from industry experts in maritime law, HR, safety compliance, financial management, estimating, and service recovery.

Networking & Peer Community

- Connect with a national network of boatyard owners, repairers, suppliers, and service professionals.
- Share best practices, problem-solve challenges, and collaborate with peers who understand your business.

Advocacy & Industry Voice

- ABBRA represents your interests on issues that impact the marine trades.
- Stay informed on regulations, environmental standards, and workforce development initiatives.

Member Discounts

- Significant savings on industry training and events.
- For example: the Marine Service Manager Course is \$200 less for members (\$1,395 vs \$1,595).
- Membership often pays for itself in training discounts alone.

Credibility & Recognition

- Build your reputation with ABBRA certifications and professional standards.
- Demonstrate your commitment to excellence and best practices to customers, employees, and partners.

Join ABBRA Today!

Thank You to Our Members

We'd like to extend a warm welcome to all new members who joined ABBRA this past year—and a sincere thank-you to our returning members for your continued support. Your involvement and commitment strengthen our community and help move the marine industry forward.

*Sharing and reprinting are welcome with permission from ABBRA and proper credit.
contact us at info@abbra.org*

FOLLOW US



ABBRA | 50 Water Street | Warren, RI 02885 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!