



MARINE RETAILERS ASSOCIATION OF THE AMERICAS
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2 New Hires Strengthen MRAA Dealer Education Team

MINNEAPOLIS, Dec. 1 – The Marine Retailers Association of the Americas (MRAA) announced today that it added two new employees to its Education Team: Senior Education Developer Bernie DeGraw and Education Coordinator Carolyn Howell.

“Adding Bernie and Carolyn will help us enhance our educational initiatives and deliver on our mission to fuel dealer success,” said Liz Walz, Vice President of Education. “They both have already made great contributions to our educational products and bring with them unique perspectives and skill sets that will improve our team.”

[Meet Bernie DeGraw – Senior Education Developer](#)

DeGraw will work closely with the MRAA Education Team to develop new educational opportunities for MRAA Members, leveraging his valuable experience managing a marine dealership. He holds a bachelor’s degree in English and a Master’s in School Counseling. DeGraw will maintain his role as part owner of FLX Marine in the Finger Lakes of Central New York. He spends his free time with his family, boating and reading.

“I am incredibly pleased and proud to be a part of the outstanding MRAA Team,” says DeGraw. “It is exciting to be able to lend an additional perspective to the creation of the Education that MRAA provides. I look forward to helping dealers build and continue success, and to supporting the boating industry as a whole.”

[Meet Carolyn Howell – Education Coordinator](#)

Howell is a recent college graduate who joined MRAA after completing an internship with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. She brings a strong editorial and design background to her role, where she will support MRAA’s education efforts on behalf of retailers. Howell is an avid outdoor enthusiast who enjoys hiking, boating and fishing.

“I have been deeply impressed by the MRAA’s commitment to fostering the success of the marine industry, listening attentively to the individual voices of boat dealers across the country and helping them grow as businesses that bring people onto the water,” says Howell. “I couldn’t be more excited to be a part of such a passionate and driven team!”

Attendees of MRAA’s [Dealer Week Conference and Expo](#), next week in Tampa, Fla., will have an opportunity to connect in person with Bernie and Carolyn.

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Additionally, MRAA announces that Liz Keener, Stevie Cook and Sherri Cuvala have been promoted for exemplary work helping the MRAA and dealers find greater success. The promotions reflect their hard work and dedication and allow MRAA to pursue its strategic goals to provide increasingly robust support for retailers. In support of that vision, Mike Davin will also take on the role of Vice President of Industry Relations.

“Liz, Sherri and Stevie have displayed tremendous leadership and drive in helping the MRAA deliver on its mission to fuel dealer success, and possess commendable mindsets for professional growth,” says Matt Gruhn, MRAA President. “They are pillars of strength within this industry and for the association, helping us to foster enduring relationships with manufacturers, partners and dealers and reach impressive new levels of achievement in Membership and Certification.”

Liz Keener – Director of Dealer Development

Keener, an innovator and determined leader within the MRAA has led and expanded MRAA’s Dealership Certification Program. She has also facilitated relationship growth and connectivity with leading manufacturers to include MRAA in their important dealer meetings with the dealer body. Her distinguished efforts and collaborative efforts with MRAA leadership and marketing have led to a record-setting dealership connection.

In 2023 alone, Keener played a significant role in creating opportunities for the MRAA that included 11 in-person dealer meetings, two virtual dealer meeting, four recorded sessions, customized OEM websites and dozens of live presentations. While advocating for the Association and dealers alike, Keener’s leadership help generate more than 150 leads and thousands in sales for Membership.

As Director of Dealer Development Keener, who also joins the MRAA Leadership Team, is responsible for working alongside MRAA partner members, primarily boat and engine manufacturers, to develop membership, education, advocacy and Certification plans for their dealer networks, with the goal of increasing engagement in all MRAA products. Keener has been with the MRAA for five years.

Sherri Cuvala – Director of Membership

Since joining the MRAA in 2020, Cuvala has raised the bar with her tireless efforts to connect dealers with MRAA’s resources. She guided the implementation of new MRAA Membership satisfaction surveys, which allow the association to better understand member needs and to enhance retention and membership recruitment. She has been successful with many aspects of membership, but a particularly notable statistic is that she has grown MRAA Membership by 47 percent!

In her new Director of Membership role, Cuvala leads MRAA’s Membership team, maintaining responsibility for developing and executing strategies to advance all aspects of MRAA’s Membership program.

Stevie Cook – Certification Specialist

In less than two years with the MRAA, Stevie Cook has played a vital role in the expansion of the MRAA Dealership Certification Program by forming strong relationships with participating dealerships. She has helped to execute a successful 7-week Certification Webinar Series to enhance communication and

streamline dealership requirements, delivering a culture of accountability every step of the way.

In her new role as Certification Specialist, Cook takes the lead on administering the Certified Dealership Program, including oversight of participant recruitment and retention and administration and marketing, while contributing to program development.

Mike Davin – Vice President of Industry Relations

Davin has been with MRAA since January of 2019. He has helped launch Dealer Week, overseen MRAA's brand, and managed internal business planning while at MRAA. Now he takes on a more outward-facing role as Vice President of Industry Relations, where he will manage stakeholder relationships and develop strategic alliances within the marine industry.

Stop by the MRAA Solutions Center at the Dealer Week Conference and Expo, Dec. 4-7, in Tampa, Fla., to meet these four individuals who are there to assist in your success.

About the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas

At the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas, we believe that for the marine industry to thrive, the retail organizations that interact with the boaters in their community must thrive. With that in mind, MRAA works to create a strong and healthy boating industry by uniting those retailers, providing them with opportunities for improvement and growth, and representing them with a powerful voice. For more information, visit MRAA.com or contact us at 763-315-8043.