



# WAGGONER CRUISING GUIDE



What Makes a Great Marina?  
It's Not Complicated - But It Is!  
The Customer Experience is Critical

# An Introduction to: Mark Bunzel - Nautical Publisher, Author

- Editor & Publisher - *Waggoner Cruising Guide*  
Covering 400 Marinas from Olympia to Ketchikan
- Publisher of Exploring Series,  
Dreamspeaker Series, Waggoner eNews, *Ports and Passes*
- Writer for *Northwest Yachting Magazine*, *Canadian Yachting*, *Lats & Atts*, *Pacific Yachting*, *Power Cruising*, *Dockside*, *Soundings*, *PassageMaker*
- Co-Author of *Cruising the Virgin Islands* - the top cruising guide in the Virgin Islands
- Charter cruised in Kodiak & Prince William Sound, SE Alaska, BC, WA, Baja, Honduras, ICW, Chesapeake, Caribbean, the Canal du Midi, Greece, First American crew to charter-cruise the Coast of Vietnam
- USCG Masters in Power & Sail
- Founder of Seattle Boat Show University and former Northwest Marine Trade Association Board of Trustees member and Chairman of the Seattle Boat Show
- On the board of the Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend



# Our Nautical Ventures

- Waggoner Cruising Guide
- Waggoner eNews
- Waggoner Seminars
- Waggoner Flotillas
- Waggoner Marina Consulting
- Fine Edge Nautical & Recreational Publishing
- Chyna Sea Ventures Ltd - Nanaimo, BC



## Waggoner Marina Updates Each Year

- 2-3 of us travel a total of over 4,000 miles
- We visit 250+ marinas out of the 400 public and private marinas between Olympia and Ketchikan
- All levels of service and amenities
- Moorage rates range \$.40 to \$3.75 per foot - Most in the \$1.25-\$1.75 per foot range

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# Trends in 2016

- Best Season Ever!  
Up 20% - 30%, more \$ spent
- Larger boats, 20% new customers
- Need more 50 amp power
- The catamarans are coming
- Looking for more experiences - food events, music, local tours, farmers and craft markets
- Big jump in kayak operators
- Three major groups buying marinas

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# The Cruising Market

- There are 36,000 cruising boats in the NW and Inside Passage area including WA, BC & SE Alaska according to consulting firm Grant Thornton
- About 1/3 or 12,000 are serious cruising boats that go out every summer for 2-12 weeks
- Boats range from 26 foot cabin cruisers to 85 foot yachts and larger.
- Boat owners spend \$300 - \$500 per day or more on:
  - Moorage and Destination Marinas
  - Restaurant Experiences, Provisions and Liquor
  - Fuel, Maintenance, Parts and Accessories
  - Tours, Attractions and Fishing Charters



## Is This Your Marina?

- No answer or slow answer on VHF. The customer with a reservation starts by telling the name of the boat and then is asked the length and power requirements - as though you have never talked to them before. *“Standby for a Slip Assignment...”*
- The customer gets to the slip in a cross-wind and there is no one to be seen to assist and take lines. No offer to help either.
- The slip has 30 amp power, but 50 amp was requested so they could use their Washer/Dryer for a load of wash. Adapters?
- The customer goes up to the office and there is little interest while they stand there and then have to fill out a registration form with un-necessary information.  
*The name of your boat is ????*    *What slip number did we assign you?*
- The customer asks what there is to do, or what are the best nearby restaurants - and they get a shrug. The harbormaster is in his/her office - but is very busy.
- The nearest shopping center is 1/2 mile away. How does the boater get there?
- Guest WiFi is good in the office lobby and reaches the first 20 boats. No pictures, Facebook, Snapchat or Netflix - under penalty of being reported
- Bathrooms/Washrooms have mold in the corners of the showers. Door frames are rusted. Scraps of toilet paper on the floor by 4p in the afternoon. Sinks are just dirty.

You get the picture... All true... but not the same place.



## Present Great Facilities

- What is the quality of your docks?
- This is a long lead item due to the cost, permitting and other issues. Do you have a plan?
- Can you improve your docks with small improvements.
  - New power and lighting pedestals
  - Replace planks - rebuild the docks over 3 years plank by plank - and avoid permitting
  - Fresh bull rails - they look good and smell good
  - New caps on pilings, attractive signage, flower baskets on main pilings, or all pilings, with drip irrigation? Quality of docks, power, water
  - Wi-Fi - The expectation is high - you are running a hotel. Many customers will choose based on the Wi-Fi service.











## Present Great Facilities

- Renovate Bathrooms/Washrooms
  - Make them fun and whimsical
  - Great showers with plenty of room, price for shower? Clean?
  - Laundry - Good machines with short drying times. Folding areas  
Clean, clean, clean...
  - Place showers and laundry near lounge area, cafe, swimming pool  
- include Wi-Fi
  - Look at Union Steamship, Elliot Bay Marina, Ladysmith Maritime Society, Shearwater

















## Present Great Facilities

- Create a theme - match to the town
- Sculpture - or old engine painted parts, or nautical gear such as anchors
- Classic boats on display
- Flower baskets, grassy areas
- Dog area
- Pathways and lighting, walking/bike trails
- Signage to trash and recycling, or to town
- Signage for after hours help - restaurants, shopping





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THE WHALE  
MUSEUM



Whale  
Interpretive  
Centre  
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WELCOME TO CRABBY BOB'S FISH

WHAT'S FRESH EX

GRAB + GO COOKED CRAB

Scallop \$12.95  
Halibut \$22.95  
Sockeye \$15.95  
Whole \$67.50

FROZEN TUNA LOIN \$16.95  
FROZEN COD \$15.95  
FROZEN HALIBUT \$23.95  
FROZEN BLACK COD \$15.95  
FROZEN SOCKEYE FILLET \$14.95  
FROZEN WHOLE SOCKEYE \$18.95

COOKED CRAB

1LB STEAMED MUSSEL \$12.95  
SEAFOOD CHOWDER \$12.95























## Skilled and Friendly Staff

- Reservation Process
  - make it easy and Friendly
- What information do you really need?
- Do you want to charge a reservation fee  
Or, charge the entire moorage up front when while time is available
- Assign the slip when you take the reservation?
  - Train your staff on how to do this
  - Reduces time at the counter when multiple boats arrive
  - Ask if they are returning guests



# When Your Guests Arrive

- When they call in -  
Welcome them by name
- If they are returning guests  
Welcome them back
- If they have not been assigned a slip
  - Work out assignments that morning
  - not on the fly
- Offer assistance with lines when docking
  - Summer staff to welcome and introduce them to the marina and other amenities
  - What is new and happening in the marina or town
    - New shops, spa treatments
  - Bag with brochures or booklet with offers
- Offer them a free bag of ice - it costs very little
- Signature Morning Amenities - Coffee and pastry or donuts
- What is your signature offering?



# Guest Amenities

- Trash and Recycling Pickup
  - Pump Out service
    - boat versus cart
  - In slip fueling?
  - Arrange for oil change service
  - Other marine services
- Bring a kayak operator to your marina
- Transportation to town and shopping
  - Free bikes
  - Electric Cars
  - Zip Cars
  - Marina Van













# Communications and Community

- Walk the Docks and Say Hello
  - Carry your dock plan with names
  - Dock staff with pads
- Create events to build community
  - Happy Hour Potluck
  - Music Events
    - Open Mic
    - Single Musician
    - Community band
- Your goal is to create an experience where the customer will want to come back
  - and tell 10 friends about the great experience
- Some marinas charge up to \$3.75 a foot for an excellent experience
- Send customers a follow up email
- Survey if they are satisfied and invite them back

















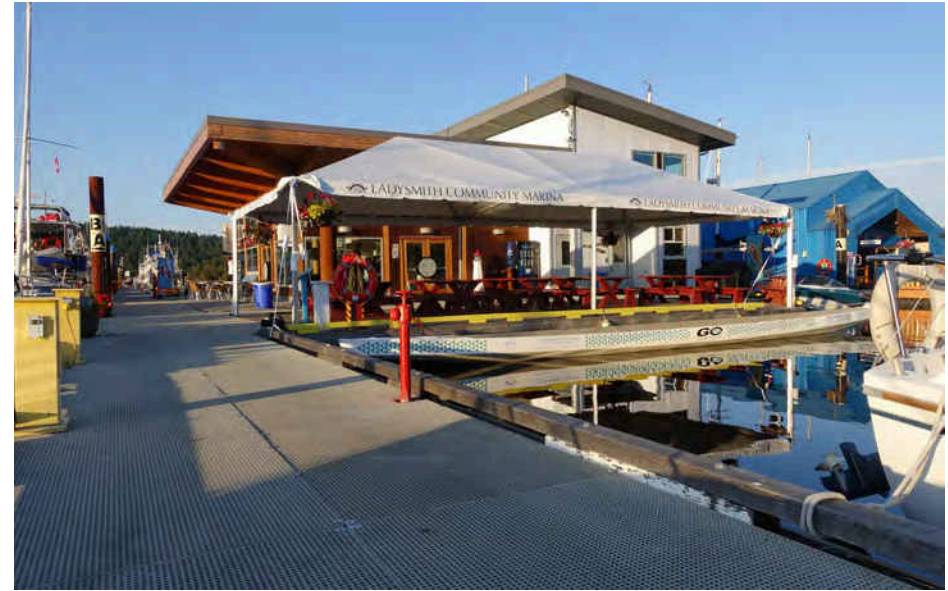
# Surveys

- Have Your Dock Staff Conduct Surveys in Slack Time
- Survey what they spend in your town
- Why did they come to your marina?
- What would they like to see?
- Will they tell their friends about the experience?



## Drive for Off-Season Business

- Special Events in Spring and Fall
  - Wine Festival
  - Beer Festival
  - Chowder Festival
- Flotillas and Type Clubs - How many are you hosting?  
They are always looking for new and fun places to go
  - What do you offer to attract them - Activity Float?  
Tents on shore?
  - Provide assistance arranging dinners in town or onsite  
This is a huge benefit to the community





# Communications and Community

- Remind the community what you bring to town
- How many marina nights?
- Estimated spending?  
Where in town do they spend?  
Shopping, Antiques, Restaurants
- Remind the community what the visiting boats bring to town
- Remind them that boat visitors do not add to local traffic or take away parking



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**What do you want to do differently as a result of this presentation?**

**What are your goals for your marina?**





**Smile! - A Marina Should Be a Happy Place  
For Your Customers - and YOU!  
Questions?**

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