

## Q & A WITH STAN SELDEN

*TWA members and others are talking to writer Sharon Babcock about enduring inspirations, life lessons, and perspectives from their experiences on the working waterfront.*

*This month is the first installment in the series: Stan Selden, founder member of the Tacoma Waterfront Association and long-time Tacoma activist.*



“It’s simply the right time,” says Stan Selden of the opportunity to put awareness of what Commencement Bay’s 40 miles from Brown’s Point to Point Defiance offers to residents, mariners, and other travelers. He has navigated the waters from Olympia to Skagway and wants to demystify this best-kept secret to the locally and internationally curious.

### **Q: Where does your interest in Commencement Bay come from?**

A: I was drawing pictures of square riggers at age 6 in elementary school in Parkland. Growing up, I spent time on the water with my family and have continued to do that throughout my life.

### **Q: What is special about this time in Commencement Bay’s evolution?**

A: A group of people working very hard has recently agreed to install a long-awaited welcome greeting and directional message for mariners as they approach the northeast entry to Tacoma’s Thea Foss Waterway. We are also closer to realizing a float for sea planes.

Critical to what can happen next is the fact that new blood has arrived on the scene in key leaders of the Chamber of Commerce, the City Manager, Tacoma’s Community and Economic Development Administration, the Museum of Glass, the LeMay Museum, the Tacoma Regional Convention and Visitor Bureau, the Washington State History Museum, the University of Washington Tacoma, the Foss Waterway Seaport Museum, and the Port of Tacoma. In addition, the Point Ruston development is well underway. It is truly a pivotal time.

### **Q: What could come out of this?**

A: It is the chance to build a strong brand for Commencement Bay, create a solid identity, and increase visibility. The initial gut reaction when we ask what needs to be done next is, “we know what everyone thinks.” The reality is that when we look into it, we discover an assortment of good ideas that somehow don’t surface or don’t get analyzed; thoughts and opinions that are not completely formed but still valid; misperceptions, and overall perceptions of people who might not always be thinking about this issue but who have a lot to offer. This timing may give us the opportunity to explore the possibility of passengers on small cruise ships departing from

Commencement Bay in July, August, and September and being able to visit our waterfront museums and places like nearby oyster farms, Blake Island, Port Townsend, Deception Pass, Anacortes, LaConner, Friday Harbor, or the Boeing Visitor Center in Everett for example. There are alternate routes and destinations available from Tacoma to south and north Puget Sound destinations including longer trips to Victoria, Canada, and the Canadian Gulf Islands. This would lead to both local and international recognition of Commencement Bay for the asset it is.

**Q: What actions are occurring to address this opportunity?**

A: A series of recent informal and formal meetings and discussions with various leaders of Tacoma--officials, insiders and outsiders alike--came to a common overriding consensus: The region has attractions and features—Commencement Bay is key—that need to be marketed to both our own residents and to the world.