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Wanda Kenton Smith has worked in the boating industry since 1980. A journalist, she launched her career as editor of [Water Ski](http://www.waterskimag.com/) and *Windsurf magazines*, and later worked as editor on additional trade titles in both the sailing and watersports sectors. She

also has served as the marketing columnist for [Soundings Trade Only](https://www.tradeonlytoday.com/) (https://www.tradeonlytoday.com/) since 1998, a post she still holds today.

Wanda previously served as vice president of marketing for Regal Boats (<http://www.regalboats.com/select-your-region/>) for 11 years prior to launching her own award-winning, full service advertising and PR firm for 13 years that serviced more than 35 global and national marine accounts.

Today, Wanda serves as chief marketing officer of [Freedom Boat Club](http://freedomboatclub.com/) (http://freedomboatclub.com/), continues to consult on select accounts, speaks at industry events and is active in several marine industry initiatives. She is president of Kenton Smith Marketing (<http://www.kentonsmithmarketing.com/>), president of Marine Marketers of America (<http://marinemarketersofamerica.org/>) and chairperson of the RBLC's New Market Task Force. She also is the event producer and publicist of Boaterz n Bikerz of America: Hull of a Tour (<http://www.kentonsmithmarketing.com/hull-of-a-tour.html>).

On her first boating experiences.....When I was in middle school, my oldest brother purchased and refurbished a 19' wooden sailboat and my family and I spent a lot of time on that sailboat on the river and local waterways. He had boated when he was younger and had always wanted to have access to a boat. I was obviously the fortunate one to enjoy the benefits of that. My brother and my dad taught me to sail when I was younger but I took a Coast Guard class years later when I was working at Regal Marine and I never looked back. That was a turning point.

On boating in her adult life.....We have owned five boats in my adult life. We had two Regals, a bowrider and a deckboat. My favorite boat that I have ever owned was the very first Super Air Nautique (<http://www.nautique.com/>), when the whole wakeboard industry started. We were the kings of the lake and the envy of all of my daughter's friends. We took them boating and wakeboarding every chance that they got. We also had a Hunter (<http://www.marlow-hunter.com/>) sailboat and a Scout (<https://www.scoutboats.com/>) dual console. I now have access to over 500 boats through the SW Florida Freedom Boat Clubs.

On her current boating lifestyle.....Now we like to get out and cruise. Go to waterfront restaurants. We really like going picnicking, finding sandy beaches and trying different locations.

On favorite boating destinations.....Two locations come to mind. The first is Italy. I had the opportunity to go boating in Portofino (<http://www.cntraveller.com/guides/europe/italy/portofino>) and Lake Como (<https://www.forbes.com/forbes/welcome/?toURL=https://www.forbes.com/sites/jimdobson/2016/06/08/the-legendary-villas-of-lake-como-the-ultimate-guide-of-where-to-go-and-what-to->

see/&refURL=https://www.google.com/&referrer=https://www.google.com/). It was absolutely spectacular. The second place is the Bahamas. Totally love that turquoise blue water and be able to snorkel and see all that fabulous sea life.

On starting in the industry.....I just got lucky. I was working in Miami and we had moved to Orlando and a friend of mine knew a guy who was advertising for an editor for Water Ski Magazine. I jumped all over it. Terry Snow was the publisher of the magazine and he took a chance on somebody pretty green and helped me launch my career. I went on from Water Ski to launch Windsurf magazine and then to edit Waterski Business, and then got into the agency side of my business.

On championing women in boating.....It was late in the 1980s and I was working for Regal Boats in charge of marketing Part of my assignment was to do competitive research. I went down to the Miami Boat Show to go and visit 25 different booths and to get information on products. I walked away with some interesting insight. First of all, nobody asked if I need any help. Sales guys wouldn't give me the time of day. From a marketing research perspective that was fantastic. It struck me that no one at any of the booths took me seriously as a buyer. I started a conversation about it in the trade press and wrote a column about it. I went on to launch a training firm that I called Marine Marketing for Women. All told, I had the opportunity to personally train over 4,000 people! I feel like it was an important step in educating the industry about the buying power and the influence that women have in the industry.

On Freedom Boating Divas.....We launched Freedom Boating Divas for female members of the club. Our goal with the program is to make our female members feel more safe and competent at the helm and to provide opportunities to meet other women who share the same passion for boating. Here in Southwest Florida, we offer free unlimited training classes exclusively for the ladies that we schedule twice a month in different locations. The second part of that is the social part. By hosting social events exclusively for the divas they have the opportunity to meet with and mingle with other women who share the same boating DNA and passion.

On engaging new markets.....The RBLC was organized several years ago with the primary purpose of growing the boating industry. I chair the new markets task force. We had a VIP influencers group that represent different ethnicities and our task force addresses opportunities to engage new and diverse audiences to boating. Ultimately, our goal is to promote engagement. We are focused on three markets - all affluent Hispanic, Asian, and African-American markets. We produced an award-winning educational module that includes latest demographic and economic trends and the highlight is five outstanding case studies with best practices from

boating companies who are successfully engaging and selling to these markets. All of the information and the webinar is available for free from download at the RBLC.org (<http://rbcl.org/rbcl-downloads.html>) website.

On Boaterz n Bikerz of America: Hull of a Tour (<http://www.kentonsmithmarketing.com/hull-of-a-tour.html>).... It originated from a conversation between myself and Jim Krueger. We were chatting one day during a ride and we talked about our bucket list and we both agreed that our number one bucket list trip would be doing a cross country ride from FL to CA. We planned it and thought it would be fun to mix in some boating activities and decided to invite others in the industry and our friends who also love boating and biking.

On the connection between boaters and bikers.....It's a fact. I was at the National Sailing conference a few weeks ago and Bonnier shared some statistics – 18% of people who sail are also active motorcycle enthusiasts. There's such a definite lifestyle crossover. Those of us who like to motorcycle and like to boat like that sense of freedom, that sense of adventure and escape that those lifestyle sports deliver.

On past tours.....It was 3,000 miles. We went from Destin, FL to San Diego. We rode the flatlands, through the scorching dessert mountains, we stopped at the Grand Canyon, plenty of spectacular coastlines, we experienced extreme heat, snow, rain, hail, thunder. It was amazing. We started at Legendary Marine at the yacht club, we had a sunset cruise in Texas aboard a 90' party boat. And then we had a 2 ½ hour splash down in San Diego Bay aboard a brand new Beneteau (<http://www.beneteau.com/us>) poweryacht and sailboat. Our second Tour was the Freedom Ride. It went from Florida to Washington DC. We folded into the million bike extravaganza called Rolling Thunder that's held Memorial Day in DC and it pays tribute to MIAs and POWs. We got to ride all the way down to the national Mall with veterans. It was a very touching and moving experience for all of us. We stopped at 5 different freedom boat clubs en route. In Annapolis we had an opportunity to board 7 different boats and watch a command performance of the Blue Angels. We had the Pacific Coast Rush. We shipped our bikes to Seattle and we rode down to San Francisco and took a loop out to Big Sur. We launched it at Alexander Marine with Regal Boats and did a launch party on a 78' Ocean Alexander (<http://oceanalexander.com/>) Yacht. Our splashdown was in San Francisco. We did a sunset sail aboard a large sailing Catamaran. The trip took us through the Glacier National Park. We cruised all the way down Pacific Coast Highway. We rode through the giant redwoods, literally through the trees. And we loved the twisting mountain ride of Big Sur and Monterey. It's just moments that you'll never forget, absolutely phenomenal.

On the 2017 Lobster Roll.....The event is July 15th-22nd. We're starting in Portland and ride the Maine coast to Canada. We twist through the white mountains in New Hampshire. We make a stop at Cape Cod and then we splashdown in Newport, RI. For those of us who are bikers, we don't like the typical tourist traps. We're staying in some quaint small towns. We're going to go whale watching, we'll be tubing, lots of fun things getting off the beaten path.

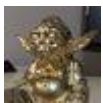
On the importance of sponsors.....Freedom Boat Club is back as our title sponsor. Regal Boats is our boating sponsor. Soundings Trade Only is our media sponsor and I will be writing a blog which will be appearing every day of the tour. Sea Tow (<https://www.seatow.com/>) is sponsoring our chase vehicle so if we have any breakdowns they come and get us. BRP Evinrude is our power sponsor. Moose Landing (<http://www.mooselandingmarina.com/>) is going to be hosting our launch party and two Freedom Boat Clubs are going to be participating with boat rides and Kenton Smith Marketing handles the publicity.

On how to participate.....You have to have a motorcycle license and we do require group riding experience but there is no cost to participate. I have a hotel planner with our discounted group rates. If anyone is interested about getting more information they can email me at wanda@kentonsmithmarketing (mailto:wanda@kentonsmithmarketing).com or visit www.kentonsmithmarketing.com (<http://www.kentonsmithmarketing.com/hull-of-a-tour.html>)

On advice for getting into the industry.....It makes sense to talk to people in the industry. There is a lot of opportunity right now for technicians and people working on the service side. Find people who are willing to talk to you about what they do and what they enjoy most. If you're a passionate boater and you love the water and want to be part of a dynamic industry, this is a great place to drop anchor. We have great people and sell fantastic products and are selling fun. I can't think of anything else that's more fulfilling and rewarding than this!

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