

Board of Directors Candidate Statements

From The Board of Directors

By Meagan Weatherby, Co-President

Annual Meeting & Elections

Our Annual Meeting, coming up on November 2nd, will kick off the election for the 2016 Board of Directors. The board serves as the voice of the membership, monitoring Syracuse Real Food Co-op's performance and plotting its course – and that means voting is one of the most important ways a member-owner can engage in democratic control of our cooperative.

This year, members will vote for three new directors. It is important to show these candidates strong support by voting for them. They will be representing your interests – ensuring that SRFC protects and builds owners' equity, operates in accordance with policy, and stays true to our vision of building a “sustainable, thriving cooperative commerce in our local community”.

The board hopes that the candidate statements below will be helpful in familiarizing you with the candidates. Be sure to come out to SRFC's Annual Meeting to meet the candidates and cast your vote! You can vote for up to 3 candidates. (Really absolutely can't make the meeting? Ballots can be cast for thirty days – more info will be posted in the store and online by November 3rd.)

Please join the board in thanking each of these individuals for stepping up in service to our Co-op. Our organization will be strengthened by the democratic process. We are very grateful to Thane Joyal and Julie Longmore for their dedicated service to the Co-op and their years of thoughtful leadership. We're also excited that Steve Morris has decided to become a candidate for a full term commitment on the board. The next few years are going to be an exciting time for the Co-op and your leadership will be looking for your input and support.

Briana C. Kohlbrenner



Candidate Questions and Statements

1. Describe your involvement with SRFC. Include amount of time spent and specific activities, if appropriate.

My husband and I are frequent customers at the SRFC and have enjoyed being members since 2005. In truth, the SRFC was one of the reasons that attracted us to the Westcott neighborhood! Fortunate for us, our home is just a short three-block walk to the shop. We also love to enjoy the specialty 'tasting events' that are occasionally offered.

2. Describe any volunteer or paid experience relevant to serving as a Co-op Board member.

I have had several volunteer experiences working with a team toward a common goal. From 2009-2011 I was an active member of the 40 Below Public Arts Task Force (PATF), a volunteer run organization aimed at delivering art experiences to the public, during which I was co-chair from March 2010 to August 2011. I also co-founded and co-chaired several volunteer-run projects including Salt City DISHES, the Salt Market, and the Funky Flea. All projects required teamwork, imagination, and dedication.

3. What do you see as SRFC's role in the broader community?

The greater Syracuse community benefits from the SRFC's intelligent selection of food products, including supporting local farms and small businesses.

4. Please provide a personal statement, including anything you feel is relevant to your candidacy.

For the past several years I have hosted many community events, projects, and jobs that have been heavily involved in the arts. While I want to continue to create art-related events for the general public to enjoy, I'm interested in expanding my community-related experiences beyond this scope. Joining the SRFC board will help me reach this objective; as well it will provide me with the opportunity to continue to serve my community in a beneficial way that is important.

Steven Morris



Candidate Questions and Statements

1. Describe your involvement with SRFC. Include amount of time spent and specific activities, if appropriate.

For the past 10 years I have come in semi-regularly, mainly looking for specialty items for myself and the cafe. I have been serving on the board for the past four months and I find it very rewarding

2. Describe any volunteer or paid experience relevant to serving as a Co-op board member.

As the co-owner/manager of Mello Velo bicycle shop I understand the need for reliable local businesses that truly care about the community, sustainability and excellent customer service while maintaining financial viability. We started out incredibly small just over 5 years ago and have gradually grown to be a major player in the greater Syracuse area. We were also just voted one of Bicycling Magazine's top 53 bicycle shops. I am involved in every aspect of the business from behind the scenes to direct interaction with customers and managing employees. Many of our customers are customers of the Co-op, so I am very familiar with the clientele, in addition to my understanding of how to realistically manage and grow a business in this neighborhood.

3. What do you see as SRFC's role in the broader community?

The Co-op has such a deep history providing the neighborhood with access to real food and even food education, that I would be honored to take part in. I also feel like it provides the feeling of ownership and community and celebration of local produce and goods. We started our business because we love cycling and the sense of community cycling brings to city streets. Just as people are so removed from their neighborhoods and surroundings, people are especially in terms of their food. Any effort to celebrate and enhance the community is something that I would like to be a part of.

4. Please provide a personal statement, including anything you feel is relevant to your candidacy.

A Rochester native, before opening Mello Velo, I studied Natural Resource Management and Forestry at SUNY-ESF. I am a firm believer in community involvement, hard work and making things happen. At home, I enjoy vegetable gardening and cooking.

Tom Taylor



Candidate Questions and Statements

1. Describe your involvement with SRFC. Include amount of time spent and specific activities, if appropriate.

My wife and I have been members for 5 years. As we live within a short walk of the Co-op, we shop often. Additionally, in the past two years, I have volunteered my time in making electrical repairs at the store. I am an electrician and have my own company.

2. Describe any volunteer or paid experience relevant to serving as a Co-op Board member.

My background as a former general contractor and now as an electrical contractor may afford the Co-op the opportunity to benefit from my knowledge and experience in buildings and maintenance. In my twentysomething years I was a part-time employee at a health food store. I have familiarity with the day to day operations of a small, real food retail store.

3. What do you see as SRFC's role in the broader community?

My view of the SRFC's role is that of a nourishing and unifying force. Certainly, the Co-op provides high quality food, drink and household needs that are required to nourish and sustain. Additionally, through its presence and function, the Co-op adds a place and a space for coming together of all people, members and non-members, in support of their lives.

4. Please provide a personal statement, including anything you feel is relevant to your candidacy.

As a young person growing up in Syracuse I have always felt that the Co-op has been a special organization and a wonderful place. Upon moving into the University area, I became a member and regular customer of the store. As my home and family have grown and settled in the past few years I have hopes and desires for a long living and improved Co-op. With my time and efforts I would like to serve the SRFC in its operations and growth.