

2022 Wild Oak Saddle Club Board Candidate Forum

Dale Miller

Wow, look at this turnout. Welcome to the very first, so far as I know, Wild Oak Saddle Club Candidate Night.

My name is Dale Miller and I will moderate this event. But before I start I wanted to point out that we're recording this on speakers hold right here. We're working on Zoom, so that Members that are not able to be here can look at the website. Our web wizard will upload it. And if anybody objects to being recorded, you need to speak up right now. All right, good.

So, I want to thank Laurie, Joe and the rest of the staff for coming in on their day off and putting on a great spread that's helping [unintelligible] thanks to Tom Hinde for giving us the wine.

I want to thank all of you for attending this event, but most importantly I want to thank the candidates for stepping up and showing their commitment to the health of this Club.

There are six board positions available and there are 12 people seeking those board positions. And your candidates are Fred Merrill, Steven Olson, Jim Henderson, Cristie Marcus, Herbert Inestroza, Pam Kersch Barbara Katona. Scott Bartley, John Meislahn, Mark Randol, Doug Pavese, Tom Hinde. And each candidate will be allowed four minutes - up to four minutes - to speak. And my job will be to enforce, coordinate a hard stop. Right? So at the three minute mark, I'll announce 3 minutes and at the three minute, 30 second mark I'll announce 30 seconds, and at the four minute mark I'll announce "time" and the candidate will stop speaking.

So each candidate has already submitted a bio and and that's been distributed to everybody in the ballots. By the way, on the election, the official ballots have to be checked and marked and turned into the Club secretary on or before - and we'll say before - January 17th. So the candidates have already submitted the biography that has been sent out with the ballots. So we cover new ground, I've asked the candidates these three questions.

1. Why are you running for the board?

2. What do you think is the most important issue with club or its member space?
3. What are the changes to the club or the board you would like to see?

The speaking order will be random. Names are in this hat. The first speaker is ... Pam Kersch.

Pam Kersch

Hi you guys nice to see you all tonight. Well, my name I you know what I wrote everything down so. I'm just gonna probably be reading mostly. So you wanted me to wait, OK? Here we go. Well, my name is Pam Williams Kirsch and my husband Kit and I joined the club in May of 2017. So I know many of you, but I don't know all of you. And I'm hoping that that will change as I serve on the Board of directors for the next three years. Kit and I joined the club because it sounded really fun to us. An organization with this stated purpose, and I quote the bylaws here, this club has "the primary purpose and objective of promoting good fellowship through recreational and social activities for the members and their families, while also maintaining an interest in the equestrian heritage of the corporation." Well, we all enjoyed the dinner. The really good food and the entertainment that the club provides. But there is much more to the club than dining activities. There are many members who enjoy weekly and daily recreational and social fellowship through such things and activities as card games and dominoes, book club meetings, mahjong games, bocce ball, pickleball, tennis and using the swimming pool. Or just gathering in the morning or the afternoon in the clubhouse or on the deck or near the fire pit in an impromptu setting to share a cup of coffee or glass of wine. And this is what interested me in running for the board. Many of these social and recreational activities are being adversely affected by limited access to meeting space and access to the facilities, and this is happening more and more frequently, It's a concern for many of the club members. If activities and access are phased out, then the interests of many of the club members is not being served. When John and Judy Poremba nominated me to run for a board position, I thought about the commitment and decided that it was something positive that I could do for the club; that is, to add my voice and ideas to maintaining, not changing the stated purpose of the saddle club. I consider membership in this club a privilege, but also a responsibility. Every Member needs to feel comfortable participating and needs to feel that they have a voice. My hope is to bridge the gap and bring new energy in a sense of

inclusiveness for all the members of the Saddle Club. I want all the Members to share and the good things about the Saddle Club while being able to participate in the club activities of their own choice. I'm told there's never been a contested board election in the history of the club for the first time, for the first time there are 12 people running for 6th available seats on the board. As outgoing board member Dale Miller says, quote, a contested election is an indication of a healthy club and a strong member engagement unquote? I agree with that statement. We have a contested election here, and I think that strong member engagement is vital for operational transparency and accountability of the club. While the current board is to be lauded for the time and great effort that they've put into the club, I believe the club will benefit with new board. Member voices added to the decisions being made and the direction of the Saddle Club going forward. It would be, it would be my honor, it would be an honor for me, Pam Kirsch, to serve as a board member of the Saddle Club. So I'm here tonight to ask for your vote. Thank you.

Dale Miller

And that's an example of how to do it. Scott Bartley

Scott Bartley

OK. I actually don't have prepared notes, but I do have the three questions. I thought my life of participating in forums candidate forums was through. Apparently, it isn't, but that's fine. I think this is a good sign we are a healthy and active club. I'm not going to take 4 minutes. The question is why am I running for board? Well, I joined the club, I went back, actually looked at it the first time we were out here was New Year's Day in 2015. Lori invited Chris and I out for brunch, and then started to do the hardcore press to join the club. Now I've been out previously because she called me when she came here, I think in October, and had me climbing around in the attic because there were plans for remodeling, so I've been out here working on that and I do remember I did present at the first annual meeting and I wasn't a member at that time. I just came and presented the plans for the redo of the of the clubhouse. We joined only a formal probably in March. Oh yeah, we love the club. I mean, we've met so many great people here. We have so many friends that we would not have known otherwise or friends that we knew casually but we've become very, very close with over the years. In my time I have served as President. I was on the board I believe. In 2016

I was president in 2018. That was the year that we had no natural disasters. We were bracketed, I was bracketed by 5, but, I served, I put a lot of value in this club and I've worked very hard to try to maintain the quality of the facility I served as the Long Range Planning. I've served on the Board with a number of great people. I think the board has done an amazing job. We went on the board. We may have had money in the bank. We didn't refer to it as reserve. We had a line of credit for the reserve and in my time on board we have gone from that to having enough reserve money and establishing a policy to have \$375,000 in reserve. We were able to rebuild and expand the deck with cash we have, which is a lot better than having a capital call to do it. And I think that's a sign of a very healthy club. I'm running for the board because I want to continue to do that service to the club. You ask what the most important thing the club is, we need to maintain our fiscal stability. This Club was on shaky ground when Lori came. The membership was declined, it's grown. It's become incredibly healthy now. Very stable financially and frankly is a fun place to be. And ask about changes. I think the changes are happening and have happened. We've just seen some in the last few months. We see a lot of changes. I think it's all good. It's all for the benefit of the club and that is why I hope to continue serving here on board. So, thank you.

Dale Miller

Alright, so our next speaker is Herbert.

Herbert Inestroza

Good evening everybody, Wild Oak Saddle Club membership. I am running for the board because I want the club to be healthy, to prosper and adapt thoughtfully to growth and change. And boy, there is a lot of change. I have the time and the interest in serving on the board. The club is an extension of whom? Where we gather to have fun. And fellowship and to celebrate life. In the club we have found our neighborhood. Good warm, welcoming people from all over the county and beyond. We feel at home. We love it, and continue to enjoy the camaraderie and support this club. We hate or dislike seeing anything changing however life being the way it is in general, nothing stays exactly the same, so change is inevitable. Now the most important issues in the club and its members that are being faced right now are changes and communication. Now the trick is to manage change to preserve the best from the past, while embracing the present, and planning for the future. Now, as chair of the Social Committee, I see that as

we deliberate what our role is or should be, especially as we emerge from the pandemic. This requires not only thoughtful deliberation, but frequent and clear communications with Club members about what is happening and where the Club is headed. My mantra as board member will be communication, communication, and more communication. Finally, I want to see our club grow and prosper. To stay healthy we need to be adaptable. To be adaptable we need a board of directors who listen, understand the needs and concerns of all the Members. Life is good. For me the Wild Oak Saddle club is a big part of that. Thank you.

Dale Miller

A minute and a half!

Fred Merrill

Hey folks, hey look, I'm a user in this club. I use this club all the time and so I really feel that I gotta do to pay back because it's just one of those things when you have this ambiance, when you have this place that you belong to it, it's a great thing and I like to keep it that way. And the the bocce courts, I'm on there every Monday night. I've got a group of 12 people. We play bocce, and by the way the bocce courts are great. I've had people tell me that they did play bocce all the time and it plays very well. So that's really good, that's something that the club should have. Tennis courts. I play the pickle not as much as I should. I mostly play down at the east, but I play the pickleball here and I know that that's a huge issue that's going to have to come up one of these days because I really feel that actually because of Kari, she put out a little thing the other day and I couldn't believe how many people are using that club compared to about a year and a half ago, and I think that is just fantastic. The courts need the work. We've got the people. I think it's going to grow. I think that that attrition happens in that way, but you have attrition happens to the club I think that the new members coming in from applying because of the popularity of courts, you're going to find those courts are going to be used a lot. The pool. I think the pool is a great spot. I've had a couple a couple of outings there, catered stuff or odd lunch, and it's fun. I think there's a way to get that enthusiasm going by a little bit of popular, by a little bit of a promotion from the board, say hey, let's do this this night, let's do this this day, on the off days or whatever we do. Lori. I love and I'm a fan of Lori, sorry to say, I mean, Lori, Lori, and her crew. You know you got, you got the Vickis, I even like Pud. It's just a, it's just a great degree thing that you do for us. I was in a

restaurant business I. Had a couple of restaurants. And back in the 1870s. I look in the mirror and I look like 1870, so I feel like actually I don't know what what's worse in the morning, looking in a mirror or the coffee that wake me up. Anyway, come up. To get the food to the table, and do it the way it is with the proper service and the good food, and get it there, it takes a lot of work. I'm actually thinking that this is probably a great club today. I'd like to make it a great club tomorrow.

Dale Miller

So, this is just a reminder that anybody on the zoom try to remember to mute yourself so that everybody can hear the speakers. Alright, so our next speaker is Mark Randol.

Mark Randol

Thank you. Fred, I'm not sorry to say that I'm a big fan of Lori and, and I think it's very useful to talk a little bit about some of the past history and the contribution she's made because I want to make sure that in our desire to accommodate all of the club members and make the change that Herbert's talking about, that we don't do anything precipitous that would jeopardize the benefit of the club. So, I'm Mark Randall. My candidacy got off to kind of a slow start, almost didn't happen because I grabbed my wife name today and fortunately I've been able to catch it before it was too late. I've been a club member for 5 1/2 years with my wife, Fran, and we have thoroughly enjoyed the club, and we are very, very privileged to be here and privileged to be a candidate. Because now I think it's time for me to give back after all of these years of enjoying the club. But again, I think it's useful to remember what it was like several years ago before Lori got here, and how she turned things around and membership is now growing. The events here are terrific. Her and her executive chef Joseph Farinacci, as you know, produce terrific food and terrific events and we want that to continue. But having said that, it's not Lori's club, and it's not Joseph's Club, it's our club, and we have to accommodate the needs and desires of all of its members. And so that's the biggest challenge that I see for the board in the next year is how we can do that again without making precipitous changes that would be not in the best interests of the club. So, with your support and with your vote, I would be privileged to serve on the board, and I thank you very much for listening.

Dale Miller

Our next speaker is Tom Hinde.

Tom Hinde

Thank you, Dale. Thank you, fellow Members and I say that because this past year I became what's known as a proprietary member and for three years I was a non-proprietary member. And it was during that time that John Whiting asked a few of us to become "board-interested". And he invited us to all the board meetings to represent the voice of the 69 proprietary members. And, of course, I got lulled into becoming interim recording secretary at that time and continue, in fact, in that role today. So, I'm not a board member, but I'm now running. And it's a great group. It's a group that is professionally focused and it represents the fiduciary responsibility of the club to guide the club in what it most needs. And so one of the questions is, what do you think are the most important issues that the members face? And from where I stand and for my involvement in the last few years in the board, I see it as very physical. We have a physical plant here that has needed a lot of repair. I mean, the deck was just sort of the tip of the iceberg. Its roofs, and its courts, and its bunkhouse, and it's ... the list kind of goes on. And so, for the next sort of five to seven years, our biggest responsibility to the club we own now, I could say, one two hundredth. Yes, well we have to keep it, we have to keep it on the ground. You have to keep roofs over our heads, and how we do that, of course, is up to the entire club, right? I want to make one note the wine was not – I'm a wine maker, I serve on many boards, some county vintners, family wine makers, Boys and Girls Club with Sonoma Marin - but, the state requires that I charge a dollar for the wine so. Do I want to make any changes? I don't think I can make changes. I think changes occur as we grow together as a club. I think as as opportunities and challenges present themselves, we grow as a community together to address them, and we kind of come out the other side with differences that move forward, or things we continue to discuss, and having had exposure to the Board in the last couple of years, I think that we do a pretty good job of that. And I'll ask for your vote. I would appreciate that. Thank you very much.

Dale Miller

Our next speaker is Cristie Marcus.

Cristie Marcus

Hi everyone, my name is Cristie Marcus and I am reading what I've written so. Bear with me. I'm very excited at the prospect of becoming a new member of the Wild Oak Saddle Club Board. Firstly, I'd like to thank all of you who are here and those who are watching on zoom. Your interest in this election is a testament to how much we love and we care about our fellow Members and this great club. My husband, John Brody, and I have been members of the Saddle Club since 2015, shortly after, Lori Darling took the reins, so we have history. I think Lori and Chef Joe have done an incredible job and I'm a huge fan of Lori. The club is beautified, upgraded and very comfortable. It is my opinion the Saddle Club is the best restaurant in town. We rarely dine out elsewhere, and that's a fact. I love being part of this club and as a board member want to work for you, the members, to make it even better. How you may ask? I have lots of ideas and then suggestions and for example, just a few. We can become more inclusive, let's start a new member welcome committee. A committee member could invite the new member, or recently new members to join them for dinner. We can also recruit other club members to do the same. Let's put new member profiles in the Hoof Beats. For that matter, each month we could profile existing members, get to know more about the folks who make the saddle Club such a wonderful community. And speaking of community, wouldn't it be great to have more members engaged in activities? We have such lovely facilities, right here, right here. Let's utilize them. Who would put a kibosh on so much for so many? But we can and should have more activities and more fun. I'm so pleased to learn that committees for tennis, pickleball, bocce, tournaments, mahjong, but book club, etc. have been recently implemented, and thanks to Kari Briner for heading them up. Thank you, thank you, Kari. And that's a great positive change if we're talking about change. These are the kind of changes that that you know, all of us can enjoy. We already have plans for pickleball lessons this spring. I and several club members - Melissa, Bret, Brody and Eddie - have already volunteered to help introduce the game to any member who is interested. What could be better than a morning of tennis or pickleball followed by lunch on the deck. As your next new board member, I will listen to what you, the wonderful members of the Wild Oak Saddle Club, have to say, and what you want, and I will represent and work on your behalf. I'm happy to answer any questions. Not now, but after. Your vote for Cristie is greatly appreciated.

Dale Miller

OK, who's next? Jim Henderson

Jim Henderson

My name is Jim Henderson and I have to tell you every time I come to this club, I'm impressed and I am especially impressed tonight, so, thanks for coming. Why would I put myself out there to be a board member? Why would? I go through this. Right? It's because I'm passionate about this club. I have the time and the willingness to serve the membership and I have the experience. As I wrote my bio, I was on the board of a large social club for 16 years or more. Served every position, transitioned it through a lot of change, and those 16 years plus of experience on that board are directly transferable to this board. I think both those organizations are very similar, and so. In addition to that I have facilities management experience. I'm an architect. I've worked in management for a Fortune 500 company, and have had organizational development experience, so those are all great traits to have on a board. And then, I think, personally, for me, the selfish reason to do this is that every time I become more involved in an organization, it has enhanced my enjoyment of that organization. So that was actually the first reason, was the selfish reason. So, when it comes to what's the most important issue for this club, I think in light of some recent events, it really comes down to communication. And I don't think that's a difficult issue to overcome. But I do promise that as a board member, serving you, I will keep in the forefront of my mind at every board meeting that membership communication is essential. When it comes to whatever change on the board, I don't think the board needs drastic change. I think it needs someone that's passionate like myself, and willing to serve the membership and considerate. Please allow me to serve you on the Wild Oak Board by voting for me, Jim Henderson. Thank you for your time.

Dale Miller

Barbara Katona

Barbara Katona

Good evening everybody. I'm not going to be reading mine, but I've been practicing on my dog. All right? Good evening, everyone. My husband and I

moved here eight years ago and part of the reason that we chose this house is that it was five minutes from this club, and since, over the eight years, we have not been disappointed. It's exceeded our expectations. Number one, why am I running for the board? It was because of an idea that I had that I was asked by members of the groups that I played dominoes, tennis and cards with. And so, from that idea, the activities director, Kari Briner has now accepted that position, and I'll get to that idea. And when I talk about the changes that I want, so I was approached by the card women to join the board and then I was thinking about it, and then I was playing dominoes with Eileen Trione and I said Eileen, contemplating running for the board, she said, good. She said we need new blood on the board. And she said, did you know at one point in time there were twelve domino games going on at this club? Because you have got to keep the games alive. So that conversation pushed me over the edge and made me decide to run for the board. So, the biggest issue that I see for the club is to maintain its fiscal, you know health, and when doing this research for my idea, we have found out that our dues that we pay do not cover the operating costs of the club. And so, we've been hearing some grumbling about there's so many events and nonprofits. Well, the events help make up for that difference that we do not have, and also the dinners and the lunches do as well. I have noticed that the club is grown to the point that sometimes it feels like we don't have enough room, and so that's was my original idea. How I became up here is that I think we need to utilize the bunkhouse more and make it a regular part of the club. Have the doors open during the time that the clubhouse is open. Have it heated. We now have donated a coffee machine to be put in there. Lori is getting water for hot water and tea. Kari Briner and I are working together to make it more comfortable, have more comfortable furniture so that in addition, in addition to the clubhouse where there are 13 groups now of games and we have one card left, we can use that space to play games, gather, do whatever we want. And during this time when we were talking with the staff about how it's going to work, and we haven't hammered out all the details yet, one of the staff members said, you're going to need a shield. And Kari and I looked at each other, a shield? And what they meant was that they felt that they needed to defend themselves against us. And so, I would ask all of you to be our best selves to the staff. Say please, say thank you, and remember that you get catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar. In conclusion I wanted to say that this is a haven for us away from home. We have fantastic food, excellent service and world class entertainment provided by Bob Briner, in affiliation with Bohemian club, Corinne Byrd's affiliation with the

Symphony, our own talented members Bill Noteman and Sean Cortright and carolers. Thank you very much and vote for Barbara Katona.

Dale Miller

So three more speakers right now. Steve Olsen.

Steve Olsen

Notes to remind me what I thought I was going to say. Thank you, Dale, my brother candidates and members of club. I'm privileged to be out here to ask for your support in my effort to rejoin the Board of Directors. I've thought about this extensively about why I want to become a member of the Board of Directors again, and one of the primary reasons is I'd like to encourage and support more member involvement in the activities and the governance of the club. I think one of the things that some of us have felt over the last couple of years is a little distance from the governance and would like to get back into that attitude that we are all part of the same group. The board should use the Hoof Beats and the e-mail list to keep members apprised of changes, price changes, service changes, facilities usage, so that none of this comes as a surprise, so that when we show up here on the premises that we don't get blindsided with the change that's happened without any prior notice. I think the Members should have the ability to arrange and manage special events during the course of the year. This is something I think we feel fairly strongly about that this is a club, this is a group of individuals who like to be together and support each other in various activities. And one of the things that we like to do and have done in the past is have events that have been actually developed and run by a group of Members or the Social Committee activities, yes, but also maybe outside of that structure. We should encourage innovative ways to introduce new members, including mixers and other focused efforts. And we ought to establish a recognition for when a provisional member, when they transition to being a proprietary member. One of the candidates mentioned that event, but we don't know that, when that happens. I think it would be good for everybody to know when a person is given an opportunity to become a part owner of the club, but we, but the rest of the club know that. I would like to encourage a mid-year general membership meeting. The only general membership meeting that we have, under the terms of the current bylaws, is the annual meeting, and the annual meeting is pretty much consumed with reports, with the election, and some entertainment, the usual

drinking and enjoying. It would be nice to have a formal business meeting where the general membership could be heard about issues that are of concern. Obviously, some of the things that were expressed at the August meeting have already caused some beneficial changes to the activities of the club I would like to address briefly – I'm going to have to start doing speed reading – that when proposed outside events collide with member activities, there should be a thorough discussion and cost/benefit analysis should be shared with the members via Hoof Beats and or the e-mail blasts that everyone can appreciate the value or lack of value of these outside events. The Saddle Club has been a wonderful place for the making of new friends and socializing with old friends and providing a place to gather. With both old and new friends who are in a warm and friendly atmosphere, my objective in seeking a seat on the board is to make every effort to maintain that atmosphere good at the membership. Thank you.

Dale Miller

Doug, would you like to go before John?

Doug Pavese

Hello everybody? Nice to see you, and I think a lot of people have seen me around here for a lot of years, so I wanted to tell everybody first of all, when the hell did you join this club? I have to have these parts because my eyesight isn't very good, but apparently I joined this wonderful in 1989. And I was president in 1993. And so, I've been around a long time. I have also, I'm known in in the Chamber of Congress as I am a board junkie. I guess I liked it. I didn't have anything else to do on Thursday. Not here. But I have a I have a sincere love for this club. I'm a local guy. I was born and raised here in Santa Rosa I went to Saint Rose, Santa Rosa High School, Santa Rosa JC and concluded at San Jose State for a management curriculum, and I pursued that in my life, went to work for Morgan Stanley for 38 years. So that was kind of a long time too and it was not very exciting. I just wanted to get this thing, I tried to get into management in with Morgan Stanley and so I got into their management program. Well, hell, they took me, and so they said we have we have one place that you could go. And I was living here in Santa Rosa with my wife and children. I said well, where are you sending me? Then they said Oklahoma City. And I said ok, something like that, exactly, I think it was a really, oh, shit. But we had a wonderful time there and a very successful, very, very good and profitable branch where I was able to be the running that that

business there. After four years of being there, my, well, my wife brought me this, that, if it's another day you can go home alone. Oh, OK, well let's go home together. And then they wanted me to go to Denver. And she said, that's not gonna do it either. So we came back here, we had two horses here, by the way at that time, and when there was a place to put horse. And and so, we actually, for the last 30 years I lived on White Oak Drive up the hill here. I sold it to one of our members. Because my wife is in a facility. Well I wanted to let me get down to the bottom line. Steve and I here went through many years ago, like almost eight or nine years ago, went through and Scott had mentioned the issues of the problem. times that we've had in the Club and I don't want to reiterate what you said. Here it's all correct, Steve. We work like we had to try to get people work on governance and it's one of my personal issues. I look forward to a new board that immediately starts on determining where the hell we are and where do we really want to go? And I really am looking forward to working with young people and and older farts like me that remember a few things that we did right or wrong and maybe I can help out in those areas. Yeah, I know where I know where I could go on Thursday nowadays, but I think I'd like to do it again. So, I would appreciate your vote. Both thank you very much.

Dale Miller

Mr Meislahn

John Meislahn

Good evening, John Meislahn, your incoming president for 2023. I wanted to be let go last because you know what everybody said here tonight, ditto. The only thing that not in my speech is Oklahoma City. I did nominate Fred Merrill to join in in this endeavor because I thought he would let me win in pickle ball, but that's not true either. This is my second term as Presidency. First year as you remember, I had two disasters. I was probably the only one, Scott. I had COVID and fires, but came through in solid colors during that time period. The staff did a great job as well. And as Mr. Bartley and Mr. Henderson alluded to, we have an ailing facility here, so there's always going to be challenges on where we spend our money and how we spend it. Some of the changes going forward I support is the club activities coordinator. Once again, Kari, thank you so much. I interviewed most of you on the nominating, that are that are being nominated tonight and they all did such a great job and that's how we got here. We got past the bios we wanted to

hear from all of them and they are all fantastic. People that I would love to have on my board. The Members will be surprised to know all the activities they can enjoy now at the club because of Kari and the things that have come out of this process. We have great food. We have great fellowship. I don't think me myself and Pam and Blane and the rest, we've read the bylaws so many times this year as we have. I also read fellowship as part of our key to the club. I don't think we're doing equine other than the polo events. And also like Doug I've served on many nonprofit Boards as well. I never did get so intimately involved in the club as I have been since I've been on the board. I'm very thankful of the board and everything that they've done to support us. We have a great group here. We have a great staff. I've seen other clubs in the community. Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa Country Club, Fountaingrove and they don't do it nearly as well as we do, and I think that's implied from the Members here and the staff. So I wish you luck in choosing. I don't think you can go wrong with any of the 12 of us, and I appreciate your time and effort.

Dale Miller

How about a big hand for all of the candidates. Bar is reopened for one final time.