

Letter: Why the Coast Central CU board election matters

January 15, 2023



As I write this, Coast Central Credit Union ballots for three board of director positions, out of nine total positions, are arriving at the homes of the 75,000 plus members in Humboldt, Del Norte and Trinity counties. I am a current member of the Coast Central board but write this strictly as an individual and from my personal experience as a long-term member of Coast Central. This is the first time in nine years that members have had a chance to weigh in through an election on the future of the credit union they literally own.

Three candidates are running for the board with the intention of greater member involvement in future Coast Central decisions and directions.

Rees Hughes, Maricela Aceves Wexler and James Kloor are running on a slate, the Member Voices Slate, with the sole purpose of increasing member/owner opportunity to participate.

To find out more about them and their slate, go to membersvoiceslate.org.

Member/owners should have a say in the future of their credit union. Although Coast Central is tax exempt because it is democratically controlled and owned by the members, that is not the only reason for greatly enhanced membership involvement.

The board has enormous responsibility for the operations of your credit union. When was the last time we talked to you? When was the last time choices were presented for you to weigh in on, as an owner? Certainly not at your annual meeting. How can we represent you, the members, as the board is expected to do, in your entire absence?

You do get to grade us through the consumer surveys, and you give us great grades, but that is not the same as informed contributions.

I want to be clear that this election is about the role of the board itself. Coast Central is a fabulous organization staffed with amazing employees at all levels. This election is not a critique of Coast Central operations. The core question of this election is how in fact the board can best represent the member/owners and support the staff as Coast Central continues to develop as the premier financial services organization and one of the leading social benefit institutions of our region.

I believe that all parties, those on the board who support the board as it now operates, those who like me want increased opportunity for member/owner involvement and those running for board seats fiercely loyal to Coast Central.

The answer to the future and all questions raised here is to be found through this election. I support Rees Hughes, Maricela Aceves Wexler and James Kloor for the three seats open. If elected they will work with those of us continuing on the board to open the doors that desperately need to be opened to member/owner engagement.

Peter Pennekamp