



## **BOARD SLATE CANDIDATE**

### **SURVEY**

For Term Beginning January 2015

Each year, our members elect half of the 15 Board of Directors to two-year terms. Any member is eligible to run for election.

The Board of Directors selects a slate of candidates to recommend based on their ability to meet certain criteria: a commitment to the SFBC, their skill set, associations with allied organizations and diversity.

The SFBC Board seeks specific characteristics in a particular year to ensure that the organization is governed by a committed, skilled, representative and diverse Board.

Please help us select the best possible slate of potential new Board members by responding to the following questions:

1. Tell us about your interest in the SFBC's mission to promote bicycling for everyday transportation. What role does bicycling play in your life, your family, friends and your community?

Bicycling is central to my life, and has been for decades.

I was given the first bicycle of my own to use for daily transportation to junior high school. I've ridden regularly and relied on bicycles for daily transportation, at least in good weather, ever since. "Bicyclist" has been an important part of my personal and political identities since my early twenties. I've lived in San Francisco since 1985, and the ability to rely on bicycles for transportation year round was one of the attractions of San Francisco and one of the reasons I've stayed here. (I didn't ride in ice or deep snow in Boston or Chicago, where I lived before moving here.) I have a driver's license, my partner has a car I sometimes use, and I sometimes drive borrowed or rented cars when I travel, but I've never owned a motor vehicle and hope that I never have to do so. Even when I'm in a motor vehicle, I look at roads with the eyes of a bicyclist. I have four bicycles for different uses in San Francisco, and a fifth I keep in Massachusetts and use when I'm visiting family and friends there.

Bicycling is the only physical activity that's ever felt natural for me. I've never been, or wanted to be, a racer or competitive cyclist, but I'm a skilled and experienced rider to whom riding has always felt far easier and more comfortable than walking. I rode professionally as a messenger, first in Boston and later in San Francisco. (I was the first professional rider in Boston or in San Francisco to wear a helmet, and agitated for safer working conditions and better treatment for working riders.) Working as a bike messenger and commuting by bike, as discussed below, gave me an acute sense of the

issues faced by urban cyclists, especially downtown, including the attitudes toward, and treatment of, messengers and other bicyclists by motorists, police, and others.

I've been seriously injured (I was unable to work for two months) and had two bicycles totaled from under me by motorists driving illegally, both times while I was commuting. I've been ticketed in SF for fabricated offenses while bicycling (and successfully fought the tickets), and been wrongly arrested for asking SF police to ticket cars valet-parked in the bike lane on Valencia Street. (I spent the night in jail and had to pay several thousand dollars to a private defense lawyer to get the charges, based on police perjury, dismissed, and the arrest record expunged.) As a bicyclist, I've experienced a wide range of discrimination, harassment, and assault from both motorists and police.

My work as a travel writer is part journalism and part amateur anthropology of bicycling among other aspects of life and of travel infrastructure and practice. I've ridden rented or borrowed bikes in cities in a dozen countries on four continents, and observed cycling cultures in many other places around the world. Since the first edition of "The Practical Nomad: How to Travel Around the World" in 1997, I've devoted extensive space in my books, Web site, and blog to the practicalities of bicycle travel, especially for local travel in urban areas. In each of my books, and on my Web site and blog, I've identified myself as an SFBC member. In recent years, I've also been doing more extended bicycle touring and writing more about long-distance travel by bicycle, in North America and overseas.

I'm an evangelist for social and environmental responsibility in travel, and believe that bicycling has a key role in responsible travel and in any sustainable human future.

## 2. Describe your involvement with the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition.

I joined the SFBC to be part of a collective effort to assert, protect, and advance the rights of bicyclists, including our rights to use the existing rights-of-way; to defend bicyclists against discrimination; and to empower and raise consciousness among other bicyclists about our rights and the hate crimes and discrimination against us.

I've been a dues-paying but not otherwise active member of the SFBC for many years, but have heard less and less from the SFBC about activities related to these issues, even recently when events have seemed to call for a renewed focus on them.

## 3. Do you ride a bike? How often do you ride? Do you commute to work by bike?

I ride almost every day it isn't raining, and some days when it is. I work at home, so I don't have a commute *per se*, but I rely primarily on bicycles (and on inter-modal transportation involving a bike, such as taking a bike on Caltrain, BART, Golden Gate Transit, etc.) for transportation within the Bay Area to business, social, and political meetings; shopping and errands; and for recreation. Not all of my bicycles have odometers, but I estimate that I ride a total of a few thousand miles a year. In the past, I've had daily commutes of as much as 15 miles each way, within the city and between city and suburbs. And as noted above, I've been a professional messenger in the past, earning a living riding eight hours a day in downtown San Francisco traffic.

4. What education, skills and experience do you have in the areas of nonprofit management, financial management, fundraising and development, governance, legal issues, organizational leadership, politics, and transportation planning? Have you served, or are you currently serving on any other boards?

I'm not a financial manager, fundraiser, or administrator. Fortunately, those skills are already well-represented on the SFBC Board and staff. My primary work throughout my life (sometimes unpaid, and supported by other day jobs, and more recently as a paid freelancer) has been legal, legislative, and regulatory policy analysis and advocacy.

On multiple issues over the years (starting with a high school internship for the state Board of Education writing a guide for high school students to their legal rights, and continuing to my work today), I've done legal education and outreach work to inform members of the public about their rights, and to empower them to exercise their rights.

I've been a non-lawyer legal worker member of the National Lawyers Guild since the early 1980s. I've worked as part of legal teams on both criminal and civil litigation. I've organized support committees and worked as liaison between lawyers, defendants, and outside supporters in numerous political trials of peace and civil rights activists.

For most of the 1980s, I was a national organizer for the National Resistance Committee and a member of the editorial and publishing collective of Resistance News, the national journal of the draft resistance movement. Our work was sufficiently successful that although those selected as defendants in show trials of draft resisters (including myself) were convicted, the trials served as showcases for the resistance, and were abandoned by the government as counterproductive. Registration for military conscription remains the law, but nobody has been prosecuted for nonregistration since 1987. It's a textbook case of successful community organizing around cases that were "lost" in purely legal terms.

I've done similar work on issues of freedom to travel and in support of individuals resisting the homeland security state in recent years with the Identity Project. I've also been involved in civil litigation strategy and tactics with the Identity Project.

The Identity Project ([PapersPlease.org](http://PapersPlease.org)) is a sponsored project, of which I am currently the sole staff person, within a larger legal and educational nonprofit, the First Amendment Project. My work with the Identity Project is a continuation of advocacy and educational work for the right to travel that I was already doing as an individual, including regulatory, legislative, and international policy analysis and advocacy.

I've testified as an invited expert witness on travel and transportation-related consumer and civil rights issues at hearings before the Canadian and European Parliaments, and have participated in proceedings of international human rights treaty bodies.

I also volunteer as legislative and regulatory policy analyst for Travelers United (formerly the Consumer Travel Alliance), a national consumer advocacy organization affiliated with the Consumer Federation of America.

Since 2008, I have served and twice been re-elected as Co-Chair of the Book Division of the National Writers Union. The NWU has the organizational structure of a labor union (UAW Local 1981) rather than having a "Board of Directors". But because it represents freelancers, its work is primarily policy advocacy (legislative, regulatory, and legal) for our members' rights and interests, rather than collective bargaining. As a national officer, I've had a leading role in the NWU's policy work, including developing and executing litigation strategy and representing the NWU to Congress, the U.S. Copyright Office, WIPO, other international organizations, and in national and international coalitions.

My writing as "The Practical Nomad", both in print and online, has focused on practical "how to" education and empowerment to encourage and facilitate independent international travel, and on consumer advocacy for the rights and interests of travellers. The diversity of my readership and fan base, from backpackers to business travellers, reflects my success in listening to, understanding, and speaking to the concerns of diverse travellers, including those with different backgrounds, tastes, and travel goals than mine.

I served one term as an elected member of the board of the Bay Area Travel Writers, but that was and is a small professional and service organization, not a political or advocacy organization and not comparable in size or organizational character to the SFBC.

5. As part of the SFBC's Strategic Plan, we are focused on developing relationships with a broader range of stakeholders, including Asian American, Latino and business communities. What is your involvement and experience with these types of groups? We are also interested in geographic diversity. What neighborhood/district do you live in?

I have little direct involvement in explicitly Asian American or Latino organizations (although of course many Mission neighborhood organizations have been, and to some extent still are, *implicitly* Latino-centric). I've lived in the Mission District since moving to San Francisco in 1985, on the same block since 1987. I started and moderate the e-mail discussion list for a longstanding bilingual block club, "Vecinos del Barrio". I'm an active (non-Kashmiri) longtime member of the Kashmiri American Council, a national, predominantly South/Central Asian American educational and advocacy group for human rights and self determination in Kashmir, and have participated in a variety of Kashmir-related South Asian American and Islamic American events. I've worked with many Asian American and Islamic American civil rights organizations and activists, in the Bay Area and nationally, on issues related to freedom of movement and travel.

I'm not entirely comfortable referring to businesses as "communities". I was once part of the industry of professional bicyclists as a messenger, although that was in the 1980s. More recently, I've been a participant and observer in the travel and tourism industries, something of growing relevance to the SFBC in light of the growing numbers of tourists (many of them foreign visitors unfamiliar with U.S. cycling practices and norms) riding rental and bikeshare bicycles in San Francisco.

6. Are you involved in any local bicycle, pedestrian, transit, health, neighborhood, environmental, professional or any other organizations relevant to our mission? If yes, please describe.

Most such organizations in which I am involved are discussed above. I'm also a member of, but haven't been active in, Ethical Traveler (especially out of concern for issues of air travel and global warming, about which I've written and on which I'm speaking at the forthcoming 2014 SXSW Eco sustainability conference), and the National Association of Railroad Passengers (an example worth studying of successful transit advocacy).

7. Why are you interested in running for a board seat at this time? Are their particular areas of interest, focus, or expertise that you can offer or that are especially of interest you?

I would bring to the Board a special interest and focus on four concerns, each of which I think has been under-represented recently on the Board and in its concerns:

First, I'm interested in participatory decision-making procedures and internal transparency and democracy within the SFBC, to ensure that members are able to determine the direction of the organization, that the Board and the staff are accountable to the members, and that the actions taken by and in the name of the SFBC (and with its resources) reflect the desires of as much as possible of the diversity of the membership.

This is a much larger topic than could hope to fully explore here, and one that I hope will be a subject of discussion throughout my term on the Board. But at present, despite what I'm sure are good intentions by current and past Board members, the SFBC has only the vestiges of internal democracy. There hasn't been a quorum sufficient to permit any business to be considered or voted on at the annual membership meeting in years, and nothing has been done to establish procedures for electronic or postal voting or to provide other venues, such as membership committee meetings on issues, for discussion or debate within the membership, much less voting or attempts to develop consensus. There's no established channel for action or decision proposals from members. Few Board members or Board candidates have made their contact information available to members, and Board candidate statements have given minimal, if any, indication of how candidates intend to vote, if elected, on issues on which members have different opinions. Even the most important high-level policy documents, such as the "Strategic Plan", have not been subject to member proposals for, or voting on, amendment or ratification. So far as I can tell from the minutes and from attending meetings, there has been virtually no discussion of substantive policy issues at Board meetings, except in executive sessions closed to members. All discussion of the Strategic Plan I have been able to find recorded in the minutes has been in executive session. So there is no way for members to know which members of the Board have supported (or not) which policies, or to base their votes for Board candidates for re-election on their voting records on policy issues.

Second, I'm interested in political policies more than administration. The SFBC needs, and fortunately has, sound administration. But it also needs sound policies. The Board hasn't been spending enough time, and hasn't created enough opportunities for members, to formulate, discuss, and decide on what those policies should be.

It's not enough to say that the SFBC advocates for bicyclists in San Francisco. Bicycling advocacy isn't normal science, it's paradigm shift and politics. What policies are in the best interests of bicyclists is not a question with a settled answer, or one on which there is

consensus within the SFBC membership. The opinions of SFBC members are diverse and changing. The SFBC is fundamentally a political organization. As such, it should expect, accept, and welcome – as openings to progress – internal discussion, debate, and proposals for new or revised policies and programs. Dealing with these issues calls for Board members focused on policy questions, not just on administration and finance.

Third, I'm interested more in influencing policies and practices than in infrastructure. I joined the SFBC as a civil rights organization of and for bicyclists and our rights. I didn't join the SFBC or pay dues over the years primarily to support lobbying for more bike lanes, and that wasn't the primary identity of the SFBC at the time I joined. That is certainly a reason many people have joined and contributed to the SFBC, and I don't oppose this as a component, among others, of the SFBC's work. But the growing focus on infrastructure has come at the expense of what was once the core mission of the SFBC, and what I believe should still (or once again) be a larger component of our activities: defending the rights of bicyclists and empowering bicyclists to stand up for our rights.

The shift in the SFBC's focus from policies to infrastructure has occurred gradually, and without ever having been formally proposed, debated, or ratified by the members. Nobody, so far as I know, has run for the Board on a platform of such a shift.

There are real differences and a continuum of opinion within the membership on this, but it's not something on which there is consensus, or would be a consensus if the issue was brought into the open. It needs to be acknowledged and taken up as an issue. I'd like to learn more about what members think on this issue – they haven't been asked – but I believe that to reflect the balance of opinion within the membership, the balance of SFBC priorities should shift significantly toward policies and away from infrastructure.

The overemphasis on infrastructure is reinforced by the SFBC having an infrastructure wish list (against which candidates are measured for SFBC endorsements), but not having an explicit legislative or policy wish list, either at the city or state level. (The SFBC is a significant player in statewide coalitions and state legislative lobbying, but has no explicit process for deciding how to wield our influence at the state level.) Similarly, there are neighborhood SFBC committees (necessarily focused on neighborhood infrastructure issues) but no citywide SFBC policy committee of members.

Fourth, I'm interested in seeing an SFBC board with not just a diversity of skills and demographics, but a diversity of political views on the issues faced by bicyclists. At least unless and until other means of member participation in decision-making are put in place (as I would like them to be, but which will take time), the only way to ensure that Board debates capture in microcosm the debates going on within the full membership – or that would go on if members were fully informed – is to ensure that the Board includes representatives of various political points of view of SF bicyclists on issues we face.

Some of the specific issues I would like the SDFBC to prioritize include full implementation of the "transit-first" clause of the city and county charter, and a campaign for reform of the San Francisco police and education of bicyclists, along the lines and for the reasons discussed in the proposal I made to the SFBC, as a member, last year:

<http://hasbrouck.org/blog/archives/002109.html>

8. Are you willing to be a major donor (\$500 or more per year give or get) and assist with additional fundraising (house parties, major events, major donor requests, etc)?

I don't believe that there should be any means test for SFBC Board members, or that donation amounts should be a factor in Board nominations or elections. To fulfill our goals of inclusiveness, diversity, and democracy, all members should have equal access to Board members and an equal voice in SFBC decision-making. As a Board member, I would rather not know how much any member had contributed. Even with the best of intentions, special treatment of major donors tends to give them disproportionate access to decision-makers, and to skew decision-making in favor of policies and programs more compatible with the views of wealthier donors.

I would welcome funding for the SFBC from whatever source, but believe it is important not to rely or become dependent on funding from outside the membership, since such dependency creates the potential for organizational capture by funders.

9. Please note your personal characteristics: age, gender, LGBTQ, parent, race/ethnicity, and any other characteristics you believe are relevant to the SFBC.

I'm 54 years old, male, bi-sexual, not a parent, of white/European ethnic background, and a native English speaker. I have extensive professional experience in the international travel industry, as a travel writer, and in international political activism, working and interacting with people from a wide range of countries, cultures, and demographics.

Please return this completed questionnaire, along with a current resume by Friday, August 15, 2014 to Carla McKay, [mckay.carla@gmail.com](mailto:mckay.carla@gmail.com) to be considered for the 2014 slate.

I've attached a summary resume. Since I haven't been looking for a job lately, much less one to which all of these aspects of my experience are relevant, it's probably of less help to you than the questionnaire above. I've also attached the bio from my Web site.

Thank you for your continued support of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition.