

THE RETURN OF PLOW TO PLATE

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Safe Food Committee Report

By Adam Rabiner

Well, dear readers, it is great to be back writing to you again after a two-year break about the *Plow to Plate Film Series*. I am here to tell you that *PtP* is back too, although not as you remember it. Our official return takes place this September, but you won't have to come to the small and sometimes cramped second floor room at 782 Union Street to enjoy the show. Rather, you can enjoy *The Pollinators*—"a cinematic journey around the United States following migratory beekeepers and their truckloads of honeybees"—from the comfort of your own, hopefully air-conditioned, home.

We were inspired to bring back *PtP* in this new form by the confluence of several fac-

tors. After the world seemed to shut down in 2020, we observed the onset of telework and other ways of connecting via our computers. We also noticed a proof of concept in the Flatbush Food Coop, whose film series carried on, via Zoom, with nary a pause in their screening schedule. We recognize that the world has changed, and although some face-to-face contact has returned, if Covid endures, which is likely, many members will be wary of attending in person. Finally, our squad was informed by the Coop that the second-floor room has been set aside for other purposes that make further screenings there impossible. All of these factors led us to conclude that we either had to adapt or change circumstances to avoid the end of our squad.

So, several months ago, our committee began to slowly coalesce again. We reached out to one another, tentatively at first, via email and then regularly by Zoom. We asked ourselves: can we viably come back and pull this off? During this time, we lost a key member who had overseen our newsletter and website and so we would have to modify our roles and learn new technologies and ways of interacting with our audiences. Also, as you undoubtedly have noticed, this very publication, on which we strongly rely for film reviews and to get the news out about upcoming events, has radically transformed itself from a print biweekly available on the shopping floor, to an entirely digital newspaper. The last print issue of the *Linewaiters' Gazette* is archived on the website from August 10th, 2021. What would this new format mean for our work and our squad? We are still not entirely sure.

What can you expect moving forward? While we can no longer provide the healthy snacks which everyone loved, you can watch at home with your favorite version of an organic Cheez Doodle. Don't worry, you'll be muted. You will also appreciate that the hard, no-frills bridge chair that you previously sat on has been significantly upgraded to your beloved couch.

We have also made a curatorial decision to screen shorter films. Zoom burnout is a real thing and we really have no intention of competing with Netflix or Amazon Prime. *Plow to Plate* has always been as much about the small but dedicated food-loving community we have created over the years, as it is about the films themselves. Part

of what made the community, of course, was meeting in person. But a larger ingredient was the involvement of film makers, directors, producers and others we brought in to explain their work and to answer audience questions. *Plow to Plate*, at its core, is really about your curiosity and engagement. In that regard, we will continue to bring in the experts and encourage dialogue and Q & A. In fact, by going online, we hope to broaden access to our film series to more attendees since logging in from anywhere is a lot easier than showing up at a particular location. Recognizing tradition, and with no compelling reason to further rock the boat, we will continue to host screenings on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m.

There remain a lot of unknowns, but we are so excited to be back. Please look for our review of *The Pollinators* soon in an upcoming issue of the new and improved *Gazette* and please check in with us on Tuesday, September 13th at seven o'clock p.m. for our inaugural virtual screening after our two-year hiatus. We will be providing a link in our soon-to-appear *Gazette* review. Until then, be well.

The Pollinators: Tuesday, September 13th, 2022 7:00 PM, Streaming Via Zoom, Link TBA.

A veteran of the Coop bathroom cleaning squad, Adam Rabiner is a member of the Safe Food Committee where he helped organize the Brooklyn Food Conferences' movie screening and founded the Plow to Plate series.