

IT'S A SIGN!

July 25, 2023



ILLUSTRATION BY VALERIA TRUCCHIA

Note: The photo reference numbers throughout this article correlate with the relevant image's position in the embedded slideshow.

By Dan Bergsagel

It's hard not to notice the abundance of signs when you enter the Coop. Like any grocery store, the Coop needs signs to function. Signs tell members what items cost, what they can find in an aisle, and where to stand on line.

Yet, as the Coop is run on member labor and structured around shared values, the signage at the Coop must share so much more information: There are greetings plastered on entranceways; strict access rules displayed overhead; stern warnings affixed to heavy machinery; and informative hints stuck next to self-serve devices. These signs can be brusque or decorative, scrawled or carefully designed. They accumulate in places expected and visible or unexpected and obscure. They convey vital instructions or indeed no instructions at all.

THERE'S SO MUCH SIGNAGE THAT INSTEAD OF MEMBERS BEING FULLY INFORMED, THERE'S A RISK THAT LITTLE OF THE INTENDED INFORMATION IS ABSORBED.

As a new member, I found this rich tapestry of signage fascinating. I wanted to know who makes the signs, who puts them up and who is allowed to take them down. Are all signs made equal? I also found the signs totally overwhelming. I couldn't tell which signs were meant for a member-shopper versus as a member-worker. I wondered whether faded, tatty signs were old and superseded by new information or still up-to-date. There's so much signage that instead of members being fully informed, there's a risk that little of the intended information is absorbed. I felt that we could use a taxonomy to help us parse signs at the Coop.

First, we need to understand some of the history of signage at the Coop. We can then categorize the signs by purpose and cross-reference that to their location and medium of manufacture. When combined, this can provide a framework for understanding which signs are most relevant to whom and at what time.

To understand all things signage, I spoke with Membership Coordinator Phi Lee Lam after I found her applying a new Opening Hours sticker on the main entrance doors one Saturday morning. Phi Lee inherited the Coop's signage liaison position after General Coordinator Jess Robinson retired in 2021. The Signage Committee organically disbanded during the pandemic, around that same time, due to a number of factors, including the retirement of some core members and the dwindling need in recent years to have a committee devoted to signs.

WALKING THROUGH THE COOP, IT'S CLEAR THAT THE SIGNAGE COMMITTEE'S STYLE GUIDE HASN'T BEEN UNIVERSALLY FOLLOWED.

To standardize the Coop's signs, the Signage Committee had previously established a style guide setting out the colors and typeface that should be used for all permanent Coop signage. However, walking through the Coop, it's clear that the style guide hasn't been universally followed. Permanent signs tend to adhere to the style guide but hand-drawn illustrations and chalkboard signs tend to go off-piste. Ad hoc signs added by receiving coordinators or member-workers to help with specific tasks also demonstrate a live-and-let-live attitude to signage.

PURPOSES

The Coop uses signs to convey information for all sorts of purposes. There are regular signs that shoppers will be familiar with from other grocery stores, such as those to help member-shoppers navigate the building by displaying the contents of an aisle (*image 1/30*) or to direct member-shoppers to the appropriate cashier line (*image*

2/30).

But beyond this basic store signage are those specific to the Coop and its hyper-involved membership: signs that assume detailed knowledge of where items were previously located, such as a notice on the aisle and shelf reassignment of recently moved goods ranging from smoothies to water filters (*image 3/30*); signs that give detailed food information, such as an apple decoder describing the characteristics of the different varieties on sale (*image 4/30*); signs that provide technical explanations on how the food is grown and sourced, such as this one on the background of integrated pest-management for apples (*image 5/30*); and signs that tell shoppers how to operate machinery that isn't always accessible in other grocery stores, such as the step-by-step guide for using the Coop's coffee grinders (*image 6/30*).

IN ADDITION TO FUNCTIONAL SIGNS, THERE ARE ALSO SIGNS DEMONSTRATING MEMBERS' PASSIONS AND MOTIVATIONS.

In addition to signs catering to member-shoppers, there is a range of signage to assist with member-workers' tasks during shifts. These include signs for how to restock the paper in the Coop's orange pricing guns (*image 7/30*); signs explaining specific processes, like how to cut and rewrap cheese into smaller parcels depending on the shape of the original larger cheese (*image 8/30*); signs providing guidance on where to put things and how to navigate the warren of back-of-house areas, like this sign summarizing which items are stored in the backyard (*image 9/30*); and crucial safety information, like what not to do in the basement electrical cabinets (*image 10/30*). Perhaps similar signs exist in all grocery stores, but we usually don't see them as customers.

In addition to functional signs, there are also signs demonstrating members' passions and motivations. These are signs promoting causes that the membership believe in, such as Black Lives Matter or the Human Rights advocating Fair Food Label (*image*

11/30); signs bearing admonishments on environmental or physical behavior, such as requests to avoid using plastic bags when doing one's shopping (*image 12/30*); or, if one must use plastic bags, to avoid licking one's fingers when separating them from each other (*image 13/30*); or comedic signs conveying helpful reminders about how to protect yourself against the coronavirus using acrostics based on Staten Island hip hop collectives (*image 14/30*); or signs with little apparent meaning at all, but which bring unique character to the basement cooler rooms (*image 15/30*); or those drawing parallels between the Coop's food-conveying infrastructure and the larger civil engineering infrastructure of the world (*image 16/30*). These are not signs you would expect to see at Whole Foods.

LOCATIONS

All these different types of signs—basic grocery store signage, Coop-specific food information, instructions for member-workers and passion projects—are visible on the shopping floor where member-shoppers, member-workers and Coop staff all interact. As you delve into the less accessible depths of the Coop, adherence to the *Coop Sign Style Guide* diminishes and informal signage reigns.

THE SECOND FLOOR, WHICH PRIMARILY HOUSES THE MEMBERSHIP AND STAFF OFFICES, ALSO FEATURES A UNIQUE SET OF SIGNS: THE SIGN ARCHIVES.

Entry to the basement is signaled by a series of strict, insistent and repetitive reminders at the top of the stairs imploring member-shoppers to stay out (*image 17/30*)! Equally repetitive signs can be found in the recycling zone next to the elevator doors on the second floor, where it is made very clear that one should only recycle soda cans (*image 18/30*).

The second floor, which primarily houses the membership and staff offices, also features a unique set of signs: the sign archives. This includes signs that have been key

to the Coop's visual identity, such as a former painted wooden storefront sign (*image 19/30*) and a 2001 edition of the iconic Coop carrot (*image 20/30*). This floor also has a rare documented reminder of the Coop's early mission of "Good Food at Low Prices for Working Members through Cooperation since 1973" in a frame (*image 21/30*) and significant signs from recent pandemic history, such as one that announced the return of member labor after the forced COVID-19 hiatus (*image 22/30*).

MEDIUM

Surprisingly, the level of attention that must be paid to a sign at the Coop seems to be both inversely proportional to how hard it was to make and install and its adherence to the *Coop Sign Style Guide*. For instance, the most permanent sign is the classic neon flag sign on Union Street (*image 23/30*), closely followed by the permanent (and on-brand) Coop Mission Statement (*image 24/30*). There are then long-term signs such as the stickers with reminders of rules about members-only access and dogs (*image 25/30*) and the food information on printed and laminated paper that is tacked on the sides of cabinets (*image 26/30*). Nearly all of these permanent signs are more than likely ignored in the day-to-day hustle and bustle of the Coop.

THE MOST CRUCIAL INFORMATION OF ALL IS TYPICALLY CONVEYED IN THE LEAST CONSIDERED AND LEAST PERMANENT WAY: BY SHARPIE.

More transient and less on-brand signs, on the other hand, are ignored at your peril: hand-painted signs specify new product types and campaigns, such as the health and beauty department's plastic-free initiative (*image 27/30*) and intricate colorful chalkboards remind the membership about how to get involved with current affairs at the Coop (*image 28/30*).

The most crucial information of all is typically conveyed in the least considered way: by Sharpie. Exciting food updates and special sales are scribbled with frantic excite-

ment on cardboard, such as these childlike exclamations about beef suet (*image 29/30*) and essential machinery safety warnings, such as those reminding member-workers to turn off dangerous, fast-moving equipment before opening doors, are given the most temporary format of all: Sharpie on masking tape (*image 30/30*).





COOP JOB OPENINGS

Copies of these postings are available in the ground floor elevator lobby, in the Membership Office, on foodcop.com and in the Linewaiters' Gazette.

THINGS HAVE MOVED!!

- APPLE SAUCE & CANNED FRUITS are now in Aisle 6A
- SMOOTHIE pouches are now in Aisle 6A
- BALL JARS are now on the Endcap across from EGGS
- SELTZER is now on the Endcap across from Spices
- BAKING PRODUCTS have moved to Aisle 2B opposite BULK BINS
- GRAINS & RICE & HEMPSEEDS are now in Aisle 2B
- JUICES have moved across the aisle to Aisle 2A
- SODA STREAM carbonators have moved to Aisle 2A, bottom shelf
- WATER FILTERS have moved to Aisle 2A, top shelf
- DRIED MUSHROOMS & DRIED CHILES are now hanging in Aisle 6B

PROTECT EACH OTHER

At the Coop we take everyone's safety seriously. We require all members to wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth **AT ALL TIMES** when inside the building.



Never pull down your mask. Members that fail to cooperate with our mask protocols may be asked to leave the store. If you have any questions, please visit the membership office.

ONLY BIODEGRADABLE ITEMS GO INTO COMPOST BUCKETS



- tags
- rubber bands
- twist ties
- containers

APPLE VARIETY CHART



BRAEBURN

Robust spicy-sweet flavor with a hint of nutmeg & cinnamon.



HONEYCRISP

Juicy and refreshing like fresh apple cider. Crisp with a unique texture, excellent for snacking.



FUJI

Crisp and very juicy with a sugary-sweet flavor that resembles that of freshly pressed apple juice.



EMPIRE

With its sweet and spicy flesh, it is one of the very best for eating out of hand, in salads, and in fruit cups.



GALA

Mildly sweet and vanilla-like with a floral aroma. This apple has thinner skin than most.



CORTLAND

A great apple for baking and cooking. White flesh resists browning more than most apples.



GOLDEN DELICIOUS

Thin skinned, consistently sweet and crisp with a silky texture.



PINK LADY

Very firm and dense with a tart flavor and effervescent finish.



GRANNY SMITH

Firm with strong tartness resembling a lemon.



MACINTOSH

Crunchy with sweet refreshing acidity, usually a hint of tartness referred to as the 'Macintosh' taste.



NORTHERN SPY

A late-season apple with a crisp, juicy texture and a tart, spicy flavor.

fresh snacks
auce.

yman winesap ipm
 hands-organic
 es- loose organic
 es-5lb boxes
 slicing organic
 alifornia organic
 l organic
 er label organic
 rganic
 ged
 ian sweet star label org
 plu#4381/4390
 ara red 93110 organic
 r organic
 alifornia organic
 3107
 organic
 pe del monte
 27
 f bag organic
 no leaf organic
 w/leaves
 sava)

I.P.M is ...
 ...the use of biological, physical and chemical
 techniques to control pest populations.
 Similar to "minimally treated", IPM uses the least
 amount of intervention that is still sustainable for
 the farm, the environment and you.
 Many farms that are in the process of being
 certified organic will label their produce IPM.

Apples		
ORG	Apple-fuji label organic	\$2.31 LB
ORG	Apple-granny smith organic	\$2.65 LB
IPM	Apple-pink lady ipm	\$1.50 LB
Citrus		
ORG	Grapefruit- organic	\$1.85 LB
ORG	Lemons-organic	\$1.80 LB
CONV	Lemons. 4958 or blank/#3 label	\$1.24 LB
ORG	Limes- organic	\$1.61 LB
CONV	Limes-key bagged	\$3.09 EA
ORG	Oranges-navel california organic	\$1.97 LB
CONV	Oranges-navel #3107	\$1.35 LB
CONV	Oro blanco	\$2.32 LB
Flowers		
ORG	Flowers- Edible blue moon 15 ct organic	\$4.19 EA
IPM	Flowers-myers lily ipm	\$12.24 BU
ORG	Flowers-myers mixed bouquet organic	\$12.11 BU
Fruit		
ORG	Apriots- organic	\$5.2
ORG	Apriots-cup organic	\$5.1
ORG	Avocados-hass #94225 organic	\$2
CONV	Avocados-hass. #4225	\$
ORG	Bananas-organic	
CONV	Bananas-baby	
ORG	Blackberries-organic	
ORG	Blueberries-pint organic	
CONV	Blueberries. pint	
ORG	Cherries-cup organic FROG HOLLOW	
ORG	Cherries-red organic #94045	
CONV	Cherries-red #4045	
ORG	Coconut- water organic by EACH	
ORG	Coconut-young thai organic	
ORG	Kiwi-organic	
Produce Prices Tuesday 5/30/2023 8:12 am		



FIRST

Look at grinder from the side.

Make sure this switch or trigger is depressed by your bag.

If you are trying to grind into a retail bag (a sm Pachamama, Irving, Grumpy, etc. vs. a plain, brown bag) you may need to slide your hand up behind the spout to activate the switch. If it still won't work...

Brush the machine gently. Sometimes beans get stuck depending on how oily they are.



If that doesn't work use the brush hanging nearby to stir the beans a bit.

IF THAT DOESN'T WORK...

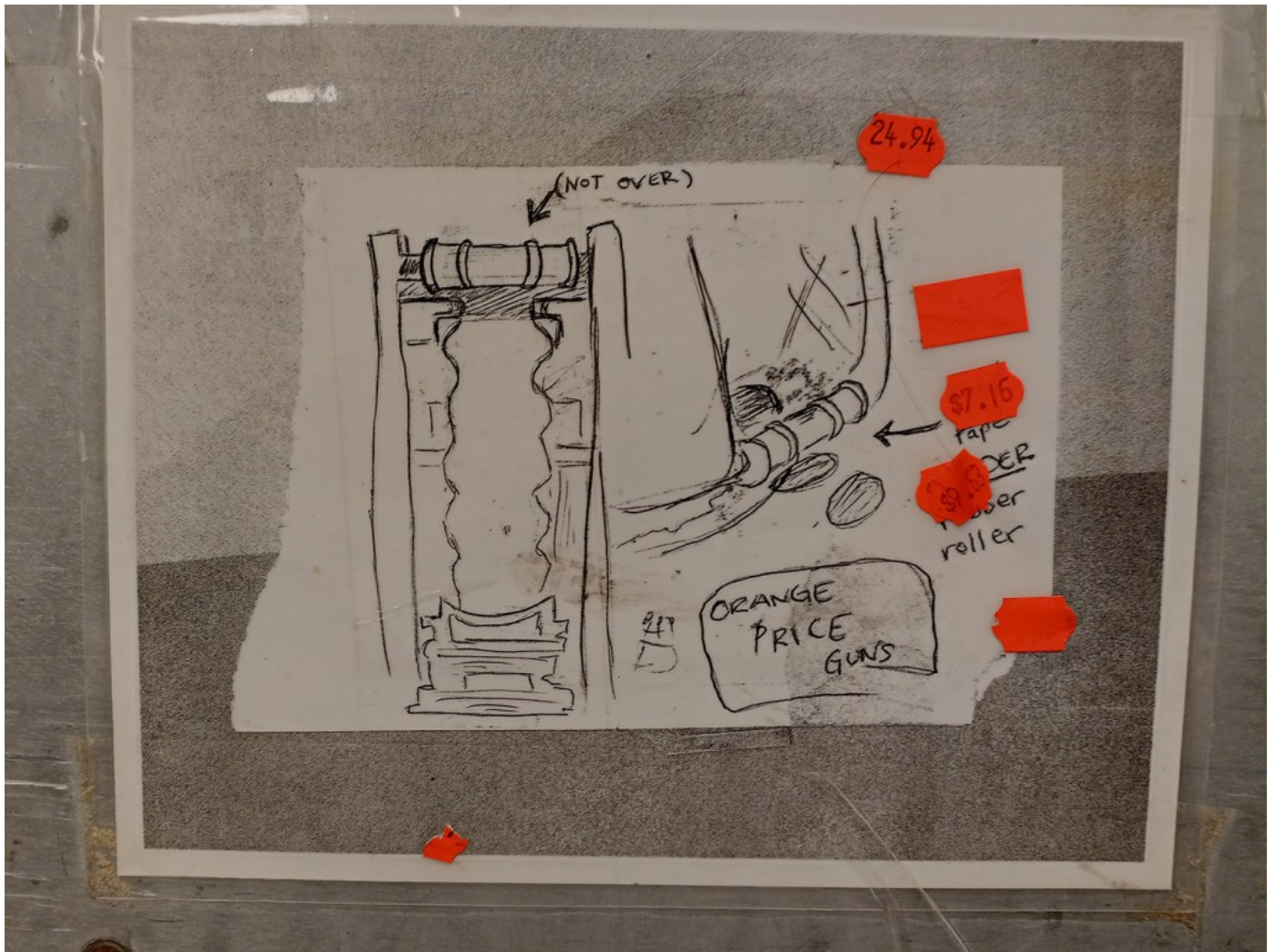
Press the white Reset Button → try grinding again



Still no luck grinding?

PAGE OUT. We'll help you

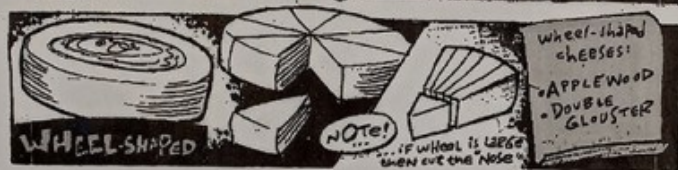




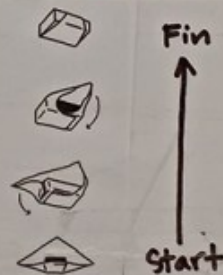
INGENIOUS!
I HAVE JUST
INVENTED
MUNSTER
MINIS!

AND
THUS

THE PARK SLOPE FOOD COOP'S
**CHEESE
SLICING
VISUAL GUIDE**



HOW TO WRAP CHEESE



Parmigiano Reggiano

Pecorino Romano

Port Salut

**NOT AN
EXIT**

WHAT GOES IN THE BACKYARD

YES

Wooden Crates



Harvest Crates



Non-Yellow
Square Crates



Compost Buckets
(do not overfill)



Recycling Bags
(clear plastic, metal cans,
sorted bottles)



Short Scrub Brush



Cleaning Bucket



NO

Yellow Crates
(take to receiving room)



Garbage
(take to dumpster out front)



**WARNING
NOT A
FIRE EXIT**



TO ETHICAL PRODUCTION
THE FAIR FOOD LABEL GUARANTEES

FAIRFOOD

DIGNITY FOR WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

A REAL VOICE FOR WORKERS IN THE FIELDS



"THIS IS THE BEST WORK-PLACE
MONITORING PROGRAM
IN THE U.S."
- New York Times

"ONE OF THE GREAT HUMAN RIGHTS
SUCCESS STORIES OF OUR DAY."
- Washington Post Op/Ed

CONSUMER POWERED
WORKER-CERTIFIED

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

LEARN MORE: WWW.FAIRFOODPROGRAM.ORG



FOLLOWING
A PRODUCTS
RE-PACKAGED
AND THEM IN
78.



ECO-CHOICE
\$4.80



ECO-CHOICE
\$6.38







Protect Ya Neck
against the Coronavirus

- W** - Wash hands
- U** - Use mask properly
- T** - Touch nothing
- A** - Avoid large crowds
- N** - Never touch your face
with unclean hands
- G** - Go to the hospital if
you have severe symptoms



RAINBOW COOLIE

WEEK-END UPDATES



Frida



Harriet



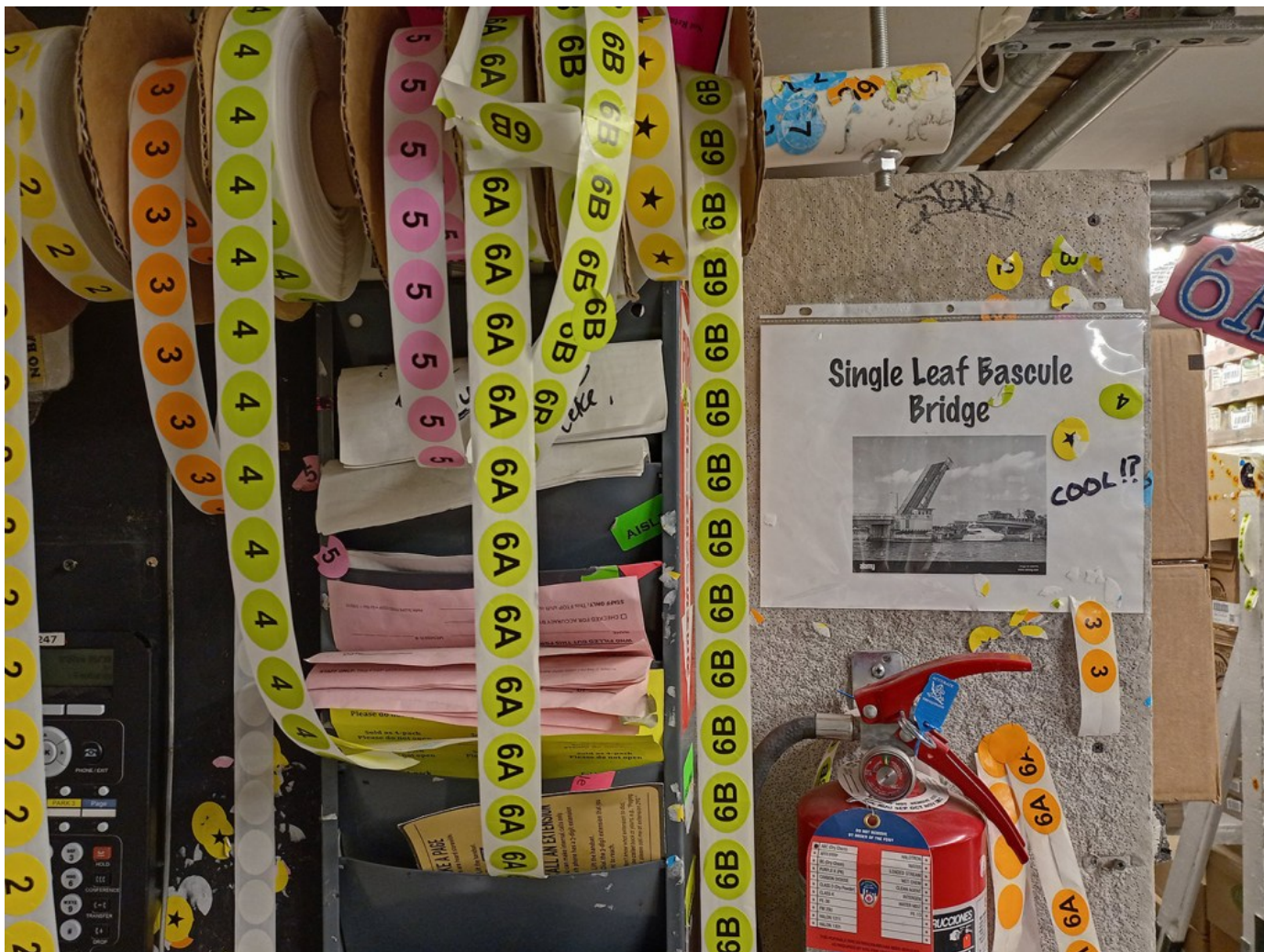
Salma



Cynthia



"Rambo Walken"





Desert Valley Gate • Coachella, CA 92236

5
Caution

SODA CANS ONLY

NO BEER NO BEER NO BEER NO BEER NO BEER NO BEER NO BEER

SODA CANS ONLY

НЕТ ПИВА НЕТ ПИВА НЕТ ПИВА НЕТ ПИВА НЕТ ПИВА НЕТ ПИВА

SODA CANS ONLY

NO CERVEZA NO CERVEZA NO CERVEZA NO CERVEZA NO CERVEZA NO CERVEZA

SODA CANS ONLY

PAS DE BIÈRE PAS DE BIÈRE PAS DE BIÈRE PAS DE BIÈRE PAS DE BIÈRE PAS DE BIÈRE

SODA CANS ONLY

NIENTE BIRRA NIENTE BIRRA NIENTE BIRRA NIENTE BIRRA NIENTE BIRRA NIENTE BIRRA

SODA CANS ONLY

NO BEER!





Good Food
at
Low Prices
for
Working Members
through
Cooperation
since
1973

Early PSFC Mission Statement

MEMBER
LABOR

resumed

MONDAY

JULY 12





Park Slope Food Coop Mission Statement

The Park Slope Food Coop is a member-owned and operated food store—

an alternative to commercial profit-oriented business. As members, we contribute our labor: working together builds trust through cooperation and teamwork and enables us to keep prices as low as possible within the context of our values and principles. Only members may shop, and we share responsibilities and benefits equally. We strive to be a responsible and ethical employer and neighbor. We are a buying agent for our members and not a selling agent for any industry. We are a part of and support the cooperative movement.

We offer a diversity of products with an emphasis on organic, minimally processed and healthful foods.

We seek to avoid products that depend on the exploitation of others. We support non-toxic, sustainable agriculture.

We respect the environment.

We strive to reduce the impact of our lifestyles on the world we share with other species and future generations. We prefer to buy from local, earth-friendly producers. We recycle. We try to lead by example, educating ourselves and others about health and nutrition, cooperation and the environment.

We are committed to diversity and equality.

We oppose discrimination in any form. We strive to make the Coop welcoming and accessible to all and to respect the opinions, needs and concerns of every member. We seek to maximize participation at every level, from policy making to running the store.

We welcome all who respect these values.

**park slope
FOOD COOP**

Park Slope Food Coop Staff

GENERAL COORDINATORS



RECEIVING COORDINATORS



MEMBERSHIP COORDINATORS



The Park Slope Food Coop unequivocally supports Black lives and the dismantling of all systems that propagate and empower systemic racism.

#BLACKLIVESMATTER

DOGS OUTSIDE THE FOOD COOP

- Please be considerate when securing your dog. Be aware that some people are afraid of dogs, and we want to avoid blocking the bench and entry door.
- If any concerns are raised, you may be asked to move your pet.

DOG BARKING LAW

Members, please obey this law out of respect for our neighbors

Administrative Code, Section 24-235. The official law, part of the New York City's new noise code, signed into law in December 2005, states: "No person having charge, care, custody, or control of any animal shall cause or permit such animal to cause unreasonable noise including, but not limited to, any sound that is plainly audible at any location within any residential receiving property as set forth below: (a) At or after 7 a.m. and before 10 p.m., continuously for a period of 10 minutes or more; (b) At or after 10 p.m. and before 7 a.m., continuously for a period of 5 minutes or more."



TO REPORT A DOG THAT BARKS UNREASONABLY, DIAL 311



LOAD LIM

SHEET

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 2 oz (57g)		
Amount Per Serving		
Calories		
Total Fat 0g		130 % Daily Value *
Saturated Fat 0g		11%
Trans Fat 0g		9%
Cholesterol 35mg		0%
Sodium 700mg		11%
Total Carbohydrate 0g		30%
Dietary Fiber 0g		0%
Total Sugars 0g		0%
Incl. Added Sugars 0g		0%
Protein 13g		35%
Vitamin D 6.7mcg		0%
Calcium 10mg		2%
Iron 0.2mg		4%
Potassium 220mg		

Ingredients: Atlantic salmon, salt, and hardwood smoke.

The carotenoid used in the feed of farm-raised salmon is identical to the natural carotenoid consumed by salmon in the wild and is the source of the color of this fish.

Product	Product Information
Description	Spence & Co Ltd. for New York Style
Claims	Nova Lox (Product of Denmark) ASC
Certifications	Vacuum Packed, Pre-sliced, Cold Smoked, Farm Raised Atlantic Salmon
Species	Kosher
Allergens	Kosher (Kof-K), ASC-certified Atlantic Salmon, Stevia Salt, Fish (salmon)

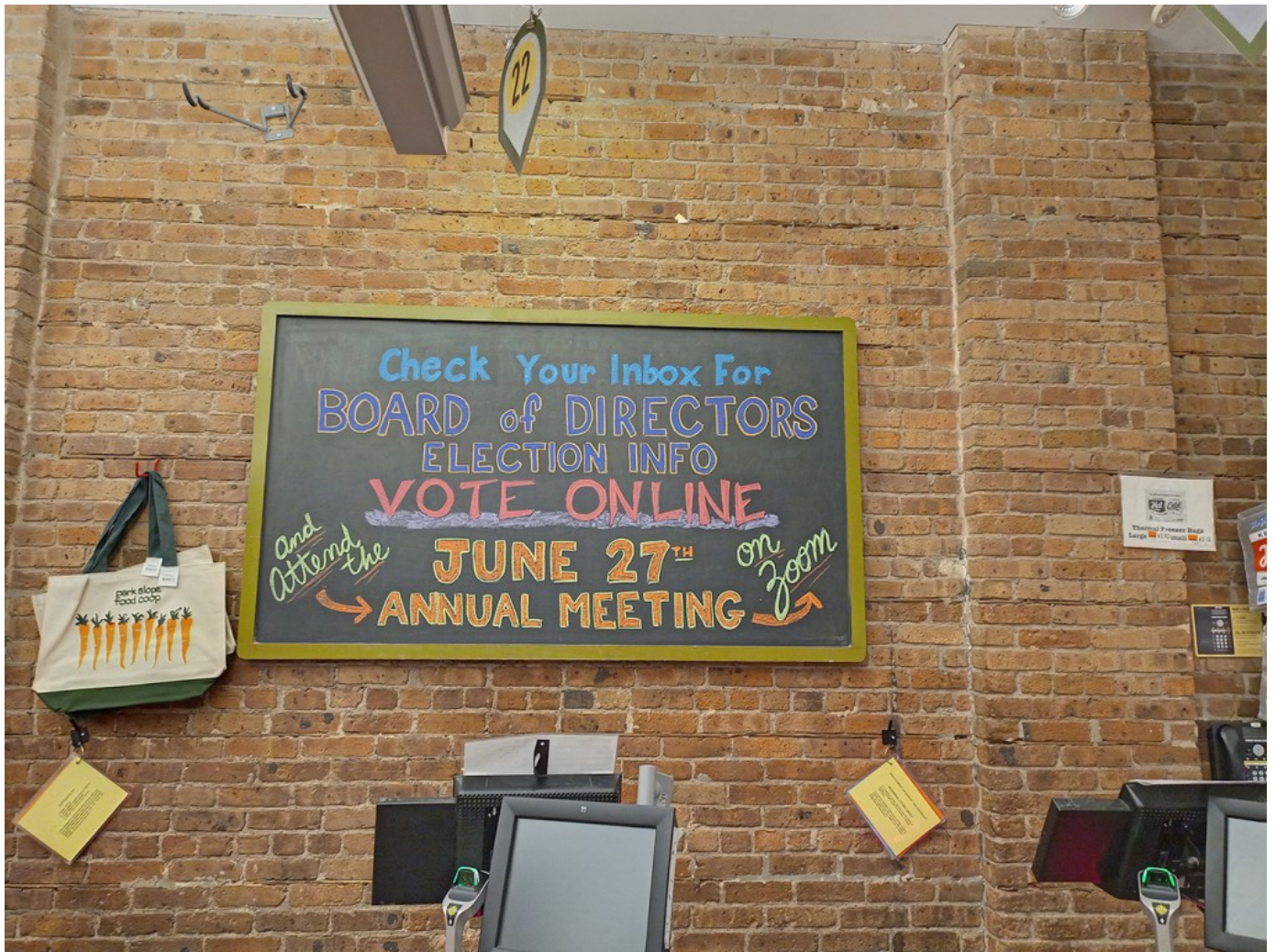
Shelf-Life & Storage Instructions	
Refrigerated Shelf-Life	24 days maximum upon first receipt
Frozen Shelf-Life	12 months minimum upon date of manufacture
Thawing Instructions	Keep frozen at or below 0°F (-18°C)
Coding Instructions	Thaw under refrigeration at or below 38°F (3.3°C)
Additional Instructions	Upon thaw, code package with 24 day Shelf Life
Additional Information	Shelf Life applies to unopened product. Once vacuum seal is open, best if used within 5 days.

Acme Item #	Customer Item #
5300ASC	NA
Package Coding	UPC
Lot#	783336102495
Item	GTW
Product	10763336202490
Case	19.9 cm (7.83 in)
Width	25.1 cm (9.88 in)
Length	1 cm (0.39 in)
Height	19.7 cm (7.75 in)
	24.0 cm (9.45 in)
	7.3 cm (2.87 in)

Case and Pallet Information					
Item	Units/Pack Quantity	Gross Weight (lbs)	Net Weight (lbs)	Pallet Co-b (FE-3)	Pallet Count
Case	6	2.31	1.5	732	24
				20	480

KOSHER
IGHS





MEAT IN THIS FREEZER HAS
BEEN MARKED DOWN 20%
or sometimes even more!

PLEASE

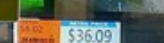
ONLY STOCK ALREADY-FROZEN
MEAT IN THIS CASE!

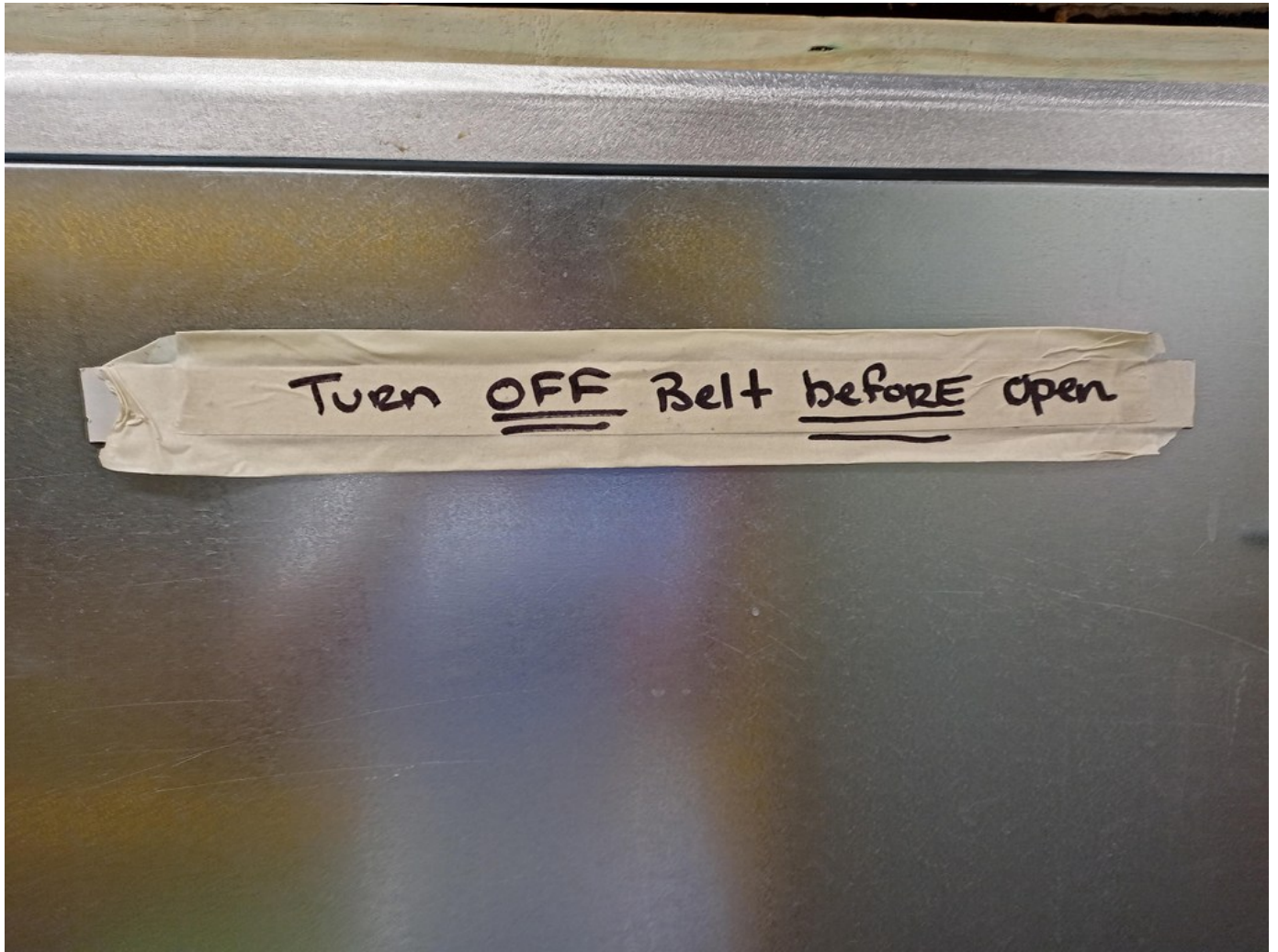
PLEASE MAKE SELECTION
BEFORE
OPENING FREEZER DOOR.

Holding door ajar
damages the freezer.

SPECIAL
SPECIAL
SALE
MEAT!!
Stock up!
(except Bones)

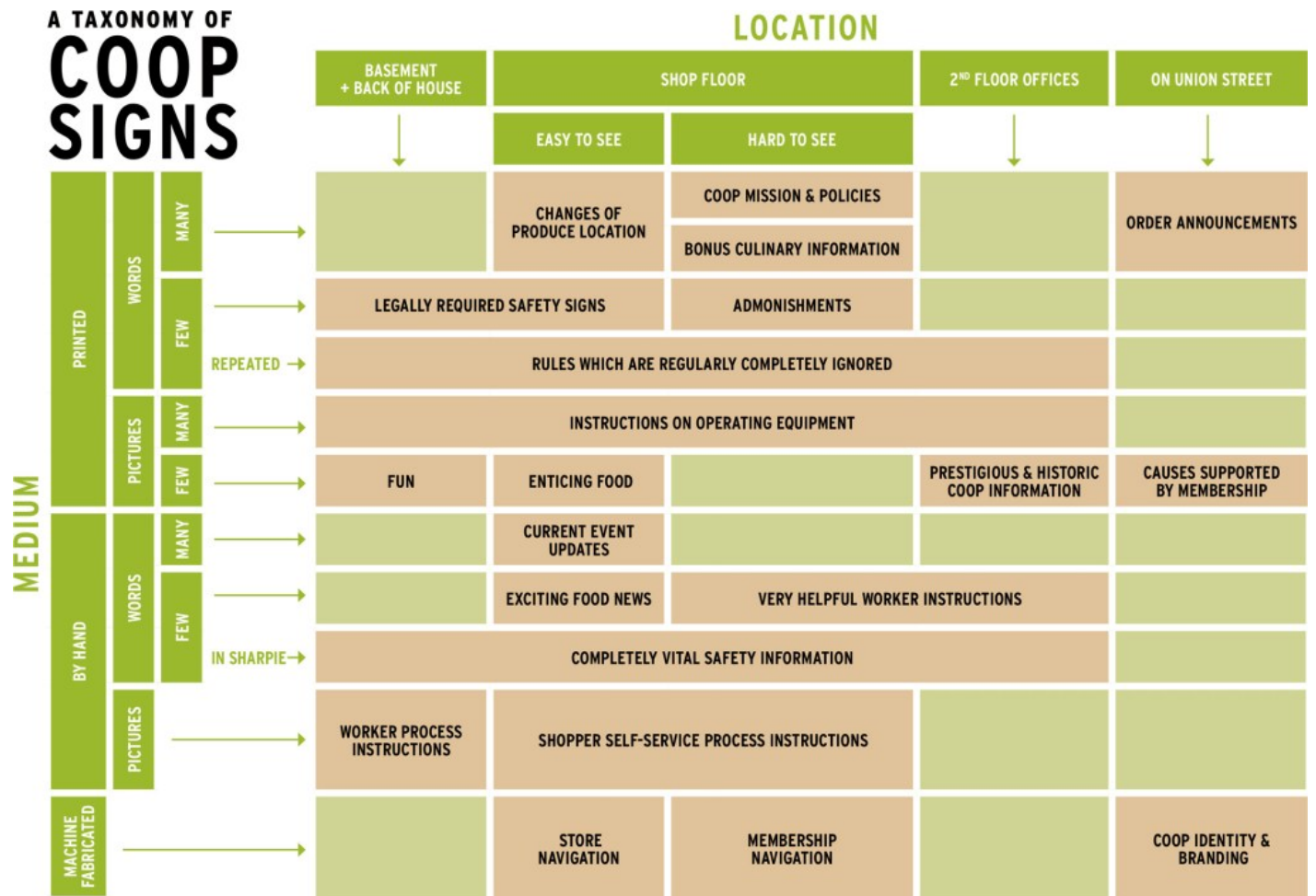
Beef Suet!





A TAXONOMY

Can we combine information from a sign's location and medium to better understand its purpose and target audience? Below is a proposed taxonomy to help confused Coop members. Yet, all good taxonomies should change and evolve as a field of study is explored. If you do not see your favorite type of sign, or disagree with the classification, please write to share your thoughts. If you are curious about what you see, then it's a sign!



Dan Bergsagel is a structural engineer from London. He likes to talk about the unexpected things hiding in plain sight.