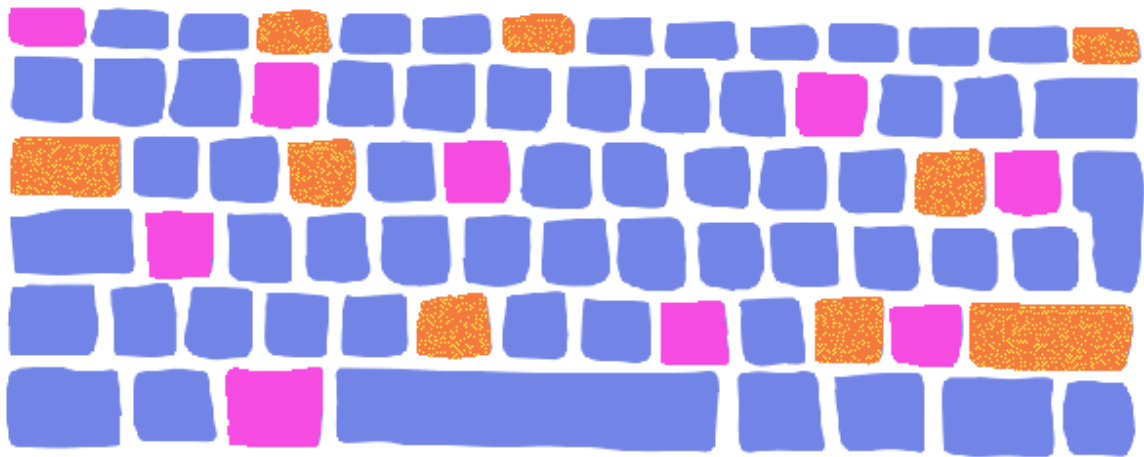


NOVEMBER 26, 2024

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



MEMBER INVOLVEMENT IN GC TRANSITION

Fellow Members,

We've been informed that Joe Holtz's current role will be split in two and that our Coop will hire two General Coordinators to replace him and that one will be GC for Finance, a new role.

I'm curious how this decision was made, and how this specific split was determined. As another member wrote recently, Joe's role has been enormous—hard to imagine how he did it all! At the same time, it seems that member involvement in the decision to reconfigure is vital and there are many ways that this job might be shared.

Members have a lot to offer as we make this transition. How can we be involved?

In cooperation,

Kathy McCullagh

FIGURING OUT TOGETHER HOW BEST TO FILL JOE HOLTZ'S ROLE

Dear Fellow Members,

In the November 5 issue of the *Gazette*, Elaine Roghanian wrote about member involvement in the search for Joe Holtz's replacement. I thank her for bringing this important issue to us and hope that we will soon hear from the Personnel Committee and the General Coordinators about a means for member-owners to share their thoughts about this important role.

While it would obviously be impossible for over 16,000 people to interview or screen candidates, surveying members about what they hope for in a new leader's vision, skills, experiences and strengths would offer a more informed perspective to a smaller search committee.

Hoping that we hear how to get involved in the search,

Thomas Cox

HYBRID MEETINGS

Dear Editor:

The October GM articulated another clear case in point for why hybrid GM meetings make the most sense for the membership. While the main agenda topic was around whether to trigger a referendum to allow all members to weigh in on mask wearing requirements on the shopping floor, the discussion at the GM was centered around the merits of mask wearing rather than whether a referendum was prudent.

I couldn't help but feel that most of us who voted in one particular direction of the referendum vote at the meeting would have felt differently about the merits of a referendum should we have felt differently about mask-wearing. That seems wrong, given that one's opinion on the merits of a referendum in a cooperative is not tied to his or her opinion on the mask wearing.

Hybrid meetings would go a long way towards resolving these conflicting forces once and for all. It would mitigate the opportunity for packing the vote on one side of the issue at a GM meeting, and would allow for more input on issues from the general electorate, which was the whole point of the referendum vote in the first place.

Allen Nisanyan

LET'S BE THE BEST SUPPORT ORGANIZATION WE CAN BE

Fellow Members,

This morning I saw a Coop post showing discounted generic products on sale. I appreciate the effort to offer more low-cost items, and hope it grows. As a nonprofit, we can help people who struggle with the high price of groceries as income disparity is likely to worsen.

When I joined the Coop in 1978, I was 23, a pregnant graduate student, scraping along with part-time work and food assistance for pregnant women and mothers via the WIC program. To this day, I appreciate that the Coop enabled us to eat fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains, when we could never have afforded them in the local health food store (Back to the Land) or found them at Key Food.

When I joined the Coop, my low income wasn't atypical. As Park Slope gentrified and became whiter, so did our Coop. Over time, we have added and added more higher-end products, meeting the demands of our demographics. In the 46 years since I joined, 30+ years of union-supported work in the public schools greatly improved my family's finances. Now, I want to give the Coop food help I had to others in need.

We can collaborate to attract and serve a wider community, including more people with low income. We could decrease the markup on basics, like discounted products, staples and some produce. We could lessen requirements for income verification, so people who don't have the documents for EBT could join the Coop and pay the reduced markup. More affluent members can anonymously help fund groceries for those in need. Let's work together to improve our Coop by making it more inviting for people with less money.

Cooperatively,

Alyce Barr

Editor's Correction on Above Letter: The Coop is not a nonprofit. We are a cooperative corporation. Whereas nonprofits are not required to pay income tax, we—as a cooperative corporation—are. For more information, see our certificate of incorporation here.

A NEW PUBLICATION BY AND FOR COOP MEMBERS

Dear Fellow Members,

Do you see our Coop as more than “just a grocery store?” Are you excited to delve into the PSFC’s role in an ecosystem of positive social action? Then you’ll want to check out *The Olive Press*, a zine from Park Slope Food Coop Members for Palestine. It’s available on our web site, psfc4palestine.org, and we distribute physical copies at each GM.

The Olive Press features Coop-specific articles centering our work within the food justice landscape. Other pieces connect our local effort for a free Palestine to a globe-spanning solidarity movement. In Issue #2, just out, a Coop member interviews his friend, a Palestinian farmer, about Gaza’s traditions of mutual support and resistance. Articles highlight a Queens-based “Keffiyeh Cup” soccer fundraiser for Gaza and the fraught history of Ireland’s support for Palestine. We cover the exciting vote by the Greene Hill Coop to join BDS. An anti-Zionist Jew and long-time PSFC member looks back on the rich history of our various boycotts as preserved in the Coop archive. There’s a recipe for rummaniyeh, a Palestinian dish served by our amazing Food Crew at a recent GM. A visit to the Hiroshima Peace Park prompts reflections on haunting parallels between the U.S. atomic bombings in 1945 and Israel’s bombardment of Gaza. There’s even a dose of Coop-specific humor in a “missed connections” feature portraying offbeat encounters that could take place in our crowded shopping aisles.

A unique mix of heartfelt testimony, fact-based analysis, must-read gossip and graph-

ic exuberance, *The Olive Press* is a window into a movement actively supported by thousands of Coop members (around 3,000 have already signed our petition!). Check it out online, or better yet, come to the next GM and snag your very own copy.

In cooperation,

Jan Clausen

MISSED MUSICAL CONNECTION

Dear Fellow Members:

I know this is not in the traditional form of submissions to the Park Slope Food Coop but I'm wondering if it's possible to print this missed connection:

Seeking the person behind the "Shtetlicious" Spotify account. I love your playlists and have been listening for years and have been dying to meet the mysterious entity behind the account!

There is a Park Slope Food Coop playlist (banging by the way) and my hope is this missed connection will get back to them somehow. I want to compliment you on your taste in music!

Sophie Edelhart

YES TO A BOYCOTT. NO TO ANTI-SEMITISM.

Fellow Members,

The last 3 letters to the editor in November 6 *Linewaiters'* grossly mischaracterized efforts to boycott targeted items connected to dubious parties operating in Israel.

Sabra Hummus is co-owned by the Strauss Group which gives financial support to unprincipled Israeli military outfits such as the Golani Brigade, which MSNBC reports “have been implicated in human rights violations against Palestinians”, and have “repeatedly been accused of abusing Palestinians in the occupied west bank”.

The British retailer Co-operative Group, in a statement about its ingredient sourcing wrote that they had “stopped sourcing any produce or own-brand products from the Israeli settlements”, saying “While there are many disputed territories throughout the world, there are currently only two examples of such illegal areas: the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian occupied territories and the Moroccan settlements in Western Sahara.”

Asserting that something must be done to end Israel’s decades-long dehumanization, open-air incarceration and now massacre and purposeful starvation of Palestinians is not an attack on Jewish people, but an opposition to the western colonial war machine encouraging and funding unprincipled behavior by Israeli leadership. A boycott is a non-violent effort to pressure our sibling nation of Israel to fall in line with international human rights norms.

I personally oppose all types of discrimination, hatred and microaggressions against any Jewish folks. I also stand with Jewish organizations such as Repair the World, Jewish Voices for Peace, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice and Rabbis for Ceasefire in demanding that the state of Israel end the current bombardment and starvation campaign being waged on the Palestinian people and act to promote equality and full human rights for all.

Extending peace and sibling-hood to all Coop members while standing by my convictions.

DEHUMANIZATION

Dear Gazette:

I write this on November 9, the morning after the pogrom in Amsterdam. Israeli soccer fans exiting an international soccer game were attacked by a coordinated mob. Dehumanization of the other makes the violent mob inevitable. To dehumanize requires a sustained process of repetition and indoctrination.

What does this have to do with the Coop?

For nearly a year, the Members 4 Palestine (M4P) have been active in the Coop. M4P is part of a larger movement using dehumanization as a tactic in a larger war against the collective existence of Jews. Over the last several months, in Brooklyn, we have seen numerous anti-Semitic attacks on Jews—assaults, stabbing, slashings, an attempted car ramming and vandalism. Attacks inspired and incited by same false rhetoric used by M4P.

Speech is the most human of all characteristics. M4P has ignored multiple invitations from Coop 4 Unity to dialog. While we can understand reluctance to engage in conversations that challenge a passionately held position, we cannot understand the refusal to meet with us within the context of being part of a shared enterprise “committed to diversity and equality.” We can only assume we are already dehumanized in their eyes.

No one in the Coop should ever be made to feel as if they don’t matter, as if their concerns are not valid. This is absolutely at the heart of the word “cooperation.” Mutual dignity and respect are the glue that holds the Coop together.

The antidote to extremism is curiosity. M4P, come and learn.

Barbara Mazor, Coop 4 Unity

CONCERNS ABOUT AMY'S KITCHEN'S PRODUCTS

Dear Coop Members:

At the January 31, 2023 GM, the Labor Committee presented a discussion item regarding Amy's Kitchen, which had engaged in anti-union activities and labor law violations. In response, some Coops boycotted Amy's and some organizations were calling for a boycott.

The dispute between the company and the employees was resolved on June 12, 2024. Amy's workers say conditions have improved, and ended the boycott. The Food Empowerment Project (FEP) said in a press release, "After eight months of discussions between Amy's Kitchen food line workers in Santa Rosa, California, representatives of FEP, and executives at Amy's Kitchen, agreements were made to not only improve the working conditions for the food line workers in Santa Rosa, but the company also acknowledged those who were abruptly let go at the now-closed Amy's Kitchen facility in San José."

In the meantime, construction on the proposed Amy's factory in Goshen, NY is going forward and set to begin between 2025 and 2027, though there still appear to be several issues that require resolution prior to construction.

All that being said, I have seen no updates in the *Gazette* about the resolution of this conflict. Perhaps the labor committee could comment on the matter and let the community know if we, the membership, may now in good faith buy Amy's products once again.

In Cooperation,

Stewart Pravda

WELL DONE

Dear Editor,

I congratulate the PSFC staff. Today I read the Food and Drug Administration's list of waffle products that were recalled because of a listeria threat. I observed that the Kodiak brand, which is one that I used to purchase, was on the list. The Coop stopped selling it weeks ago.

We all should appreciate the work of the staff in taking early action in removing the product from the freezer.

Irvin Schonfeld

HOORAY FOR THE COOP!!

Dear Members:

The over-capacity turnout at our last General Meeting was wonderful to see. As a member of the Coop for (yikes!) 30 years as of 2025 and as a frequent GM attendee for many of those years, the renewed interest in participation that we've seen in recent months is heartening indeed. Yes, some of it is due to the re-activation of efforts to get the Coop on board with the internationally recognized boycott of targeted Israeli products—and its own mission statement for that matter—but there's also re-

newed interest and active engagement by a large segment of our membership in taking care of each other through twice-weekly masking, getting still greater democratic participation through hybrid voting in the near future, the printing of a new educational (and often quite funny) 'zine called *The Olive Press*, etc. A vibrant and flourishing Coop is only possible with the passionate, respectful participation of its members. As a Coop elder I'm proud and grateful to belong to our beloved community.

Carol Wald