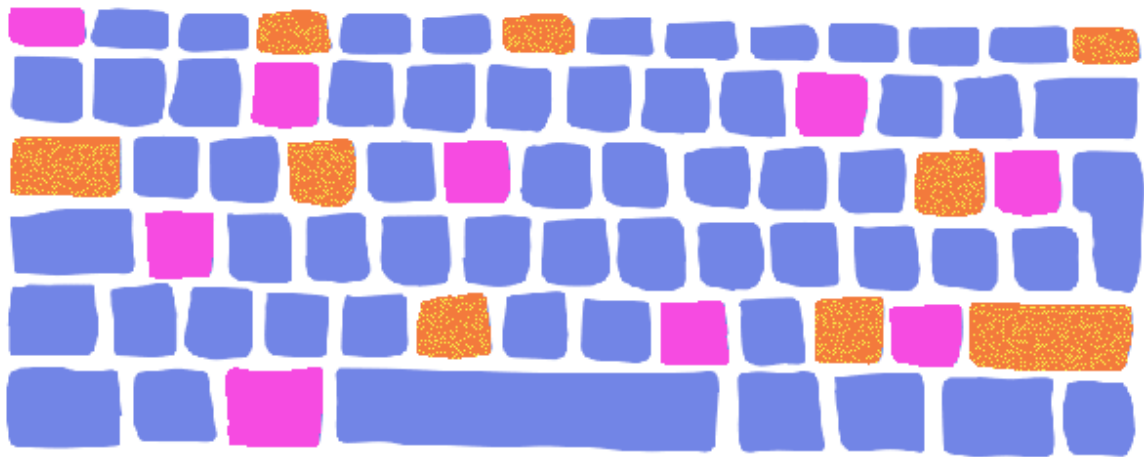


DECEMBER 17, 2024

December 18, 2024

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



ALARMING COST RISE AT THE COOP

Dear Fellow Members:

It was deeply distressing to learn that the Coop plans to return to what was supposed to be a temporary, pandemic gross margin of 25% after failing a very modest retreat to 24% (“Notes from the October General Meeting”). It seems clear that something permanent has shifted in the cost structure of this organization to the point of institutionalized bloat. If the Coop is to serve its core mission of affordable food then costs must come down permanently and a more serious examination of expenses must be undertaken.

The ability and willingness to do so should be prominent in the criteria for selecting Joe Holtz’s replacement. Unfortunately the selection process has thus far proceeded with a minimal role for members, whose focused interests in low margins differ from the interests of coordinators paid from the margin. Member approval was not sought to extend the “temporary” higher margin another year (essentially making it permanent) nor was any information or analysis of how we got to this point brought to the meeting where the decision was announced, judging from the *Gazette* report. Instead members received an update about another cost center in the works, home delivery.

A reckoning on expenses is inevitable. We should collectively summon the grit to face it now rather than later, when it will be much more difficult to do so. We as members must also be vocal when coordinators fail to consult us on important matters.

In cooperation,
Ryan Tate

Dear Ryan,

The Gazette Letters Editor asked the General Coordinators to respond to your letter.

At the March 2023 GM, members voted to give authority to the General Coordinators to annually set the markup in a range of 21-25%, based on the Coop’s financial situation. You can read the minutes from that meeting.

Second, at the October 2024 GM, Joe Holtz gave a detailed report of why the markup was going back up to 25%. This document, shown at the GM, provides the financial reasons the markup will be increasing to 25% on Feb 3, 2025 (the first day of the fiscal year 2026). Every member received this document, either by email or text, before the meeting.

The delivery service's cost to the Coop is pure speculation. In fact, we predict the opposite. However, since it hasn't started yet, no one knows what its effect on our finances will be. It's also important to note that the service will have a trial period, after which it will come to a GM for final approval or rejection by members.

*Sincerely,
The General Coordinators*

IT STARTED WITH WORDS

Dear Editor:

In 2021, Holocaust survivors began a campaign to show how that genocide “started with words.”

The current epidemic of antisemitic and anti-Zionist speech, and subsequent global escalation of antisemitic violence, echo that phrase. We are witnessing the latest provocation for the historically recurring, multi-millennial expulsions and genocidal attacks on Jews, in this instance for defending themselves against their terrorist enemies who have declared their genocidal “intent,” intent being required to prove genocide.

According to *Gazette* policy, letters cannot be “hateful, needlessly inflammatory, discriminatory libelous, personal attacks....” Apparently, this principle applies only to at-

tacks on individuals, not religious, national or ethnic groups, though I'm certain such sustained attacks on any groups other than Jews and Israel would never appear in the *Gazette*. (A letter of mine was rejected as "inflammatory" for using the word "Arab" as a descriptive, non-pejorative term, and Palestinians identify as Arabs).

For years the editors have intentionally or thoughtlessly ignored their policy that letters must be written with "accurate, attributed, easily verifiable statements of facts separated from opinions." If this is true, why publish a letter alleging "haunting parallels" between the nuclear attack on Hiroshima and Israel's actions in Gaza? Israel is widely recognized for making unprecedented wartime efforts to avoid civilian casualties, undermined by Hamas operating within civilian infrastructure.

Another allegation is "purposeful starvation" of Palestinians. Note that Hamas is known to frequently hijack food provided by Israel and intended for civilians.

As to calls for a ceasefire, it was during a ceasefire that Hamas committed its brutality on Oct 7, 2023.

Sadly, I don't expect this letter to have any impact on the editors, Board of Directors, Diversity Committee or BDS activists. This Coop is what it is, a community lacking ethical agency and commitment to its principle of inclusiveness for *all* members.

Sylvia Lowenthal

HYBRID MEETINGS: MAKING A BAD SYSTEM WORSE

Dear Editor:

The Coop's town hall type GM was appropriate for a simpler time. We were small, intimate, and running the store was relatively simple. Now it is more complex. The Coop

manages dozens of employees, pension and health plans, reserve funds, property, etc. It is a \$60M/year business.

Our current system allows any member to introduce any agenda item, and it must be scheduled for a GM. There is no obligation to provide an impact or cost/benefit analysis. The presentations are brief and there is no opportunity for prepared counter responses. Instead, we have ad hoc responses often based more on feelings than on facts. All present members vote, and the Board of Directors, by tradition, mirrors the meeting proceedings thereby making the meeting decision official and legal.

The system allows for abuse and irresponsible decision making, such as when an update to the personnel policy was rejected. The hybrid meeting would amplify these deficiencies.

Aside from the recklessness of voting to change the bylaws without a plan on how to carry out hybrid meetings and taking on additional expenses when the Coop sales are not meeting costs, there does not appear to be a demand to attend GM's that would warrant holding hybrid meetings, except for the push to have the Coop endorse the BDS movement, and with it endorse the Hamas war against Israel's existence as a Jewish and democratic state. Anyone who believes the former does not include the latter has not done due diligence. The BDS faction has been very public about promoting hybrid meetings as a means to hold a BDS vote. A vote for hybrid is a vote for BDS. BDS will destroy our Coop. Please vote against hybrid meetings.

Barbara Mazor

BDS IS ALREADY HURTING OUR FINANCES

Dear Membership,

BDS has already damaged PSFC's balance sheet and threatens staff pensions. Just imagine the ruin if we ever vote them a place at our table.

At the October General Meeting, the financial report stated awareness that people aren't shopping due to political "disputes." I am one of those people. It's my coop and I'm disgusted every time I see BDS openly attempt to dictate what I buy, what I believe and how to behave politically.

Frequent stops and socializing once translated into me spending over \$1,000 a month. Since March, I don't crack \$350. I just get essentials, and I'm out. Coming up is our ultimate protest: not shopping altogether yet refusing to relinquish membership.

I join Jews, Christians and Muslims in resisting this attack on our Coop, a growing groundswell ever since Hamas broke the truce on October 7, 2023, raping, kidnapping and murdering 1,200 Jews and Muslims of every age.

But what about, "I'm Jewish so it's OK," or, "I'm anti-Zionist, not anti-Jew"? My reply is, "Nope, not buying that either." History looks brutal for the minuscule, misinformed Jewish groups who initially supported the Germans politically and at concentration camps, or spied for Stalin. And public anti-Zionist figures worldwide are open about their violent intentions towards (yeah, right) Zionists.

BDS goes beyond purging certain kinds of Jews from PSFC and ignoring how Palestinians were always more terrified of Hamas than the IDF. This is 1930's level bigotry and whatever term passes for Fascism on the Left.

It literally nauseates me now to visit. I imagine that titillates some keffiyeh-clad members, but look at them and ask yourself, "What's funny about ruining this place?"

BDS needs the Coop, not the other way around.

Jesse Rosenfeld

HEALTH INSURANCE FOR FREELANCERS

Dear PSCF Community,

As a freelancer for more than 10 years, health insurance has been a real struggle both in terms of cost, coverage and network. I found Opolis in 2023 and enrolled in 2024 and am happy to say I will renew for 2025. I felt other freelancers would want to know about this option for health insurance. The fact that Opolis is also an insured coop is a double bonus for the PSFC community. I can attest you won't find cheaper and better health insurance on the open market.

Thanks,

Johanna Kolodny