

IN MEMORY OF DAN CLEARWATER GROSS

September 16, 2025



Illustration by Olexa Hewryk

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*By Thomas Rayfiel*

Dan Clearwater Gross, a Coop member who was heavily involved in composting, both in Park Slope and other parts of Brooklyn, died unexpectedly on July 14. He was 40 years old. Dan joined the Coop in 2010, left in 2013 then rejoined in 2022. Dan's partner, Alexia Cohen, describes how "for the past two-plus years we did the composting shift together on Saturdays at the Old Stone House community garden. We hauled and processed the compost in the garden. We loved our composting shift so much. We often did it while playing music on our speaker, chopping the compost to the rhythm of the music. Little kids would stop by and ask what we were doing. They loved participating in the process for a couple of minutes. We had nice interactions with all sorts of folks in the park. Dan was a socialist, and the Coop aligned with his values."

Sherry Showell, squad leader of the Composting Squad, remembers Dan as “a fascinating and enthusiastic person. I filed it in the back of my brain to try and introduce him to my son. I thought they had a lot of things in common—hands-on building, inventing, physics. This just is too sad. He really impressed me.”

Dan was also on the board of BK Rot, a bike-powered, fossil fuel-free food waste hauling and compost service that operates at the local level, enlisting community members. In the photo accompanying this obituary, he is standing in front of a compost sifter he and Alexia designed and fabricated.

During his previous time as a member, Dan was on the Commando Squad, an elite cleaning unit that met once every 12 weeks and gave the Coop a deep cleaning on Sunday nights from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Dan’s professional life was varied. At the time of his death, he was Senior Director of Membership for the Newlab Brooklyn in the Navy Yards, a company devoted to helping startup technologies gain a foothold in the commercial world. Previously, he was a scientific instrument maker. He also collaborated with artists to create various art pieces and installations.

He is survived by Alexia Cohen, his life partner, his parents Penni Harmon and Alan Gross, his brothers Eliot Harmon and Mowgli Holmes, and his sisters Crystal Clearwater Gross and Lily Harmon.

*Coop member Thomas Rayfiel is the author of eight novels. He has also written “living obituaries” for VICE TV.*