

SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

September 16, 2025

Letters to the Editor



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIEL WILLOW

ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSION AND VOTING (THANKS + UPDATE)

To the editors,

I wanted to thank Membership Coordinator Jason Weiner for shouting out my proposal

during his July GM presentation!

As a quick overview, my proposal (agenda item #915) is to make the decision-making process at the Coop more convenient and accessible by:

1. Setting up an online forum to discuss agenda items ahead of GMs.
2. Having an “early voting” option for agenda items.

For full details of the proposal and a feedback form, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/psfc-online-forum>

A member who found my proposal through Jason’s presentation suggested setting up a group to collaborate on the proposal, so I’ve created a Discord server for folks interested in getting involved. I will send an invite link for the server to those who indicate in the feedback form that they are interested in helping out.

Thanks again to Jason and to anyone who takes the time to consider my proposal!

Sincerely,
Yejia Chen

A More Democratic Coop Is Possible

Dear Coop members,

For those who don’t know, a fantastically thorough and well-researched proposal for online asynchronous discussion and voting (“async” for short) was recently submitted to the Agenda Committee. See Yejia’s letter above for an introduction!

Online asynchronous discussion is the only format that would give every member the opportunity to voice their opinion. Even hybrid discussions, despite increasing attendance and voting, would still hit their time limit as most in-person ones do.

Async also enables deliberate, productive conversation between members, truly maximizes voter turnout and complements GMs regardless of their format.

Plus, async could be implemented without a bylaws amendment, by considering online votes to be mail ballots or advice for the next board meeting (these methods might require legal confirmation), or by having the board approve accepting online votes ahead of each upcoming meeting.

And async would be implemented after the Coop resolves the already (briefly) scheduled boycott items, so members can discuss it without fearing ulterior motives from its supporters or opponents.

Despite the recent conflict in the Coop, I don't think it's controversial to say that serious flaws in our decision-making procedures have been exposed (e.g., board norms, venue scheduling). I hope members on both sides of the boycott and hybrid issues will read the proposal and submit their feedback (positive or negative) and thoughts on Coop democracy.

With member input and support, I'm optimistic async could translate this all-time high interest in Coop governance into a more engaged, collaborative membership. If you want to test it out for yourself, Yejia has set up a sort of async "free sample" by creating the online comment board and Discord group—check it out and bring your big ideas for the Coop!

In cooperation,
Tyler Yandrofski

The Newly Minted Plastics Reduction Committee Is Ready To Go

Dear Coop Community,

We, the members of the new Plastics Reduction Committee, wish to thank everyone who turned out for the General Meeting on July 29 and voted overwhelmingly to support our proposal for formal committee status. For those who couldn't make it, we invite you to find out what all the excitement is about through our Committee Fact Sheet, available for your perusal [here](#).

Those of you whose memories do not scroll back as far as the 1950s—most of you, right?—might find it difficult to imagine a world without plastic. We know that this work is going to take a lot of imagination, creative thinking and engaging with the Coop community.

We're excited to roll up our sleeves and get to work. It is our goal to improve options at the Coop to meet the needs of members who are concerned about the health and environmental impacts of plastic food packaging. We also aim to educate those who want to learn more about these impacts. We'll work toward these goals while being guided by the collaborative, affordable and healthy spirit of the Coop.

We welcome your participation through feedback. You may reach us at reduce.plastic.psfc@gmail.com.

With hopes for a healthier, happier world for you and your children,

The Plastics Reduction Committee

Lesley Broder, Ricki Jaeckel, Zoë Kaplan-Lewis, Jessica Roff, Anne Schoeneborn, Abigail Shelton, Matthew Spencer, Lois Wilcken

Toward a More Inclusive Coop

Coop Community,

When the Equity, Access and Community Committee surveyed members, I reflected on how, during my 47-year membership, our Coop had become increasingly whiter and wealthier. So much has changed about the nature of what we sell... more and more luxury goods, no self-bagged bulk, fewer items that would appeal to those with limited income.

What would it take to make the Coop more diverse, more welcoming to people who cannot afford much of what we sell or might feel uncomfortable in our current store? What would it take to get the word out to potential members who don't know someone already in the Coop, who don't travel in similar social circles, who don't speak English as a first language?

We could contact community organizations, like CHiPS, the Center for Family Life and the Red Hook Initiative, asking for their input on how to do better outreach to their communities. We could schedule targeted info sessions and open houses.

We also need to ask ourselves, what would I be willing to do to make this Coop more inclusive, more reflective of a broader cross-section of New Yorkers? Would I be willing to pay a larger markup so that people who need financial support could pay a lower markup? Would I be willing to see fewer luxury products on the shelves and more inexpensive basics? What could I do to make people from other communities feel welcome?

There are so many ways we could evaluate our Coop: How many cheeses do we sell? How many craft beers? How many products in plastic clamshells? Who can afford to be a member? How do we care for the most vulnerable among us?

How do we open our door in a way that lets more people in?

We have so much; let's share.

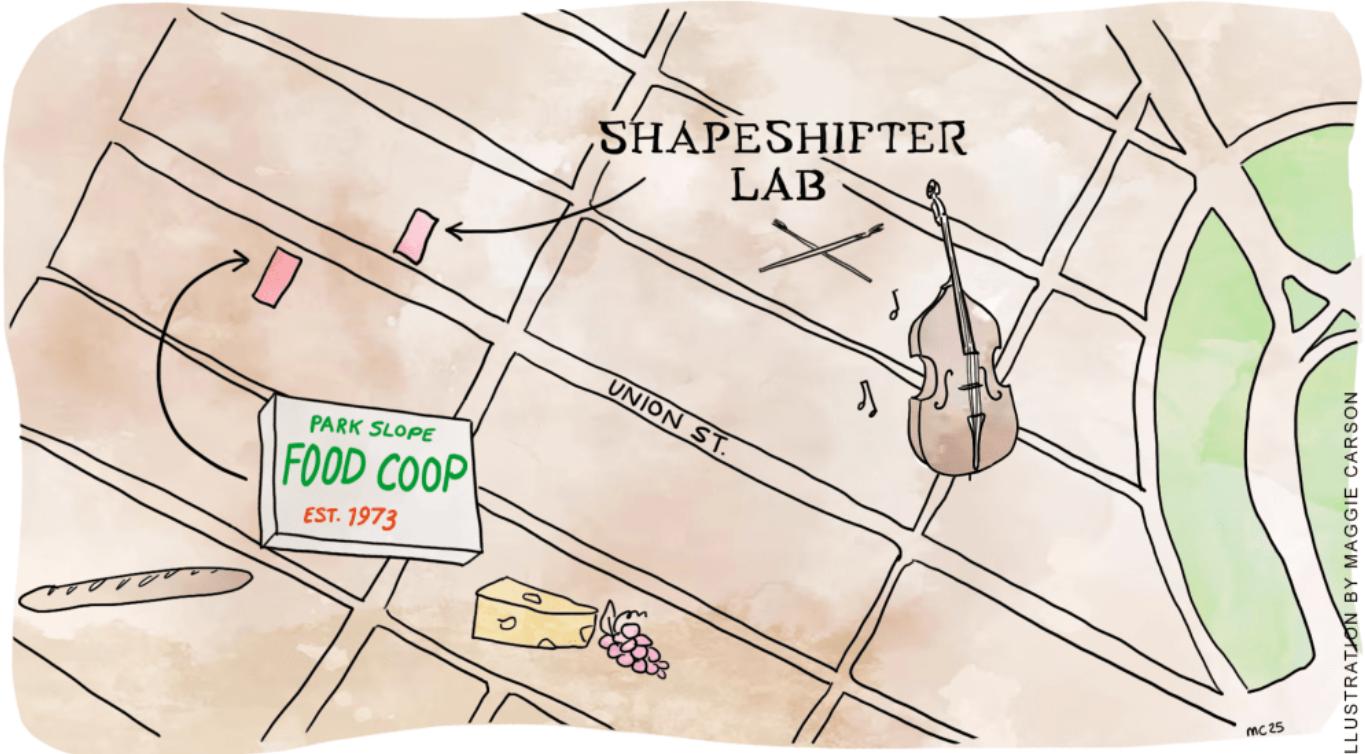
Sincerely,

Alyce Barr

ShapeShifter Offers Art, Jazz and Community — Right Across the Street

To the editor:

How many members of our Coop know what a treasure of artistic value is just across the street at 837 Union Street? It's called ShapeShifter Lab "Brooklyn Music and Arts Space." I admit I'm writing this with a personal motive. Right now and until the end of October, there's an art exhibition sponsored by Good Neighbors of Park Slope (GNPS), an organization that many PSFC members are a part of.



GNPS is an all-volunteer, nonprofit, aging-in-place organization open to residents of Park Slope and surrounding areas who are age 55 and over. Our goal is to create a network of members to make life in our neighborhood easier and more fulfilling, while maintaining our autonomy and quality of life in our homes.

Back to the art exhibition at ShapeShifter, there are several exhibitors who are PSFC members. I won't name them. You have to go see their art! Hours at ShapeShifter are quite "shifty." When there's an event, they are open. When it's open, the moment you walk in, and even before you open the front door, you will see two amazing paintings staring you in the face. They are by our mom, Florence Siegel (1921-2014). Although she never got to be a member of PSFC or GNPS, she did live in my South Slope house for her last three years.

So if you like jazz and/or art and want to support local artists, please go check out ShapeShifter and the current art exhibition!

Stop in one hour before each event on their schedule to take a look to find times to go.

Martha Siegel and Loren Siegel

Your Vote Is Meaningless Here

Dear Members,

Welcome back from summer vacation. Coop governance is cracking.

The August General Meeting (GM) resulted in the Board of Directors unilaterally ignoring membership input and announcing their intention to fast-track hybrid meetings. Remember, we had a Coop-wide referendum defeating the idea.

So now your vote means nothing.

How was this allowed to happen? At the April 2025 GM, the BDS faction arranged for the hostile takeover of the GM. The BDS-friendly Board then introduced a proposal to hold said rejected referendum. This opened the door to your now effective irrelevance.

Most of our Board supports boycotting Israel, and their representative global BDS movement openly support Hamas, who identify kidnapping and rape as resistance. Hybrid voting is their stated method to achieve a boycott that the majority of our members don't want. Your vote, and our cooperative model of governance, is the price you pay. The fear of speaking out against a divisive faction that in effect supports a genocidal fascist terrorist group is palpable. It is indifference, it is cowardice, and one day too late you will have always been against it.

In protest I retract my extra Covid-era investment. I call upon membership to follow my lead and join me at coop4unity@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Jesse Rosenfeld

On Hybrid Meetings and the BDS Debate

Dear Coop members,

The Board of Directors has again acted outside our Coop's longstanding tradition of basing decisions on member votes. Our *Guide to the General and Annual Meeting* states clearly that the Board votes only on issues already decided by the membership.

The current issue is hybrid meetings, and the push is complicated by attempts from Members for Palestine (M4P) to link the Coop to the BDS Movement. Whatever one's views on technology or accessibility, we must not confuse a governance question with an outside political campaign.

We must disentangle hybrid meetings from BDS.

BDS is not a neutral, nonviolent human rights initiative. Its leadership praised the October 7 attacks and remains tied to groups that promote violence. It does not improve life for Palestinians and offers no vision of peaceful coexistence. Instead, it seeks to delegitimize Israel and normalizes hostility toward Jews.

In June's record-turnout election, members decisively rejected the two identified pro-BDS candidates. M4P has failed to significantly increase the number of votes in their favor from 2024, demonstrating limited support. Coop members voted to remain focused on food, affordability and cooperative values. The membership has rejected BDS.

Hybrid meetings deserve careful study on their own terms. Committees could explore feasibility, technology and costs, then report back for a membership vote. That process respects our governance model. But the Coop should firmly close the door on BDS resolutions. Continuing to entertain them only wastes energy and divides members.

The General Coordinators, Chair Committee and Agenda Committee are responsible for stewarding the Coop. They have every reason to declare, “The Coop will no longer entertain motions related to BDS.” If they won’t, the only explanation is a lack of desire or a lack of will.

Sincerely,
Barbara Mazor

Remember What Never Again Truly Means

Dear Coop Members:

The PSFC I joined nearly 30 years ago was one I’ve always believed in. The sense of diversity, equity and inclusion defines our solidarity. Yes, DEI is a very good thing, unlike the lies and horror Nazis like Trump are pushing.

But in my entire life, I have always believed that those of us who value these principles share a common bond in the rejection of genocide. Community is always fraught with internal disagreements and dissension. But I draw the line at those who feel, and often quite belligerently, that Israel has a right to commit war crimes, ethnic cleansing and—as Jewish scholars and Shoah survivors have written, among others—quite clearly genocide by the far right-wing Likud government.

There is NEVER a justification for genocide. People who are blasé or supportive of this

should be ashamed to walk into the Coop. I think they should reconsider their views and if they are unable to recognize that butchering and maiming tens of thousands of babies, children, aid workers, journalists, families and starving them to death is wrong, perhaps they should not be a part of the PSFC community. I invite them to shop elsewhere and end their membership.

To those struggling and open to changing their views, painful as it may be—I respect and honor this profound moment. Remember what Never Again truly means.

For we ALL, living in the U.S. must face the struggle of a nation built on slavery, racism and genocide. Our world hurtles down the highway of self-inflicted extinction if we do not end global heating. Middle East and Gaza gas fields motivate much of “Western” support of genocide in order to secure yet more foul fuels with which to burn our only planet to death.

Sincerely,
George Carter

Toward a More Democratic Future Coop

Fellow Members,

The last Board election is behind us, we have a new General Coordinator and democratic practices are challenged everywhere we look. We have a unique opportunity to reflect on the recent Board election and strengthen our democracy here in our coop. One concrete step we can take: honestly repair harm done when former GC Joe Holtz sent a personal email to the full membership, taking advantage of his access to the Coop email list and directing members' votes in the upcoming election.

The Personnel Committee, General Meeting and Board of Directors need to take ac-

tion to prevent future abuse of the email list and substantially biased GC writing in the *Gazette*. They can ensure that, as a retired GC, Joe Holtz is entitled only to write individual letters to the *Gazette*, like any other member, and not those that express any favored position of power. Though Joe is now retired, he should be informed in writing that his past actions were inappropriate and unacceptable.

Coop Management and the Personnel Committee owe a public apology, in the *Gazette* (and in email), to Taylor Pate and Dan Kaminsky, who were vilified by Joe Holtz. They can acknowledge that it is likely that Joe's email impacted the election, and while we are not doing the election over, we must take steps to make sure nothing like this ever happens again.

In cooperation and for democracy,
Kathy McCullagh

Call for Grassroots Organizing While Working Towards Boycott

Dear Coop members:

I've just returned to Brooklyn from a year spent out of the country. Active in Palestine solidarity work before my departure, I came back to a sickening sense of *déjà vu*. Every day brings new Israeli atrocities in Gaza, atrocities that are fully underwritten by the U.S. government using our tax dollars. Meanwhile, even as manufactured famine rages, our Coop still hasn't made the decision to boycott Israeli products. In fact, despite a wildly successful petition campaign, we haven't even managed to take the basic democratic step of putting the issue to a vote.

As a long-time and proud Coop member, I feel both frustrated and ashamed, and I know these feelings are widely shared by other members. Is this really who we are as a Coop? What does it mean if we can't do the minimum to uphold our mission state-

ment promise to avoid complicity in exploitative practices?

In the face of these sentiments, we should not give up, as I won't. This is the time for creative approaches. I call on my fellow members to join me to advocate for justice for Palestine in all the ways we can think of. Here are a few examples: talking to people about Palestine as we wait on the checkout line, publicizing which Israeli products are currently being sold so that shoppers can avoid them, speaking out against genocide at GM Open Forums, identifying explicitly as PSFC for Palestine at marches and protests, and building an alliance with the folks at Greene Hill Coop, which voted to join the BDS movement last year. Yes, we urgently need to enact an official boycott—but while we work to make that happen, let's be working toward a sturdy grassroots culture of Palestine solidarity at the PSFC.

Sincerely,

Kumru Toktamis

Member since 1993

Let's Organize to Rid Our Coop of the Political Operatives

To the Members:

Our board is now acting independently, and their strategies to re-create our Coop and interfere with our structure and the staff is in full swing. They think they are justified in their actions and because they are legally our board, the legal architecture gives them an advantage.

Every year there is a board election and board members' terms are three years. I propose we organize with one another now so we can work to eventually rid our board of members with a political agenda.

If you are interested in doing this, please email me at PoliticsOut@proton.me.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Tobier

Peaches

Dear Coop staff:

Can you please investigate and report on the situation with peaches this year at the Coop? They have not been very good. I thought it might be just my perception, but I have asked friends and everyone says they feel the peaches have been terrible this year. Why? Are we doing something different with buying or storing? Was it just a bad year for peaches? What gives? I look forward to peach season all year. This year has been a disappointment.

Sincerely,
Aida Stoddard

Produce Buyer Cecelia Rembert responds with insights into the Peach Process and this year's crop: The current produce buying team at the Coop has been buying fruits and vegetables for the Coop since 2017, and our produce department overall has had very little turnover in this time. We are storing peaches the same way we always do: they are never refrigerated at the Coop, whether on the shopping floor or in the basement. We have been ordering from the same suppliers and growers, mostly. Our conventional peaches are generally Southern U.S. in the early season. In organic, we try to get Watsonia (fourth-generation family farm in South Carolina), and in conventional we try to get Big Smile (also a family- run commercial farm in South Carolina).

We did find both variations of South Carolina peaches to be inconsistent in quality; a good lot would be followed by one that was mealy. My research into the South Carolina peach season this year reports a lot of cool temperatures and rain in the early summer, which maybe impacted the harvest quality? We know that mealiness is generally a result of “chill damage” from refrigerating peaches at any point post-harvest— maybe it can also be caused by cool weather? It sometimes takes us a few days to fully assess how a current lot of peaches we have received is ripening, because they come in to us hard. We pivoted in and out of South Carolina peaches several times in the early summer, trying to catch different varieties and lots. As a result of the inconsistency, we pivoted earlier than usual out of conventional South Carolina peaches to New Jersey peaches (Fralinger’s) as soon as they became available.

But, from mid-July onwards we have been selling local IPM yellow and white peaches from a network of local farms and we have found those mostly very good. And it was a wonderful nectarine season!