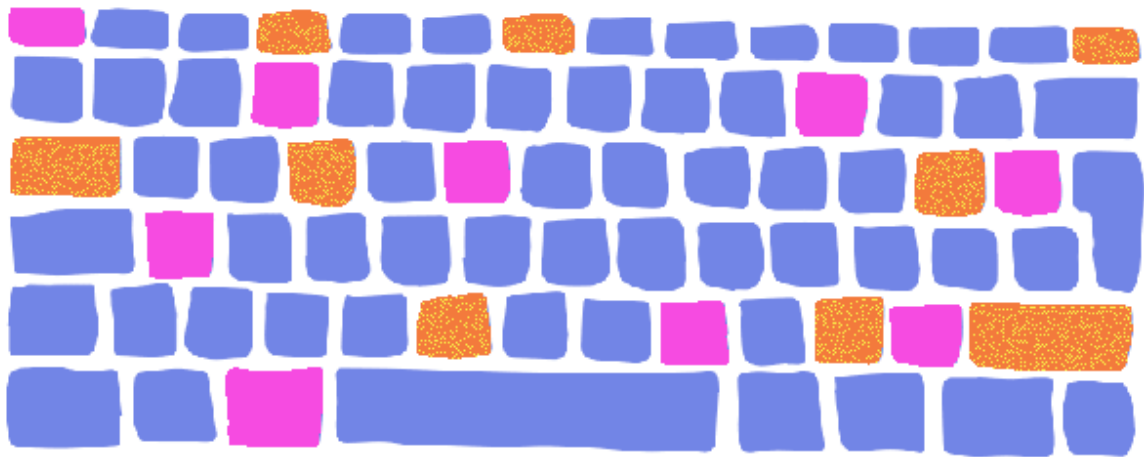


NOVEMBER 18, 2025

November 18, 2025

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



CONGRATULATIONS COOP RUNNERS

Dear Members,

Congratulations to Coop members who completed the New York City Marathon on Sunday, Nov. 2. The marathon travels through all five boroughs from its start in Staten Island to the finish in Central Park, passing nearly right by the Coop on its route in Brooklyn along Fourth Ave. On Marathon Sunday, the whole city embraces the spirit of generosity, cheerfulness and bonhomie that I hope we all bring to our community year-round. I wish you all a speedy recovery, and I do believe we carry epsom salt in aisle four to help you along!

Barry Leybovich

FOOD COOP PRODUCT REVIEW

Dear Gazette and PSFC,

I think it would be highly useful for Coop members if the *Gazette* had a product review section with reviews provided by members. I have recommendations, good and bad, that I'd like to share, and would like to hear others' recommendations as well. It would also make members aware of products they didn't even know we sold—like cat-butt magnets or drying racks for plastic bags. Thanks!

Sincerely,
Michael Katz

DISCLOSE THE LEGAL OPINION NOW—"CONFIDENTIALITY" IS NOT A VALID EXCUSE

Dear Coop members:

The topic of the alleged legal opinion (a) stating that hybrid meetings can be implemented without amending the bylaws and (b) validating the practice of allowing the board to vote on matters that do not appear before it as member-initiated agenda items has been an ongoing topic of discussion. (See voluntary article, June 24, 2025, and letters to the editor and General Coordinator responses on Aug. 26 and Oct. 28, 2025.)

The General Coordinators have stated that the legal opinion is not in writing. On the basis of 20 years in commercial litigation in which I reviewed and drafted legal opinion letters, I say that that proposition is literally incredible. It calls into question (a) what question the GCs presented to the unidentified attorney(s) who rendered an opinion and (b) whether the attorney(s) examined the governing documents of the Coop and conducted an evaluation of the events of April and June 2025 in the context of New York law. The decision to change Coop practice on the magnitude of what is happening without a proper legal opinion is plausibly a breach of fiduciary duty.

In the Aug. 26 issue of the *Linewaiters' Gazette* I called for disclosure of the fabled legal opinion. GC Joe Szladek responded there that the opinion is confidential. That response is not valid. No law is stopping management from disclosing to the membership whatever shred of writing shows the legal reasoning—which they should do for an opinion that supposedly legitimizes the end of the Coop's historical governance structure and calls into question whether the Coop's bylaws and guidelines mean anything. Even if the legal opinion were confidential, nothing prevents management from making a limited waiver of confidentiality with whatever redactions are necessary.

Disclose the opinion now.

Sincerely,
Noah Potter

Editors Note:

Noah sent a version of this letter to the LWG on Aug. 29, 2025, for inclusion in the Sept. 16, 2025 issue of the LWG, though it was not published. Noah intended to deliver a version of the letter to the Chair Committee at the Sept. 30 meeting but he was sick that night and, at his request, a fellow member delivered the letter to the Chair Committee to be read (in accordance with the meeting rules). The Chair Committee did not read the revised letter due to his absence. The report on the meeting in the LWG noted a comment during the meeting that he should submit the letter to the LWG.

General Manager Response to Noah Potter's Letter

Dear Coop Members,

Following the April 29 Board meeting, the General Coordinators sought legal guidance from attorneys with extensive experience in cooperative governance. This was not a request for a single, formal legal “opinion,” but part of an ongoing and broader dialogue about the Coop’s governance practices and legal compliance. We have consulted these attorneys numerous times to clarify questions of authority, process and best practices under cooperative law.

We approach these consultations thoughtfully and thoroughly—asking questions from multiple angles to test the consistency and reliability of the attorneys’ guidance. Our goal is to ensure that all perspectives and member concerns are represented in how we frame our inquiries, and that the resulting advice supports sound, transparent decision-making.

Based on advice from the Coop’s governance attorneys, and as previously shared with members:

- The Board has the authority under the bylaws to take the action it did on April 29.
- A bylaw amendment is not required to allow hybrid General Meetings.

Maintaining confidentiality in communications with legal counsel is both standard and essential. This confidentiality protects the Coop's ability to seek candid, independent advice and to meet its fiduciary responsibilities to the membership. While we share the conclusions of our legal consultations when they directly affect Coop operations or members—as we have done here—the underlying attorney-client communications are privileged and not disclosed. This approach is consistent with standard practices across cooperatives, nonprofits and other member-owned organizations.

Respectfully,
Joe Szladek
General Manager

I MET WITH A SAILOR FROM THE GLOBAL SUMUD FLOTILLA

Dear members,

On Friday, Oct. 10, 2025, at my local coffee shop in Gowanus, I met with a sailor from the Global Sumud Flotilla, an international civil-society maritime initiative aimed at challenging the Israeli blockade of Gaza. This person across the table from me shared that they were only a few days removed from having been taken from international waters at gunpoint by Israeli forces while attempting to deliver humanitarian aid to Palestinians, a mission they described as a moral and legal obligation under the Genocide Convention.

I was struck by this person's bravery and could not help but reflect on the inertia of our cooperative over the last two years to not even table a vote for the boycott of Israeli goods. Have we become so numb that we fail to recognize the humanity of Palestinians? A better Coop and world are possible, just as the many boats sailing toward Gaza have inspired so many to believe.

Sincerely,
Damien Neva