

PRINT 'GAZETTE' FEASIBILITY STUDY COMMITTEE SEEKS MEMBERS

January 7, 2025



The *Linewaiters' Gazette* is the heartbeat of our community.

COVID necessitated a transition to a purely online format for the decades-old institution. Now as we emerge from the pandemic stronger than ever, the store is feeling more and more sterile and members are interested in bringing back the energy and livelihood of a print edition.

At the December GM, members voted to create a year-long committee dedicated to researching and understanding opportunities to fit a physical newspaper into the evolved workflows of our changing Coop.

We are seeking up to five members to join the team.

All are welcome to apply—we're specifically interested in meeting members who might have some of the following skills:

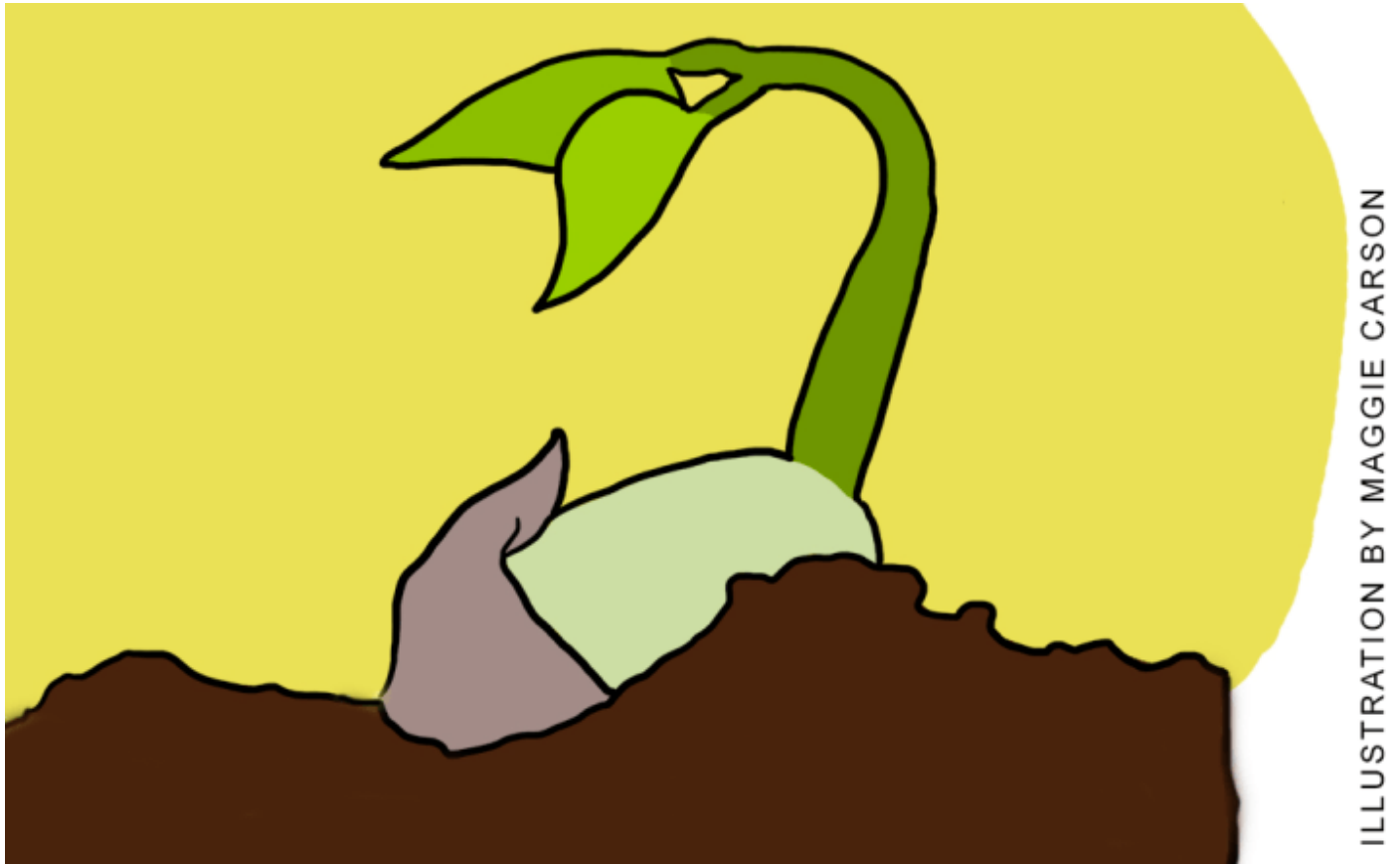
- Deep knowledge of desktop publishing tools like Adobe InDesign.
- Experience with print publication production.
- Experience working on self-directed projects.
- Experience with qualitative research projects.

Most of all, we are looking for empathy, energy and curiosity. The work will be mostly self-directed and will fill the two hours and forty-five minutes for each shift rotation. Workslot credit will be provided.

To apply, please email alex@alexgodin.com with any relevant experience and the words "Coop committee application" in the subject line.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE REPORT: WHY THE RECENT DROUGHT AND WILDFIRES?

January 7, 2025



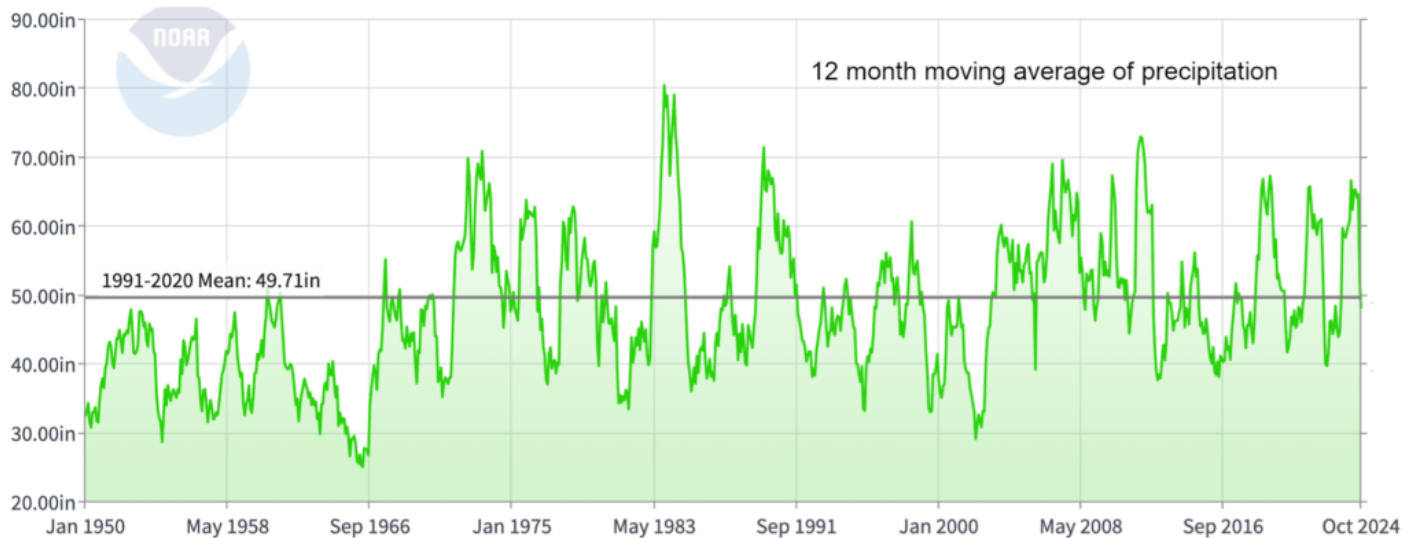
By Damon Turney, for the Environmental Committee

January 7, 2025

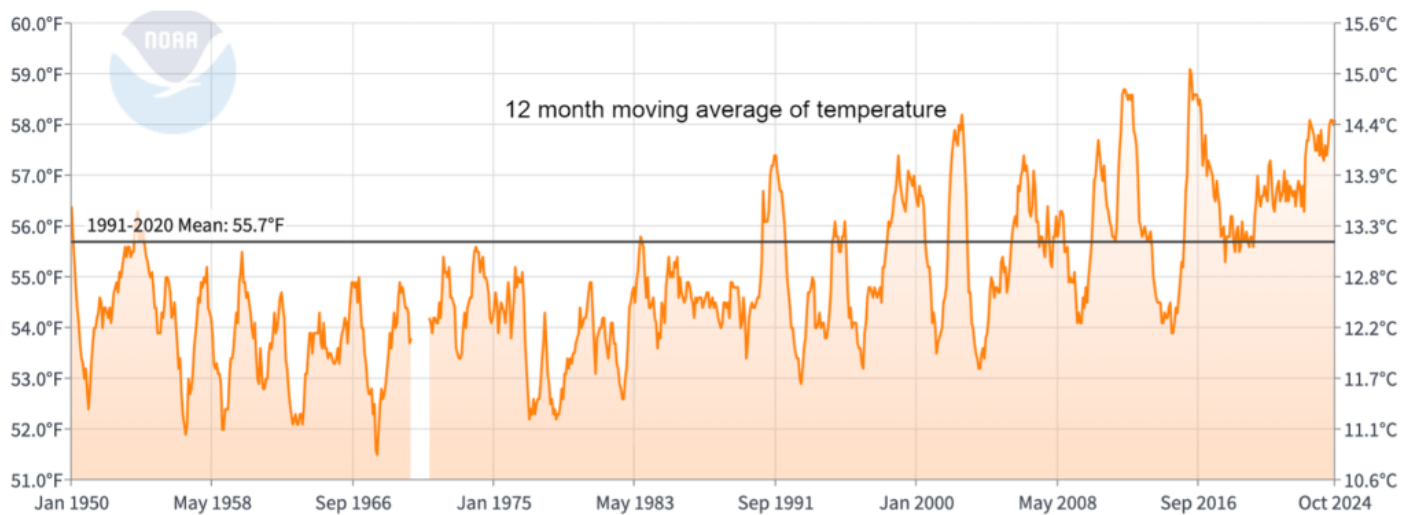
Our recent sunny autumn weather is not all warm news. Our heavily forested ecosystem is drying out¹, a fact clearly visible in the recent fall foliage having more brown than previous years. Of particular concern is the connection between our dry forests and the rise of forest fires in the tristate area, including many close to the city, which made air hazardous to breathe a few weeks ago. Our local Prospect Park was also damaged by a large forest fire that consumed two acres of trees and land on November 8.

So what's the reason for this, and what can be done to help? The data from environmental science points a clear finger at climate change but with a plot twist. Actual precipitation in our watershed has *increased* over the past 75 years, notwithstanding the exceptionally dry October we just had, as shown by the data below from the famous Central Park meteorological observatory.² Climate change is known to increase rain-

fall. This is due to increased evaporation of water from the oceans, which translates to more rainfall—what goes up must come down.



So how are we in drought then, you ask? This is the key issue. The higher temperatures on our forest and land nowadays mean they dry out much faster. Remember, evaporation occurs faster in warm temperatures, and the forest is a living system that loves to consume groundwater when it has a warm sunny day to do so. Below is the temperature history from the same observatory in Central Park—temperature rise is clearly the dominant factor here. These trends of precipitation and temperature are stronger in upstate cities like Albany or Binghamton, near our NYC watershed and reservoirs. The effect of higher evaporation means New York reservoir levels are a much better metric of drought severity than rainfall. Recent rains, just before November 27, have not been enough to improve reservoir levels.



Climate scientists call this faster drying process a “flash drought” effect³, meaning a month of low rain now can have the same bad consequences as 12 months of drought a century ago. And increased rainfall is now necessary to keep our watershed in the same state as it was 50 years ago. At present date the reservoirs that hold water for New York City are unusually low, likely due to just a couple months of low rain. A worsening of this trend could threaten major costs or damage to NYC water quality, or to the subterranean tunnels that feed water to the city, not to mention the forest fires and air quality.

What can we do to help? The good news is that rain will return to New York, likely at increased levels. It remains to be seen if increased rainfall will be enough, given the higher temperatures, and higher evapo-transpiration. At some point in the future, environmental issues will need to be taken seriously by city/state/federal voters and officials, because bigger problems may arise that will not be pleasant. Recommended actions to help are:

- Stay engaged politically: Ensure our elected officials keep a smart focus on environ-

mental issues.

- Conservation: Fix leaks, reduce waste, consider rainwater barrels if feeding a large garden or landscape. Cover pools.
- Be fire conscious, particularly when outdoors at barbecues or similar events.
- Research and innovate: Study known solutions⁴ and be active in developing new ones.

Want more? So do we. The Park Slope Food Coop Environmental Committee collects tips and hacks on issues of concern to the shopping members, so please feel welcome to reach out with additional information or suggestions at psfc.environmental.committee@gmail.com.

Notes

1. Hillary Howard, "New York City Drought Warning Declared for First Time in Over 20 Years," *New York Times*, 11/08/24.
2. National Centers for Environmental Monitoring, website for meteorological site USW00094728, accessed 11/26/24.
3. Yuan et al., "A Global Transition to Flash Droughts under Climate Change," *Science*, 2023
4. U.S. E.P.A., Prepare for Drought, www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/prepare-drought, accessed 11/29/24.

EQUITY, ACCESS AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE REPORT

January 7, 2025



By Azi Khalili for the EACC

December 17, 2024

Founded in 2004, the Equity, Access and Community Committee (EACC) was established to uphold the Park Slope Food Coop's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. The EACC is a team of academics, researchers, attorneys, educators, artists and activists united by a shared passion for equity and social justice within the Coop.

Dedicated to creating an accessible and welcoming space, the EACC advocates for diversity, challenges discrimination and promotes equal participation. Working alongside Coop staff, managers and members, the committee investigates cases of discrimination and offers support to members who have experienced or observed discrimination based on racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, religious bias, etc.

We review reports, mediate conflicts and propose structural changes to address and

prevent discriminatory practices. Though the EACC does not impose penalties, our mission is to foster a fair and inclusive environment for all members.

In an effort to better understand and serve the Coop's community, the EACC is launching an anonymous demographic survey. Approved by the General Meeting, this survey will gather insights on the Coop's membership to inform outreach, recruitment and programming and to ensure the Coop reflects the diverse Brooklyn and Greater NYC communities it serves.

Key goals of the survey include understanding member demographics, identifying underrepresented groups and shaping policies that enhance inclusivity. By addressing potential barriers to participation, the EACC hopes to improve Coop accessibility and make data-informed decisions to meet members' needs. The EACC hopes to launch the survey in late December or early January. We will notify Coop members as soon as it's available.

To further support its mission, the EACC is also building a new website. This resource will provide members with information on the committee's role, how to report incidents and ways to engage in the Coop's efforts to build a more equitable community. Stay tuned for updates as the site develops!

INTERESTED IN ENGAGING COOP WORK?

January 7, 2025



November 26, 2024

DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE (DRC) SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

SKILLS NEEDED

- Communication • Problem solving • Conflict resolution
- Dealing with complex situations
- Investigation • Writing • Research

OUR WORK INCLUDES

- Resolving conflicts between members
- Applying Coop rules and regulations

- Discussing policy issues related to the committee's work
- Investigating allegations of uncooperative behavior by members and engaging in problem-solving
- Frequent contact with committee members
- Participating in mediation, hearings and other conflict resolution methods

REQUIREMENTS

- In order to be considered for this position, any candidate must:
- Be a member for at least a year
- Have an excellent attendance record
- Possess the ability to work on a team
- Have good writing skills
- Have computer proficiency (Excel, Word, email)—this is essential
- Attend evening meetings every six weeks

We often work more than the 2.75 hours in a 6-week period. These hours are credited and can be banked for future use.

We recognize the importance of various points of view when considering cases brought to us. We are seeking a candidate pool that reflects the diversity of the Coop's membership.

CONTACT

foodcoopdrc@gmail.com with the subject line: Joining the DRC

Join us to make the Coop the best place it can be for everyone.

LINEWAITERS' GAZETTE SEEKS COORDINATING EDITORS

January 7, 2025



November 5, 2024

The Linewaiters' Gazette has been the Park Slope Food Coop's official newsletter since its inception in 1973, when the *Gazette* was mimeographed and distributed to the Coop's then few hundred members. Since it went digital in 2021, the *Gazette* has had over half a million views and more than 130,000 visitors to its WordPress site.

The *Gazette* currently seeks two Co-Coordinating Editors to provide leadership to the entire *Gazette* workforce, which includes four teams of 15 member-workers who collaborate to write, edit, produce and illustrate a new issue every three weeks.

The Coordinating Editors will work together as a team, in coordination with a staff member, to strategize long-term planning for the newsletter, while also being involved in immediate problem solving. The role includes helping to create fair submission and editorial policies; serving as a sounding board and resource for Developmental Editors, Production Editors and the Letters Editor; learning the inner workings of the *Gazette*, with an eye for improvement; recruiting and facilitating trainings for new workers; and resolving conflict, among other things.

Requirements:

- Minimum of 3–5 years of experience in editing or production in the publishing sector
- Possess excellent judgment and strong communication and listening skills
- Able to work with diverse groups of people
- Flexibility to work an irregular schedule to support the *Gazette* teams

Prerequisite: One year of Coop membership immediately prior to applying.

If you have the relevant work experience and Coop tenure and are interested in serving the Coop in this important capacity, please email your résumé and a cover letter explaining your interest and qualifications to: GazetteSubmissions@psfc.coop. Please put “Coordinating Editor” in the subject line.

The two candidates selected for these positions must be approved by the General Meeting and will hold three-year terms.

Diversity Statement: We seek an application pool that reflects the diversity of the Coop’s membership.

JOIN THE AGENDA COMMITTEE

January 7, 2025



ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SAVAGE

November 5, 2024

The Agenda Committee is seeking new members! The Committee's work is scheduling the agenda for the monthly General Meeting, and it meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. over Zoom.

Prospective applicants should be:

- Members in good standing for at least a year before the pandemic.
- Able and willing to regularly attend Agenda Committee meetings. These occur on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. ten times a year. There is no meeting in June and December. Currently, the Committee is meeting via Zoom.
- Willing to work in a collaborative committee environment.

- Interested in the ongoing business of the Coop.
- Willing to attend the General Meeting at least five times a year. The General Meeting meets on the last Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

Please send statements of interest to psfcac@gmail.com. The Committee will interview applicants and then select candidates for election at the General Meeting.

We are seeking an applicant pool that reflects the diversity of the Coop's membership.

CLEAN CORN: MEXICANS PROTECT A GLOBAL STAPLE

January 7, 2025



International Trade Education Committee (ITES) Report

By Helen Beichel for the ITES Committee

September 24, 2024

A February 2023 Mexican Presidential Decree banned the growing of transgenic corn, in order to protect the people's constitutional right to a clean environment and native species from cross-pollination by genetically modified (GMO) species.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT AN INDIGENOUS RIGHTS GENERAL EXCEPTION IN ANY TRADE AGREEMENT INVOLVING THE US WILL BE EXAMINED.

The decree included restrictions on GMO corn usage in minimally processed foods, such as masa and tortillas. It set a deadline of March 2024 for the elimination of glyphosates in the country, setting a long-term goal of removing GMOs fed to animals. In August 2023, the US Trade Representative, eventually supported by the Canadian government, opened a case against the Mexican government in the secretive Investor State Dispute System tribunal (ISDS). The case asserted that Mexico is violating the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) by preventing the importation of GMO corn. The U.S. claims that Mexico did not present scientific evidence in its report to back up its claim that GMO corn and herbicides are dangerous to the Mexican people.

This is the first time that an Indigenous Rights General Exception in any trade agreement involving the U.S. will be examined. USMCA Article 32.5 on Indigenous Peoples Rights, which was insisted upon by Canada, allows any of the three USMCA countries to create measures “necessary to fulfill its legal obligations to Indigenous Peoples.” In addition, the Environmental chapter in the USMCA points to the connections between Indigenous People’s rights and biodiversity.

Mexican nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) support their government’s policies, saying that they are in line with the USMCA, as well as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade Agreement (GATT)’s Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. These measures allow taking a precautionary, proactive stance regarding protecting corn as there are no conflict-free scientific studies proving the safety of GMO maize. The involvement of GATT provisions makes this a case with global implications.

GROWING GMO CORN IS DESTRUCTIVE TO THE MILPAS GROWING SYSTEM, A PRACTICE THAT INTEGRATES CORN, BEANS, PUMPKIN, BROAD BEAN, QUELITES AND MEDICINAL PLANTS AND THE RESILIENCE THEY GENERATE IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND SOIL DEGENERATION.

Mexican NGOs point out that in 2020, 40% of the Mexican diet was corn-based. The

average Mexican eats around 432 lbs of corn per year. Mexico also says that by defending itself in front of the ISDS, it is defending its corn biocultural heritage and preserving its native corn species.

Mexico is a gene reserve for 64 different breeds of corn, 59 of which are native, used and preserved for 300 generations by Indigenous Peoples and the ancestral practices of peasant groups. Mexico points out the decree is not a ban on importing corn; it merely regulates the end use of corn for human consumption. Growing GMO corn is destructive to the milpas growing system, a practice that integrates corn, beans, pumpkin, broad bean, quelites and medicinal plants and the resilience they generate in the face of climate change and soil degeneration.

Analysis by U.S. NGOs such as Food and Water Watch highlights that U.S. approval of GMO corn is based on industry assertions, not science. Assessments of reproductive, developmental, neurological, metabolic, microbiome or gastrointestinal-tract-related health risks have not been addressed through the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) process. Nor has any other process in the public or private sector addressed those risks. The U.S. government has never done its own assessment of GMOs.

Technical comments coauthored by Friends of the Earth and Food Tank pointed out that the U.S. government's submission to the tribunal lacked information about the toxins expressed in contemporary GMO corn varieties, and their levels. It ignored dozens of studies linking the insecticidal toxins and glyphosate residues found in GMO corn to adverse impacts on public health.

OUR BODIES WERE NOT DESIGNED TO DIGEST THESE NEW PROTEINS EXPRESSED IN GMO SEED STRAINS. THESE TOXINS ARE DESIGNED TO KILL INSECTS BY BREAKING DOWN THEIR DIGESTIVE SYSTEMS.

The toxicity of GMO corn has been increasing since it was introduced 30 years ago.

First, insecticidal toxins, in the form of new proteins, have been engineered into every grain of GMO corn. Early varieties had just one new protein, but today, two thirds of GMO corn varieties have been engineered to have three or more. Levels of these toxins in GMO corn grain now measure 50–100 parts per million (ppm), up from 2–6 ppm.

Our bodies were not designed to digest these new proteins expressed in GMO seed strains. These toxins are designed to kill insects by breaking down their digestive systems. The same seems to be happening to us. The Center for Food Safety's analysis submitted to the tribunal documents increasing allergenic responses to transgenic corn. There are now antibodies against these Cry toxins, which are proteins that attack the gut lining, in at least 8% of Americans. Also, 85% of field corn in the U.S. expressed endotoxins, including non-GMO fields contaminated through wind pollination.

Next, consider the herbicides that are integral to GMO corn. Originally, GMO corn was engineered to withstand just the weed killer glyphosate. Glyphosate usage has increased in the U.S. more than tenfold since the introduction of GMO crops. Now, 86% of GMO corn varieties are engineered to handle two to four toxic herbicides.

Friends of the Earth calls on the U.S. to provide science addressing these concerns in its USMCA response. The tribunal is expected to issue its ruling on the dispute in the fall.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE REPORT

January 7, 2025



PHOTO BY EVA SCHICKER

Banking on Change: Make a Difference at the Cash Register

By Alice Roche-Naude

At the Park Slope Food Coop, we're all about making mindful choices. We prefer to buy from local Earth-friendly producers. We recycle. We try to lead by example, educating ourselves and others about health and nutrition, cooperation and the environment. But our commitment to a healthy planet doesn't stop at the checkout aisle. Have you considered the environmental impact of your bank?

Your Money's Environmental Footprint: Kicking the Fossil Fuel Habit

Banks don't just store your money; they use it to fund various projects and industries. By choosing a sustainable bank, you can ensure your hard-earned cash isn't indirectly supporting practices that harm the environment. Traditional banks often invest heavi-

ly in fossil fuel companies. This fuels climate change, leading to extreme weather events, sea-level rise and disruptions to agriculture—all impacting our food system and communities.

“Since the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, the world’s 60 largest banks have poured US\$ 5.5 trillion into the fossil fuel industry,” according to Banking on Climate Chaos, a report published by a coalition of civil society groups.

Banking with a Green Conscience: Divest from Fossil Fuel

The good news? There’s a growing movement of sustainable banks that align with our Park Slope Food Coop spirit. These banks choose to divest, meaning they sell their investments in fossil fuel companies. Instead, they invest in projects that are more aligned with our values at the Coop. These banks might:

- Support Renewable Energy by investing in solar, wind and other renewable energy sources, promoting clean energy transition.
- Fund Sustainable Businesses through loans and investments directed towards sustainable agriculture, green building projects and eco-friendly businesses.

Making a Difference, One Dollar at a Time

By choosing a sustainable bank, you become part of a growing movement towards a greener economy. Here’s how your decision can create a ripple effect:

- Put pressure on banks and big polluters with increased demand for sustainable banking. The realities of climate change put pressure on traditional banks to shift their practices, making fossil fuel expansion eventually too high a risk. Last month, Barclays announced they would stop directly financing new oil and gas projects.

- Invest in a healthy planet. Your money supports projects that combat climate change and promote environmental health.
- Align with Coop values. Choosing a sustainable bank reflects the same environmental consciousness we practice at the Coop.

Small Steps, Big Impact

Switching banks may seem like a small action, but collectively these choices have significant power. By aligning your banking choices with your values you can make a real difference for the environment and support a more sustainable future. Remember, every dollar counts and with conscious banking we can invest in a healthier planet, one transaction at a time.

Finding the Right Fit

Not all sustainable banks are created equal. Research their practices, investment strategies and commitment to environmental responsibility. Don't be afraid to ask questions and compare options.

See these resources to find a fossil fuel free bank:

Mighty Deposits

Green America

1 Million Women

Green Portfolio

Alice Roche-Naude is a member of the Environmental Committee.

ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE REPORT

January 7, 2025



By Meghan Davidson of the Animal Welfare Committee

The Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) has been helping Coop members access information about the animal welfare standards of the products carried in the Coop for over a decade; researching products for sale at the Coop and producing guides to aid in decision-making. Many members believe our committee helps shape the array of products carried by the Coop but this is not accurate. Coop staff make all purchasing decisions and many factors contribute to their final choices, such as availability, price, delivery schedules, and consumer demand. Each of the products on our shelves is pro-

duced under a variety of different animal welfare conditions and our guides are the best way to answer any questions you might have.

We are a small committee, of nine members, tasked with creating and maintaining guides for the animal products (and alternatives) sold at the Coop. Last year two of our members moved into other roles, leaving us with a couple of spots to fill. We had a huge response to our call for new members and appreciated the opportunity to meet with over a dozen incredible Coop members who are also interested in keeping the membership informed about animal welfare concerns. This spring we added two new members and are so excited to have Sohum and Melissa helping us now!

We currently have guides to help members make purchasing decisions for products including eggs and milk (both newly updated this year), beef and pork (both updated last year), chicken and turkey, and plant milk. We are always working on producing new guides and updating existing guides. Currently, members are in various phases of producing guides to cheese, cheese alternatives, pet food, yogurt, fish, and more!

We always welcome member questions and suggestions! Please contact the AWC by emailing psfcanimals@gmail.com. You can also find the AWC on X and IG at [@psfcanimals](https://www.instagram.com/psfcanimals) or Facebook at [fb.me/psfcanimals](https://www.facebook.com/psfcanimals). The AWC blog (which is the best place to view all of our guides) is psfcanimals.blogspot.com, which can be found on the homepage of [FoodCoop.com](https://www.foodcoop.com). All our guides are posted on the blog and our Instagram also has great tips to keep you informed each month.

THE HUDSON VALLEY FARM COOP COMMITTEE IS RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

January 7, 2025



The Hudson Valley Farm Coop Committee is recruiting new members. This is an exciting project and you will be joining a diverse team creating positive change in our food and farming systems. Committee members receive Park Slope Food Coop shift credits for their work. Agricultural business experience is not required to join.

The Hudson Valley Farm Coop (HVFC) is a proposed venture that will acquire, improve and operate 15 farms in the Mid-Hudson Valley for the benefit of its shareholders and the wider community. The start-up budget for this project is \$30 million. The Farm Coop will raise funds through a unique financial mechanism called a Direct Public Offering. The HVFC will provide its members the rare opportunity to own a stake in socially progressive and ecologically regenerative farms. Their investments will help to re-create, sustain, and protect this wonderful corner of our threatened and critical agricultural region.

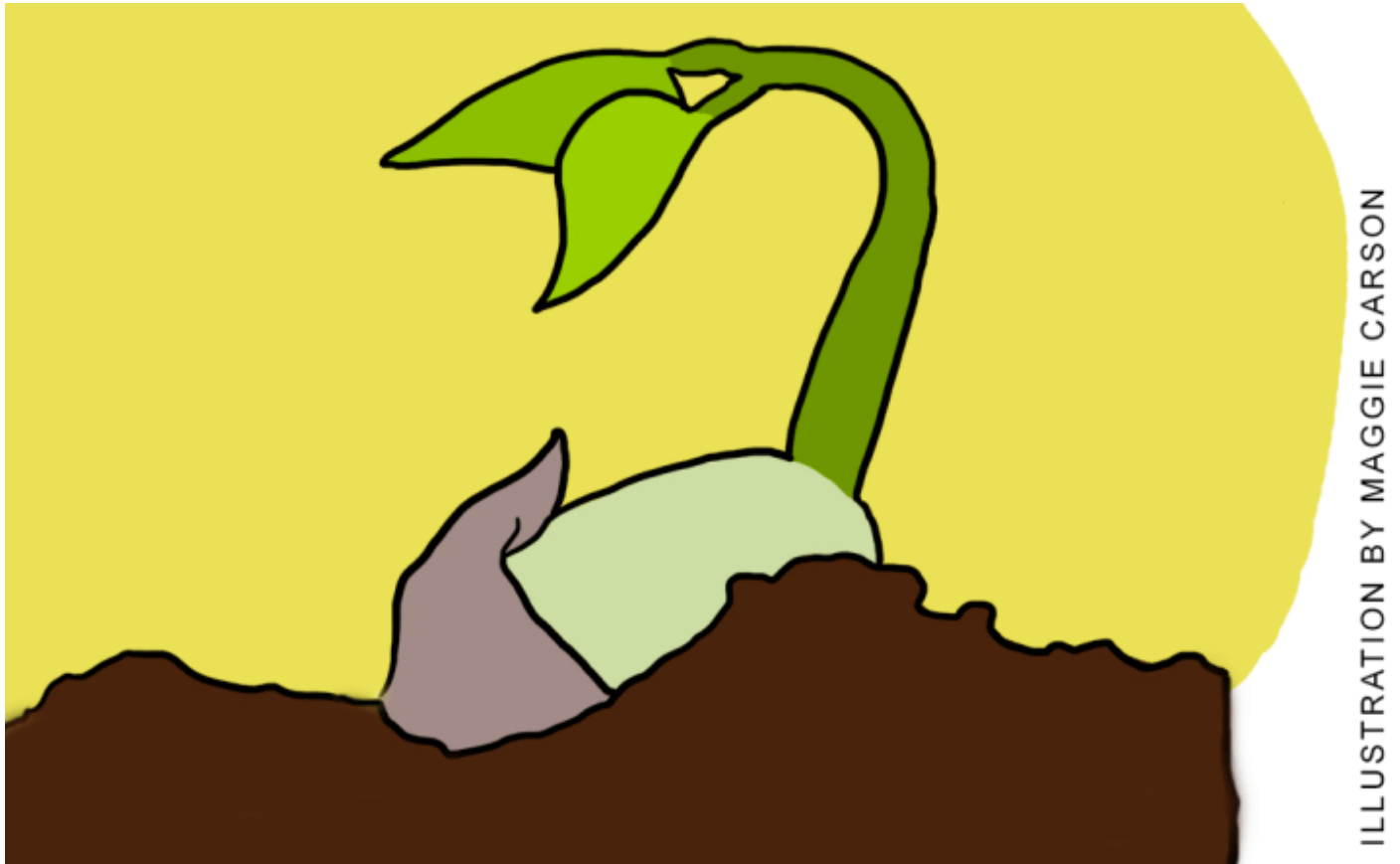
Our immediate needs are in four broad areas:

- First, we are looking for experienced attorneys, business administration and finance professionals. The tasks at hand include refining the business plan, preparing our financial model and pro forma statements, establishing the cooperative corporation and structuring the direct public offering.
- Second, are professional planners and geographers to round out our design team.
- Third, are seasoned marketing professionals to help sharpen our presentations to attract project cosponsors in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, and eventually individual Farm Coop shareholders.
- Fourth, community organizers to explore the potential for a unionized workforce and to build partnerships with others, including social justice, local agriculture and rural revitalization organizations.

The Park Slope Food Coop voted at the April 2021 General Meeting to become the original sponsor of this new and separate cooperative business. PSFC members interested in joining the committee may contact Jonathan Farber for more information at info@hvfarmcoop.com.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

January 7, 2025



The Food Coop's Environmental Committee is seeking to grow! The mission of the committee is to provide education, research and advisement to ensure the Food Coop operates in fidelity to its environmental policy to support "the best products and practices with regard to the health, safety and preservation of humans, animals and the overall biosphere." You can learn more about the Environmental Committee's history and activities [here](#). We seek members with education and professional experience in environmental topics relevant to the Food Coop's operations and impact. If you wish to apply, please fill out this [web form](#).

FILM NIGHT: DRIVERS WANTED

January 7, 2025



Every day for the past 67 years, 90-year-old cab driver Johnnie “Spider” Footman has shown up for work at one of New York City’s most eclectic communities—the taxi garage across from the river from the United Nations. The garage is a kind of a refugee camp in the heart of New York, a city where drivers have come for protection from human rights abuses, racism and economic instability.

But to be a cabbie demands reserves of patience and persistence, in the face of long hours, disrespectful customers, blinding blizzards and a host of other challenges.

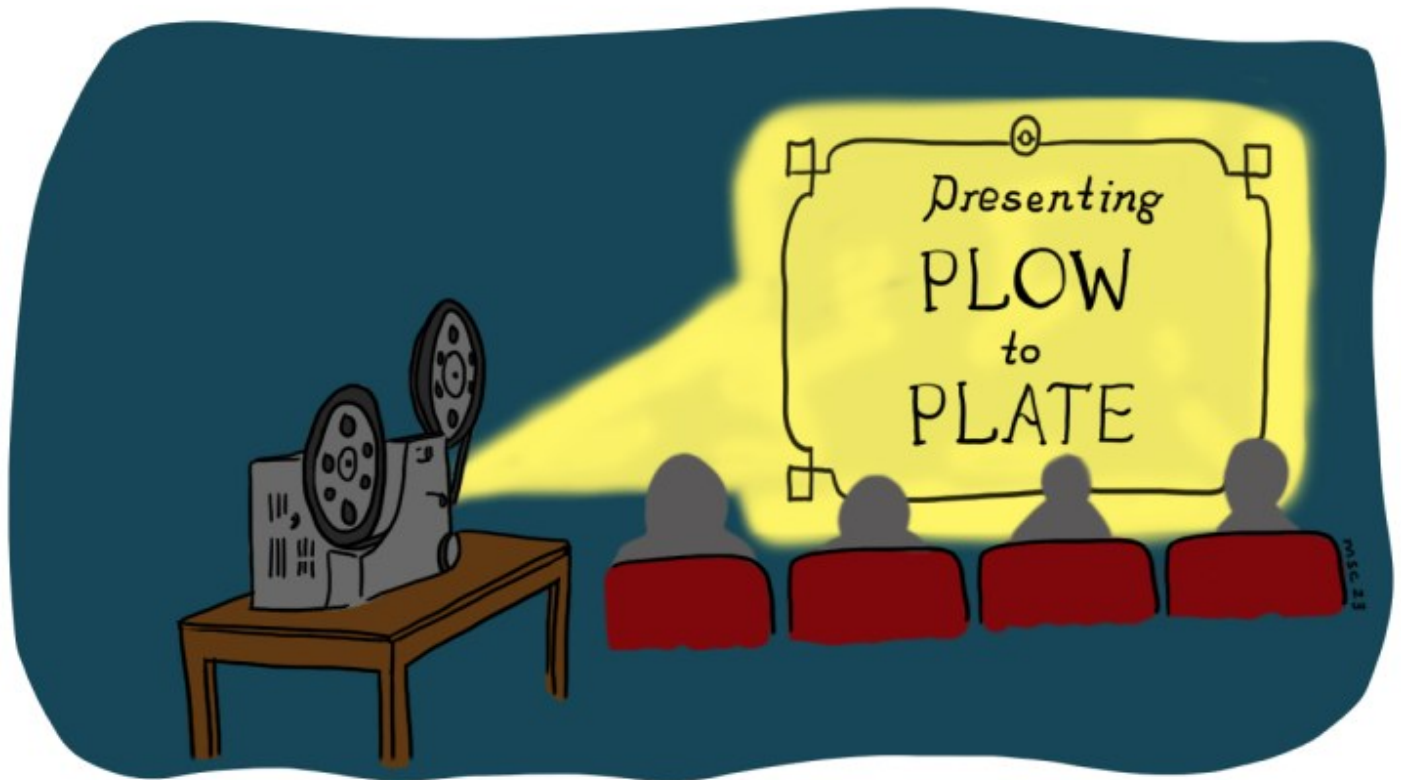
Filmmaker Joshua Z Weinstein directed the feature film *Menashe*, which was released by A24 and nominated for a Gotham Award for “Breakthrough Director,” as well as an Independent Spirit Award for “Best First Feature.” He has also directed the documentaries *Drivers Wanted*, *Flying On Engine*, and *I Beat Mike Tyson*. As a cinematographer he has lensed *Sell/Buy/Date*, *Elaine Stritch: Shoot Me* and *Bikini Moon*. Born in New York City, Joshua has been a Coop member on and off since 2008.

This documentary will be screened on this Zoom link on Thursday, February 8th at 7p.m. Director Joshua Z Weinstein will be present for a Q+A after the screening.

To be added to our email listserv for future screening announcements, please send a request to jlymiller@me.com

PLOW TO PLATE FILM SERIES: FROM FOOD TO FREEDOM

January 7, 2025



By Adam Rabiner

From Food to Freedom is written and directed by Nelson Campbell, son of Dr. T. Colin Campbell, father of the whole-food plant-based nutrition movement who conducted pioneering research on the links between animal protein and cancer. Forming the basis of his 2005 book *The China Study*, which he co-authored with his son, Dr. Campbell's research found that animal foods increase serum cholesterol, heart disease, and cancer rates. The meat industry and other powerful interests labeled him a maverick and a quack, hoping to discredit and silence him. The filmmaker believes this is still the case. In granting us permission to screen the film, he wrote, "I don't know if you are

aware of this, but Facebook is censoring our film promotion. Facebook's largest source of ad revenue comes from the pharma industry, so their policy toward us is not surprising given their heavy-handed control of the information they allow on their platform."

"FACEBOOK IS CENSORING OUR FILM PROMOTION. FACEBOOK'S LARGEST SOURCE OF AD REVENUE COMES FROM THE PHARMA INDUSTRY, SO THEIR POLICY TOWARD US IS NOT SURPRISING..."

NELSON CAMPBELL, DIRECTOR

From Food to Freedom is a highly entertaining but very serious, documentary that translates all the hard science and statistics into real-life stories. In this kind of vegan version of *The Real World*, Campbell recruits six individuals with type 2 diabetes (and their spouses) to spend ten days in a house in Greensboro, North Carolina, where every meal is plant-based. All participants are monitored and counseled, one-on-one and in group sessions, by a licensed physician. Their blood is sampled and scored at the beginning and end, while their glucose is continuously monitored throughout—an inverted version of *Supersize Me*, in which a month-long diet of nothing but McDonalds nearly killed filmmaker Morgan Spurlock.

The volunteers are not cherry-picked. They range from 18 to retirement age, and are not healthy. In addition to diabetes, many are overweight, have high cholesterol, triglycerides and blood pressure, suffer from sleep apnea, have trouble with mobility and are on multiple medications. Someone drove four hours to the house from out of state only to discover she had a broken arm. All are eager and positive, but none feel it will be easy. One is fond of telling his wife, "Rome was not built in a day..."

And yet, positive results are almost immediate. In group discussions, they enthusiastically describe how they feel better, have more energy, and appreciate the food—sal-

ads and vegetable-based versions of meatloaf, lasagna, macaroni and cheese and other familiar comfort foods. They are not just passive eaters but are welcomed into the kitchen to assist Campbell's wife, Kim, a cookbook writer, and another chef, Fernando Peralto, with meal preparation.

At the end of the 10 days the eight individuals have collectively lost fifty-four pounds, good and bad cholesterol levels have universally dropped, blood pressures have improved and many have completely stopped or severely restricted their use of insulin and other medications.

Of course, the real question is, can this awesome accomplishment achieved in a communal and supportive setting, translate into real, long-term change? *From Food to Freedom* does not shirk this vital inquiry. While six months later, people occasionally fell off the wagon for a Burger King onion ring or restaurant meal, most climbed right back on. Successful participants were supported by a spouse or benefited from friends and housemates.

Those who struggled were more isolated. One was hampered by her "meat and potatoes" husband who refused to eat much of what she cooked. Another lived alone and succumbed too often to her cravings for potato chips and soda. But she was still on the journey and trying.

From Food to Freedom alludes to the still-powerful forces in society that control the terms of the debate, for example the pharmaceutical industry with its highly effective marketing, public relations and advertising. The film, made during COVID, shows that most people who died from the virus had underlying pre-existing conditions and yet none of the advice offered by the experts—wear a mask, wash your hands, social distance—included a healthy plant-based diet.

Though the Campbells are not naïve they remain convinced that the truth will prevail. The movement in which they have played such an important part is growing by the day. Twenty years ago it was hard to find soy milk yet today there are supermarket

sections dedicated to plant-based alternatives. *From Food to Freedom* and other similar films have companion websites, full of useful information as well as affiliated non-profit organizations promoting the cause of alternative food systems. In this, the Park Slope Food Coop and the Plow to Plate Food movie series play a small but important and proud part.

From Food to Freedom, *February 13, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.*

Screening link: <http://www.plowtoplatefilms.com/events/>

To be added to our mailing list for future screening announcements, please email a request to plowtoplate@mail.com.

Adam Rabiner lives in Ditmas Park with his wife Dina and two children, Elan and Ana.

FILM NIGHT: SEEKING FILMS FOR THE 2024 PROGRAM

January 7, 2025



Calling all directors, producers, editors, cinematographers and screenwriters!

We are now accepting submissions for films made or crewed by Coop members. Films of any length (features to shorts) and any genre will be considered for screening. The films are screened via Zoom, and we hold a Q&A after every screening so Coop members can engage with the filmmakers to learn more about their process and work.

If you'd like to submit a film, please send a link and a short synopsis to gabrielrhodes@me.com.