

MEMBER SUBMISSION: OPEN STREETS NOT FOR ALL

September 24, 2024



By Denise DeYonker

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The Open Streets Program is not for all. The program that was once welcomed during the pandemic is now harming businesses and residents and with little to no oversight, accountability or transparency for the nonprofits that run them.

ONLY CERTAIN BUSINESS MODELS BENEFIT FROM THE STREET CLOSURES.

MITCHELL'S SOUL FOOD, A 40-YEAR-OLD BLACK-OWNED BUSINESS, IS NOT ONE

OF THEM.

There is no requirement for community consultation or consent to close down a street, even a critical traffic artery. That has been our experience in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn—with the closure of Vanderbilt Avenue, a major thoroughfare, for six months a year, three days a week. Only certain business models benefit from the street closures. Mitchell's Soul Food, a 40-year-old Black-owned business, is not one of them. The Sunday street closures shuts out their customers who drive or take the bus after church, as they have for decades.



The crowd gathered outside of American Vegan on Saturday, June 26. Despite government officials intervening on that restaurant's behalf, the nonprofit that runs the Vanderbilt Open Streets program won't budge. *BKReader* ran an article

in May of this year about Mitchell's. Another restaurant, American Vegan, already closed down, in large part after a series of run-ins with the nonprofit.

Neighboring streets are clogged with traffic when the three-day street closures are in effect, harming businesses and residents in the surrounding area. Prospect Heights is a privileged neighborhood with ample access to beautiful green spaces (including a brand new one, Pacific Park). It is difficult to justify the need for the concrete open space when the harm to many clearly outweighs the few who benefit. A group of neighbors came together to fight back and the United Neighbors of Prospect and Crown Heights was born.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE REPORT

September 24, 2024



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.

LOVE LETTER FROM A MERMAID: ON PLASTICS AND YOUR HEALTH

September 24, 2024



Member Submission by Lois Wilcken

Dear Coop Members,

Allow me to introduce myself. I go by many names: Atargatis, Ba, Liban, Little Mermaid, Lorelei, Mami Wata, Orehu, Seirēn. I bear many attributes: seduction, wealth, vanity, irresistible music. The reason for this diversity lies in the nature of my dwelling, the sea that girds our planet Earth. All nations know me. They love me, but they also use me as a receptacle for their waste, especially plastics. Words of caution:

What goes around comes around. Just as plastics harm the marine life I see day by day, so they harm you and your family.

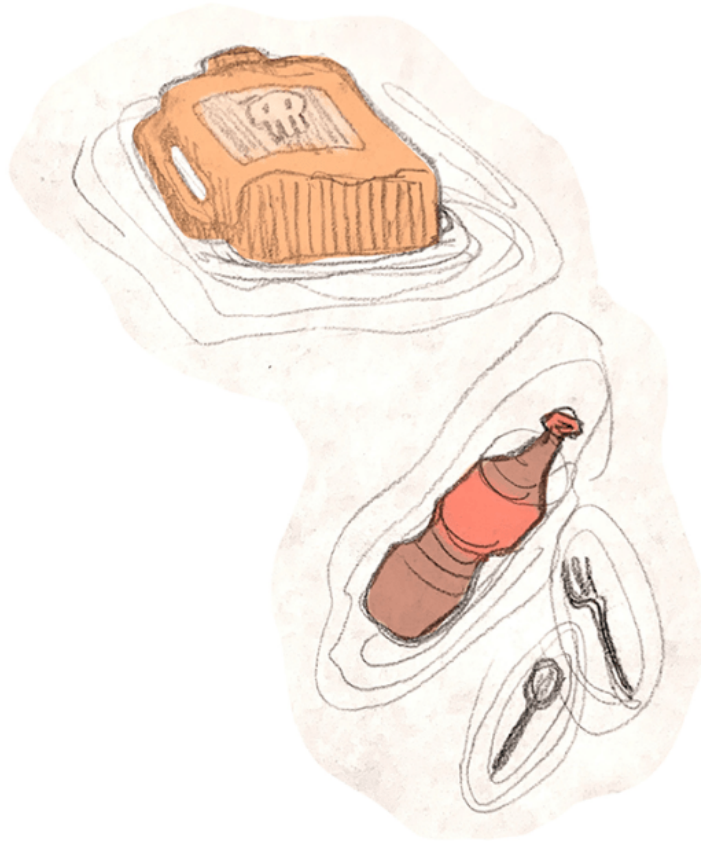


ILLUSTRATION BY KAITLYN QUACH

Life did not evolve with plastics. In planet-Earth time, the existence of plastics barely fills the blink of an eye. Scientists call it a novel entity, synthetically created from fossil carbons little more than a century ago. Pliable chains of large molecules called polymers form the foundations of plastics and host additional chemicals capable of imparting such properties as color, texture, durability, water resistance and more. Today's plastics bear 13,000 chemical additives; science associates about 2,300 of these with health impacts including cancer, birth defects and diminished cognitive function. Your vulnerability depends on your engagement in the basic phases of plastic's life cycle: production, use and disposal. Workers and people in communities close to production sites suffer most from the first phase, and disposal sites like myself (the sea) suffer most from the last. Everyone suffers from the second phase.

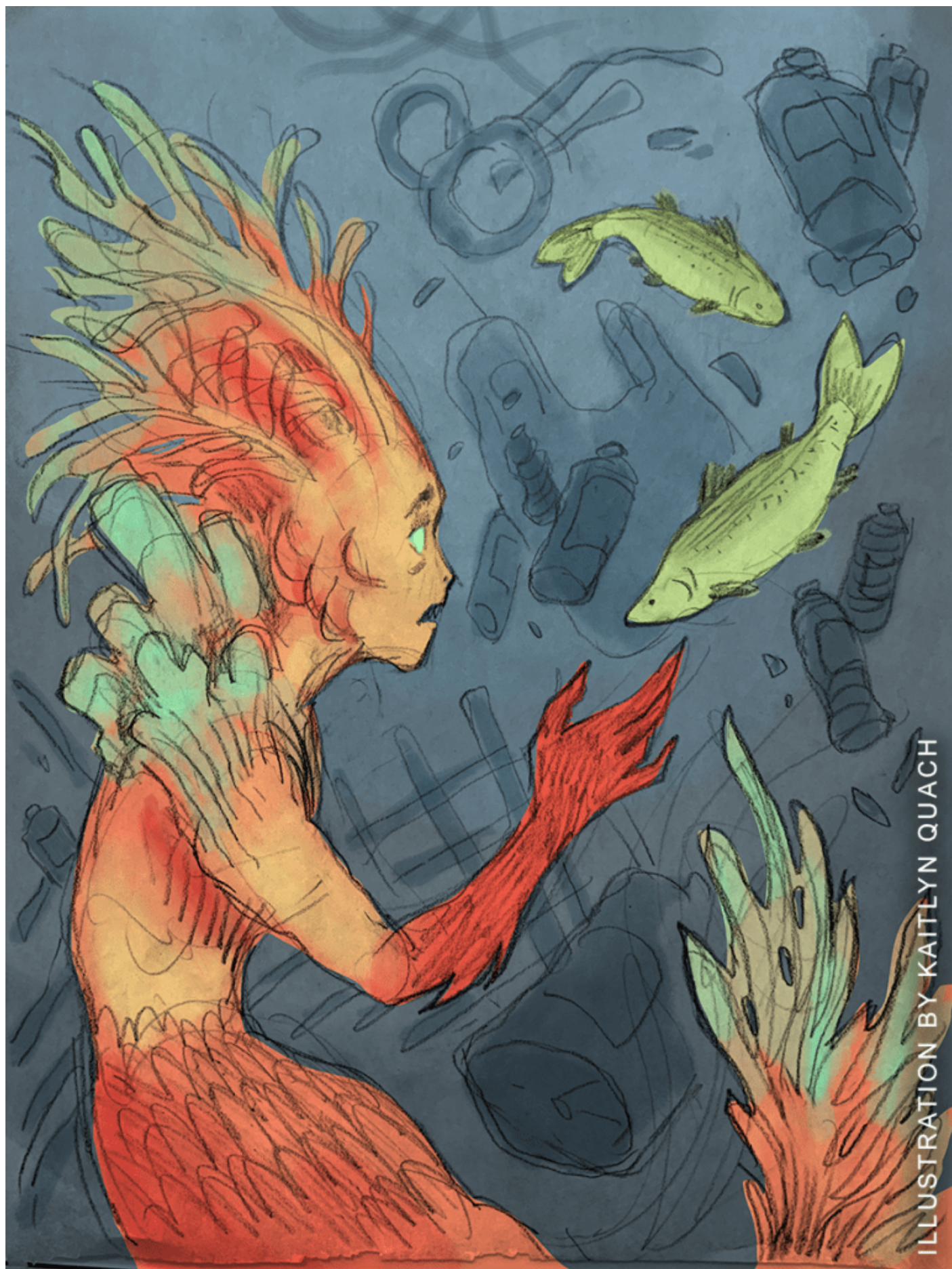


ILLUSTRATION BY KAITLYN QUACH

You might imagine that plastics are fixed in form, but they actually change over the course of their lifetime. If you could eat the kind of mushroom Alice ate in Wonderland, you might shrink to a size where you could witness the degradation of plastic. First, you would see macroplastics, fragments splintered off over time from the deceptively coherent original. With an additional mushroom or two, particles of microplastics and nanoplastics (MNPs, less than ten-millionths of a meter) would appear. We know MNPs best for their explosive population growth in aquatic ecosystems like my own; plastic polymers and their chemical additives have invaded every corner of the sea. Migration, you might say, occurs at the end of plastic's life cycle—in the disposal phase. It happens, however, during the use phase as well, mostly in your plastic packaging and storage.

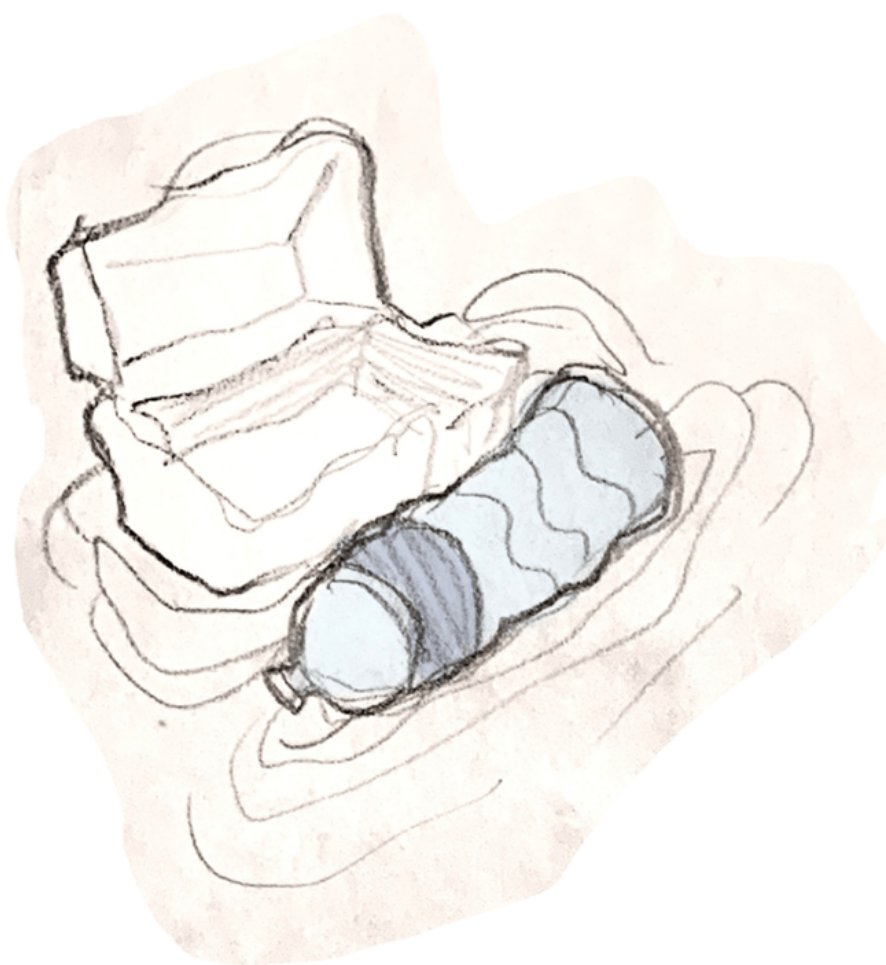


ILLUSTRATION BY KAITLYN QUACH

A peer-reviewed study published in *Environmental Science and Technology* in 2023

confirms the migration of MNPs during use. The scientists conducting the study measured MNP release from plastic containers and reusable food pouches under three scenarios: storage at room temperature, refrigerated storage and heating by microwave. By far, three minutes of microwave heating caused the highest release of MNPs (temperature factor), while refrigeration and room-temperature storage over six months came in a close second (time factor). The reusable food pouch released more particles than the plastic containers (physical properties factor). The Food Packaging Forum, based in Zurich, identifies surface-to-food ratio as an additional factor influencing extent of migration, identifying single-serving packages as most likely to contaminate food.

What exactly is the risk here? What happens when MNPs migrate from food into your bodies? The research is young, but evidence of health hazards due to the ingestion of MNPs is mounting. Fragmented plastics accumulate in tissues and cells, causing inflammation and oxidative stress, but they also act as vehicles for their toxic chemical additives. In its work toward a Global Plastics Treaty the Minderoo-Monaco Commission on Plastics and Human Health in 2023 named decreased fertility, premature births, neurodevelopmental disorders, cardiovascular disease, and renal disease as just a few hazards humans face. (Download the report [here](#) and see Figure 4.1 on page 71.) Tragically, infants in the womb and young children are at highest risk. The sensitivity of early development increases the odds of such conditions as low birth weight, impaired lung growth and childhood cancer. Some conditions manifesting in adults can have their roots in fetal and early childhood exposure.

Is waiting for yet more definitive research worth the risks? Should policy, on the other hand, follow a precautionary approach, placing the burden of proof that the product is safe on those companies profiting from the manufacture of plastics? What can you do meanwhile? Can you think of precautions that your Coop can take as the science moves forward? Although I live in the sea, I do encircle the planet, and I hear just about everything. Some of you have ideas about alternative (non-plastic) bags for produce and bulk; others would like to see the larger bins replace small packages in the bulk aisle as a reduction of surface-to-food ratio. I've heard one member talk about a

special section—with lots of visibility—for items that do not come in plastic packaging. I feel certain you, too, have ideas. A little sea bird tells me that you may get involved by contacting plasticfreefoodcoop@gmail.com.

*With love from the sea,
Your Mermaid*



ILLUSTRATION BY KAITLYN QUACH

Artwork by Kaitlyn Quach

Kaitlyn Quach is a cartoonist and activist who works part-time in food service. They love long walks, grape hyacinths and slightly scary-looking mermaids. It is now impossible for them to get lost inside the NY State Capitol/LOB because they've been lobbying for climate legislation so many times.

You can find Kaitlyn on Instagram @the.gauntlets

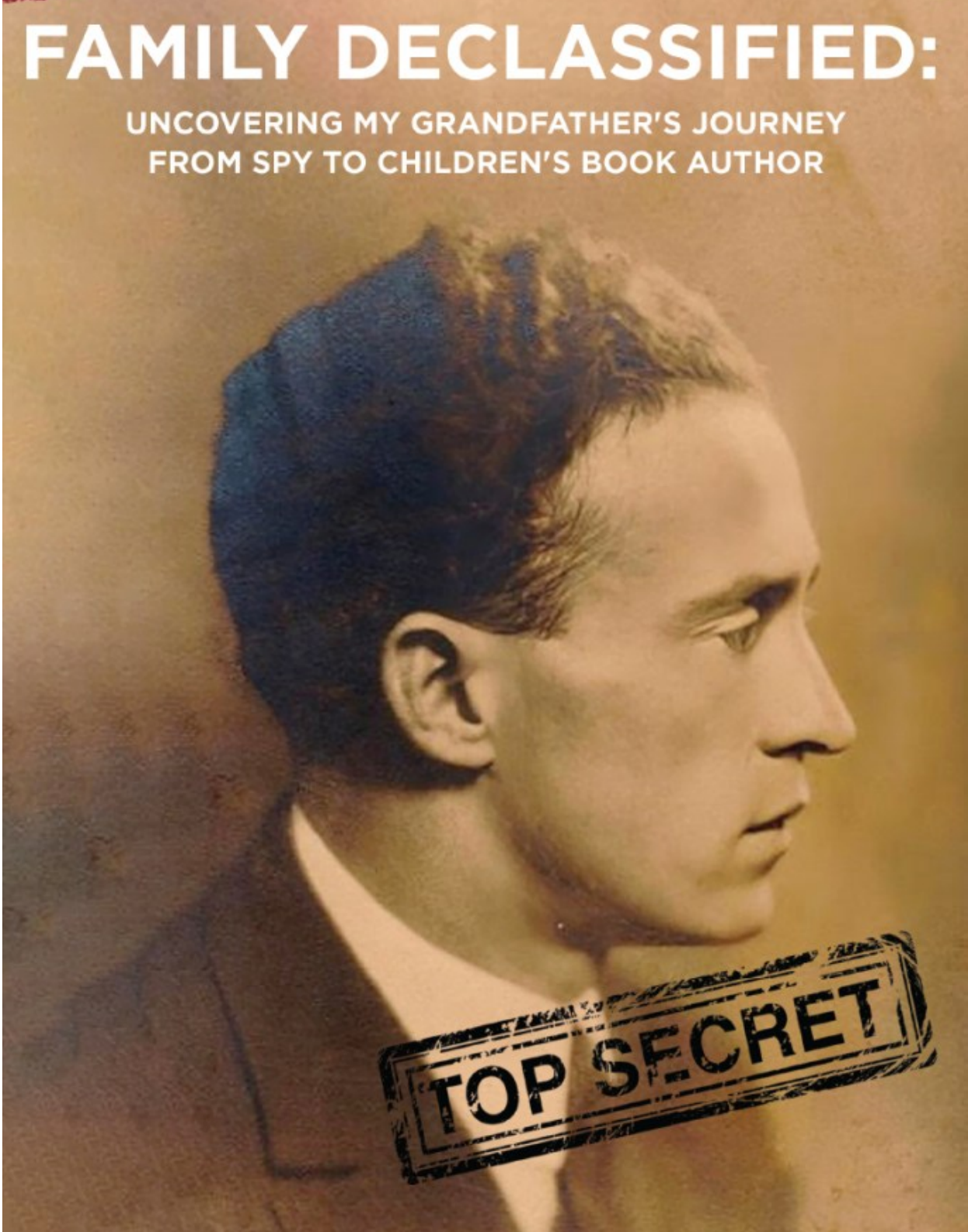
MY GRANDFATHER, AN EPICUREAN SPY

September 24, 2024

KATHERINE FENNELLY

FAMILY DECLASSIFIED:

UNCOVERING MY GRANDFATHER'S JOURNEY
FROM SPY TO CHILDREN'S BOOK AUTHOR



TOP SECRET

Member Submission by *Katherine Fennelly*

If my Hungarian-American grandfather were alive today and living in Brooklyn, I have no doubt he would be a member of the Park Slope Food Coop. Francis Kalnay, or “Ferko” as we called him, was many things: a linguist, a spy for the Allies in World War II, an award-winning children’s book author and a designer of houses in Valle de Bravo, Mexico.



Francis “Ferko” Kalna making a loaf of bread in California, 1980s. Photo provided by Katherine Fennelly.

Ferko was also a superb chef who roasted his own coffee beans, milled his own flour, harvested honey from bee hives, cured meats in an underground smokehouse and grew fruits and vegetables on his properties in Mexico, and then in California. Late in his life he invented and marketed a bread plate (below) and built bread ovens for neighbors.

VIRGINIA SAFFORD’S BOOK WAS ABOUT THE BEST MEALS SHE HAD EVER EATEN.

ONE OF THE CHAPTERS FEATURED A REPAST PREPARED BY FERKO AT HIS B&B IN VALLE DE BRAVO.



The Greatful Bread Plate, invented by Francis “Ferko” Kalna. Photo provided by Katherine Fennelly.

My grandfather’s skill as a chef was highlighted in the book *Friends and Their Food* written by Minneapolis food writer Virginia Safford,[1] who visited him in Mexico, where he lived for 20 years after the war. Safford’s book was about the best meals she had ever eaten. One of the chapters featured a repast prepared by Ferko at his B&B in Valle de Bravo. She writes:

I saw a load of various beans drying in the sun on his terrace, and the smell of the freshly brewed coffee was almost as tantalizing as the bread. Everything we ate at

the simple wooden table in his little kitchen, with the cooking going on in full view, was delicious. We started out with what might be called country antipasto. In the middle of a table were crisp radishes and small green onions garnishing a platter of sliced, home-smoked turkey breast [from an underground smokehouse] to be eaten on fresh buttered rye bread. Then came the soup...and authentic Hungarian stuffed cabbage rolls. Last was Hungarian rum cake with wild strawberry jam and home-roasted coffee.

In addition to preparing delectable meals, Ferko wrote about cooking and published a series of articles for the magazine *House Beautiful*. An example shown below featured recipes for cooking with fresh flowers. Others highlighted smoked meats and Hungarian dishes, such as stuffed cabbage.

Flowers in Cooking?

And why not? Flowers are sugar and spice and other things nice. They can broaden your palette of flavors in several piquant directions. This summer give them a whirl in your kitchen

By FRANCIS KALNAY

1971, 4, 10



An article Ferko wrote for *House Beautiful*, April 1960. Photo provided by Katherine Fennelly.

You can read more about my grandfather's life as a spy, linguist, children's book author and an epicure in my book: *Family Declassified* (Sunbury Press, 2023).

[1] *Friends and Their Food* by Virginia [Safford, Virginia. *Friends and Their Food*. Dillon Press, New York, 1969.] Safford, 1968