

JOIN THE GAZETTE!

March 22, 2022



A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Almost as old as the Coop itself, the *Linewaiters' Gazette* has long been the official newspaper of the Park Slope Food Coop. Documenting the major issues of the Coop and staff and the lives of its members, the *Gazette* provides a time capsule of change in and around Park Slope, Brooklyn, and the changing relationship between people and food over half a century.

What started as a print publication reproduced by mimeograph is now a digital publication created by perhaps the Coop's largest committee of more than 60 people. The *Gazette* is looking for new members, particularly experienced reporters, individuals familiar with WordPress to prepare images for publication, and members for the email marketing team. We seek team players for workslots that fulfill the Coop work obliga-

tion.

If interested in joining, send a cover letter and a resume or some other representation of your qualifications to GazetteSubmissions@psfc.coop. We strongly encourage applications from BIPOC and members of the LGBTQ+ community. We can best serve the Coop if our squad reflects the PSFC's overall diversity.

CELEBRATING THE AFRICAN DIASPORA ON THE COOP'S SHELVES

March 22, 2022



By Zoe Singer

Above, from left to right: Fonio, an ancient, gluten-free grain from West Africa (image by Adam Bartos); Moroccan shakshuka (photo courtesy of Mina); Caribbean-inspired ice cream (photo courtesy of Crème & Cocoa).

The aisles of the Coop reflect a commitment to local, artisanal foods and diverse, global influences. During Black History Month this February, I wanted to learn more about

the African diasporic (see definition, below) flavors I found while shopping, from Caribbean ice cream to Moroccan condiments and a West African grain I'd never tried before. So I reached out to the producers to ask about their stories and how these flavors, which reflect the African diaspora, landed on Coop shelves.

Tropical Sunshine in the Freezer

Friends of mine had been rhapsodizing about Crème and Cocoa's Caribbean Queen soursop ice cream, and I was thrilled to discover there's also a non-dairy version. Indeed, this traditional Caribbean ice cream flavor is uniquely refreshing and indulgent. Crème and Cocoa co-owner Omar Thorpe described the flavor as mango-like and lemony. He and Astrid Thorpe (they are partners in business and marriage) purée sweet, well-ripened soursop, known as *guanabana* in Central American countries, into their dairy and non-dairy coconut bases for this celebrated flavor.



Crème and Cocoa owners Omar & Astrid Thorpe.

Omar is Panamanian and Astrid is Haitian-American. The couple met and live in Brooklyn with their three children. In addition to running the Crème and Cocoa scoop shop in Prospect Lefferts Gardens, they stock stores, including the Coop, and offer national and local delivery. In the warmer months, their ice cream bike can be booked for anything from corporate events to block parties. The shop also makes a fabulous place to host a party. In addition to the more familiar ice cream flavors, the couple churn

fresh, local ingredients into flavors that pay homage to their tropical, Caribbean upbringing, from grapenut soursop to rum raisin, sorrel sorbet, and a fantastic non-dairy peanut punch. And they're always trying out something new, from bourbon vanilla with a hibiscus swirl to dark chocolate stout. For Mother's Day last year, Coop shoppers were treated to a special run of Roses and Pearls, made with rose petals and edible chocolate pearls. We can't wait to see what they come up with this year!

A Little Grain With Big Impact

Pierre Thiam and Phil Teverow also met on the streets of Brooklyn, back in the early 2000s. Pierre, born and raised in Senegal, is a celebrated chef, restaurateur, author, entrepreneur, and environmental activist whose innovative cooking is rooted in the traditions of West Africa. Phil is a food industry veteran who pioneered the introduction of unusual ingredients (including quinoa, in the 1980s). The friends founded Yolélé in 2017 to change conditions for rural West African smallholder farmers and distribute African food products including fonio, a climate-friendly, nutritious ancient grain from the Sahel region. Yolélé is a Fulani term of exuberance used throughout West and Central Africa. It roughly translates to "let the good times roll." People shout out "yolélé!" to get parties started and people dancing. The Fulani people are the world's largest nomadic group, living across government-drawn country lines.



PHOTO BY EVANSUNG, COURTESY OF YOLÉLÉ

Raw fonio.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL BERMAN

Fonio pilaf is available at the Coop, in aisle 6.

Fonio is a tiny, nutritious gluten-free grain that grows in West Africa and cooks similarly to couscous, with a nutty flavor. This climate-smart ancient grain is grown exclusively by smallholder family farmers across the Sahel region in West Africa. Yolélé sources their fonio from Mali, Senegal and Guinea. Back in Brooklyn, the grain is transformed into delightful chips and quick-cooking, pre-seasoned pilafs in flavors including Afro-Funk, made with fermented locust beans; Greens, made with moringa and spinach; Yassa, with chile, onion and lime; Jollof, with tomato and bell pepper; and plain. Plain fonio is a nice gluten-free base for everything from sweet potato pie to crisp coated fried okra.

Elegant Flavors of North Africa



Mina Kallamni, the founder of Mina, at the market.

Mina Kallamni grew up in Casablanca, which is on the Atlantic Coast of the Chaouia plain, in central-western Morocco, and is the country's chief port. When Mina first tasted harissa, the spicy red chile pepper condiment originally from Tunisia, she loved it and made it her own, developing a fresh-tasting, spicy recipe that drew raves. Mina went on to study cooking in Paris, then ran a successful high-end catering business in New York City.



The jars of Mina Harissa are available at the Coop, in aisle 6.

After she retired, her children worked with her to launch Mina in 2010, a line of authentic Moroccan pantry staples including preserved lemons, shakshuka sauce and bright-tasting tagine sauces. They source natural, non-GMO ingredients from family farms in Morocco. The flagship harissa is intensely spicy and savory—try it with eggs, blended into a dip or anywhere you might use a hot flavorful condiment. The products make Mina’s fantastic recipes easily accessible, from chicken tagine with preserved lemons and olives to a complex-tasting shakshuka that simply entails simmering eggs in the flavorful sauce.



PHOTO COURTESY MINA

Coconut curry chicken.

Note

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “African diaspora refers to the long-term historical process by which people of African descent have been scattered from their ancestral homelands to other parts of the world.” And per Oldways: “African Diaspora is the term commonly used to describe the mass dispersion of peoples from Africa during the Transatlantic Slave Trades, from the 1500s to the 1800s. This Diaspora took millions of people from Western and Central Africa to different regions throughout the Americas and the Caribbean. These African ancestors landed in regions that featured different local foods and cuisines, as well as other cultural influences, that shaped their unique cooking styles.”

Zoe Singer is a former food writer and recipe developer turned grant writer. She is a lifelong Brooklynite and longtime Coop member.

FEBRUARY 22, 2022, GENERAL MEETING

March 22, 2022



ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE CARSON

February GM Covers Hearing Committee Election, Explores Child Care Proposal

By Frank Haberle

On February 22, approximately 110 PSFC members gathered by Zoom for the February General Meeting. The agenda items included voting for Hearing Administration Committee candidates, and discussion of a proposal to allow one member of a two-parent household to suspend membership in order to take care of children. Several brief committee and coordinator reports rounded out the events. With two items on the agenda, a smaller February crowd, and seasoned veterans running the event the meeting wrapped up in a crisp 90 minutes.

Electing New Hearing Committee Members

The first agenda item invited attending members to vote on two members who sought to join the Hearing Administration Committee (HAC). As explained by Committee member Dominique Bravo, the HAC acts as part of the PSFC's Disciplinary Com-

mittees, playing the role of organizing hearings by scheduling the events, calling in Coop members for hearings, and making sure that all procedures are followed. Bravo invited the two candidates, both 20-year members of the Coop, to speak about their qualifications. Only one of the two candidates, Israella Mayeri, was in attendance.

“I joined the Coop when I moved to this neighborhood,” said Mayeri. “I joined the Coop because I liked the people and I liked the idea of joining a cooperative. I want to join this committee to make a greater contribution to the Coop.”

Several attending members asked questions, including: “The Disciplinary Committee seems like such an important committee that does such confidential work. What is your experience and what makes you qualified to serve on this committee?” Bravo, who is a lawyer, clarified that there are a number of committees and that this committee does not manage the actual hearings. “I’m a retired lawyer,” Mayeri added. “I’m very good with working with other people in a team. I want to contribute to this effort.”

Allowing Parent of Young Children to Leave Membership

The second agenda item was a discussion item that allows one member of a two-adult household with a child or children under school age to leave membership. As presented by Ryan Snelson, a member of the Coop since December, the agenda item stated, “The Coop needs to better accommodate pandemic parents—allowing one partner to leave indefinitely so the other partner can care for their child or children under school age.”

“Being a parent right now is extremely difficult,” Snelson said, opening the discussion. “What makes it more difficult is being a parent and being able to meet shopping and work shift requirements. All we are asking for is that the Coop allow one parent to take care of their child. I’ve brought this up a number of times with the membership office. I keep hearing, ‘This is the way it has always been done.’ I’m asking for one household partner to not have to work shifts.”

Members weighed in on the proposal. One asked for clarification: “Would one member be exempt from the work requirement, or would they be placed on leave?” Another added, “We could make an effort to restart child care, which would be a better way. I am somewhat opposed to keeping people out because we need member labor but also because it’s an important part of building the bond in the community.” Questions were raised about how to accommodate single-parent households and people who are taking care of elders and sick family members. A recurring concern focused on drawing from the pool of member workers we need to keep the Coop fully functioning.

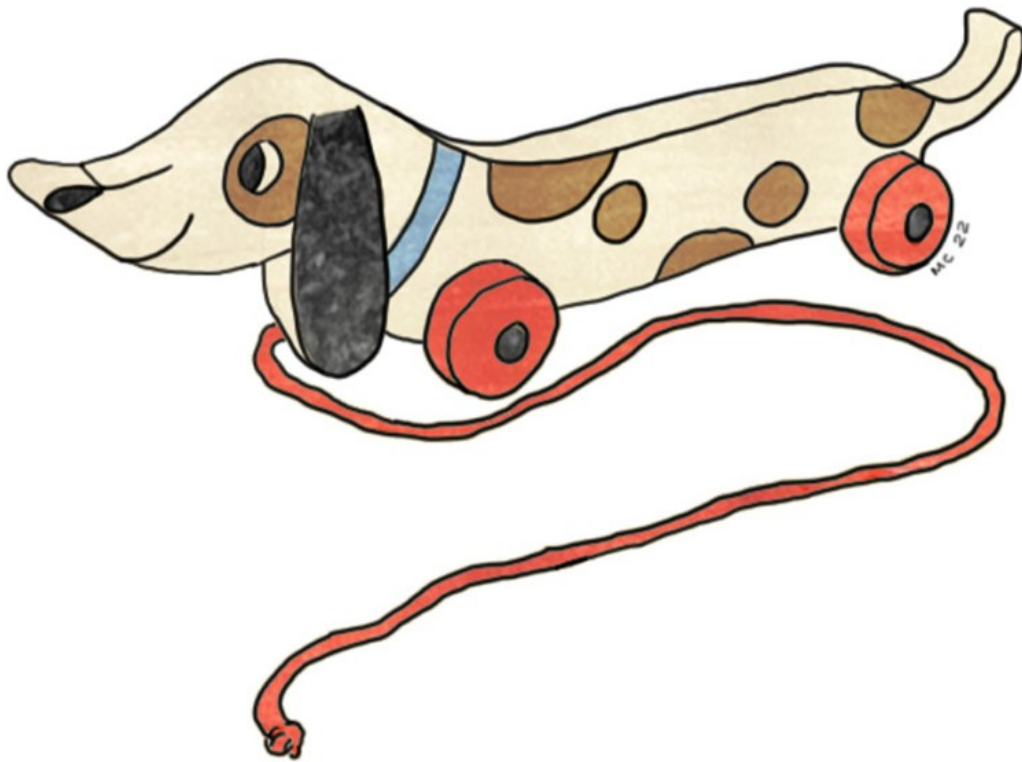


ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE CARSON

As one member noted, “As a new member you may not understand how the Coop works. When you say, ‘Half my household is not working,’ you’re doing something that is non-Coop. We need all our labor. There are other things we can be doing. If parents decide to opt out it undermines our model. Very few coops can do our work. Honestly, you just joined the Coop. Why do you want to mess with our model?”

“Nobody’s trying to undermine the Coop for this model,” Snelson responded. “I’m just

asking for us to look at this from the perspective of parents with young children. Do we want to look at the way we do business? Is the end game for the Coop to make more money, or increase labor?"

One member added, "I think child care is a really important part of the Coop. If people aren't in favor of this proposal, then we should consider bringing back child care." Another responded, "This may be part of a larger issue that concerns other members who are caring for people right now. I don't see how taking back child care can be done right now. I think this is a non-issue."

Snelson wrapped up the conversation by thanking everyone for their consideration. "I appreciate this, but I'm not asking for child care," he concluded. "I'm asking for a policy where one parent can leave the Coop for child care responsibility. All your points about how the Coop worked in 1973 are good points, but this is not 1973."

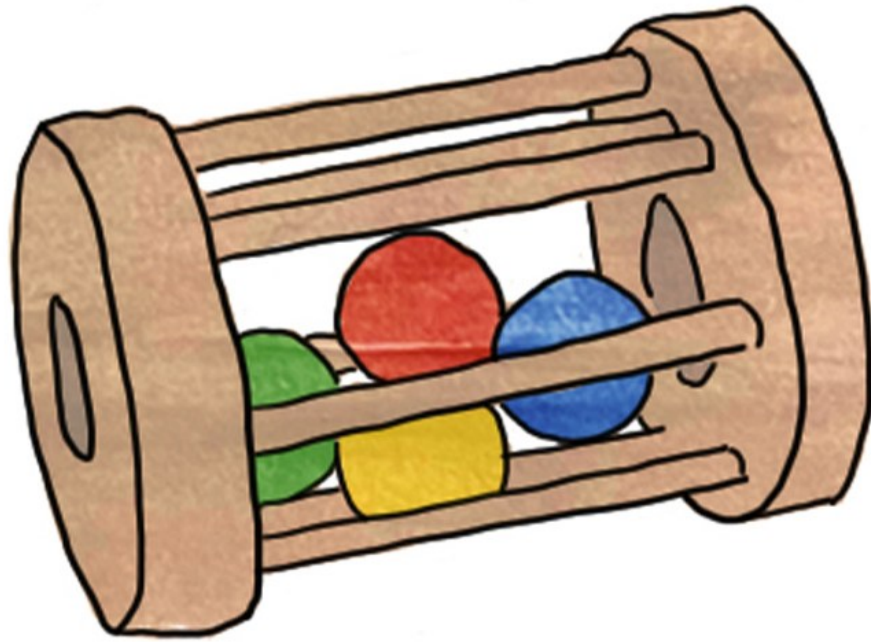


ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE CARSON

Committee and Coordinator Reports

Prior to the agenda items, there were a number of reports. Joe Holtz, General Manager, General Coordinator and Treasurer, reported on Coop finances, underscoring that there were indicators that the first four weeks of the 2022 fiscal year were off to a slow start, but that we are finally close to a cash flow break-even. “The advent of adding new members is important,” Holtz said. “We lost 4,500 to 5,000 members during

COVID. We are building back. We are now at about 13,000 and adding 100 or so a week.” When asked what the optimal enrollment would be, Holtz said “we had 17,100 members when the pandemic started. Right now, we have a goal of 15,000. Let’s get there first.” Other members asked about how long price markups and fluctuating prices (which reflect price fluctuations and increases passed on by suppliers) would last. Holtz added that when member labor returns to 100% and the temporary worker system is sunsetted, the Coop will be able to look more closely at lowering prices.

General Coordinator Ann Herpel reported on the return of the member workforce and enrollment. “We are now reintroducing the food processing in the basement. If you are interested in olives and cheese work, you can find those shifts now. We have planned for the temp people to be here another two months.” Regarding enrollment, Herpel stated that “we have new member enrollment sessions four times a week now with over 100 appointments to enroll. We have 1,000 new members since we started enrollment on December 5. Staff and members are reporting that the new members have been really enthusiastic.” A very brief report on several international labor events in the news was reported by Bart DeCourcy of the International Trade Information Squad, rounding out the committee and Coordinator reports. In comments just before the reports, Imani Q’ryn, Board member, encouraged members to consider running for Board membership. “I’ve been on the Board 20 years. I want to encourage others to join the Board, especially people of color. If you love the Coop, help us protect the voice of the people.”

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF TERRACYCLE AT THE COOP?

March 22, 2022



ILLUSTRATION BY DEBORAH TINT

By Christopher Cox

There are—or were, before the pandemic—three types of recycling done at the Coop. The first is the same sort of recycling members might be doing at home: aluminum cans and plastic bottles; paper and cardboard; glass and hard plastic. Most of this, generated by shoppers and staff as they go about their day, is collected regularly by the private carting company that also handles the Coop’s garbage bound for the landfill. The second involves materials used to ship food and other products to the Coop: cardboard boxes, plastic wrapping for pallets, and large plastic containers for items like olives.

Those first two recycling options were disrupted at the beginning of the pandemic but have since resumed. But the third type, the TerraCycle program, is still on hold. TerraCycle, a private recycling business based in New Jersey, was the port of last resort for

Coop members who wanted to divert baby-food pouches, energy-bar wrappers, toothpaste tubes, plastic bags and other hard-to-recycle plastics from the landfill. Members could drop off these materials—as long as they came from products bought at the Coop—on special collection days, when the Environmental Committee set up tables to sort them in front of the main entrance. Everything would then be sent along to TerraCycle, which would then upcycle them into new, useful products.

The program started in 2015, with twice-monthly collections, and it was an immediate success. “We wanted to be more responsible about the waste the Coop members are generating from products purchased at the Coop,” Ann Herpel, a General Coordinator, said. Sarah Chandler, the member who came to run the TerraCycle program, claimed that the program was an important part of the Coop’s overall environmental footprint: “We are doing our part to keep soft plastic packaging out of our city’s waste stream.”

As the number of participating members grew, however, so did the costs. TerraCycle charged about \$180 per box of recycled materials, and the Environmental Committee soon had to go before the General Meeting to ask for more funding.

Eventually it became clear that the Coop needed to find a different solution. “The amount budgeted to the Environmental Committee by the General Meeting every year they were going to exceed over and over again, because we were using these boxes, which are expensive,” said Herpel. The committee soon hit upon a different way to get collected materials to New Jersey: They would forgo the boxes and instead use the Coop’s baler to put everything onto a single pallet, which a third-party trucking company would then deliver to TerraCycle. This was still expensive—Herpel estimated it cost around \$8,000 a year—but cheaper than using the company’s boxes, which was approaching \$12,000.



ILLUSTRATION BY DEBORAH TINT

Chandler and the other members of the TerraCycle squad soon faced a new problem: where to store the pallet before shipping. It would take two or sometimes three different collection dates to fill an entire pallet—which meant that it had to be stored somewhere dry where it could remain out of the way. “So we would have this pallet for a month that lived in the meeting room,” said Herpel.

This arrangement was awkward but manageable and continued until the pandemic shut down the TerraCycle program (and almost everything else). A message posted on the Coop’s website in March 2020 reads: “Check back for updates over the coming weeks. TerraCycle collections will resume as soon as we are safely and responsibly able to do so.” Two years later, TerraCycle collections have not resumed.

I asked Herpel if the cost of the program was part of the reason that it hasn’t resumed. The Coop, after all, continues to lose money because of the pandemic’s dis-

ruptions. She said that money wasn't the issue in this case: The TerraCycle program still has approved funding from the fall of 2019 that hasn't been used. "There's a budget to restart TerraCycle already," Herpel said, "but they just basically need to find the space for this pallet and actually staff the collection and schedule the collection moments."

The pallet problem isn't trivial. The meeting room space, where it once sat, has been transformed. At first, the room served as place to serve meals to the 130 temporary employees hired to operate the Coop while member labor was suspended. Now it serves as a staging room for some of the bulk processing that has moved upstairs to avoid overcrowding in the poorly ventilated basement. Herpel said there is no more space for the pallet there.

The fate of the TerraCycle program then rests, at least in part, with the Environmental Committee. If they can solve the pallet problem, they'll also have to reconstitute the workforce needed to run the collection and arrange for the shipper to take everything to New Jersey. Chandler says she's ready to get started: "I'm looking forward to supporting the staff and rebuilding the squad so that TerraCycle is available to everyone again." Members of the Environmental Committee did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

The Environmental Committee's website, last updated in 2017, seems to offer some hope for the future. The committee exists, it says, to ensure that the Coop stays true to its mission to "support the best products and practices in regard to the health, safety, and preservation of humans, animals, and the overall biosphere."

THREES BREWING AGAINST VACCINATION MANDATES

March 22, 2022

Before you buy another cute graphic can of Threes Brewery beer, please look up what the CEO has been ranting about on Twitter.

He called vaccine mandates a “crime against humanity,” comparing them to the Jim Crow South and Nazi Germany.

“If you are not speaking out against them, you are a conspirator,” Josh Stylman said in a tweet about the mandates. “Everyone is entitled to their own opinion. Yours just happens to be unscientific, immoral, and evil.”

No. Just NO! Drink a different beer, Cooperators.

Lisa Guido

P.S. March 1 update: Threes CEO Josh Stylman has stepped down due to public outcry and will divest his equity, although the timeline for that has not yet been finalized, according to Threes Brewing.