# HOT SAUCE SUMMER!

July 11, 2022




ILLUSTRATION BY DEBORAH TINT

*By Zoe Singer*

First, the alarming news about hot sauce: In April, Huy Fong Foods, which produces the widely adored large squeeze bottles of sriracha, announced that severe weather had impacted their main ingredient. With deliveries delayed until after Labor Day,

we’re in for a sriracha shortage this summer.

As of this writing, several brands of sriracha, including the delectable Three Mountains yellow sriracha, are still on the Coop’s shelves. (Hey, now, no hoarding—remember when we had to cap toilet paper purchases?) On a brighter note, a plethora of other fiery sauces made by area artisans are in stock as well, just waiting to spice up your summer picnics! Here’s a roundup to pique your interest in piquant flavors beyond your go-to picante.

The local, woman-owned Queen Majesty brand produces its hot sauces in Long Island City in small batches using fresh ingredients. The bottles, which boast gorgeously illustrated labels, contain unusual, intriguing flavor combinations like Red Habanero and Black Coffee, and the searingly delicious Cocoa Ghost. Recipes on their website for salad dressing could inspire many a summer meal.

> “AS TEMPERATURES RISE AND SRIRACHA LEVELS DWINDLE THIS SUMMER, WE CAN LOOK TO THE AGE-OLD WISDOM THAT EATING SPICY FOODS CAN KEEP YOU COOL.”

Up in the Hudson Valley, Ric Orlando emphasizes that his hot sauce recipes are “balanced,” with more flavor than “shock.” His Purple Haze Psychedelic Sauce is based on the habanero chile, combined with pineapple, herbs, ginger, cider vinegar and red cabbage, which lends its color and, he claims, makes the habanero easier to digest. A bit milder, with a warming sweetness and complexity from clover honey, grapefruit, and turmeric, the Dirty Blonde also makes a fantastic glaze for grilling.




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Ithaca, New York is home to Mojo's Sauce, which showcases Finger Lakes produce in their Smokin' Hot Heirloom Hot Sauce (try it in your next Bloody Mary!) and Sunshine Carrots, a medium-spicy, sunny-tasting concoction of Scotch-bonnet peppers, lemongrass, ginger and roasted carrots that will perk up your next sandwich.

Closer to home, Brooklyn Delhi's Guntur Sannam hot sauce puts this whole sriracha crisis in perspective. Made from a single-origin heirloom variety of the Guntur Sannam chili pepper from Andhra Pradesh, along with tomatoes, garlic, tamarind and asafetida, it's a mix of savory, smoky and sweet spice that I recommend on eggs, noodles, rice, tofu, lentils, chicken…you get the idea.

Brooklynite Auria Abraham, owner of Auria's Malaysian Kitchen (full disclosure: our kids were in school together and I have been hooked on her sambal ever since), imports fermented shrimp paste from Malacca, a coastal city in Malaysia, for her intense

Hot Chili Sambal. I've been adding tiny amounts of the condiment to my stir-fries for years, where the seafood flavor blooms, lending added depth and savor. Auria's homey, approachable recipes are an online cooking class in themselves.

The preserved lemon harissa from New York Shuk is another pretender to the sriracha throne, with a rich tanginess that makes it more versatile than many spicier versions of the North African and Middle Eastern hot sauce. The super simple recipe for grilled eggplant salad on their website is a perfect showcase for the combination of salty preserved lemons and traditional harissa spices (chili, garlic, coriander, caraway and cumin).

As temperatures rise and sriracha levels dwindle this summer, we can look to the age-old wisdom that eating spicy foods can keep you cool. What better time to explore the Coop's diversity of local, artisanal hot sauces?

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

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## THE COOP AND THE SEAN CASEY ANIMAL SHELTER

July 11, 2022




**Supporting Animal Rescue Efforts: PSFC Hopes to Reengage Members in Donation Program for Local Shelter**

*By Frank Haberle*

Anybody who has been a Coop member for a reasonable amount of time has heard at least something about the Coop's longstanding relationship with CHIPS, a local soup kitchen and residence for young mothers. Coop members and staff have donated produce, volunteered and worked shifts to ensure support for this local community nonprofit.




On a much smaller scale, and completely under the radar, in the past decade the Coop has also moved products like cat litter, dog food and other essential supplies to Sean Casey Animal Rescue. Boxes of dented cans of dog and cat food and bags of litter in damaged packaging that would otherwise not sell on the Coop shopping floor have instead been packed up and delivered to the nearby Animal Rescue Center by a committed team of staff and members.

The effort to collect and move products to the shelter began several years before the COVID crisis, with coordinators and members working together to collect and deliver needed items to Sean Casey, located just off of Fort Hamilton Avenue in Kensington. Sean Casey Animal Rescue is a thriving animal rescue and rehabilitation center that currently takes in over 2,000 animals per year, more than any private rescue in New York. Sean Casey shelters and rehabilitates animals and then works to find them loving, adoptive homes. Operated largely by volunteers, since its founding in 1998, Sean Casey has saved more than 8,000 animals from the city's Animal Care & Control

alone.

**Starting With Litter**




The project started with a cat litter problem, remembers Jessa Fisher, then an on-site receiving coordinator and now a remote Coop staff member. “I was the Tuesday monitor, from 2:30 to 3:30,” Fisher recalls. “Every Tuesday afternoon, I had 20 to 30 receiving workers I was in charge of. I was obsessed with using every worker efficiently and not wasting time with people standing around not knowing what to do. (People probably hated having me as their monitor!) That’s when we came up with the lists of ‘things to do when you think there is nothing to do.’ ”

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MADE THE GARBAGE REALLY HEAVY AND SEEMED LIKE A TOTAL WASTE.




One of the big jobs every Tuesday was handling the cat litter. “Every week we got a whole U-boat’s worth, maybe 40 bags total, of the World’s Best cat litter in both green and red bags from our main distributor, UNFI. We also received another 10 bags of the Feline Pine cat litter in bags. The World’s Best came shrink-wrapped in plastic, three bags to a bundle. But when the bundles got sent to the aisle, people would invariably use the sharp end of their box cutter to open [them] up, without anyone being there to instruct them. The bags would bust open, there was cat litter everywhere, and a perfectly usable but broken bag of cat litter had to be thrown out. This made the garbage really heavy and seemed like a total waste. At the time, it seemed like we were ripping open one out of every three bags.”

Fisher addressed the problem by dedicating shift workers to focus their attention on taking shrink wrap off bags of cat litter and putting them in milk crates, so they

stacked easier and there was less chance of bag damage. The member workers developed a technique using the blunt end of the box cutters. “During my receiving shift,” Fisher remembers, “I would have two strong people doing this job, dismantling a U-boat of cat litter and transferring bags into milk crates, sending the U-boats down to the basement and stacking very heavy crates of cat litter in the basement. Invariably, though, we still lost bags. Not only that, we always accumulated dented pet food cans or cans where the label was missing, neither of which we could sell. I couldn’t bear this going into the garbage as our normal soup kitchens didn’t take pet food, and we paid for our garbage by weight.”




Another coordinator came up with the idea of sending the food and litter to Sean Casey. “I called Sean Casey and, as it turned out, they were happy to be the recipients of our torn cat litter bags and dented cans,” Fisher recalled. “During my shift I would ask if any receiver wanted to go on a bike ride or drive their car to Sean Casey to drop off some donations. People were often willing to go (anything to get out of

stocking aisles), but didn't always have transportation. Two of our regular receiving workers, Zach Poff and David Cutler, were always happy and willing to make the delivery. (Shout out to Zach and David!) But those two were only here once every four weeks and we needed this done every week. I was the only receiving coordinator who oversaw this and it needed to get done once a week, or the dedicated milk crate we had on the top of the gray shelf in the receiving room for damaged goods would start overflowing. So I eventually made it a shift, and kind of tucked it in with the vitamin workers I oversaw."

**The Need Today**




COVID reshaped the project and limited the Coop's ability to dedicate time to collecting and delivering the supplies. Presently, there is no member shift committed to the pet supplies. But while the flow of donated materials has been stemmed, the need has grown. City-wide, after an initial burst of pet adoptions in the early months of the COVID crisis, the numbers of rescued dogs and cats began to soar again in the past

year, leading to overwhelming demand for programs like Sean Casey.




Fisher, who relocated to Rochester in 2020 and continues working remotely for the Coop as the vitamin and supplement coordinator, ensured that the project would continue, although it was slowed during the COVID period, when there were no longer shifts. Today, Receiving Coordinator Charles Parham, who has been at the Coop for several years in the meat and produce departments, has taken over the project. As Parham recalls, during COVID, “I noticed a build-up of pet food in the receiving area, and I connected with Sean Casey. I now take the materials directly to Sean Casey. The amount varies from week to week, depending on breakages that occur when pallets arrive off the truck, or when members mistakenly cut into bags, or dented cans.” Parham’s interactions with the Sean Casey staff are limited when he drops off the materials at a table set up outside the facility for donations (at 153 East Third Street). “I go in and we say hello, but only briefly,” he explains. “The staff there are really focused on taking care of the animals.”

“WE COULD CONDUCT A PET FOOD DRIVE, SIMILAR TO WHAT WE DO FOR CHIPS,” **PARHAM ADDED.**




Asked about the possible return of a member shift to support this project, Parham said that “bringing the shift back could happen, but it might have to be modified. Regular pickup of pet items might not be required or available always. So maybe the shift would include other Coop work in addition to the pet food drop-off. Reflecting on other ways that members can support this effort, Parham added that we could conduct a pet food drive, similar to what we do for CHIPS. “I think if the members knew more about the need, they would certainly help.”




Sean Casey Animal Rescue welcomes volunteers, donations, animal foster families and adoptions. For more information please visit https://www.nyanimalrescue.org/volunteer.

*Frank Haberle has been a Coop member for nearly 30 years. He works for New Settlement in the Bronx and is the author of the novel* Shufflers*.*

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## IT’S SUMMER JAM SEASON

July 11, 2022




*A photo essay by Rod Morrison*

Flavors abound in the hot summer months, so why not spend a few hours in one's kitchen capturing the delightful aromas of the many berries, stone and citrus fruits, and spices at the Coop?

Choose distinctive stone fruits such as plums, peaches or apricots.




Or opt for juicy berries such as blackberries, strawberries, blueberries or raspberries—or a mixture of all. You'll have distinctive flavors ready for a jam bursting with the summer sun.




Add juice and zest from an organic lemon or lime, and your flavors will intensify.




Next, choose your sugars and fruit pectin. Add spices such as cinnamon and ginger, all readily available at the Coop.




Last but not least, choose your jars from the wide selection available at the Coop. Th-ese are currently stored in the produce section on the shelves near the potatoes.




Don’t forget, weather permitting, there is always time for a rooftop jam session. Invite your friends for a homemade jam tasting.

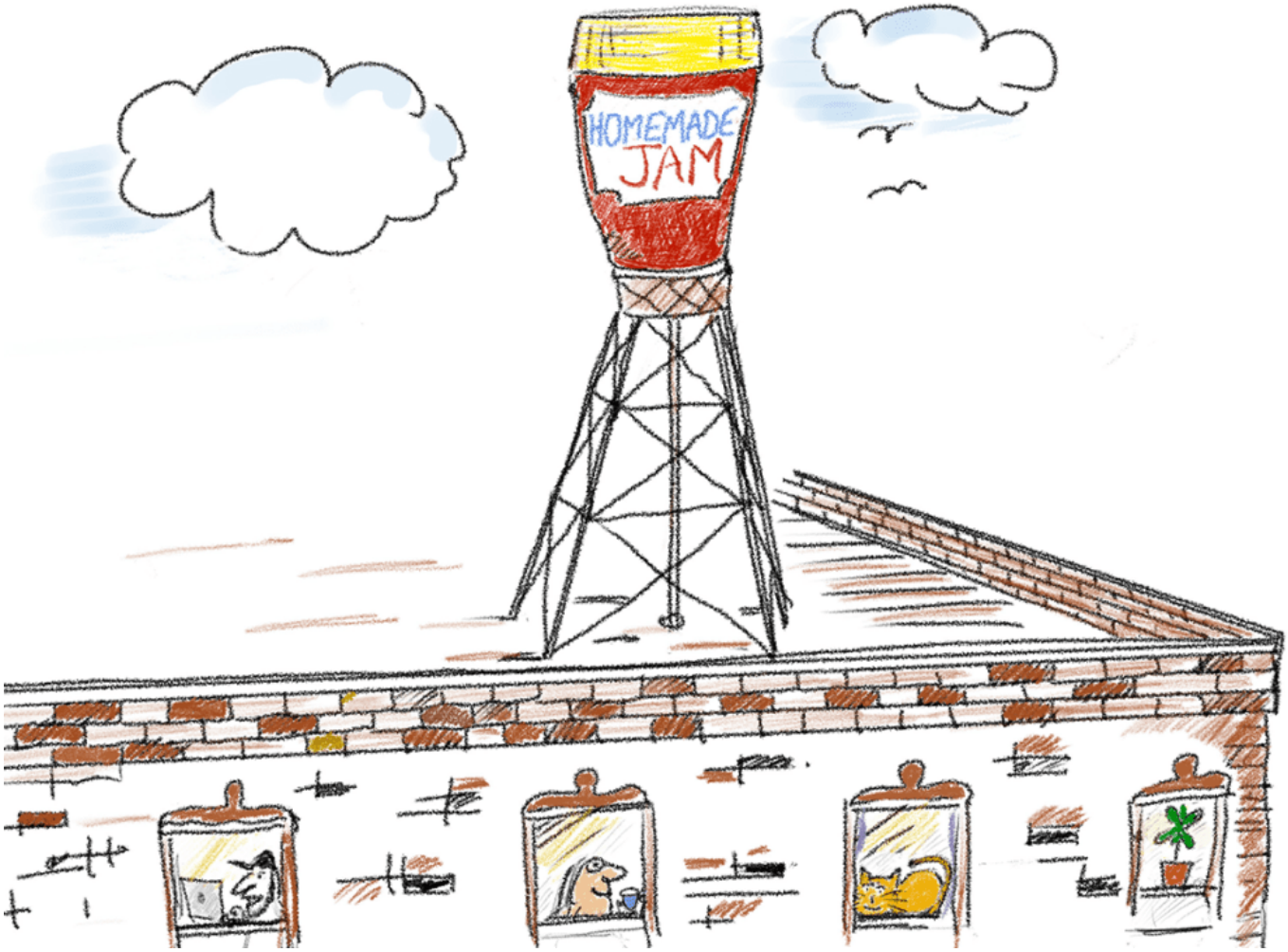



ILLUSTRATION BY ROD MORRISON

Have a great summer!

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## A SECOND LOCATION FOR THE COOP: STATUS REPORT

July 11, 2022




ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE CARSON

*By Christopher Cox*

The pandemic was a great wrecker of plans, large and small. In early 2020, long-time member and Squad Leader Jonathan Farber and the committee studying the possibility of opening a second location of the Coop was ready to address the General Meeting. But then there were no General Meetings, and the report the committee had prepared was set aside. The Coop was fighting for its survival, not looking to expand.

In the months that followed, the Coop lost over 5,000 members. Financial losses rose as high as $120,000 a week. But gradually, as members returned, first as shoppers and then as workers, the Coop's finances stabilized. New members began signing up. "We've had over 2,000 [prospective] members express the desire to join," General Coordinator Joe Holtz said. "We haven't let them all in yet."

Farber concluded that, with the Coop growing again, it's time to return to the subject of opening a second location. "I'm of the opinion that the Park Slope Food Coop is an

amazing institution with a great history and a great mission. And I felt that because we were very successful, it was part of our mission to expand, to share what we have with others." Holtz echoed this idea: "When you have something good, you should share it."

> "WHEN YOU HAVE SOMETHING GOOD, YOU SHOULD SHARE IT." GENERAL COORDINATOR JOE HOLTZ.

In November 2021, Farber asked to be put back on the agenda for a General Meeting so that he could present his committee's report on the possibility of opening a second location. He said he wanted to save any details from the report for discussion during the meeting but did reveal the report's final recommendation: "We do think it's feasible to open up a second location somewhere in Brooklyn."

**A Multiyear Process**

The second-location committee was established by a vote of the General Meeting in 2016, but Farber says he's been thinking about expanding the Coop since 2010. He began talking with one of the general coordinators about the idea. At the time, the Coop was overcrowded and orientations were being limited to reduce the number of new members joining each year. "We had basically grown to our full size and we didn't have the plan for what came next," Farber said. "It's taken us a decade of really hard focused work and attention to detail to get us to this point."

Farber, who joined the Coop in 1993, ended up going in front of the General Meeting four times before the proposal to create the committee passed. "I introduced it as a discussion item in, I believe, 2012 for the first time," he said. "We didn't get so far." But he was determined. In his professional life, Farber is a farmer and a landscape architect, and he knew from talking to organic and sustainable food producers in the region that they would cheer on an expansion. "The stronger the Coop is, the better for

our food system in general," he said.

Finally, at the General Meeting on November 29, 2016, a nine-person committee was elected to begin an 18-month feasibility study. The committee's original members—Kubi Ackerman, Eugenia Di Girolamo, Andrew Kimball, Michael Freedman-Schnapp, Adam Lubinsky, Dan Miller, Margaret Stix, Thomas Storck, and Farber himself—were drawn from a pool of over 50 applicants. The committee also includes General Coordinators Holtz, Elinoar Astrinsky and Joe Szladek.

Opening and operating a grocery store is devilishly complicated, and the committee members were chosen to represent each of the areas of expertise required to accomplish the task. "They were leaders in real estate and planning and architecture and finance," Farber said. One was a real estate attorney, another worked in the Department of City Planning.

The 18-month process ended up requiring more than three years to complete. They began by mapping where the Coop's members lived. They wanted a location that was more convenient for some existing members but that could also bring in a new cohort from elsewhere in Brooklyn. They also didn't want to undermine the original location: "Close but not too close," as Farber put it.

When the committee was created, they assumed they would buy rather than rent the location of the new store. Now, Farber says, both options are on the table. Holtz said that in either case, the Coop should be prepared to lose money on the second location in its first few quarters of operation, until enough shoppers arrive. "If you pick the right neighborhood, you could have a tremendous number and you could get up to speed pretty quickly," he said, "but it'll still take a little while."

OPENING AND OPERATING A GROCERY STORE IS DEVILISHLY COMPLICATED.

Farber was confident that the expansion wouldn't risk the Coop's financial stability. And, ultimately, by increasing the Coop's buying power and storage capacity, the second location could help lower prices for everyone.

**What's Next?**

The report may be ready to present to the General Meeting, but that's no guarantee that it will be on the agenda anytime soon. Fran Hawthorne, who serves on the Agenda Committee, said that they are working through a backlog of discussion items that keeps getting longer and longer. That's the result of several factors: General Meetings are shorter in the Zoom era; pandemic-related updates take up a lot of the allotted time; and many other proposals delayed by the disruptions of the last two years are now coming up for discussion.

Hawthorne said that because of a longstanding rule that big changes to the Coop aren't put up for discussion during the summer General Meetings, the second location wouldn't be on the agenda until the fall at the earliest. Farber said that though he was eager to present the committee's work, he was prepared for the delay. "It is very difficult to get items into and through the General Meeting," he said. "It takes a tremendous amount of tenacity and there are a lot of rules."

The report itself will be the same one that was ready in March 2020. Though both Brooklyn and the world are different places now, Farber said the committee's underlying recommendations remain the same. "We're going to speak to how things have changed," he said, "but we're not going to update the proposal."

Once the report is presented, members will have a chance to offer feedback. If the committee's recommendations are adopted, a new committee will be formed to enact them. If that sounds like another in a nearly interminable series of steps, Farber doesn't seem discouraged: "My hope is that a year from now, we will be looking at real estate."

*Christopher Cox is the author of* The Deadline Effect*, out in paperback on July 12, 2022.*