AUGUST GENERAL MEETING: DISAPPOINTMENT ABOUT BIKE RACKS AND CHILDCARE, BUT FINANCES LOOKING UP

October 4, 2022



ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN DONOHUE

By Jess Powers

Roughly 122 people attended the end-of-August Coop General Meeting on Zoom. The meeting covered Joe Holtz's suspension, Coop finances, the removal of bike racks, a call for the return of childcare, labor issues at Amy's Kitchen and other topics.

During the Open Forum, Coop members expressed appreciation for General Coordinator Joe Holtz and dismay with his recent 30-day suspension without pay. Staffer Gillian Chi shared that she and a member submitted a proposal for back pay and an apology. Later, Brian Shuman of the Oversight Committee shared that they received com-

plaints about the suspension and expect a report on the Personnel Committee, which levied the penalty, from the Oversight Committee. Other members asked whether the *Linewaiters' Gazette* will concurrently publish in print and whether members can be emailed upon publication. General Coordinator Ann Herpel said it wasn't possible to produce a web and a print version without a lot more work. She also recommended signing up for *Gazette* email notifications [scroll to the bottom of this page to do so].

THE COOP HAS AROUND 13,500 ACTIVE MEMBERS, WITH JUST OVER 10,000 WORKING MEMBERS. THE REMAINING 3,000 ARE ON WORK EXEMPTIONS.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Holtz updated members on the financial health of the Coop and shared five points that also appear in the summary of the financial statement.

First, the Coop is losing less money overall due to the return of member labor; second, the 4 percent increase in the markup, which went from 21 to 25 percent, contributed to an increase in income; third, projections show an average of 10 percent more sales than the previous year; fourth, there is a good financial cushion and the Coop is owed $1.5 million by the IRS. Another issue: the Coop needs to eventually pay into the pension plan. He also said there are pending questions about whether or not to lower prices, increase the number of checkouts, expand hours and up the number of people allowed in the Coop at the same time. A pilot of a home delivery system is also is being planned.

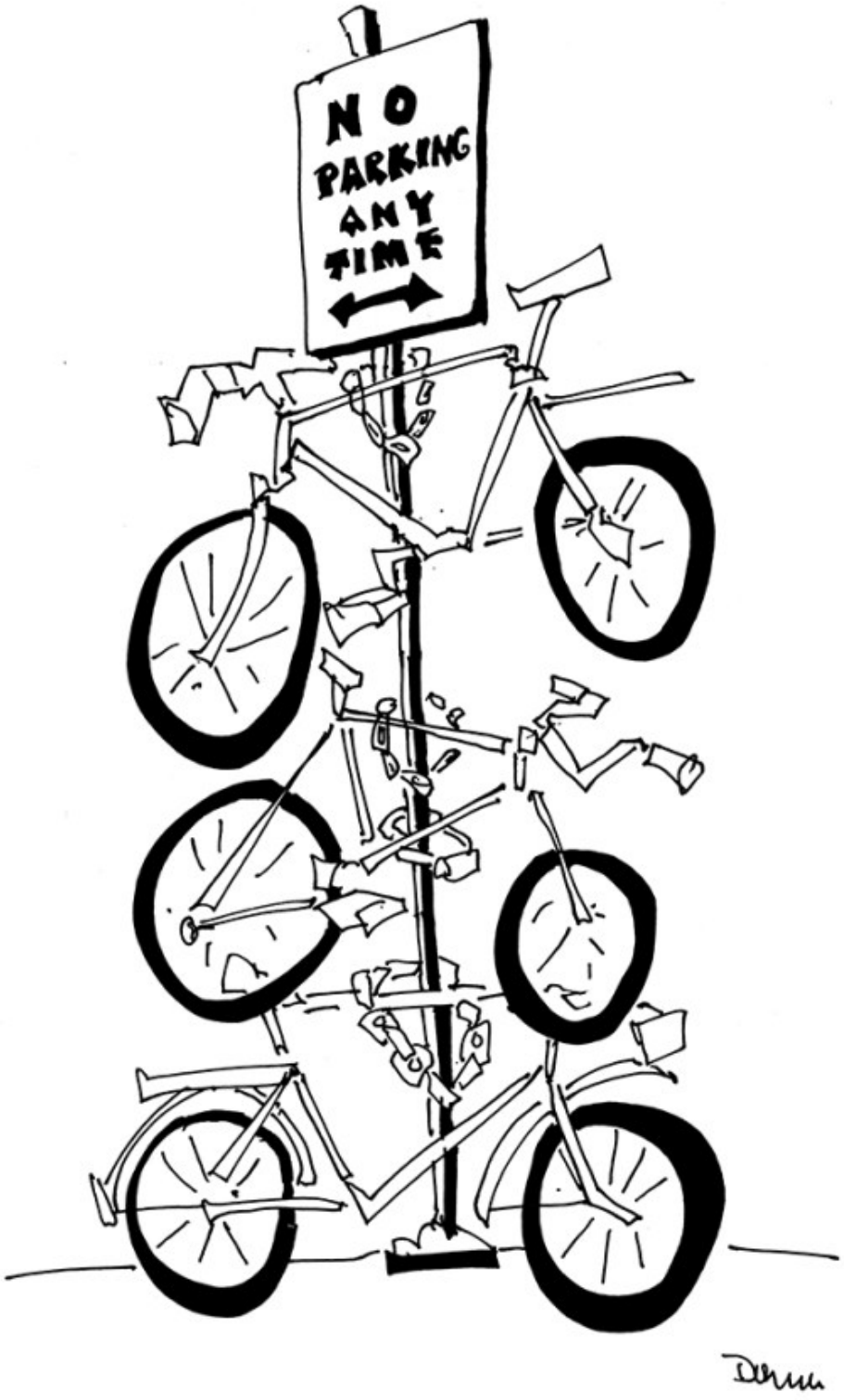


ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN DONOHUE

REMOVAL OF BIKE RACKS AND OTHER UPDATES

In the General Coordinator report, Ann Herpel acknowledged two new part-time membership coordinators to work on weekends: Karina Gee, who was previously a shopping squad leader, and Elly Dittmar, who floated in a variety of shifts.

Herpel noted that construction work is occurring next to the Coop at the former St. Francis Xavier School, now leased to the Department of Education. The Coop was informed by the contractor that during the next phase of construction a dumpster will be partially placed in our loading zone and that sometime in the fall the bike racks closest to the mural will be removed. They were installed by the Department of Transportation and approved by the former principal of St. Francis. She continued that the Coop will also likely lose the bike racks closest to the street and that the news was "disappointing." The Coop and its members can make an appeal to city agencies for other bike racks to be placed on Union St.

There was no food report this meeting.

MEMBERS AND WORKERS

As of the date of the meeting, there were around 13,500 active members of the Coop, with just over 10,000 working members. The remaining 3,000 are on work exemptions. The new member orientations fill up every week with an average of 81 new members assigned to work shifts. This growth, she stated, will "strengthen and fortify the bottom line." Attrition is seasonal, at about 17 percent, similar to pre-pandemic numbers.

Bookkeeping Coordinator Kathy Hieatt, who writes the member investment refund checks, added that she completes roughly 30 per week, fewer than the number of new members. John Tucker, a member recently eligible to retire, inquired whether his member labor—and that of other retirees—was needed. Herpel said that if an open shift appears on the calendar, it reflects the operational needs at that time.

LABOR CONCERNS AT AMY'S KITCHEN

Eric Frumin of the Labor Committee presented a report on Amy's Kitchen, a family-owned company that manufactures prepared frozen foods carried by the Coop. The Labor Committee was created in 2017 at a GM and reports on workers in the food chain, engages with suppliers and works to be a constructive force within that space. The labor story broke on NBC News and pieces followed on KQED and Eater.

In May, the Committee sent a series of investigatory questions regarding labor conditions to the company. After not receiving a response, they sent them again. At the last GM, the Committee asked the Coop to contact Amy's Kitchen, with the intention that, as the Coop is a significant customer, the company would take the obligation seriously. In turn, the GCs decided to ask the National Co+op Grocers (NCG), which serves as an intermediary between coops and producers to get better deals. Their spokesperson was already aware of the issues and agreed to send a letter to Amy's "at a high level" to press for an answer. Frumin believes that the questions had gaps but would enable us to get a more accurate picture of labor conditions.

Research by Labor Committee members was "distressing," according to Frumin. There are repeated injury rates and the company has failed to act. At four major facilities in California, Oregon and Idaho, reports on injuries from one plant are more than triple those of their peers in the frozen processing business. He compared the situation to Amazon's poor reputation among its peers in the warehousing industry. Amy's Kitchen is not reporting injuries and is having a "safety meltdown," he continued. The Committee is following their process to continue investigating and make a recommendation to membership.

CALL TO IMPROVE THE GM AGENDA

Beth Ruck and George Sarah Olken presented a discussion item on how members can help shape the GM agenda. With enthusiasm, Olken shared that they "love going to the GM for the promise of connecting. And while it isn't perfect, that means we can make it better, more vibrant and participatory." The pair were not advocating for a

specific proposal, but sought ideas and promised to return with ideas.

In a brief PowerPoint presentation, they explained the current process, by which any member-owner can propose an item. These are selected in order of submission, but some are prioritized due to urgency. One concern named was that the queue is not public, so members don't know if their proposal is already being addressed by someone else or if they can collaborate. The process can take a while, so one suggestion was a "vote-a-rama" for appointments to committees, for example. Another suggestion was to alternate the GM format to allow for more discussion time.

A lively discussion ensued with members suggesting chat rooms, utilizing Pol.is to create consensus, affirming the necessity of writing articles in the *Gazette* to publicize agenda items and emphasizing the need to be mindful of minority opinions as well. Coop member Bhakti Sondra Shaye also agreed that separating a discussion and a vote at two different meetings "doesn't seem logical" because the same people won't necessarily attend and it "detracts from democracy." Please email beruck@hotmail.com or georgeolken@gmail.com with suggestions.

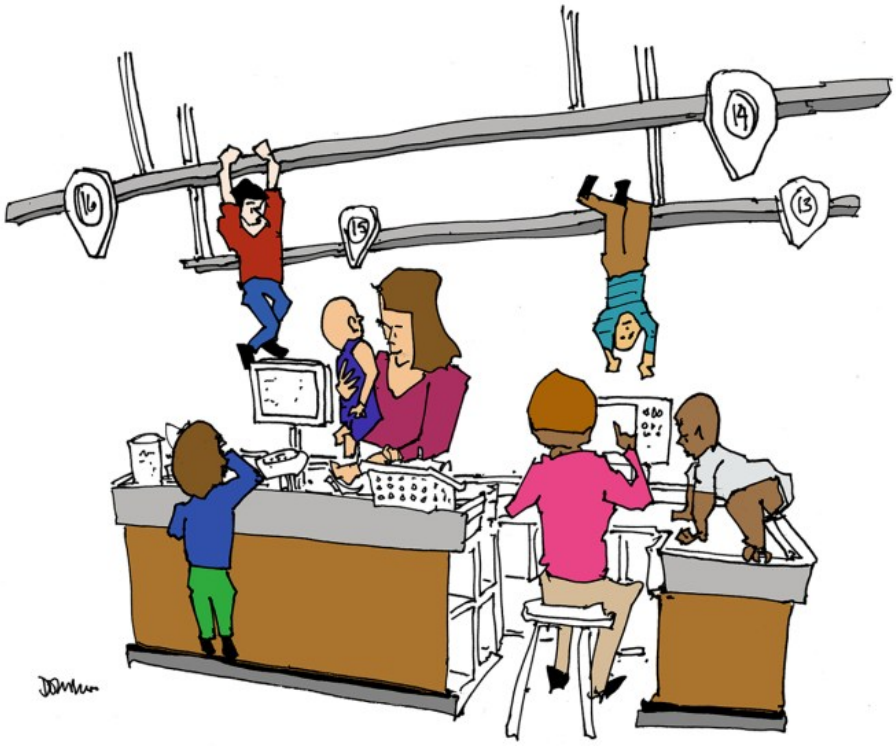


ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN DONOHUE

CHILDCARE UPDATE

Lauren Belski, a PSFC member for 15 years, and her husband, Brian Russ, brought forth a discussion about the current status of childcare at the Coop. She shared that her first shift was in childcare, at a time when she never thought she'd be a mother herself. Years later, she brought her children, connected with other parents and observed her kids making friends at childcare. "It was a special place and I really missed it," she said.

In a nod to the previous topic about agenda items at the GM, Lauren shared that they used the options available to them to lift up this issue: Brian published a letter to the editor in the Gazette, they repeatedly spoke with other parents, they waited for the return of childcare, and, finally, added it to the GM for discussion. Lauren lamented that during the "last six months especially, there are certain elements of procedures that exist and a lack of transparency about why they exist." She observed that member labor returned and childcare didn't, that masks aren't required in public places and that day cares are back open. She also experienced frustration with the response to their letter as well as with paying for a babysitter in order to do her work shift. Other families are experiencing the same hardships and falling behind on shifts, she shared, and the Coop should "stand up and welcome families back. Profits will go up. [Parents] buy for more than themselves; they're spending lots of money."

Lauren observed that the main thing holding the return of childcare back is the new bulk item machine currently housed in the former childcare space. She said, "they allocated a space that should be used to help working families for single use plastic bags."

Members responded to the presentation as "heartfelt and sensible." Another parent, David, stated that "parents are ready to leave the Coop if things don't change" and it's a "much less joyful place." He urged the Coop to "reassess where we are now." Nicholas, a member without children, was mindful of groups at the Coop that "may not have sway" and was in support. Beth Ruck thought that the childcare issue tied to-

gether many of the themes from the night's meeting, from financial health and stability to the "things that distinguish our institution from the myriad ways people have to shop and . . . centering community." While George agreed, they also raised the concerns of immune compromised members and eldercare.

General Coordinator Ann Herpel, in response to questions about how many children were accommodated at a time in childcare, explained that up to three childcare workers could be in attendance at a given time, caring for up to 12 children. Each childcare worker could bring up to two children of their own, limiting the number of available slots. Priority was given to working members over shopping members and there were times when childcare was closed because "no one showed up to work." GC Joe Holtz shared that childcare evolved around 1980 and, while he is committed personally to its return, there is a need to balance fears, public health considerations and to find a place for the bulk item machine.

The minutes for the previous meeting were approved and the meeting was adjourned.

Jess Powers works in emergency management and enjoys adventures in nature and eating. IG: @foodandfury

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SOMETHING'S FISHY

October 4, 2022

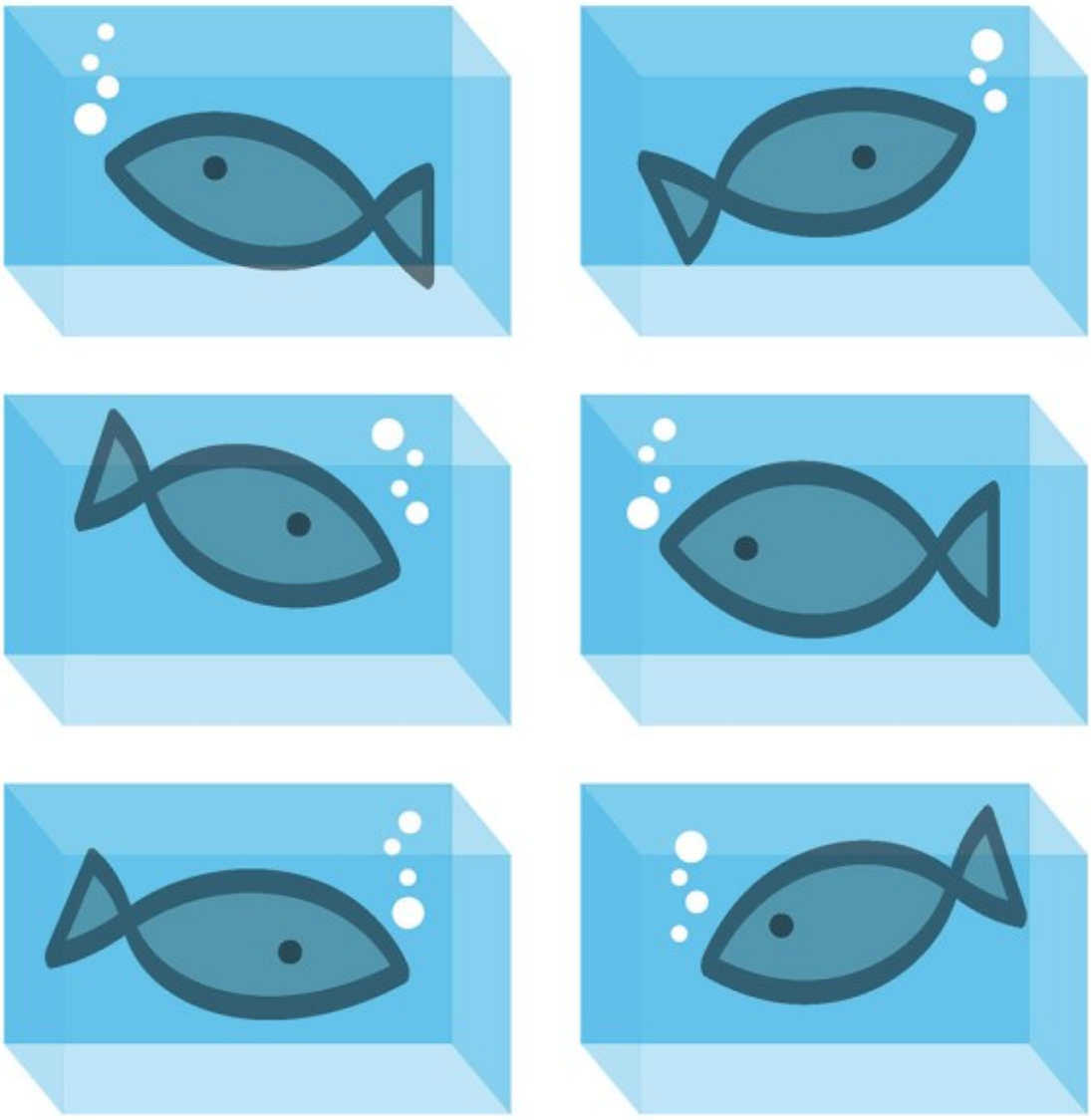


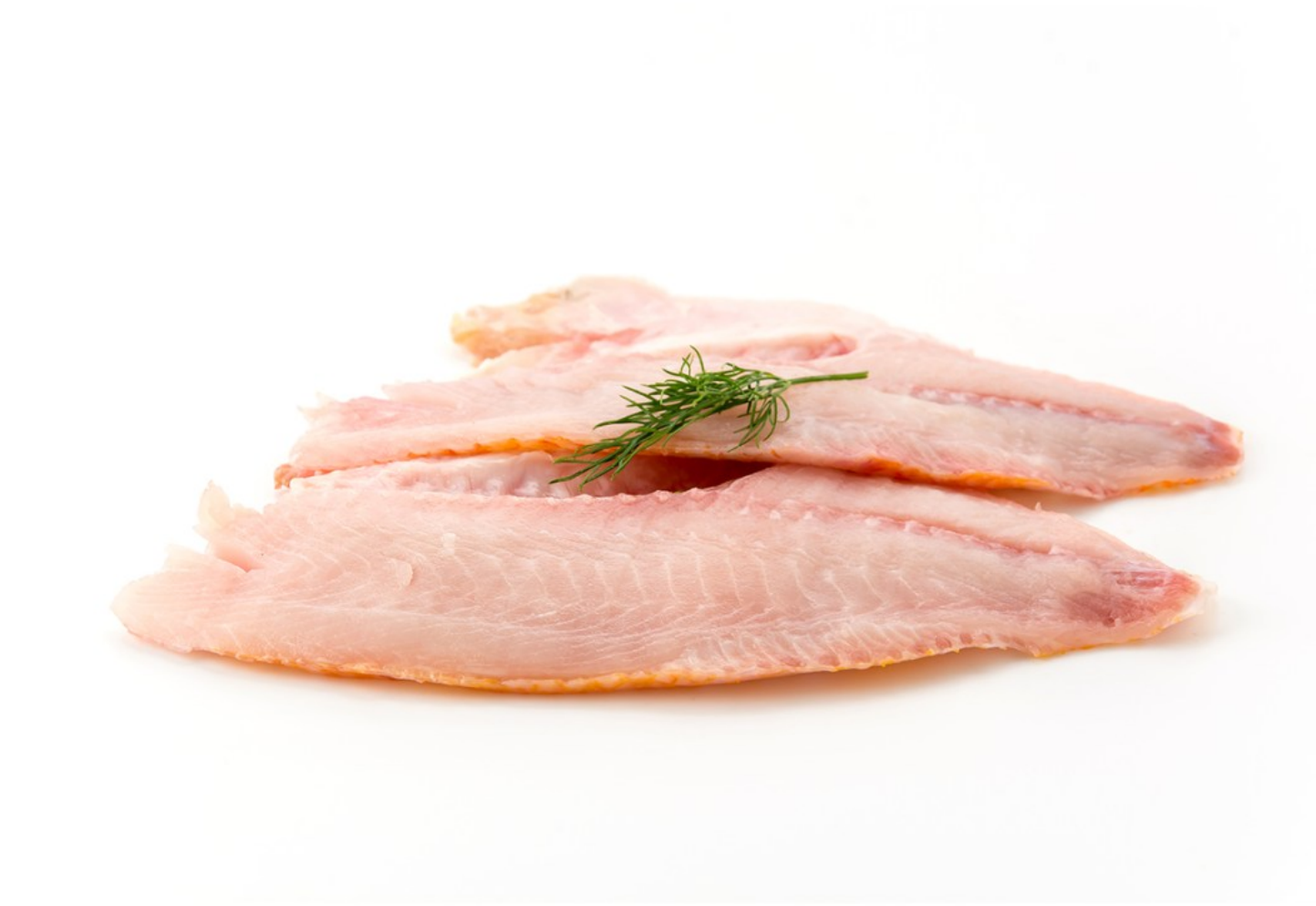
ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SAVAGE

by Liora Fishman

AN OVERVIEW OF THE FISH AT THE COOP

I've never given much thought to where my fish comes from. As you might guess, much of my relationship to fish was established through the comments people would make about my last name when I was growing up—but that's basically where it ended. As I child, I would choke down salmon when my mom would serve it, though I

eventually grew to love in the form of sushi. But, unlike the thought and care I put into understanding where the meat I purchase comes from (buying organic poultry and so on), the origin of my fish was always an afterthought.



FISH VERSUS MEAT

Perhaps I thought more about meat because the story around its consumption has always been more dire. With documentaries in the mid to late-2000s, like *Food, Inc.*, investigating where most grocery store meat came from, and *Super Size Me* tearing off our rose-colored glasses about McDonald's, the meat industry's shortcomings have long been highly publicized. You don't have to be a vegetarian (I am not, though not without a bit of guilt) to understand that eating meat is harmful to the environment, and sometimes also to our health.

Yet, in my laziness and impatience when it comes to cooking meat and poultry, I've often found myself turning to quickly-cooked fish like tilapia or flounder for protein. Which has prompted me to ask: Where does my fish come from? And what impact does eating fish have on the environment?

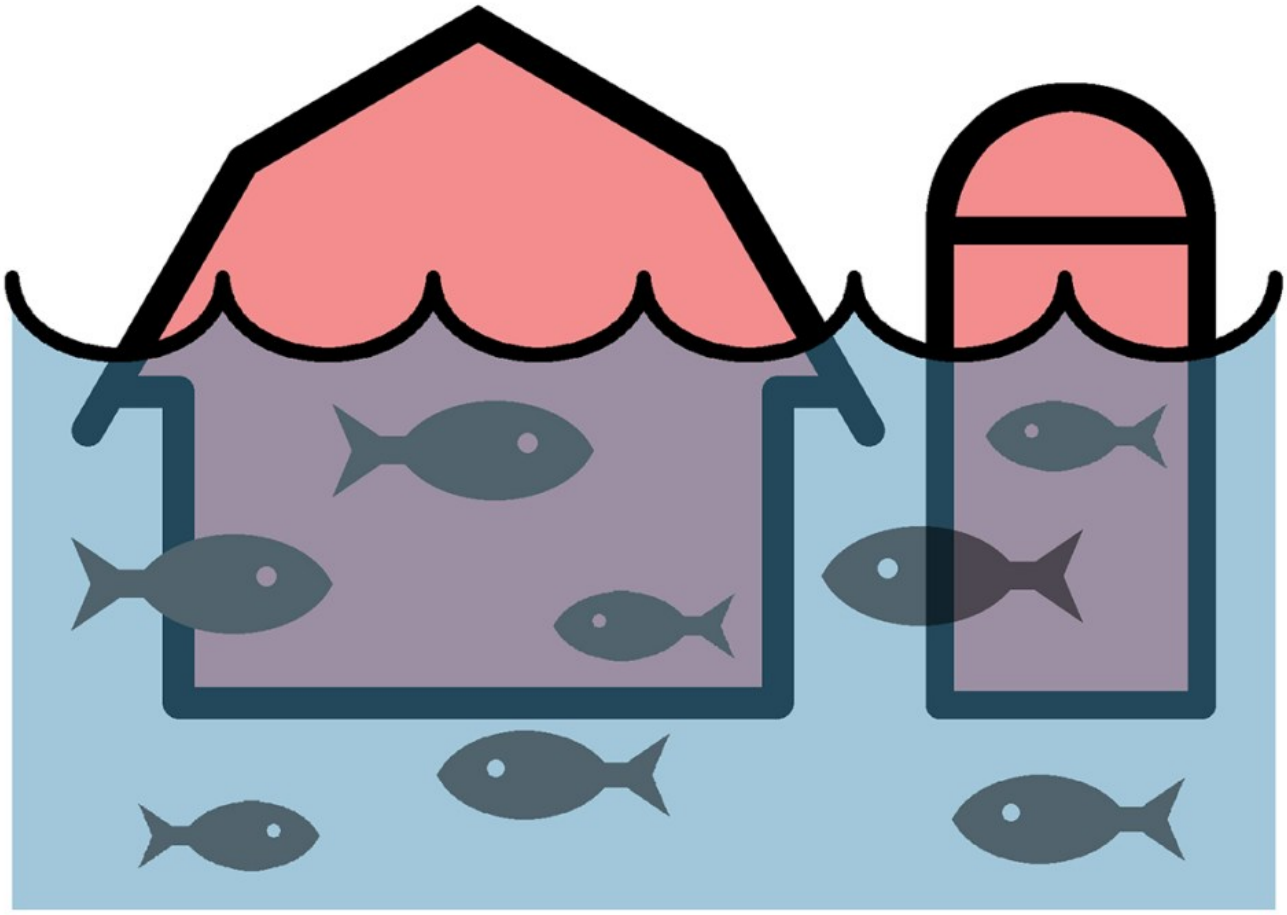


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SAVAGE

WHERE DOES MY FISH COME FROM? AND WHAT IMPACT DOES EATING FISH HAVE ON THE ENVIRONMENT?

In the last half-century, the global impact of overfishing has tripled. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, “one-third of the world’s assessed fisheries are currently pushed beyond their biological limits.” One of the largest problems of overfishing is “bycatch,” the “unwanted sea life” captured “while fishing for a different species.” According to the World Wildlife Organization, “this, too, is a serious marine threat that causes the needless loss of billions of fish, along with hundreds of thousands of sea turtles and cetaceans.”

The fish we eat is typically caught in the ocean (wild-caught) or raised on a fish farm (farm-raised). Fish farms are often harmful to the marine life they reside among, and are some of the main contributors to bycatch and overfishing in general.

Mariculture, or the cultivation of fish farms within an enclosed section of an ocean, usually employs open-net pens and cages to capture large amounts of fish. This poses threats to the native environment, can lead to outbreaks of disease and can threaten the health of the larger ocean if the managers of the fish farm are not cautious about waste removal. According to the Ocean Futures Society, disease, in particular, poses a threat not just to the cultured animals within the farm but also to the greater, native landscape of the habitat, by introducing “non-native diseases into the environment or facilitating disease through unsanitary conditions in densely packed farmed fish.” There is also the issue of non-native or genetically modified fish possibly escaping and outcompeting native species.



LOOKING AHEAD

Of course, this bleak outlook on marine life puts a damper on the salmon you were looking forward to ordering at your favorite restaurant. As someone who prefers fish to meat and finds little excitement in other forms of protein (sorry tofu), I find the dire situation of the commercial fishing industry particularly alarming. Luckily, there are sustainable alternatives to your Big Fish woes, such as sustainable fish farming or aquaculture.

CLOSED SYSTEMS

Many forward-thinking, sustainably-minded fish farms have turned to walled, closed--container tanks that operate entirely on land. “By separating farmed species from native populations, both systems protect the environment from accidental fish escapes,

limit the spread and transfer of disease and parasites between local and farmed fish and decrease the amount of fish feed and waste excreted into the local ecosystem," the Ocean Futures Society explains.



ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SAVAGE

SUSTAINABILITY

These closed-container systems also conserve water by not harming perfectly good,

clean ocean water and the habitats living within it. Sustainable fish farms should strive to use as little water space as possible (as many do) and continually monitor the quality of the water to ensure that no harmful pollution is leaking into the ocean as a result of their practices.

Many sustainable fish farms have partnered with scientists to go a step further and develop recirculation systems. These systems are a way for on-land fish farms to—yup, you guessed it—recycle the water they use to further reduce their environmental impact. Columbia University's Climate School reported that "recirculation systems use 100 times less water per kilo of fish than traditional land-based systems. In addition, the water quality can be monitored continuously, which lessens the risk of disease and the need for antibiotics."

The demand for fish is simply outpacing the supply we have in our oceans. But with sustainable fish farming, on-land production and water recirculation, there is a hopeful and healthy option in the not-so-distant future for pescatarian and pescatarian-inclined friends alike. Commercial fish farms are beginning to acknowledge the dire state of the situation and adopt more sustainable practices. The remaining question is one we often ask our corporations in the face of the climate crisis: Is it enough? And will it happen quickly enough?

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK

In the meantime, we can do our research on our own fish choices at the Coop, spend a few more seconds reading the packaging, or quickly search Google before checking out. If your fish says "farm-raised," check if that farm is on-land and closed-container or if it resides in the ocean. Individual actions cannot and will never be enough to correct the systemic wrongs committed at a grand, corporate scale, but supporting local, sustainable organizations does give momentum to the growing call for action around ethical, eco-conscious fishing practices.

OUR COOP EXPERT

Charles Parham, one of the Coop staff members who oversees fish buying, says that the Coop uses Monterey Bay Aquarium, in California, as a general guide. “Typically we only consider fish that are in their ‘Good’ or higher categories,” Parham says. “We also prioritize MSC or BAP certification,” meaning that the Coop seeks out fish distributors who fit the the Marine Stewardship Council or Best Aquaculture Practices certification, both of which provide rubrics and standards for fish distributors.

“In general, as with the Coop’s other buying principles, we prioritize sustainable practices,” Parham explains. “We do not require fish to be local or wild, but when a good option comes up, such as Hudson Valley Fisheries, we are excited about it.”

Liora Fishman lives in Prospect Heights. She’s been a Coop member since 2021.

THEFT AT THE COOP

October 4, 2022



The Scene of the Crime: Not in the Shopping Area—It's the Second Floor

By Juliet Kleber

CULTURE OF TRUST

On the Coop shopping floor, it is not uncommon to see a member leave their cart and hurry to another (perhaps especially crowded) aisle to grab an item or two, unencumbered by their groceries and their purse or backpack, which then sit unguarded in the unattended cart.

Among members, it seems, there is a feeling of trust in fellow member-owners that contributes to lack of vigilance around the security of their personal belongings. Anya Shiferson, a Coop member since 2015 and a temporary staff member during the pandemic, described feeling "pretty blasé about leaving my purse on my cart while I shop and roam around." During the time she worked at the Coop, she said, she never worried about theft of personal belongings and never heard of it happening. "I used to leave my phone to charge at the entrance all the time. It always felt very trusting and relaxed, which is why I loved working in the office even pre-pandemic," Shiferson

said.

Most of the time that trust is not misplaced, but a recent spate of thefts has Coop leadership urging members and staff alike to be more cautious with their valuables. According to Coop founder, General Manager and Treasurer Joe Holtz, “Maybe ninety percent of the time, it’s fine. But I don’t think people would be leaving valuables in their carts in their neighborhood Key Foods.” And though theft from carts is uncommon, on two occasions this summer an individual has succeeded in pilfering wallets and credit cards from places where staff and members leave their things as they go about their work.

While lockers are provided by the front entrance, members working shifts in receiving or in the basement—like stocking, lifting, and produce or cheese processing—have been known to leave bags and other personal items on hooks that are meant for coats and jackets. Even those member-workers who are more wary often leave coats and bags on hooks and keep valuables like wallets and cellphones on their person rather than using the lockers. Some simply forget they’re there. One such member, Priscilla Posada, keeps her belongings close by when she’s working checkout shifts. “I guess I forget,” said Posada, who joined the Coop in 2019. “They’re not as visible—I can see the piles of jackets and bags by the stairs but the lockers look empty and feel like they’re maybe not for our use.” Others just forgo the lockers because it would be an additional stop before reporting to their shifts. For those who do leave their wallets and such in unguarded places, it is likely due to that same sense of security and trust that might make us easy targets for theft.



THE INCIDENTS

In the summer of 2022, there have been two reported occasions in which multiple wallets or credit cards were stolen. According to email reports, both incidents were discovered by victims, who realized after the fact that their belongings were taken and reported the missing items to their supervisors. Upon receiving those reports, the Coop's closed-circuit surveillance system was consulted and the video footage was found to have caught both thefts taking place. While Holtz declined to put the *Linewaiters' Gazette* in contact with the theft victims for interviews, they did provide a detailed account of the events as recorded by the store's cameras.

The first incident took place on June 21, a Tuesday, just before 7 p.m. The CCTV footage shows an individual (not believed to be a Coop member) entering through the front doors wearing a face mask, waving to the member working at the entrance desk, and proceeding directly to the second floor without entering the shopping area. From there, the individual looked into the conference room, then proceeded through the south office and into the staff room. This room contains a microwave and refrigerator for Coop employees to prepare meals and lockers to store their belongings. Once

inside the staff room, the interloper was filmed testing lockers to find some that had been left unlocked and ultimately taking two wallets, which belonged to staff. He then proceeded to the main staircase and exited the Coop.

The second incident took place nearly a month later, on Sunday, July 24, also around 7 p.m. Surveillance video shows someone approaching the Coop from the direction of 6th Avenue and entering in the same manner as before, passing the entrance desk to the second floor. Upon discovering that the staff room was occupied, the individual returned to the first floor, spoke briefly with the entrance worker at the desk and was allowed to proceed the shopping floor without swiping in. From there, they went directly to the stairwell that leads to the basement and began searching through bags that members had left. The individual then left the Coop from that stairwell. Two members who had stored their belongings on or around the hooks reported missing items after their shift, and the closed circuit camera footage was reviewed, revealing the events related above.

PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN

A HISTORY OF THEFT AT THE COOP

Like any retailer, the Coop experiences some product loss, but theft of personal belongings is uncommon. Membership Coordinator Mike Voytko is the staff person responsible for reviewing the Coop's CCTV footage, and while he gets "occasional requests" to review CCTV footage "from someone who thinks their wallet was stolen out of a shopping cart, or they left a purse or a bag in their cart and they come back and find that cash has been taken," he considers those incidents rare.

Cases like this summer's thefts, involving a person repeatedly targeting personal belongings, are not unprecedented but are rare enough to be memorable. Two particular cases stand out in the collective memory of those interviewed by the *Gazette*.

In the late 90s or early aughts, a non-member repeatedly stole items from the shopping floor, first stealing products from the Coop and eventually graduating to theft of wallets and purses from shopping carts. According to Holtz, who recounted this history in an interview, these thefts were frequent enough to become "an economic problem for the Coop." Eventually, that person was arrested in the store when a squad leader witnessed a theft taking place, called the police and managed to stall the person until they arrived.

Another string of thefts that occurred in the early aughts more closely resembles the events of this summer. The perpetrator in those cases was a minor (also a non-member) who repeatedly entered the Coop to steal personal belongings from staff areas upstairs. "That person was adept at coming into the offices—not the shopping floor—and coming in at times when the offices were sparsely populated and taking personal things from desktops and desks."

Holtz related one remarkable incident from that series of events: "It was a Sunday evening, and I received a phone call from a worker who was locking up and gave their keys to someone outside the Coop." When they realized their mistake, the worker alerted Holtz, who hurried over to the Coop immediately, and quickly recognized the

same minor, “I walked up to the kid—it was the same kid that we’d already chased out of the building other times—and I said ‘give me the keys’ and he did.” Holtz believes that the teen had convinced the Coop worker to hand over the keys with the intention of breaking into the store once everyone had gone. “This kid was adept at telling adults stories to get what they want,” Holtz said, “they got this adult to hand over the keys based on a story.” He was reminded of this incident when reviewing the report of the July theft, “in this case, they told the entrance worker a story that was effective”—enough to get onto the shopping floor without scanning in.

The thief in the early-aughts eventually stopped returning for unknown reasons, but Holtz believes that, based on the apparent age of the individual in the CCTV footage, it could be the same person, now an adult. “Judging from the video, I feel like there’s a possibility that this is the same person.” He was struck by other similarities between the two cases—the targeting of the upstairs offices rather than the shopping floor, the familiarity with the layout of the building, the ability to talk their way into the Coop and “the fact that this person came here with such comfort makes me feel like the person remembers being comfortable here as a youth.” Still, Holtz is not entirely certain, “I haven’t seen a photo of this new person that can definitely tell me it’s the same person, but if I got to see this person in person, I believe I’d be able to tell… but hopefully I’ll never get a chance to see this person because he’ll never come back.”



WHAT'S NEXT?

Though caught on camera, there are no plans to release images or descriptions of the person responsible for the thefts. Holtz makes a compelling argument for withholding such details based on past incidents: members eager to apprehend a thief have misidentified and falsely accused other shoppers, and avoiding that kind of profiling is paramount. "One time we had a photo of that guy that was arrested here," he explains, "and there were a set of members that were roughly that person's look and height, and [other members] would look at the photo and say 'this must be the person' and they were wrong… the pain of that happening in our Coop is just not acceptable."

For now, the General Coordinators are focusing on preventative measures, specifically the installation of locks on several doors to prevent access to staff spaces by potential bad actors. Three doors in particular are being discussed as possible barrier points—the south office, the copy room, and the receiving room. These doors would be locked during certain times of day, possibly employing an electronic keypad so that those who work in those areas could move around with relative ease. Still, even those

prevention methods present their own set of challenges, balancing the needs for freedom of movement, convenience, and security. Certain doors, like the one leading to the staff room that was the site of the theft, must remain unlocked for safety reasons as points of egress from the building. And though the person accessed the Coop by bypassing the entrance desk and proceeding upstairs, there are also no plans to restrict access to that area for numerous logistical reasons. “We have the need for openness in the Coop,” said Holtz, “for members to be able walk freely in the area before the desk and go up to the second floor to return their seltzer bottles, to see someone upstairs. That openness is valuable.”

At present, it has been over a month without another theft of that nature, so hopefully any security changes will remain untested for the foreseeable future. Still, Coop management urges members and staff alike to stay aware. Signage warning members not to leave their valuables has been posted in the stairwell where the July thefts took place and some workers have recalled being reminded of the same by their supervisors at the start of their shifts.

“The Coop is a special place for all of us,” said Coordinator Mike Voytko. “It’s like a second home to many, certainly among the staff, and it can be easy to let our guard down.” But the message from Coop leadership is a simple one: Be mindful of your valuables and do not leave them unsecured.

Juliet Kleber is a writer and editor based in Bed-Stuy. She serves as a member of the Editorial Board of n+1 magazine.

FLOORED BY JOE HOLTZ’S SUSPENSION

October 4, 2022
Dear Coop,

As a PSFC member for the last 34 years, I'm floored by the Personnel Committee's punitive measures against Joe Holtz for wearing an N-95 mask and coming in to work without knowing he would test positive for Covid that day. The man might have improved your quality of life for decades and withstood any number of uncalled for insults, but he is *not* a fortune teller.

Hayley Gorenberg's detailed reporting in the *Linewaiters' Gazette* presents the facts, and I concur completely with the letter written by Cynthia Blyer that outlines the Personnel Committee's unprecedented, uncalled for, unjust and downright bizarre punishment. I add my voice to those who demand, as Cynthia did, that the committee:

1. Reimburse Joe for the month of July.

2. Keep in mind that we are running a cooperative, not a gulag.

Cynthia stressed that Joe would be the first one to speak up if another staff member were treated like this, or about any kind of unfairness in our community and in the world.

I will be attending the upcoming General Meeting on September 27 to speak to this agenda item. If Joe is not reimbursed and all punitive measures rescinded at that meeting, I urge Coop members to protest the abhorrent and extremist actions of the Personnel Committee with an emergency referendum.

Jessica Greenbaum

FTOP RULES TOO RESTRICTIVE

October 4, 2022

Dear Coop,

With the recent return to recurring shifts, I find the Future Time Off Program (FTOP) policy that states you can only schedule two shifts at a time too rigid and not well publicized.

First, it does not appear anywhere in the Workslot Policy Agreement. Second, the two places it does appear—on the "Shift Calendar" web page and Section III, paragraph 7 of the Membership Manual—it is buried in the text and not easy to notice.

More importantly, the PSFC seems to encourage members to add credits to their shift bank credit but then limits members' ability to build up credit by limiting them to two scheduled shifts at a time.

In the Membership Manual, for instance, it states, "You need to work at least one shift per cycle but you are welcome to work extra shifts. Those additional shifts will add credits to your bank. There is no limit to the number of credits you can have in your bank." And then adds a little later, "You may have up to two scheduled shifts at one time, with no more than 2 shifts on the same date." These two statements seem to be at odds with one another.

Moreover, when we accept the Workslot Policy Agreement, we agree that "Whenever possible I will cancel farther in advance, so other members have the opportunity to claim the shift(s)." Here, too, the FTOP policy makes it difficult to do so. For example, I will be traveling in November but cannot cancel my November shift and choose an alternate slot until I work my next shift in September. By that time, I fear the slots that are most convenient for me will be taken.

The system needs to be more flexible. Let's increase the number of shifts that can be scheduled at one time.

William Yotive

JOE HOLTZ SUSPENSION

October 4, 2022
Dear Editors,

I want to add my voice to those who have called for transparency from the Personnel Committee regarding the Joe Holtz suspension. The committee said the *Linewaiters' Gazette's* article about the suspension was inaccurate but did not indicate why. They claim privacy issues preclude them from being transparent. I understand wanting to protect Joe's privacy, but he has been open about the situation. Has the committee asked Joe if he would waive his right to privacy in this case? If it's the privacy of committee members they want to protect, that concerns me. Shouldn't the membership know how the personnel committee makes decisions? Don't they act on behalf of the membership?

A 30-day suspension without pay is a harsh penalty for what seems to have been an inadvertent violation of rules that don't appear to have been clearly disseminated. Let's have the Personnel Committee admit to a mistake here and restore Joe's lost wages.

In cooperation,
John Wilson