

# INSIDE THE WINTER WONDERLAND OF THE COOP'S PRODUCE AISLE

January 17, 2023



by John B. Thomas

Winter in the Northeastern United States is not typically a season associated with fresh produce. It's not synonymous with the tomatoes, lettuces, and berries that fill the Coop produce aisle in spring, summer, and fall. Yet many fruits and vegetables are harvested in the fall and store well for winter consumption. Vegetables like pumpkins, Brussels sprouts, and rutabaga and fruits like grapefruits can add a rich diversity to our diets.

At the same time, keeping the Coop shelves stocked with year-round favorites like tomatoes and avocados means that our produce buyers sometimes have to look further afield than our region to source produce that satisfies member needs while also meeting the environmental and social responsibility ethos of the Coop.

To understand more about what considerations go into sourcing produce in the winter, the *Linewaiters Gazette* interviewed Produce Coordinator and Buyer Cecelia Rem-

bert. A lightly edited transcript of the interview is below.

### **What is typically considered “winter” produce?**

Our local winter produce is mostly storage items grown locally in the fall—winter squashes, sweet potatoes and potatoes, onions, root vegetables like rutabaga, kohlrabi, turnips, celeriac, and fruits like apples. We are at this time still able to get some local green vegetables—like broccoli, spinach, chard, dandelions, tatsoi, chicory, and radicchio—the dark and bitter greens are the cold-hardest. We also still have a little bit of local greenhouse grown loose and head lettuce (e.g. loose Asian mix, Queen’s greens winter gem loose salad mix, local little gem heads), but many of our lettuces are now coming out of California or the Southeast. For fruits, only the apples are still local. Everything else comes from further afield.

LOOK FOR MANDARINQUATS AND ALGERIAN TANGERINES, BOTH OF WHICH ARE ON THE SHELVES NOW!

### **What are some of the winter produce items in stock at the Coop now?**

Many people also associate winter with the citrus season in Florida, California, and Texas, and we do have many citruses beginning to arrive from those locations, including delicious Texas grapefruit, Kishu mandarins, markut and sweet limes, Meyer lemons, limequat, satsumas, clementines and pummelos, and more new citrus arriving every week. Winter is also a time of some tropical fruits, like passionfruit, feijoa, sapodilla and eggfruit (canistel), coming from both California and Florida. We also have a relationship with a family vineyard in Moldova and enjoy their sustainably--grown loose seeded black grapes from December to March.



**Are there some items that we continue to source throughout the winter that have to come from farther away?**

Avocados are grown year-round in Mexico (except a few months where we can source the organic avocados from California) so really they don't experience much change. During the local season (May to November) we are able to source many local tomatoes, and indeed we are now sourcing some Mexico tomatoes (mostly plum and cluster) alongside greenhouse-grown tomatoes from the United States. Berries are coming from far away right now—our blackberries and raspberries are out of Mexico, but blueberries are mostly out of Peru right now. We don't offer strawberries at this time because the quality-cost axis inverts. What that means is that the cost exceeds the quality during the winter and so we pass. Bell peppers are sourced from some far-flung locations, including Israel, Mexico and the Netherlands. Cucumbers are sometimes sourced from Mexico right now, as are bagged sweet peppers. Lady Moon is a reliable and high-quality grower out of Florida and Georgia and we are able to source

eggplant, some peppers and some kales, head lettuces and other greens through the early winter; likewise we are able to source other squashes and greens from New Sprout Growers, a cooperative of organic farms in the Carolinas.



WE HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH A FAMILY VINEYARD IN MOLDOVA AND ENJOY THEIR SUSTAINABLY-GROWN LOOSE SEEDED BLACK GRAPES FROM DECEMBER TO MARCH.

**What items do we explicitly choose not to buy during the winter, for sustainability (or other) reasons, that might be in stock at a normal grocery store?**

Strawberries do not make the cut in the winter, although we usually bring them back for a week in February for those members who desire them for Valentine's Day. We

are also very selective with our grape options over the winter. Grapes are imported from Peru and South Africa over the winter and we will get these in small quantities, but generally the quality is not as high as the California season, although the pricing can be shockingly high. We wait for Mexican grapes in April and May and then California follows in June. We move out of early-season apples as the quality declines and shift our apple program to late-season and storage apple varieties.

**Are there any other seasonal goods you'd recommend Coop members try this winter?**

My favorite winter produce? Terrific local broccoli; local radicchios of all varieties, local root vegetables like sunchokes, rutabaga and black radish, buck brand satsumas, pink lady apples, feijoa, and winter squashes like sweet dumpling, acorn and kabocha. And look for mandarinquats and Algerian tangerines, both of which are on the shelves now! We also have really delicious small-farm organic turmeric from Florida. It just arrived and will run for a few months. It's incomparably better than the turmeric we are usually able to get (from Hawaii or Fiji). And then finally, my number one favorite fruit of all the year is the Melogold grapefruit from Buck Brand Citrus. It's a cross between a pomelo and a grapefruit and it's absolutely delicious.

*John B. Thomas works in sustainability and social impact for a performance apparel company.*



PHOTO BY JENNIFER MACFARLANE

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# IT'S ALWAYS ICE CREAM SEASON AT THE COOP

January 17, 2023



ILLUSTRATION BY ERIK SCHURINK

*By Sara Ivry*

Ice cream has been a favorite treat since as far back as any of us can remember. I grew up in Massachusetts in the 80s, where my fellow New Englanders and I hoovered nearly 23 quarts of ice cream per person annually, far outpacing the rest of the country, where, according to data from the International Ice Cream Association, the average hovered closer to 15. In the decades since, the national average has

ticked up; the International Dairy Foods Association estimates that Americans now eat about 16 quarts per person per year. In the early part of the pandemic, I satisfied my hankering for ice cream care of Arethusa Farm, a Litchfield County, Connecticut purveyor whose work is, in a word, sublime. I was, at the time, staying with my parents in Northwest Connecticut, near the creamery's headquarters. But once back in Brooklyn, the only place I could find Arethusa was at a specialty grocer where the mark-up from what I paid per pint in Connecticut was nearly 100%. I mostly went without it.



Then, earlier this year, to my great delight pints of Arethusa appeared at the Food Coop. There was chocolate! Vanilla! Toasted almond and coconut! When I realized my all-time favorite flavor—coffee—was missing, however, I submitted a member request that the Coop carry it, too. Soon thereafter, it materialized in the shelves. That's thanks to Kimberly Curran, one of the Coop's frozen foods buyers, who pays close attention to members' tastes and recommendations in the eternal and noble pursuit of

deliciousness. Curran started shopping at the Coop as a kid with her parents some 30 years ago. Now a parent herself to a 13-year-old, Curran took the position of frozen buyer six years ago. She spoke about about her work stocking one of the Coop's most popular destinations.

**Sara Ivry:**

First, I'm so grateful that you brought in that Arethusa coffee flavor.

**Kimberly Curran:**

I'm so glad. That's what I strive for. Customer service runs in my blood. My grandfather was a grocer on Lenox Avenue in Harlem. I relish buying the ice cream because people really respond to affirmation like, "Hey, I want this pint in the Coop." And then you get it and they buy it. It's a great ecosystem.

**Ivry:**

What factors must you consider in buying ice cream for the Coop?

**Curran:**

Procurement. You have to be mindful of a heavily perishable item. There are cold chain supplies to be mindful of, like, you know, keeping things that come off a truck. You want it back in this cold storage as fast as possible. Consideration for what will sell. People love a classic vanilla or chocolate or, in your case, coffee. And we make room for epic stuff as well. We have a lot of everything-but-the-kitchen-sink kind of pints.



KIMBERLY CURRAN, A FROZEN FOODS BUYER AT THE COOP, PAYS CLOSE ATTENTION TO MEMBERS' TASTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE ETERNAL AND NOBLE PURSUIT OF DELICIOUSNESS.

**Ivry:**

What's the weirdest request that you've fielded?

**Curran:**

When someone first said "the Aresthusa toasted almond and coconut needs to happen" I had to look it up. They have a huge following for just that flavor specifically. I went through three vendors—emailed them—they're like, 'No, I don't have this.' Then I found one, and I was like, 'Send me three cases.' It's always a nuanced conversation to bring a new item into the Coop.

**Ivry:**

How so?

**Curran:**

You have to be mindful of bringing items in that will sell that meet the Coop standards for dairy or the ingredients list. And that people will enjoy buying and are reasonably priced. We have expensive ice creams, but we also have reasonably priced pints. We need that middle ground. I personally always strive to have small businesses if I can, local businesses, if I can, you know, being a Coop kid.

The Coop's mission really does stick in my head. As a full-time employee, I've taken that to heart. In recent years—2020 was a reckoning for everyone, retailers included—I took it upon myself to research more POC companies. More small companies, more local companies to encourage more of them in the ice cream case. That I could do my part as far as creating or continuing to create an inclusive environment that is cost effective as well.

That we can bring in people of color and women-owned businesses and that my supervisors allow the space for that—I really do appreciate that. I want that case to feel like it's got something for everyone. I want it to be inclusive. If somebody comes to me with, 'We don't have something,' I'll try and bring it in. I always strive to do that, and that's the messaging I give to any member who reaches out. Including you.

**Ivry:**

Are there many ice cream companies that are owned by women or by people of color?

**Curran:**

Luckily, I got a lot of really great leads on quite a few. Noona's, Korean-inspired pints, was in before I had ice cream as a category for buying. It's amazing; they have yuzu blossom flavor, they have a dairy-free green tea ice cream. They have a black sesame that everyone goes crazy for. And the founder's husband owns Brooklyn Cured.

It's a New York story where there are two vendors that provide to the Coop. It's a fairy tale, very romantic.

Throughout the years I've brought in epically strange pints by Oddfellows. They're owned by people of color. How they started their company is adorable; it was a trio, a wife and husband and their friend, who's a chef. The wife was pregnant with twins and she couldn't quell her cravings for a strange sweet pint, and the chef made something pretzel, something chocolatey, something peanut buttery, something miso. And then they started a company based on a really satisfying ice cream. There are so many stories like this in Brooklyn.

We have Caribbean-inspired Island Pops, they're on Nostrand Avenue; I have Del's and Adirondack, who are local. They feel it's important to be part of the Park Slope Food Coop, it's worth their time and energy. When I bring them in, it's supporting the local businesses of Brooklyn and New York. That's super vital to having small shops survive in this economy. I want to keep a good cycle of purchasing and providing going.

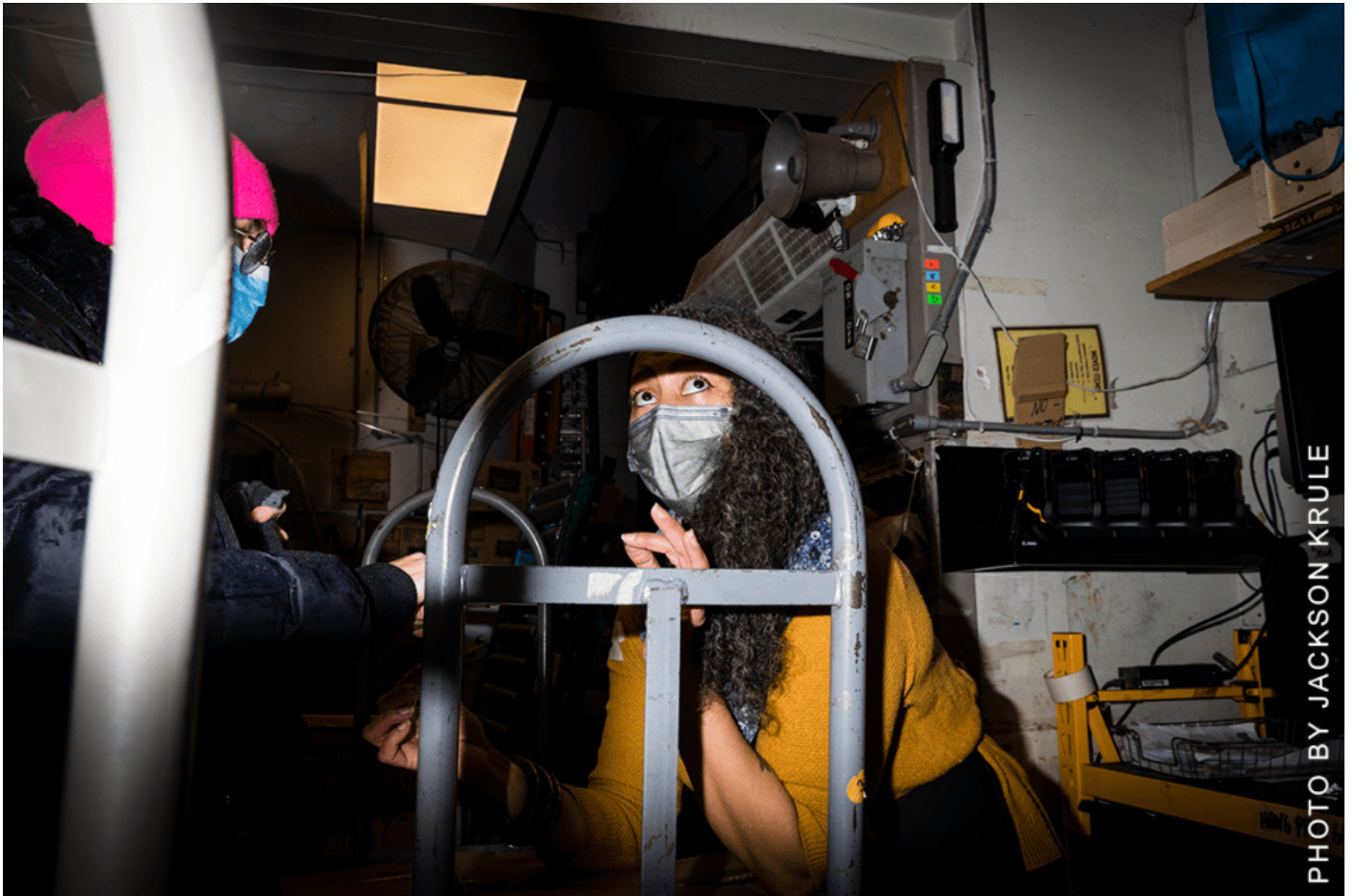
IT'S YEAR ROUND. IT DOES NOT SLOW DURING THE WINTER. THE FLAVORS JUST SHIFT.

**Ivry:**

Do the ice cream sellers come to you or you go to them to find new flavors and makers?

**Curran:**

It's a combination. Before the pandemic, makers would call the membership office, create a vendor date, tour the Coop, and chat with the buyer. Post Covid, there's no demonstrations of food, and no real schedule for vendors to come in, so it's been kind of a challenge.



A lot of member suggestions. Word of mouth. It could be the buyer's research. You have to follow trends, watch stats. Look at trends from years past. Historically, vanilla has always been popular at the holidays—'We need vanilla for pies!' But other people have holidays, and interesting flavors are really welcome. Malai has these wonderful seasonal spiced chocolate pints. I ordered a bunch of roses and cinnamon. I have at least five new SKUs apart from the chai and the Turkish coffee pints we always carry. I have some holiday favorites that I try and bring in every year that I highlight. And then *New York Times* highlighted Malai like last week so that we'll see a surge by word of mouth.

**Ivry:**

How much ice cream does the Coop sell per week?

**Curran:**

Cases upon cases. If we had to put a price tag on it, it would be innumerable. It's year round. It does not slow during the winter. The flavors just shift. In the summertime it's

sorbet and then sorbet slows down. And then the shift goes back to like 'lighter' flavors in the summertime.

**Ivry:**

Are there other notable trends?

**Curran:**

People have a vast palette. I have people who absolutely love the holiday movie-inspired ice creams. I just brought an Oddfellows capsule, which is a small run, in for the holidays. We have Banoffee Pie from *Love, Actually*. They had *Elf*'s Buddi Spaghetti Sundae; it doesn't have spaghetti in the pint, but it's everything he threw on his morning spaghetti. We have Razzleberry Dressing, which is one of my dad's favorites from *Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol*.

**Ivry:**

But it's not all small, indie ice cream purveyors.

**Curran:**

We have Aldens. We have Haagen Dazs, and it sells. If I took it out of the roster, I would get a lot of push back from membership. Why get rid of Ben and Jerry's? Why get rid of Haagen Dazs? You cannot get radical; you can't just tell people they can't eat the ice cream they're requesting.

**Ivry:**

What's your personal favorite?

**Curran:**

If I had to choose—the Dolcetta marscapone and berries. It has a tartness and a beautiful swirl of seasonal fruit. That's the first one that comes to mind. I love the yuzu by Noona's. If I had to pick a third, it would probably be the Malai rose with cinnamon. It's so unctuous and delightful as far as the floral palate.

**Ivry:**

When you do get a new flavor in how much of it you buy?

**Curran:**

It depends. Sometimes I'll ask colleagues, "What do you think about this pint?" while we're ordering? You know, and I kind of take the temperature. If I ask our social media person to post it, I don't want to run out. Sometimes people will see something on the Coop's Instagram account as a story and they'll run to it. A new item brings excitement.



I had a coworker who really had her hand on the pulse of like, you know, arts and culture. She would go, "Hey, you know, this was in the *Times* article last weekend," Or my sister who's much younger will be like, "Hey, Del's got a spot in this local article," and then you should probably bring more in.

**Ivry:**

I once produced a radio interview about an ice cream shop on Cape Cod that was selling lobster ice cream. Vanilla with lobster bits in it.

**Curran:**

Amazing. People will try crazy flavors. We had bacon, egg, and cheese. It has a swirl of custardy Velveeta, which I'm not crazy for. I thought people would like it. It also had soy bacon pieces in it. And, I think it might've had lard. Then we had a cornbread ice cream that people would buy cases of; it did have lard and I had to put it on the label, so people knew even if they were vegetarian and they ate honey and ate dairy, that it had lard.

**Ivry:**

Do you taste every ice cream that you bring in?

**Curran:**

I get a little taste. And I encourage staff to give feedback. If a vendor has given me a sample, I'm like, "Hey, it's in the fridge. Let me know what you think. Here's the details on it."

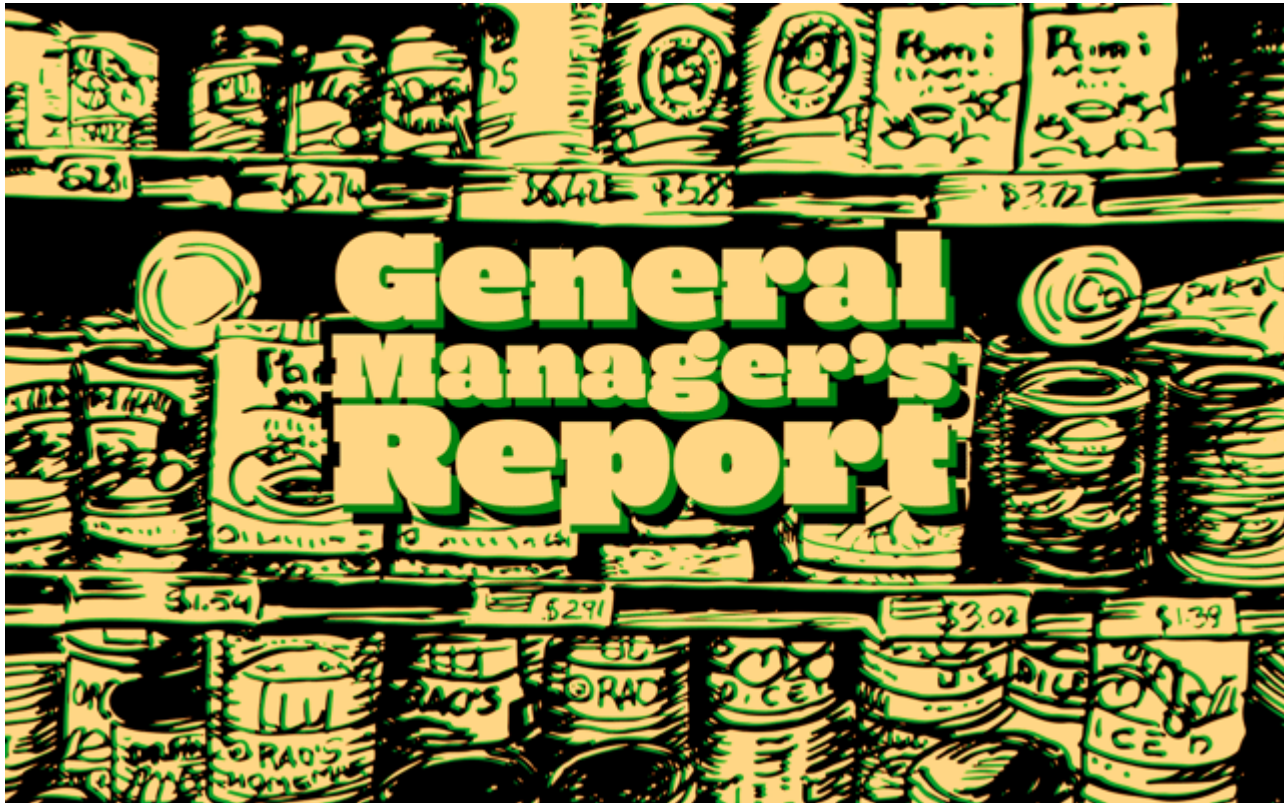
There was a particular pint that was not for the faint of heart. Not for the food unadventurous. It had granulated garlic and onion on like a sesame stick or something. I was like, "Please be mindful that there are aromatics in there and please also be mindful that everywhere else in the world with exception for America has savory puddings and desserts and ice cream." Like, "Don't get it twisted just because we're sort of middle of the road in our palate and adventures in America, this is not unusual and you should research it before you say anything out of bounds." People did enjoy it. But ice cream shouldn't have a disclaimer. You should be brave or you shouldn't try it.

*A long-time Food Coop member, Sara Ivry lives in Clinton Hill with her son, who is partial to Blue Marble's strawberry ice cream.*

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## GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

January 17, 2023



*By Joe Holtz, General Coordinator and General Manager*

### PERSONNEL POLICY FOR GENERAL COORDINATORS

I would like to elaborate on some issues relating to the Personnel Committee (PC) that were discussed in the article about the Committee Oversight Committee (COC) that appeared in the October 25, 2022 issue of the *Linewaiters' Gazette*. The article describes the mandate of the COC and, among other things, its concerns with respect to transparency and accountability of certain committees, including the Personnel Committee (PC), which was established to support and oversee the General Coordinators (GCs). It also mistakenly states that the PC can fire GCs.

These issues of transparency and accountability are very important for the Coop. In August the role of the Personnel Committee came to be looked at more carefully than

it had been for decades. As I will describe below, the current authority as conferred on the PC when it was established does not actually permit the PC to discipline, dock the pay of or fire General Coordinators directly. Regarding firings, the founding PC document sets forth an indirect method that involves the General Meeting (GM) that would be unhealthy for the Coop were it to be implemented. Regarding disciplining a GC, the document clearly states that there were no approved powers in place (see paragraph 7 of the accompanying 1981 document that the editors have published below).

## ORIGINAL AUTHORITY OF THE PC

The PC was established by the General Meeting (GM) in 1981. The only reference to the possibility of firing a GC was contained in an introductory paragraph which quotes from a 1980 GM decision: "...Coordinators will be hired with the assumption of job retention except in the case of unfavorable reviews [of job performance]." In other words, a GC can only be fired if an unfavorable review prepared by the PC is presented to the General Meeting (see paragraph 5 of the accompanying 1981 document). The document is silent on who would make the firing decision in the event of an unfavorable review. Some could say it is implicit that it would be the GM since the GM is receiving both the written and oral presentation of the review from the PC. Others might say that it is implicit that the PC would make the firing determination. Either way, such an important procedure should not have been left to interpretation. Two or three years after 1981, the PC decided that a GC ought to be fired and indeed it wound up at the GM. The GM voted to approve outside arbitration to settle the matter.

## GRIEVANCE AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES 1989 TO 2006

In 1989 the General Meeting adopted a grievance and complaint procedure. It authorized the PC to discipline and fire GCs and also provided due process protections to GCs. This corrected the above deficiencies of the 1981 document.

## CURRENT AUTHORITY OF THE PC STARTING IN 2006

However, the corrections were temporary because in 2006 the General Meeting rescinded the 1989 procedures and no replacement policy was ever adopted. So, it was back to the deficiencies of the 1981 document.

## SIGNIFICANCE TO THE COOP

The 1981 system, which is the current system, is not supportable with respect to the fair treatment of the GCs. The Coop has about 80 coordinators who are not GCs and we have 5 GCs. The non-GC coordinators are supervised by the GCs who can discipline and fire them. Due process protections with respect to the non-GC employees are set forth in the Coop's employee handbook. But that part of the handbook doesn't cover the GCs. Nor are the GCs afforded due process protections in any current document.

If this current method of decisions with respect to firing being made by the GM after presentation of an unfavorable review were to be used, the result could be a painful and humiliating baring of behaviors and abilities that I think should not take place at a forum like the GM. It has been suggested that this could also subject the Coop to legal liability.

There is no currently viable way to address complaints against any GC by non-GC staff, by other GCs, or by members and therefore no path for remedies for those who might have been harmed. There is also no direct way to require GCs to change their behavior or to fire them if appropriate.

This also means that, notwithstanding, the intent of the Coop in our Mission Statement which states that the Coop intends to be "a responsible and ethical employer," the GCs currently have no due process protections.

The issues of GC accountability to the membership and to non-GC coordinators, as well as the lack of due process protection for GCs should not remain unaddressed by

the Coop. The PC and the GCs have recently discussed beginning to address these issues and hopefully bring proposal(s) to the General Meeting.

In addition, I think the Membership should know that during the months of August and September four of the six PC members resigned.

Lastly, thank you to the many members who have communicated their concerns about this situation and to the members who may be paying attention to these issues in the future.

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## GM ESTABLISHES THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE-1980

### APPROVED PARK SLOPE FOOD COOP PERSONNEL POLICY and PERSONNEL COMMITTEE JOB DESCRIPTION

Passed by the General Membership in June 1980:

“The coordinators will be hired with the assumption of job retention, except in the case of unfavorable reviews (of job performance).”

In order to evaluate the job performance of the coordinators, and to provide a way for a 1,000-member cooperative generally to relate to its employees, the ad hoc personnel committee makes the following proposals:

1. Establish a permanent personnel committee (PC), elected by the general membership meeting, with the responsibility to: review employee performance; investigate complaints against employees and grievances by the employees; draft job descriptions and suggest paid job openings and unpaid work slots.

- The PC to have five members, and not to be a job slot. Paid employees not eligible to be on the committee.
- PC recruitment and orientation: Members will be encouraged to run for the PC through an ad in the *Gazette*. This will include a description of what is entailed in being on the PC. Those interested in becoming candidates will be invited to a two-hour meeting with the ad hoc committee (paid coordinators will be present at the first one and a half hour of the meeting). This will be a non-confidential meeting to orient those interested in being on the PC. This meeting will be mandatory for candidates, but a make-up time will be arranged if necessary. At the following general membership meeting the candidates will introduce themselves and give a short statement as to why they should be considered for the committee. There will be a discussion and questions and answer session. Everyone will be eligible to vote by secret ballot. A two-thirds vote is necessary to win a seat on the committee, with the five highest number of votes winning. (Note: this will be the only committee of the Coop to have power delegated to it, and to be not supervised by a coordinator). The ad hoc committee will not make recommendations to the general meeting; however, members of the ad hoc committee can comment on candidates during the discussion period that will follow or during the general question and answer period.
- PC members shall serve for two years. The first committee elected will be given staggered terms (three chosen for one-year. terms and two for two-year. terms), so future terms will be overlapping. A committee member may serve for two consecutive terms.
- Employee reviews: The purpose of a review is to inform the membership of the per-

formance of the employee and to give feedback to the employee on his/her performance. At the general meeting following the review, the PC shall make an oral as well as written presentation to the general meeting. All five committee members shall be involved in the review, which shall be based on the job description and should include interviews with the coordinators and solicitation of comments by the membership. There should be feedback during and after the review. Reviews shall be yearly except for new employees who shall be reviewed after the first three and six months of employment with special reviews when desirable. Reviews shall be staggered so the committee can focus on one employee at a time.

- The permanent personnel committee should develop hiring procedures when necessary for approval by the general membership. At the time the procedures are developed, the PC should examine the hiring process used in 1975, 1978, 1979 and 1981. One of the first tasks of the permanent PC should be to interview people regarding past hiring experiences to establish a written record while these experiences are still fresh in people's minds.
- The present employees do not wish written contracts of employment, although these personnel practices, together with the grievance and complaint procedures, if passed would be a commitment by the Coop that would give the employees such guarantees. However, new employees should be offered a work contract, and current employees may ask for one at any time they desire.
- A written log of PC activities and decisions, and employee review files, shall be kept by the committee in a secure place, available only to current PC members. The PC shall devise a way to guarantee confidentiality of these records. Employees shall

have the right to see their own files.

Dated, September 1981

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## COOP BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS ARE DUE

January 17, 2023



*Interested in serving on the Coop's Board of Directors? Nominations are now open!*

OPENINGS

There is one opening on the Board for a term of three years.

## CANDIDATE DEADLINE

If you wish to submit your name for nomination, you must declare your candidacy by submitting a statement of up to 750 words to [gazettesubmissions@psfc.coop](mailto:gazettesubmissions@psfc.coop). Candidates may also opt to include a small photo for online publication. **Deadline for candidacy submission is Wednesday, March 1, 2023.**

## DECIDING AND VOTING

Candidates will have the opportunity to present their platform at the March 28, 2023 General Meeting. Every member will receive an online ballot via email in May. Paper ballots will be available upon request. Voting will take place at the Annual Meeting to be held on June 27, 2023.

## DUTIES OF THE DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors comprises five elected Coop members and the senior General Coordinator present. Members serve three-year terms. Members of the Board are expected to attend General Meetings monthly. They receive Coop work credit for their attendance. From our inception in 1973 to the present, the monthly General Meeting has been the decision-making body of the Coop. Since the Coop was incorporated in 1977, we have been legally required to have a Board of Directors. The Bylaws of the Park Slope Food Coop state: "The portion of the Board of Directors meeting that is devoted to receiving the advice of the members shall be known as the General Meeting [...] The members who gather to give advice to the directors may choose to vote in order to express their support or opposition for any of the issues that have come before the meeting."

*For more information about Coop governance, please see [The GM and the Board of Directors and Amended Bylaws of Park Slope Food Coop, Inc.](#)*

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## SAFE FOOD COMMITTEE REPORT: PLOW TO PLATE'S UPCOMING DOUBLE FEATURE

January 17, 2023



by Adam Rabiner

*Bisonhead* was shot on location in 2015 in Yellowstone National Park with the Native American Tanner family. It is a short and quiet film, mostly visual—wintry plains and hills, a bison shot dead with a rifle and dragged away by its slayer leaving a trail of blood in the snow, the same bison lying in the back of a pickup truck having its teeth examined by a young woman wearing a pink blazer. The prairie wind howls, an instrument like a didgeridoo sadly wails, flowing water crests over a waterfall and roars, a snowplow rumbles steadily down a deserted highway, footsteps make a crackling crunch on a snowy path, but not that many words are uttered. Yet the movie packs an

emotional punch above its weight. It's like a highly concentrated fruit juice. A little goes a long way.

After a few of these images, the following words, contextualizing the film, are posted on the screen in white print on a black background:

*"The extermination of bison from their hunting grounds will force the Plains Indians to give up their nomadic ways and surrender to the reservation system. Every buffalo dead is an Indian gone."*

1867, U.S. Military Colonel.

*"Nearly 150 years later, a family of Ponderai Native Americans travel to Yellowstone to take part in the culling of wild bison in order to preserve their treaty hunting rights."*

*"Yellowstone was once part of the Ponderai's ancestral harvesting grounds. Today they are restricted to a small hunting zone outside the park."*

One of the longest stretches of conversation is when some of the Tanners discuss hunting strategies over a map of the area and realize their opportunities are limited by the fact that the bison are gathered on private land which is off limits to the Tanners.

A similar restriction is brought to bear in the subsequent scene. One of the Tanner elders is driving his car and about to enter an area when the driver of another vehicle leaving the area stops him to ask if she can help him with anything. When he says no, she doesn't hesitate to tell him that the area is closed and off limits. When asked if she is a game warden, she replies, "Nope, I just live here," to which Mr. Tanner replies under his breath after pulling away, "Well, don't worry about it then." The younger woman in the car laughs at his retort to a microaggression piled on top of generations of historical injustices.

After this annoying encounter, the older Tanner and his younger female relative pull up on some bison grazing on grass ringed by a fence with buildings in the background—a Yellowstone education center and a gift shop—and she films them with her phone. This scene is followed by one of a vanload of non-Native American tourists whose tour guide stops the vehicle for a photo opportunity. The guide explains that it will have all the elements of a classic Yellowstone winter picture because it has the three necessary components of snow, buffalo, and rising steam behind them. In the next scene, two buffalo with bells draped on their necks walk below the balcony of a residential condominium. The sense one takes away from these juxtapositions is that the Tanners, indeed the buffalo themselves to some degree, have also been relegated to tourist status.

As powerful as these images are, *Bisonhead* ends with a handful of words. “We can’t harass them, we can’t chase them. What do you think our ancestors did back in the day? (gentle laughter). Run them into a draw or run them over a cliff.” (more soft laughter). *Bisonhead* ends with the Tanners defiantly driving past a herd of buffalo grazing by the side of the road, honking the car horn to chase the buffalo as someone prepares a rifle. Then the film circles back to the opening shot of the felled buffalo and the hunter breathing heavily from the exertion to move it onto the truck. “What do the bison mean to us?” asks a voiceover as you watch a bison slowly walk away from the camera behind a snowy and wind-swept hill rise. “In one word, freedom.”

*Our National Mammal* tells the story of buffalo culling by the Montana Department of Livestock due to ranchers’ fear of brucellosis disease.

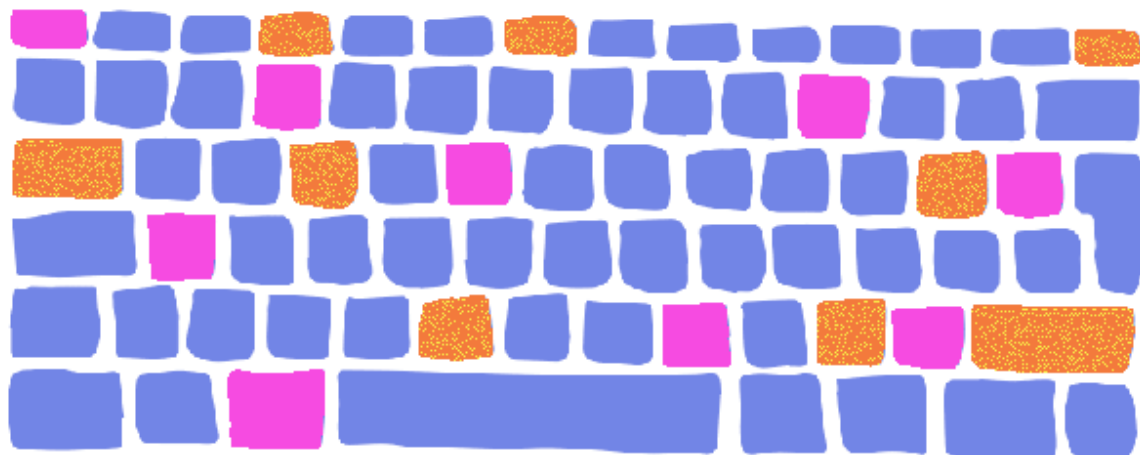
*Bisonhead* and *Our National Mammal* screening: Tuesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 @ 7:00 p.m.

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LETTERS 1/17/2023

January 17, 2023

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



GRATEFUL FOR MASKING POLICY

To the Editor:

I joined the Coop in 2017 in my 70's, and thus am an older working member. I am writing to express my gratitude and support for the general coordinators' decision to continue the mask requirement for all shoppers and workers. As the risk of serious Covid infections and death has waned for younger members, it seems that some have forgotten that those of us who live with a continued heightened risk (whether due to age, illness or a combination of factors) need to continue to protect ourselves. As the Coop has gotten busier, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain a comfortable distance from others; it seems to me that many members are not even making a modest effort to avoid close contact. I have limited myself to working 6 a.m. stocking shifts (no customers in the store for most of the shift!) and the occasional "walker" slot when one turns up, and have tried to confine my shopping to times when the store is not too busy, but I am concerned that without a mandatory masking policy even these practices will feel inadequate. With deaths at well over 300 a day nationally, mostly among older people, those of us at a heightened risk appreciate having places where we can participate in daily life without undue worry and risk.

Thank you for the current policy and I sincerely hope it continues.

*Ellen Winner*

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## HEARTFELT THANKS TO PSFC STAFF

To the Editor:

I want to thank all of the PSFC staff for their exceptionally hard work since the pandemic began. My background is in Operations + Dispute Resolution and, while I've always been in awe of how the Coop functions under its unique business model, I am deeply grateful for everyone who kept it together through Covid so that members could continue to have such a special shopping experience. I particularly want to thank everyone involved in purchasing for toughing-out what I can only imagine to

have been a supply nightmare for nearly the last three years. I've recently noticed that some of my missing staples have returned to the shelves, so I'm particularly appreciative of their efforts.

The pandemic brought on chaos for everyone, and while I've read and heard about a lot of negative issues at the Coop, I want to make sure the gratitude held for staff cuts through that noise so they know they are immensely appreciated. Thank you all!

*Katheryn Keller*

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## ARE VACCINES SAFE AND EFFECTIVE?

To the editor,

The Coop had really no choice but to institute a vaccine mandate for workers, as demanded by the city, which is unfortunate because we lost people who had no intention of submitting to them. But we're now seeing information coming out about these particular vaccines that are highly disturbing, including the unprecedented plethora of deaths and disabilities that have been appearing in the CDC's Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (known as VAERS) temporally associated with the vaccines, plus the realization that they don't prevent infection or transmission but are only claimed to reduce hospitalization and death from Covid-19. In light of this growing realization, people should think twice about the steady stream of boosters coming out. The "safe and effective" talking points and the rock-solid belief in "the science" and in modern medicine, are looking more and more like little more than propaganda. What people actually believe in is what they are told "the science" is.

In fact, the longstanding belief in the practice of vaccination itself as the agent that wiped out the terrible infectious diseases of the past is simply *not the case*. Rather, what brought about the diminution of these diseases was the common public-health

measures that most of us take for granted, and which were extended to most citizens over the course of the first half of the 20th century: specifically, indoor hot and cold water, treated water, indoor flush toilets, refrigeration, steam heating, garbage collection, and others. Some of these were luxuries not even available to the kings of old. Think of the possibility for infectious diseases without these measures, whether with vaccinations available or not. And alternatively, how would people have fared without vaccines available, but *with* these public health measures? And, in fact, more and more people are shunning vaccines.

*David Barouh*

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## LEAVE THE HEADPHONES AT HOME

To the Editor,

I was just starting a stocking shift recently, and I found myself holding a box of farm-raised organic pork tenderloin, priced and ready to sell—quite appealing—but with no space on the refrigerated shelf for display. Being a new member and somewhat cautious by nature, I decided to ask the member next to me, who was also dutifully stocking, if he had any advice on how to proceed. “Hey, do you know where this tenderloin is supposed to go?” A little louder: “Excuse me, sorry. A question? Regarding this pork tenderloin?” Nothing! Finally, he turned around, looked at me with some skepticism, took out his earbuds and said, “What?”

What followed “what” was a fairly straightforward conversation about stocking pork tenderloin that I won’t share here, but when our problem had been resolved my fellow Coop member returned his earbuds to his ears and didn’t speak again. Now, in addition to being cautious I am also prone to shyness, especially in new situations, and yet despite myself I do think there is value in being, at minimum, open to the possibility of conversation. Headphones declare: “Do not speak to me.” Which is totally fine in

any number of situations one encounters living in the most populous city in the United States, but is a shift at the Coop one of those times? Discussing pork tenderloin or produce or U-boat technique can lead to conversations about work, hobbies, family—anything. Or not. But whether you'd rather talk or listen, isn't it a good thing to get to know your fellow members a little bit more? Sharing our time and our labor, together in this place, is what makes it more than just a grocery store. Right?

*Clark Mizono*