

CROSSWORD: "FAMILY STYLE"

September 13, 2023



MEET THE NEW WAVE OF COOP STAFF MEMBERS

September 13, 2023



By Anita Bushell

Notice some new faces roaming the aisles? The Coop has several new staff members. The *Linewaiters' Gazette* took a few minutes to welcome and get to know them.

TANYA STEINBERG, RECEIVING COORDINATOR:

What brought you to the Coop?

The amazing, affordable food and community. I moved to New York City in 2015 and the Coop, where my brother had been a member, was one of the factors in the “pro” column when deciding to make that move.

Where were you working before you joined the Coop?

I worked in restaurants most of my life, which is where I developed a love for food. Since moving to New York City, I worked as a studio manager for an artist and personal assistant to an interior decorator before coming to the Coop.

When did you start working at the Coop?

I came on staff in September 2022, but I also worked on weekends during the pandemic as a temporary worker in Receiving.

What is your favorite Coop product?

So many things. I mean, it's hard to talk about anything without mentioning the incredible produce but I'm currently obsessed with the Vegan Tomato 'Nduja made by City Saucery that lives on the gourmet endcap.

What do you do when you're not working at the Coop?

I am a painter, so I spend time in my studio when not at the Coop. I also am an avid bird watcher and go to Green-Wood Cemetery to enjoy birds and nature a few times a week.

Do you cook? If so, what is your go-to weeknight recipe?

Yes, I cook. My go-to is roasted vegetables with homemade seitan (super delicious and easy to make by the way).

What is your favorite Park Slope business?

I don't live in Park Slope so I will plug my favorite business in Sunset Park, the neighborhood where I spend most of my time: Yafa Cafe is a wonderful Yemeni café, with great food and coffee. Super chill and friendly vibe.

MARION MORAN, RECEIVING COORDINATOR:



PHOTO BY JENNIFER MACFARLANE

What brought you to the Coop?

A very good friend of mine told me about the wonderful produce, low prices, and friendly community of people, so I joined in September of 1998. I have been a long-time, committed member and have enjoyed it ever since.

Where were you working before you joined the Coop?

Before working at the Coop, I was completing my business degree at Brooklyn College and worked as a volunteer in Cats TNR & Rescue. I also interned with NYPIRG (New York Public Interest Research Group) and spent time as an environmental activist and helped with beach cleanups around Jamaica Bay.

When did you start working at the Coop?

I started working at the Coop in January 2023 as a receiving coordinator.

What is your favorite Coop product?

I love all the wonderful fresh organic produce, eggs from humanely raised chickens, grass-fed ground beef and other healthy food options at the Coop. I cannot say that I have one favorite product.

What do you do when you're not working at the Coop?

When I am not working in the Coop, I am birding in Prospect Park, visiting museums, gardening or relaxing at home with my many rescue cats.

Do you cook? If so, what is your go-to weeknight recipe?

Yes, I cook. I love making large pots of soups and stews, so that I have something to rely on when coming home late from work. I usually cook on my days off.

What is your favorite Park Slope business?

My favorite Park Slope business is the Coop, of course!

DENNIS DORGAN, RECEIVING COORDINATOR:



PHOTO BY JENNIFER MACFARLANE

What brought you to the Coop?

I stumbled in on my first day living in Brooklyn!

Where were you working before you joined the Coop?

While in Brooklyn I worked in sales at R&A Cycles. Before I moved to New York, I was a sawyer at Pacific Rim Tonewoods in Washington [state] for seven years.

When did you start working at the Coop?

Late May, 2023.

What is your favorite Coop product?

Lime LaCroix from the dairy cooler.

What do you do when you're not working at the Coop?

I enjoy riding my bike and playing music when I can.

Do you cook? If so, what is your go-to weeknight recipe?

Baked Lemon Garlic Coho Salmon with rice and greens.

What is your favorite Park Slope business?

Aside from the Coop, I'm a big fan of Miss American Pie on 5th Ave. A warm space with lovely pie, treats and baking classes run by a very friendly married couple.

ELLY DITTMAR, MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR:



PHOTO BY JENNIFER MACFARLANE

What brought you to the Coop?

When I first moved to New York, I was living with members. After learning more I was super excited to join and contribute!

Where were you working before you joined the Coop?

Before joining staff here, I was working for a catering company based at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

When did you start working at the Coop?

August 2022.

What is your favorite Coop product?

Anything from the cheese case!

What do you do when you're not working at the Coop?

I spend much of my free time with my dog and close friends, hanging out and cooking or watching TV. I like to go on long walks and hikes. During the summer I try to make it to the beach as much as possible!

Do you cook? If so, what is your go-to weeknight recipe?

Yes, my roommate and I love to cook! Tacos are definitely our go-to.

What is your favorite Park Slope business?

I love Bagel Hole on 7th Avenue and 12th Street!

KARINA GEE, MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR:



PHOTO BY JENNIFER MACFARLANE

What brought you to the Coop?

I joined in 1993 when my roommate at the time convinced me to join by taking me shopping with him one day.

Where were you working before you joined the Coop?

My prior career was in consumer products licensing—granting permission to manufacturers to use my companies' brands and intellectual property on their products, packaging and services. Immediately before joining the staff at the Coop, I worked at Girl Scouts of the USA, expanding the brand into licensed products like Girl Scout Cookie-flavored coffee from Dunkin' Donuts, Girl Scout Cookie ice cream from Breyers, and Girl Scout Cookie Blizzards at Dairy Queen. Prior to that, I handled consumer products licensing for The Sopranos at HBO, The Muppets at the Jim Henson Company and Peter Rabbit for Viking Penguin.

When did you start working at the Coop?

I joined the staff as a membership coordinator in August 2022.

What is your favorite Coop product?

I've recently discovered the Mitica Carmelized Pecans in the bulk aisle. They definitely live up to the tag line on the label: "Crunchy & Addictive"!

What do you do when you're not working at the Coop?

During the pandemic, I took up birding and am now an avid birder in Green-Wood Cemetery. I actually met receiving coordinator Tanya Steinberg on a guided bird walk before we both were hired! I've also been trying to do more baking, something my mother taught me when I was a kid. And I was recently elected president of my apartment building's coop board, so that's been taking up a lot of my free time.

Do you cook? If so, what is your go-to weeknight recipe?

My cooking skills are pretty basic, so I like to cook a big batch of something and re-heat through the week. One of my go-to recipes is a Peruvian chicken and rice recipe I found on the New York Times Cooking app.

What is your favorite Park Slope business?

The Park Slope Food Coop, of course!

ERIC ALGER, RECEIVING COORDINATOR:



PHOTO BY JENNIFER MACFARLANE

What brought you to the Coop?

I had been living in the city for about two years and had become frustrated with both the prices and quality of groceries available within close walking distance of my apartment. Despite this, I had become increasingly interested in cooking. My partner at the time knew of the Coop and suggested we both join.

Where were you working before you joined the Coop?

I continue to freelance as a studio assistant for a multimedia artist and eyewear/accessories designer named Kerin Rose Gold. Prior to meeting Kerin a year ago, I spent time working for Trader Joe's, Getty Images and Patrick McMullan Company.

When did you start working at the Coop?

I joined the Coop in early 2007, and the Receiving staff in early May 2023.

What is your favorite Coop product?

The produce.

What do you do when you're not working at the Coop?

You'll find me wandering around the city's museums and galleries, enjoying live music, embellishing secondhand sportswear, making images and art, biking, dancing and swimming.

Do you cook? If so, what is your go-to weeknight recipe?

Yes, I do. I've got homemade hummus on hand pretty much at all times.

What is your favorite Park Slope business?

Artist & Craftsman Supply.

Anita Bushell is a freelance writer who has been published in Friends Journal, Ford Foundation Report, and Uncensored: American Experiences with Poverty and Home-

lessness. *She just published Object Essays.*

INSIDE ANOTHER BROOKLYN FOOD COOP'S JOURNEY TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE

September 13, 2023



By Sara Ivry

The first rule of a Food Coop shop is: Arrive at its storefront. I'd forgotten this basic tenet this past summer when I set out to buy milk and whatever else struck my fancy at the Greene Hill Food Coop (GHFC). When I was there last—several years and an entire pandemic ago—it was located on Putnam Avenue, around the corner from a bar, just near Fulton Street in Clinton Hill, the neighborhood I call home.

Now, it was nowhere in sight. That is, in my sight. It had moved a few blocks away, closer to the border of Bed-Stuy, and I had no idea.

And there's the rub: too few would-be shoppers know anything much about the GH-FC's existence. And fewer still take the step of becoming a bona fide member. Indeed, membership has hovered around 300 for several years now. The GHFC General Manager Jake Boxenhorn wants to change that. He's making a renewed push to grow his member pool and ensure its longevity.

"I really had no idea what a coop even was until I got here to New York City," says the Long Island native. After graduating college two years ago, he moved to Brooklyn "right down the street from where Greene Hill is now, and I was looking for part-time work, as well as a good place to shop. Greene Hill happened to be offering a part-time job on the weekend, and to become a member at the same time."



Opportunity knocked and Boxenhorn welcomed it in. About eight months ago, he grad-

uated from part-time weekend gig to full-time General Manager when his predecessor left.

Since then he's been stymied—as have others before him—by the question of how to gain new members, how best to spread word of the GHFC and how to get people to join up.

“WE DON'T BEAT THE PRICES OF OTHER COOPS. WE DON'T HAVE THE BIGGEST SELECTION, BUT WE HAVE A GROUP OF REALLY PASSIONATE PEOPLE.”

“Everyone knows about the Park Slope Food Coop, and everyone shops there,” he says. “I've done a lot of work on the floor at other coops and see that people just don't really know who we are. We're pretty small.”

General Manager of the Park Slope Food Coop (PSFC) Joe Holtz agrees the relative size of GHFC vis a vis PSFC presents a hurdle.

“A Coop like ours has 9,000 items, and 6,000 square feet, and theirs has many thousand fewer items because of the smaller selling space, and because of our size we can get better prices,” he says. “We're a problem for Coops near us, so we try to help in every way we can.”

PSFC members are allowed to shop at the GHFC, and support the tiny food coop. The *Linewaiters' Gazette* has covered the GHFC's efforts to shore up membership, the PSFC has given the GHFC loans, and Holtz has responded to Boxenhorn's request for semi-regular meetings to think of what policies and changes might work best for the GHFC to meet its growth goals.

Among them, having “open shopping” days this past summer, to entice passersby and members of the local community as well as allowing PSFC members to shop at

Greene Hill without having to work there. So doing raises overall sales and encourages PSFC stalwarts to consider joining Greene Hill as well.

“They said, ‘Can we let your members shop here?’” Holtz says. “And we said, ‘You can do whatever you want for our members. But I’ll tell you what we don’t do: let your members shop here because that would be like us killing you.’”

“When I think of any Coop, your first job is will you survive, and your second job is will you thrive,” Holtz says. “Surviving without thriving means you’re still vulnerable.”

At present, GHFC is vulnerable. It routinely does about \$20,000 a week in sales, Boxenhorn says, a figure it can live off of—if modestly.

“We’d like to get up to 25, that would help us thrive,” Boxenhorn says. “Right now, we’re in a survival mode. And we’re trying to get out of that through inward restructuring.”



Getting there is contingent on growing membership; Boxenhorn is aiming for a base of a solid 500.

He says he and his board are discussing a lot of ideas regarding how to grow. He wants to improve the Coop's operation and its general presentation by patching up and painting the basement and the store's interior, fixing its flooring, and generally swapping its "original homey Coop look" for something less worn in and, hopefully, more compelling. He's also hoping to change how shifts at the GHFC are structured—to shorten them and make them more frequent and to implement more serious repercussions when a member is delinquent.

"WHEN I THINK OF ANY COOP, YOUR FIRST JOB IS WILL YOU SURVIVE, AND YOUR SECOND JOB IS WILL YOU THRIVE?" HOLTZ SAYS. "SURVIVING WITHOUT THRIVING MEANS YOU'RE STILL VULNERABLE."

“We’ve been very lax about how we maintain our shift structure,” he says, contrasting it with the rigor of the PSFC. “What you guys do is much more strict. That’s something that we’re thinking of doing to make our membership more accountable in general.”

He also has embarked on a semi-regular meeting with Holtz to brainstorm other ways that Greene Hill might start to thrive. Holtz welcomes this opportunity to lend his insight, accumulated over more than four decades as a PSFC staff member.



“When I was the only employee in June of 1975,” Holtz says, “I was given a lot of freedom to try things. I would ask Jake if he feels like he has that freedom, because I think that’s important—a certain entrepreneurial aspect.”

Holtz says he’ll also encourage Boxenhorn to consider lowering prices on produce and ensuring it is of a quality superior to what is generally available in the area. “Increase the sales on that, increase the turnover, and become famous for that,” Holtz

suggests.

Until then, Boxenhorn is buoyed in this work by the community he stumbled into.

“I feel so strongly about this Coop in the sense that we are so close knit,” he says, noting that he knows the name of every single member. “We know each other so well. It’s such a friendly environment that I don’t think any other coop has. The vibe of the Coop is what makes it special and you have to experience that to understand. We don’t beat the prices of other coops. We don’t have the biggest selection, but we have a group of really passionate people.”

“We’ve been around 12 years,” Boxenhorn adds, “and we’re still here. So whatever we’re doing is working. “

Sara Ivry is a long-time member of the Park Slope Food Coop.

THE FUTURE OF CHILDCARE, PLASTIC BAGS, AND ‘HOUSEHOLD’ DEFINITIONS—TRICKY TOPICS COVERED AT THE AUGUST GENERAL MEETING

September 13, 2023



By Liz Welch

The Coop's August General Meeting took place on Zoom, for the last time in the foreseeable future as in-person meetings resume in September. Issues covered ranged from how the Coop's mark-up is calculated, to why childcare is still on hold—and why 21 is the new suggested age for adult members. Last but not least: Can we please begin to address our fossil fuel addiction?

CHAIR COMMITTEE IS LOOKING FOR A NEW MEMBER

Chair Committee member Josef Szende ran the General Meeting on August 29 at 7 p.m. via Zoom, during which he announced that the Chair Committee is currently looking for a new member who “directly reflects the diversity of the Coop.” Anyone interested, please email psfcchair@gmail.com.

ENCOURAGING FINANCIAL NEWS:

Joseph Holtz, the Coop's co-founder, General Coordinator, General Manager and Treasurer, presented an eight-page financial statement, and reported “encouraging”

news:

The Coop's gross margin as of July 16 is \$4,941,000 versus our total expenses of \$4,741,00, leaving \$200,000 to operate. Our overall income is \$283,000, due to other and interest income.

Holtz also shared a graph (page 2 of the report) designed by General Coordinator Lisa Moore that clearly shows the fluctuation of the gross margin percentage at the Coop during the four-week periods that comprise the first 24 weeks of this fiscal year. The Coop's overall gross margin percentage for the 24 weeks is 19.61%.

"If we know the actual gross margin, versus the perfect gross margin, then we know the shrink, which is the measure of all that goes wrong—whether dropping a jar on the ground, someone steals something or a company misbills us and we pay too much," Holtz explained.

The Coop's shrink percentage is 1.27% of sales—better than the 2.7% industry average, and even better than the the 1.7% industry low. As a coop owned by member shoppers and workers, Holtz believes that "we can and should be lower." Holtz added that the Coop is transparent about how all products are priced.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERSHIP COORDINATORS

General Coordinator Lisa Moore announced two new membership coordinator team members: Lisa Pelavin began work on Saturday, August 26, and Mae Frankeberger was slated to begin work on Wednesday, August 30.

RETURN OF CHILDCARE

Moore also gave an update on the return of childcare, which members voted in favor of restarting at the October 2022 meeting.

Efforts to revert the former childcare room from the bulk processing area that it be-

came during Covid are underway. Shelving has already been ordered and there is a plan to accommodate the bulk processing area back in the basement. The Coop staff also must revise the childcare training material, train members and create a new functionality in Member Services for childcare training and work slots.

The biggest unforeseen obstacle, however, has been securing insurance for childcare. "The Coop had childcare insurance until we canceled the policy in 2020 due to COVID restrictions," Moore explained. "Joe Holtz contacted our broker in May 2023 to restart our policy and learned that the insurer we'd used for years is no longer in the market."

Since then, the Coop's insurance broker has reached out to multiple carriers and has not yet found one willing to insure childcare because we are not a licensed childcare facility or they do not write childcare policies. Moore said that we are exempt from NYS childcare licensing requirements because "according to health code Article 47, we are a retail establishment providing supervision for children of patrons, our members, while parents are on the premise and the children are not spending more than 8 hours in the program per week." But we also could not become licensed even if we wanted to because the requirements are so stringent. "The child care room does not meet the standards established by NY: the room must have two exit doors with fire suppression, for example," she explained. "We do not have such a room in our building."

However, to make ourselves more attractive to insurers, the number of children will be limited to eight at any time and childcare workers must participate in background checks. "Our broker is continuing the search as the list of possible carriers has not yet been exhausted. Provided we get insurance, the goal is to have childcare back up and running in the fourth quarter," Moore said.

After Moore's presentation, member Beth Ruck asked if there had been any efforts to enable Coop members to coordinate with each other to share childcare, such as a bulletin board sign up. Another member, Lisa G, noted that there were only 30 people

present on the Zoom and since this is an issue that impacts so many members, that perhaps the *Linewaiters' Gazette* could cover it.

NEW DEFINITIONS

The Coop's current rules state that members can join the Coop at 18, which means when current members children turn 18, they must join, be issued a card under their own member number, and begin working shifts. Parents have historically pushed back on this rule—whether their kids don't want to join, or they're away from home at college. General Coordinator Ann Herpel explained that this has led to tension, confusion and an equity issue as some children who wanted to be able to shop on their own or to work a parent's shift have been issued cards at 14—and we have a record of their age, and expected them to work when they turn 18. There are many more kids of members for whom there is no record.

"We decided it would be reasonable to raise the age to 21," Herpel explained. "If you can buy alcohol and weed at that age, you can also work at the Coop."

The Coop's General Coordinators sponsored an issue to be discussed: "Coop Definition of Household and Adult" as these definitions have caused confusion and stress to members and staff alike, according to Herpel, who presented reasons for the proposed shifts.

They include:

- The Coop defines an adult as a person 21 years or older. Individuals 21 and older may apply to join the Coop.
- A household is a group of adults who share food and other products purchased at the Coop.
- All adults in a household are required to join the Coop and fulfill all membership requirements.

- All adults in a familial relationship who reside together must join the Coop. Familial relationships include but are not limited to spouses, domestic partners, significant others, children/step-children, adult children, siblings/step-siblings, parents/step-parents, and grandparents/step-grandparents.

The other related issue was confusion over the definition of what it means to be in a “household.” Herpel explained, “The current accommodation is that if you are two adults living in a household but don’t otherwise share anything, then that person is not part of your household.” While your roommate does not have to become a member, your spouse or older children do.

“We want to make it clear that if one member of your family wants to join the Coop, then everyone in that household must join,” Herpel said.

During the questions and comments portion, member Seher Dholakia suggested that in order to be inclusive, people who are not part of a Coop household should still be able to join at the age of 18.

“I would have joined at 18,” Dholakia explained. “And I lived in New York.”

Herpel agreed that more nuanced language could be included in the new rules, adding, “If we are not requiring other children of household members to work until 21, then there could be access for new adult members joining at 18, but not having to work until 21.”

Another member named Tara also shared that she had been a member for 18 years and had never heard of this policy, which was why she came to the General Meeting—to figure it out. “I was not aware that [my daughter] could have gotten a card,” she explained. “She just left for college—can she still shop with me if she is home for the holiday? Is she supposed to work when she is home for the break? The 21 change would be super helpful to us to navigate.”

Under the current rules, Herpel explained: “You would have to register her as a member and then have her take a leave of absence until she is home, at which point she would have to work in order to shop. Or she could join her when she comes home—either winter break or summer break—and then go on leave when she’s back at college.”

The last member to comment on this complicated issue was Bhakti Sondra Shaye, who simply stated: “I’m in support of whatever makes the Coop more family-friendly!”

FOSSIL FUEL

Coop member Tracy Fitz spoke next about an ongoing conversation at The Coop—to stop giving away plastic bags. “We started talking about this in Oct 2019, and then again in September 2022,” Fitz said. “My idea is to sell compostable or non-compostable bags instead of giving them away.”

She presented her reasons, starting with data:

Currently the Coop gives customers 60,677 non-decomposable bags per month. Each costs roughly \$.01 a piece, which comes out to an estimated \$693 per month, which the Coop covers.

The pros? The bags are cheap and strong.

The cons? Fitz listed many, including: They take fossil fuel to make them and do not decompose. Despite the myth, they are not recyclable—as it costs more to reuse than to use a virgin bag. Making—and getting rid of—these single use bags uses heat, which means more Co₂ is emitted into the air which directly contributes to global warming. Carbon emissions are directly related to a 30% increase in extreme weather events, including hurricanes, wildfires, heat waves and more.

She also compares these stats to the pale green compostable bags made from corn that the Coop also distributes to members for free. Each costs 4 to 5 cents, and 41,000 are distributed monthly, which costs the Coop \$1,837.00.

The pros? These bags are biodegradable. The cons? They need air to compost and often wind up in the garbage. “If they don’t go into compost,” Fitz said, “they don’t decompose.”

She also pointed out that the combined cost of providing bags for members—whether single use or decomposable—cost the Coop \$30,000 plus a year which is added to the cost of food. Her suggestions?

1. Convert to providing compostable bags which would cost the Coop \$52,000 a year. “I vote for no free use single bag give away at the Coop and instead use that \$52,000 to subsidize using re-usable bags.”
2. Have a coop work slot that has a member walking around the Coop and training people how to be less dependent on fossil fuel plastic. “We would start with the single use bags,” she said. “And then tackle the clam shells and soft plastic containers.”

Member Brian Shuman showed members the mesh bags his family uses, and asked how the Coop would pay for this conversion. Holtz said: “By converting from fossil fuel [to decomposable] bags, we’d spend \$50,000 a year.... that’s not good for our financial situation.” While he agrees with Fitz that the “plasticization of our world is appalling” and that he is in support of “making this conversion”, they differ on how the Coop would deal with it financially, explaining. “Tracy would like people to pay for it. I would like to pay for it by raising the price of every case of produce by 20 cents for every case of produce.”

If people were to pay for their bags, that could cause conflict at check out, which the Coop has been trying to make more efficient. “If we charge people per bag at check

out, it would slow check out down,” Holtz said. “We can’t afford to do that.” He also thanked Brian Shuman for using cloth bags, adding that the Coop does not subtract the weight of the bag.

Amita Rodman agreed: “I wash and bring my own bags—and don’t expect that other people do that. But I do expect that we must and should pivot away from plastic as part of our value system.”

She suggested markups, or the Coop absorbing the price, as a good way to do this.

General Coordinator Lisa Moore agreed.

“We are working towards replacing compostable bags in the produce area, and removing fossil fuel bags,” she said. “And paying for it by adding 20 cents per case—not per item—in produce. You would not feel it as a customer, as a buyer of these items. And that is not the same as charging people individually.”

A member named Lenore seconded that the Coop absorbing the price is the more equitable approach: “I’ve done cashier and check out and people on fixed or limited income often have to put things back they can’t afford.” Herpel agreed: “A member using food stamps is not able to buy bags on their EBT card. It is not an option.”

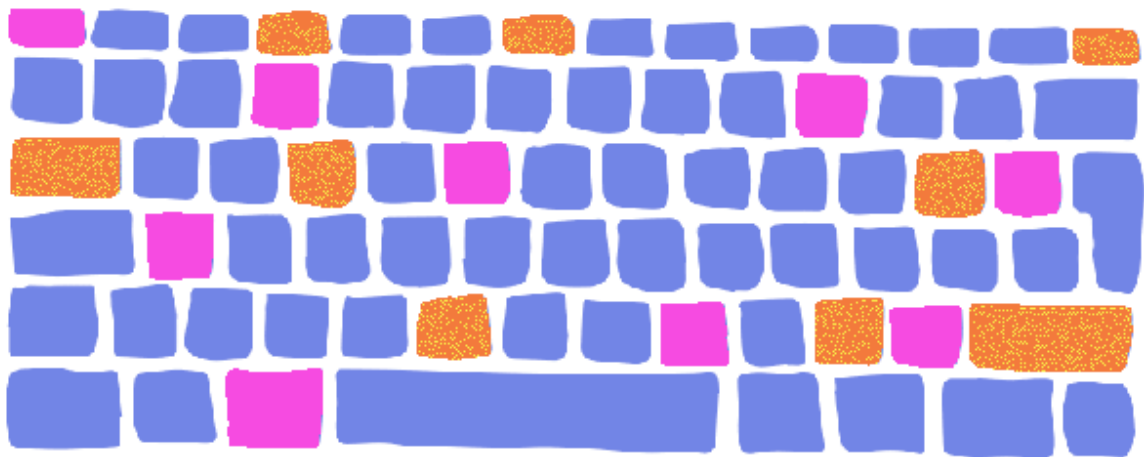
Fitz appreciated all these ideas and ended the session with: “Can we chip at this issue slowly and methodically? Let’s stop with the fossil fuel bags first. Then we can go for the clam shells which are also single use, and soft plastic jars as well. And can we vote on this next time?”

Liz Welch re-joined the Gazette as a reporter in August 2023 after a hiatus. She is a longtime journalist and author/collaborator whose work can be seen at www.lizwelch.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

September 13, 2023

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BYO Containers

To the Coop,

Zoë Kaplan-Lewis's letter to the editor in the last *Linewaiters' Gazette* was exactly on target, and I agree with every word she wrote. This is my plea for the Coop to return the bulk bins to the bulk aisle.

I understand that bulk items are sold in plastic bags for reasons of hygiene, to keep Coop members' hands away from grains, beans, sugar, etc. If this is the case, I find it troubling that produce isn't treated with the same concern. In Italy, there are rolls of plastic gloves in the produce aisle and everyone dons gloves before touching a single item. We use our bare hands to pick out produce, and if one tomato isn't firm or squishy enough, we put it back. Is there a rationale for allowing bare hands in the produce aisle but not in the bulk aisle?

I urge the Coop to return the bulk bins. If people want to purchase grains, beans, sugar, etc., in plastic bags, there are grocery stores in the neighborhood that supply these items. If people want to keep the plastic in their grocery carts to a minimum, there is only one grocery store where that *could be* possible: the Park Slope Food Coop. Please consider turning "could be possible" to "is possible."

Thank you,

Judy Jacob

Single-Use Plastic at the Coop

Dear Coop,

100,000 single-use plastic bags given away to Coop shoppers every month?

According to Martha Hoffman, the coordinator who orders them, close to 60,000 fossil-fuel bags costing \$.01 per bag and 40,000 “compostable bags” costing \$.045 per bag are ordered per month. [Note: the letter said “\$.01.1” above; I assume the writer meant “\$.011,” but I’m just guessing—Dave Mandl, letters editor.]

Coordinator Joe Szladek wants to give away only “compostable” bags, which will cost, at 100,000 a month, close to \$54,000 a year.

Coordinator Joe Holtz sees this bag giveaway as a necessary part of doing business at the Coop.

Shoppers require it, he thinks, although he reuses all the plastic bags he gets by buying bread.

Where is the Environmental Committee? He says they don’t want to educate.

Why do we use so many single-use plastic bags at the Coop?

And there are single-use plastic-wrapped clamshells, food pallets, peanut butter jars...

What happens to them? The compostable “free” produce bags must be composted in a commercial compost facility. They take 180 days there; they don’t compost in backyard compost bins.

There is no recycling for single-use plastic. Anything that can be separated from regular garbage/recycling that is light enough to be blown in air is sent to a Covanta furnace.

Is there a parallel between Sackler’s Oxycontin lies about addiction and the fossil-fuel industry’s lies about recycling and burning fossil fuel? We in the USA are addicted to convenience. Do we continue the addiction, riding blindly with convenience into climate change?

Tracy Fitz