

MARCH GENERAL MEETING: STATUS OF THE BDS VOTE, POTENTIAL BOARD MEMBERS AND PERSONNEL POLICIES

April 30, 2024



By Jess Powers

The March General Meeting returned to the Picnic House in Prospect Park. It addressed the status of the Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) vote, provided introductions to potential Board members and discussed personnel policies and other Coop business. Roughly 150 people were in attendance. Attendees receive a detailed email with the agenda, a four-week financial statement, draft February minutes and materials on Coop governance.

Update on the BDS Vote

Ahead of the member Open Forum, the Chair Committee decided to invite General Co-

ordinator Joe Holtz to speak. When questioned about this decision by a member, Joseph Senda explained that the Chair anticipated questions and comments about the BDS vote and wanted to address the current status of the vote. Holtz explained that after an eight-year search for a venue that can accommodate more than two thousand people, anticipated for a “referendum on Israeli products,” the Claire Tow Theater at Brooklyn College could be secured for the May 28 General Meeting. Four members submitted agenda items for a vote; all four members declined to put forward their item for the May meeting. Members for and against the BDS movement voiced their positions. Before beginning the Treasurer’s Report, Holtz added that “boycotts in the past had 87-100% support” whereas “this one has thousands of members who are upset on both sides.” He offered: “The Coop is open to different groups. It’s a challenge. I don’t know how our Coop is going to resolve this.”

One member made a comment regarding a lack of hooks to hang carts (which were already replaced) and another spoke about food waste in the compost bins. Another member questioned how agenda items are prioritized and why, as a person with a disability who had difficulty attending in person, their item about hybrid meetings was bumped in favor of an agenda item from staff.

Holtz said that the agenda item on personnel was of “vital importance to the Coop” for “succession planning.” During the Treasurer’s Report, Holtz elaborated on employee health benefits: “Each financial report is an opportunity to learn more about some important aspect of the financial statement,” he said.

Compost, Sewage and Tortillas

General Coordinator Elinor Astrinsky responded to an Open Forum question about composting. She explained that with thousands of new members and no squads with specialties that were refined over time, there is a “constant training battle.” Blemished food suitable for the soup kitchen winds up in compost. A video has been made to better train produce workers.

Recent long lines at the Coop for the bathrooms had to do with “untoward stuff [making its] way down to food processing.” Raw sewage was leaking and repairs included snaking, water jetting and cameras in the pipes (“kind of like a colonoscopy,” she added). A sagging pipe is being properly pitched and a new pipe connected to the sewer.

Astrinsky also explained that spring produce is still growing, so besides an “unusual crop of strawberries, under \$2 a quart,” there are Vista Hermosa tortillas, Rancho Gordo beans, and other specialty items to try, as well as Easter chocolates and chocolate matzah for Passover.



ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE CARSON

Board of Director Candidate Presentations

Nine candidates are competing for two open seats on the Board; elections will be held at the June 25, 2024 Annual Meeting. All of the candidates expressed their love of the

Coop community and interest in participating as Board members.

Tess Brown-Lavoie has a background in agriculture, land and food justice. JulieAnn Buzzanca was unable to attend but created a video message; she works in financial and accounting services. Avery Houser founded an all-natural hard seltzer company. Ramon Maislen is a project manager for complex construction projects who attended the Sudbury Valley School, a democratic school where elementary school students had votes equal to teachers. Jimmy Royston is a partner at a global consulting firm who works with many of the brands found at the Coop. Sondra Shaievitz, a Coop member for 30 years who attended “so many GMs and almost every single Zoom meeting,” is a corporate lawyer who became an energy healer and spiritual teacher. And finally, Keyian Vafai was a field organizer for Julia Salazar’s State Senate campaign.

When asked if they could envision not following the advice of the membership in a controversial vote, the prospective Board members said they could as long as no legal or financial hardships would come to the Coop as a result. Maislen added that he was probably one of the few people in the room to have visited multiple Palestinian cities, adding “[Coop members] have to live together, live in a democracy.” Candidates Richard Alvarez and Ralph Yozzo were not in attendance.

Please refer to full candidate statements here: <https://linewaitersgazette.com/2024/03/19/board-candidates-who-they-are-and-why-theyre-running/>.

Coop Employees and Personnel Policies

General Coordinators Joe Holtz and Lisa Moore proposed changes to personnel policies, citing “deficiencies” in the policies approved by the GM in 1981, which need to be updated to reflect widely accepted HR practices. The goal is to have all policies in one place and to codify existing policies. Holtz also noted that they cannot advertise for new members to the Personnel Committee, which currently has two members, without approval of the proposal, which clarifies the role of the Committee.

Moore explained the four-part proposal. The first part restated a policy that had already been passed, which states that all HR matters related to staff under the supervision of the general coordinators will be decided by the general coordinators. She stated that the employee handbook is regularly reviewed with an employment lawyer and that changes are reviewed with staff. The second part dealt with HR matters related to the general coordinators and the general manager. According to Moore, the general coordinators worked with the Personnel Committee and sought input from an employment lawyer recommended by National Co+op Grocers to revise the hiring, disciplinary actions and termination policies for the general coordinators and the general manager. All general coordinators agreed to these changes. The third part established that personnel policies would only be decided by the general manager, general coordinator team and/or the Personnel Committee. The final part stated that this new policy would replace all previous decisions related to these HR policies.

Coop member Andy Feldman cited a *Gazette* article that alluded to “deep divides [among] Coordinators.” Holtz acknowledged “deep and painful divides” and suggested that committee members could assist with “actively trying to heal them.” Moore added that the Coop works with the New York Peace Institute, an organization that helps mediate workplace issues, and noted that it has been “a path that helped us” with “developing a policy that we could all agree to.” Both acknowledged a need to balance transparency with confidentiality on workplace and performance issues. Chair Committee member Imani Q’ryn pointed out that with only two open board seats, some of the candidates might consider using their skills in this important role.

Jason Weiner, a membership coordinator, spoke as an hourly employee and responded to a question about the status of the union. He believes that the personnel proposal serves to protect his rights as a paid employee at the Coop. He described a need to balance membership and paid staff, to have more transparency and a codified plan. Lastly, he recognized the two remaining members of the Personnel Committee: “They are amazing, and hopefully [there will be] more [soon].”

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 cooking. She's on IG @foodandfury.

Editor's Note: On April 1st, the General Coordinators (GCs) were informed that Brooklyn College has rescinded its offer to lease their theater to the Park Slope Food Coop for a General Meeting to discuss and vote on matters regarding Israel and Palestine. The GCs will continue to search for a suitable, large venue to hold the General Meeting for all topics relating to boycotts.

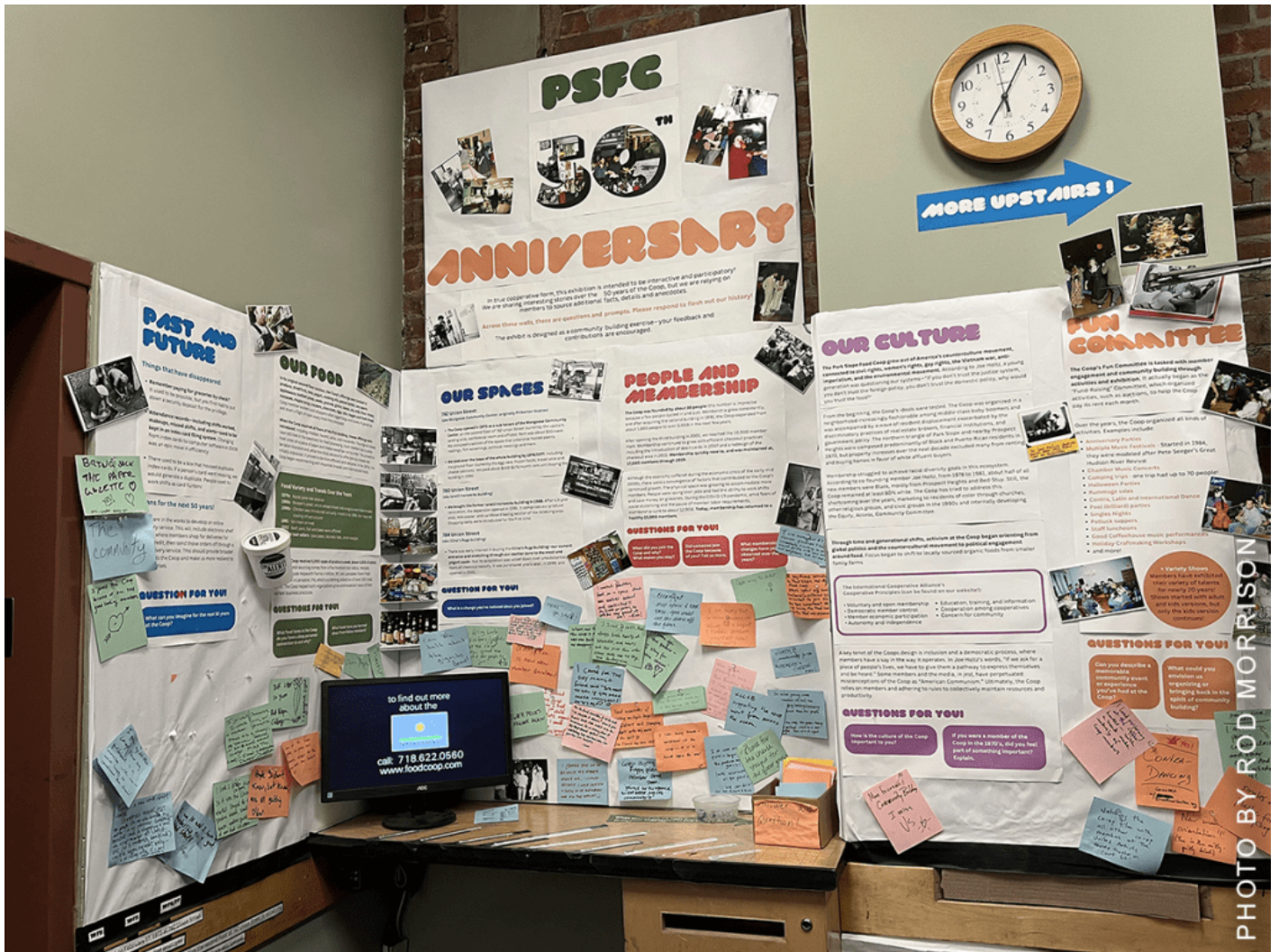
CELEBRATING THE COOP'S 50 YEARS: FUN COMMITTEE EXHIBIT SUSTAINS, BUILDS COMMUNITY

April 30, 2024



By Gabriella Di Piazza for the Fun Committee; photos by Rod Morrison

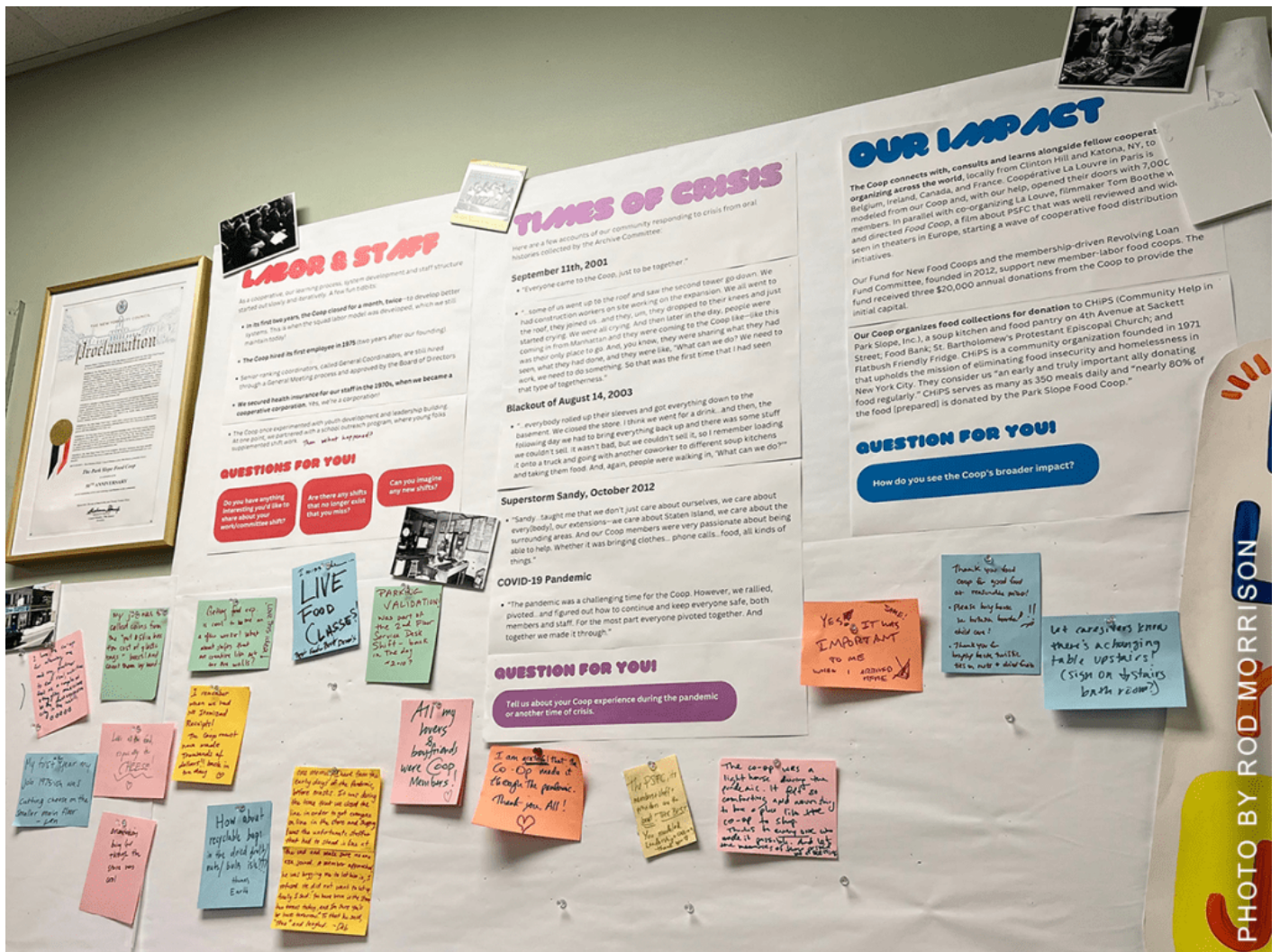
From November 2023 through March 2024, the Fun Committee installed an exhibit in the Coop entryway and at the 2nd-floor landing celebrating our 50th anniversary. Vintage video clips ran on a loop and archival materials, photos and factoids spanning our five decades were showcased. In true cooperative form, the exhibition was interactive and participatory, relying on members to share feedback, anecdotes and additional history.



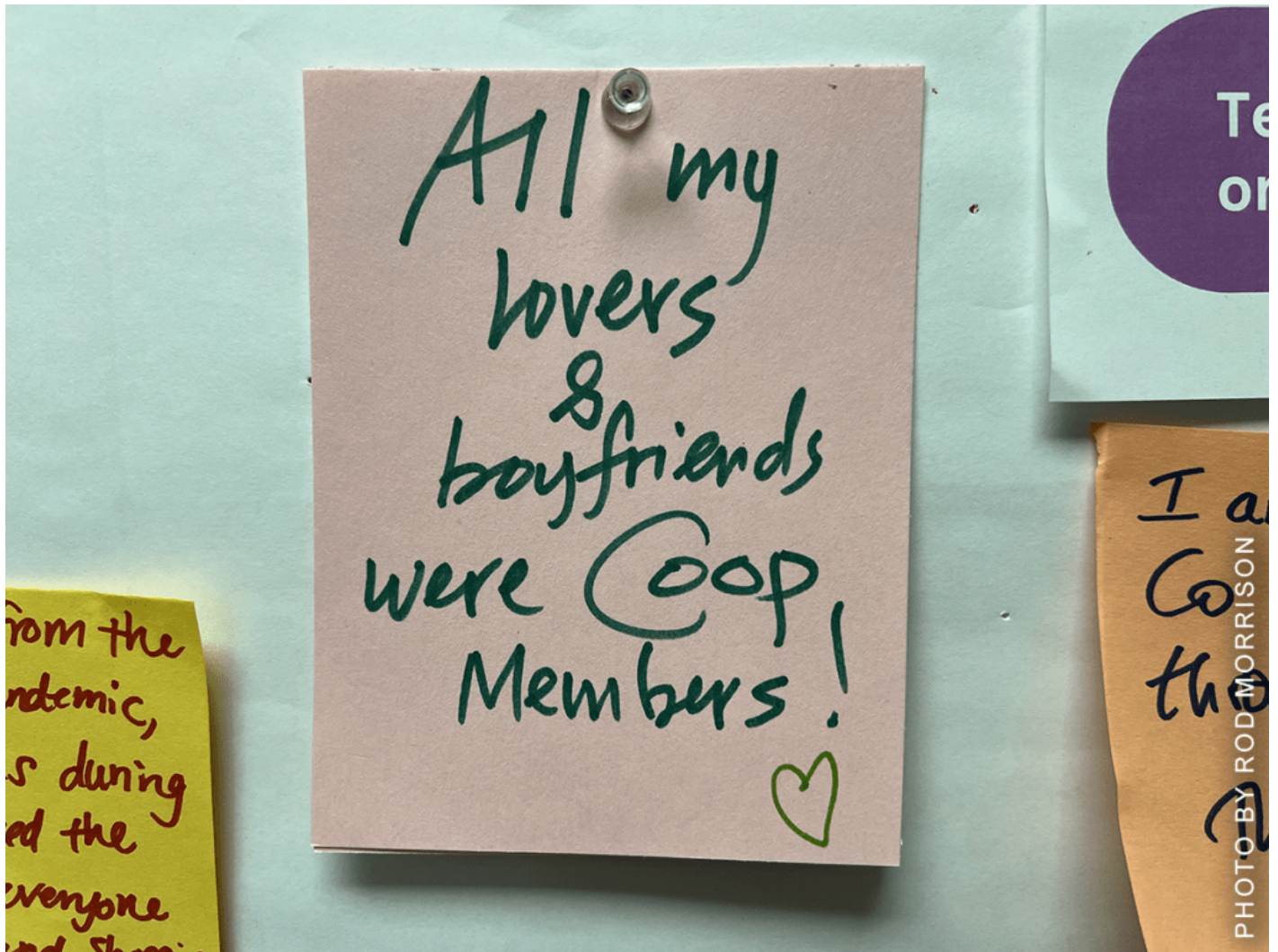
The exhibit was a reminder that we're part of a unique organization that has enriched the lives of thousands.

The exhibit detailed a timeline of major occurrences at the Coop, from our opening in February 1973 to digitizing the workslot system in 2021. The exhibition was organized into several sections. "Our Spaces" described the opening and expansion of our physical space and asked our members to share changes they've noticed since joining. "People and Membership" and "Food" detailed membership growth and expansion of food offerings through the years. "Past and Future" reflected on bygone traditions and posed member projections for the Coop's next 50 years. "Our Culture" highlighted how the Coop grew out of America's counterculture movement and its insistence on inclusive and democratic values, and "Fun Committee" recalled community-building events throughout the decades. Other sections featured "Love and Connection," "Our Impact," "Labor and Staff" and "Times of Crisis." For each category, ques-

tions and prompts provided a community-building exercise that inspired members to recall and contribute to our collective history.



The 50th Anniversary exhibit covered how the Coop has changed and adapted over the years.



Members left a variety of notes on the board. Some were poignant, some amusing.

The Fun Committee thanks everyone who took a moment to engage with the exhibition and those who were key in its planning, development and installation. We are currently exploring how to archive the exhibition and keep the dialogue alive online.



The Fun Committee next to their exhibit.

Interested in finding out more about the Fun Committee? Reach out at psfcfun@gmail.com.

URBAN GARDENING COOP STYLE

April 30, 2024



By Juliet Kleber

Spring has sprung—plants and seeds have begun to appear in the aisles of the Coop, and I know I’m not the only member with a small, rented or unconventional outdoor space. So I spoke with the Coop’s seed buyer, Cecelia Rembert, about the plants the Coop offers and the ways they take the particularities of small spaces and urban gardeners into consideration.

Five years ago, I learned to garden in a rundown Williamsburg backyard shared with six of my neighbors. The other tenants had mostly given up on the mosquito-ridden space, full of trash and ivy that had been growing uninhibited for years. I cut back that ivy, cleared out the broken-down shed that was rotting underneath it, and hauled it out to the street bit by bit in black contractor bags. I amended the soil with compost and pulled out bricks, chunks of concrete and ancient garbage. I re-paved the stone

path that cut through the center of the yard and threw down grass and wildflower seed that flourished into a lush half-lawn, half-meadow.

While it grew, I brought in big felt raised beds, and I planted tomatoes, eggplants, peppers and leafy greens. I set up an arched trellis over the path and planted sugar snap peas in a crate at each side. I enjoyed (almost) every minute of it, and gardening became one of my great loves. The neighbors I shared it with began to come out and enjoy it more. I threw cookouts and birthday parties and read for hours in the sun, especially in the worst days of COVID.

And then I moved and left it all. I was ready to move in with my partner, and though I had ample outdoor space, my actual apartment was much too small for two of us and two cats. So I said goodbye to my backyard and moved into his apartment in Bed-Stuy, which came with an eight-inch deep balcony, an empty roof and an opportunity to join the Coop. I joined the ranks of many Coop members and other New Yorkers who have to find more creative ways to exercise their green thumbs in the absence of a yard.

“PEOPLE ARE GARDENING IN ALL KINDS OF CIRCUMSTANCES,” SAID REMBERT, “SOME PEOPLE HAVE BACKYARDS, SOMETIMES IT’S JUST A FEW CONTAINERS ON A FIRE ESCAPE OR THE FRONT STOOP, SOMETIMES IT’S THE TREE PITS IN FRONT OF THEIR BUILDING.”

Gardening season at the Coop begins as early as February and runs through May. Seeds are the first to arrive—both cool-weather crops like peas, kale and other leafy greens, which can be directly planted outside at the first signs of spring, and more delicate, warm-weather plants like tomatoes and other nightshades that can be started indoors now and brought out around Mother’s Day, when the nights are warmer and the plants have grown sturdy enough to withstand the elements. The Coop sources seeds from three suppliers: Fedco, a fellow cooperative that sells larger-quantity pack-

ets; Artistic Gardens, which sells a variety of affordable seeds in different quantities, including sample packs; and Hudson Valley Seed Co., which sells a wide range of flowers and edibles in small, beautifully decorated “Art Packs” likely to catch the eye of many shoppers.

By early April, the Coop had already sold thousands of seed packets this season. But there is no shortage of options when it comes to live plants either, if you don’t have the time, patience, or indoor space to start with seeds. Members can grow some of the same veggies they’d buy in the produce aisle by purchasing live plants from Fresh Meadows—one of the Coop’s produce suppliers. They offer herbs like rosemary, lavender, sage, chives and oregano, as well as veggies like snap peas and broccoli. Later in the season (usually around May), they’ll have a variety of tomato starts and other warm-weather edibles like eggplants and peppers. Produce supplier Hepworth Farms also offers some garden-ready plants, and Myers stocks the Coop with potted bulbs.



There are also two nurseries the Coop only works with at planting time. Starting in mid-April, Gowanus Nursery brings in a weekly delivery of annuals like nasturtiums, peas, and herbs in eco-friendly containers of coconut coir rather than plastic growers pots and packed in wooden crates that the Coop returns. “They have a beautiful mentality about conservation,” Rembert said. Glover Perennials supplies most of the Coop’s longer-lived plants, both winter-hardy edibles like blueberry and strawberry plants as well as ornamentals. And while you might recognize the green Glover logo from your local hardware store or garden center, you’ll want to snap them up at the Coop for a much better price. As Rembert told the *Gazette*, “It’s fun to be partnered with them, because we’re able to offer their perennials at a better price than you would pay if you went to a garden center... It’s been a big hit with members, because they’re able to come in here and pay \$14 for something they’d pay \$30 for at a nursery.”

EVEN WITH A BEAUTIFUL, SUNNY BROWNSTONE BACKYARD, GARDENING IN NEW YORK CITY CAN BE A CHALLENGE.

Rembert also considers other member needs, beyond affordability, when planning out the Coop's garden offerings. First, there are the realities that all New York City gardeners face: brutal summer heat, exposure to common urban pollutants like pet waste and concrete run-off and, often, poor soil quality. "Everything we get is zoned for this [climate] zone, so it should do well under these growing conditions," Rembert said, "And whenever we're faced with a choice between more delicate and hardier, we go with the hardier."

Even with a beautiful, sunny brownstone backyard, gardening in New York City can be a challenge. Overly sandy, clayey, or nutrient-poor soil can be amended with compost like the \$6 bags of BK Rot that the Coop sells. But other issues can't be as easily ameliorated. In my old backyard, for instance, all my edibles had to be grown in raised beds, because chemical testing revealed that the soil contained 1,473 parts-per-millions of lead—over three times higher than the 400 ppm threshold that New York State deems unsafe for vegetable gardening. In cases like that, which are common, even a New Yorker with ample space must become a container gardener.

"People are gardening in all kinds of circumstances," said Rembert, "Some people have backyards, sometimes it's just a few containers on a fire escape or the front stoop, sometimes it's the tree pits in front of their building." In my case, it's window boxes hung on the railing of a narrow balcony and plans to haul some big planters up to the roof. But even those constrained spaces can offer more options than one might think.

The Coop's most popular garden products, according to Rembert, are herbs and tomatoes, all of which can do just fine in pots or other small containers. Some are even bred and sold with those constraints in mind—like the dwarf tomato plants from Fresh

Meadows that the Coop will have in stock in May. “They’re really great for container gardening because sometimes tomatoes get really leggy and all over the place, but these won’t overflow the space,” Rembert said.

And container gardeners can think bigger than just tomatoes and herbs for their small spaces. Peppers can flourish in relatively small pots as well, as can less common fruits and vegetables. Strawberries are a compact, hardy option that will come back every year—Artistic Garden’s Fraise de Bois alpine strawberries make a particularly good container option, as the especially sweet, tiny fruits can grow in abundance in a limited amount of soil, and the plants don’t produce fast-spreading runners like other strawberries tend to. Plus, a seed packet is only about 30 cents at the Coop.

Snap peas do well in a container too, and will grow beautifully up a railing, a fence, or just a piece of chicken wire or wooden lattice leaned up against a wall. New container gardeners might be surprised to find that larger crops can live happily in a smaller space too: “Butternut squash spread their leaves a lot, but they don’t actually need a lot of root room,” Rembert shared. “And if you have a black rubber pot or even a milk crate lined with a planter bag, they’ll absorb lots of heat which is great for things like melons—especially if you mulch with a black garbage bag.” Cucumbers, zucchini and eggplants can thrive in similar setups.

The same can be said for many of the ornamental plants stocked at the Coop—at present, you can find violas and clematis from Glover Perennials, both of which do well in containers. And Rembert makes a particular effort to stock plants native to our region, so while these plants might not feed you, they’re a much needed meal for the pollinators who make New York their home, including birds, bees and 700 types of butterflies that migrate through the area.

So for members who usually skip over the seeds and plants thinking they don’t have the space, this could be your year. Just start out with a pot of good soil, a bit of sun, and plenty of patience.

Juliet Kleber is a writer, editor, and musician based in Bed-Stuy. She joined the Coop in 2021 and always comes home with too much cheese.

HOW NEW PRODUCTS FIND A SHELF AT THE COOP

April 30, 2024



By Rahima Nasa

The best place to discover what's new at the Coop is the endcap across from the eggs-and-tofu case. Even when the endcap doesn't boast new products, it usually has seasonal items for holidays—but any day of the year, it's possible to find your next

go-to pantry staples. Maybe you find that an item all over your Instagram (such as a certain tinned fish brand) has finally arrived at the Coop. Or perhaps it's something you hadn't even thought about buying but that looks interesting enough, so you plop it in your basket. I've done the latter so many times, I've amassed a treasure trove of these items in my pantry.



Seasonal items, such as different brands of matzos, can also be found on the endcap shelf near the bread section.

I wanted to know more about how the Coop decides what to introduce to our shelves, so I got in touch with one of the Coop's 18 buyers. Gillian Chi has been a buyer at the Coop for nearly 15 years. Responsible for the shelf-stable items, she considers every product suggestion and forwards them to the appropriate buyer. I first encountered Chi through my own misguided product suggestion for a protein bar that had addi-

tives that are not allowed for Coop products. (You can find the list of these additives here, which I would urge you to check before making a suggestion.)



The tinned fish items are a delightful display of art in themselves. They can be found on the endcap shelf near the meat section.

Chi notes that there isn't a rigid formula for how buyers approach what to purchase, but affordability, product uniqueness, trade shows, samples and suggestions from members—made via the Member Services page—certainly influence their decisions. “We take risks as buyers... in deciding how much of something to order, even for [one] week because our basement is not that big. We can fit much less than a week's worth of food in our basement,” Chi explained.

Because of the Coop's limited space, buyers treat each shelf like precious real estate and are careful to choose items that members will likely buy. New products are usually purchased in small quantities until buyers can determine how the product does before ordering more.

CHI RECALLS THINKING, “YES, WE’RE DEFINITELY GOING TO TRY THAT. THERE IS NOTHING ELSE LIKE THAT IN THE STORE.”

Though members often submit granola and tomato-sauce suggestions, Chi is reluctant to purchase more of these products since there are already so many options on the shelves. But she is eager to stock unusual products, like the Fila Manilla Ube coconut spread that was recently introduced, and immediately bought up. Chi recalls thinking, “Yes, we’re definitely going to try that. There is nothing else like that in the store.”

My ears perked up because I knew exactly what she was talking about. I picked it up at the Coop a few weeks ago and made coconut ube bread with it. The only other place I would have come across something like this is in a Filipino grocery store in Queens. Fortunately for me, I may be able to make more ube desserts on a whim, because the product did really well, according to Chi, and is likely to return. Products made by smaller brands, however, are trickier to keep stocked because their distributors may underestimate how popular a product will be and then run out, leaving a long gap between when the order is made and the shipment arrives. “They have to create another purchase order. It takes time for that to be shipped to the warehouse, the distributor warehouse, and then to us. So it could be another month before that product comes back,” Chi explained.

When a new product does find a permanent space on the shelves, as my precious ube spread may, it means that something else may have to go to make space. In many cases, it makes the most sense for buyers to discontinue products that are not selling well. But it’s not always that simple because buyers strive to stock products that meet the diverse tastes of all members.

“What I would do is look at a broad category like salsa. We carry a lot of different brands of salsa. And say, okay, which one of those is the slowest seller? I can get rid

of that. Or which granola is the slowest seller? Or which cookie?” said Chi.



The many salsas and hot sauces the Coop offers on the endcap shelf near the meat section.

On the other hand, the Coop’s buyers sometimes keep products like tamarind paste—one of the slowest sellers in the sauce, salsa and condiments category—on the shelves because it’s unique and may be difficult to find in other stores in the neighborhood. Affordability is another big factor in determining what stays on the shelves. Each type of product is usually available at different price points. For example, if there’s a brand of pasta that is the lowest seller but it’s cheapest, Chi will still keep it on the shelves in order to maintain affordability across the Coop. “Even if we don’t sell a ton of it, there are people who are going to come and buy it every time they shop because they know this is the best deal for a pound of pasta.” Typically,

however, according to Chi, “the affordable items actually sell the most, which is great.”

The intentionality with which the Coop’s buyers do their job is manifest throughout the store. Chi recalled a shopper paging out a few weeks ago looking for a suggestion for an Asian grocery store nearby. The shopper had a recipe that called for some ingredients they didn’t expect to find at the Coop. Another buyer met the shopper in aisle six and found almost every product on the shopper’s list with the exception of gochugaru, which was out of stock.



The yummy banana bread found on the endcap shelves in the produce section.

“We don’t want people to have to go to other stores to complete their shopping, you know?” Chi added.

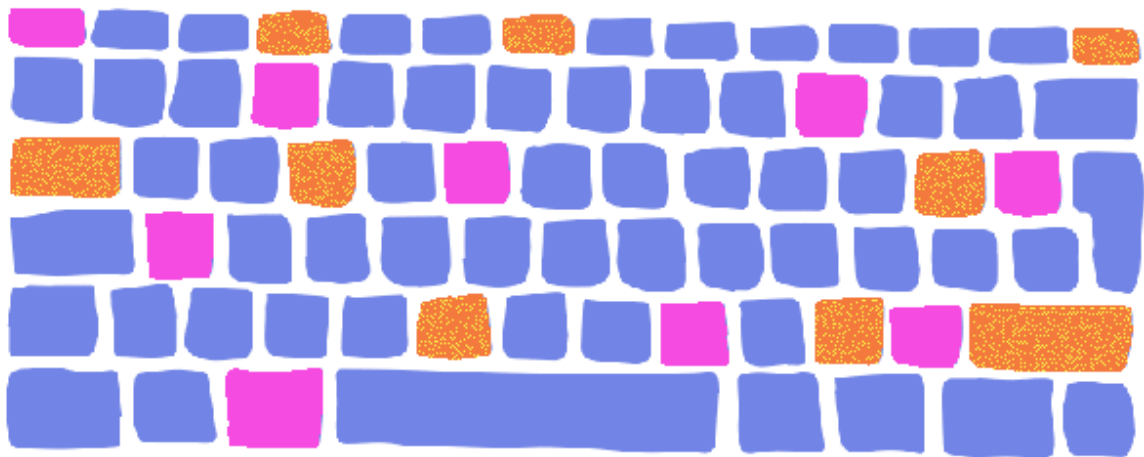
Given how carefully the Coop's buyers select our products, the likelihood of finding what we need, and new products to try for the first time, is high.

Rahima Nasa enjoys writing for the Gazette because of all the members she's gotten to meet and because it allows her to learn about how the Coop works. When she's not writing for the Gazette, Rahima likes to experiment with new ingredients and is on a never-ending quest to make the perfect pie crust.

APRIL 30, 2024

April 30, 2024

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Please Expand List of Vegan Foods

Dear Park Slope Food Coop,

As a vegan who has been a member of the Coop for over 20 years with a vegetarian daughter, I am of course very happy with the wonderful selection of fresh produce you carry year-round. But I am constantly disappointed by some of the packaged

products which are either lacking in options, or which have been discontinued.

For instance, for years the only real vegan jerky we have carried is the same extremely dry Primal Spirit sticks. There are many vegan jerky brands now—for instance Louisville Vegan Jerky, which can be found at Whole Foods and is excellent—and even Beyond has their own brand now. Please let's have more vegan jerky options!

Also, in the yogurt department we could really use more Silk soy yogurts or some other brand of soy yogurt, for instance a vanilla flavor and a plain soy yogurt. Forager is tasty, but cashew (and oat and coconut) yogurts have NO nutritional value—no protein or calcium. Soy is the most nutritious type of yogurt and milk for vegans.

Lastly, please bring back Sweet Earth Benevolent Bacon, Quorn Chiqin Fillets, and Meatless Grounds (vegetarian), Earth Balance Vegan Cheddar Flavor Squares, Wholly Veggie Buffalo Cauliflower Wings, Van Leeuwen vegan chocolate ice cream, and Mings Bings Plant-based Egg and Cheese flavor if possible. It would also be great if we could sell Impossible Burgers in addition to our other Impossible products.

*Thank you so much for considering,
Eva Airdjis*

Needed: More Transparency In Regards to General Coordinators Team

Dear Coop Members,

In the aftermath of General Manager Joe Holtz's suspension in the summer of 2022, Personnel Committee Member Jean Callahan was quoted in the *Gazette* as saying there were "deep and painful divides" within the Coop Coordinators group.

I wrote a letter to the *Gazette* that fall asking how the Coop could allow such discord to be hiding in our organization as we shopped and worked.

In the time since I heard nothing about the issue, so at the recent March General Meeting (GM) I asked about the situation. We were informed that the General Coordinators team has been working with the NY Peace Institute (an organization that promotes peace in our community). I said this was great, but it was too bad that it took my question at the GM almost two years later to learn about it.

We are now in the process of establishing new “Personnel Policies, Personnel Committee, and General Coordinator Roles.”

I think these procedures ought to include mechanisms for more transparency and communication between the coordinators, the Personnel Committee and the members, such that we are informed about things like the above, and more!

The membership deserves to be kept up to date about coordinator and Personnel Committee activity ongoingly. Not just when a major issue is percolating, a big decision is pending or a crisis is taking place. What about a report in every *Gazette* issue about what these people are thinking about, the projects they are working on and what they are discussing in their meetings?

Andy Feldman

Value of Walkers

To the editor:

As a Coop member for 22 years, I think the system of walkers has been one of the most useful and practical improvements that I’ve observed. I remember some letters that derided it, but it has truly stood the test of time.

I notice instances where shoppers are left waiting longer than necessary or practical. Wouldn’t it make sense to expand the number of people doing walking shifts at higher volume shopping times to eliminate long waits?

Nice opportunity for a pleasant walk while serving a useful purpose. All while giving your dog some exercise if you wish!

Cordially,
Saul D. Raw

Expanding Access to General Meetings

Dear Fellow Coop Members:

I'm writing to advocate for a proposal I submitted in December 2023 to make General Meetings hybrid (in-person and online).

I submitted this proposal to support member participation. Our current GM venue is the Prospect Park Picnic House, with a capacity of 240. Our membership is 15.5k, which means a maximum of 0.015% of us can participate in the Coop's policymaking on any given issue. The PSFC mission states that we "seek to maximize participation at every level." Given the precedent-setting pandemic-era online GMs, it's regrettable that we aren't utilizing everyday technologies to fulfill that mission.

Since submitting this proposal, I've talked with folks for whom expanded avenues of attendance are critical to their ability to help shape our Coop. These are people with accessibility needs, for whom travel can be burdensome and large gatherings potentially dangerous; caregivers, whether new parents or people with ailing family, who need to stay close to loved ones; members who live in different boroughs, or even different parts of the state or country. If these members contribute their labor, they deserve the opportunity to have a say in the Coop's governance.

Since submitting my proposal, I've been notified multiple times that I should prepare to present, only to be told that for one reason or another it has been taken off the agenda. The latest reason was that the Picnic House can't hold all the people who would want to talk about this proposal, and larger venues aren't available; I don't

take pleasure in this irony.

If you support this proposal, please reach out to our administration and let them know you'd like to see it come to the floor. We all deserve to participate, and to me, this proposal is straightforward common sense.

*In cooperation,
Morgan Võ*

Endorsing Ramon Maislen and Sondra Shaievitz for the Board of Directors

Dear Fellow Coop Members,

I would like to endorse Ramon Maislen and Sondra Shaievitz for the Board of Directors. Ramon and Sondra both spoke at the March GM. Their responses were clear, agreeable, and focused exclusively on the role.

I would gladly call them both "Pro-Coop."

Ramon and Sondra have many decades of membership experience between them. This sweat equity is important: I feel uneasy about so many other candidates since they have only a few years at the Coop and want to jump into such an important role. Some of them have admitted to only attending a few General Meetings, if at all. This role requires a deep-rooted understanding of our community and organization. That understanding can only be acquired through long-term experience, both in working shifts and in participating in our organizational processes.

Ramon and Sondra come with a great deal of experience in business and law. Their experience focusing on the legal and financial bottom line for our Coop is vital to our stability.

Ramon and Sondra appear fully capable of setting aside personal opinions for the

greater good of the PSFC. They accept what the Board role has always been, to simply approve the wishes of the general meeting and not to use it for activism inside or outside the Coop.

I encourage fellow members to support Ramon Maislen and Sondra Shaievitz by voting YES for them during the election. It's worth noting that according to PSFC's voting guidelines, you can vote YES for more than one candidate (two yeses, for example, is fine), and you can vote NO for as many as you'd like. Also important—candidates require more YES votes than NO votes to be elected.

*Sincerely,
Elia Jeifez*

What Happened to Jason Toothpaste?

Fellow Cooperators:

Did you notice the “new and improved” Jason toothpaste? We’ve tried three different flavors and they’re all disgusting.

I reached out to Hain Celestial, the parent company, and they provided the old and new ingredient lists. They’re almost completely different products: two thirds of the ingredients changed and the only ones to remain the same are water, glycerin, silica and stevia extract—and stevia jumped up from almost the bottom of the list to close to the top. (I think stevia is the ingredient that I find so disgusting.)

This is just a simple example of American capitalism. Someone makes a great product and builds up a small base of loyal customers, a large corporation buys them out, tries to expand market share by releasing a “new and improved” version that’ll appeal to the masses, and destroys the product in the process. This is why we can’t have nice things.

*Petty rant over,
Christopher Diamond*

Coop Members Engage in Intimidation Campaign

Dear Members,

I am a new member of the PSFC and the Director of the Tow Center at Brooklyn College.

The General Coordinators inquired about renting the Tow Center's theater on February 13, 2024, for a Coop-wide discussion about a boycott of Israeli products. They requested extra security, so I assured them that our events were overseen by a private security firm.

I attended the March GM for work credit, where Joe Holtz announced the Tow Center's theater as a potential meeting space, but also that the Coop would no longer need the venue. On March 27, Joe withdrew the inquiry. On April 1 though, Joe emailed me to see if the theater was still available.

Before that, from Friday, March 29, through Sunday, March 31, I received 11 voice-mails and was forwarded an email sent to senior Brooklyn College leadership that urged them to deny rental requests by the PSFC. This was clearly a coordinated campaign by Coop members opposed to any discussion of a boycott. All these communications followed a script; each message suggested that violence would occur if the college rented to the PSFC. Of course, based on these threats, Brooklyn College can no longer rent the theater to the Coop. Additionally, I've been adversely affected professionally and, since most of these messages were left by Coop members, I now feel much less comfortable at the PSFC. I offered space to help the Coop carry out its member-driven operations, and I do not appreciate being bullied and harassed.

How can the Coop have difficult conversations if intimidation tactics like these contin-

ue to obstruct discussions? It is essential that we find ways to renew the Coop's democracy.

Dena Beard

Voicing Dissent: Standing Against BDS Petition at Park Slope Coop

To the Editor,

In recent weeks, supporters of the BDS movement have been stationed prominently outside the Coop, actively soliciting signatures for a petition urging a boycott of Israeli products. One of them wrote to the *Gazette*, painting a rosy picture of the reception she received.

However, there's growing sentiment among some of us that this campaign is deeply offensive, fostering divisiveness within our Coop community and exhibiting shades of antisemitism. Attempts by at least one Coop member to engage with the BDS supporters and express his concerns were met with disregard. Members who have approached the front desk with their objections have been informed that while the Coop has received numerous complaints, it cannot prohibit petitioners from gathering signatures on the sidewalk.

While acknowledging the right of individuals and organizations to advocate for their causes outside the Coop, many of us are eager to voice our opposition within our community. The apparent silence of passersby should not be misconstrued as silent consent; rather, it reflects discomfort and disagreement with the BDS petition. Numerous Coop members, including friends and acquaintances, share this discomfort and wish to ensure that our dissenting voices are also heard.

In cooperation,

Maya Bodinger

Refusing Our Complicity

Dear Members,

During February's GM, it was suggested that we should donate to the aid group Anera instead of pushing for a boycott at the Coop. As of April 2nd, Anera announced that it would be pausing operations in Gaza following the IDF's targeted strikes of three World Central Kitchen vehicles on April 1st, which killed seven aid workers, as well as the killing of Anera aid worker, Mousa Shawwa, by an IDF strike on March 8th. These killings follow the indiscriminate slaughter of more than 33,000 Palestinians by IDF violence since October of last year.

Supporting relief efforts is necessary, as is stopping the ongoing genocide. When relief is being cut off and aid workers themselves are murdered, our focus must be to refuse our complicity in the violence that exacerbates the need for relief in the first place. We can and must do many things at once, including enacting a principled boycott of Israeli goods at the Coop.

*In cooperation,
Laura Henriksen*

A Ban on Israeli Products Threatens the Coop's Spirit of Inclusivity

Dear Editor:

My favorite thing about PSFC is the warmth and diversity of our community. As a cooperative of Brooklyn residents with a myriad of unique identities and perspectives, every one of us is joyfully accountable for the labor required to keep PSFC's doors open and our shelves stocked. For me, the privilege of having access to produce that's affordable, local and organic is a huge plus. However, what I appreciate most is the spirit of our collective that has transformed grocery shopping from a tedious chore into an expression of belonging. I rarely leave a shift without learning about a new veg-

etable or getting inspired by a fellow PSFC member to try a new recipe. Our modern world is a hectic, complicated and scary place, and PSFC feels like a haven from that. We care about each other. Over the past six months, well-meaning members of “PSFC Members for Palestine” have threatened the inclusive culture of our Coop with a call to ban products from Israel. They align themselves with the BDS movement whose messaging is widely known to incorporate antisemitic tropes about the perceived powers and evils of Jewish people. Antisemitic discrimination has triggered atrocious violence throughout history and is currently fueling attacks on Jewish people and spaces in New York City and throughout the United States. The conflict between Israel and Hamas is deeply polarizing; by adopting a ban against Israel, we would be inviting antisemitism into the PSFC. Such an act would alienate Jewish and pro-Israel members and attract negative PR. Most importantly, this boycott would undermine and erode our culture and values. We owe it to our community and to PSFC to be a beacon of inclusivity and belonging. It is for this reason that I oppose a ban on products from Israel.

Sylvia Tobias

Don't Like It? Don't Buy It!

Dear Linewaiters' Gazette:

Recently I was approached on the sidewalk in front of the Coop asking to sign a petition supporting a boycott of Coop products imported from Israel. This came a week after my neighbor's home was vandalized with “FREE GAZA” spray paint (their door has a visible mezuzah), and days before I was told in a CEC 15 meeting if I had a problem with antisemitism in my son's school, I should just send him to private Jewish day school.

We moved to Park Slope 10 years ago, in part because of its beauty, friendly vibe and proximity to the park. Within the month I dragged my husband to the Food Coop's orientation. I'm a registered dietitian and value good quality food. I naively never locked

my brownstone door during the day, that is until October 8th (we also have a visible mezuzah).

The hate that's invaded our community these last six months has been painful. You don't have to like or support a government or country overseas, but we're neighbors. We deserve a right to feel safe and welcome in Park Slope and at the Food Coop. Lately I have felt neither. This boycott is divisive. If buying tahini to make sabich sandwiches—the kind I like to get in Tel Aviv—bothers you so much, don't buy it.

So much of what we eat is rooted in who we are. Why are we ostracizing members? We should be welcoming differences in our community, not fueling hostility between each other. This demonization of Israel is outright antisemitism and there is no place for it at the Food Coop.

*Thank you,
Shira Sussi*

Boycotting Israel is Hurtful to Many of Us, and Hurts the Coop

Dear fellow members:

My message about the recent push to boycott Israeli products is simple and heartfelt: The proposal is deeply hurtful.

The last six months have been nightmarish for those of us with a direct connection to Israel and Palestine. This is a traumatic and scary time. Divisive efforts like BDS make it worse, not better. A boycott is hurtful because it assigns all the blame to one side, delegitimizing the experience of Israelis wrapped up in a complex conflict, along with the vast majority of Jews who have deep ties to Israel. And, it must be said, boycotting Jews has a dark and sinister echo of centuries of systematic and murderous anti-semitism in both Europe and the Middle East. Critics of Israel have an affirmative obligation to distance themselves from antisemitism, and an indiscriminate tool like a

countrywide boycott fails that test.

Some say that the fact that the boycott hurts is the point. But we should be better than that, and also mindful of our obligations as a community. Hurting Coop members is also hurtful to the Coop itself.

I understand the desire to take a stand, support suffering people and oppose war. But this boycott is not simply a convenient way to express solidarity with Palestinians under bombardment. We as a community owe it to our members with ties to both Israel and Palestine not to oversimplify the situation, and not to demonize people on either side.

Instead, let's devote our energy to positive and healing acts. Some of the products we carry at the Coop come from peace and co-existence initiatives in Israel and Palestine. Instead of boycotting them, let's feature and celebrate them.

Josh Suskewicz

Re: PSFC for Palestine

To the Editor and Fellow Coop Members:

If you don't want to buy peppers grown in Israel, don't buy peppers grown in Israel. To insist, however, that everyone else must follow suit is domineering, wrong and, in this case, antisemitic.

For over 2,000 years, Jews have been singled out, isolated, scrutinized and subject to abuse. Explicit antisemitism is no longer socially acceptable. Today, however, Israel offers a convenient proxy for those who cannot tolerate a Jewish expression of independence and sovereignty. Antipathy to Israel is not only fashionable, but the price of admission in many progressive spaces.

Israel is not above reproach. Absolutist and single-minded calls to eliminate it, however, are another thing entirely. No one's calling to eradicate other Coop sources with troubling human rights records such as Honduras, Ecuador or, for that matter, Texas. Yet "PSFC for Palestine" is openly committed to a movement that opposes Israel's mere existence. According to its own proponents, the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement aims to eliminate the world's only Jewish state.

At the end of the day, a Coop boycott would not even register on the Israeli economy. It would, however, invariably lead many Jewish Coop members to feel unwelcome and send the message that it's acceptable to single out Jews for mistreatment. In that light, the zeal with which some have taken towards vilifying Israel understandably leaves many, including this Coop member, feeling rattled.

Michael Snow

Regarding a Potential Boycott of Israeli Products

Dear Editor:

We've been here before. Some years ago there was a proposal to boycott Israeli products at the Coop. A rundown of products found that there were only a few products of Israeli origin that the Coop carried. Additionally, of course there were very divergent opinions within the Coop on Israel. We must look to the effective meaning of any boycott and the divisiveness of any movement within our membership. We have agreed, for instance, to no longer carry Cheerios, because of concerns about glyphosate. Most Coop members were in agreement on this. An Israeli boycott does not have the same level of support. Curiously, concerted action by people who claim to support Palestinians led SodaStream some years ago to close its West Bank facility, thus removing jobs from Palestinians. Was that a win for Palestinians overall? We must look at the long-term effects of any action we take on the issue at hand but also on our ability to operate as a food store with a diverse population.

In Cooperation,
Adam Segal-Isaacson

The Divisiveness BDS Seeds Is Antithetical to the Coop Mission

Dear Fellow Members:

I was born in Israel and spent my formative years there. My grandfather, who emigrated to Israel after the Holocaust, was a small farmer who grew clementines and was a member of an agricultural cooperative. Perhaps, through random chance, I have crossed paths with a fellow PSFC member-owner who directly enjoyed the literal fruits of his labor.

The events of the October 7th massacre in Israel and the ongoing hostage crisis in Gaza weigh heavily on me on a daily basis. I also, deeply and unequivocally, empathize with the suffering of Palestinians and innocent civilians affected by the ongoing war on Hamas. I hope the silent majority of member owners also simultaneously hold both of these truths with heavy hearts.

My hope for the region is to achieve a just and lasting peace. The BDS approach undermines efforts for peace and coexistence by seeding resentment instead of encouraging cooperation. The BDS movement is in direct contradiction with peace-building, and makes reconciliation impossible. With this in mind, I cannot support the Coop joining the BDS movement.

The BDS movement makes it clear that peaceful coexistence is not its goal when they condone violence and criticize organizations and businesses that advocate for dialogue and mutual coexistence.

If the Coop votes to join the BDS movement, it will be in direct conflict with my values of supporting a peaceful resolution between Israel and Palestine and my household will, with broken hearts, leave the Coop.

*Sincerely,
Tali Rasis*

BDS: Historically Rejected By Responsible Parties

To the Editors, Members, and Board of Directors,

BDS is a movement that primarily plays out on college campuses, where students vote to have their institutions divest from Israeli companies, refuse cooperation with Israeli universities and where students disrupt Israeli speakers. Support of this movement on campuses has also, not surprisingly, resulted in harassment, exclusion and even attacks on Jewish students, as well as damage to property. Several lawsuits are pending against these institutions for permitting an antisemitic climate, and government agencies are amping up policies against antisemitism. Nor is there evidence of university administrations acting on these student decisions.

As to food coops, more than a decade ago only one American food coop, Olympia, voted to boycott Israeli products, to the best of my knowledge. All others voted no: Port Townsend, Davis, Sacramento, Seattle, Ann Arbor, and finally, Park Slope, whose super-majority vote against a referendum in 2012 was essentially a vote against joining BDS.

The primary reasons for their decisions given by leaders at these coops were the lack of qualifications to take actions on international conflicts and to resolve the conflict in the Middle East; that such actions countered the purposes of a food coop; and that such actions would damage coops. In the case of Seattle Central, a committee member there called consideration of the boycott “a malignancy to our business.”

There is no evidence I can find that apart from our Coop, any other is revisiting campaigns to join BDS.

I add here that in 2016, the NYC Council voted, by a super-majority, in favor of a reso-

lution “condemning all efforts to delegitimize the State of Israel and the global movement to boycott, divest from, and sanction the people of Israel.” Similar proposals have been passed by New York State and other states.

Sylvia Lowenthal

Why Is the PSFC a Success Story?

Dear Coop Members:

Before joining the Coop, I was skeptical about the concept. Despite my reservations, the allure of affordable prices and quality produce convinced me to give it a try. I vividly recall my first shift, thinking, “Let’s just get this over with and return to my usual business.”

However, to my surprise, I discovered a peculiar joy in arranging fruits and vegetables. Initially, I couldn’t pinpoint the source of my contentment. Over time, it became clear: The satisfaction didn’t stem from the task of organizing produce itself, but from feeling connected to a diverse community of individuals, all united in the simple act of sorting carrots and apples. It was beautifully straightforward and profoundly unifying. At the end of the day, we’re all fundamentally alike, no matter your profession, where you were born, or your political views. There was a place for everyone to feel welcome.

I’ve enjoyed every shift at the Coop, growing to value its true inclusiveness and, of course, the exceptional food.

Recently, however, the atmosphere has shifted. Politics and polarization have crept in, threatening the delicate fabric of our cooperative. The Coop is at a critical juncture. I earnestly hope we can all recall the core principles that have sustained our community since 1973 and strive to preserve this wonderful community as healthy and truly inclusive for all.

*Thanks,
Yuval Inselberg*

Taking Issue With Coordinators' Corner Column

Coop Members,

I am 68 years old and I joined the Coop when I was 23. For many years I was proud to be part of a cooperative that was tied to issues of food and labor justice. I learned from the Coop that organic growing practices were more important for farm workers than for me as a consumer, and that supporting their right to work without exposure to harmful chemicals was paramount.

Fast forward to now: Joe Holtz's recent piece (March 19 Coordinators' Corner) has upset me to my core. I'm frustrated and ashamed that the Coop has not taken a stand against the Israeli genocide, against Israel's deliberate starvation of Gazans, its aid blockades and its destruction and theft of Palestinian farmland. BDS seems like the least we could do.

I have known Joe Holtz since I joined the Coop. I have valued and respected the work he did to establish and sustain the Coop. In his writing, he worries about the Coop's future 50 years. Fifty years from now, it is very unlikely that Joe or I will be alive, but people can judge us then by what we did and said now, in the face of this genocide.

Alyce Barr

Response to 2/26/24 Coordinators' Corner

To the LWG Editors:

I was dismayed and disappointed by the opinions expressed by Joe Holtz in his February 26 Coordinators' Corner column. His byline states that he speaks on behalf of

all the General Coordinators. I would like to know by what process the rest of the coordinators agreed with what he said and why their names did not appear.

He states that some members feel unwelcome at the Coop because of the language of a petition. Who are these members and what is making them feel unwelcome? We as members and humans have the right to question and criticize our own government and any other foreign government, especially the conduct of a foreign state that is taking our tax dollars. I have read the petition from PSFC Members for Palestine and find nothing that could be interpreted as harassing about it.

I think it is an abuse of position and privilege for Mr. Holtz to favor one group of members over another and claim to represent the persons who direct the Coop. This is his personal opinion and has a chilling effect on open discussions and in a sense “poisons the jury pool” that will later be allowed to participate in some kind of far-off vote or consensus process (which I sincerely doubt will ever occur — it’s all rhetoric to me). I think as a Coop it is an overdue time for us to have discussions about power and privilege and how they are used unfairly.

Yours truly

Amina Ali

IN MEMORY OF MAGGIE LEA-COLLIER

April 30, 2024



By Thomas Rayfiel

Readers who remember when the *Linewaiters' Gazette* was printed on paper and had ads for personal services in the back may well recall one that seemed to run in every issue:

“MADISON AVENUE HAIRCUTTER is right around the corner from the food Co-op, so if you would like a really good haircut at a decent price, please call Maggie. I charge \$60.00.”

Maggie was Maggie Lea-Collier, who died February 2, 2024. Maggie joined the Coop in 1991. She worked various shifts, including a morning shopping squad, but her main interaction with the Coop was through haircutting. Many members responded to her ad and, in addition to loving the haircuts they got, became lifelong friends. Maggie was also an avid knitter, producing scarves and blankets, as well as a baker, gifting people with rolls, scones and cookies.

An orphan born in London, Maggie was adopted by Muriel Massy-Collier, who drove an ambulance during World War II. She always dreamed of coming to America and finally did, studying art, then combining that ambition with hairdressing at an upscale salon where, as she put it, she “sculpted hair” for the rich and famous before going out on her own in Park Slope.

Her daughter, Stana Weisburd, recalls: “She had many adventures and enjoyed travel-

ing, particularly to small islands where she could live in a hut reading good books. She also enjoyed going out dancing all night with friends. She loved playing scrabble and doing jigsaw puzzles.”

Fred Dupiton, her longtime partner, emphasized that “her experience at the Coop was a great one. She was always talking about how fortunate she was to have it nearby, how she met a lot of great people, some of whom came to be clients as well, which helped her hairdressing business grow.”

One of those people was Mary Gerety, who initially received a great haircut.

“Over time and at the start of the pandemic, when I retired, I offered to shop for Maggie and take her to her doctors’ appointments. We soon became close friends and often cooked for each other, took walks and kept each other posted on what was going on in our lives. Maggie was a generous person with her time and talents. We both talked about how grateful we were for our lives and the people in them. Maggie loved that she had been independent all her life and enjoyed it to the fullest.”

Maggie is survived by her daughter, Stana Weisburd, son-in-law Paul Wepy, grandchild Devin Wepy, and her partner of 46 years, Fred Dupiton.



LOVE LETTER FROM A MERMAID: ON PLASTICS AND YOUR HEALTH

April 30, 2024



Member Submission by Lois Wilcken

Dear Coop Members,

Allow me to introduce myself. I go by many names: Atargatis, Ba, Liban, Little Mermaid, Lorelei, Mami Wata, Orehu, Seirēn. I bear many attributes: seduction, wealth, vanity, irresistible music. The reason for this diversity lies in the nature of my dwelling, the sea that girds our planet Earth. All nations know me. They love me, but they also use me as a receptacle for their waste, especially plastics. Words of caution: What goes around comes around. Just as plastics harm the marine life I see day by day, so they harm you and your family.

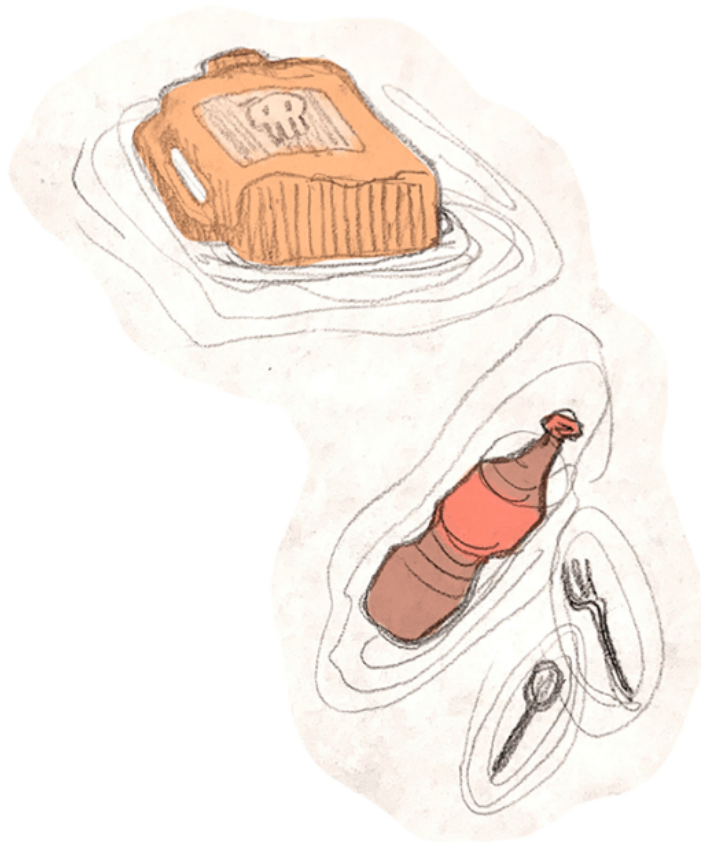


ILLUSTRATION BY KAITLYN QUACH

Life did not evolve with plastics. In planet-Earth time, the existence of plastics barely fills the blink of an eye. Scientists call it a novel entity, synthetically created from fossil carbons little more than a century ago. Pliable chains of large molecules called polymers form the foundations of plastics and host additional chemicals capable of imparting such properties as color, texture, durability, water resistance and more. Today's plastics bear 13,000 chemical additives; science associates about 2,300 of these with health impacts including cancer, birth defects and diminished cognitive function. Your vulnerability depends on your engagement in the basic phases of plastic's life cycle: production, use and disposal. Workers and people in communities close to production sites suffer most from the first phase, and disposal sites like myself (the sea) suffer most from the last. Everyone suffers from the second phase.

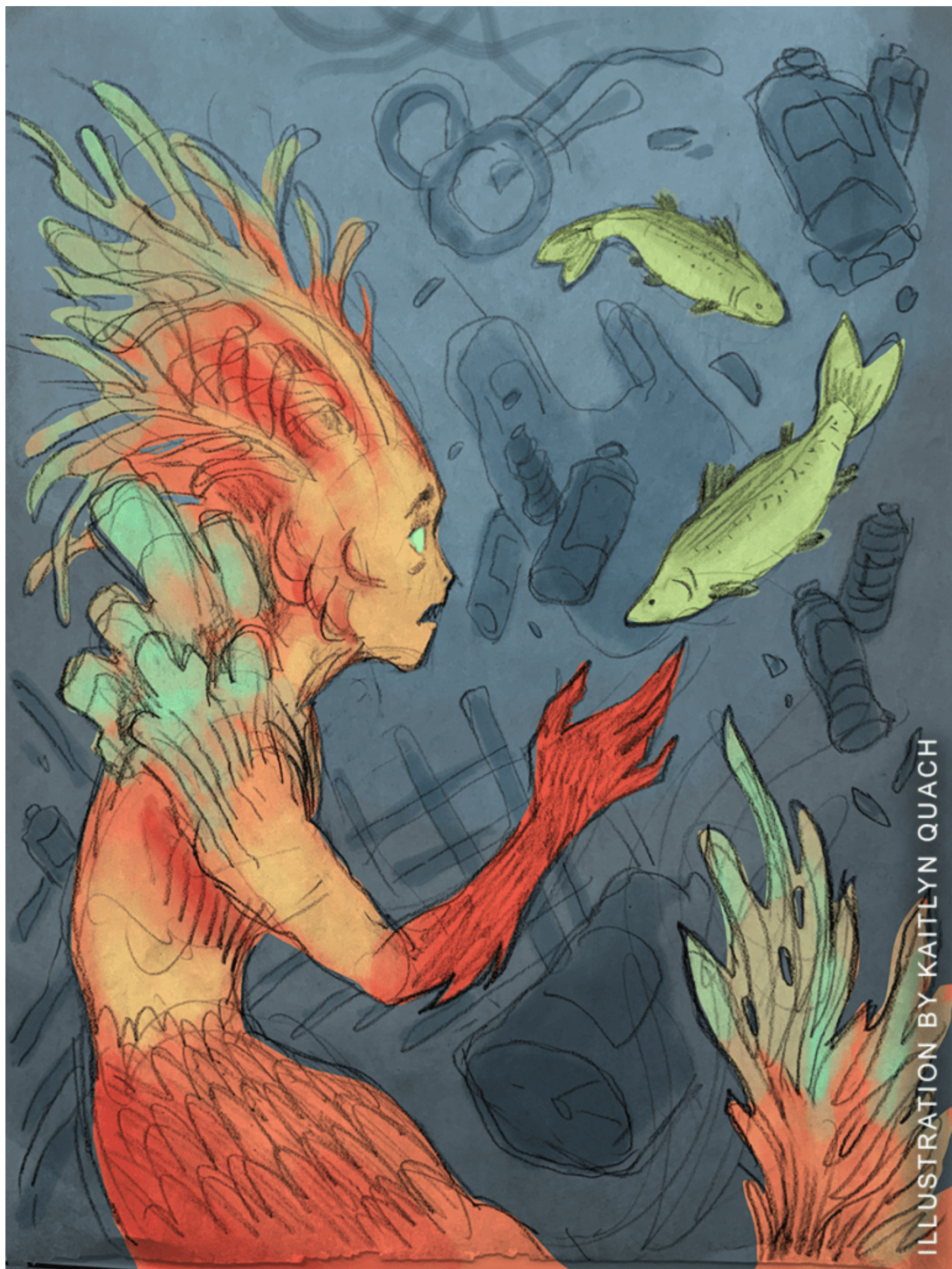


ILLUSTRATION BY KAITLYN QUACH

You might imagine that plastics are fixed in form, but they actually change over the course of their lifetime. If you could eat the kind of mushroom Alice ate in Wonderland, you might shrink to a size where you could witness the degradation of plastic. First, you would see macroplastics, fragments splintered off over time from the deceptively coherent original. With an additional mushroom or two, particles of microplastics and nanoplastics (MNPs, less than ten-millionths of a meter) would appear. We know MNPs best for their explosive population growth in aquatic ecosystems like my own; plastic polymers and their chemical additives have invaded every corner of the sea. Migration, you might say, occurs at the end of plastic's life cycle—in the disposal phase. It happens, however, during the use phase as well, mostly in your plastic packaging and storage.

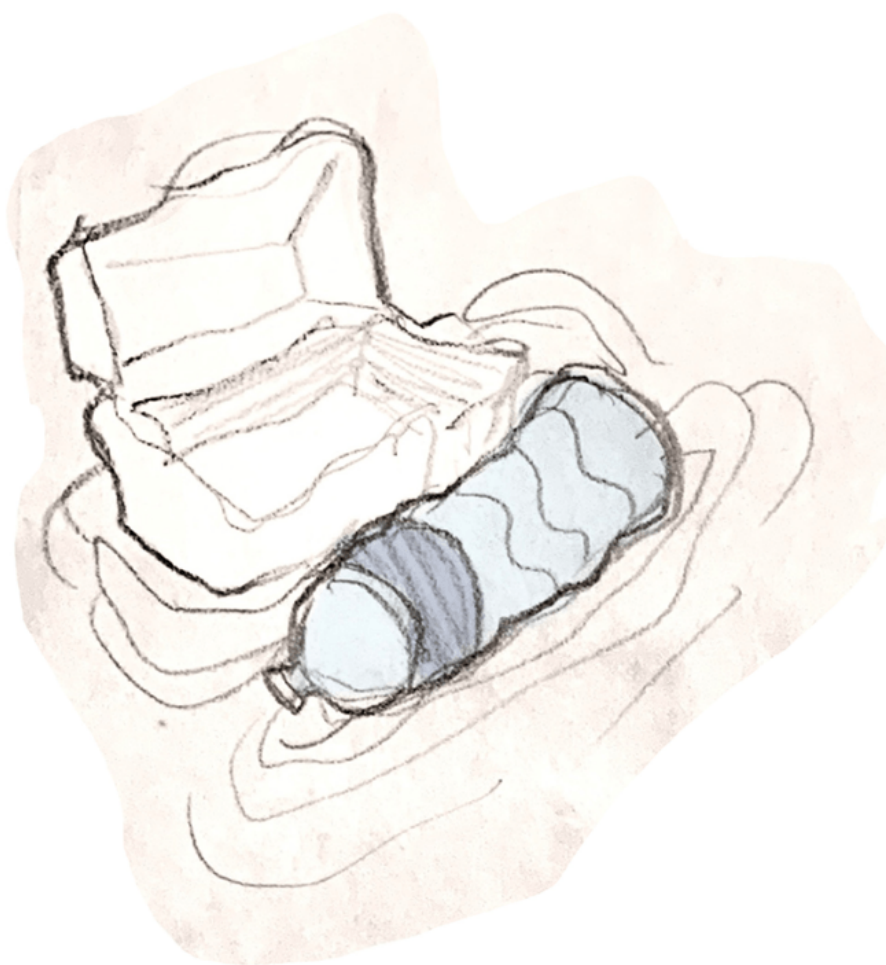


ILLUSTRATION BY KAITLYN QUACH

A peer-reviewed study published in *Environmental Science and Technology* in 2023

confirms the migration of MNPs during use. The scientists conducting the study measured MNP release from plastic containers and reusable food pouches under three scenarios: storage at room temperature, refrigerated storage and heating by microwave. By far, three minutes of microwave heating caused the highest release of MNPs (temperature factor), while refrigeration and room-temperature storage over six months came in a close second (time factor). The reusable food pouch released more particles than the plastic containers (physical properties factor). The Food Packaging Forum, based in Zurich, identifies surface-to-food ratio as an additional factor influencing extent of migration, identifying single-serving packages as most likely to contaminate food.

What exactly is the risk here? What happens when MNPs migrate from food into your bodies? The research is young, but evidence of health hazards due to the ingestion of MNPs is mounting. Fragmented plastics accumulate in tissues and cells, causing inflammation and oxidative stress, but they also act as vehicles for their toxic chemical additives. In its work toward a Global Plastics Treaty the Minderoo-Monaco Commission on Plastics and Human Health in 2023 named decreased fertility, premature births, neurodevelopmental disorders, cardiovascular disease, and renal disease as just a few hazards humans face. (Download the report [here](#) and see Figure 4.1 on page 71.) Tragically, infants in the womb and young children are at highest risk. The sensitivity of early development increases the odds of such conditions as low birth weight, impaired lung growth and childhood cancer. Some conditions manifesting in adults can have their roots in fetal and early childhood exposure.

Is waiting for yet more definitive research worth the risks? Should policy, on the other hand, follow a precautionary approach, placing the burden of proof that the product is safe on those companies profiting from the manufacture of plastics? What can you do meanwhile? Can you think of precautions that your Coop can take as the science moves forward? Although I live in the sea, I do encircle the planet, and I hear just about everything. Some of you have ideas about alternative (non-plastic) bags for produce and bulk; others would like to see the larger bins replace small packages in the bulk aisle as a reduction of surface-to-food ratio. I've heard one member talk about a

special section—with lots of visibility—for items that do not come in plastic packaging. I feel certain you, too, have ideas. A little sea bird tells me that you may get involved by contacting plasticfreefoodcoop@gmail.com.

*With love from the sea,
Your Mermaid*



ILLUSTRATION BY KAITLYN QUACH

Artwork by Kaitlyn Quach

Kaitlyn Quach is a cartoonist and activist who works part-time in food service. They love long walks, grape hyacinths and slightly scary-looking mermaids. It is now impossible for them to get lost inside the NY State Capitol/LOB because they've been lobbying for climate legislation so many times.

You can find Kaitlyn on Instagram @the.gauntlets