

A SODASTREAM MYSTERY, HR REFORMS, AND MELONS GALORE! NOTES FROM THE JULY GENERAL MEETING

September 4, 2024



By Liz Welch

September 4, 2024

The evening of Tuesday, July 30, was hot and sticky and my first time attending an in-person Park Slope Food Coop General meeting in years. (The last time had been pre-pandemic, back when the meetings were held at Congregation Beth Elohim.) This one was at the Picnic House in Prospect Park which meant walking through a cluster of trees, via the 5th street entrance, and crossing the busy bike and runners path to the stately brick building where the assembly started promptly at 7 p.m.

General Meeting Committee chair David Moss welcomed everyone with a land ac-

knowledge (Lenni Lenape) and the Open Forum began, where members were given the opportunity to ask questions. Queries ranged from: “Why are we still using clam shell containers and plastic bags?” to “Why aren’t these meetings hybrid?”

The former inquiry echoed many members’ concerns about how to lower the Coop’s dependence on single use plastic, from packaging to produce and bulk bags. The latter is another perennial issue in our post-Covid era. Several speakers chimed in to state that Zoom is a dependable technology and would foster higher participation in GMs. Making at-home participation would also be a thoughtful offering to members who cannot travel (into the park and across a bike lane no less) to in-person meetings. Most members who commented were in favor of a hybrid option, prompting Moss to explain that the Coop’s bylaws require in-person meetings. He assured the group that this concern and the one about plastic use were ongoing issues that the Coop will continue to address and explore.

“OUR INCOME DIPS THROUGHOUT THE SLOWER SUMMER MONTHS, BUT IS EXPECTED TO BOUNCE BACK BY THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR.”

The Treasurer’s Report was the next item on the agenda. General Manager and Treasurer Joe Holtz explained why the Coop shows less income this year than it did last year. “Markup was raised from 21% to 25% during Covid,” Holtz explained. “Then, just before the beginning of the current fiscal year, we lowered it 24%.” In a follow-up, he explained that the power to lower it was given to the General Coordinators by the General Meeting. Holtz also noted that the Coop’s income will bounce back by the end of the fiscal year and explained, “Our goal is to make food affordable, and break even.”

Other highlights from Holtz included news that the Coop has engaged a company to study and draw a design for a new heat pump system to replace the air conditioner originally installed in 1991. The cost for this will be approximately \$700,000. And over-

all, the Coop's cash and cash equivalents equal \$8 million. "To be prepared for the next pandemic," Holtz added, "we need between 7.5 and 10 million."

During the General Coordinators' reports we learned that summer is a great opportunity for teens to get work experience at the Coop. The minimum age is 14 and working papers are necessary. Attendees also heard about a fleet of new shopping carts and salad bins (to prevent wilting), as well as a "findability" search for the health and beauty aisle, which you can access on the price look up computer on the side of the ice cream case. Basically, you can type the name of the product you are looking for and it will tell you the precise location.

Then there was a pop quiz: how many kinds of melons were sold in late July? Correct answer: 14! Melon types included Snow Leopard, Cavaillon, Picasso and four different kinds of watermelon. A member asked: "What happened to the vegan gluten-free pound cake?" Alas, Margaret Palca, who made those and other beloved baked goods, has retired and closed her beloved Columbia Street waterfront bakery after 40 years!

Another fascinating factoid: the Coop hands out 3,000 masks weekly. Attendees learned this when Holtz explained the snafu the last week of July when a delayed mask delivery resulted in mask-only Wednesday and Thursday shopping days not being honored.

The last item to bubble up for discussion was why the Coop no longer sells SodaStream products. The answer has nothing to do with boycotting Israeli products, Holtz explained. "[The company has] been denying credit to us—and barely communicate nor respond to the issues we raise." Hence, the Coop has parted ways with the manufacturer.

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Sourdough

PHOTO BY JENNIFERMACFARLANE

There was a shoutout to Matt Hoagland who, after 19 years as a membership coordinator, has been hired as a general coordinator. This announcement was followed by a supercool presentation of an interactive map called Seeding Solidarity, which shows every co-op, community refrigerator, garden, credit union and other “cooperative and democratic entity” in New York City. This presentation was made by a representative from Cooperative Economic Alliance of New York City (CEANYC). Those interested in participating in the project can learn more by emailing mapcoopnyc@gmail.com. Their next meeting is on October 8, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

All of the above were the equivalent of warm-up bands to the evening’s rousing headliner: “Urgent Resubmission of Personnel Committee Proposal.”

Membership Coordinator Karen Mancuso took the stage with Membership Coordinators Jana Cunningham and Mae Frankeberger, who together had collected 50 staff signatures in favor of a proposal that outlines a new approach to Personnel Committee responsibilities. To recap: “Area Coordinators” is the umbrella term for staff who are not General Coordinators. Receiving Coordinators, Membership Coordinators, Bookkeeping Coordinators, and the IT Department are all considered Area Coordinators. The General Coordinators are the supervisors of the staff of approximately 75 Area Coordinators. The Personnel Committee (PC) is composed of PSFC members who are responsible for hiring, firing and disciplining the General Coordinators. This group operates with out-of-date policies that are deficient in addressing the current workforce. When the committee was formed in 1981, there were only 1,000 members at the Coop. Now that the Coop has vastly grown—in membership and staff—the authors of the proposal laid out a need for functional HR practices and policies. As Mancuso explained, “without an empowered PC, the Coop is unable to fairly mediate any grievances.”

“THE COOP IS THIS AMAZING PLACE WHERE WE ALL LOVE TO SHOP AND WORK AND COME TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY. WE NEED TO PROTECT IT.”

During the subsequent Q and A session, most of the members who commented agreed that we must protect our staff at all costs. During the vote an overwhelming majority shot up their hands in favor of this new proposal.

As Mancuso stated, “the Coop is this amazing place where we all love to shop and work and come together as a community. But to this group, it is our employer and our livelihood. We need to protect it.” The motion was passed unanimously.

Liz Welch is a journalist, memoirist and book collaborator.

THE COOP’S TEN COMMANDMENTS (A.K.A BYLAWS)

September 4, 2024



By Anita Bushell

September 4, 2024

In the 26 years I've been a member of the Coop, here's something I'd never stopped to do: sit down and read the bylaws.

Last spring I was covering a General Meeting for the *Gazette*, and the bylaws came up. Apparently, they said that the Board of Directors of the Coop had to meet once a month. I wondered what else it stipulated. So I decided to get my hands on a copy of the bylaws, and find out what else they said. These regulations dictate the way the Coop is run. Embedded in the articles were answers to some of my greatest Coop-related questions. (PSFC bylaws can be read here, on the Coop's website.)

I've often heard Coop members refer to the Coop as a "grocery store." Is that accurate, though?

No. At a grocery store, one simply trades money in exchange for groceries. At the Coop, one becomes a member, makes a monetary deposit and investment and agrees to trade labor for the ability to shop for groceries. (See Article One)

Am I truly a "member/owner"?

Yes. Article Two states that the terms "member" and "owner" are interchangeable and mean the same thing. (See Article Two)

Does The Coop have a Board of Directors?

Yes. The Coop has a Board of Directors, consisting of five members. They are elected by the members of the Coop at the Annual Meeting in June. (See Article Three)

Does the Coop have Officers?

Yes. The Coop has a President, Vice-President, Secretary and a Treasurer. (See Article Four)

Does the Coop have paid employees?

Yes. The Coop employs paid staff members who belong to one of two tiers. General Coordinators are responsible for overall management of the Coop, and Area Coordinators supervise Receiving, Membership, Bookkeeping and Information Technology. (See Article Five. This information is also found in Section Eight of the Membership Manual.)

Does the Board of Directors meet regularly?

Yes. The board of directors convenes at least ten times annually. (See Article Six)

Are board of directors elected and if so, when?

Board of directors elections take place at the Annual Meeting in June. An election can be held at a monthly meeting if a position becomes vacant before term's end. (See Article Seven)

Are officers elected and if so, when?

Elections for officers take place at the GM in June, which includes the board of directors elections. (See Article Eight)

Are the board of directors in charge of how the Coop is run?

Yes. The board of directors is ultimately responsible for the operation and administration of the Coop. (See Article Nine)

Can the bylaws be amended?

The bylaws may be amended (in whole or in part) so long as they receive approval of two thirds of Coop board members and two thirds of members at the GM. Written notice must circulate before such a meeting takes place. (See Article Ten)

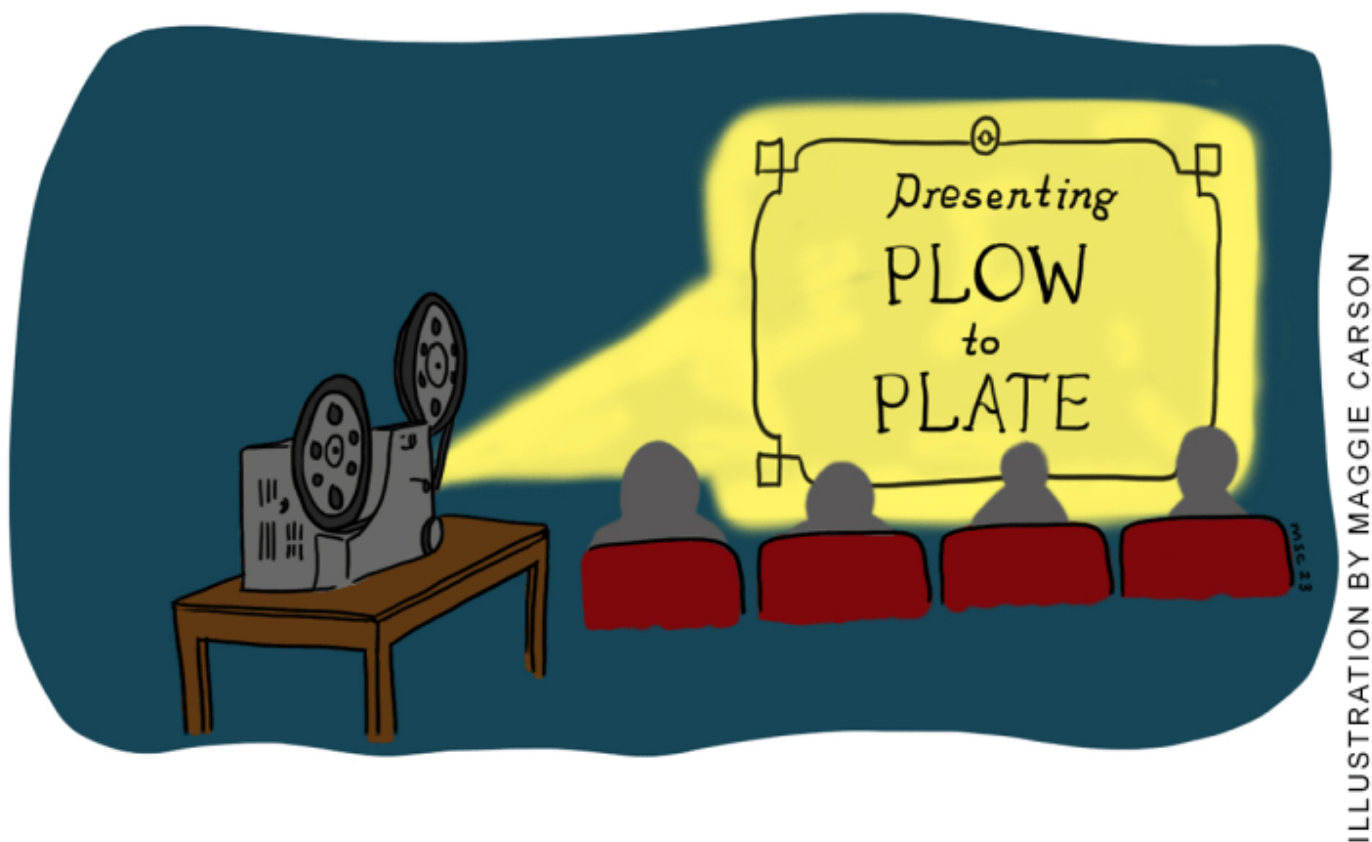
I'm really glad I read the bylaws. It didn't take much time—after all, there are only ten of them—and it gave me a sense of history, context and a much better understanding of this amazing organization that I've been a member of for 26 years.

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

Homelessness. Her latest book is *Object Essays*.

PLOW TO PLATE FILM SERIES

September 4, 2024



PET FOOLED: THE SHOCKING TRUTH ABOUT THE PET FOOD INDUSTRY

By Adam Rabiner

September 4, 2024

Let's just say that the documentary *Pet Fooled* is brought to you by *Plow to Bowl* rather than *Plow to Plate*. Never in our long-running series have we presented a film

on what we feed our pets, although we have discussed whether cows are grass or grain fed. Yet *Pet Fooled* builds on the series' commitment to unveiling the less than savory aspects of an industrialized, corporatized and profit-driven food system. What plagues the pet food industry are the same problems that bedevil the system designed for our eating—namely, false and misleading packaging, monopoly power and consolidation, weak or non-existent regulation and a focus on profits over health.

It's really not shocking therefore to learn that our pets suffer from many of the same maladies that we do: obesity, allergies, autoimmune issues and diseases such as diabetes. The main reason for this is that many of the pet food formulations are not biologically appropriate. Dogs and cats are carnivores. A cat's favorite meal is a freshly killed mouse. And dogs evolved from meat-eating wolves. In fact, every animal has a unique diet best suited for it. Worms eat dirt; hummingbirds thirst for nectar. Serve a snake a salad and it will hiss at you as it slithers away into a hole where it will choose to starve to death. Yet, many pet foods are packed with carbohydrates. One beautifully designed package listed the following top unnecessary ingredients: ground yellow corn, chicken byproduct meal, corn gluten meal, whole wheat flour and animal fat. Another leading dog-food brand with all organic brown rice, oats, millet, barley, sorghum, peas and potatoes is described as "fabulous quality ingredients...if you were a goat."

Even the animal parts are problematic. By-products are what's left over after an animal has been slaughtered and all the edible parts removed for human consumption. They consist of every piece and part imaginable. In other words, "mystery meat" of unknown quality or grade. These by-products, ground up and blended with synthetic vitamins and minerals, are obtained from slaughterhouses, but can also include dead animals from farms, ranches, maybe even zoos.

There are other problems. Kibbles, otherwise known as dried pet food, exacerbate dehydration in cats and dogs and contribute to kidney problems. The words on packages do not actually mean what most people think they do. For example, "dinner, nugget and formula" must contain up to 25% actual meat. However, "with" may con-

tain only 3% meat. And “flavor” may contain little to no (0%) meat, yet the package might contain an image of a fresh steak. Similar deceptions apply to words such as “natural” and “organic.”

A lot of this deception was revealed in 2006 because of a major product recall and congressional hearings resulting from a mysterious illness afflicting dogs caused by melamine, a deadly chemical used to make plastic. Subsequently, between 2007 and 2013, dog deaths and illnesses were associated with chicken jerky tainted with trace elements of antibiotics produced in a single factory in China.

The negative attention that thrust the industry into the spotlight created an opening for Blue Wilderness, which developed into a billion-dollar brand, to offer ostensibly healthier, grain-free and more biologically appropriate foods, though a lawsuit filed by Purina later revealed that the upstart company, Blue Buffalo, misled consumers and engaged in false advertising when it claimed it used no animal byproducts.

Today, many passionate animal lovers have founded and launched pet food companies that form the basis of an alternative industry. Many of these visionaries enthusiastically and transparently talked about their products with the film makers. As for the five main conglomerates, they have gauged consumer sentiment and branded their own newer formulations; however, their spokespeople remained more secretive about the sourcing of their ingredients.

The bottom line is that today there are plenty of options for the educated consumer and animal lover, whether it is the newly popular raw food craze, or the glut of gently-cooked, human-grade options delivered frozen monthly to your door (shout out to my dog Sparky’s favorite—The Farmer’s Dog). There is no longer a reason to be fooled. Read labels. You can also make your own dog food like my veterinarian friend does. Though, if you are like me, that is going a bit too far.

“Pet Fooled,” September 10, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.

Screening link: <http://www.plowtoplatefilms.com/events/>

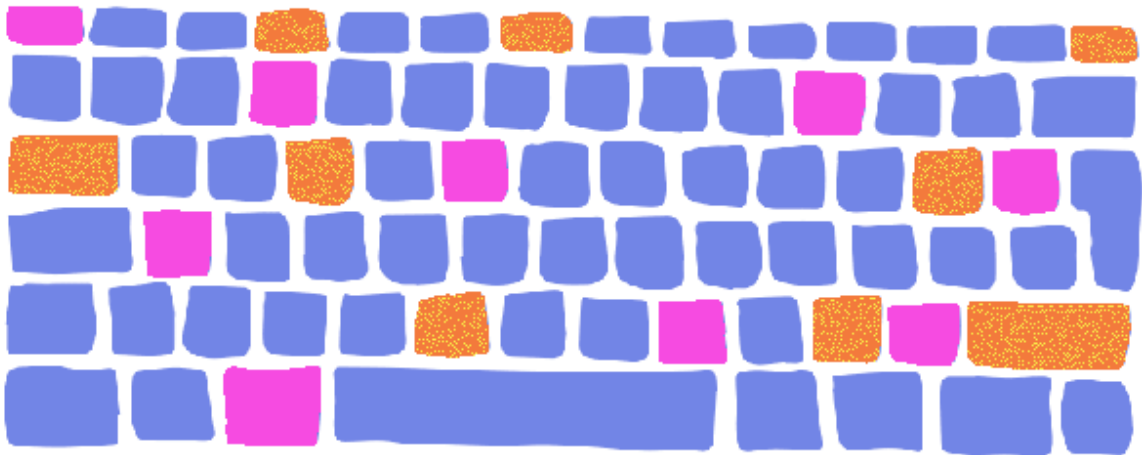
To be added to our mailing list for future screening announcements, please email a request to plowtoplate@mail.com.

Adam Rabiner lives in Ditmas Park with his wife, Dina, and two children, Elan and Ana.

SEPTEMBER 4, 2024

September 4, 2024

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



GIVE FUNGI THE RESPECT THEY'RE DUE

Dear Coop,

A very minor bone to pick: I tend to work checkout shifts, and am always dismayed that mushrooms are categorized under vegetable in the checkout system. Not only

are mushrooms not vegetables, they aren't even plants. Fungi are their own biological kingdom (along with plants, animals, protists and monera). So, in a biological sense, a mushroom is as much a vegetable as a chicken is—that is to say, not at all.

In cooperation,

Abaye Steinmetz-Silber

RE: JUNE ANNUAL MEETING REPORT (7/23/24)

To the Editor:

The June Annual Meeting Report (7/23/24) contains a misleading statement, “The Board of Directors plays a pivotal role in how the Coop operates by acting as the decision-making body for the Coop.”

Actually, unlike most organizations, the members on the Board of Directors at the Park Slope Food Coop (PSFC) are expected by other Coop members to receive and follow the advice provided to it in the form of General Meeting (GM) votes on all matters brought there. In other words, even if a PSFC board member disagrees with a particular GM voting result on a proposal or election item, the board member will accept the advice provided by the membership vote. That is why the GM chair usually states at the beginning of every GM that the GM is the decision-making body of the Coop. That is why members discuss and vote on all matters before the board votes on whether or not to accept their advice. That is why board candidates are generally questioned by members to make sure that, if elected, he or she will honor this PSFC cooperative tradition.

Please correct the online report error so that readers are not led astray on the role of the board.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Tobier

LET'S RETHINK MEMBERSHIP CAPS AND IMPOSE OCCUPANCY ONES

Dear Editor,

The solution to Coop crowding surely involves more market force and less central planning than the current approach. Rather than capping total membership, total member occupancy should be capped, either at fire code maximum or some lower number at which shopping becomes truly painful (which, in my experience, is extremely rare).

This controls crowding through natural consequences. If the Coop fills on Sundays, for example, there will be lines, encouraging those who can shop on less crowded days to do so, while making shopping possible for those who need to do so on that day—including people are currently denied this opportunity by the membership caps.

The central planning that has occurred thus far is certainly appreciated, and ideas like later shopping hours are great. Making the cap about how full the building is rather than how full the membership rolls are makes the Coop more inclusive while relieving some planning burden from our General Coordinators.

Ryan Tate

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF FINDING WORK SHIFTS

Dear Coop,

I as well as many other community members that I know have increasingly struggled with finding shifts. I am wondering if the Coop would consider some of the following suggestions: increased hours, reducing to two-hour shifts and/or shifts every eight weeks and limiting the number of shift credits one is able to accumulate in a year. These are all preliminary notional ideas, so obviously, they would need to be researched in regards to the effect any or all of these would have on operations, membership and solidarity.

Stephen Klein

TWO COOP LOVERS FOR HYBRID MEETINGS

Dear Coop-ers,

The PSFC was a major plug in our respective moves to Brooklyn. As folks who love fresh local produce and supporting community-run grocery stores, we were both beyond excited to see if the Coop would live up to its hype. And, in so many aspects, the Coop *has* delivered as we hoped it would: delicious produce, excellent bulk items, sweet treats discovered while stocking the dairy aisle and fun and quirky co-owners that we can chat with while working a shift. Despite these obvious perks, there is at least one key way in which the Coop has fallen short: providing inclusive General Meetings.

Part of what makes the Coop special is that it is *defined* by its community, and together, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We work collectively to restock, check out and request new and exciting products. We even work together to put to-

gether this newsletter. It's disappointing, then, that this does not extend to being open and welcoming for our GMs. Hybrid GMs offer the chance for folks with different schedules, needs, abilities and time constraints to more easily participate in making the Coop a more inclusive community. Since the pandemic, meetings utilizing Zoom and other virtual participation platforms have become par for the course. They are common-place for doctor visits, university classes, work huddles, fundraising events, NYC community board meetings—you can even do a virtual interview for TSA PreCheck and Global Entry! Today's widespread use of virtual meeting spaces demonstrates a common understanding of the benefits of the inclusivity that they offer. If we are truly a Coop where all members can contribute to our definition as a collective, prioritizing hybrid meetings should be at the top of the list.

Jessie Wesley

Estee Ward

ON HYBRID VOTING, AKA MAKING PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY WORK AT THE COOP

Hello!

A few months ago, I got an email from the Coop announcing the vote for Board of Directors. I was excited to take part in the board election! Unfortunately, I was out of the country and on-leave; how was that going to work? Well, it worked swimmingly. The vote would be taking place in-person at the next General Meeting *and* online in the lead-up to the meeting. I could vote online—and early!

I clicked on the link, signed in, read the candidate statements one final time and voted. The whole process took five minutes. Democracy in action, 2024! Amazing!

This experience, however, stood in powerful contrast to the fact that we are still unable to vote online regarding measures raised at the GM. Every month, the GM notice goes out with the exhortation that “Participating in the meeting is your way of having a voice in important issues that affect you and your Coop. Meaningful member participation strengthens our governance system, ensures that the board of directors hears from the Coop membership, and upholds the democratic principle at the heart of cooperatives.” This is inspiring stuff, so it’s too bad that, given the resistance to hybrid meetings, a Coop with over 16,000 members has its major issues decided in-person by about 200.

It’s not as though this is a new issue. For decades now, members have been raising the need to make the coop governance process more accessible. As we approach the November 2024 election, in a political atmosphere where US democracy is on the line in a historically unprecedented way, maybe we can do our part by working together to make the little village that is PSFC a place where the ideal of participatory democracy is reflected in our practices.

Jim McKay

DIRECT DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE COOP

To the editor:

I write on behalf of Coop 4 Unity, a group of Coop members who understand and oppose the goals and tactics of the Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) movement.

Instead of continuing to fill the *Linewaiters’ Gazette* with letters for and against the renewed push to declare the Coop in solidarity with a boycott of the State of Israel, Coop 4 Unity proposes direct communications with Park Slope Food Coop Members 4 Palestine, the BDS faction within the Coop.

In the July 23, 2024, edition of the *Linewaiters' Gazette*, a member of the unity group put out a call for mediation. There has been no response to that call. Ironically, a BDS supporter's letter in the same edition concluded with a dinner invitation to members who oppose the efforts of "Members 4 Palestine." We construe that dinner invitation as an expression of willingness on the part of the BDS faction to engage in direct dialogue.

The letter with the dinner invitation did not include the member's contact information. The email address for the Coop group is coop4unity@gmail.com. If anyone from the BDS faction (or any Coop member) wants to communicate directly about the future of the Coop—and move the conversation out of the *Linewaiters' Gazette*—please contact us at that address.

Noah Potter

A SECOND REQUEST FOR WELL-INTENTIONED DIALOGUE WITH PRO-BDS COOP MEMBERS

Dear PSFC Members for Palestine,

I have received no response from the BDS-inspired PSFC Members for Palestine regarding multiple good-faith requests for mediation to negotiate a resolution to the intensifying conflict that has arisen as PSFC Members for Palestine attempt to resurrect a boycott of Israeli products, characterizing it as a moral imperative for the Coop.

Instead members of this faction have taken to mocking opponents of the boycott (see, for instance, Carol Wald's July 23 letter in which she writes of "the pearl-clutching hysteria over members who support a targeted boycott of Israeli goods) and those who worry about BDS's infiltration of the Coop, in the form of letters to the *Linewaiters' Gazette* that assert the moral superiority of their position (see, for example, Lisa

Guido's July 23 letter in which she states "what's being done by Israel to Gaza with the financial backing of the USA is one of the greatest moral atrocities of our lifetime, and it did not begin as a reaction to Hamas on October 7. To be silent, to equivocate, to deny, is to tacitly endorse an act of generational evil.")

We reject the tactic of Jews weaponizing their identity in support of BDS. Their anti-Zionism is no more morally superior than the beliefs and concerns of other Jews. That is true in the Coop context, as anywhere.

I repeat my invitation to participate in a mediated constructive dialogue on these issues. We are giving your faction the benefit of the doubt that you do not understand the harm you are causing to many fellow members in a community grocery store based on cooperation.

If you do not respond to our request, we will understand your silence as an expression of your unwillingness to communicate and, by extension, your callousness towards this harm, and, ultimately, your disregard for the fiscal health of the Coop's business.

With hopes of cooperation,

Ramon Maislen, Coop 4 Unity

JUST SAY NO...TO MEDIATION REGARDING THE BDS AGENDA

Dear Members,

I have read Ramon Maislen's letter (published in the July 23, 2023 issue of the *Gazette*) and the follow-up letter that was handed out at the July 30, 2023 GM. In these, he proposed a private mediation session between Coop 4 Unity and PSFC Members for Palestine to clarify how the group intends to "align the agenda of BDS with

the principles of the Coop” and to discuss the “rise in confrontations between Coop members and strategies to ensure the safety and respect of all members.”

I don't think it makes sense to hold a mediation between Coop 4 Unity and PSFC for Palestine or between Ramon and a representative of PSFC Members for Palestine. A proposed boycott would affect all members of the Coop. Just like all other Coop-wide issues, the specifics of what this boycott would entail should be brought to the full membership, for discussion at a General Meeting and (ultimately) a vote. Nothing needs to be said behind closed doors; this must be a discussion open to all members.

There is a place for mediation at the Coop—the Dispute Resolution Committee is available to any members who find themselves in personal disputes or unresolved negative interactions.

I am a Jewish woman who also worries about antisemitism, but BDS and PSFC Members for Palestine are not antisemitic. I believe Israel is committing crimes against humanity and that the least we can do as a Coop is to discuss whether to boycott certain Israeli products.

Cooperatively,

Rebecca Schoenberg-Jones

LET'S VOTE ON BDS

To Coop Members,

Controversy in any group is natural. I am convinced that in our Coop with a clear process for shared decision-making and sufficient individual emotional maturity, constant arguments can be avoided. Neither of these criteria is easy to achieve. Both depend

upon the commitment of members to each other and to common goals that are at least as strong as the commitment to one's own opinion and interest—a caring community.

Trust in a democratic process is delicate. We have suffered early childhood trauma as well as violent historical assaults on our identity that resulted in loss, grief and anguish. The process for collective decision-making in a caring community needs to include consequences for cheating and violence. We need vision, courage and trust.

You win some; you lose some. Feeling safe requires winning with grace and humility and/or losing with dignity, acceptance and adaptation.

With contemporary digital capacity, secure processes to vote can be adapted. We use infinite ways of sharing information, thinking and experiences. With so much technology, we don't need to be all in the same place to cast a ballot.

A fair voting process for collective decision-making will be inclusive, respectful and equitable if it is managed by an impartial team and overseen by members of different factions. Hope for peace includes enough vision, trust and courage to try democracy.

Susan Metz

THE COOP'S COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY

Dear Coop Members,

I've been a member since February 2020, and what I love most about the Coop is its commitment to democracy. We are all workers, members and owners, with hierarchy limited to administrative necessity. Our voices are equal and we act in the best interest of the majority.

In the summer of 2020, I saw the Coop's commitment to democracy tested. In the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement and the murder of George Floyd, many members called for an official statement in support of the movement. Although it was clear that the majority of members would likely support such a statement, our leaders decided to wait until a vote could be held. While this felt counterintuitive at the time, it demonstrated the Coop's integrity and dedication to democratic processes.

Today, we are faced with another tragic moment. The war in Gaza has entered its ninth month with no clear end in sight. Israel continues its bombardment and civilian deaths rise daily. We now have an opportunity to act by stopping the sale of products that help fund this violence. As the Coop has done in the past, it must show integrity and put this question to a membership vote. The delay in voting feels excessive and unlike the BLM voting delay, the rationale here is unclear.

If the membership votes to keep BDS-sanctioned products on the shelves, so be it. But what is most important is maintaining our commitment to democracy. Without it, the Coop ceases to be what it is.

Atticus Hoffman

FILM NIGHT: THE INVISIBLE EXTINCTION

September 4, 2024



THE INVISIBLE EXTINCTION

THE RACE TO SAVE OUR VANISHING MICROBES

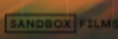
A MICROBE MEDIA PRODUCTION, A FILM BY Sarah Schenck & Steven Lawrence

INSPIRED BY the work of Cloria Dominguez-Bello & Martin Blaser, and Blaser's book *Missing Microbes*

EDITOR & SENIOR PRODUCER Russell Greene CO-PRODUCER Elijah Stevens ORIGINAL SCORE BY Hahn Rowe

PRODUCED & DIRECTED BY Steven Lawrence & Sarah Schenck

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: GERRY OHRSTROM / THOMAS CAMPBELL JACKSON /
NEIL & ANNA RASMUSSEN / DAVID & ELISABETH REES / ARA KATZ / ANDREW CREIGHTON / RAJA DHIR
CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: MITCHELL BLUTT / PETER EMCH / WEA OHRSTROM NICHOLS



www.thefilm.com

The Invisible Extinction spotlights the extraordinary work and charismatic personalities of renowned scientists Martin Blaser and Gloria Dominguez-Bello as they endeavor to save the vanishing microbes that are essential for our survival.

The film joins them on this urgent quest from the USA to Venezuela, China, Israel and Switzerland, showing us how the overuse of antibiotics, elective C-sections and processed foods are driving the destruction of our inner ecology, which is happening even faster than climate change. As the Covid-19 pandemic hits, Blaser pivots to focus on how our microbes may help protect us from the virus and future pandemics, while Dominguez-Bello spearheads the creation of an international microbe vault to safeguard precious bugs that may help cure chronic illnesses.

Sarah Schenck co-directed and produced *The Invisible Extinction*, which premiered at CPHOX and was shown in international festivals across the globe. She also was a producer/director and on-air correspondent for the PBS weekly news program *Need To Know*, on the acclaimed episode “Saving Carla,” which focused on childhood obesity in the Bronx. *For Parent Earth*, a website Schenck co-founded in 2009 to increase access to healthy food nationwide, she wrote, directed and produced hundreds of original videos in English and Spanish. She also makes video content for nonprofits including Amnesty International, the Park Slope Food Coop, the NYC public schools and the Supportive Housing Network of NY. She is currently making a movie about menopause around the world.

Steven Lawrence co-directed and produced *The Invisible Extinction*. He is a producer-director and media pioneer who has been making documentaries for over 30 years about artists, activists and everyday heroes—from underground Soviet rockers to a Senegalese rapper fighting FGM to cat rescuers in Brooklyn. As a producer, his work includes three feature docs in collaboration with Michael Apter, including *The Long Way Home* and *Married In America*. He created the International Emmy-award winning series *Born In The USSR* producing the first film in the series, *Age 7 In The USSR*. Among his many other producing credits are *The Furious Force Of Rhymes*, *Sarabah* and Heddy Honigmann’s *100 UP*. His directing credits include *Tell*

Tchaikovsky The News: Rock In Russia for MTV, the *Vis à Vis* series for PBS and *The Cat Rescuers*, winner of the 2018 Hamptons International Film Festival animal rights award.

Sarah and Steven will be present for a Q+A after the screening.

This documentary will be screened by Zoom on Thursday, September 26th @ 7 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86197030906>

Meeting ID: 861 9703 0906

To be added to our email listserv for future screening announcements, please send a request to jlymiller@me.com

CROSSWORD: "WALKIE-TALKIE"

September 4, 2024