

THE CHALLENGES—AND SUCCESSES—IN MAKING THE COOP MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT

January 28, 2025



By Dan Bergsagel

January 28, 2025

The Coop has long been a trailblazer in trying to save energy and operate as a responsible citizen in a world where the climate crisis has become increasingly urgent.

Way back in 1991, the Coop installed an energy efficient gas-powered air-conditioning system that avoided using ozone-depleting CFCs. The Coop started buying electricity generated only from solar and wind farms in 2005. All lighting was replaced with LEDs in 2019. Those new fixtures use 75 percent less energy and last 25 times longer, saving \$40,000 per year.



PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN



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There is more that can be done, but those ambitions run up against the challenges of the very nature of the Coop itself. The Coop is open nearly every day of the year, the turnover of groceries from the shelves is high, and members are constantly coming in and out to shop or work. There is very little time for repairing or replacing equipment because everything is constantly being used. The doors and loading bays are often open, letting heat out during the winter or heat in during the summer.

“We are a huge energy user,” explained General Coordinator Elinoar Astrinsky. “We have refrigeration on 24/7, and we have lights on pretty much 24/7.”



PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN



PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN



PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN

Still, the Coop has a commitment to doing things better.

“We want to reduce our energy consumption—not just for costs but to be good environmental stewards,” Astrinsky said.

The Coop operates two energy systems. The first, powered by natural gas, regulates the internal temperature—heating, ventilation and air conditioning. The second is powered by electricity from the local grid, and operates the refrigeration systems that keep food chilled or frozen, the lighting and computer systems, and the network of elevators and conveyors that lift and lower food and people around the building.

Improving these systems is not straightforward, but it is the role of Astrinsky and the Energy Efficiency Committee.

Previously, low energy-consumption equipment that did not draw from the local electricity grid—including the 1991 gas-powered AC system—was favored over all-electric systems. Today, local NYC laws and national trends have led to a push to reduce fossil fuel use in favor of renewable electricity.

Some energy decisions are common sense. The motors that power the refrigeration cases in the Coop have recently been changed to so-called electrically commutated ones, which are costly but three times more efficient.

The open refrigeration display cases have been fitted with night curtains—screens which are pulled down when the Coop is closed—to reduce energy loss.



PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN

Night curtains on open fridges reduce energy loss.

Historically, the changes adopted by the Coop have been effective.

In 2008, the Coop's energy performance was rated in the top 25 percent when compared to grocery store peers as part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Energy Star program. (At the Coop's entrance, there is a small plaque to the right of the main doors, bearing the familiar Energy Star logo, which is more often seen as a blue sticker on a new appliance.)

The certification was received under the stewardship of Bob Sauchelli, a former E.P.A. employee and Coop member. "Energy Star is not a recipe," explained Sauchelli. "It is not a prescriptive based rating system. It's a performance-based one. You could put perfect technology into a building and then mismanage it completely—overheat it in winter, overcool it in summer." In other words, the Coop performed well because it had made sensible decisions in choosing cooling systems—and then used the systems wisely.

The Coop also performed well due to its success as a grocery store. "The busier the store, the higher the energy budget," Sauchelli said. The number of people passing through means that the Coop is being compared to stores with equivalent customer bases, which are much larger and need to heat and cool larger volumes.



PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN

The front door and loading doors are often open.

In 2024, some improvements to reduce energy loss were considered and rejected. A reconfiguration of the entrance vestibule to reduce air flow and heat loss when the doors are open was deemed impractical due to the exceptionally high shopper traffic at the Coop. Additional plastic film glazing on the inside of all windows was deemed undesirable because it would hinder their use.

In early 2025, additional glazing (a plastic laminate) is scheduled to be added to the large skylight above the shopping floor to reduce heat loss. With 17 years worth of energy consumption reduction efforts now completed since the last Energy Star certificate, is it time for the Coop to renew its status, and see how well it is performing? Sauchelli said he “would love to see the plaque updated” and would happily assist with the process.

Dan Bergsagel is a structural engineer from London. He likes to talk about the unexpected things hiding in plain sight.

HOW MANY MEMBERS SHOULD THE COOP HAVE?

January 28, 2025



By Zach Schiffman

January 28, 2025



ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SAVAGE

The Coop can often feel overcrowded, with shoppers jostling one another and the entry line flowing up the street. At the same time, membership size is still below pre-2020 levels—a decrease brought about by the pandemic—despite significant efforts to increase efficiency.

That is the tension that the Coop’s leadership regularly confronts: How many members should the Coop have?

This past fall, the Coop reached its 2023 goal of 16,000 members, which is 1,200 less than the 2019 peak. Still, General Coordinator Joe Szladek says the Coop hopes to add another 500 members this year. New members are crucial to the Coop’s long-term success because they help to bolster the Coop’s finances, typically spending more per visit.

It is estimated that adding another 500 members would bring roughly \$1.8 million in additional annual revenue.



ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SAVAGE

Szladek says that figuring out the correct membership size has been a delicate balance since the stark fall to 12,500 members in 2020. “As we were starting to build back up,” he said, “we wondered, ‘What number do we get back to that is appropriate for the Coop?’ The initial hope was to take the edge off the crowdedness of the Coop pre-pandemic.”

“At 17,200 members, we had to keep finding new space for things. To fit deliveries, we had to move stacks of produce in the basement over two inches, and then another two inches, and then another two inches,” he said of peak membership. “We just didn’t have any more room. It was very challenging.”

Szladek said the staff discussed a target and agreed that if members were shopping at pre-pandemic levels, “we probably don’t want to be at 17,000.”

Here’s the catch: Coop members are not shopping at pre-pandemic levels.

In January 2024, members bought an average of 87 units of groceries per month, whereas in 2019, they purchased 97 units per month. Szladek said several factors contributed to the 13 percent drop, including the reduced shift commitment (from every four weeks to every six weeks).

“The six-week cycle means members are coming to the Coop fewer times per year to work,” Szladek said, “and it’s possible they’re splitting their shopping between more local options between shifts.” Despite the Coop’s beloved lower prices, rising housing costs are also a factor, with members forced to move farther away. “It’s very expensive to live near the Coop,” Szladek added, “so people aren’t always close to shop here.”



ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SAVAGE

Even Membership Coordinator Karen Mancuso has moved farther away. “I am a Coop shopper through and through, but if I wasn’t here all week and able to shop while I am working, I might shop more at other places,” she said.

The Coop’s leadership also worries about competition from other grocery stores.

“We’re always thinking and wondering about who’s going to open near us and how that’s going to impact the Coop,” Szladek said. “When Whole Foods opened in 2012, we noticed a dip in sales. It was only 2 percent, and we were very resilient, but it’s a more complicated landscape now, with considerations like food inflation and online shopping.”

The Coop could increasingly face pressure from new low-cost grocery stores coming to the neighborhood, including Lidl on 5th Avenue (opening next year) and the long-rumored Gowanus Trader Joe’s.

The Coop plans to be open an additional hour every day starting on Monday, February 3, going from 84 hours a week to 90 hours. This move is intended to address both external competition from other grocery options and internal competition for shifts and room in the aisles. Szladek said the Coop continues to explore online ordering options, which would also counteract competitors like Instacart and provide a new swath of shifts for members.

As the Coop inches toward 16,500 members, the membership office is not operating very differently. “There are probably hundreds of people out there who want to join the Coop,” Mancuso said. “We tell everyone the same thing, ‘Look at the website, create an account, and it will tell you when we open appointments to join.’ We’re trying to be really transparent about it.”

If the Coop takes on too many new members, she said it’s relatively easy to slow down the flow.

“In 2007, we realized we had to start controlling the number of people who could join. That’s when we created the online sign-up for orientations. We control things so much more now because it’s all digital,” Mancuso said. “We can cancel new member enrollments for the month of December, for example, because of the holidays, or maybe we just don’t need more people right now. Before this, we just always had orientations every week, and the new members began to spiral out of control.”

Despite concerns about overcrowding, Mancuso and Szladek both feel confident about the Coop’s increased efficiency since the pandemic.

“I think at first it was a little scary,” Mancuso said, “People thought, ‘You guys really want to go back up to 17,000?’ We couldn’t really handle that before COVID, but now we can because of all of these new systems; the lines move so quickly, and there are way fewer people waiting on line in the store. I think most members appreciate that.”

Zach Schiffman is a social editor and writer at New York magazine, comedian and Park Slope local.

HOW THE COOP CAN CHANGE YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO FOOD

January 28, 2025



By Liora Fishman

January 28, 2025

when I joined the Coop at my then-roommate's insistence, I was a skeptic. I questioned whether it could possibly be as wonderful as it had been described—particularly when there was a work commitment.

But after a few weeks of Coop shopping, I knew that I had been proven resoundingly wrong. My entire grocery bag had transformed, and with it my cooking habits. I looked forward to meal preparation on Sundays when I'd previously dreaded it. I tried new recipes and new products and paid attention to what was on the shelves, rather than blindly grabbing the same items each week.

My experience got me thinking about how joining the Coop has reshaped members' approach to food and cooking.

For Jenna Zucker, who joined in the summer of 2024, the Coop has been transforma-

tive. Zucker, who is dairy-free, felt stuck in repetitive eating habits due to limited options elsewhere.

“The Coop gave me so much more variety in the types of dairy-free options I had, and I was drawn to that—I wanted more variety in my eating habits and routine, and I really got that from the Coop,” Zucker said.

They now experiment with new recipes using cashew-based dairy-free cheeses, and have discovered favorites like vegan apple pie and Coop candies.

Gabriela Herrera joined the Coop in May 2024 and was surprised by the abundance of products beyond produce. “I feel assured that the products have been vetted for sustainable or organic standards, and I can confidently buy them knowing they align with my preferences,” she said. Herrera’s routine, already built around cooking, has expanded to include seasonal and local ingredients she hadn’t previously used.

For Sarah Slaton, who joined the Coop with her husband two and a half years ago, the access to seasonal produce has reinvigorated her approach to cooking.



“Before the Coop, I felt like I was constantly working with the same ingredients throughout the year,” she said. “Now I’m already looking forward to citrus in January and ramps in the spring. Every season there’s something to look forward to at the Coop, and it keeps cooking fun throughout the year.”

Barbara Weisfeld, a member since 2001, described how the Coop inspired her to focus more on high-quality, affordable ingredients.

“Even if I’m not the best cook, I know it’s going to be okay because the ingredients are amazing,” she said.

The Coop also encouraged Weis to take her health more seriously, noting that being surrounded by high-quality, healthy food options influenced her overall habits. “I was a smoker before I joined the Coop,” she said. “I think being a part of the Coop made me take my health more seriously.”

The Coop has also introduced members to new foods that have become staples in their diets. Avery Trufelman confessed that she was a staunch vegetarian before join-

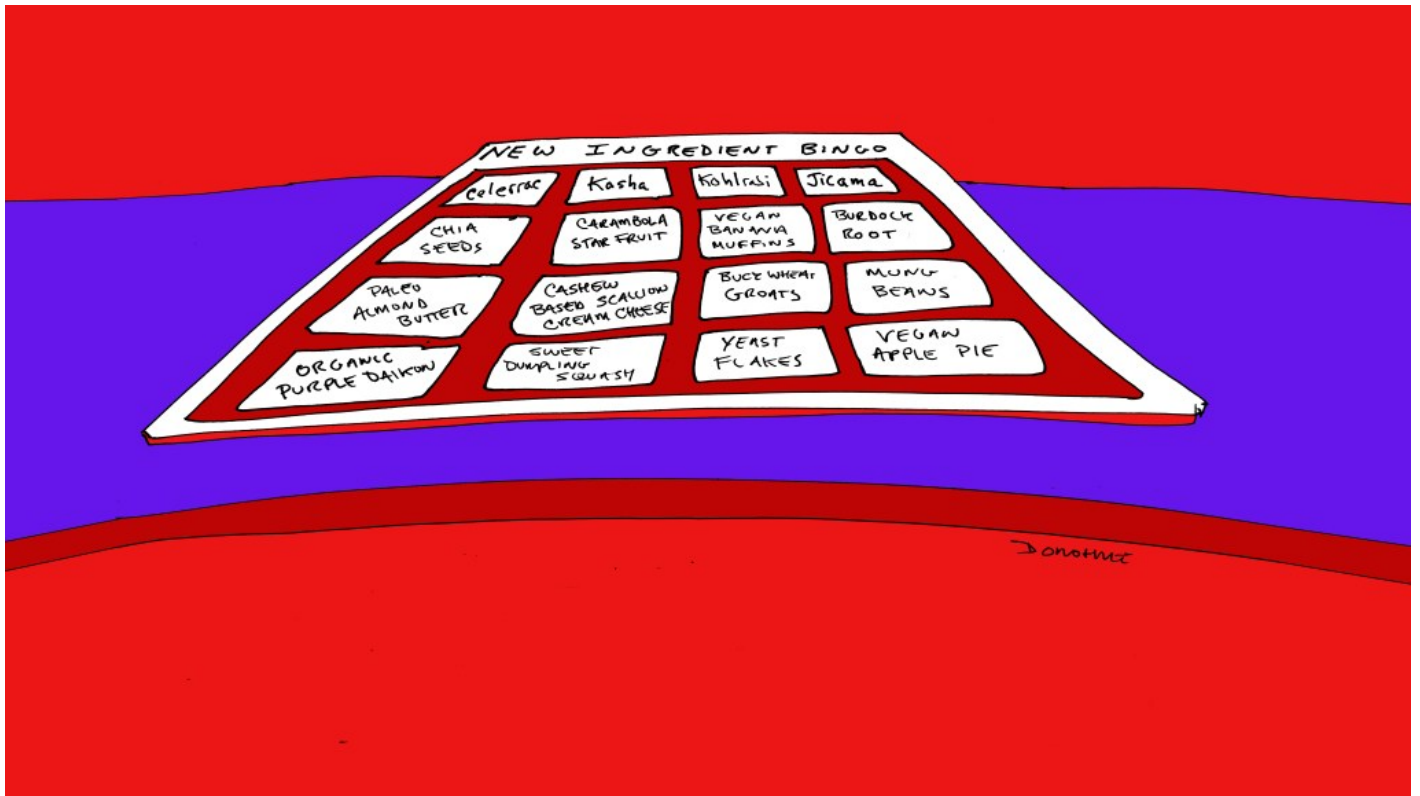
ing the Coop but was tempted by the array of tinned fish, leading her to adopt a pescatarian diet. “I blame the Coop!” she joked. Trufelman also uses Coop-sourced oats and almonds to make her own plant-based milks.

Herrera listed several new favorites, including Spicy Bjorn Corn, Keogh’s Irish Potato Chips and bulk teas, while Slaton now always has Rancho Gordo beans and jelly beans from the bulk section on hand. For Weis, vegan banana walnut muffins and paleo almond butter chocolates have become regular treats.

Beyond the products, members emphasized the community culture of the Coop. Zucker described it as a “home for food lovers” where conversations about favorite foods at checkout lines make the experience unique. “Food is not a thing that is shameful but rather really enjoyed,” they said. “That’s invaluable to me.”

Trufelman echoed this sentiment, highlighting the sense of purpose she feels volunteering through the Coop and how the community aspect has kept her involved even after she moved further away.

“I love volunteering at CHiPs, and my Coop membership ensures that I do it regularly,” she said. (CHiPs is a soup kitchen, food pantry and shelter for women with young children on Fourth Avenue between Sackett and Degraw Streets. Coop members can receive shift credit for volunteering there.)



Members like Zucker and Weisfeld said they appreciate how the Coop creates an intentional environment where food is valued and conversations about sustainability and health are normalized. As Zucker put it, “It’s a real antidote to what can often be a toxic culture about food pervasive in our society.”

Herrera was drawn to the Coop for its collaborative spirit. “I loved the aspect of community and the ability to contribute to the operations of the market,” she said. “It’s more than just a store—it’s a shared space that we all maintain together.”

Weisfeld noted that, overall, she has found a sense of comfort and belonging in the community: “There are some wonderful people in the Coop.”

When she first joined the Coop, she had inconsistent schedules and the shifts helped her establish a routine and sense of stability. “My work schedule varied all the time. I didn’t think I could do the shifts at first—but I actually found my niche,” she said. “It ended up being a gift.”

Liora Fishman joined the Coop in December 2021. She lives in Prospect Heights and

has a wonderful dog, Ollie, whom she loves very much.

COORDINATORS' CORNER: WHY WE MUST PRESERVE THE 75% BOYCOTT THRESHOLD

January 28, 2025

COORDINATORS' CORNER

ILLUSTRATION BY ERIK SCHURINK

By The General Coordinator Team

January 28, 2025

In the Jan. 7, 2025, issue of the *Gazette*, we outlined several significant risks posed if the Coop were to boycott Israeli goods. Today, we turn our attention to a critical concern: a proposed repeal of the 75% supermajority requirement for General Meeting

votes on boycotts. Advocates for the Israeli boycott are seeking to reduce this threshold to a simple majority, creating an easier path to approving a boycott of Israeli goods.

We understand that members who favor these changes value the Coop and are acting on their beliefs in alignment with their political values. Members who have expressed a desire for a boycott may not intend to divide the Coop, but their proposals threaten to do just that—alienating members, destabilizing finances and detracting from our core mission of providing affordable, high-quality food to working members. While we respect their right to raise these issues, we must acknowledge the risks their proposals pose to the broader Coop community.

Upholding Cooperative Principles

The 75% threshold is not arbitrary—it is rooted in the International Cooperative Alliance’s 7 Cooperative Principles, which promote unity while embracing diversity. Decisions such as a boycott, which have far-reaching implications, should reflect a broad consensus rather than a slim majority. By preserving the 75% threshold, we ensure that boycotts genuinely represent the collective will of the membership and align with the Coop’s core values, as demonstrated by our 50-year legacy of inclusivity, shared labor and cooperation.

The Risks of Reducing the Boycott Threshold

Since 1973, boycotts at the Coop have historically received overwhelming support, often near 100%, with none below 80%. This support has been essential to maintaining the cohesion and sustainability of the Coop. Lowering the threshold would undermine this tradition and could result in:

- Divisiveness and distrust among members
- Member departures

- Fewer new members joining
- Financial instability
- Higher prices
- Staff layoffs

For more info on these risks, see our previous Coordinators' Corner [here](#).

Simple Majorities, Super Majorities and Coop Democracy

A simple majority vote for boycotts risks allowing the views of a narrow majority to override the concerns of a substantial minority, eroding the sense of belonging and mutual respect that defines our Coop. Divisive boycotts will alienate many members, causing thousands to feel unrepresented or unwelcome, potentially leading to significant departures.

In addition, requiring a 75% supermajority to approve a boycott is not anti-democratic; democracies often use supermajorities when unity, inclusivity and long-term stability are prioritized, particularly in situations where divisive outcomes could jeopardize the integrity of the institution. By requiring broader consensus for boycotts, the Coop avoids division, polarization and instability, safeguarding its core principles and sustainability, while a simple majority risks alienating members and weakening the community.

The Role of Politics at the Coop

Our shared labor and cooperative culture reflect the Coop's approach to political stances. While broader political considerations and boycotts are a part of the Coop's history, moving forward with a boycott without near unanimous support threatens to erode what unites us: the shared efforts of running a successful, welcoming and sustainable cooperative. By retaining a high threshold for boycotts, we prioritize the principles that bring us together.

Protecting the Coop's Future

The Coop's success is built on its shared labor model and ability to serve a diverse community. Lowering the 75% boycott threshold to a simple majority undermines our Coop.

We urge all members to act to protect our Coop:

- Attend General Meetings to voice your concerns.
- Vote against lowering the boycott threshold and related governance changes.
- Engage in respectful dialogue with fellow members about these issues.
- Write to the *Gazette* to share your perspective.

MEMBER SUBMISSION: TRASH TO TREASURE: COOP WASTE INSPIRES ARCHITECTURAL STUDENTS' CREATIONS

January 28, 2025



By Tim Shields

January 28, 2025



In November 2024, the bustling basement of the Park Slope Food Coop became an unlikely muse for creativity. Twelve first-year architecture students from Pratt Institute descended on the Coop, but not for groceries—they were there to collect stacks of discarded cardboard and onion bags for an ambitious final project.

Under the guidance of PSFC member and sustainability architect and educator, In Cho, the students were tasked with transforming recyclable materials into prosthetic devices capable of supporting the human body in motion. The project wasn't just about sustainability; it was a challenge to reimagine the potential of humble packaging waste as structural, weight-bearing objects.

Joseph Gordon, a receiving coordinator, played a key role by carefully stockpiling materials for the students. The Pratt group marveled at the Coop's behind-the-scenes operations, particularly the sheer volume of packaging involved in food distribution.

The students' designs culminated in innovative prosthetic devices that supported

two-person interdependent movements, blending engineering, architecture, and sustainability. The result? An experiment that turned waste into art, function and inspiration.

“It’s amazing how these everyday materials challenged us,” said one student. “We learned to see them not as trash but as opportunities for design.”



Students showcase one of their creations. Photos by In Cho.

This collaboration showcased the creativity of Pratt’s budding architects while highlighting the importance of sustainable practices and rethinking waste as a resource. Big thanks to PSFC Receiving Coordinators Joseph Gordon, Marvin Pique and Dominique Esser, and fellow guests, who attended the final presentation, inspiring the next generation of architects.

Tim is a longtime Coop member who enjoys his 5:30 a.m. lifting shift at the top of the belt.

MEMBER SUBMISSION: WHY THE COOP'S FISCAL YEAR ENDS AT THE BEGINNING

January 28, 2025



By Scott Middleton

January 28, 2025

It's Jan. 31, do you know where your receipts are?



Most of the time, the year starts on January 1. The Romans concocted a calendar year that we all find good enough for most applications: resolutions, the Academy Awards, novelty New Year's glasses. For certain organizations, though, the *fiscal* year ends on a familiar quarterly date: March 31, June 30 or Sept. 30. The Coop, ever the outlier, eschews these options and closes its books on a seemingly unusual date: the Sunday closest to Jan. 31 (e.g., Feb. 2, 2025). What's the deal?

Come to think of it, why does society need this concept at all? As it turns out, the choice of a fiscal year (FY) usually reflects some seasonality to a business's affairs. The goal is often to avoid major planning, budgeting, or bookkeeping efforts during a busy season, and instead take advantage of a lull or obvious stopping point. Many universities, for example, align their FYs with the academic calendar and cap the year in the slower summer season. Many retailers, on the other hand, close their FYs after the end of the busy holiday shopping season. In this regard, ending the FY in January is one of the few things uniting the Park Slope Food Coop with Kohl's, Walmart and

other corporate behemoths.



PHOTO: JOHN MIDGLEY



PHOTO: JOHN MIDDLEY



PHOTO: JOHN MIDGLEY



PHOTO: JOHN MIDGLEY

Members conducting inventory

In the case of the Coop, our FY is closely tied to the annual inventory of the year's leftovers [public service announcement: the Coop is closing at 1:00 p.m. on February 2 in observance of this yearly ritual]. According to General Manager Joe Holtz, if the Coop were to end the year on December 31 like a typical American household, then we would have to take stock right on New Year's.

This would be a problem for at least three reasons. First, the annual inventory effort requires staff, but January 1 is one of five paid holidays available to Coop employees. Second, this work also involves significant member labor, but members might balk at making an extremely thorough accounting of crackers and vitamins on a day normally set aside for hangovers and quietude. Third, the New York State Cooperative Corporation Law requires outside accountants to monitor our inventorying process to verify this asset as they do for all other Coop assets. The accountants, too, would prefer not to do this on New Year's Day.

Beyond the annual inventory, an added benefit of the Coop's FY is that it moves our tax deadline beyond the normal April 15 filing date. As a result, accountants are much freer to work with us on auditing efforts. On similar grounds, the Coop moved its former FY end date from September to January because our CPA claimed that the annual audit ran into the next calendar year and caused him to lose other business.





PHOTO: JOHN MIDGLEY

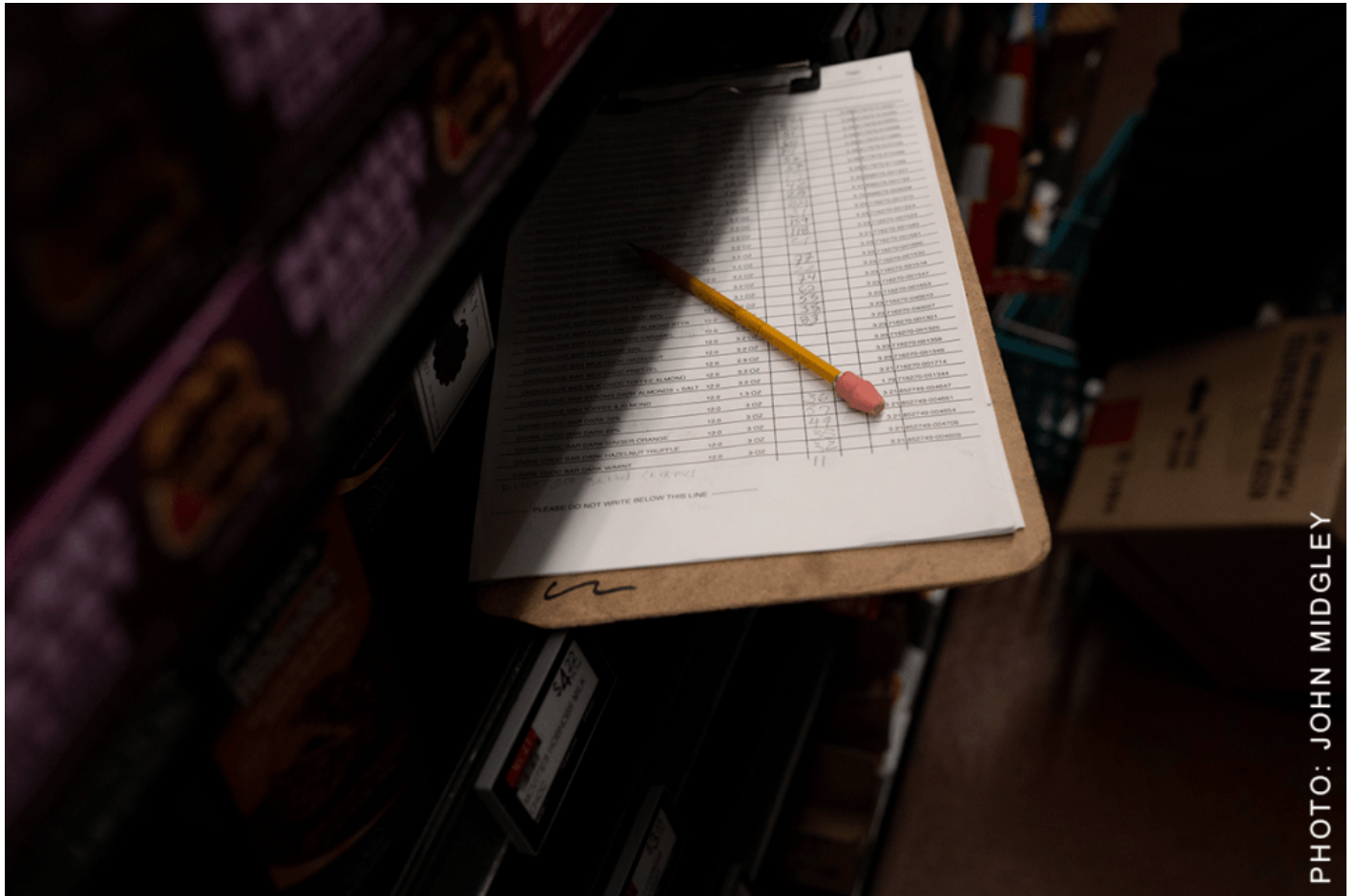


PHOTO: JOHN MIDDLEY

The result is effective from an accounting perspective, if a bit confusing for your average member-owner. Peculiarities result. Some years are 52 weeks long, others 53. Because FYs are always named for the calendar year in which they *end*, the Coop spends a full 11 months of the year one notch ahead of the calendar. Funky dates occur: The Monday after the Sunday closest to January 31 is the start date for changes to our opening hours and base mark-up percentage. Mark your fiscal calendars—the 25 percent markup is coming.

Odd but sensible, the Coop will dutifully observe its fiscal year as usual this month. Nearly, but not quite aligned with the lunar new year, this February 3 offers the opportunity for members to reflect on the inevitability of 2026 coming just around the corner, no matter how you account for it.

Scott is Executive Director of the Marine Park Alliance. A Coop member for 47 work cycles, he is a fan of calendars and timekeeping.

JANUARY 28, 2025

January 28, 2025

Letters to the Editor



JANUARY 28, 2025

The January 7 edition of "Coordinators' Corner: Our Coop at Risk" elicited a large and

emphatic response from Coop members. We received some 60 letters most of which took issue with the general coordinators' positions vis-à-vis the possibility of a boycott of products made in Israel and the possibility of holding hybrid general meetings. The letters below offer a representative sample of these voices. —Letters Editor

Shade Grown Coffee at the Coop—Good for Biodiversity and Yummy

Dear Editor:

I am grateful that the Coop now reliably sells really yummy shade grown coffee from No. Six Depot. The coffee plant evolved as a shade grown species, meaning that it grows in the understory, beneath a diversity of larger trees. More complex habitats, with differing tree heights and different tree species, foster bird diversity. Different bird species are often associated with feeding at different heights in the tree canopy. Shade grown coffee offers this type of habitat structure that fosters bird diversity. However, nowadays, much of the world's coffee has been bred to grow in full sun, and no longer participates in complex habitat structures, resulting in much lower levels of biodiversity when compared to shade grown coffee plantations.

Murray Lantner

The Right Choice

Dear Fellow Members:

I'm not sure who on the staff put Extra Peaceful Olive Oil on the shelf, but it was the right move at the right time. The Park Slope Food Coop is a gem, like all organizations that search for decent social alternatives rather than serve as a center for profit-mak-

ing or political posturing.

Such organizations face, from time to time, challenges that take one side or perturb its purpose. The label of the olive oil bottle includes the following: “Produced collaboratively by Arab and Jewish women in Israel.”

It is not just an alternative to BDS, it is an avoidance to taking a side in the conflict. It posits a sensible path. The world is awash in disappointing leadership. Netanyahu, Trump, Putin and Xi Jinping are not so much leaders as they are perpetrators of perturbation.

This particular product offers a different path—not taking a side in a battle but collaboratively seeking a peaceful solution. It’s as simple as that. It’s one of the reasons I love the Coop. The world is not working well right now. Some Arab and Jewish women in Israel are.

Rodger Parsons

Where Are the Standards in Letters to the Editor?

To the Editors:

I do not understand how it benefits the Coop for the *Gazette* to continuously publish letters from the same three or four people who make outlandish, unsubstantiated claims about other members’ alleged intentions and beliefs. I am getting tired of the right of myself and others to advocate for the boycott of a foreign government that is supported by our tax dollars, a government that consistently denies the human rights of the Palestinian people and wages war on civilians in nearby countries. It is outrageous that our right to free speech is equated with terrorism.

The obvious purpose of these letters is to create confusion and make slanderous statements. Their baseless and unproven accusations violate the *Gazette's* own Fairness Policy and Respect Policy.

It is not up for debate that we are entitled to our rights of freedom of speech and peaceful organizing.

I recommend that the *Gazette* staff review their own policies before they print any further letters, and not publish the same authors continuously.

*Thank you,
Amina Ali*

No to the Status Quo

My Fellow Coop Members,

I read the Jan. 7 letter from the General Coordinator team with great frustration and concern. Their panicked attempt to discourage the adoption of a hybrid meeting format read, to me, as an abdication of responsibility. To question, in the year 2025, how a hybrid meeting could possibly meet the needs of the membership is naïve. A group of competent people committed to a truly participatory democratic process would eagerly pursue a hybrid meeting structure rather than throwing up roadblocks under the guise of level-headed stewardship.

The General Coordinators seem to be far more interested in preserving the status quo than ensuring that the will of the membership is heard. If this letter is a true reflection of their leadership philosophy, I encourage them to resign.

Amanda Friedman

Coordinators' letter in Jan. 7 issue

To the Linewaiters' Gazette:

My initial reaction to the misleading, fear-mongering letter "Our Coop at Risk" was anger, but it was followed by deep sadness and a sense of betrayal.

I love the Coop because it represents a more just, more democratic way of doing business. The coordinators' letter undercuts those values. Instead of confronting injustice, it advocates acquiescence; instead of expanding democracy, it seeks to override, even silence, members' voices.

Let's not fail our cooperative values, and let's not fail the great moral test of our time.

*Cooperatively,
Linda Ewing*

The Hypocrisy of Our General Coordinators

Dear Editor:

I've been proud to be a member of the Coop, with all of its history and mission statement and principles of accessibility and community participation, as evidenced by ongoing masked shopping days, for one example. Which is why I am perplexed and, the longer this goes unaddressed, frustrated at the lack of movement on hybrid General Meetings. This has been something many members have supported and has been discussed since late summer last year—why the foot-dragging by leadership to vote on this, or at least continue the discussion? The longer this is ignored, the less it seems

an oversight and the more it seems intentional, which raises other questions.

On a related note, the General Coordinators are not helping their case with their letter criticizing members pushing for a boycott of Israeli products. It is disappointing and, frankly, bold for leadership to use their bully pulpit to assign blame to PSFC Members for Palestine for fracturing the community when leadership is equally responsible for that division. Protecting the status quo is a position, as inconvenient as it may be to acknowledge. It is illiberal to shut down discussion of this as divisive; good leadership fosters communication and looks for common ground. It doesn't vilify good-faith, principled positions.

In order to maintain the trust of membership, it behooves leadership to be responsive with members, be consistent in acting on our community values of accessibility and encouragement of member participation, and hold a vote on hybrid General Meetings. Enough with the games and passive-aggressive power plays. Even members we may disagree with deserve respect and to participate in Coop matters.

Maria Boncyk

Bring the Targeted Boycott of Israeli Goods to a Vote

Dear Editors,

Put up or shut up—bring the targeted boycott of Israeli goods to a vote. Thumbing the scale against the boycott like was so cravenly done in the Jan. 7 2025 *Linewaiters' Gazette* issue betrays a bad faith amongst the General Coordinator team on this matter. We are the Coop, bring this boycott to a vote and let it reflect the will of our body.

Damien Neva

In Defense of Democracy—a Messy and Vital Institution

Dear Fellow Members,

I am alarmed by the anti-cooperative recommendations paid staff are making to our supposedly member-led community.

I joined the Coop because I believe that communities are best served by institutions offering true democratic power and participation. As I've watched thousands of Palestinian civilians killed and starved in a war that I believe threatens the security of Israelis and Palestinians alike, I've pleaded with government officials to follow international law and restrict funding to a government committing war crimes. When it became clear they would not, I turned to local organizing. In an institution like the Coop, I have a voice in where my dollars are spent, and as the leading example of its kind, our collective action as a community has a broader impact.

During General Meetings, I've heard from other members who do not share my beliefs (and from many who do). I have no desire for a boycott to be implemented that does not reflect the support of our collective body. But I am alarmed by the suppressive behavior in the letter from the Coordinator Team, openly stalling a hybrid meeting model because PSFC Members for Palestine's "large email list would have an outsized impact with hybrid meetings in effect." All Coop members are on the email list inviting us to General Meetings; the many of us who have also opted to advocate for a boycott only represent an "outsized" impact to those who wish to minimize our perspective.

I am also appalled by the suggestion that we consider who the incoming presidential administration will "target" when setting Coop policy. In the coming months, independent democratic organizations like ours will be more important than ever. Protecting our messy but vital democratic process is paramount, regardless of whether a boycott

is passed.

In Cooperation,
Sofía Campoamor

Calling Out Fundamental Dishonesty

To the editor,

As the matter of BDS is being worked through by members, I am eager for discussion to continue in a democratic and open manner—whatever the outcome.

The piece recently published under the “Coordinators Corner” was not that. It was a fundamentally dishonest piece. It wasn’t meant to educate, inform or argue a point.

It was meant to mislead.

Hard conversations deserve honesty and bravery. These authors offered neither.

There is a real discussion to be had about supporting Israeli industry, but it cannot occur if honesty is optional.

Walter Kaplan

On Hybrid Meetings

Dear Editor:

I attended most of the monthly meetings when they were on Zoom—all about accessibility and nothing to do with BDS (whether it was a topic of discussion or not). Going to the park on a winter Tuesday night is a lot to ask! I have not attended since we stopped Zoom.

I'm disappointed to read our General Coordinators buying into specious paranoid anti-democratic arguments (Coordinators' Corner: Our Coop at Risk from Jan. 7, 2025).

A rare positive outcome from the pandemic was the updating of our online functions, in member voting and member services.

Lisa Guido

Singling Out Israeli Goods

Dear Coop Members:

We have every right to boycott a country based on civil rights issues, but why are we singling out just one? If we boycott products from one country over civil rights issues then we need to add several more to that list. We sell products from China, Sri Lanka and Egypt to name just a few that are accused of significant civil rights issues by the U.N. and Amnesty International, among other groups.

If the boycott passes, we will need to examine all products we sell that come from countries with poor civil rights records. Otherwise, we will be hypocrites by deeming that only one country is worthy of a boycott, while turning a blind eye to all others. If we choose to do this then it will prove that we are not as liberal, open-minded and progressive as we'd like to think we are.

Michael Katz

Response to Coordinators' Corner

Good morning,

I'm writing to express my strong discomfort with the recent Coordinators' Corner. The claims against the boycott campaign are deeply troubling. Not only are they fearmongering, but they also misrepresent the values and goals we are working hard to uphold at the Coop.

More unsettling, however, is the assertion that a hybrid meeting model would harm the Coop's culture and democratic process. This position ignores the public safety risks we continue to face, going into the sixth year of a deadly pandemic, amidst surges in other contagious illnesses like norovirus and flu A. As someone who has been immunocompromised for over a year, I can attest to how difficult it has been to adjust to this new reality, made even harder by ableist practices like the one proposed by the General Coordinator Team.

The GCs' position appears to be aimed at undermining a democratic process that should be open, transparent and inclusive of all voices. The boycott and hybrid proposals aren't about division; they are about making Coop processes more equitable and values-driven, and giving more members the opportunity to engage meaningfully. The GCs' attempt to shut down this dialogue with misinformation and overreach is unacceptable.

As a proud Coop member, community organizer and third-generation New Yorker, I hope to see the Coop grow in service of the values of democracy, social responsibility, care and cooperation that it claims to uphold.

Solidarity,

Solange Amor

A Grateful Response to Coop Coordinators

Fellow Members,

I want to thank the Coordinators for taking an unequivocal stand against BDS at the Coop. It is my sincerest hope that the letter in the Coordinators' Corner represents an inflection point in this protracted, divisive conflict at the Coop.

Thank you, Coordinators, for calling out the strategic plan of the PSFC Members for Palestine to use hybrid voting to rush through a series of votes that would result in a Coop-damaging boycott.

Due to the ever-shifting nature of antisemitism, Jews suffer from a timing problem: Before good people begin to take action against new manifestations of antisemitism, the Jewish community must absorb and withstand the brunt of harm. We see this in the NYC government report that detailed hate crimes against Jews accounting for 54% of all hate crimes in NYC in 2024. We see this in the replacement of the word "Jews" with "Zionists" in calls to cleanse our public spaces. And we see this in boycotts based on the relentless delegitimization of the one and only Jewish state, Israel.

But we are a resilient people—we love our traditions, each other, our Jewish homeland and our neighbors. That love and pride in our identity has enabled us to weather all that history has thrown at us since the beginnings of our story over 3,000 years ago in the land of Israel.

We survived many attempts to destroy us and delegitimize us in the past, and we will survive the efforts of the PSFC Members for Palestine, too.

So, thank you again to the good people of the Coop—my Jewish and non-Jewish neighbors alike—who are currently taking a moral stand against a movement driven by

hate that does no good for anyone.

Jonathan Aranov

Response to Coordinators' Corner

Dear Coop Members,

I was already disappointed that, for over one year, the General Coordinators obstructed our Coop's vote for a popular Hybrid meeting proposal—an issue of democracy. I was then disgusted by the GCs recent denouncement of the Hybrid proposal and PS-FC Members for Palestine in the last *Linewaiters' Gazette*. They based their arguments on the fiction that “thousands” of members might leave if a boycott passes. The bogeyman threat that members “might leave” is not a coherent rationale for the Coop Coordinators to undermine the will of our membership. They are deducing this from a handful of emails and letters sent by a vocal minority of members.

While they offer no concrete evidence, here's some data that we do have: PSFC Members for Palestine is the largest campaign of Coop members in the Coop's fifty-year history; its petition has over 3,000 signatories. The candidates it endorsed for the Board of Directors won with more votes than any candidates in Coop history. The board candidates who ran against the boycott—both lost with the most “no” votes ever received by board candidates in any Coop election. If there are Coop members who are against the principles of our Coop's democracy, and would leave based on a strong majority of membership voting on any proposal, then they should not be Coop members: They don't believe in the values stated in our membership manual, namely, the Second Principle of Cooperation—Democratic Member Control. Let actually-cooperative members take their place.

In Cooperation,

Sophie Glickman

Is the PSFC Any Better Than Costco?

Fellow Members,

I was really troubled by the latest “Coordinators’ Corner.” Its attack on PSFC Members for Palestine was disingenuous and manipulative.

One would hope that the Coop would put its considerable talents to designing and implementing a decision-making process grounded in a thoughtful and safe consideration of a boycott. Unfortunately, the opposite has been true; the Coop leadership has worked at every turn to prevent such a process from happening.

One thing I find particularly reprehensible is their repetition (without repudiating it) of the ludicrous slur that PFSC Members for Palestine, many of whom are Jewish, are anti-Semitic. By repeating the slur without repudiating it, the coordinators give it force while pretending it’s not coming from them.

I have felt for a long time that the coordinators, while arguing that the discussion would tear apart the Coop, have in fact been supporting the Israeli occupation.

In the face of 14 months of incessant bombing of hospitals, schools, apartment buildings, of daily images of children killed and neighborhoods in rubble, of unspeakable horrors in the news every day, the coordinators have not even hinted that they might be troubled by the ongoing slaughter and the clear intention—voiced by so many of Israel’s leadership—to completely destroy Palestinian society in Gaza and the West Bank.

The Coop was founded in the 1970s on principles of community built on cooperation,

participation, and democracy as an alternative to the corporate food system which was symptomatic of so much that was wrong with our society. If 50 years later, we can't even discuss and vote on how to apply those principles because it might affect the bottom line, what are we?

Just a buyers' club really. Costco with a veneer of environmentalism.

Is that what we want to be?

John Gordon

Virtue Signaling

To the Editor,

Given the editors' alleged principles, I was shocked (not for the first time) that they would publish a letter including the statement: "I refuse to support a genocide and the occupation of stolen lands" (Jan. 7, 2025 edition). This is an unacceptable, unsubstantiated reduction of one of the most complex international conflicts to a simplistic libel, one that has incited anti-Semitic hatred and violence around the world. It's but another example of the virtue-signaling that has dominated the Coop's culture since 2009, with no guardrails against vilification of a state fighting an unquestionable existential battle.

Israel has enough enemies, including Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, Iraq, Syria and the Houthis (did I leave anyone out?), without the Coop joining the destructive "non-violent" efforts of the BDS movement to delegitimize Israel. Boycotting the few Israeli products carried at the Coop will make absolutely no difference to the outcome of this conflict but members are free to make their own decisions. The fact that it's repeatedly been made clear how offensive this movement is to many Coop members seems to

have no impact on the would-be Hamas-supporting members who wish for the destruction of the one and only Jewish majority state in the world.

Sylvia Lowenthal

Why a Boycott

Dear Gazette:

I'm a Coop member and I write this message to say that our Coop is not at risk. It is misleading to use those words to incite hate against BDS. Boycott is our peaceful way to stop arming the killing machine. I was shot with two dum dum bullets by an Israeli sniper with American guns in 2002. Dumdums are bullets that explode inside the body and leave huge damage. I'm still in pain. Please help us by stopping to fund the army that kills my people.

*Warmest,
Khaled Jarrar*

BDS & Israeli products

To the editors:

I love the PSFC to which I have belonged for nearly 50 years, like Joe Holtz. I would never wish to do anything that might jeopardize the health and cooperative wealth of the Coop. BDS is a legitimate political tactic and hence it can be legitimately proposed to a cooperative organization like the Coop. The Coop might vote and once the vote is completed it might be announced what the vote was. The Coop members

might wish to impose upon us at that time a decision about whether or not we wish to purchase products from Israel. Until such time, each shopper is welcome to pursue their own boycott, or not. If sales of Israeli products plummet, then that is also a successful way to create a boycott. Each one of us, in the end, must decide about what we feel about what the U.S. is fueling in Gaza—the destruction of its population with an intent to make the Gaza strip unlivable for the current population—if this not genocide, then, it is, at very least, ethnic cleansing. I cannot imagine that most of us wish to support the targeting of a civilian population, children and noncombatants, and destruction of the health care system and basic sanitation, the targeting of doctors and journalists and children. Our options for effective action are severely limited. Nevertheless, it feels imperative for each one of us to familiarize ourselves with the bombardment of the Gaza strip and to decide how we might wish to respond.

*Sincerely,
Karen Malpede*

A Demand for Transparency

Dear Editor:

I write to understand more about the Coordinators and who they are. Is a list of the current Coordinators available on the Coop website?

If not, such information should be made available and easily accessible to the members, particularly if such Coordinators use their positions of power and influence to promote anti-democratic processes within the Coop and sabotage proposed reforms like a hybrid general meeting structure (see the latest Coordinator's Corner, which is a shameful and embarrassing use of this platform).

If the Coordinators wish to make their opinions known, they should make their faces

known. Say it with your full chest.

Signed,

Christopher Pepe

Editor's Note: Names and photos of general coordinators at the Coop are readily available—and long have been—on a poster in the entrance lobby and on the second floor.

Hybrid Meetings Are Long Overdue

Dear fellow Coop members,

Over the years, I've convinced friends to join the Coop, arguing that it represents a community-led space that resists the otherwise impersonal, inaccessible, top-down structures we encounter in our everyday lives. While I still believe this, I am disappointed by the bad-faith opposition to a shift that would make our Coop vastly more inclusive and democratic: making all General Meetings hybrid. It is even more appalling that some insist on suppressing the membership's democratic workings to tip the scales on one potential future vote, and are willing to accuse fellow members of being dishonest about their legitimate accessibility concerns in the process.

I joined the Coop in 2019 but couldn't attend a GM until the meetings went remote in 2020; my pre-COVID work schedule and commute time to the Picnic House had made it impossible before. Now that we've returned to in-person-only meetings, vital conversations and votes about the future of this place are once again left to a very small minority of members. People who do not have childcare access; whose work schedules are unpredictable; who can't risk another COVID infection; or who face barriers traveling to the Picnic House (among so many other groups) are left without a say in Coop matters. I am still COVID-cautious, both for my own safety and that of others, and the current indoors, mask-optional GM setup asks me to compromise those concerns in or-

der to fully participate in the Coop.

If we really believe in an inclusive, member-led co-op model—or if we, as our mission statement says, “seek to maximize participation at every level, from policy making to running the store”—we will take this sensible step to make meetings and votes more accessible to all members by going hybrid.

Mai Schotz

We Need Ethical Leadership

Fellow Members,

The Coop has always been a community driven by principles of democracy and ethical actions. Boycotts are a cornerstone of free speech and democracy, and suppressing this form of expression undermines the democratic principles upon which the Coop was built. Embracing hybrid meetings upholds the Coop’s commitment to accessibility and transparency, ensuring every member can voice their perspective and contribute to decision-making. Expanding access strengthens, rather than divides, our collective interest in shaping the Coop’s future.

Lowering the vote threshold from 75% to 50% ensures that the Coop operates as a true democracy, where decisions reflect the will of the majority. A 50% threshold means every voice has equal weight in shaping our collective future, whereas a 75% threshold sets an unreasonably high bar and privileges the status quo over progress.

Claims that a boycott would financially ruin the Coop are rooted in fear, not fact. The Coop’s financial stability relies on our collective participation and shared commitment, not on passive avoidance of contentious issues. Would some members leave? Perhaps. But ethical leadership isn’t about placating everyone; it’s about doing what’s

right.

Legally, while anti-BDS legislation exists, it largely targets state entities and is often legally dubious. Numerous organizations across the U.S. have engaged in BDS campaigns without legal consequences. Framing a principled boycott as “anti-Semitic” conflates criticism of Israeli policies with prejudice against Jewish people—a fear mongering narrative that erases the diversity of Jewish voices supporting BDS.

This is about more than numbers of risk; it’s about who we are. Will we stand on the side of justice and dignity, or will we allow fear to paralyze us? A boycott of Israeli goods is not a threat to the Coop—it’s an opportunity to affirm our values and stand for justice.

Signed,
Leah Susman

Correction to Dec. General Meeting Report

Dear Editor:

I wanted to request a correction in the Dec. GM Report. Specifically, this paragraph:

“[Ann Herpel] also noted that the Agenda Committee had placed a notice about the election in the *Gazette*, on FoodCoop.com and on the Coop Corner bulletin board, as required.”

This entire paragraph is misleading and incorrect. The Agenda Committee did not place a notice in the *Gazette* until after the election. That’s why the election was unfair.

The post on foodcoop.com was not visible on the front page, and also, it was posted in 2021. Follow this link from The Internet Archive to see that it was originally posted in 2021. You can also have a look at the Food Coop website to confirm that there is no way for a member to find this post. Furthermore, while it's good to post openings in as many places as possible, according to our procedures it's not how members are to be notified. The notification is required in the *Linewaiters' Gazette*.

Members were also not notified of candidate openings at the General Meeting, which the Agenda Committee claimed several times. If you review the meeting minutes, you can see that the announcement for other committee elections were noted, but not that of the Agenda Committee.

Lastly, the post on the Coop Corner bulletin board also happened after the election.

Thank you.

Warmly,
Keyjan Vafai

Emotional Blackmail in the Linewaiters' Gazette

Dear Members:

Reading the latest *Linewaiters' Gazette*, I was distressed to see the General Coordinator Team put such a heavy-handed thumb on the scale in the ongoing debate about BDS at the Coop. And I find the emotional blackmail of unwarranted claims that this debate might destroy the Coop particularly reprehensible. Please stop!

Robert Rosen

In the Corner for the Coordinators' Corner

Dear Membership,

We, the undersigned, thank the General Coordinators for taking a principled stand against the campaign to have PSFC boycott Israeli goods. The GC's have correctly identified the financial and legal dangers associated with this destructive campaign.

Aaron Miller

Alan Brown

Alan Salzberg

Amy Potter

Anita Aboulafia

Arkadiy and Aleksandra Malamud

Avishay Mazor

Baila Olidort

Barbara Mazor

Batya Lerner

Bonnie Loewenstein

Bozhena Vistman

Bruno Grandsard

Carina Hueber

Carol Wiener

Catherine Weinstock

Chaim and Shula Scharf

Christina Gantcher

Constantine Kaniklidis

Corrine Lang

Dave Marcus

Diana Maislen

Eddie D.

Elizabeth King

Ellen Simon

Eric E.

Erik Diamond

Fran Hawthorne

Fran Saunders

Frances Weiner

Frumie Lev

Frumie Lichtenstien

Gerald Weider

H. Schweitzer

Hannah Lieberman

Harry Schweitzer

Harvey Lang

Jamie Alexander

Jamie Alexander Principe

Jena Goldman

Jesse Rosenfeld

Jill Levy

Jonathan Hirsh

Jonathan Lief

Jonathan Tobias

Josh Levy

Josh Suskewicz

Judith Foster

Karen Shaw

Larisa Fomovsky

Lauren Rosenblum

Linda Marsanico

Linda Wong

Liora Cobin

Lorin Robyn Goldhirsh

Madeleine Nash

Malcolm Varon

Malkah Spitalny and husband

Maor X.

Marjorie Ordene

Meg Robertson

Mike Gantcher

Mindy Werner

Mirele Rosenberger

Murray Lantner

Naomi Bernstein

Neal Kantor

Noah P.

Nogah Rotstein

Nona Aguilar

Norm Green

Olivia Hughes

Perry Swergold

Ramon Maislen

Rebecca S.

Roberta Arnold

Rodger Parsons

Rosalie Weider

Sarah Eisinger

Sarede Switzer

Saul Raw

Sondra Shaievitz

Steven Berke

Susan Miller and husband

Sylvia Lowenthal

Tali Rasis

Tim Rohde

Yuval Inselberg

Zachary Konigsberg

Zara W.

SQUARE DANCE!

January 28, 2025

January 28, 2025

Come out and square dance at the ShapeShifter Lab on February 15! Bring friends and family and learn how to do-si-do, “rip and snort” and more. Alex “Sargent See-doo” Udis and Emily Hosmer-Dillard will call and teach all dances.



PSFC SQUARE DANCE

February 15, 2025

6:30- 8:30pm

ShapeShifter Lab

FREE!

All ages welcome!

Every dance will be taught and beginner-friendly.

No experience or partner necessary.

Refreshments and light bites available



Dance to the tunes of award-winning old-time and bluegrass string band musicians Jennifer Wilkin, Andrea Asprelli, Eli Hetko, A'yen Tran, Sarah Alden, Dave Speranza, Joe Bass, James Shipp, Jean Rohe, Krissie Nagy and friends.

Every dance will be taught and beginner-friendly. No experience or partner necessary.

- **FREE!**
- **Feb. 15, 2025**
- **Music 7-8:30 p.m.**
- **All ages** welcome; children under 16 must bring a guardian
- Refreshments and light bites available for purchase

This event is brought to you by the PSFC Fun Committee with ShapeShifterPlus.

RSVP on Eventbrite

Facebook invitation

FILM NIGHT: TIME Y2K

January 28, 2025



By Jennifer Miller and Gabriel Rhodes

January 28, 2025



HBO ORIGINAL

TIME BOMB
424

THE END OF THE WORLD
AS WE KNEW IT

NEW DOCUMENTARY
STREAMING DEC 30

max

As the clock counted down to the 21st century, the world faced a potential technological disaster: a bug that could cause computers to misinterpret the year 2000 as 1900. Crafted entirely from archival footage and featuring first-hand accounts from computer experts, survivalists, scholars, militia groups, conservative Christians and pop icons, *Time Bomb Y2K* is a prescient and often humorous tale about the power and vulnerabilities of technology.

This documentary will be screened by Zoom on **Thursday, Feb. 6th, at 7 p.m.** Editor Katyann Gonzalez and producer Peter Nauffts, both Coop members, will be present for a Q&A after the screening.

Katyann Gonzalez is a film editor and assistant editor working across documentary and narrative films. Her work has screened at international film festivals including Sundance, New York Film Festival and Berlinale as well as on major streaming platforms like HBO and Netflix. She is currently working on a docuseries about the Alabama Crimson Tide football team for Fox.

Peter Nauffts is a New York-based archival researcher and producer. He has conducted archival research on shows for Apple, ESPN, HBO and PBS. He is currently working on a documentary about Sun Ra for Firelight Films.

JOIN VIA ZOOM MEETING:

- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86444661891>
- Meeting ID: 864 4466 1891

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

Jennifer Miller and Gabriel Rhodes live in Brooklyn and have been Coop members for

20 years plus.

Editor's note: This film was initially supposed to be screened in November but we moved to February.

CROSSWORD: THIS

January 28, 2025



MEMBER SUBMISSION: CASE FOR THE LINEWAITERS' GAZETTE AS DIGITAL KNOWLEDGE BASE

January 28, 2025



By Tim Hospodar, Member of PSFC Board of Directors

January 28, 2025

During our Coop's December 2024 General Meeting, a member interrupted the proceedings with a point of information in order to reference the *PSFC Guide to the General and Annual Meeting*. They drew our attention to Committee Election Procedures in Section VIII. This section's item A, about candidate eligibility, includes the instruction for all Coop Committees to announce openings in the *Linewaiters' Gazette*. Only minutes prior to this interruption, I was speaking to the assembled members about an election in October, at which, as a present member serving on the Board of Directors, I abstained from voting. The lack of sufficient information I cited resulted from debate at the October GM regarding the election's announcement in the Gazette.



Image of a screenshot showing Instagram @foodcoop account's post driving traffic to Linewaiters' Gazette with a visualization of the Agenda Committee's call for nominations, 06 November 2024, credit: author

Performing due diligence during a meeting, on an iPhone 15, isn't ideal. Do you use the Gazette's Table of Contents—i.e., the Committee Info section? Do you go post to post, using the left/right buttons at the bottom of the page? Do you leverage the tags

hiding at the bottom of each post in a subtle, desaturated color—e.g., #2024-11-05—which collates all posts for said issue? And when you don't find what you are looking for, should you conclude it was deleted, hard-to-find, unprinted or never submitted?

Not finding the information you need in Instagram; not finding emails or texts or mail from our Coop; finding it tacked to the Coop Corner; and finding it on the Coop website are all moot points in consideration that the Election Procedures single out the *Gazette* as a single source of truth unless we introduce a debate about the temporal qualities of all these channels. And it's worth noting that the *Guide to Meetings* was published in 2011 with 2016 amendments—before the pandemic accelerated the digitization of the *Gazette*—when the printed resource was truly a paper trail. Recent discussions at GMs about the *Gazette* returning to paper seem timely!



Image of a photograph depicting an infographic hanging in the produce section at the PSFC that illustrates the various sweet potatoes known to be carried at the Food Coop. 23 January 2023, credit: author

I'm not submitting an opinion against printed materials. Instead, I want to promote the *Gazette* expanding as a digital knowledge base boasting domain expertise and transparency. The fifth principle of cooperation's focus on education can be interpreted as a reminder that knowledge sharing is a critical element of community. And a knowledge base enables our sharing. Sharing is more than workshops upstairs or on Zoom. Where's the playbook for a successful second location; how do we offboard executive decision-makers; can we inform new members what is an "end-cap" and

which ones are dedicated to new products, fancy products, or magically discounted products? Why do some bananas go from green to black and what's with all these potatoes? It is not useful to trap this info in signs and various digital channels—some of which expire on your phone after 24 hours. While it is important to meet members where they are—or where their eyes fall—we also need a persistent, digital library.

When not serving the Food Coop, Hospodar can be found wearing a Computer Scientist hat—fixated on information management and process improvements.