

## DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING: BDS TENSIONS FLARE AGAIN

December 30, 2025

# spin the meeting dial



ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SAVAGE

December 30, 2025

*By Kayla Levy*

During the final General Meeting of 2025, held on December 2 at the Prospect Park

Picnic House, tensions over a proposed boycott of Israeli goods, which have simmered all year, burst into the open again.

As members filed into the rows of white folding chairs, Jan Clausen, a writer and Coop member since the 1970s, stood in the center aisle handing out copies of “The Olive Press,” a zine published by Park Slope Food Coop Members for Palestine. Shortly before 7 p.m., General Manager Joseph Szladek approached and asked her to stop.

“Members aren’t allowed to pamphlet while someone is shopping for milk, and being at the General Meeting is akin to that,” Szladek said in a follow-up interview, adding that the Coop would always allow members to distribute materials in a public space, like the Union Street sidewalk.

Clausen responded that for decades there was a literature table at the general meetings, where members handed out all sorts of pamphlets, including political materials. “I’ve seen a lot of rules made up to suppress speech,” she said.

This exchange foreshadowed much of what came next: an update from the Chair Committee on a long-debated proposal for hybrid meetings, a communications proposal related to the staff’s ability to send “do-not-reply” emails, and, in less contentious news, a rundown on Thanksgiving shopping.

## **OPEN FORUM LEADS TO BOYCOTT DEBATE, AGAIN**

The majority of the nine members who took to the floor during the open forum discussed issues related to the boycott debate. Meeting chair Dan Hegwood read aloud a letter from Noah Potter voicing dissatisfaction with the Board of Directors, who broke with typical protocol and authorized a referendum vote on hybrid meetings at the April GM.

While ostensibly about virtual attendance at general meetings, the issue of hybrid voting has become tied up in the fight over the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions move-

ment (BDS). In his letter, Potter said the Board's decision to proceed with the vote marked "the end of member governance of the Coop."

Opponents of BDS say the push for hybrid meetings actually represents an effort by BDS supporters to get their proposal approved by the Coop, since in-person votes on the matter have been canceled. They say in a hybrid meeting, a BDS vote is more likely to pass.

At the June meeting, it was announced that hybrid voting was supported by 66.43 percent of members in a referendum, which was not enough for the 66.67 percent needed for a bylaw amendment.

The Board then independently decided to authorize hybrid meetings in September.

Later, Barbara Mazor, a Coop member since 1988, asked four board members that she termed "activists"—who have shown support for BDS or the April motion—if they would adhere to hypothetical future votes where Coop membership rejected BDS. She and Board Member Keyian Vafai had a muffled exchange, after which Mazor said, "I'll take that as a no."

Vafai, however, spoke up five minutes later: "Yes, I absolutely believe in voting with the membership." Board members Tess Brown-Lavoie, Tim Hospodar and Brandon West, who Mazor also called out by name, did not comment.

Two members made non-BDS-related comments. Hospodar raised concerns with an amendment passed in August affirming that the Coop Treasurer must be an upper-level management staff person, and former General Manager Joe Holtz asked attendees to support a developing co-op in Brazil, which he previously wrote about in the *Line-waiters' Gazette*.

## **THE NUMBERS: COOP FINANCES & THANKSGIVING SALES**

The General Coordinators' reports largely centered on numbers—including the standard update on the financial health of the Coop from General Manager and Treasurer Szladdek, and a seasonal report on Thanksgiving sales.

Year-to-date sales through November 9 were up 8.5 percent over the previous year, but the cost of goods and running the Coop were, too, meaning the business had a \$372,000 deficit, Szladdek said. The General Manager reassured members that sales usually pick up during the fall and winter and he expects the Coop to come "close" to breaking even by year's end.

Szladdek attributed some of this year's deficit to costly one-off expenses and rising healthcare expenses for personnel, as seen nationally. He said the Coop is seriously considering how to balance rising healthcare costs while maintaining a strong staff plan, and noted in follow-ups that the current self-insured, premium-free plan has saved the Coop "a tremendous amount of money over the years."

Next, Elinoar Astrinsky, a General Coordinator since 2009, detailed Thanksgiving sales—a staggering volume of food totaling more than a Boeing 787's cargo load. Shoppers bought 38,000 pounds of produce, 7,760 pounds of cheese (cheddar was the most popular) and plenty of walnuts (about 1,000 pounds), she said.

Astrinsky concluded with a shout-out to staff for keeping the store well-stocked and relatively line-free, which elicited applause from the audience. Meeting chair Hegwood, who repeatedly asked attendees to hold their applause during politically fraught moments, joked that applause was only appropriate "when we're having Thanksgiving sales numbers."

## **AN UPDATE ON HYBRID MEETINGS**

Following a brief committee update from the International Trade Education Squad about the Trump Administration's trade policy (which, in summary, remains volatile but still impacts the Coop far less than other grocers thanks to our focus on local

goods), the Chair Committee issued a progress update on hybrid meetings.

After the Chair Committee solicited support for the transition to hybrid meetings, nine people expressed interest, seven responded to an outreach email and six were selected for the role, explained Committee member Josef Szende. The positions are short-term and will be evaluated for long-term participation, he added.

During a period for questions, Mazor took to the stage again to ask whether members will be able to comment on the Committee's eventual proposal, expressing specific concerns about how the meetings will be kept civilized. Szende responded that he couldn't speak to specifics (the Committee hasn't yet met), but that the transition will be collaborative.

"This is not a consulting firm delivering a product. This is a community. We're working together and we need to dialogue," he said "It's going to be a process and it's definitely not going to be perfect."

## **TWO ELECTIONS & A PROPOSAL ABOUT ELECTIONS—PLUS A DISCUSSION ABOUT RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION**

Chair Hegwood opened the GM agenda by urging members to be "civil and generous," a request that was mostly respected during the 90-minute session covering two proposals and votes.

The meeting opened with member Michael Freedman-Schnapp, who brought his earlier proposal for a member-led Financial Advisory Committee to a vote. Most members expressed support for the Committee, especially since Freedman-Schnapp added a revision in response to feedback that reserves two of the seven seats for members without financial expertise.

"I don't have a lot of expertise, but I have thoughts about what are socially responsible investments that I would want the Coop to make," said Alyce Barr, a member of nearly 50 years, explaining that a Committee with a mix of backgrounds would foster

cooperation. The vote passed 111 to 11.

Next came a hotly debated agenda item from Coop member Rosa Palermo, who proposed reserving the “do-not-reply” email—used for one-way staff communications—for operational updates and announcements, not personal opinions or advocacy. Her proposal came in response to a controversial message that Holtz sent from the “do-not-reply” email weeks before the Board of Directors Election (and his retirement).

In the message that staff said was sent to 34,000 active and inactive members, Holtz said that he was speaking only for himself, but encouraged all recipients to vote against Dan Kaminsky and Taylor Pate—pro-BDS candidates endorsed by PSFC Members for Palestine. Kaminsky and Pate both lost the election.

In her opening statement, Palermo mentioned the email, saying that it made her think about how “our communication tools support equal member voice and align with our cooperative values.” However, she maintained that the proposal was about communication structures, not specific political views, and never named Holtz explicitly.

This caused confusion for at least one member, who took to the mic to ask for clarification on the email, but most speakers understood its subtext, and many expressed support for the proposal, citing frustration with Holtz’s message.

However, the response wasn’t all positive. One member questioned whether the proposal even merited consideration, noting he was sure “Joe was very sorry,” which drew applause that the chair quickly curtailed. Later, while Palermo discussed how communication can be used to strengthen cooperativism and increase access, an audience member shouted, “why the lies” prompting the chair to intervene again and remind members not to shout out.

The discussion concluded with a member named John, who said he was present in support of Palermo, emphasizing that there are already participatory channels where

members can share personal viewpoints, namely, the GM or *Gazette*.

Next, the evening saw two elections: Members re-elected Jacob Heyman-Kantor (120-5) and elected Josh Geller (93-31) to serve on the Hearing Officer Committee (HOC), following brief presentations of their qualifications and a question-and-answer segment.

Directly following the HOC election, members George Sarah Olken and Sophia Li presented an aptly timed proposal on establishing an Election Committee to administer open elections on a consistent schedule. As it currently stands, committee elections are not held on a fixed schedule. Typically, when a committee has an open seat, sitting members solicit interest from Coop members and contenders are asked to make a case at the GM (or join in a less formal manner).

“Those elections work, in general, the way we just saw,” said Olken, referencing the HOC election. “It’s not exactly an election because we don’t know how many other people applied, it’s two people running for two positions, members often don’t know what the committee even does and then in almost all cases the nominees slip through.”

Olken and Li’s proposal, by contrast, presents a more thoughtful vision of open and participatory elections overseen by the Election Committee. Their plan centers on two meetings: first, a nomination GM where members can put themselves or others forward for open positions from the floor. Then, a vote in June, aligning with the Board of Directors Elections. This model closely mirrors that of the Brooklyn Public Library Union, where Olken is President.

Members queried and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of this proposal. While some appreciated how it could make elections more open, many raised concerns about practicalities, like how long and chaotic a nomination meeting could be, or how devoting two of ten annual GMs to elections could deter from other work members need to do.

Li and Olken waived most of their allotted wrap-up remark time to let others speak, and then gave a brief thank-you at the end. “This is exactly the conversation I think we need to have,” said Olken. “I am glad this proposal engendered this and I’m hopeful that by trying to change our systems we will figure out what exactly we want them to be.”

At the conclusion of the meeting, all board members voted in favor to accept the members’ advice on the Financial Advisory Committee and Hearing Officer Committee Elections held earlier in the evening.

---

## SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT: GOTHAM GREENS

December 30, 2025





December 30, 2025

*By Dan Bergsagel*

In July, the Gazette reported on the important role that one of our distributors, the worker-owned cooperative and Fair Trade advocates Equal Exchange, plays at the Coop.

This conversation with a like-minded distributor and our Coop buyers highlighted the stories of many Coop suppliers in our carefully curated supply chain. But it also underscored how most members don't know about these suppliers.

"I wish members knew more about what is going on behind the scenes at this lovely grocery store," said Britt Henriksson, one of the Coop's receiving coordinators.

This supplier spotlight aims to showcase where the Coop's food comes from: like-minded organizations that value workers' rights and sustainable, ethical practices, and produce healthy, delicious and fairly-priced products.



Gotham Greens is among the most local of the Coop's suppliers. The company grows leafy greens at farms in Gowanus (1 mile), Greenpoint (6 miles) and Jamaica (13 miles).

(Fun fact: the honor of the most local supplier appears to go to a beekeeper on Union Street, a block away, whose honey is sold at the Coop.)

Unlike a traditional farm, Gotham Greens grows lettuce in hydroponic, climate-controlled greenhouses that nourish plants with nutrient-rich water regardless of the season.

Gotham Greens utilizes regenerated former industrial buildings like the Greenpoint Wood Exchange and the Edward Langer Printing Company factory.

Hydroponics has historically struggled to shed its sci-fi connotations or—as the *New York Times* highlighted in a piece in 2011, when Gotham Greens' launched—its associ-

ation with illicit marijuana farming or a lack of flavor.

But Jodi Genshaft, a vice president at Gotham Greens, said the company has become a sought-after supplier to grocery stores and restaurants across the five boroughs “including Whole Foods Market, FreshDirect, Amazon Fresh, Wegmans, ShopRite, Union Market, and of course, Park Slope Food Coop!”



## FRESH AND LOCAL

The Coop strives to source food locally. This prioritizes fresh food and reduces carbon emissions associated with transporting the food.

At the Coop, “local” is defined as a one-day truck drive (approximately 500 miles). Transporting fresh lettuce from Gotham Greens’ first Greenpoint facility should take about 20 minutes (of course, depending on the traffic on the BQE).



“It’s pretty impressive that they grow within just a few miles of the Coop. You don’t get that pretty much anywhere,” said John Horsman, one of the produce buyers at the Coop.

The Coop has been buying from Gotham Greens since 2013. While Gotham Greens is certainly the closest “farm” to the Coop, it remains relatively small.

“Gotham Greens are basically salads in a clam shell. So they don’t factor against the cases upon cases of loose salad greens that we sell. I would say it is under five percent of the total leafy greens we sell,” Horsman said.

Freshness is at the core of Gotham Greens’ business model, whether selling to the Coop or anyone else. “We harvest in the morning and it’s in the store in the afternoon,” cofounder and CEO Viraj Puri told Fast Company back in 2011. “Literally, they get it the same day. And we can do that year-round.”

This shorter supply-chain also helps reduce food waste. Reducing the time in transportation can lead to significantly longer shelf lives for their products. “Our packaged salads typically offer three weeks of shelf life while lettuce from California and Arizona typically has less than a week before it goes out of date,” Genshaft said.

## GROWING CLIMATES

During warmer months, Gotham Greens lettuce is primarily competing with local loose salads from traditional organic farms in the Northeast, but during the colder seasons it becomes harder to source leafy greens locally.

Genshaft explained that “more than 90 percent of domestically grown leafy greens come from California and Arizona,” 2,600 miles away from the Coop.

Approximately one third of the packaged salad sold at the Coop in winter—including arugula, spinach and supergreens—come from Lancaster Farm Fresh in Pennsylvania

or Myer's Produce in Massachusetts, where greenhouses and polytunnels allow for lettuce to continue to be grown in winter.



This is true beyond leafy greens. “Most of the produce grown in the United States comes out of Yuma, Arizona and the Bakersfield area of California,” said Horsman. “It’s an ideal growing region, and it’s not easy to replicate the geography and climate. They have it down to a science out there with consistent near-perfect temperatures all year round.”

However, the remaining two-thirds of lettuce sold at the Coop—particularly the organic salad greens—is trucked in from these growing regions in the West. At the moment at the Coop, this includes some specific varieties, such as iceberg lettuce and romaine hearts. Gotham Greens provide crisp alternatives to iceberg lettuce grown much closer to home, such as their Greenhouse Crunch mix.

There are local farms, like Lady Moon, that geographically move by the growing sea-

son: “They grow out of Pennsylvania in the regular season, and then move down to Georgia and Florida in the winter months,” explained Horsman.

## HOLISTICALLY SUSTAINABLE

The Coop strives to source food not just locally, but also sustainably in the wider context. Sustainability is often evaluated using the triple-bottom-line principles of people, planet and profit.

From the people perspective, Gotham Greens is a local organization bringing employment to the neighborhoods where we live. Their community partnerships with organizations like Green Bronx Machine promote childhood education into healthier diets through donated seedlings, and they donate fresh produce to the well-established charity City Harvest, which distributes free food to food pantries and soup kitchens.

By making productive economic use of the roofs of existing underused industrial buildings—and adding additional functional space—Gotham Greens helps preserve urban landscapes, retaining character in communities.

From the profit perspective, Gotham Greens is a smartly run enterprise. Its product is available in stores far beyond the Coop, and its Gowanus facility, built on the roof of the Whole Foods Market development in 2013, is a long-term partnership. Its expansion from short-life span products like leafy greens into more shelf-stable offshoots like pesto or spinach dip (delicious and also available at the Coop) diversifies its business while still aligning with its core product: fresh leafy greens.

Unlike the Coop, Gotham Greens does not operate based on a worker-owner cooperative nonprofit model. It was founded as a public benefit corporation (PBC), “a for-profit company legally committed to creating a positive impact on society and the environment, alongside shareholder profits, by balancing stakeholder interests (shareholders, community, environment) and reporting on its social mission.” Genshaft said.





However, its recent collaboration with Sesame Workshop—which brought beloved characters like Elmo and Oscar the Grouch to its leafy green packets—was perhaps a triumph of both people and profit: bringing genuine enthusiasm to salad-shy young kids (this reporter’s toddler included) and the associated benefits of healthier diets. Genshaft reported that Gotham Greens “saw this partnership drive sales, brand awareness and education about ways to enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables at every age.”

## A MORE COMPLICATED ENVIRONMENTAL STORY?

The “planet” perspective initially seems straightforward. Aside from the clear reduction in transportation emissions from such local produce, Genshaft and Gotham Greens’ promotional materials highlight what they say are the benefits of the company’s urban hydroponic approaches:

- They use “up to 90 percent less water than traditional open-field farms” due to the contained hydroponics method and the filtering and recycling of water.
- They use “up to 97 percent less land than traditional farming.”
- They use natural pest control in their greenhouse environments instead of chemical pesticides.
- The facilities are energy-efficient and some of their energy supply is from renewable solar and wind electricity generation.

By continuing to use existing buildings and extending their life, Gotham Greens avoids demolition and construction of replacement structures, reducing carbon emissions and extending the utility of the resources and carbon emissions that went into the initial construction.

Gotham Greens is active in reducing waste in the food supply industry, and its Ugly Greens product—often on sale at the Coop—is an example of action on this topic. These are bags of leaves that are not up to the aesthetic standards shoppers are accustomed to because of pests or excessive light. But aside from cosmetic defects, these greens are good for eating.

It’s worth noting that it is not clear whether the carbon emissions of climate-controlled hydroponic growing are lower than those of traditional farming.

Climate-controlled greenhouses are energy intensive—how sustainable they are depends on whether the energy source is renewable or fossil. Gotham Greens relies on energy it purchases from the grid. This could mean that the carbon emissions from growing its greens are higher than those grown in a naturally warm and sunny climate.

Still, that does not take away from the many innovations of urban farming reflected in Gotham Green’s operation, which allow us to enjoy salads plucked from over our own heads that very day.



---

# WHAT THE COOP’S SUPPLEMENT AISLE TELLS US ABOUT HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRENDS

December 30, 2025



PHOTO BY AZIKIWE ABOAGYE

December 30, 2025

*By Zach Schiffman*

If you want to understand the American vitamins and supplements industry—its booms, busts, fads, fears and the quiet ways it reorganizes our anxieties—there may be no better vantage point than the Park Slope Food Coop’s own supplement aisle. And there may be no better guide than Jessa Fisher, who has been overseeing and ordering the Coop’s vitamins and supplements since 2016.

“I was a member and lived in Brooklyn for 10 years,” Fisher said from Rochester, N.Y., where she now lives. “And then once COVID hit, I left New York City, but I kept ordering the vitamins and supplements remotely.”





PHOTO BY AZIKIWE ABOAGYE



PHOTO BY AZIKIWE ABOAGYE



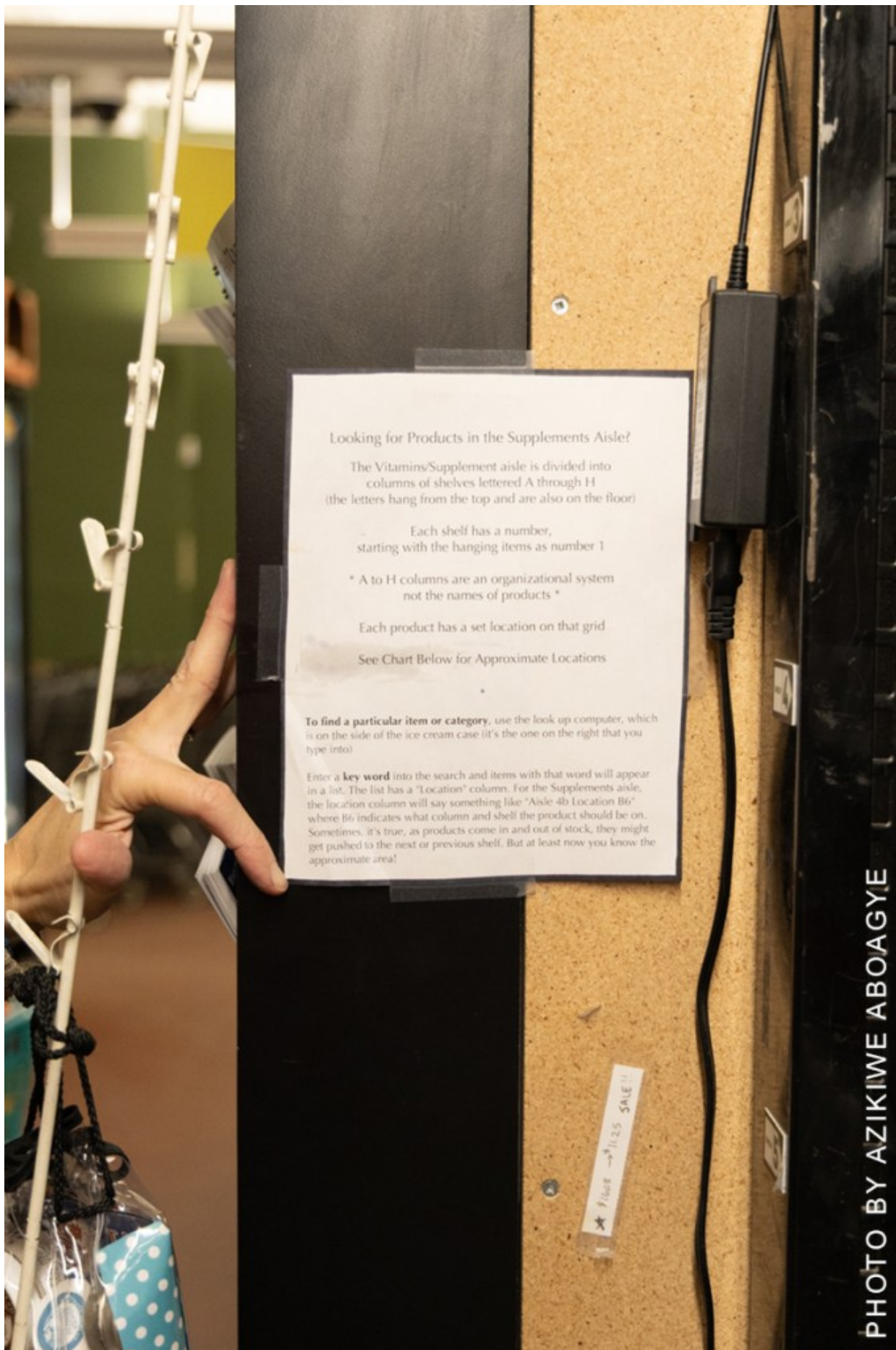


PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN

Fisher began her career at Willner Chemists, a store on Park Avenue in Manhattan that “only sold supplements and vitamins,” then worked at the herb shop Flower Power in the East Village.

At Willner, she helped people with their questions and their products. At Flower Power, she sold tinctures and herbs in a space where the whole point was explanation: *What is this? What does it do? Why would I take it?*

But the Coop is different. “We don’t do any of that at the Coop,” Fisher said. “All of it has to sell itself.” Other stores, she noted, “have displays, they’ll have information, they’ll have trainings, they’ll have all sorts of things. They’ll have samples.”



### Looking for Products in the Supplements Aisle?

The Vitamins/Supplement aisle is divided into columns of shelves lettered A through H (the letters hang from the top and are also on the floor)

Each shelf has a number, starting with the hanging items as number 1

\* A to H columns are an organizational system not the names of products \*

Each product has a set location on that grid

See Chart Below for Approximate Locations

\*

**To find a particular item or category,** use the look up computer, which is on the side of the ice cream case (it's the one on the right that you type into)

Enter a **key word** into the search and items with that word will appear in a list. The list has a "Location" column. For the Supplements aisle, the location column will say something like "Aisle 4b Location B6" where B6 indicates what column and shelf the product should be on. Sometimes, it's true, as products come in and out of stock, they might get pushed to the next or previous shelf. But at least now you know the approximate area!

PHOTO BY AZIKIWE ABOAGYE

But, Fisher said, “we don’t do any training or give out any information at the Coop, which is so crazy that it all just sells itself.”

Nationally, that’s where the industry has gone: away from hand-selling and toward self-directed consumer research. According to the Council for Responsible Nutrition, supplement use is at an all-time high, driven more by people reading articles and newsletters and watching TikToks than by staff in white coats behind a counter. If supplements once needed a person standing next to the shelf, now they mostly need a phone and a search bar. The Coop’s shelves—shrinking, expanding, rearranging, never quite containing what the membership suddenly wants—mirror those shifts.

When Fisher started, the aisle looked different.

“When I started, we had a really big presence with Solgar, and this up-and-coming company, Garden of Life,” she said, the latter of which exploded in popularity. “They were super popular, constantly coming out with so many new products. Then, at their height, they got bought out.”

Garden of Life was purchased by Nestlé in 2018. The arc she describes is now standard: small natural brand, explosive growth, then acquisition by a multinational and, at times, a more frustrating relationship on the purchasing end.





According to Grand View Research, the global dietary supplements market, now close to \$190 billion, is in exactly that phase of corporate consolidation. The aisle in the Coop feels those mergers as Fishers's reps and the minimums suddenly change, but it's the same story.

Present-day health trends are felt strongly in the health aisle. As Ozempic has surged in the last few years, the demand for supplements promising weight loss has waned. "When I first started, raspberry ketones were really popular," Fisher remembered. "Dr. Oz was touting it for weight loss—it was a big thing. And then probably people just realized, oh, this isn't working all that well."

(When Oz was nominated by President Trump to become head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, he was grilled in the U.S. Senate for his promotion of supplements as diet miracles.)

Right before Fisher left Brooklyn, CBD hit. "That was huge," she said. Getting CBD in-

to the Coop was a project in itself. “We were trying to figure out where the cabinet should go and then how to design the cabinet,” Fisher recalls. “And then because it had to be locked, there were tons of logistics with that.” It was, she said, “hot stuff.”

The more important long-term shift may be the rise of basics: melatonin, vitamin D, and magnesium. These are the things people talk about not as fads but as part of their daily lives: sleep, bones, stress.



PHOTO BY AZIKIWE ABOAGYE

National surveys, including a 2022 study in *JAMA*, show U.S. melatonin use has roughly quadrupled over the past decade, particularly among young adults and parents. At the Coop, Fisher has noticed the form-factor creep as well, as melatonin gummies have surged in popularity. The Coop has some gummies scattered throughout the vitamin, kids', and herb sections, but she's wary. "You don't get as much of the medicine in the gummy," she said. Vitamin D is everywhere too, but Fisher doesn't fall for the hype. "A lot of people say that you really need really high doses," she said. "I don't carry those, like 50,000 IUs." (IU is a measure of vitamin potency.) "I just stick with the 10,000 in our aisle."

According to the NIH Office of Dietary Supplements, vitamin D deficiency is widespread in the U.S., and supplement sales jumped after pandemic-era studies linked low vitamin D levels with worse health outcomes, especially in colder climates.

"Magnesium has also exploded," she said. "It is out of control. Before, all you could get was magnesium citrate, but now it's magnesium glycinate, magnesium taurate, magnesium fizz."

Nationally, magnesium has become one of the fastest-growing supplements in the country. According to the Council for Responsible Nutrition's 2023 survey, usage has risen sharply, with many Americans taking magnesium specifically for sleep and stress—exactly what TikTok videos and clinicians now recommend.

What looks like an overstuffed section at the Coop is just following the national boom. "Even though we have 10 trillion magnesiums, it's hard to cut any of them because they all sell so well," Fisher said.





Everyone also seems to be talking about protein. But the Coop tells a more local story.

“There’s been a backlash, too, because a story came out in the *New York Times* about how a lot of these protein powders have heavy metals in them,” Fisher said.

She was immediately alerted that one of the Coop’s products was cited in that story. “I took it off the shelf.” Another performance supplement, though, has clearly arrived.

“Creatine is pretty popular in the weightlifting world,” Fisher said. “I definitely have noticed a spike in that.” National sales data backs that up: creatine has quietly become a staple, driven by younger consumers who treat it as an everyday performance and recovery tool rather than a niche bodybuilder’s aid.

Just as Fisher rushes to add things to the aisle, she is also constantly evaluating what

should be cut.

“For the last five years, we could not keep enough elderberry in stock,” she says. “It is one of the herbs that has actually been proven to be antiviral.”

However, in the past year, Fisher has noticed elderberry sales waning as COVID immunity concerns have softened nationally. But space, not enthusiasm, is what kills most products.

“I just don’t have room to carry everything,” Fisher says. “I had to cut the tincture section, the essential oils, the flower essences and a bunch of homeopathic remedies.”

A lot of those items “sold only once a week—or once every two weeks,” she explains. “It really is based on sales volume.” Nationally, tinctures and essential oils peaked in the mid-2010s wellness boom and have since flattened, while mushrooms, minerals like magnesium and sleep aids have surged. The Coop’s aisle reflects the same transition—just with more members emailing about it.

“I have an attachment to every product I order, so it’s very hard for me to get rid of the products that don’t sell,” she said. “They’re all like my little babies.”

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

---

2026 COOP BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN

December 30, 2025



ILLUSTRATION BY EVA SCHICKER

December 30, 2025

Serving on the Coop's Board of Directors is a meaningful way to deepen your engagement with and service to your Coop. There is one open Board position to be elected in 2026 for a three-year term. Members are invited to nominate themselves.

Nominations are due on Sunday, March 1, 2026, at 5 p.m. Candidates will be elected at the 2026 Annual Meeting on June 30.

## **BOARD STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Park Slope Food Coop is governed by a Board of Directors composed of five members elected by Coop member-owners. All elected members serve three-year terms. In addition, the senior General Coordinator present at the General Meeting serves in an *ex officio* capacity.

### **BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Regularly attend monthly General Meetings, the Annual Meeting and any other meetings as necessary.
- Thoroughly review all meeting materials in advance to participate responsibly at General Meetings.
- Follow the Seven Principles of Cooperation, the Coop's mission statement, the Coop's bylaws and the Guide to the General and Annual Meeting.
- Uphold fiduciary duties on behalf of the Coop and its member-owners. Board directors have legal and ethical duties to:
  - Act carefully: Make thoughtful, informed decisions and exercise the same care and concern for board responsibilities as any prudent person would in managing their own affairs. Avoid actions that could reasonably jeopardize the Coop's financial stability or its ability to operate.
  - Act loyally: Place the interests of the Coop ahead of personal interests, disclose



all conflicts of interest and avoid using Board service as a means for personal or commercial gain.

- Act lawfully: Ensure the Coop complies with all applicable laws and regulations and doesn't engage in illegal or unauthorized activities. Carry out the Coop's mission in conjunction with its purposes as stated in the Coop's governing documents.
- Act prudently: Exercise reasonable business judgment in managing financial resources and investments.

*For more information about Coop governance, please see The GM and the Board of Directors and Amended Bylaws of Park Slope Food Coop.*

## **BOARD DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND MEETINGS**

The Board of Directors is the legally required decision-making body of the Park Slope Food Coop. The Board convenes monthly at the Coop's General Meeting, to which all members are invited. The GM is the portion of the Board of Directors meeting during which members meet to discuss and vote on agenda items to provide advice to the Board of Directors on those items.

The GM has been an integral part of the Coop's decision-making body since our inception. Members play an active role in decision-making by submitting agenda items, attending General Meetings, voting on proposals presented at the GM and electing the Board of Directors. Members' votes on proposals are considered advice to the Board. At the end of the General Meeting, the Board will either accept or reject the members' advice. The Board's role doesn't overshadow or replace the member initiative, discussion and advice expressed through voting, which are at the heart of the General Meeting.

If you have never attended a General Meeting and are interested in a Board position, we encourage you to attend the upcoming GMs on January 27 and February 24.

## **HOW TO APPLY:**

Submit a candidate statement of up to 750 words that includes your responses to the following questions. Your statement will be published in the *Linewaiters' Gazette*, posted in the Coop Corner and distributed to all member-owners.

1. What inspired you to consider serving on the Park Slope Food Coop Board of Directors?
2. Share any skills, interests and experience you would bring to the Board. Examples may be drawn from any personal, educational, work/professional or volunteer experience.
3. Describe your PSFC work slot experience briefly.
4. At the time of application, are you aware of any endorsement of your candidacy by any Coop member-run group, or do you expect to receive any endorsement or organized support from such a group, and have you actively participated in any Coop member-run group, including groups advocating for or against boycotts?
5. PSFC is "good food at an affordable price for working members through cooperation." What does that mean to you?

Send your candidate statement and photo to [gazettesubmissions@psfc.coop](mailto:gazettesubmissions@psfc.coop) or drop off your application at the Membership Office. Please include your name and member number. If submitting electronically, attach a Word document or paste your statement in the email body. Include a head-and-shoulders photo if available; otherwise, your member ID photo will be used.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDACY

1. Submit your statement and the optional photo by **Sunday, March 1, 2026, at 5 p.m.**
2. Attend the March 31, 2026, General Meeting, where you will introduce yourself and answer questions from members during the candidate presentation portion of the agenda.

## KEY DATES:

Candidate Applications Due: March 1, 2026

Candidate Presentation at GM: March 31, 2026

Election Period: June 1-28, 2026

Annual Meeting: June 30, 2026

---

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

December 30, 2025



December 30, 2025

Has the conflict over the Coop's possible involvement in a boycott of Israeli goods or related issues affected your experience as a Coop member?

Join two experienced mediators for a facilitated conversation. This will be open to any Coop member regardless of their perspective or involvement.

This is a chance to share your thoughts and feelings about the Coop community and how you have been impacted, and hear how others in your community have been impacted.

This conversation is meant to focus on your experience as a Coop member during times of conflict, especially if it feels personal. This space is for open listening and dia-

logue, not for making decisions about a boycott or convincing anyone of a particular view.

Confidentiality is very important to allow everyone an opportunity to share in ways that we don't often have while rushing to and from the Coop. By choosing to come to this conversation, you agree to the ground rule to keep everything said confidential.

You will get work slot credit for joining this conversation. This initial conversation is capped at 12 people. If more than 12 people sign up, it might be possible to schedule additional sessions.

**When:** January 12, 6:00–8:00 p.m. at the Coop.

**Who:** Your facilitators are two long-time Coop members and trained mediators.

Facilitator 1 is a divorce and family mediator with a private, sliding scale, mediation practice. She also teaches the Small-Claims Mediation Clinic at a law school where she takes the students to night court. She also teaches conflict resolution skills in 3-5 day intensives as a certified New York State Trainer. She believes that understanding is everyone's hidden superpower.

Facilitator 2 is a Brooklyn based mediator and trainer. She teaches mediation at a law school and trains as a New York State-certified trainer. She mediates family and community disputes. She believes that engaging with conflict can have a truly transformational effect.

**How to Register:** If you are interested in attending, please complete the survey at the link below. The Coop will notify you regarding your participation.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1okaCePiXLEle-6GD117Tt340fb9\\_y5U6pv-Abx7zgVEc/edit](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1okaCePiXLEle-6GD117Tt340fb9_y5U6pv-Abx7zgVEc/edit)

---

## EQUITY, ACCESS AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE REPORT

December 30, 2025



Park Slope Food Coop Demographic Survey: Report to the Membership, December 2025

*By Jordan Dunn, Vikas Hiremath, Dory Thrasher and the Equity, Access and Community Committee*

The Equity, Access and Community Committee of the Park Slope Food Coop (EACC) is pleased to present our first report on the results of the Coop's first-ever demographic survey. This data will guide policy and programmatic changes to make the Coop more

equitable and accessible.

This article is a summary of the EACC's initial report on the results of the survey. The initial report is available [here](#). It presents descriptive statistics, offering a snapshot of the demographic breakdown of the Coop. In future reports, we will discuss the interaction between demographic factors, compare our demographic makeup to that of Park Slope and Brooklyn, and propose questions for future research.

## **RESPONSE RATE AND REPRESENTATIVENESS**

The web-based survey ran from April through June 2025 and was completed by 4,711 members. This is 27 percent of the Coop's 17,145 members.

To understand representativeness, we compared survey results to data that the Coop has on all members: zip code and retirement status. We found that the share of survey respondents per zip code is similar to the entire Coop membership: for instance, 35 percent of survey takers reported that they live in 11215 (the Coop's zip code), compared to 34 percent of all Coop members. Similarly, 14 percent of survey respondents reported that they were retired from their Coop worksite, compared to 15 percent of the total Coop population. These comparisons give us confidence that the survey is reasonably representative.

## **WHO WE ARE**

The demographic survey asked questions about Coop members, including age, gender, length of membership, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, religion, household composition, education, household income and other characteristics.

**Years of membership:** Most survey respondents have been Coop members for between 1 and 5 years (29 percent), followed by 11 to 20 years (22 percent). Twenty-two percent of survey respondents had been members for more than 20 years, while 10 percent had been members for less than a year.



**Age:** The largest share of Coop members are between 30 and 39 years old (29 percent), and about half (51 percent) are between 30 and 49. About 10 percent are 70 and older.

**Gender:** The Coop skews more female than male, with 63 percent of survey respondents identifying as female (both cisgender and transgender) and 31 percent identifying as male (both cisgender and transgender). Five percent of respondents indicated that they were nonbinary, gender nonconforming, gender fluid or intersex, and one percent preferred not to answer. Of all respondents, 2 percent indicated that they were transgender.

**Sexual orientation:** Seventy-one percent of respondents indicated that they were straight or heterosexual, 17 percent indicated that they were gay, lesbian or bisexual, 10 percent identified as queer, and 3 percent provided another description of their sexual orientation.

**Race and ethnicity:** The survey offered multiple categories and allowed people to select all that applied to them; people could also write in an answer. Seventy-six percent selected White or Caucasian; 9 percent multiracial and/or multiethnic; 8 percent Asian or Pacific Islander; 3 percent Black, African American or African; 2 percent Latino/a, Latine, Latinx, or Hispanic or Indigenous, Native American or Alaska Native; and 1 percent Arab, SWANA, Middle Eastern or North African.

**Religion:** This question also allowed people to select multiple checkboxes or write in an answer. A little over half (51 percent) of respondents who answered this question selected “no religion, atheist, or agnostic,” 21 percent selected Jewish and 11 percent selected Christian (any denomination). The remaining respondents selected another religion, selected multiple religious identities in combination or wrote in an answer.

**Household composition:** The average number of people per household is 2.12. Thirty-one percent of respondents indicated that they live in single-person households, 42 percent live in 2-person households and 25 percent live in 3- or 4- person households.



About one quarter of respondents said they had children living with them.

**Education:** Thirty-eight percent of survey respondents hold a bachelor's degree and 58 percent hold a graduate or professional degree. Four percent indicated that they had a high school diploma, some college but no degree or attended technical school.

**Income:** About half of survey respondents (48 percent) have household incomes over \$150,000/year, and over two-thirds of Coop membership (68 percent) have a household income over \$101,000/year. An equal number of Coop members have household incomes of \$55,000 or less as those with incomes of \$350,000 or higher (10 percent in each group).

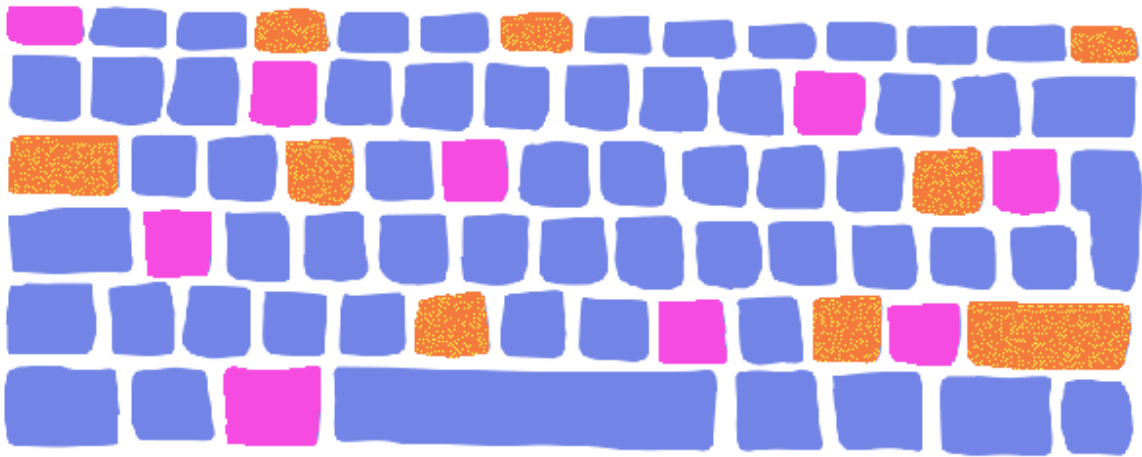
For the full report, which contains greater detail about survey findings and discusses methodological caveats and survey limitations, please visit our committee's website.

---

DECEMBER 30, 2025

December 30, 2025

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



## **APPLAUDING POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS**

Dear Coop members:

Granted, General Meetings aren't always fun and are sometimes even contentious. But we—the Coop Family—should be proud of some of our recent accomplishments

and current considerations. Starting in January, our new hybrid structure will open up participation to many more of our members. (Note: I would have gladly been more active over my last 18 years if I—as a single parent and very busy nonprofit manager—could have participated remotely.) And some new initiatives are exploring robust, creative ideas for enhancing education and awareness regarding committees and operating procedures; offering training, leadership development and greater inclusivity; and clarifying protocols for ensuring appropriate democratic communications. Way to go, Coop!

These types of developments help me feel even more welcome and inspired. Let's keep up the momentum and commitment to innovation, inclusivity and equity in our dynamic democratic experiment.

*Sincerely,*

*Mitty Owens*

Coop member since 2006; social justice writer on Substack

---

## **ATTILA THE HUN AND KARL MARX BOTH LIKE GOOD FOOD AT FAIR PRICES**

Dear Coop members:

The Park Slope Food Coop is a grocery store. It is a good place for me to shop. The grocery-store aspect of the Coop is great; the political activism is not. I recall that at a GM in 2016, an “Education Committee” member urged us to go to Philadelphia and protest the Trans-Pacific Partnership at the Democratic Convention. Nearly a decade later, members argue over banning products. I stopped attending GMs. Now a member writes a letter about wishing for the ideological purity of a bread supplier.

On December 10, Lidl grocery store opened at 120 5th Ave., close to the Coop. Their prices are lower compared with the Coop prices for similar items. The produce is not as good as that of the Coop, but the bakery is better; they have freshly baked croissants that are crisp for 49 cents. They also offer a large selection of meat and fish at slightly lower prices. I have not yet tried the meats to know about the quality.

The Coop prides itself on being founded in 1972. I grew up where there are coop entities that are thriving to this day that were founded in 1908 and the other in 1915. Both stick to their knitting. The first one is a coop bank that started very small and over the last hundred years has expanded to many branches in many cities in India. No members or account holders entertain political activism at the bank. My question is how long before members of the PSFC are turned off by political activism and walk with their feet. If I have problems with any products, I have the option to NOT buy that product.

*Sincerely,*

*Amol Kaikini*

---

## **CHANUKA AND ANTIZIONISM**

Dear members,

I recently saw a flyer advertising an Antizionist Chanuka party and thought this was hilarious seeing as Chanuka is the most Zionist Jewish holiday there is. On Chanuka, we celebrate indigenous Jewish resistance over Greek colonizers and the restoration of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel.

Unfortunately, there are quite a number of such self-proclaimed “antizionist” Jews right here at our coop who are working to ban the sale of Israeli goods (BDS).



As progressive as these folks might envision themselves to be, they are nothing but our generation's version of the Hellenistic Jews, who mistakenly thought that if only they were more empathetic towards their overlords, or better assimilated, they could "keep the peace." Tragically, they fell to the same fate as their "less liberal" brethren.

Because while the Hellenists were technically only against religious zealotry, not Jewish people per se, and antizionism opposes only Jewish *statehood*, ultimately, the soul of the Jew is inseparable from his or her body, and Jewish identity is intrinsically tied to the land of Israel, the center of which was known historically as "Judea," as it was the ancestral homeland of the tribe of Judah, the source of the word for "Jew."

To be clear, this does not mean one must endorse everything the Israeli government does or that it is in any way above critique, but to call oneself an Antizionist while at the same time celebrating Chanuka, is oxymoronic.

Pro-Israel Jews and friends, as evidenced by the public Menorah lighting outside of the Coop this year, the antizionists are only making us stronger. Stay proud and stay loud.

*Sarede Switzer*

---

## JANUARY CONCERT SERIES

December 30, 2025

**SEASON 2, 5TH CONCERT!!**

# **THE PSFC CONCERT SERIES**



**FEATURING**

**JACK SEARS  
JULIETTE + EMRE  
VIVIENNE AERTS  
CHRIS STROMQUIST TRIO**

**FRIDAY,  
JAN 9, 2026  
DOORS 6 PM  
SHOW 6:30; \$10**

**SHAPESHIFTER LAB  
837 UNION ST,  
BROOKLYN, NY 11215**

**Get your  
tickets here!**



**JOIN US FOR THE NEXT PARK SLOPE FOOD COOP CONCERT SERIES  
ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 9, AT SHAPESHIFTER LAB.**

Tickets are available **here**.

**Set 1 - 6:30 to 6:50 p.m.**

**Performing Artist / Band: Jack Sears**

**Personnel:**

– Jack Sears – Piano

**About:**

Jack Sears opens the evening with a set of original piano works—intimate, expressive and crafted with a modern melodic sensibility.

---

**Set 2 - 7 to 7:20 p.m.**

**Performing Artist / Band: Juliette + Emre**

**Personnel:**

– Juliette Hainline – Voice & Piano  
– Emre Tetik – Piano & French Horn

**About:**

Juliette and Emre present a journey through French art songs, weaving together original works by Emre Tetik, selections by Gabriel Fauré and more. Expect an evocative blend of voice, French horn and piano with expressive harmonic colors.

---

**Set 3 - 7:30 to 7:50 p.m.**

**Performing Artist / Band: Vivienne Aerts**

**Personnel:**

– Vivienne Aerts – Voice & Keys

**About:**

Singer-songwriter Vivienne Aerts shares new material from her upcoming sailboat-re-

corded album *Current*. Blending jazz, electronics, vocal loops and water-inspired soundscapes, her set explores flow, connection and resilience through an intimate and innovative sonic world.

---

**Set 4 - 8 to 8:20 p.m.**

**Performing Artist / Band: Chris Stromquist Trio**

**Personnel:**

- Sean Moran - Guitar
- Jordan Scanella - Bass
- Chris Stromquist - Drums

**About:**

A dynamic instrumental trio featuring guitar, bass and drums. Chris Stromquist leads a cohesive ensemble delivering tight interplay and rhythmic drive, rooted in improvisation and modern jazz sensibilities.

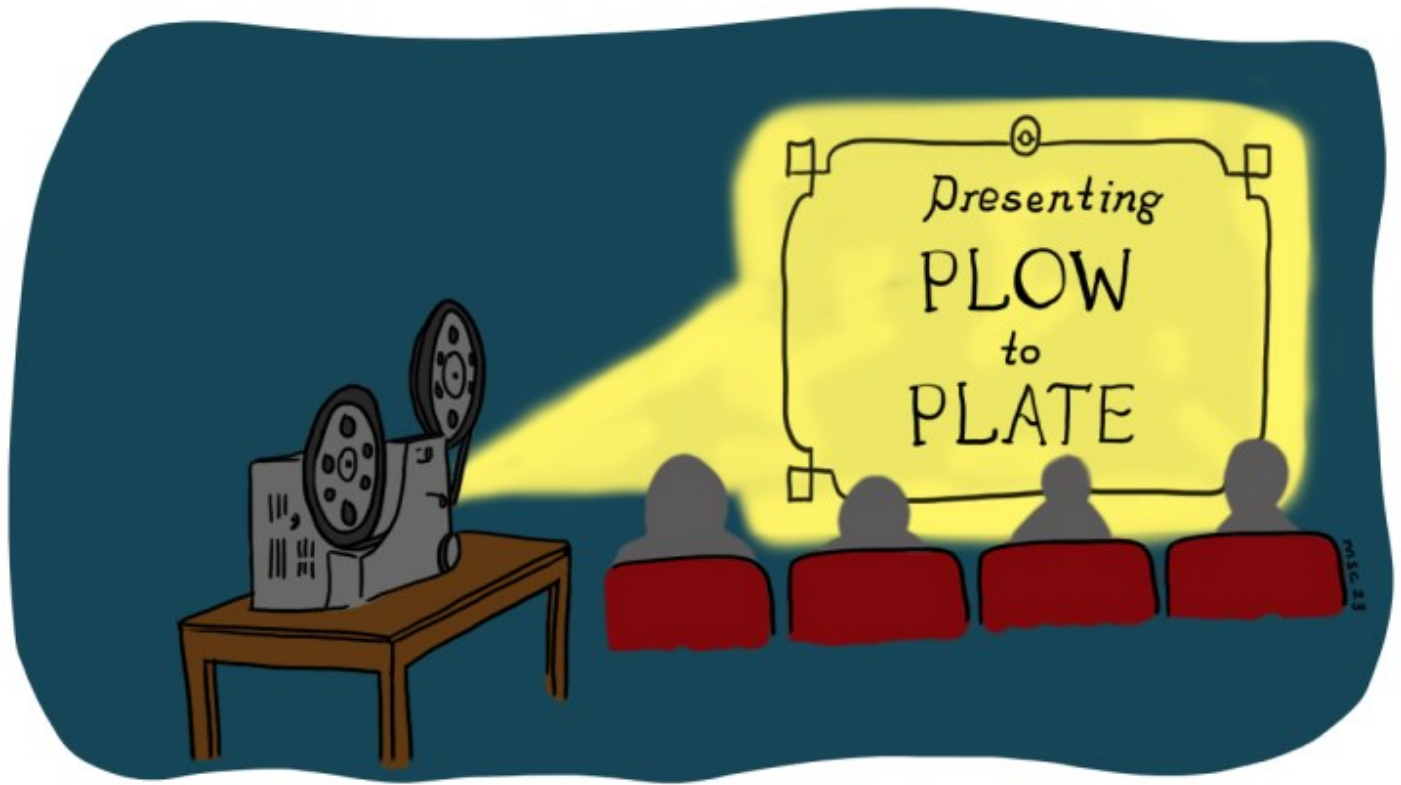
**BUY TICKETS!**

---

PLOW TO PLATE PRESENTS: AGAINST THE TIDE

December 30, 2025





By Adam Rabiner

*Against the Tide* begins in silence and darkness. Against a black background, white credits sporadically appear. Forty-five seconds in, a very soft drone is heard, then, abruptly, a newborn baby's cry, and the camera starts to roll. The baby is cradled between the legs of an older woman, who is giving him a vigorous massage and blessing him, "Mother Sea, protect your son. My little angel. My baby." Later, the child is cleansed and purified with herbal smoke from a cast-iron cauldron as his grandmother implores, "Mother be kind to your child." The following scene shows the baby's young father, a traditional fisherman named Rakesh Koli, walking along a Bombay beach at dawn, as a singsong prayer intones, "Fear not! Fear not! Fear not! There's nothing to fear. Fear not! Tides turn, fear not. Winds howl, fear not. Tides turn, fear not. A Koli knows no fear. Remember you're a Koli. You fear nothing."

This third straight screening of a Grasshopper film follows the company's style of immersing viewers in the action without explanation or context. You are like that newborn babe, suddenly thrust into a world that is baffling to the point of near incomprehensibility. Who is this woman rubbing my body parts? Why are they dangling me

head down on top of a wood-burning brazier? But as for that infant, eventually the pieces naturally and organically begin to fall into place. You start building a vocabulary and an understanding of where you are and the people around you: what they do, their circumstances, and therefore yours, too.

That is the challenge and the beauty of Grasshopper films. They are immersive like no others. The subjects allow you into their lives and conversations like an eavesdropping fly on the wall. But they do not answer questions, opine or explain directly to the camera what they are thinking or feeling. They simply live and share their lives in all their messy detail. This is not a stint with Anthony Bourdain on *Parts Unknown*, but a deep dive into another unfamiliar world. It is like an anthropological or sociological textbook come alive.

You almost immediately meet Rakesh's good friend Ganesh Nakhawa, who is also a seventh-generation Koli fisherman. Unlike Rakesh, who is poor and owns a small traditional boat and fishes the "shallow sea," media-savvy Ganesh Nakhawa is middle-class and studied banking in Edinburgh, but returned to Mumbai (home of the Kolis), in India to found and become CEO of BLUCATCH, which oversees a small fleet of larger commercial ships. He fishes the "deep sea," has his own website and advertises his business with a bumper sticker and baseball caps bearing the Instagram logo and hashtag #TheLastfishermanofBombay.

Rakesh lives in a typical modest compound near the water without indoor plumbing, while Ganesh resides in a modern apartment in the city. Both are married, Rakesh to a woman of similar circumstances and Ganesh to the daughter of a prosperous businessman. Rakesh has children and Ganesh's wife becomes pregnant during the film. Despite these distinctions, they lead parallel lives. Both are dependent on the vagaries and bounty of the sea, which, due to overfishing, pollution and climate change, is becoming less generous. The lack of fish threatens both businesses, and they face similar challenges about where and how to fish, and whether to downsize. While Rakesh takes advice from his mother and the traditional wisdom of his ancestors, such as whether or not to fish during a monsoon, Ganesh relies on deep-sea maps

and multiyear satellite data on ship locations. Rakesh tells Ganesh he would be happier and more successful if he returned to his roots, without the debt, credit or pressures of his large-scale enterprise. Ganesh tells Rakesh to borrow one of his boats and try his luck outside the shallows, where he can catch tuna, mackerel, salmon and other large, valuable fish.

To describe this film in much more detail is to give away too much. I want the viewer to experience the movie the way it is meant to be, as it gradually unfolds, like the baby who, over the months of filming, acquires language and begins to solve the puzzle of his existence. As you do so, the film's title takes on symbolic and economic meanings in addition to its literal one, and you come to appreciate the exhortations to live without fear more fully. The movie left me teary-eyed, something a typical sociological text cannot achieve, but one that fine cinema is always capable of.

*Against the Tide* Tuesday, January 13, 2026, @ 7:00 p.m.

Screening link: <https://plowtoplatefilms.weebly.com/upcoming-events.html>

To be added to our mailing list for future screening announcements, please email a request to [plowtoplate@gmail.com](mailto:plowtoplate@gmail.com).

*From October 2025 through March 2026, Plow to Plate is exclusively featuring Grasshopper Film documentaries.*

*Adam Rabiner lives in Ditmas Park with his wife, Dina.*

---

B.Y.O.BOOK CLUB: UNPLUG, READ & CONNECT

December 30, 2025





*The*  
B.Y.O. Book  
Club

*Unplug, Read and Connect*

---

**Thursday, January 8, 2026, from 7–9 p.m.**

**390 Social  
390 5th Ave, Brooklyn**

**RSVP: [bit.ly/coopbyobook](https://bit.ly/coopbyobook)**



Sponsored by:  
The Park Slope Food Coop Fun Committee  
and Park Slope Parents



Join us for a cozy community reading event where we turn off our screens to reconnect with the joy of reading and being in community. We'll begin with 30 minutes of quiet reading, followed by conversation and reflection with fellow readers, and then another 30 minutes of reading plus connection time at the end. Bring whatever you'd like to read, settle in, order drinks and bites to support 390 Social and make some new reader friends.

Thursday, January 8, 2026, at 7 p.m. at 390 Social, 390 5th Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn

Only 25 spots available!

Co-sponsored by Park Slope Parents and the Park Slope Food Coop Fun Committee.

RSVP Here: <https://forms.gle/HTSgVRpm4d4ZCcuGA>