‘LIVE SMALL, LOVE LIFE, AND KEEP GOOD COMPANY’

January 20, 2026



MEET JIM CHRISTENSEN, A RECEIVING COORDINATOR AS ‘CAN-DO’ AS THEY COME

January 20, 2026

By Liz Welch

Jim Christensen's eclectic resume includes being named a finalist for a Nicholl Fellowship from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for a screenplay. He was 39 and managing a 20-person staff in a large Minneapolis coffee shop and had written a blue-collar riff on *North by Northwest* that sent up gangster movies. Jim replaced Hitchcock's Madison Avenue executive (Cary Grant) scrambling on Mount Rushmore with a divorced Chicago mechanic rescuing his daughter in the lobby of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum. "I went to LA and met a bunch of agents," he said. "It was heady stuff!"

Ever since then, he said, "It has always been about finding a good day job so I could continue to write."

The recently turned 70-year-old can now add "Receiving Coordinator" (R.C.) at the Park Slope Food Coop to a list of gigs that already includes high school English teacher and soccer coach, advertising researcher and strategist, and manager/trainer of testing and hiring teams that created the TSA in the wake of 9/11. A long-distance relationship lured him to New York where he consecutively managed for the 2010 U.S. Census, was a store manager for Sterling Place, and was a "deliverista" for a 7th Ave. sandwich shop before taking up again self-employment as a painter and handyman.

"I was a sole proprietor, made a business card, and biked my ladder and tool bag all over Brooklyn to do repairs," he said. "It was great! But a bit lonely."

> JIM ENJOYED GETTING TO KNOW THE PEOPLE WHO GRAVITATED TO THE REPAIR SHIFT—PAINTERS AND PLAYWRIGHTS, ARCHITECTS, AND JOURNALISTS.

Jim first joined the Coop as a member in 2009 after that long-distance girlfriend made it a stipulation when he moved from Minneapolis to live with her on 7th Ave in Park

Slope. While their relationship did not endure, Jim’s appreciation of the Coop did.

“I did the late-night commando cleaning shifts,” he said of his early days earning work credits. “They were Sundays 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. but we’d meet just four times a year. I met the most interesting people.”

PHOTO BY JENNIFER MACFARLANE

Craving that kind of community in his paid work, he applied for a staff job several years ago, which he did not get. But in 2025, at the encouragement of friends, Jim reapplied—this time for membership coordinator and receiving coordinator positions—and was interviewed the same week for both. As it happens, the Coop's lead facilities coordinator had recently departed for the New York Aquarium, so management wasted no time in tapping Jim's handyman experience and skills to help fill the void. For 15 months he fixed many things personally, and organized tools and spaces. Primarily he fielded all repairs requests and evaluated maintenance needs to manage evening Repairs shifts during which members cooperated to cross-train skills and fix things. He transitioned to receiving coordinator in December 2025.

"I loved the Repairs shifts," he said. "We did all kinds of things, ranging from painting to improvement. A blower in the cooler might need unclogging or a dripping faucet might need to be fixed. People worked cooperatively, often above their skill set. Some even learned how to weld."

> JIM WILL CONTINUE TO DO WHAT HE HAS ALWAYS DONE: "LIVE SMALL, LOVE LIFE, AND KEEP GOOD COMPANY."

He singled out a bathroom-soap situation as one of their more satisfying small triumphs. Constantly leaking dispensers were a perennial problem until a late-night repair team figured out how the Coop could reduce plastic waste and save money with replacement. "We cut four millimeters from a plastic stirrup-shaped component. This shortened the piston stroke inside the mechanism so it dispenses only as much soap as necessary, making them cost-effective," he explained. "The team both piloted the modification and also videoed it to share so the next shift could alter the remaining dispensers."

Jim especially enjoyed getting to know the people who gravitated to that shift—painters and playwrights, architects and journalists. He feels similarly about everyone on

staff.

“The variety of people who work here is astonishing,” he said. “Everyone is nice, professional, skilled and smart. The underlying vibe aligns with our mission statement. It’s not too over-the-top to say I love my colleagues—and I love my job.”

Another loveable facet of his new job: it allows him to read and write. In fact, he continues to write screenplays, including one he and his partner—a writer of short stories and fellow Coop member—have adapted from a memoir set in the Midwest.

As the couple prepare to shop it around, Jim said he will continue to do what he has always done: “Live small, love life, and keep good company.”

Liz Welch is a journalist, memoirist and book collaborator.