

IT'S HEARTS AFLUTTER BY THE ALMOND BUTTER

January 20, 2026



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH THREE COOP COUPLES

January 20, 2026

By Susannah Jacob

You don't have to be a Coop member for long to get the hang of how things go at 782 Union Street. Radicchio and romaine live in the produce aisle, raw cashews are over in the bulk bins, and romance is... everywhere around us. From the new lovebirds making goo goo eyes by the coffee grinders to the longtime marrieds who consider shopping a Friday night date tradition, there's a whole lot of love going on. In advance of Valentine's Day, we asked three Coop couples to spill their secrets and shopping strategies.

APRIL GREENE & ARTHUR MEACHAM

Time together: 14 years

How did you meet?

Arthur: At the end of 2013, I switched from a receiving shift to a Monday night cashier shift, and April was already there. I noticed her, of course, but the Coop is busy. Then, in January 2014, there was a blizzard, and we were the only two cashiers who showed up for the 9 p.m. shift. The store was completely quiet. We just sat together and talked and laughed so much that when it came time to balance our drawers, we had to do it three times because we kept miscounting.

April: It was pretty great. We also did the very romantic walk to the ATM together in a blizzard to dump our envelopes.

Arthur: I asked for her number, and she gave me her business card. I texted her. It bounced, because it was a landline. I emailed her instead. She wrote back saying she'd had a great time but had a boyfriend, though "it's not going that well." A month later, at our next shift, she said, "I broke up with that guy." We went on our first date a few nights later.

April: I remember him walking off into the blizzard carrying two enormous shopping bags for his lentil soup and then realizing he was going the wrong way and turning around. It was very cute. I remember thinking: even if this doesn't progress, this guy is showing me that better people exist.

Do you work shifts together?

Arthur: Not anymore—we have a six-year-old, Ivy, so someone needs to be home. I work later evening shifts. I love repair shifts because you get to see hidden corners of the Coop, like the roof.

April: I miss our recurring cashier crew—people from that shift came to our wedding.

I still love checkout because you get the best conversations. It's like waiting tables: brief but often meaningful exchanges.

"WE JUST SAT TOGETHER AND TALKED AND LAUGHED SO MUCH THAT WHEN IT CAME TIME TO BALANCE OUR DRAWERS, WE HAD TO DO IT THREE TIMES BECAUSE WE KEPT MISCOUNTING."

Do you shop together as a family?

Arthur: April meal-plans, and I shop every weekend by bike. Ivy comes sometimes now—she helps push the cart and pick things out.

April: It's important to her because the Coop is such a big part of our lives.

Favorite Coop taste sensations?

Arthur: The apples, especially Candy Crisp—I've never seen them in a regular supermarket.

April: We have an elaborate cereal setup at home: three cereals, berries and high-protein vegan yogurt.

Any foods you disagree about?

April: Arthur's vegan, so he's not thrilled about my smelly cheeses.

Arthur: And I'm morally opposed to Brussels sprouts.



THOMAS LEVINESS & MAURA LEVINESS

Time together: 13 years

How did you meet?

Thomas: We met in Mexico. We worked at the same university—we were both teachers.

Maura: I was an art teacher and Thomas was an English teacher. When we met, Thomas was actually thinking about coming back to the U.S.

Thomas: I'd already given my notice. Then we met, and I thought, well, I'm going to stay. The university was happy to let me rescind my resignation.

Maura: Then we went to Spain because Thomas did a master's degree. We weren't married then—we are now.

Thomas: We lived there for a year, then moved here for three years, then went back

to Mexico, and then came back here again.

Who joined the Coop first?

Maura: We joined at the same time, because one of Thomas's friends was already a member.

Thomas: I'd actually been to the Coop once in the early '90s. A friend from Marine Park was a member, and it was very different then. But when we moved here, I remembered it and thought, we've got to join the Food Coop.

Maura: Where I'm from in Mexico, we don't really have places like this. We have the mercado, which is cheap and sort of organic, but this was my first co-op. At first, I thought it was kind of hippie—but I really liked it. Once you start doing shifts, you meet people, and I found everyone very interesting and open-minded.

Do you work shifts together?

Thomas: Yes, we have a recurring shift together—checkout at 10:30. They always put us together. People sometimes look confused when they see us talking so much, and then when they realize we're a couple, they're like, "Oh, isn't that nice?"

Maura: Checkout is my favorite. I like talking to people and seeing all the products come through. I always ask, "What is this, and how are you going to cook it?" People give you recipes.

Do you shop together?

Maura: Always after our shift. We live super close, so we go every couple of days. We try to make a list. We try.

Thomas: And then we buy more than what's on it.

Maura: Bread is our first stop.

Thomas: She follows the list. I wander off and get lost.

“THEY ALWAYS PUT US TOGETHER. PEOPLE SOMETIMES LOOK CONFUSED WHEN THEY SEE US TALKING SO MUCH, AND THEN WHEN THEY REALIZE WE’RE A COUPLE, THEY’RE LIKE, ‘OH, ISN’T THAT NICE?’”

What are your favorite Coop taste sensations?

Thomas: Definitely the bread. Mixed berry scones, blueberry muffins, cinnamon amann, chocolate croissants. The sweet breads are our guilty pleasure. They used to have a cheese Danish that was incredible, but they stopped carrying it after Covid.

Is there a food that only one of you likes?

Thomas: I eat everything.

Maura: I’m allergic to a lot of things—it’s not that I don’t like them, I just can’t eat them.

Thomas: She always wants yogurt. I keep trying all the non-dairy yogurts, and they just don’t agree with me.



BRIANNA BLAGROVE & ROCCO PERSICO

Time together: Four years

How did you meet?

Rocco: We met at school. We were both at Stony Brook University.

Brianna: It was our last year—we graduated together. We actually met on Hinge.

Who joined The Coop first?

Brianna: I did. I grew up around here, and my sister and I used to go to Park Slope all the time because we thought it was so cool. Her dad's girlfriend was a member and always told me, "You see that grocery store? You need a membership to shop there." So when I moved back to Brooklyn, joining felt inevitable.

Rocco: I didn't even know what a food coop was. They're not really a thing where I grew up, in Smithtown on Long Island. But it sounded appealing—a place where everyone understands how it works, everyone's done shifts, and there's this shared responsibility. The atmosphere is just nicer.

What are your favorite shifts?

Brianna: We usually work the same shifts. Checkout is my favorite. I've also done bread really early in the morning, which I liked, but checkout and office are my go-tos.

Rocco: Same. Checkout and office. I've done bulk, too. I wanted to do cheese once, but they moved me because they didn't need it that day.

What's your shopping strategy?

Brianna: We almost always shop after our shift.

Rocco: Pretty much every time.

Brianna: I don't really make a grocery list. When I'm on checkout, I mentally track what other people are buying. If something looks good, I'll ask, "Where'd you get that?" and then I'll go find it after. My shopping list is basically other people's groceries.

What are your favorite Coop taste sensations?

Rocco: I love the marinated Greek lima beans from the fridge near the vegetables. I'm also a sucker for the chocolate bar aisle—especially when we do express checkout, because you're just staring at it. I almost always grab a chocolate bar.

Brianna: Bagels and cream cheese are staples. He likes everything bagels; I get plain whole wheat.

Is there a food one of you loves that the other can't stand?

Brianna: I'm the type who buys things just to try them, and then I usually don't like them—so he eats them.

Rocco: I love those chocolate-covered Greek yogurt bars.

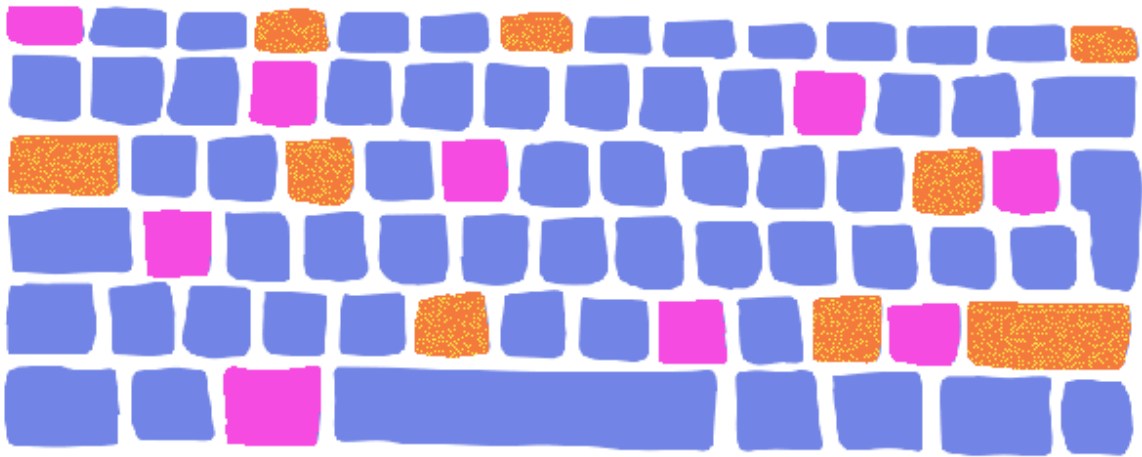
Brianna: I can't stand them. I like Skyr. No Greek yogurt for me.

Susannah Jacob is a history PhD student and a proficient operator of the slotted, plastic bag-taper machine in the Coop's bulk department.

JANUARY 20, 2026

January 20, 2026

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



PSFC'S MISSION DEMANDS PROTECTIONS FOR ALL

Dear Coop members:

Coop leaders—most notably the directors—can look to the city for direction on combating harmful rhetoric to ensure that all members feel welcome at the Coop regard-

less of their political viewpoints.

Diversity of thought is foundational to the Coop. In Sun Yu's Book "Park Slope Food Coop 50 Years of Cooperation", Yu validates this notion by describing historical disputes within the Coop, which reaffirms that differing views are part of our DNA.

On December 30, NYC's Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism (MOCA) released its 2025 report on antisemitism. Some Coop members over the last 18 months—including some of the directors—have promoted messaging that paints alleged dysfunction at the Coop as a byproduct of members that are perceived to be Zionist.

We should all have critical thoughts on societal challenges, but not at the expense of dehumanizing a specific group of people. The MOCA report indicates that specific anti-Zionism rhetoric is detrimental to Jews. Specifically, "the practical consequence of anti-Zionist rhetoric is ... the dehumanization of all Jewish people ... when Zionism itself is characterized as racist or illegitimate, Jewish people become targets for hostility and violence."

Dehumanizing language leads to violence: In Crown Heights, two Jews have been stabbed.

Jews have been murdered in:

- Thousand Oaks
- Washington DC
- Boulder
- Manchester
- Sydney

Additionally there has been vandalism, arson, gun shots and car-rammings at syna-

gogues and Jewish institutions in North America and Europe, including shuls within a stone's throw of the Coop.

Coop Leadership needs to maximize safety within the Coop—including protection for all Jewish members regardless of their political viewpoints—as this duty is listed in our mission statement, which states “we strive to make the Coop welcoming and accessible to all and to respect the opinions, needs and concerns of every member.”

Sincerely,
Zack Zaban

THE BDS-BONDI CONNECTION

Dear Coop members:

Lethal narratives incite violence:

Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, Charleston, South Carolina, June 17, 2015: Nine African Americans were murdered by a shooter radicalized by white supremacist, anti-Black rhetoric.

Tree of Life Synagogue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 27, 2018: Eleven Jews at prayer were murdered by a shooter radicalized by white nationalist, anti-Semitic, anti-immigration rhetoric.

Chanukah celebration, Bondi Beach, Sydney, Australia, December 14, 2025: Fifteen Jews were murdered by two shooters radicalized by antizionist, anti-Semitic rhetoric.

Our Coop must never provide a platform for lethal narratives—rhetoric that casts en-

tire groups as inherently evil, assigns collective guilt and normalizes exclusion and violence. Yet, here we are. The same dehumanizing antizionist discourse that animated the Bondi shooters has been incessantly repeated by the Coop's BDS advocates in *Gazette* letters, pamphlets, Instagram posts and GM statements.

Their narrative relies on three core misrepresentations:

1. Israel's defensive war in Gaza, following the October 7, 2023 massacre of over 1,200 people and the kidnapping of 251, is labeled "genocide."
2. Israel's security measures in response to terrorist attacks on its population are labeled "apartheid."
3. Land purchases in the birthplace of Jewish civilization, and the Jewish quest for dignity and self-determination, are labeled "settler-colonialism."

These libels erase Palestinian responsibility and agency while portraying Israel as the sole aggressor. It ignores the long history of denied equality for Jews under Islamic rule as well as the opposition of Arab political leaders to Jewish equality and immigration.

Antizionism is implicated in countless attacks on Jews and Jewish institutions worldwide. The BDS proposal is an attempt to exploit our Coop to further amplify the antizionist lethal narrative. Our General Meeting exists to steward our \$60M/year business. Our Coop should not be used to legitimize language that endangers any group of people, including Jews.

Sincerely,

Barbara Mazor

FOOD CLASS: MUSHROOMS 101

January 20, 2026

The Park Slope Food Coop Cooking Squad Presents:

mushrooms 101

Kick off your culinary adventures in the new year with mushrooms! Guest chef and squad member William Doran will be joined by some of the Coop's mushroom suppliers to talk ***all things mushroom*** and share three different ways to prepare the humble fungi, including an *oyster mushroom ragout with polenta* and a *mushroom pâté*. Both recipes are vegan.



Wed., Jan 21, 2026 7:30 PM EST

Park Slope Food Coop – 2nd Floor Kitchen

\$10 cash fee for in-person attendees or join online for free!

Register:

foodcoopcooks.org/rsvp or scan the QR code.

Find us on Instagram [@foodcoopcooks](https://www.instagram.com/foodcoopcooks)



January 20, 2026

Kick off your culinary adventures in the new year with mushrooms! Join us with guest chef and squad member William Doran to talk all things mushroom on Wednesday, January 21, at 7:30 p.m. as part of the Coop's monthly cooking series. William will demonstrate three different ways to prepare mushrooms, including an oyster mushroom ragout with polenta and a mushroom pâté.

The class will be in-person at the Coop *and* streamed online via Zoom. For in-person attendees, there is a ten-dollar cash-only fee taken at the door to help cover the cost of ingredients. Attendees will get to interact with the chef and sample the recipes! (Both recipes mentioned above are vegan.)

ABOUT THE CHEF

William Doran is a licensed architect, educator and food writer based in Brooklyn, NY. He was born and raised in New Orleans and has spent most of his life stoking a passion for cooking and bringing people together through food. In 2021, he started publishing recipes and food stories at adventurouscooks.com and began hosting virtual and in-person cooking classes the following year. His passions for food and architecture brought him to New York City in 2022, when he also joined the Coop—and subsequently the Cooking Squad. William publishes a free quarterly newsletter and you can also find him on social media as [@adventurouscooks](https://www.instagram.com/adventurouscooks).

RSVP, PARTICIPATE, AND FOLLOW

Sign up for classes, download recipes, and find shopping lists to cook along from home at foodcoopcooks.org. As classes are added, they will show up on the Squad's home page. Check back regularly for updates! Follow the Cooking Squad on Instagram at [@foodcoopcooks](https://www.instagram.com/foodcoopcooks) for more content including shopping sessions with guest chefs!

TEACH A CLASS

Though cooperation is at the heart of the Coop's mission, so is food! The Cooking Committee is looking for guest chefs to share their food expertise, traditions, and special treats. Members receive FTOP credit for preparing and delivering classes. Tell us what you want to teach!

FEBRUARY CONCERT

January 20, 2026

SEASON 2, 6TH CONCERT!!

THE PSFC CONCERT SERIES



FEATURING FOUR ACTS

PORTERFIELD – FT. OR BAREKET AND INES VELASCO

THERESA ROSAS – ALAN GRUBNER – SAM WEBER TRIO

NOA FORT

ZOSHA WARPEHA & JONATHAN KAISER

**FRIDAY,
FEB 13, 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, February 13, at ShapeShifter Lab.

Buy Tickets Here!

Set 1: 6:30 PM - 6:50 PM

PORTERFIELD — FT. OR BAREKET AND INES VELASCO

Joined by Or Bareket and Ines Velasco, Jacob Aviner leads this trio in a new batch of never-before-heard songs, reimagining his band Porterfield. More info:

- Jacob Aviner — vocals, electric guitar
 - Or Bareket — upright bass
 - Ines Velasco — drumset
-

Set 2: 7:00 PM - 7:20 PM

THERESA ROSAS – ALAN GRUBNER – SAM WEBER TRIO

Trio project focused on songs, compositions, and improvisations.

- Theresa Rosas — piano, vocals
 - Alan Grubner — violin
 - Sam Weber — bass
-

Set 3: 7:30 PM - 7:50 PM

NOA FORT

Solo set featuring Noa Fort's original songs.

- Noa Fort — voice, piano

Set 4: 8:00 PM - 8:20 PM

ZOSHA WARPEHA & JONATHAN KAISER

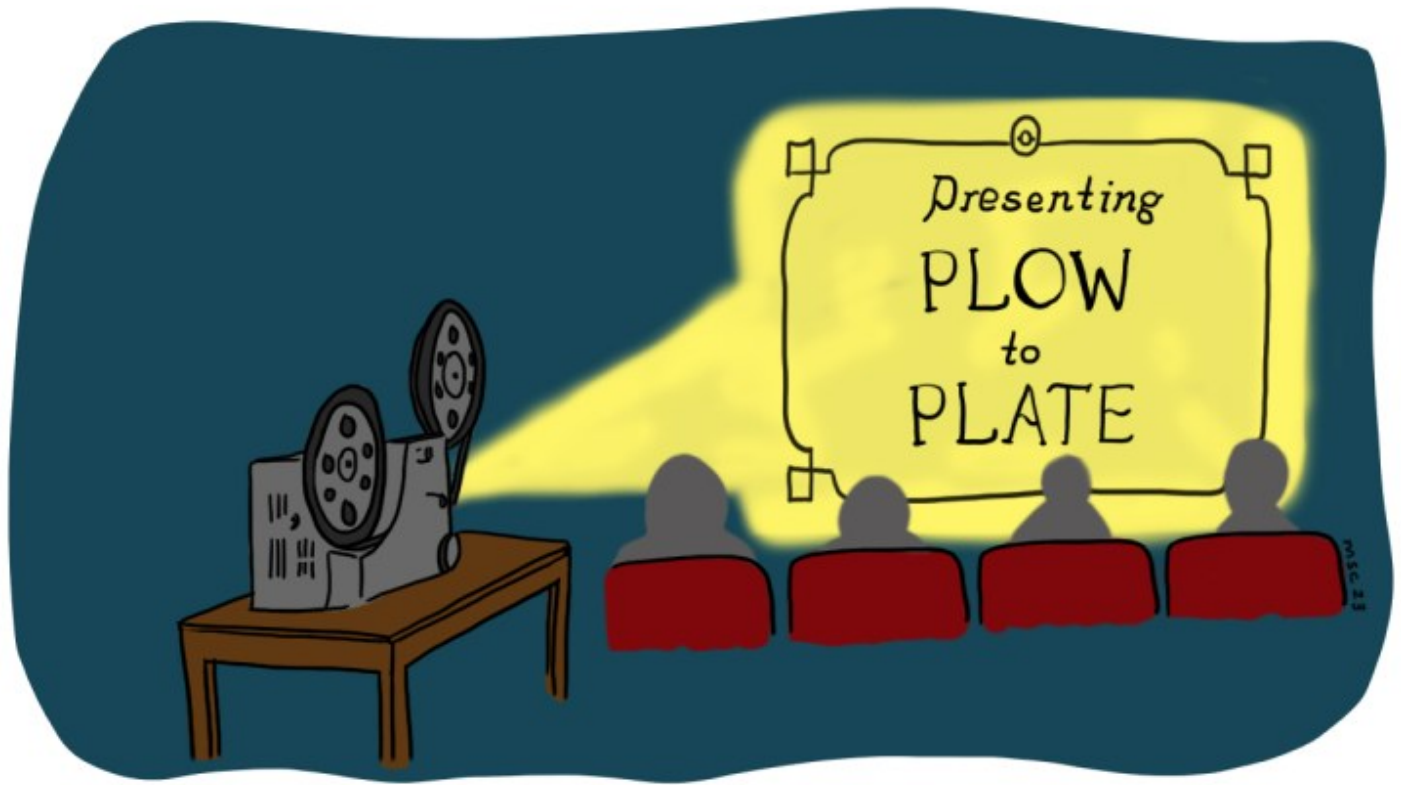
New atmospheric duo exploring textural, drone-based, and improvised spaces for hardanger d'amore and cello.

- Zosha Warpeha — hardanger d'amore
- Jonathan Kaiser — cello

[Buy Tickets Here!](#)

PLOW TO PLATE PRESENTS: RODENTS OF UNUSUAL SIZE

January 20, 2026



January 20, 2026

By Adam Rabiner

Rodents of Unusual Size begins on Delacroix Island, Louisiana. A street sign on the left prominently announces: “Dead End.” Another, on the right: “End of the World.” But despite the area’s isolation and hardship, many die-hard Cajuns like fisherman Thomas Gonzalez refuse to leave this marshy swampland south of New Orleans. There is even an invasive species of giant rodent, originally from South America, known as the nutria, which positively adores the place. The film is the story of humans and nutria living together in an uneasy peace and equilibrium that constantly threatens to tip one way or another.

The nutria, a giant rat with two yellow buckteeth and webbed feet weighing up to 20 pounds, first came to Louisiana in the 1930s, when furriers transported them from Argentina, to breed with muskrats for their fur. This enterprise was initially lucrative. Fatefully, though, the nutria is thought to have escaped from their cages during a storm. They adapted well to the bayou, and hunters and trappers kept the population

in relative balance. However, in the 1980s, the animal-rights movement against fur caused the bottom to fall out of the market, and pelts lost their value. With no one hunting the nutria any longer, zero predators except alligators, and the ability to create a new litter every three months, the nutria population exploded from five to 20 million. In short order, they began eating up the swamps and causing massive harm to the delicate ecosystems, which went from verdant green vegetation to brown mud flats.

Louisiana created the Nutria Control Program, which offered a five-dollar bounty for each nutria tail turned in, with no limits. This program provided a lifeline to many local fishermen and fisherwomen. While most nutria hunters have no problem with exchanging tails for pelts, Bimbo Phillips, a native American from the Atakapa-Ishak tribe, continues the tradition of using the pelts for coats as his ancestors did.

One of the essential questions posed by *Rodents of Unusual Size* is what economic value, if any, can we extract from the nutria today? Phillips may be on to something. *Righteous Fur* is a company whose mission is to bring designer nutria fur clothing to the contemporary fashion market. Their goal is to raise public awareness about coastal restoration while providing an eco-friendly alternative to traditional fur.

Louisiana has also promoted cooking and eating nutria. The government commissioned a study and has hired local and celebratory chefs to make nutria sausages, Slim Jims, hot tamales, gumbo and other locally popular dishes. The nutria has a lot going for it. The animal is a vegetarian that only eats roots; has a clean, grass-fed diet; is lean and is reputedly tasty. One chef said it is an excellent alternative to chicken breast and described eating it “like tasting Louisiana.” That is quite an endorsement. However, the animal’s aesthetics are a significant strike against it, hurting its promotion. After all, it looks like a giant rat. The nutria, in this respect, faces some of the same challenges that edible insects do in terms of mainstream acceptance among your average American consumer.

Another question raised by the film is how we should view this invader on our shores.

It is indisputably destructive to the environment. Though cute, especially when they are babies, nutria's aggressive nature toward everyone but their owners and high maintenance requirements make them poor pets. Yet they have been Louisianans' neighbors for about 100 years, and people there have become fond of them. They were the mascot for the New Orleans Zephyrs, a now-defunct minor league baseball team. The Louisiana Fur and Wildlife Festival features a nutria-skinning competition and a Fur Queen Beauty Contest. Some wealthy homeowners of a local golf community routinely steal and tamper with the traps set by the pest control specialist. They believe that showing kindness is a good example for children. Love them or leave them, the nutria is here to stay.

***Rodents of Unusual Size* Tuesday, February 10th, 2026 @ 7:00 p.m.**

Screening link: Visit our Upcoming Events page

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

Note: From October 2025 through March 2026, Plow to Plate is exclusively featuring Grasshopper Film documentaries. *Rodents of Unusual Size* is a Tilapia Film distributed by Grasshopper Film.

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