

COVID-19 ATTACKED AND UNDERMINED THE COOP

October 5, 2021

We can't fit working and shopping members and maintain safe social distancing. The results are financial and social. We are losing money and members.

Coop finances depend on required member labor—whose value in dollars is never counted in the budgets—to sell elite health-food store products for commercial supermarket prices. We're built on equity and solidarity of member/owner/worker/shopper; the same privileges and same responsibilities for each member.

Our traditional squad system fell apart as about 4,000 of 17,000 members (18%) left. Under emergency conditions, the management collective (General Coordinators) hired members to run the store for minimum wage. More expenses; less income.

In mid-July, the GCs instituted a new system of member labor. Members sign up for shifts doing different tasks on different days under the supervision of a different paid staff person who is under the supervision of the GCs. Less social cohesion.

Many of us want to restore the traditional system of squads with member leaders. We created a process to identify, recruit and prepare member leaders (over several months) to step into place and then to organize members into squads if/when it is safe and feasible. The item was discussed at July General Meeting. The vote will be at the October 26 GM.

A QR Code to the complete text will soon be available.

Those registered will receive the document in an email.

Please study the plan, comment and vote at the Oct GM.

Susan Metz

Editor's note: Please see "The Coop Making It Through COVID" for Gazette reporter-researched information on the percentage of members who departed the Coop during the pandemic.

TIME FOR A VACCINE MANDATE AT THE COOP

October 5, 2021

DEAR *LINEWAITERS' GAZETTE* EDITORS,

It is time for the Coop to implement a vaccine mandate for its members. I understand that not everyone is able to get a vaccine, including those with autoimmune disorders, those receiving chemotherapy, etc. However, the vast majority of people, including the vast majority of Coop members, do not fall into these categories. For those of us who are able, the time to hesitate is through.

It was heartening to see, during the pandemic, how Coop members eagerly adopted public health best practices: social distancing, masking, limiting the number of members in the Coop at a time, etc. The Coop did a much better job than most other institutions at keeping its members safe and healthy.

Now the Coop must take the next step: require members, who are able to receive a vaccine, to be vaccinated if they intend to remain members.

While I understand indoor masking will be the norm for some time, if we are ever to return to a world without masks, we must be vaccinated. It is not fair that the majority of members must continue wearing masks on their shifts indefinitely because a few holdouts refuse to get vaccinated. Life must eventually return to normal. The best way to accelerate that process is to require all Coop members who are able to get vaccinated to do so.

Sincerely,
Taylor Wofford