

NEWLY FORMED FAMILY SUPPORT COMMITTEE LOOKING FOR MEMBERS

October 28, 2025



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The Family Support Committee was voted into existence at the September 30, 2025 - General Meeting and now seeks to assemble a dedicated team of diverse members. The goal of the Family Support Committee is to come up with ways to return the Coop to its former, more family-friendly model similar to when childcare was an option for shoppers and those doing their shifts. As a committee, over the course of one year, we plan to survey current members, analyze work slot patterns and collaborate with Coop leadership to introduce new policies that better support families.

We are eager to incorporate a broad range of voices and perspectives, with a particu-

lar emphasis on engaging parents, as this committee aims to address their unique needs as they navigate work and parenting.

When the Coop's childcare program ended around the time of Covid, we first fought to bring it back, but due to many outside factors it became nearly impossible to make childcare a part of the Coop again.

Scheduling, managing and completing shifts is no doubt a challenge for any adult with a full-time job; but for working parents, especially those with children aged 0-12, it can be nearly impossible. As members of the Coop for over 17 years, Brian Russ and Lauren Belski, who proposed this committee, have seen the frustrations parents went through when the Coop ended its childcare program. We know many families who had no choice but to leave the Coop completely.

The Family Support Committee is seeking 4-8 new members and members will be awarded workslot credits for their work. Meetings will take place every six weeks and be conducted either online or in person when possible. Members will be allocated specific tasks, and will be required to conduct research or compile findings outside of meeting times.

In one year's time we aim to report back to Coop leadership team with a solid four to five actionable changes in policy that will relieve the stresses of being a Coop member while also being a working parent.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Family Support Committee, please send an email to Lauren Belski (lauren.belski@gmail.com) and Brian Russ (bruss81@gmail.com). In your message, please explain your family situation, why you would be interested in joining this committee and a few ideas you may already have brewing.

MY GRANDFATHER, AN EPICUREAN SPY

October 28, 2025

KATHERINE FENNELLY

FAMILY DECLASSIFIED:

UNCOVERING MY GRANDFATHER'S JOURNEY
FROM SPY TO CHILDREN'S BOOK AUTHOR



TOP SECRET

Member Submission by *Katherine Fennelly*

If my Hungarian-American grandfather were alive today and living in Brooklyn, I have no doubt he would be a member of the Park Slope Food Coop. Francis Kalnay, or “Ferko” as we called him, was many things: a linguist, a spy for the Allies in World War II, an award-winning children’s book author and a designer of houses in Valle de Bravo, Mexico.



Francis “Ferko” Kalna making a loaf of bread in California, 1980s. Photo provided by Katherine Fennelly.

Ferko was also a superb chef who roasted his own coffee beans, milled his own flour, harvested honey from bee hives, cured meats in an underground smokehouse and grew fruits and vegetables on his properties in Mexico, and then in California. Late in his life he invented and marketed a bread plate (below) and built bread ovens for neighbors.

VIRGINIA SAFFORD’S BOOK WAS ABOUT THE BEST MEALS SHE HAD EVER EATEN.

ONE OF THE CHAPTERS FEATURED A REPAST PREPARED BY FERKO AT HIS B&B IN VALLE DE BRAVO.



The Greatful Bread Plate, invented by Francis “Ferko” Kalna. Photo provided by Katherine Fennelly.

My grandfather’s skill as a chef was highlighted in the book *Friends and Their Food* written by Minneapolis food writer Virginia Safford,[1] who visited him in Mexico, where he lived for 20 years after the war. Safford’s book was about the best meals she had ever eaten. One of the chapters featured a repast prepared by Ferko at his B&B in Valle de Bravo. She writes:

I saw a load of various beans drying in the sun on his terrace, and the smell of the freshly brewed coffee was almost as tantalizing as the bread. Everything we ate at

the simple wooden table in his little kitchen, with the cooking going on in full view, was delicious. We started out with what might be called country antipasto. In the middle of a table were crisp radishes and small green onions garnishing a platter of sliced, home-smoked turkey breast [from an underground smokehouse] to be eaten on fresh buttered rye bread. Then came the soup...and authentic Hungarian stuffed cabbage rolls. Last was Hungarian rum cake with wild strawberry jam and home-roasted coffee.

In addition to preparing delectable meals, Ferko wrote about cooking and published a series of articles for the magazine *House Beautiful*. An example shown below featured recipes for cooking with fresh flowers. Others highlighted smoked meats and Hungarian dishes, such as stuffed cabbage.

Flowers in Cooking?

And why not? Flowers are sugar and spice and other things nice. They can broaden your palette of flavors in several piquant directions. This summer give them a whirl in your kitchen

By FRANCIS KALNAY

1971, 4, 10



An article Ferko wrote for *House Beautiful*, April 1960. Photo provided by Katherine Fennelly.

You can read more about my grandfather's life as a spy, linguist, children's book author and an epicure in my book: *Family Declassified* (Sunbury Press, 2023).

[1] *Friends and Their Food* by Virginia [Safford, Virginia. *Friends and Their Food*. Dillon Press, New York, 1969.] Safford, 1968