POTLUCK PICNIC!

May 5, 2026


Join the
Park Slope Food Coop
POTLUCK
MORE INFO.& RSVP
BIT.LY/ COOP POTLUCK
PICNIC!
&
Cookbook Club
MAY 17, 1-4 PM
Prospect Park
In front of the picnic house
Hosted by the Fun Committee

The Park Slope Food Coop Fun Committee is throwing a Potluck and Cookbook Club on May 17 outside the Picnic House in Prospect Park. We will get together to discuss and eat selected recipes from *Start Here* by Sohla El-Waylly.

RSVP and more information >

FIBER CRAFTING & MENDING CIRCLE

May 5, 2026



COURTESY OF THE PARK SLOPE FOOD COOP FUN COMMITTEE

Calling all Coop members who are serious or aspiring fiber crafters and menders (knitting, darning, crochet and embroidery!).

Join the Park Slope Food Coop Fun Committee and the Park Slope Food Coop Environmental Committee on Saturday, April 18, from 4:00–6:00 p.m. in the Coop's second-floor meeting room to work on our projects together, learn from each other and be inspired by our crafty neighbors.

We will have donated fiber available from our partner Brooklyn Creative Reuse for participants! You are also welcome to bring extra yarn you would like to swap with others! Please note that while we have some extra tools available, we cannot guarantee you tools to work with, so please bring your tools!

We have 25–30 slots for this event. Please RSVP here for this event to let us know you are coming!

CELEBRATE OUR COOP COMMUNITY AT THE SECOND ANNUAL POTLUCK PICNIC

May 5, 2026

Join the Coop Community

Potluck Picnic

Hosted by the PSFC Fun Committee

Sat.
June 14
2025

1:00-
3:30pm



Prospect
Park

by the
Picnic House

Bring a dish, your recipe, games and a blanket!
Coop members and friends welcome

RSVP here

bit.ly/457nHi1

Join us for the second annual potluck and yard games gathering in Prospect Park on Saturday, June 14!

Grab your picnic blankets and loved ones, and let’s unwind and celebrate the start of summer and our expansive Coop community with a day in Prospect Park! We will gather from 1–3:30 p.m. at the hill in front of the Picnic House. The closest entrance is at Prospect Park West and 5th Street.

Please RSVP. Your presence is all that is required, but if you’d like to contribute a dish or a game, please indicate so at the RSVP link below.

Rain date: Saturday, June 21, 1–3:30 p.m.

Hosted by the Fun Committee

THE FUN COMMITTEE: BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH GATHERINGS AND JOY

May 5, 2026



April 22, 2025

By Liora Fishman

If you've been to a Coop cabaret, danced at a Coop-sponsored prom in a church basement, or made puppets with fellow members, you've probably experienced the work of the Fun Committee. These joyful events don't happen by accident—they're the product of a long Coop tradition, where member-driven activities have been part of the culture since the early days.



PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN

Thomas Oesau and Gabriella Di Piazza having fun in the Coop.
Returning once more after a COVID-prompted hiatus, the Coop's Fun Committee is responsible for organizing activities that strengthen community and keep members engaged beyond work shifts. While its current focus is on social gatherings and cultural events, the committee actually began with a straightforward mission: to help the Coop pay its rent. Originally called the "Fund-Raising Committee," it organized events like auctions to raise money during the Coop's early years.

One of the committee's early members, Martha Siegel, joined the Coop in 1973 and began contributing to community-building in 1983. "I started wanting to create a community through my passion: music," explained Siegel. Her passion quickly became a driving force behind the Fun Committee's evolution.

Siegel recalled that the then-Fund-Raising Committee was already active when she and Steve Browman launched the first Annual Food Coop Music Festival in 1984. "So we joined forces with that planning committee," she said, to plan a festival that could both raise funds and foster a greater sense of community through art and song. The festival was a major success, featuring over 100 musicians and drawing a crowd of 1,000 people—and continuing for several years. "I still have the programs from the first two years," Siegel said.

The Fun Committee through the years
Over time, the committee's role evolved to focus more on building community. Some past activities have included anniversary parties, rummage sales, Halloween gatherings and potluck suppers. There were music festivals modeled after Pete Seeger's Great Hudson River Revival, chamber music concerts, coffeehouse performances and even camping trips that drew up to 70 people.

Today, the Fun Committee continues that tradition by hosting events designed to bring Coop members together in ways that are joyful, inclusive and low-pressure.

The Fun Committee's next event is the 2nd Annual Potluck Picnic, on Saturday, June

14, in Prospect Park. All Coop members and their families are invited to bring a dish, a blanket and a spirit of sharing to this laid-back afternoon of food and connection. In case of rain, the event will be held the following Friday, June 21.

Thomas Oesau, a longtime Fun Committee member, said the committee is about more than fulfilling responsibilities. “Sometimes people think of the Coop as a place of rules and duties,” he said, “but there’s also this incredible creative spirit here. The Fun Committee exists to bring that out—to help members see each other as whole people, not just fellow workers or shoppers.”

He emphasized the continuity provided by longtime members. “It was great to have such a legacy of membership and tradition of activities,” Oesau said. “We had 16 annual Kids Variety Shows, lots of craft-based activities in the old community room and events at Old First Church and the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture.”

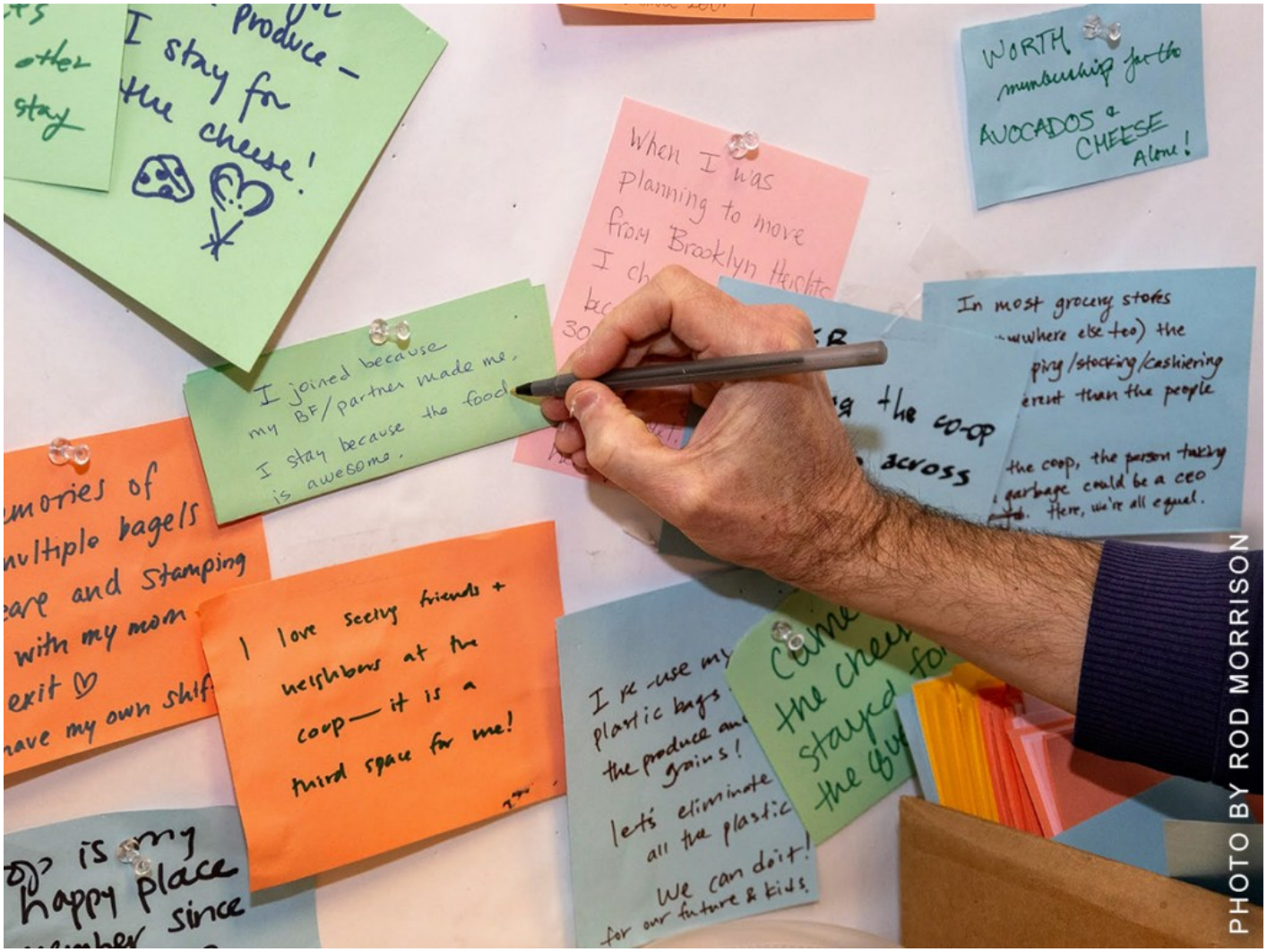
Siegel explained that the music festivals eventually evolved into annual Variety Shows. “We alternated years for audiences of adults and kids. Eventually, we only continued the Kids Variety Show because it attracted way more people,” she said. “They continued until Covid and even through it—in 2021 and 2022 we did them on Zoom. We also did a fun Trivia Night on Zoom.” Siegel retired from the committee in 2023.


RAISE THE BAR MIX
RAISE THE BAR MIX
KERNELS RAW
Setton Farms
California Pistachios
PRODUCE
PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN

Thomas Oesau and Gabriella Di Piazza having fun the Coop.
Committee member Gabriella Di Piazza highlighted the vibrant energy of pre-Covid open mic nights, especially those held at the Old Stone House. “A particular highlight from pre-Covid days was seeing the range of talent and creativity on display within the Coop community,” she said. One performance that stayed with her was “a rap and tap combo performed by Sarah Safford, accompanied by Martha Siegel on cello and set to Run DMC’s instrumental of ‘You Be Illin.’ Good times!”

Fellow committee member Fadwa Abbas shared her appreciation for events that brought together different generations. She recalled a cardboard game afternoon where an eight-year-old girl outplayed everyone at Dixit—a favorite board game Abbas brought in. “She’d never played the game before but ended up being better at it than all of us,” Abbas said.

Events have varied in tone and format over the years. A spring cabaret featured performances by Coop members; a Coop Prom invited people to dress up and dance in a local church basement. Puppet-making workshops, trivia nights, movie screenings and seasonal gatherings all serve the same basic purpose: giving members a reason to slow down and connect with the Coop community.



Spreading joy with positive messages at the interactive 50th anniversary exhibition. Because the Coop's own members—musicians, artists, sound technicians and cook-s—are featured, the events are accessible and showcase the depth of talent in the community.

"A party might seem trivial, but it can be transformative," Oesau said. "You strike up a conversation on the dance floor, and suddenly you know someone you've only ever passed in the cereal aisle. It builds trust. It builds warmth."

Abbas believes the events create space for friendships and shared experiences. "The events we organize help people get to know each other beyond shopping and shift work," she said.

The committee meets regularly to plan, organize, promote and run events. Though

it’s part of the standard labor system at the Coop, members say the work is especially rewarding. “We’re doing labor, just like any other shift,” said Oesau, “but it feels different. You’re collaborating to make something delightful happen.”

“Before the pandemic, many of our events happened in the lounge upstairs in the Coop,” Abbas said. “It made organizing events like card-making or pumpkin-decorating easy. I think losing the lounge space forced us to think more creatively about organizing events in terms of both location and types of events.”

Oesau described how the committee adapted during the pandemic by hosting virtual events like trivia and an online open mic. They also partnered with the Diversity and Equality Committee on “Black Voices: Showcasing Black Creativity at the Coop” and created a 50th Anniversary exhibition in the Coop lobby. “All of that expanded our model,” he said. “Now, collaboration is central. We work with outside spaces and members who want to help lead programs.”

Newer members like Rob Price have brought fresh energy. “After meeting the team and learning about the community work that the team does, I thought that my background and skills could add value to the Fun Committee,” he said. “Once I joined, I realized how the Coop community has so many shared values, and that there truly is a need to foster this by making space for the members to come together outside of shopping or shifts.”

For Di Piazza, working on the 50th anniversary exhibition was a turning point. “Joining the committee became an avenue for me to engage with members beyond the shopping floor,” she said. “One highlight was working on the 50th anniversary exhibition and diving into the Coop’s archives, which helped me connect with the deeper history and perspectives of our membership.”

“We have been trying to be thoughtful about representation, inclusiveness and access,” said Oesau, “with our engagements a reflection of the Coop’s principles and goals overall. Recent iteration and experimentation has opened up new opportunities

and events, while preserving some level of tradition so that people can return for events they enjoy."

"We have a wonderful resource in the members themselves—lots of wisdom, talent and skill," Abbas said. "So all we have to do is create opportunities for people to get to know one another in a social or creative setting."

To reach out to the Fun Committee and get involved, send an email to psfcfun@gmail.com. You can also follow along with upcoming events and behind-the-scenes planning on Instagram at @psfc_fun_committee.

Liora Fishman joined the Coop in December 2021. She lives in Prospect Heights and has a wonderful dog, Ollie, whom she loves very much.

Editors' note: Two quotes that were originally incorrectly attributed to a Fun Committee member have been removed from this article.

SQUARE DANCE!

May 5, 2026
January 28, 2025

Come out and square dance at the ShapeShifter Lab on February 15! Bring friends and family and learn how to do-si-do, "rip and snort" and more. Alex "Sargent See-doo" Udis and Emily Hosmer-Dillard will call and teach all dances.

PSFC
SQUARE DANCE

February 15, 2025

6:30- 8:30pm

ShapeShifter Lab

FREE!

All ages welcome!

Every dance will be taught and beginner-friendly.
No experience or partner necessary.
Refreshments and light bites available

Dance to the tunes of award-winning old-time and bluegrass string band musicians Jennifer Wilkin, Andrea Asprelli, Eli Hetko, A’yen Tran, Sarah Alden, Dave Speranza, joebass, James Shipp, Jean Rohe, Krissie Nagy and friends.

Every dance will be taught and beginner-friendly. No experience or partner necessary.

- **FREE!**
- **Feb. 15, 2025**
- **Music 7–8:30 p.m.**
- **All ages** welcome; children under 16 must bring a guardian
- Refreshments and light bites available for purchase

This event is brought to you by the PSFC Fun Committee with ShapeShifterPlus.

RSVP on Eventbrite

Facebook invitation