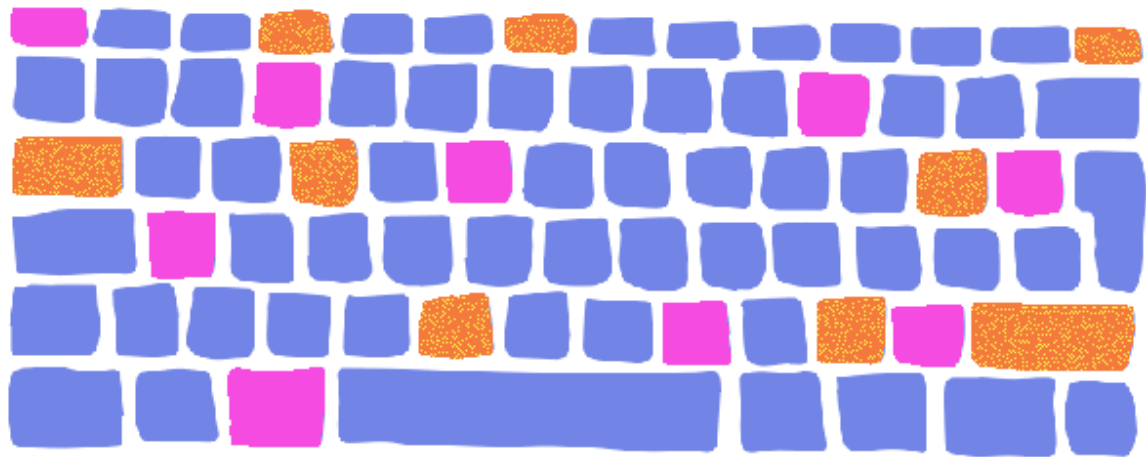


JULY 7, 2026

July 7, 2026

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



LET'S TOGETHER ENDEAVOR TO GROW COOP MEMBERSHIP

Dear Coop members:

Our membership does not fully reflect the diversity of the communities around us. Many New Yorkers who could benefit greatly from the Coop—including low-income families, people using SNAP benefits and many communities of color—remain under-represented among our members.

I and a few others are interested in organizing a member-led effort to explore how we can better reach and engage these communities. The goal is to ensure that more people have the opportunity to learn about membership, understand how it works and decide whether it's right for them.

This effort could include researching successful outreach strategies, connecting with community organizations, gathering input from current and prospective members and developing recommendations for improving our outreach and messaging.

We are looking for fellow members who would like to help think through these questions and work on practical solutions. No special expertise is required—just an interest in expanding access to the benefits of cooperative food purchasing and community participation.

We are especially interested in hearing from members with experience in community organizing, education, anti-poverty work, communications, cooperative development or outreach to underrepresented communities, but everyone is welcome.

If this sounds interesting, please contact me at wbeckler@gmail.com. We would love to connect with others who share an interest in helping the Coop reach a broader cross-section of New York City.

Sincerely,

William Beckler

RESPONSE TO THE ISRAEL BOYCOTT

To my fellow cooperators:

I sit to write with a heavy heart. I have been a Coop member since the 80s and was very disheartened by both the procedure at the General Meeting as well as the result. After the pro boycott members made their 10-minute presentation, there was no discussion. Rather, someone immediately moved the matter to a vote. It was like a kangaroo court, where the decision was made without consideration of competing views.

As to the merits, I also opposed the decision and would have raised my hand, if given the opportunity. Israel has broken many hearts, including mine, in its treatment of the Palestinians and its heavy reliance on force rather than politics to resolve disputes. However, the boycott and the idea boycotting of Israel alone starts this conversation in the wrong place. We live in a world full of bad actors, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, China, Russia, Afghanistan and even the United States are a few of the countries which deprive its citizens, or its neighbors, of basic human rights. The Coop needs a standard to judge all nations, not just one.

If we are judging Israel, and I support a harsh judgment of Israel for its misdeeds, we must have a standard for judging the entire family of nations. To my eyes, there are many countries which would fail, including Israel. However, to single Israel out smacks of a long and tired trope of judging the misdeeds of Jewish people by a different standard, not applied to all countries.

I hope that next year there will be a full discussion with multiple points of view in an attempt to set a standard by which all nations of the world can be judged—not solely Israel.

Sincerely,

THE BOYCOTT HARMS THE COOP COMMUNITY FAR MORE THAN THE STATE OF ISRAEL

To the Editors:

I'm dismayed that my fellow Coop members have voted to boycott products made in Israel. (Or at least a large subset of members; we don't know whether a referendum would have had the same result.)

All or most of the Israeli products the Coop sold before the boycott are also carried by multiple large chains around NYC. Most are also available online. Furthermore, the international BDS movement does *not* call for boycotting supermarkets in the US or UK that sell Israeli products. It only asks consumers not to buy certain products.

We're always free to buy or not buy any product. Coop shelf space is tight; products that don't sell quickly disappear. A boycott prevents members from making our own choices.

The trivial loss to Israeli producers from the Coop's boycott will have no material impact, neither harming the state of Israel nor benefiting the people of Gaza in any meaningful way.

Its only effect is to damage the Coop community and bottom line. We have members afraid to attend or chair a meeting; we've had to hire security; we will likely lose members; and we're facing possible lawsuits.

Framing the discussion as if there are only two possible sides—condoning genocide versus fomenting anti-Semitism—is not only false, it makes peace and justice impossible to achieve. The only debate we should have is whether a boycott is the most effec-

tive tactic for advancing them.

I hope those who value the PSFC community stick around to help rebuild it instead of abandoning it to those who have put a well-intentioned but misguided crusade ahead of our collective wellbeing.

Jean Gazis
Member since 2009

EVER RULED BY ROBERT'S RULES

Dear Coop members:

A few members labeled the May GM “anti-democratic” because 73% of attendees voted to end debate and proceed directly to a vote on the boycott proposal, which then passed with 67% support.

Under Robert’s Rules, an assembly may, by a two-thirds vote, decide to close debate and move to a decision. This is exactly what happened. The motion to end debate was itself voted on democratically and passed by a very high margin.

The crucial context is that the meeting had already been running for about three hours, and would likely have gone to 11 PM or later if debate remained open. In the debate on the previous item (restoring simple majority for boycotts), the discussion was derailed by hostile parliamentary motions that burned time and created delays. There was little actual opinion expressed during that first debate. Faced with this reality, members probably concluded they did not want to repeat that frustrating experience, had enough information to make a decision and would rather fast-forward to a vote on the boycott.

The boycott has been discussed extensively over many years, including in previous General Meetings, outside the Coop, and in the *Gazette*. It's impossible to know how the outcome might have differed under different circumstances. Had there been more time, debate may have persuaded members in either direction, provided it was not derailed like the previous debate. All we know is that a clear supermajority of members voted to end debate, including some members who voted against the boycott.

Reasonable people can disagree about whether that was the best choice. But the decision was made through well-established procedures and the resulting vote reflected the will of the membership. It was fully democratic and procedurally proper.

In cooperation,

John Caramichael

Co-presenter of item #887 (Restoring Simple Majority for Boycotts)

TIME TO REEVALUATE YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE COOP?

Dear Coop members:

For years, the Coop represented an appealing model: member work to keep prices low, high quality items, cooperation. Organizations require compromise and coalitions.

For the nearly 20 years that I have been a member, I largely ignored the political aspects of the organization. The benefits of Coop membership outweighed the generally cramped store and often chaotic shopping experience. It was good while it lasted!

Prior to this year, I had also never been to a general meeting.

After attending the most recent two GMs, I feel broken and ashamed to be associated with a supposedly “inclusive” organization. With the divisive campaign and vote to boycott Israeli goods, I felt the rift and polarization that has deeply infected so much of our lives in an organization that I had come to love.

To quote Asya Gorokhovsky from the May 25 letters “To tell you the truth even shopping itself has become much less pleasant lately.” I could not agree more.

Unlike a majority who voted on the boycott item, I don’t want to make a political statement when I buy groceries. I am just buying groceries.

In the short term, I am maintaining my membership but taking steps to move on. I have withdrawn the additional member investment that I made during the pandemic. I will not perform any further work shifts. And I will move more of my grocery spend to other options in the area. My goal is to exit the organization within six to twelve months. It feels almost like grief; losing someone close to you.

To all of the members driving the heavy political agenda I wish you well. Though, if you genuinely reflect on the recent efforts, you might see that these efforts do not promote the true value of cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jed Meyer

THIS MOMENT DEMANDS LEADERSHIP

Dear *Linewaiters’ Gazette*:

Following the historic votes of the May 26, 2026 General Meeting, I am dismayed to

not see any of the usual organs of leadership à la “Coordinators’ Corner” being exercised in the *Gazette*. This is a moment that calls for those organs to be flexed so that we may coalesce as a cooperative especially as outside forces are so clearly aligned against us. We are stronger than the shrill voices clamoring to reverse the will of the Coop.

Sincerely,

Damien Neva

Editor’s Note:

The deadline for submissions for the June 16 *Linewaiters’ Gazette* was May 25. As noted by Damien Neva, the GM was on May 26, a day after the submission deadline. Inopportune timing made it impossible for Joe Szladek, the Coop’s general manager, to submit thoughts related to the boycott vote in time for the “Coordinators’ Column” of June 16.

LET’S END THE DIVIDE ON UNION STREET

Dear Coop Staff and membership,

I’d like to address the very core of the May 26 presentation to mandate a boycott of Israeli products. The stated cause was to combat the current Israeli government’s violation of international law in the Israel-Gaza war. Has the Israeli government violated international law in Gaza? I say yes. Has the current Palestinian leadership of Hamas and their active funding partners breached internationally acceptable norms? I’d say yes.

I admire an open mind willing to listen to others. Acting with compassion, and seeking

to see a bigger picture, with all its contradictions, requires intelligence and personal humility. I saw none of that from the presenters of the boycott proposal.

When it comes to boycotts I feel they should be voluntary. I've used the power of my purse to protest against corporations which went against my beliefs. But, my personal boycotts were fueled by freedom of choice, and not mandate.

Instead of forcing this boycott on members, why not have the Coop label the products which are Israeli and let shoppers decide if they want to purchase them or not. If the Israeli products don't sell, well then, so be it.

This process of "natural selection" is "naturally" democratic.

I tried to raise my hand to suggest this at the GM but no counter arguments were allowed to be articulated then. We were presented with the "pro" boycott talking points but we were not given time to express other sentiments or alternative suggestions to the boycott proposal. Ultimately, I felt bullied and bamboozled by advocates for the BDS movement.

I vote to restore respect for all Coop members, and end the divide on Union Street.

Sincerely,

Lizanne Merrill

PROUD TO BE A PART OF PSFC

Dear Coop members:

I am thrilled that our food coop passed the resolution to boycott Israeli goods. This act aligns our practices with our values of sourcing products that do not depend on exploi-

tation of others. I, like thousands of my fellow members, over 4,000 of whom voted for the boycott at the last meeting, am devastated by the genocide and occupation of the Palestinian people by the Israeli state. I am honored and proud to be part of an institution that stands for the liberation of Palestinians and other oppressed peoples worldwide.

Sincerely,

Yana Kuchirko

BDS SUPPORT HURTS PALESTINIANS

Dear fellow Coop members,

Are we seriously feeling proud that we are boycotting Al Arz Tahini? A company based in Nazareth, which employs Palestinians in Nazareth. A company, whose original owner, gave money that was to be used to fund an Arabic language LGBTQ hotline, among other philanthropic causes. If you're looking for a definition of virtue signaling, here it is. This hurts Palestinian workers and their families; it saves nobody. Had discussion at the meeting not been summarily squelched, maybe we could have talked about negotiating an exception for this and other similarly situated companies. Further punishing the Palestinian citizens of Israel will only help the fascistic regime governing them. Great work folks.

Sincerely,

Lisa Badner

ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM CAUSES TERRIBLE VIOLENCE

Dear Coop members:

“My legs were shaking and my hands and my head were hurting a lot. I felt like a rock.” That was how nine-year-old Odai Shanah described feeling on May 18 at the Islamic Center of San Diego, where two armed anti-Muslim extremists carried out a mass shooting attack and murdered three people.

According to one report, the child “saw the bodies of victims as SWAT teams led him and other children out of the classroom in which they had been sheltering during the attack, a sight he will likely never forget for as long as he lives.”

Odai is one of 140 children who survived an armed assault on Muslim children in San Diego last month because of the heroism of Amin Abdullah, Mansour Kaziha and Nadir Awad.

We know that anti-Muslim rhetoric and views are drivers of mass violence, such as genocide.

When multiple Israeli rabbis call for the murder of children and mothers, we must ask ourselves how we choose to act in our local community, our Cooperative. I sat through a “speech” from a board candidate that was supposedly in “good standing”. I was shocked as she inappropriately used the terms “terrorist” and “Muslim Brotherhood” during a General Meeting in response to the Boycott proposal. As a Muslim, I felt unsafe. This kind of rhetoric inspires many violent attacks.

Multiple times at the Coop, people have stared at me in ways they don’t stare at my East Asian partner or others. Stares that remind me of the terrible words the board candidate said on stage. The worst is when someone stares during check-out.

How can we accept people referring broadly to Muslims as “terrorists”? Muslims are

being terrorized by words and acts of genocide.

Sincerely,

Idris Merchant

IN FAVOR OF THE HEALING POWER OF ART

Dear PSFC community,

I arrived at the Coop on June 3, 2026 and found two large men wearing matching security shirts in the entry cube. They took up half the space and could only smile at the looks of disbelief. When we asked why there were guards at the gate, we were told that there was an altercation, two or three weeks prior. How utterly sad and embarrassing!?

I think we need to invest our energy in better building community.

Last August I offered some ideas at the GM and was told that what I proposed was either in motion or that they would be considered. Well, nine months later, and our struggle to create an environment that is kinder, more accessible, and inclusive continues.

Will the Coop PLEASE –

1. Return the classified ads to the *Gazette*. How are we to communicate with one another? What is taking so long? Without the stairway of flyers, we have no bulletin board that belongs to communal support. We could have it by the elevator and/or online. To the point, we would offer a discount to PSFC members who might want to join our summer arts camp Brooklyn Arts for Kids, but we have no way of telling

them about it.

2. Support Coop artists by displaying their work on our empty walls. Art is essential to our health, and we should consider beautifying our home with art wherever we can. Perhaps along the brick wall behind the cashiers, or at the entrance desk.

These are divisive times indeed, but I hope the Coop can chart the way forward together with openness, respect, and creativity, not security guards.

With gratitude and fun for all,

Wally Wallach

OUR IMPRACTICAL VOTING MECHANISMS DISENFRANCHISED ME

Dear Coop community,

I'm writing to raise a concern with the proceedings for the recent decision on a boycott: only people present at the monthly meeting could vote. I had to work that evening so I couldn't attend. I'd assumed that there would be a voting window longer than two or three hours but no, only those present were able to vote.

To restrict voting on such a consequential decision disenfranchises the members who were unable to attend that evening. Making voting impractical and limiting access is not a pattern I expected to see at the Coop.

Sincerely,

Elisabeth Vincentelli

WHO WE, AS A COOP, HAVE BOYCOTTED

Hi there,

The December 2025 issue of the zine *The Olive Press* provides a list of Israeli products that PSFC4Palestine “...urge all members to boycott.” This letter attempts to distill what companies are affected.

- **Al Arz Tahini:** Founded by Asad Zaher in 1992. After his death, Julia, his wife, took over. She is an Israeli Arab known for her philanthropy. According to a July 2020 story in *The New York Times*, the company faced a boycott from Arab groups after Zaher donated to an Israeli LGBTQ+ rights group. The company was bought by the Sugat Group in 2022.
- **Dorot Gardens:** Established in 1992. Manufactured in Kibbutz Dorot in southern Israel.
- **EcoLove:** Founded in 2011 by Sharona Romano Lazar. Located in Tel Aviv, Israel.
- **Equal Exchange Olive Oil:** According to a May 2026 article in *The New York Post*, “Equal Exchange Olive Oil [...] is actually made by a non-profit organization led by a team of Arab and Jewish women.”
- **Osem:** Israeli company owned by Nestlé.
- **Seed + Mill:** Founded in 2016 in the Chelsea Market in NYC by Lisa, Rachel, and Monica, the trio work with a facility in Northern Israel that, according to the *Post*, is a “family-owned factory employs a mix of Arab, Jewish, Christian, and Druze workers, who will also be economically impacted.”
- **Soom:** Philadelphia based and run by Amy, Shelby and Jackie. According to their FAQ, Soom is produced in “Israel, in a facility located within the Green Line.”

I hope this list provides clarity.

Truly,

THE *LINEWAITERS' GAZETTE* NEEDS FAIR AND TRANSPARENT MEMBERS-APPROVED EDITORIAL PRACTICES

To the *Gazette* Co-Coordinating and Letters Editors, *Gazette* Staff Liaisons and All Members:

Editors, as a fellow member and 48-year *Linewaiters' Gazette* reader, I ask you to share with the membership an overview of your responsibilities, including chain of command and decision making. Please publish our Coop's editorial policy, how it was established, who is able to comment on it and suggest revisions, and how a member could do that.

Staff liaison(s) to the *Gazette*, what is your role? How are you selected for this work, and in this capacity, who supervises you? When I've submitted letters, I generally hear back from one staff member, but another contacts me if they find my content problematic. Do you forward all submitted letters to the editors, or do you read and select which to send on? Why aren't members allowed to submit their letters directly to the *Gazette* staff?

Editors and liaisons, are you opposed to the recent enactment of a boycott of Israeli products? Do your opinions about Israel, the Palestinian genocide, or related matters, guide your decisions to scrutinize and demand revision of content that is pro-boycott or critical of Israel. (That I and others who mentioned genocide in prior letters have been required to use a citation is an example of this scrutiny.)

What's the proportion of requested edits and content revisions for anti-boycott and pro-boycott letters? How do you determine hate speech? When a writer likens keffiyehs to KKK robes and you publish this, are you showing fairness and balance in

editorial practice? 4,551 members, 67% of those who attended the May 26 General Meeting and voted, voted in favor of the boycott of Israeli products. It is past time for our Coop's newsletter to respect their perspective and to demonstrate this in editorial practice.

In Cooperation,

Alyce Barr

Response from the Letters Editor:

I took over the letters to the editor responsibility shortly after the events of October 7. Since then, the vast majority of letters have had to do with BDS, Israel and Gaza. Given the highly sensitive nature of that conflict, it is incumbent upon me to scrutinize every letter to the best of my ability and query any fact or assertion that is questionable or debatable. Indeed, that level of scrutiny applies regardless of letter topic. Sometimes queries I pose to letter writers have prompted them to infer my thinking on the conflict. They do this without having ever spoken with me or without knowing a thing about me.

It is critical to note, however, that my personal opinions, no matter what they are, are immaterial to my job; they do not factor into editing. What matters is a commitment to accuracy, respect and our Coop community in its entirety.

In response to your question regarding what proportion of edits and revision requests goes to anti-boycott versus pro-boycott letters. I don't track or tally edits this way, because doing so would mean sorting letters by political position before I edit them, which is the opposite of how I approach this work. Rather, I query language and assertions on their own terms, regardless of where a letter falls on this or any other issue.

As for specific editorial calls on individual letters, this is not the forum to debate them one by one. I stand behind the judgment I bring to each letter, and if a member has a

specific concern about a specific decision, I'm glad to hear it directly and discuss it, as I have with many letter writers during my tenure.

To be sure, I have asked people representing all perspectives to provide evidence to support assertions that may raise concerns about fairness and respect and/or that concern matters of public debate. As I explained to one writer an issue back, my job is to act as a proxy for the reader; if I'm caught off guard or find something unclear, it's likely general readers will too. My job is, furthermore, to anticipate and tend to that lack of clarity, dispensing with it, before publication.

Two conscientious and scrupulous coordinating editors, elected by Coop members at a general meeting, help me in the letters editing process. Here is an example of how that works: More than 40 people submitted letters to run in the last issue. It took me nine hours to edit them all; that's a lot of time when you consider a shift is two hours and change, and the coordinating editors were backstops in this arduous process. They pitch in with editing and querying as needed, and it is needed; they troubleshoot issues that I may find vexing; occasionally, they reach out to writers directly, which is why you may hear from more than one person at the *Gazette* about a single submission.

The reliable and helpful staff liaison also plays an important role in this process, though it's distinct from our jobs as editors. The liaison is not an editor and thus does not make editorial decisions; the final say on what is published rests with the editors. The role of the staff liaison is to support the process: answering questions about Coop policy and history, offering feedback, and helping usher each issue from submission through to publication.

The *Gazette's* editorial policy is viewable for all here; you'll note it includes policies regarding fairness and respect, the latter of which directs that letters "must not be hateful, inflammatory or needlessly provocative." In my experience there has been a lot of that from both sides and though I respect all perspectives, that doesn't mean I allow euphemistic bigotry or hatred in any regard to appear in my brief.

Our Letters and Member Submission policies were revised by the entire *Gazette* staff this past spring, following a one-month pause and review process. Both policies are supported by three core characteristics: fairness, anonymity and respect. Any member wishing to comment on or suggest revisions to these policies is welcome to raise them with the *Gazette* staff, who will bring that feedback to the full staff for consideration in any future review.

Yours in cooperation,

Sara Ivry

IMAGINATIVE APPROACHES TO EXPANDING MEMBERSHIP

Dear Coop members:

At a recent membership meeting, in April perhaps, a member spoke about ways to expand our membership, especially in terms of providing access to communities that have been unable to navigate the complicated process of onboarding. Obtaining one of the 35 orientation spots made available twice a week privileges those with access to the resources and the time needed to jump through those hoops. Instead, could we undertake an imaginative way to ease this process? Perhaps tabling in certain locations and facilitating faster onboarding, as the aforesaid member suggested, is one way. I'm sure we could put our heads together to come up with multiple ways to accomplish this goal. This may be particularly relevant in the current moment when bad faith actors are demonstrating their "unity" by threatening to leave the Coop. Judging from my own circle of friends, there are many folks eager to join, if we could only provide an easier on-ramp. Besides, there are communities with lesser earning power quite nearby who could benefit from membership in the Coop.

In a different example, the San Francisco Bay Area baking coop Arizmendi helps

others start new locations by providing training and other resources. If we are so great, why be so limited?

Sincerely,

Jayanth Eranki