

ALISON ROSE LEVY OBITUARY

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By Thomas Rayfiel

“WHERE IS OUR FOOD COMING FROM? WHO GREW THIS? HOW DID IT GET HERE?”

These were the type of questions Alison Rose Levy, a longtime Coop member, asked repeatedly, both in her professional career as a journalist and as a longtime reporter for *The Linewaiters' Gazette*. A resident of New York and Aquinnah, Massachusetts, Alison died on December 31, 2022, at her family home near Menemsha Pond. She was 72.

Alison focused on social justice, the healthcare system, and progressive medicine. She ghost-wrote or co-wrote several best sellers on diet, fibromyalgia and Lyme disease. Her work appeared in *Truthout*, *AlterNet*, *Common Dreams* and other publications in the alt press. Her many *Gazette* pieces include articles that explored the danger of GMOs (genetically modified organisms), the risk posed by fast-tracking trade deals, fracking, and many other nationally sensitive debates directly affecting products that the Coop stocks on its shelves. "She believed fervently that health was not merely a personal matter but a collective, systemic endeavor that concerns us all," her husband, Ed Levy, recalls.

In later years, she also hosted the podcast *Connect the Dots*, on the Progressive Radio Network, which promoted "health activism, linking personal health to the health of our culture, society, and environment."

Alison joined the Coop in 1998. She contributed to the *Gazette* for eighteen years. General Coordinator Joe Holtz remembers her as "an excellent reporter who had a very good understanding of the health food industry." Former *Gazette* editor Erik Lewis, who worked with her, writes: "Alison brought her political and polemical and high journalistic skills to the paper, always pitching stories on natural foods, food safety and government laxity regarding safety. We met at a local coffee house and debated stories, the future of the *Gazette*, editorial policy and all. She was so spunky, with strong opinions and so well-researched. I'm so sorry she's gone."

When assigned the task of profiling herself for an article on *Gazette* reporters, she wrote: "After 9/11, seeing the diversity here soothed my heart. The Coop is my local home base community and also my model for what can be. The produce aisle is

paradise. Where else can you get organic bitter melon and okra—and lychees (even though they're not organic)?"

Alison is survived by Ed, her husband of 27 years, her brother, Dan Cohen, her nieces Anna and Rosalie Cohen, as well as her twin tabbies, Pete and Cubby.

In a 2008 article, headlined "A Guide to Action," she sounded a clarion call which has lost none of its urgency: "Today, after the years that have passed since the founding of the Coop, those interested in constructive social change have their work cut out for them like never before."

Member Thomas Rayfiel is the author of eight novels. He has also written "living obituaries" for VICE TV.