

MEET TOM RAYFIEL, THE OBITUARY WRITER FOR THE “GAZETTE”

August 26, 2025



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By Emmett Lindner

Tom Rayfiel, a Coop member who spent many a shift working in the dairy cooler, has been writing obituaries for the *Linewaiters' Gazette* for years. It may sound macabre to deal in death, but obituaries solidify recollections of loved ones that might otherwise fade over the years—in both memories and conversations. Through Rayfiel's writing, a Member remains a part of the Coop's collective memory and history for generations.

He aims to capture someone's life by speaking with their loved ones and acquaintances to boil down decades of experiences and find the core personality of the person who has passed.

Some of the members Rayfiel has written about include Tim Mohr, a food-processing squad leader, who was also a translator with accomplishments that "are almost too many to name"; Shelly Weiss, an early Member who was "a force of nature at whatever she set her mind to"; and Alison Rose Levy, a longtime writer for the *Gazette*.

"WE SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE WHEN ONE OF US DIES," SAYS RAYFIEL. "OTHERWISE, A PERSON JUST FAILS TO SHOW UP FOR THEIR SHIFT A FEW TIMES AND FADES FROM MEMORY."

"I never thought of writing them myself until I saw a makeshift memorial notice on the wall of the Coop's receiving area announcing the death of our (very young) beer buyer," said Rayfiel. "I felt, if we are a community, we should acknowledge when one of us dies. Otherwise, a person just fails to show up for their shift a few times and fades from memory."

Mr. Rayfiel is a writer by trade and has published novels including *Split-Levels* and *Colony Girl*. He has also worked with *VICE*, creating tongue-in-cheek "living obituaries."

In this interview, Rayfiel discussed how he writes obituaries, how he began his career and what writing about death has taught him. (Note: This interview has been edited and condensed.)

Can you tell readers a little about yourself?

I was born in Westchester and grew up in northern New Jersey and went to school in

Iowa, Grinnell College. Then, I lived in various other places, Saratoga Springs, and in Paris and London for a while, doing odd jobs and was always writing.

In Paris, I did screenwriting for a bit. I worked with French directors who were hoping to make it big in Hollywood by writing scripts and I helped them out.

I always wanted to be a prose writer. Screenwriting was more a way to make money. It's a very interesting craft, but I knew pretty early on that I wanted to be more in control of the final product than you are as a screenwriter. You're basically there to help the director achieve his vision, I suppose, and it's all subservient to that.

And you can be more independent as a novelist.

Yes, you can also be more poverty stricken.

I did write short stories first. I published short stories in various literary quarterlies and eventually, I published several novels. The novel as a form has always fascinated me.

When did you move to Brooklyn?

Maybe 34, 35 years ago. My wife is a potter, Claire Weissberg. She's Claire of Claireware, the pottery store down on Union and Nevins in Gowanus. We moved to Brooklyn because we wanted to be near a gas-fired kiln she had found on Third Avenue. It was not chasing after some trendiness at all. It was just one of the few gas-fired kilns she found that she could have access to.

Did you join the Coop when you first moved here?

Pretty soon after. At that time, it was very different. It was only open a few hours a day, and it was a much smaller space. Obviously, it hadn't expanded the way it is now.

At first there was no dairy cooler. It used to be just a refrigerated cabinet that you would haul everything out of and rotate one by one and put new stuff in. My first job was at the bottom of the conveyor belt. No one told me that you had to brace all the items because the conveyor belt was angled way too steeply.



Photograph by Michael Berman.

So, the first thing I sent up was a load of flour and a load of cucumbers. The flour tipped over and broke, and as I was staring up at the conveyor belt, this cascade of cucumbers and flour came out. Any other job, of course, I would have been fired on the first day, but it being the Coop, they just explained to me what I needed to know, and eventually I figured the rest out.

I enjoyed seeing how a coop works from the inside, instead of just seeing the finished product. It's kind of amazing to me how all the moving parts fit together as well as they do.

THERE IS—NOT TO GET TOO CORNY ABOUT IT—A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AT THE COOP THAT I CERTAINLY DON'T FEEL WHEN I GO TO WHOLE FOODS OR KEY FOOD.

At what point did you think about writing obituaries for the Coop?

I saw that flyer, which I still occasionally glimpse when they have the door to the receiving area open for our beer buyer. It was a little homemade announcement that he had died. And that really struck me as being insufficient. That's when I got the idea of going to Joe Holtz with this idea of being the obituary writer for the Coop.

What is your process for writing the obituaries?

I go where they lead me, but I keep them all about the same length. There's a sort of general underlying form, which is: I talk a little bit about the person's life outside the Coop, but then I also emphasize what they did in the Coop and what the Coop meant to them. I try to talk to people who worked with them at the Coop, people who knew them. Often I find the Coop had a real place in their lives. And that's the part I try to emphasize.

There is—not to get too corny about it—a sense of community there that I certainly don't feel when I go to Whole Foods or Key Food.

I don't have a template. I try to wing it each time. I'm sure that I am, in fact, asking very similar questions, but I never wanted to become so rote that I'm just reeling off questions from a boilerplate email I have. I try to make it a little more individual.

I'm very intent on not making it a literary performance in any sense of the word. I just want to stay out of the way as much as possible. I want to get the information out there, and I love getting quotes from people who knew the person. I don't want to

have some kind of flourish that's mine. So mostly it's a question of staying as invisible as possible.

WHAT STILL AMAZES ME IS THAT WE ARE INDIVIDUALS AND EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN STORY. IT'S A TRUISM, BUT IT'S GREAT TO FIND OUT AGAIN AND AGAIN.

Is it ever difficult to speak with family members or friends for the stories?

Yes, I always prefer email, because I think for both sides, they get to sort of gather themselves more than if you're on the phone. There have been times when people aren't comfortable writing it out, then I've talked to them. Sometimes it's been hard for them, and I certainly tread lightly. I'm not a muckraking obituary writer. All I want to do is memorialize these people, not find out some hidden truth about them.

What do you take away from writing about death so often?

What still amazes me is that we are individuals and everyone has their own story. It's a truism, but it's great to find out again and again. And it's very often very touching to see the impression people made on other people, even if it's just tangential. After they're gone, people still leave this sort of resonance with other people. And I pick up on that.

It does reinforce this sense I have that we've created—not to get too grandiose about it—but we have created this low-level sense of community, which, especially in these times, I feel is kind of rare and worth preserving. Now, luckily, we're all united in the fact that we're all going to die, so maybe that will keep us at least together in that sense.

Emmett Lindner works on the breaking and trending news desk at The New York Times.

NEW BOOK AND DIGITAL ARCHIVE OFFER GLIMPSES INTO COOP'S 50-YEAR HISTORY

August 26, 2025



August 26, 2025

By Leila Darabi

Park Slope Food Coop members, staff and curious Brooklynites gathered for an evening of eclectic history this June at the Center for Brooklyn History, exploring the rich and sometimes contentious history of the Coop. The event marked the debut of a newly digitized archive of the *Linewaiters' Gazette* and the launch of a new book, *Park Slope Food Coop: 50 Years of Cooperation*, written by Coop member Sun Yu. *New Yorker* staff writer and Coop member Alexandra Schwartz moderated a conversation between Yu and Coop co-founder Joe Holtz, all of which was recorded and is now view-

able on the Center's YouTube channel.



Alexandra Schwartz, Joe Holtz and Sun Yu. Photograph by Rod Morrison.

Marcia Ely, Director of Programs at the Center, opened the event by announcing the archive's public launch. She called past issues of the *Gazette* "a mirror, not only to the Coop's 50-year history, but to Brooklyn's history and to our national story."

Despite dominating recent Coop General Meetings and the *Gazette* letters section, the words "Israel," "Palestine," "Gaza" and "boycott" did not come up once during discussions of historical disputes at the Coop.

LETTERS BRING TO LIFE PAST CONTROVERSIES

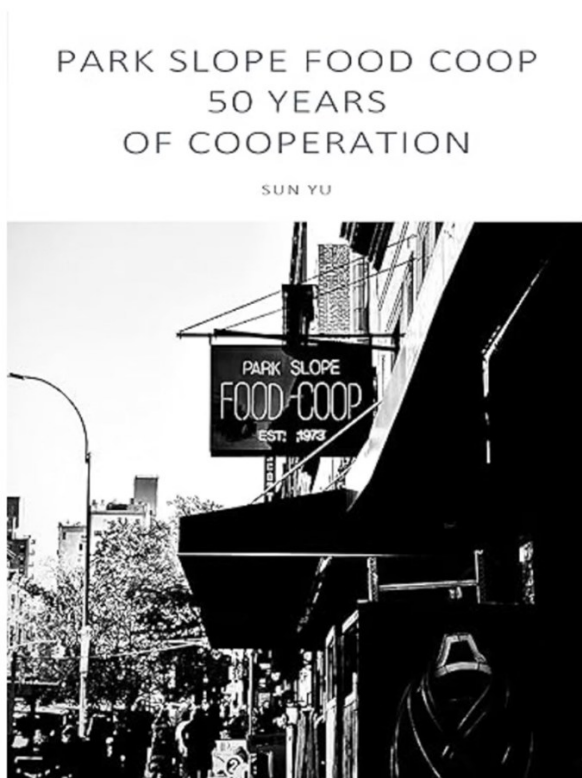
"I just thought this was the most amazing, incredible organization that I had ever

seen,” Yu said when asked what inspired him to write his book. “The story deserved to be told,” he added.

Sourced exclusively from past issues of the *Gazette*, Yu’s book offers a lively recounting of the Coop’s founding, early challenges, enduring debates and distinctive charm. He especially enjoyed reading the impassioned letters to the editors submitted by members over the years.

Yu began the project during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, when sifting through old issues became a kind of meditative routine. Friends in his native South Korea, stunned by his descriptions of a member-run supermarket in Brooklyn, encouraged him to write the book.

Park Slope Food Coop: 50 Years of Cooperation is now available for purchase at the Coop for \$9.



Sun Yu’s book. Photograph by Caroline Mardok.

A STORY OF COEXISTENCE

In her widely read 2019 *New Yorker* article, “The Grocery Store Where Produce Meets Politics,” Schwartz captured the Coop’s singular blend of earnestness and discord.

Speaking to the *Gazette* following the book event, she noted:

I think what you see in the book—and this is the Coop story—is, first of all, people trying and failing and trying again to live together. The Coop is a huge success story about coexistence, and for that reason it is also about endless quarrels and squabbles, because that’s really what coexistence is. And you see people’s passion, which is both moving and enraging.

“I LOOK AROUND TODAY AND I SEE YOUNG PEOPLE, SO I FEEL LIKE WE’RE STILL ALIVE,” SAYS COOP CO-FOUNDER JOE HOLZ.

WORK MAKES IT WORK

Holtz, in addition to cofounding the Coop in 1973, became its first paid employee in 1975. He and the other founders were in their twenties when they launched this grand experiment in cooperative retail.

At one point during his decades of leadership, Holtz even organized a study group for staff, inviting them to analyze what caused other similar cooperatives to fail. One case study stuck with him: “They didn’t do a good job of bringing in younger people, and it just went away [when the founders retired],” he told the audience. “I look around today and I see young people, so I feel like we’re still alive.”

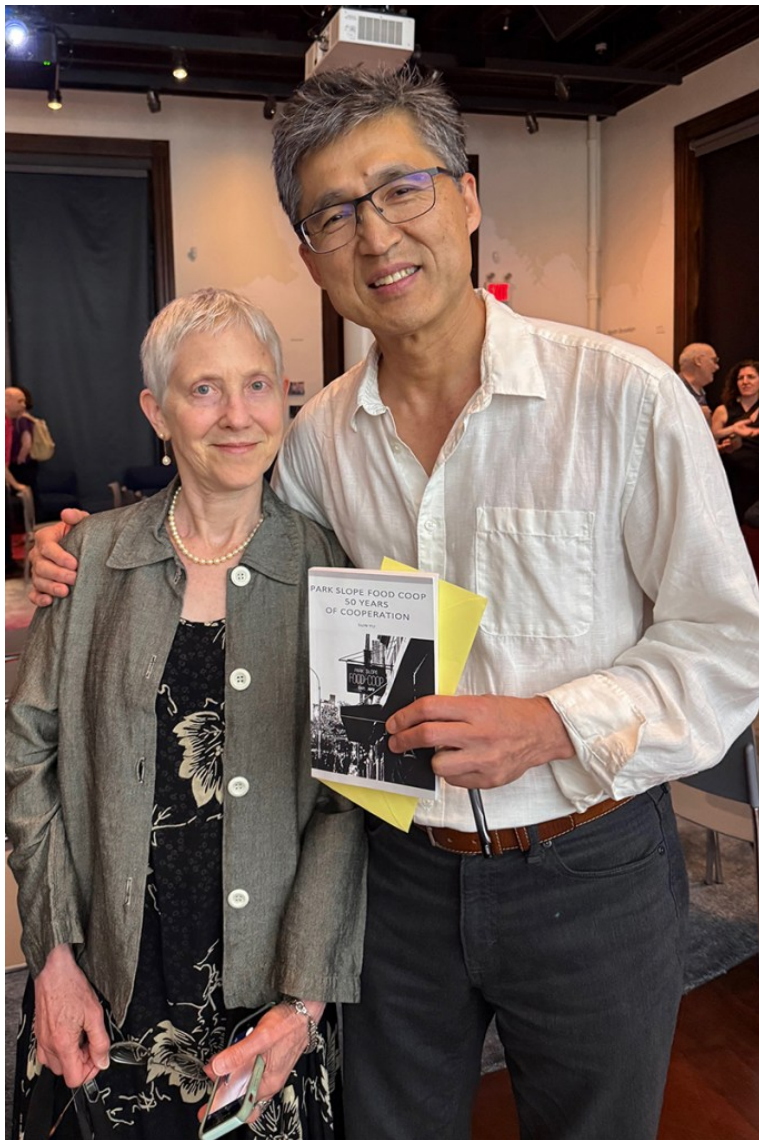
Holtz remains steadfast in his belief that the Coop’s work requirement is central to its success—and its fairness. “If you don’t make everybody work and start letting some people buy their way out of work, that sets up a class system,” he said.



Sun Yu, Joe Holtz and Alexandra Schwartz at the Center for Brooklyn History. Photographs by Rod Morrison.



Sun Yu, Joe Holtz and Alexandra Schwartz at the Center for Brooklyn History. Photographs by Rod Morrison.



Sun Yu, sharing his book after the talk with *Linewaiters' Gazette* artist and archivist, Deborah Tint. Photograph by Rod Morrison.

A CHEESE COUNTER DISAPPEARS

Yu recalled being amazed when a friend first brought him to the Coop in 2007. "I saw that it worked. That was the moment. I saw everyone working, stocking vegetables and fruit. And I just immediately wanted to be part of it," he said.

One detail from early years at the Coop that stuck with him was the old cheese counter. "It was this community touchpoint," he said. "You'd tell another member what you wanted, and they'd weigh it and have it ready by checkout."

THE DIGITIZED *LINEWAITERS' GAZETTE* ARCHIVE IS NOW ACCESSIBLE THROUGH THE CENTER'S DIGITAL COLLECTIONS PORTAL.

Holtz reminisced about the cheese counter as well: "There was a sense of connection, like the person behind the counter cared." Cheese slicing eventually moved to the basement when the Coop expanded because, as Holtz explained, the counter took up a lot of space and "every square foot mattered."

THE GAZETTE ARCHIVE GOES DIGITAL

The digitized *Linewaiters' Gazette* archive is now accessible through the Center's digital collections portal, where readers can access PDFs of past *Gazette* issues. Archivist Alice Griffin and Reference Librarian Liza Katz began digitizing the collection in 2013, and Deborah Tint, the Center's Special Collections Cataloger and a longtime *Gazette* illustrator, later joined the work. A grant from the Metropolitan New York Library Council funded the last mile of the project.

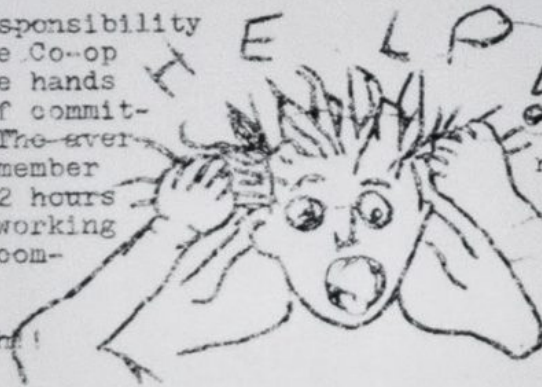
THE LINEWAITER'S GAZETTE

Official Newsletter of Park Slope Food Co-op/Bklyn, NY, Oct. 27, 1973

Dear Folks,

This may be the last "Line Waiter's Gazette" you will read. If there is continued lack of active participation on all levels and continued financial losses, the Park Slope Food Co-op Store will be forced to close. The outcome will be decided at the General Meeting on Tuesday, October 30, 1973 at 7:30 PM.

The main responsibility for running the Co-op is still in the hands of a handful of committee members. The average committee member puts in 5 to 12 hours per week (!!) working for the Co-op compared to most people's 3 hours per month! These people are tired and overworked and the time period for which they have volunteered is over on October 30th. If other



If enough people volunteer there will be no need for people to put in excessive time and energy as is happening now.

The continued existence and efficient functioning of the Co-op can only be realized if there are VERY LARGE committees.

In this way, it will not be, as it is now, dependent on a few individuals expending abnormal amounts of energy. The future of the Co-op

Sample of the old *Linewaiters' Gazette*.

THE LINE WAITERS' GAZETTE

SEPT. 22 1973

In case you haven't noticed, the line at the coop is longer than ever. Everyone shows up early to get their share of the limited amount of food. If there was enough food, people could show up all throughout the day, not wait and still get food. There isn't enough food because there isn't enough money to buy what we need. In fact the coop is still losing money. Fund raising, loans, etc. have been suggested as possible solutions. A plan of action will be discussed at the next general meeting - so please think about this and come, TUESDAY SEPT. 25, 7:30 at the Mongoose.

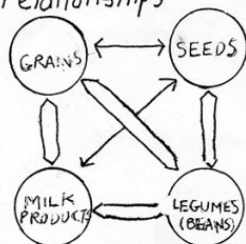
Don't forget to sign up for work requirement

CATS ARE UP FOR ADOPTION - SPEAK TO COORDINATOR

NEWSLETTER IDEAS? CONTACT JINI 638-7396 KATHY 788-1808

BALANCING PROTEINS WITHOUT MEAT

In order to get the full benefit of the proteins in your food, you need to eat foods which together supply you with all the essential amino acids. Proteins in one food, complement the proteins in another. This is especially important for those of us who eat little or no meat. The chart below shows complementary protein relationships



□ means groups are generally complementary

↔ means only some items in each group are complementary

For more information read DIET FOR A SMALL PLANET by Frances Moore LAPPÉ

Sample of the old *Linewaiters' Gazette*.

As of August 2025, issues from 1973 through 1987 are available online, with additional batches covering 1988 to 2006 expected this fall. The Coop's website also hosts past issues of the *Gazette*, through August 2021. That August the newsletter went fully digital at LinewaitersGazette.com. Both collections include some gaps. For example, no issues could be located from 1974 or 1980, and some issues from 1973 and 1975 are missing.

Tint and her colleagues are working with Coop staff to track down members who might have held on to missing editions (and have asked that anyone with physical copies from the missing years contact the *Gazette*). Holtz recalled the occasional surprise discovery while working with the archive team: "I would see another issue from [a missing] year just on my desk, brought by someone anonymously," he said. "It was

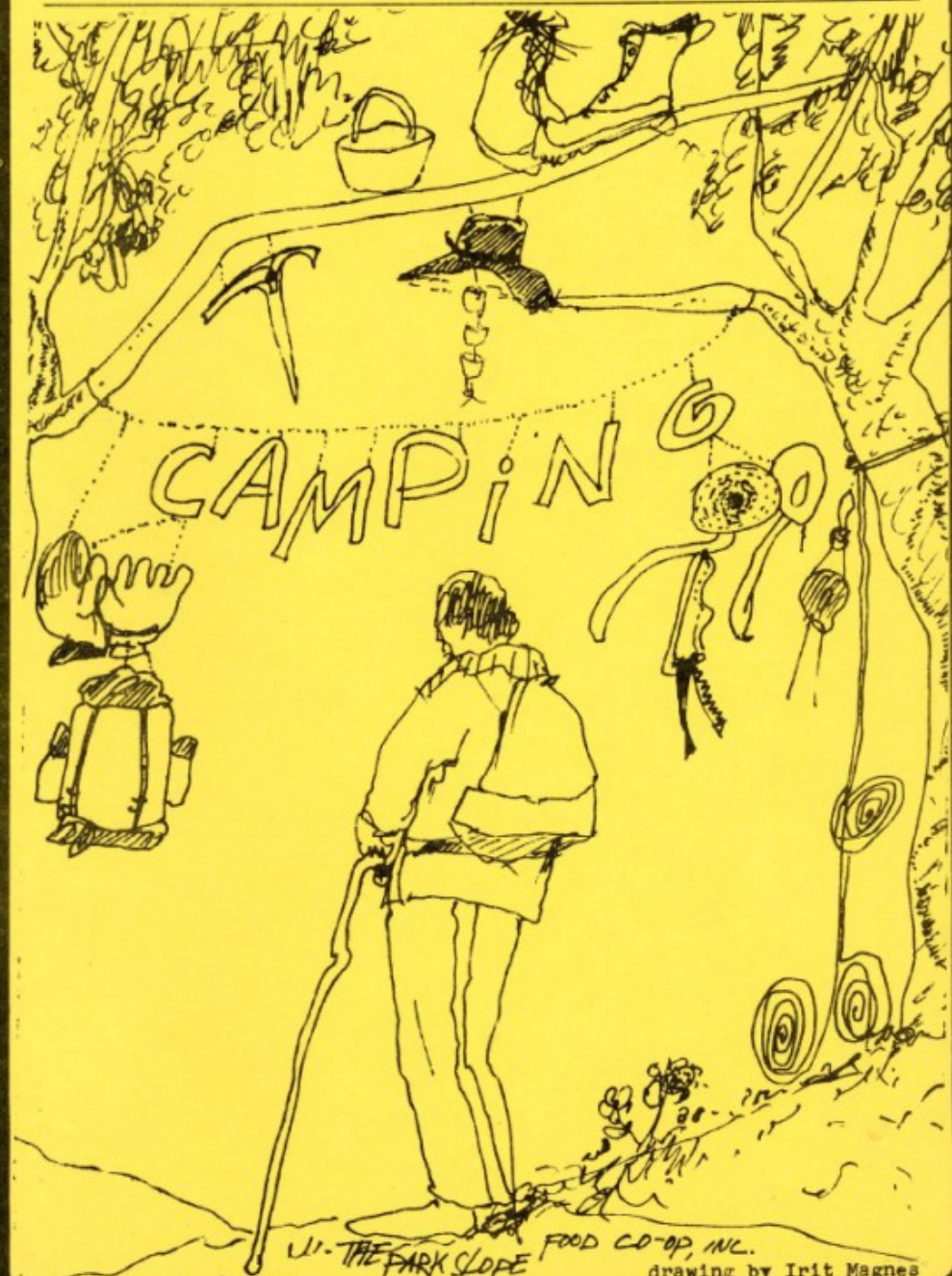
great.”

Linewaiters Gazette



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
OF THE PARK SLOPE FOOD CO-OP, INC.

June 15, 1978



111 - THE PARK SLOPE FOOD CO-OP, INC.

drawing by Irit Magnes

Gazette from 1978.

Linewaiters Gazette



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
OF THE PARK SLOPE FOOD CO-OP, INC.

March 8, 1979



Gazette from 1979.

ILLUSTRATING HISTORY

In a blog post for the Center, Tint wrote that poring over early issues offered a glimpse into the Coop's "pragmatic idealism" and revealed how "process and policy were developed on the fly" in the store's early days. In a call with the *Gazette*, she shared that one of the highlights of the endeavor had been rediscovering the expressive cartoons of *Gazette* illustrator Rod Morrison.

As part of the archive's public debut, Tint's own illustrations were on display the evening of the event.

THE COOP'S STORY LIVES ON

In his retirement letter to members earlier this year, Holtz summed up what kept him going for five decades:

I have stayed because of the overwhelmingly positive energy and thoughts so many of our members have about the Coop; I have stayed because of how much our members care for the Coop and feel connected to their Coop.

As Yu noted, the Coop's history isn't just worth preserving, it's worth participating in. "That's the thing that amazed me from the start," he said. "It's a supermarket. But it's also a story."

Leila Darabi joined the Gazette as a reporter in 2016. She posts photos of the food she makes with Coop ingredients on Instagram (@persian_ish). On September 24th, she will lead the next Coop cooking class, featuring techniques and recipes for cooking a seasonal favorite: eggplant.

MEMBER SUBMISSION: CASE FOR THE LINEWAITERS' GAZETTE AS DIGITAL KNOWLEDGE BASE

August 26, 2025



By Tim Hospodar, Member of PSFC Board of Directors

January 28, 2025

During our Coop's December 2024 General Meeting, a member interrupted the proceedings with a point of information in order to reference the *PSFC Guide to the General and Annual Meeting*. They drew our attention to Committee Election Procedures in Section VIII. This section's item A, about candidate eligibility, includes the instruction for all Coop Committees to announce openings in the *Linewaiters' Gazette*. Only minutes prior to this interruption, I was speaking to the assembled members about an

election in October, at which, as a present member serving on the Board of Directors, I abstained from voting. The lack of sufficient information I cited resulted from debate at the October GM regarding the election's announcement in the Gazette.



Image of a screenshot showing Instagram @foodcoop account's post driving traffic to Linewaiters' Gazette with a visualization of the Agenda Committee's call for nomina-

tions, 06 November 2024, credit: author

Performing due diligence during a meeting, on an iPhone 15, isn't ideal. Do you use the *Gazette's* Table of Contents—i.e., the Committee Info section? Do you go post to post, using the left/right buttons at the bottom of the page? Do you leverage the tags hiding at the bottom of each post in a subtle, desaturated color—e.g., #2024-11-05—which collates all posts for said issue? And when you don't find what you are looking for, should you conclude it was deleted, hard-to-find, unprinted or never submitted?

Not finding the information you need in Instagram; not finding emails or texts or mail from our Coop; finding it tacked to the Coop Corner; and finding it on the Coop website are all moot points in consideration that the Election Procedures single out the *Gazette* as a single source of truth unless we introduce a debate about the temporal qualities of all these channels. And it's worth noting that the *Guide to Meetings* was published in 2011 with 2016 amendments—before the pandemic accelerated the digitization of the *Gazette*—when the printed resource was truly a paper trail. Recent discussions at GMs about the *Gazette* returning to paper seem timely!



Image of a photograph depicting an infographic hanging in the produce section at the PSFC that illustrates the various sweet potatoes known to be carried at the Food Coop. 23 January 2023, credit: author

I'm not submitting an opinion against printed materials. Instead, I want to promote the *Gazette* expanding as a digital knowledge base boasting domain expertise and transparency. The fifth principle of cooperation's focus on education can be interpreted as a reminder that knowledge sharing is a critical element of community. And a knowledge base enables our sharing. Sharing is more than workshops upstairs or on Zoom. Where's the playbook for a successful second location; how do we offboard executive decision-makers; can we inform new members what is an "end-cap" and

which ones are dedicated to new products, fancy products, or magically discounted products? Why do some bananas go from green to black and what's with all these potatoes? It is not useful to trap this info in signs and various digital channels—some of which expire on your phone after 24 hours. While it is important to meet members where they are—or where their eyes fall—we also need a persistent, digital library.

When not serving the Food Coop, Hospodar can be found wearing a Computer Scientist hat—fixated on information management and process improvements.

LINEWAITERS' GAZETTE SEEKS COORDINATING EDITORS

August 26, 2025



November 5, 2024

The Linewaiters' Gazette has been the Park Slope Food Coop's official newsletter since its inception in 1973, when the *Gazette* was mimeographed and distributed to the Coop's then few hundred members. Since it went digital in 2021, the *Gazette* has had over half a million views and more than 130,000 visitors to its WordPress site.

The *Gazette* currently seeks two Co-Coordinating Editors to provide leadership to the entire *Gazette* workforce, which includes four teams of 15 member-workers who collaborate to write, edit, produce and illustrate a new issue every three weeks.

The Coordinating Editors will work together as a team, in coordination with a staff member, to strategize long-term planning for the newsletter, while also being involved in immediate problem solving. The role includes helping to create fair submission and editorial policies; serving as a sounding board and resource for Developmental Editors, Production Editors and the Letters Editor; learning the inner workings of the *Gazette*, with an eye for improvement; recruiting and facilitating trainings for new workers; and resolving conflict, among other things.

Requirements:

- Minimum of 3-5 years of experience in editing or production in the publishing sector
- Possess excellent judgment and strong communication and listening skills
- Able to work with diverse groups of people
- Flexibility to work an irregular schedule to support the *Gazette* teams

Prerequisite: One year of Coop membership immediately prior to applying.

If you have the relevant work experience and Coop tenure and are interested in serving the Coop in this important capacity, please email your résumé and a cover letter explaining your interest and qualifications to: GazetteSubmissions@psfc.coop. Please

put “Coordinating Editor” in the subject line.

The two candidates selected for these positions must be approved by the General Meeting and will hold three-year terms.

Diversity Statement: We seek an application pool that reflects the diversity of the Coop’s membership.

MAY GM: MEMBERS DIVIDED ON ISRAEL, ALIGNED IN DISDAIN FOR PLASTIC WASTE

August 26, 2025



By Leila Darabi

The May General Meeting kicked off on May 28 at the Prospect Park Picnic House with a charged open forum focused not only on members' differing views on the Israel-Hamas War, but on how those views are communicated. The chair committee reminded members throughout the evening that singling out other members in their statements would not be tolerated and repeatedly asked members to refrain from shouting out comments from the audience.

Members also discussed a proposal to bring back the print edition of the *Linewaiters' Gazette* and a proposal to create a new committee to reduce the Coop's plastic use.

OPEN FORUM

During the open forum, several speakers called on fellow members to embrace civility. (Note: Coop members are not required to share their full names during the open forum.)

Seth Pollack shared that he felt some materials being circulated ahead of the Park Slope Food Coop Board of Directors elections reflected the division among members and stated "the very, very least that I feel we can do is answer the call of civil society groups and join the BDS movement" referring to the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign.

ONE MEMBER REPORTED THAT LABELS OF ISRAELI PEARLED COUSCOUS HAVE BEEN DEFACED ON THE COOP SHELVES AND CALLED THE BEHAVIOR "PETTY AND UNCOOPERATIVE."

Jonathan T. claimed that another Coop member had been called a Nazi by another member and that "hate has no place here and neither does BDS."

Amos reported that labels of Israeli pearled couscous have been defaced on the Coop

shelves and called the behavior “petty and uncooperative.”

Several members addressed the ongoing debate around whether the Coop would need to change its bylaws to permit virtual or hybrid meetings and voting by proxy.

Dena Beard stated that she works for the Tow Center for Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, a potential venue to host a GM that included a BDS discussion or vote, and that she felt threatened after receiving a voicemail from a member warning her that hosting such a meeting would incite violence. Tensions peaked when Beard said that one voicemail had come from a member whom she mentioned by name.

MJ reported that Professor Michael Haber had, pro bono, drafted a legal memo after reviewing the Coop’s bylaws and that in his opinion the Coop would not need to change bylaws to legally host hybrid or virtual meetings.

Alex also commented on the benefits of virtual meetings, noting that virtual meetings and votes worked well throughout the pandemic.

In response to the open forum, General Coordinators offered some clarifications:

Joe Holtz shared that the Coop’s lawyer had reached the opposite conclusion and thought the bylaws would indeed first need to change before a virtual or hybrid meeting could be considered. He noted that the Board had received both decisions.

GENERAL COORDINATOR ELINOR ASTRINSKY REPORTED THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN UPTICK IN NON-MEMBERS ENTERING THE STORE AND CAUTIONED SHOPPERS AND WORKERS TO KEEP THEIR VALUABLES CLOSE AT ALL TIMES.

Ann Herpel also clarified that Brooklyn College had offered to host a GM where a BDS vote could take place but that, before signing a contract, the General Coordinators

asked the agenda committee to contact the four members who had previously submitted items related to a vote on the boycott of products from Israel to confirm that these items could be brought to the May GM. Herpel shared that:

“All four members declined the May 28th date and instead requested to postpone their items until after another pending agenda item about changing the 75% supermajority currently needed to approve a boycott was discussed and voted on,” and closed stating: “Though it took more years than many would have liked, the [General Coordinators] did fulfill our commitment to secure a location.”

TREASURER’S REPORT

Holtz also reviewed the 12-week financial statement shared ahead of the meeting covering the period from April 21 through May 28, 2024. He shared that there has been a 7.65% increase in average weekly sales compared to the previous year, but that he expected this average to fall to around 5% by the end of the year.

Holtz also took questions, clarifying that the Coop currently marks products up 24% over wholesale, a 1% decrease from the previous year, which impacts profits.

COORDINATOR’S REPORTS

General Coordinator Elinor Astrinsky shared what she called a “nuts and bolts” report with updates across a range of topics. Among these, she reported that there has been an uptick in non-members entering the store and cautioned shoppers and workers to keep their valuables close at all times. She also stressed that anyone working a shift should wear close-toed shoes.

ALEX GODIN SHARED THAT “THE COOP FEELS MORE AND MORE LIKE A WHOLE FOODS AND LESS LIKE A COMMUNITY,” LAMENTING THE LOSS OF FREE CHILD-CARE AND THE STORE BULLETIN BOARD.

Herpel read a statement from the General Coordinators taking issue with how their views were characterized during the April GM during a vote on the Coop's HR policies.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Bart DeCoursy of the International Trade Education Squad gave the lone committee report sharing awareness that hearings are ongoing to settle Mexico's ongoing dispute with the U.S. over corn. Mexico refuses to import genetically modified corn, which accounts for most corn grown in the U.S.

NOSTALGIA FOR A PRINT EDITION OF THE *LINEWAITERS' GAZETTE*

For the first of two agenda items for discussion, Alex Godin shared that "the Coop feels more and more like a Whole Foods and less like a community," lamenting that the loss of free childcare and the store bulletin board during the pandemic also contributed to this feeling. The proposal: reinstate a print version of the Coop's newsletter, the *Linewaiters' Gazette*.

Eric Lewis, a former co-coordinating editor of the *Gazette* voiced enthusiastic support and suggested investigating ad sales as a way to cover costs and testing out a new print version for a year to see what worked. The *Gazette*, he said, "is a place for budding journalists... and deepens and strengthens the sense of community [at the Coop]"

Coop member Morgan also shared, in support of the proposal, "print ephemera is an amazing way to create an embodied sense of community."

Coop member Kian asked what the cost would be to reinstate a print edition. In response, Herpel shared that in the last 30 days, the online *Gazette* has received 31,000 views of articles and 10,000 visitors. She also said that to revive the print edition, the Coop would need to replace several computers, resubscribe to Adobe software and cover the cost of printing.

Staff member Jana Cunningham shared that the Coop is working on adding classified

ads to the digital *Gazette*.

Coop member Yasmine also voiced support, noting that digital news can be changed but that “in print, the work of journalists is set in stone.”

TRACY FITZ PROPOSED THE CREATION OF A COOP CLIMATE CRISIS COMMITTEE AND COLLECTED EMAILS FROM MEMBERS WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED TO JOIN.

In response to a question about the kind of paper used to print the *Gazette*, Herpel clarified that the prior *Gazette* was printed on post-consumer newsprint by a union print shop.

The second and final agenda item, introduced by Tracy Fitz, proposed the creation of a Coop Climate Crisis Committee (4Cs) and collected emails from members who would be interested to join.

“In 2019, the Coop went through 49,000 plastic produce bags a week. We now use 57% of that, 28,200 produce bags a week because we have clamshells instead!” In a lively presentation, Fitz pulled sample bags and plastic clamshells out of a bag and waved them around, inspiring laughter across a room that an hour earlier had felt quite tense. “We’re all addicted, [to plastic]!” she cried. A suggestion to wrap General Coordinators in plastic as an artistic action drew applause.

During the discussion that followed, no one disagreed, but members shared additional thoughts on ways to reduce plastic.

Zoe added that compostable bags also include fossil fuel and aren’t necessarily a safe alternative.

Sunny shared that she had a similar idea to create a committee and asked interested

members to email plasticfreefoodcoop@gmail.com to join, noting that she was open to joining forces and creating a single Coop Climate Crisis Committee.

Lois Wilken urged people to read her recent *Gazette* submission “Love Letter from a Mermaid: On Plastics and Your Health.”

For historical context, Holtz shared that the Coop had in the past banned plastic produce bags, then brought them back. “There’s a lot of education to do,” Holtz said. “We also sell something in aisle four to wash and reuse plastic bags.”

CLOSING

Board member Brandon West called a vote to close the meeting during which the board voted to accept the minutes from the April GM.