

SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

September 16, 2025

Letters to the Editor



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIEL WILLOW

ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSION AND VOTING (THANKS + UPDATE)

To the editors,

I wanted to thank Membership Coordinator Jason Weiner for shouting out my proposal

during his July GM presentation!

As a quick overview, my proposal (agenda item #915) is to make the decision-making process at the Coop more convenient and accessible by:

1. Setting up an online forum to discuss agenda items ahead of GMs.
2. Having an “early voting” option for agenda items.

For full details of the proposal and a feedback form, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/psfc-online-forum>

A member who found my proposal through Jason’s presentation suggested setting up a group to collaborate on the proposal, so I’ve created a Discord server for folks interested in getting involved. I will send an invite link for the server to those who indicate in the feedback form that they are interested in helping out.

Thanks again to Jason and to anyone who takes the time to consider my proposal!

Sincerely,
Yejia Chen

A More Democratic Coop Is Possible

Dear Coop members,

For those who don’t know, a fantastically thorough and well-researched proposal for online asynchronous discussion and voting (“async” for short) was recently submitted to the Agenda Committee. See Yejia’s letter above for an introduction!

Online asynchronous discussion is the only format that would give every member the opportunity to voice their opinion. Even hybrid discussions, despite increasing attendance and voting, would still hit their time limit as most in-person ones do.

Async also enables deliberate, productive conversation between members, truly maximizes voter turnout and complements GMs regardless of their format.

Plus, async could be implemented without a bylaws amendment, by considering online votes to be mail ballots or advice for the next board meeting (these methods might require legal confirmation), or by having the board approve accepting online votes ahead of each upcoming meeting.

And async would be implemented after the Coop resolves the already (briefly) scheduled boycott items, so members can discuss it without fearing ulterior motives from its supporters or opponents.

Despite the recent conflict in the Coop, I don't think it's controversial to say that serious flaws in our decision-making procedures have been exposed (e.g., board norms, venue scheduling). I hope members on both sides of the boycott and hybrid issues will read the proposal and submit their feedback (positive or negative) and thoughts on Coop democracy.

With member input and support, I'm optimistic async could translate this all-time high interest in Coop governance into a more engaged, collaborative membership. If you want to test it out for yourself, Yejia has set up a sort of async "free sample" by creating the online comment board and Discord group—check it out and bring your big ideas for the Coop!

In cooperation,
Tyler Yandrofski

The Newly Minted Plastics Reduction Committee Is Ready To Go

Dear Coop Community,

We, the members of the new Plastics Reduction Committee, wish to thank everyone who turned out for the General Meeting on July 29 and voted overwhelmingly to support our proposal for formal committee status. For those who couldn't make it, we invite you to find out what all the excitement is about through our Committee Fact Sheet, available for your perusal [here](#).

Those of you whose memories do not scroll back as far as the 1950s—most of you, right?—might find it difficult to imagine a world without plastic. We know that this work is going to take a lot of imagination, creative thinking and engaging with the Coop community.

We're excited to roll up our sleeves and get to work. It is our goal to improve options at the Coop to meet the needs of members who are concerned about the health and environmental impacts of plastic food packaging. We also aim to educate those who want to learn more about these impacts. We'll work toward these goals while being guided by the collaborative, affordable and healthy spirit of the Coop.

We welcome your participation through feedback. You may reach us at reduce.plastic.psfc@gmail.com.

With hopes for a healthier, happier world for you and your children,

The Plastics Reduction Committee

Lesley Broder, Ricki Jaeckel, Zoë Kaplan-Lewis, Jessica Roff, Anne Schoeneborn, Abigail Shelton, Matthew Spencer, Lois Wilcken

Toward a More Inclusive Coop

Coop Community,

When the Equity, Access and Community Committee surveyed members, I reflected on how, during my 47-year membership, our Coop had become increasingly whiter and wealthier. So much has changed about the nature of what we sell... more and more luxury goods, no self-bagged bulk, fewer items that would appeal to those with limited income.

What would it take to make the Coop more diverse, more welcoming to people who cannot afford much of what we sell or might feel uncomfortable in our current store? What would it take to get the word out to potential members who don't know someone already in the Coop, who don't travel in similar social circles, who don't speak English as a first language?

We could contact community organizations, like CHiPS, the Center for Family Life and the Red Hook Initiative, asking for their input on how to do better outreach to their communities. We could schedule targeted info sessions and open houses.

We also need to ask ourselves, what would I be willing to do to make this Coop more inclusive, more reflective of a broader cross-section of New Yorkers? Would I be willing to pay a larger markup so that people who need financial support could pay a lower markup? Would I be willing to see fewer luxury products on the shelves and more inexpensive basics? What could I do to make people from other communities feel welcome?

There are so many ways we could evaluate our Coop: How many cheeses do we sell? How many craft beers? How many products in plastic clamshells? Who can afford to be a member? How do we care for the most vulnerable among us?

How do we open our door in a way that lets more people in?

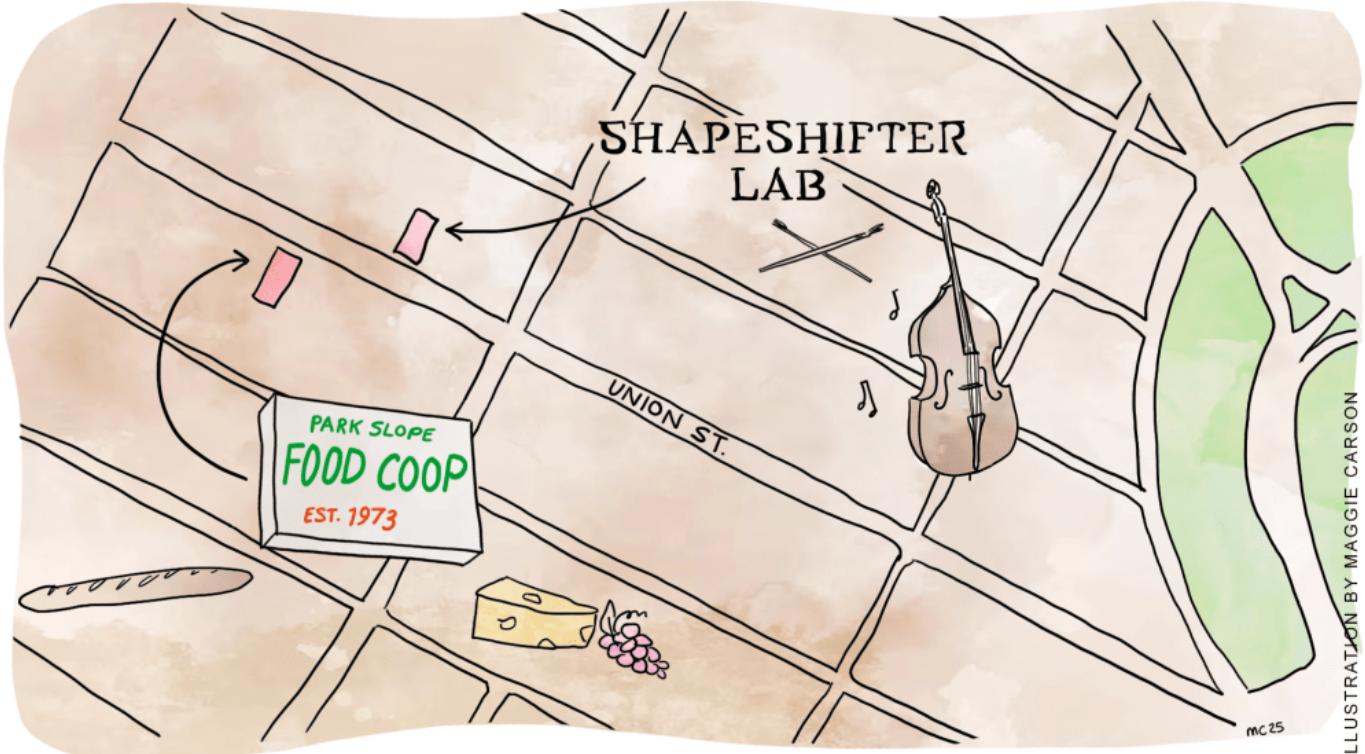
We have so much; let's share.

Sincerely,
Alyce Barr

ShapeShifter Offers Art, Jazz and Community — Right Across the Street

To the editor:

How many members of our Coop know what a treasure of artistic value is just across the street at 837 Union Street? It's called ShapeShifter Lab "Brooklyn Music and Arts Space." I admit I'm writing this with a personal motive. Right now and until the end of October, there's an art exhibition sponsored by Good Neighbors of Park Slope (GNPS), an organization that many PSFC members are a part of.



GNPS is an all-volunteer, nonprofit, aging-in-place organization open to residents of Park Slope and surrounding areas who are age 55 and over. Our goal is to create a network of members to make life in our neighborhood easier and more fulfilling, while maintaining our autonomy and quality of life in our homes.

Back to the art exhibition at ShapeShifter, there are several exhibitors who are PSFC members. I won't name them. You have to go see their art! Hours at ShapeShifter are quite "shifty." When there's an event, they are open. When it's open, the moment you walk in, and even before you open the front door, you will see two amazing paintings staring you in the face. They are by our mom, Florence Siegel (1921-2014). Although she never got to be a member of PSFC or GNPS, she did live in my South Slope house for her last three years.

So if you like jazz and/or art and want to support local artists, please go check out ShapeShifter and the current art exhibition!

Stop in one hour before each event on their schedule to take a look to find times to go.

Martha Siegel and Loren Siegel

Your Vote Is Meaningless Here

Dear Members,

Welcome back from summer vacation. Coop governance is cracking.

The August General Meeting (GM) resulted in the Board of Directors unilaterally ignoring membership input and announcing their intention to fast-track hybrid meetings. Remember, we had a Coop-wide referendum defeating the idea.

So now your vote means nothing.

How was this allowed to happen? At the April 2025 GM, the BDS faction arranged for the hostile takeover of the GM. The BDS-friendly Board then introduced a proposal to hold said rejected referendum. This opened the door to your now effective irrelevance.

Most of our Board supports boycotting Israel, and their representative global BDS movement openly support Hamas, who identify kidnapping and rape as resistance. Hybrid voting is their stated method to achieve a boycott that the majority of our members don't want. Your vote, and our cooperative model of governance, is the price you pay. The fear of speaking out against a divisive faction that in effect supports a genocidal fascist terrorist group is palpable. It is indifference, it is cowardice, and one day too late you will have always been against it.

In protest I retract my extra Covid-era investment. I call upon membership to follow my lead and join me at coop4unity@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Jesse Rosenfeld

On Hybrid Meetings and the BDS Debate

Dear Coop members,

The Board of Directors has again acted outside our Coop's longstanding tradition of basing decisions on member votes. Our *Guide to the General and Annual Meeting* states clearly that the Board votes only on issues already decided by the membership.

The current issue is hybrid meetings, and the push is complicated by attempts from Members for Palestine (M4P) to link the Coop to the BDS Movement. Whatever one's views on technology or accessibility, we must not confuse a governance question with an outside political campaign.

We must disentangle hybrid meetings from BDS.

BDS is not a neutral, nonviolent human rights initiative. Its leadership praised the October 7 attacks and remains tied to groups that promote violence. It does not improve life for Palestinians and offers no vision of peaceful coexistence. Instead, it seeks to delegitimize Israel and normalizes hostility toward Jews.

In June's record-turnout election, members decisively rejected the two identified pro-BDS candidates. M4P has failed to significantly increase the number of votes in their favor from 2024, demonstrating limited support. Coop members voted to remain focused on food, affordability and cooperative values. The membership has rejected BDS.

Hybrid meetings deserve careful study on their own terms. Committees could explore feasibility, technology and costs, then report back for a membership vote. That process respects our governance model. But the Coop should firmly close the door on BDS resolutions. Continuing to entertain them only wastes energy and divides members.

The General Coordinators, Chair Committee and Agenda Committee are responsible for stewarding the Coop. They have every reason to declare, “The Coop will no longer entertain motions related to BDS.” If they won’t, the only explanation is a lack of desire or a lack of will.

Sincerely,
Barbara Mazor

Remember What Never Again Truly Means

Dear Coop Members:

The PSFC I joined nearly 30 years ago was one I’ve always believed in. The sense of diversity, equity and inclusion defines our solidarity. Yes, DEI is a very good thing, unlike the lies and horror Nazis like Trump are pushing.

But in my entire life, I have always believed that those of us who value these principles share a common bond in the rejection of genocide. Community is always fraught with internal disagreements and dissension. But I draw the line at those who feel, and often quite belligerently, that Israel has a right to commit war crimes, ethnic cleansing and—as Jewish scholars and Shoah survivors have written, among others—quite clearly genocide by the far right-wing Likud government.

There is NEVER a justification for genocide. People who are blasé or supportive of this

should be ashamed to walk into the Coop. I think they should reconsider their views and if they are unable to recognize that butchering and maiming tens of thousands of babies, children, aid workers, journalists, families and starving them to death is wrong, perhaps they should not be a part of the PSFC community. I invite them to shop elsewhere and end their membership.

To those struggling and open to changing their views, painful as it may be—I respect and honor this profound moment. Remember what Never Again truly means.

For we ALL, living in the U.S. must face the struggle of a nation built on slavery, racism and genocide. Our world hurtles down the highway of self-inflicted extinction if we do not end global heating. Middle East and Gaza gas fields motivate much of “Western” support of genocide in order to secure yet more foul fuels with which to burn our only planet to death.

Sincerely,
George Carter

Toward a More Democratic Future Coop

Fellow Members,

The last Board election is behind us, we have a new General Coordinator and democratic practices are challenged everywhere we look. We have a unique opportunity to reflect on the recent Board election and strengthen our democracy here in our coop. One concrete step we can take: honestly repair harm done when former GC Joe Holtz sent a personal email to the full membership, taking advantage of his access to the Coop email list and directing members' votes in the upcoming election.

The Personnel Committee, General Meeting and Board of Directors need to take ac-

tion to prevent future abuse of the email list and substantially biased GC writing in the *Gazette*. They can ensure that, as a retired GC, Joe Holtz is entitled only to write individual letters to the *Gazette*, like any other member, and not those that express any favored position of power. Though Joe is now retired, he should be informed in writing that his past actions were inappropriate and unacceptable.

Coop Management and the Personnel Committee owe a public apology, in the *Gazette* (and in email), to Taylor Pate and Dan Kaminsky, who were vilified by Joe Holtz. They can acknowledge that it is likely that Joe's email impacted the election, and while we are not doing the election over, we must take steps to make sure nothing like this ever happens again.

In cooperation and for democracy,
Kathy McCullagh

Call for Grassroots Organizing While Working Towards Boycott

Dear Coop members:

I've just returned to Brooklyn from a year spent out of the country. Active in Palestine solidarity work before my departure, I came back to a sickening sense of *déjà vu*. Every day brings new Israeli atrocities in Gaza, atrocities that are fully underwritten by the U.S. government using our tax dollars. Meanwhile, even as manufactured famine rages, our Coop still hasn't made the decision to boycott Israeli products. In fact, despite a wildly successful petition campaign, we haven't even managed to take the basic democratic step of putting the issue to a vote.

As a long-time and proud Coop member, I feel both frustrated and ashamed, and I know these feelings are widely shared by other members. Is this really who we are as a Coop? What does it mean if we can't do the minimum to uphold our mission state-

ment promise to avoid complicity in exploitative practices?

In the face of these sentiments, we should not give up, as I won't. This is the time for creative approaches. I call on my fellow members to join me to advocate for justice for Palestine in all the ways we can think of. Here are a few examples: talking to people about Palestine as we wait on the checkout line, publicizing which Israeli products are currently being sold so that shoppers can avoid them, speaking out against genocide at GM Open Forums, identifying explicitly as PSFC for Palestine at marches and protests, and building an alliance with the folks at Greene Hill Coop, which voted to join the BDS movement last year. Yes, we urgently need to enact an official boycott—but while we work to make that happen, let's be working toward a sturdy grassroots culture of Palestine solidarity at the PSFC.

Sincerely,

Kumru Toktamis

Member since 1993

Let's Organize to Rid Our Coop of the Political Operatives

To the Members:

Our board is now acting independently, and their strategies to re-create our Coop and interfere with our structure and the staff is in full swing. They think they are justified in their actions and because they are legally our board, the legal architecture gives them an advantage.

Every year there is a board election and board members' terms are three years. I propose we organize with one another now so we can work to eventually rid our board of members with a political agenda.

If you are interested in doing this, please email me at PoliticsOut@proton.me.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Tobier

Peaches

Dear Coop staff:

Can you please investigate and report on the situation with peaches this year at the Coop? They have not been very good. I thought it might be just my perception, but I have asked friends and everyone says they feel the peaches have been terrible this year. Why? Are we doing something different with buying or storing? Was it just a bad year for peaches? What gives? I look forward to peach season all year. This year has been a disappointment.

Sincerely,
Aida Stoddard

Produce Buyer Cecelia Rembert responds with insights into the Peach Process and this year's crop: The current produce buying team at the Coop has been buying fruits and vegetables for the Coop since 2017, and our produce department overall has had very little turnover in this time. We are storing peaches the same way we always do: they are never refrigerated at the Coop, whether on the shopping floor or in the basement. We have been ordering from the same suppliers and growers, mostly. Our conventional peaches are generally Southern U.S. in the early season. In organic, we try to get Watsonia (fourth-generation family farm in South Carolina), and in conventional we try to get Big Smile (also a family- run commercial farm in South Carolina).

We did find both variations of South Carolina peaches to be inconsistent in quality; a good lot would be followed by one that was mealy. My research into the South Carolina peach season this year reports a lot of cool temperatures and rain in the early summer, which maybe impacted the harvest quality? We know that mealiness is generally a result of “chill damage” from refrigerating peaches at any point post-harvest— maybe it can also be caused by cool weather? It sometimes takes us a few days to fully assess how a current lot of peaches we have received is ripening, because they come in to us hard. We pivoted in and out of South Carolina peaches several times in the early summer, trying to catch different varieties and lots. As a result of the inconsistency, we pivoted earlier than usual out of conventional South Carolina peaches to New Jersey peaches (Fralinger’s) as soon as they became available.

But, from mid-July onwards we have been selling local IPM yellow and white peaches from a network of local farms and we have found those mostly very good. And it was a wonderful nectarine season!

JULY GENERAL MEETING REPORT

September 16, 2025



August 26, 2025

By William Doran

A boisterous crowd quickly filled the Atolye Venue and Bar on 6th Street in Gowanus for the Coop's July 2025 General Meeting (GM). General coordinator and committee reports followed a lively open forum, as did a full agenda that included committee elections and a vote to officially create the Plastics Reduction Committee.

OPEN FORUM

Nine members came up to share thoughts on a variety of issues, including hybrid meetings, the boycott of Israeli products and the Agenda Committee election to take place that evening.

Sentiments in favor of the boycott have grown significantly more pointed over the course of 2025. Six of the nine members who came up spoke very passionately about the war in Gaza. Member Gabriel Young quoted UN Secretary General António Guterres in calling it "the moral challenge of our century," stating that "Palestinians are

starving to death: 88 children as of yesterday.” He continued, “and yet we continue to stock food from Israel at our Coop.”

Member Damien Neva echoed the gravity of the situation: “Facing annihilation for the last 22 months, Palestinians in Gaza are now being subjected to a starvation campaign of an industrial scale by Israel.”

Member Noah Potter then came up to speak out against the candidacy of Adrien Weibgen for membership on the Agenda Committee. Chair Committee Member David Moss asked Potter to leave the stage and the venue after Potter accused Weibgen of expressing personal support for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement and highlighting her personal social media accounts on a flyer that was passed out on the sidewalk prior to the meeting.

NEW GENERAL MANAGER JOE SZLADEK ADDRESSED THE HIGH TENSIONS FELT DURING THE OPEN FORUM AND RECENTLY AT THE COOP SURROUNDING THE BOYCOTT OF ISRAELI PRODUCTS.

Lastly in the Open Forum, member Makrand Bhoot reminded us of the Coop’s 50-year commitment to supporting CHiPS (Community Help in Park Slope) with donations of food and member labor. Members can select a shift at CHiPS for their work slot. Bhoot asked why the CHiPS shift does not have an assigned coordinator.

GENERAL COORDINATOR REPORTS

Before providing a thorough treasury report, new General Manager Joe Szladek—who succeeded Joe Holtz—addressed the high tensions felt during the open forum and recently at the Coop surrounding the boycott of Israeli products. He discouraged the publication of individuals’ names, saying, “This does really feel like it crosses a line. Members are being publicly named, and there are flyers being passed out about

them."

Szladek also mentioned Members' concerns about their physical safety on both sides of the boycott issue, stating that he felt compelled to seek help from Community Affairs and other mediation organizations to get advice on how to manage the tensions. After he rhetorically asked, "What do we do?" an audience member boldly shouted, "We vote!" This referred to a general membership vote on boycotting Israeli products—which lies at the heart of the current conflict.

COOP SALES THROUGH JUNE 2025 WERE AT ROUGHLY \$25,000,000—AN INCREASE OF ABOUT 10.1% OVER THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR.

TREASURY REPORT

Coop sales through June 2025 were at roughly \$25,000,000—an increase of about 10.1% over the same period last year, due to a number of factors: The Coop is now open 7% more hours; the markup on goods increased by 1% as of February 2025 and membership is approximately 4 to 5% higher than it was last year. Inflation also impacts this number.

The Cost of Goods Sold (COGS) as of June also went up from \$18,000,000 to \$20,000,000 over the same period last year. Gross Margin Dollars to date—the money we keep—is sitting close to \$4,900,000, while operating expenses were \$120,000 higher than that. As of August 2025, the Coop is operating at a slight loss. The Coop does have non-operating income that helps make up the difference—which includes things like new member investments and interest earned on Coop investments—totaling \$160,000.

THE COOP'S GRAB-AND-GO REFRIGERATOR IS NOW BACK UP AND RUNNING. HIGH

TARIFFS ON EQUIPMENT ADDED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE COST AND THE TIME IT TOOK TO REPLACE THAT CASE.

GENERAL COORDINATOR REPORT

General Coordinator Elinoar Astrinsky provided assorted updates on Coop operations and staff, along with a few announcements. The Coop's grab-and-go refrigerator, typically offering Court Street Grocers sandwiches and sushi (among other treats), is now back up and running. High tariffs on equipment added significantly to the cost and the time it took to replace that case.

The Coop is changing the way food processing shifts are structured by combining bulk and cheese shifts into more generic food processing shifts to make member labor more flexible addressing day-to-day workloads. Astrinsky also mentioned that Food Processing is looking for squad leaders in both bulk and cheese. Interested members should have worked shifts on the squad they're interested in leading and speak directly to food processing staff during their shift.

The Coop has also hired a new bookkeeper named Jacob Slaton. He is currently training under Kathy Hieatt, who will retire soon.

Astrinsky brought attention to author Sun Yu who wrote a book about the Coop called *Park Slope Food Coop: Fifty Years of Cooperation*, written solely based on archived editions of the *Gazette*.

Astrinsky added that the Coop is holding a special summer food drive to support the soup kitchen and pantry CHIPS. Donation boxes are located near the Coop exit through the end of August, or you can donate via a QR code at each checkout.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Member Sarah Schenck made some announcements on behalf of Wordsprouts, the

Coop's longstanding reading series that features published authors who are also Coop members. The next event is Wednesday, September 24, at 7 pm at the Old Stone House of Brooklyn, at 336 3rd Street. It will feature Carina Finn's book, *Feast and Famine*. RSVP to Wordsprouts events at Eventbrite. Members may also make suggestions for future events or nominate featured speakers via email at psfcwordsprout-s@gmail.com. You can also follow the Wordsprouts squad on Instagram at [@foodcoop-wordsprouts](https://www.instagram.com/@foodcoop-wordsprouts).

THE COOP COOKING SQUAD HOSTED ITS FIRST IN-PERSON COOKING CLASS SINCE THE PANDEMIC ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 30, AT THE COOP. THE CLASS FEATURED BREAKFAST TACOS.

The International Trade Education Squad (ITES) provided an update on tariffs. The Trump Administration continues to negotiate tariffs and extend deadlines for agreements, making for a very uncertain future. The squad also highlighted that the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is coming up for its six-year review next year. ITES is seeking new members. If interested, contact the squad via its Bluesky Account at trade@psfc-trade.bsky.social.

The Coop Cooking squad hosted its first in-person cooking class since the pandemic on Wednesday, July 30, at the Coop. The class featured breakfast tacos, and it was also broadcast on Zoom. You can watch the classes, which are hosted monthly, here on the squad's You Tube page. Next class will feature an eggplant dish by *Gazette* reporter Leila Darabi on Wednesday, September 24, at 7:30 pm. Learn more at foodcoopcooks.org or on the squads Instagram page: [@instagram.com/foodcoopcooks](https://www.instagram.com/foodcoopcooks).

AGENDA

The evening's agenda included two elections: Members approved Adrien Lorenzo Weibgen (190-21) and Leslie Schultz (185-10) to serve on the Agenda and Personnel

Committees, respectively, following brief presentations of their experience and relevant qualifications.

THE PLASTICS REDUCTION COMMITTEE WILL NOW BECOME AN OFFICIAL WORKING COMMITTEE AT THE COOP TO WORK WITH STAFF TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO SHRINK OUR RELIANCE ON PLASTICS.

The Plastics Reduction Committee was also approved by the membership by a vote of 181-14. This new committee made a full presentation of their proposal to the GM in January 2025 and will now become an official working committee at the Coop to work with staff to develop strategies to shrink our reliance on plastics. Members may email the new committee at reduce.plastic.psfc@gmail.com to offer suggestions, ask questions or participate.

The agenda concluded with a beautiful presentation by Coop Membership Coordinator Jason Weiner titled “A Call for Cooperative Renewal,” which guided members through a critical reconsideration of the general meeting format and how we make decisions. His presentation compared the Coop’s somewhat antiquated form of governance to its sophisticated membership management and inventory systems.

He noted, “Despite increasing membership tenfold, the general meeting format hasn’t meaningfully changed in decades.” He continued, “Democratic Coop governance should involve all members, but our system doesn’t come close.” His proposal focused primarily on ways the Coop can use technology to push the meeting format and decision-making processes into a more equitable and inclusive future.

He noted the inconsistency of attendance at meetings and the fact that only roughly 1% of the Coop’s entire membership are able to attend a single, in-person meeting (and vote). You can find Weiner’s full presentation on You Tube as well as the full text of Weiner’s presentation. Weiner also solicits questions and comments from member-

ship via an online submission form.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Board President Brandon West came to the stage to lead the Board of Directors meeting. Directors Tim Hospodar and Lynn Husum were also present. The Board voted to officially accept the advice of the membership, as well as the items voted on during the meeting.

Board Member Husum presented the findings of a hybrid meeting referendum paper recount called by the Board at the June 2025 Annual Meeting. The recount took place at the Coop on Wednesday, June 23. Husum reported that 6,371 votes were cast online via Simply Voting and 133 paper ballots were cast, for a total of 6,504 votes. Of the 133 paper ballots, 79 were yes and 54 were no. No discrepancy was found between the initial count and the recount of the paper ballots. Two Coop members working a Flex shift on the shopping floor were tapped at random to conduct the recount in the presence of Board Members Husum, Keyian Vefai and Hospodar, along with the two members who were the original paper ballot counters, General Coordinator Matt Hoagland, IT Coordinator Gerald Barker and Coop General Manager Joe Szladek.

William Doran is a licensed architect, educator and food writer based in Brooklyn, NY. Though originally from New Orleans, LA, he has been a Coop member and New York City resident since 2022. He has taught cooking classes for the Coop (foodcoopcooks.org) and publishes a free quarterly newsletter at adventurouscooks.com.

VOLUNTARY ARTICLE: PLASTICS IN TESTICLES? THAT'S RIGHT, GUYS!

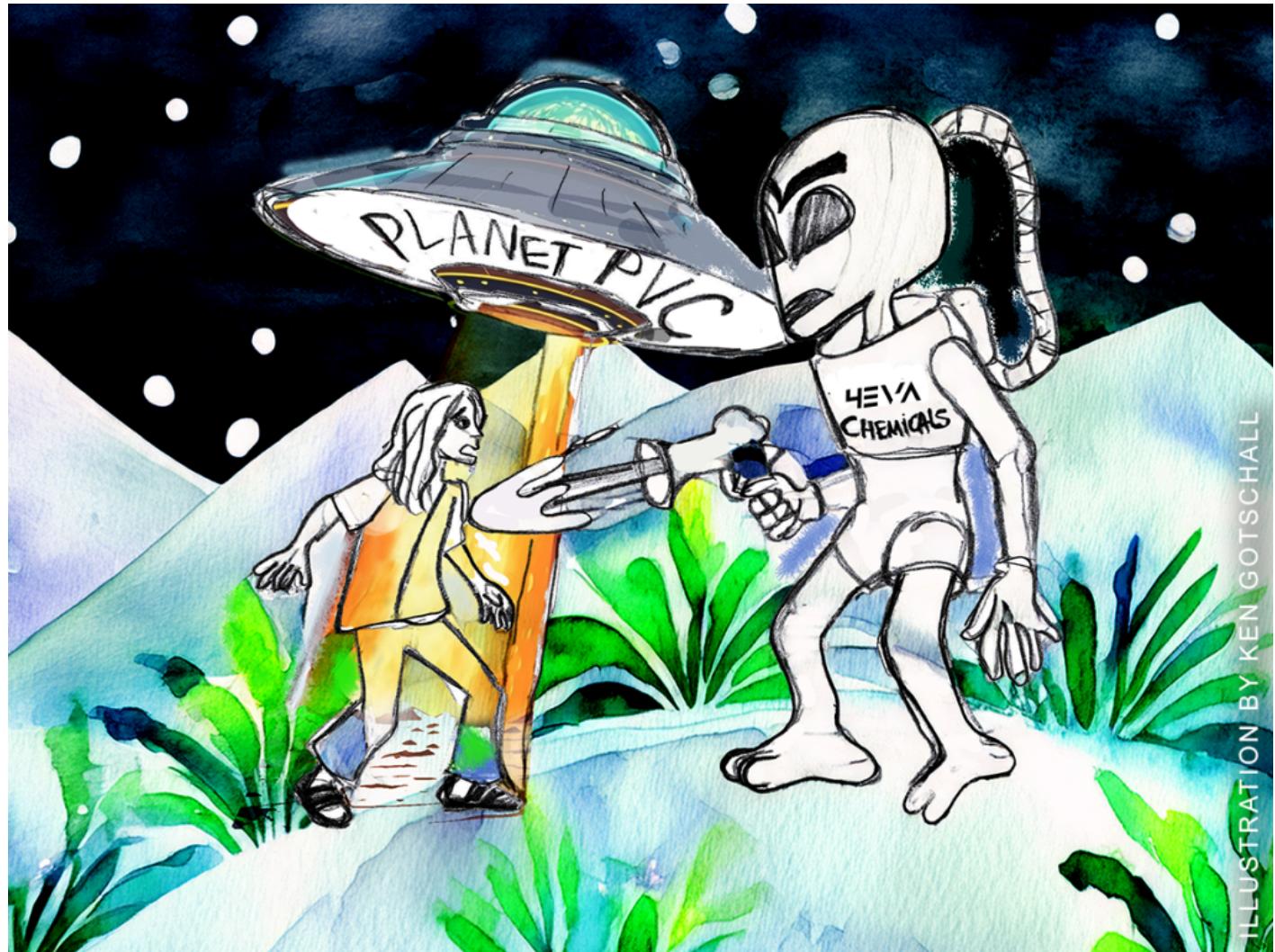
September 16, 2025



June 24, 2025

By Lesley Broder, Ricki Jaeckel, Zoë Kaplan-Lewis, Jessica Roff, Anne Schoeneborn, Abigail Shelton, Matthew Spencer and Lois Wilcken

Just one year ago, NPR and several other media sources reported on a study conducted at the University of New Mexico and published in the May 15 issue of the peer-reviewed *Toxicological Sciences*. A team of researchers studying microplastics in both human and canine testicles did not expect the quantity that they found in humans—actually three times higher than in dogs. The study followed a smaller one in China, in 2023, that also found microplastics in testicles. The studies establish no firm causal connections with human health issues, such as the well-documented global decline in sperm count, but they make a powerful argument for further research, and a good dose of precaution.



You don't have testicles? That doesn't let you off the hook. In March 2024, *The New England Journal of Medicine* published the results of a three-year study that found a correlation between micro- and nanoplastics (MNPs) in heart tissues and heightened risk of disease. Just last month, *Nature Medicine* published yet another study on MNPs in decedent human brains, and the scientists found a possible correlation with dementia.

A MICROPLASTIC, BY THE WAY, IS A SHARD OF PLASTIC MEASURING NO MORE THAN FIVE MILLIMETERS IN LENGTH, AND A NANOPLASTIC IS ONE BILLIONTH THE SIZE OF A MICROPLASTIC.

Interested now? A microplastic, by the way, is a shard of plastic measuring no more than five millimeters in length, and a nanoplastic is one billionth the size of a microplastic. The latter is capable of passing through a cell wall. Besides the polymer at the base of plastic (a chain of molecules made from fossil carbons), the industry adds up to 16,000 chemicals to impart properties like durability, flexibility, texture and color. These include known toxins. The New Mexico study found an abundance of polyethylene (PE) and the carcinogenic polyvinyl chloride (PVC). Even a nanoplastic carries the chemicals. They never go away. And we would be remiss for not mentioning that *plastic particles like to migrate from packaging into food.*

We are members of the Coop who have been meeting regularly since July 2024 to form a Plastics Reduction Committee. At the January General Meeting (GM), we delivered a warmly received presentation of our reasons for wanting to work with the Coop community to reduce our use of plastics (especially single-use), provide alternatives for shoppers, and educate members about the crisis and what we can do. We were on the agenda for a vote to establish the committee at the May GM, but other pressing issues postponed the vote. We are not on the agenda for the June GM, but we are optimistic we will soon come up for a vote.

Meanwhile, we will continue meeting and learning. If you are interested in learning more, we can make the following recommendation (downloadable):

Landrigan et al. 2023. "The Mindaroo-Monaco Commission on Plastics and Human Health." *Annals of Global Health* 89(1): 23, 1-215. <https://annalsofglobalhealth.org/articles/10.5334/aogh.4056>.

Questions? You may reach us at reduceplasticpsfc@gmail.com

JANUARY GENERAL MEETING REPORT: HIGH TENSIONS ON A COLD NIGHT AND A COOP DIVIDED

September 16, 2025



March 11, 2025

By William Doran

Coop members warmed themselves around pots of soup outside the Prospect Park Picnic House, awaiting entry for the January General Meeting (GM).

Once everyone was settled inside, the evening's agenda hovered above gathered members on a large projection screen. While there were other topics discussed, three contentious issues took up most of the two-and-a-half-hour gathering: boycotts, hybrid general meetings and committee elections.

OPEN FORUM

Several members spoke in favor of boycotting Israeli products and expressed disappointment in two General Coordinators' articles published in the January *Gazette*.

Some members who spoke that night chose to only give their first names.

A Coop member, Jim, argued that, "When the Coop was founded in the '70s, we boycotted products from apartheid South Africa, despite the fact that the United States, under multiple presidents, had official policies protecting South Africa."

Another member, Judy, pushed for open discussion: "The Coop is a member-led organization dedicated to democracy and to making the world a better place. Members need to be able to have this discussion. It's been put off and refused to be discussed for over 10 years."

Aaron, a member, labeled the General Coordinators' stance in the *Gazette* as fear-mongering: "The place to mediate disagreements is at these general meetings. As a Jew, I'm pretty familiar with fear-mongering rhetoric around the non-violent protest movement for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS)."

A self-organized group, Coop 4 Unity, spoke against the boycott, calling for unity among members and extending an invitation to engage boycott supporters in dialogue. Another member, Barbara, directly criticized boycott supporters, saying: "You don't understand the movement you're promoting, or you are willfully lying to all of us. And to this group I'm going to ask you, do you value the Coop more than you hate Israel? And to everyone else I ask, if you value the Coop, then please, we have to do something to stop them."



Aaron



Hana



Hima

Boycott supporters have also self-organized as PSFC 4 Palestine, publishing a zine called *The Olive Press*, which they distributed outside before the meeting, along with the aforementioned soup.

Members criticized the 75% majority voting threshold for boycotts, citing important decisions regularly made via simple majority, such as board elections and markup increases. To applause and laughter, a Coop member, Hana, sardonically identified several other things that could become policy with a simple majority: “We could allow suspended members to shop, but only if they wear a scarlet ‘S’ around their neck. We [could] make all Coop general meetings black-tie only. We could even refrigerate beer.”

Another member, Hima, criticized the concept of in-person-only general meetings: “This group of people here, we represent 2% of the membership. Why should we be the only exclusive club that gets to vote on any issues?” Hima continued, “During

COVID, we saw that technology is definitely available and accessible. It's exploitative that 100% of us work, but only 2% of us can actually vote."

"I CAN'T MEASURE THE IMPACT. IT WOULD BREAK MY HEART FOR PEOPLE TO LEAVE THE COOP JUST BECAUSE THEY DON'T AGREE WITH A COOP POLICY," SAID JOE HOLTZ, REGARDING THE PROPOSED BOYCOTT.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Coop's net income dropped by about \$525,000 from the previous year, due largely to a 1% reduction in the base markup, which returned to 25% at the start of the 2026 fiscal year in February. In 2020, members voted to increase the markup from 21% to 25% to combat pandemic losses. It was later reduced to 24% to alleviate some of the pressure on members.

Treasurer and General Manager Joe Holtz stressed of the decrease, "You can't eat the markup, but you can eat the food." He highlighted cost of goods sold (the value of goods prior to markup) as a better indicator of how the Coop performed which was up roughly \$3 million over last year. He noted that member equity—the value of what we all own together, minus debts—stayed consistent from 2023 to 2024 at \$8.73 million.

Member questions shifted the focus back to boycotts, requesting financials to support the General Coordinators' stance against the boycotts that were published in the *January Gazette*. The January 7, 2025, piece, with a byline from the "General Coordinator Team," titled, "Coordinator's Corner: Our Coop at Risk," warned, in part: "Financial fallout from a boycott could force tough decisions such as raising prices or laying off staff."

Holtz responded, "I can't measure the impact. It would break my heart for people to leave the Coop just because they don't agree with a Coop policy." Calling attention to

thousands of members on both sides of the issue, Holtz said that taking a stance is a risky prospect, and that the Coop cannot afford to lose members. "I believe that cooperators are precious, and I don't want to lose any of you."

GENERAL COORDINATORS' REPORTS

General Coordinator Lisa Moore validated member complaints about adherence to election protocols, citing that the Agenda Committee missed the deadline to publish an announcement in the *Gazette* prior to elections last year, and it did not announce the opening at the September 2024 GM.

She quieted doubts, however, about the legitimacy of the election in question, saying: "There's no evidence suggesting that these committees intentionally omitted their announcements from the *Gazette*. Nor should the omission cast doubts on the validity of the elections."

She called for an update to the Coop's Guide for General Meetings and Annual Meetings to include guidelines on vacancy announcements and potential consequences for omitting the required steps mentioned. Moore noted, "All committees should be held to the same standard to ensure transparency, cultivate trust and encourage participation among all members." She invited interested members to submit their information to psfcac@gmail.com, reiterating that there are still openings on the Agenda Committee.

Lastly, she indicated that the Coop has identified several 800-seat (or larger) venues for in-person voting on hybrid meetings. The Agenda Committee will reach out to the proposal's presenters to select a date.



Lisa Moore



Joe Szladek

General Coordinator Joe Szladek closed the presentation of GC reports by reminding everyone of the Coop's early closing on February 1 for annual inventory.

EIGHT MEMBERS PROPOSED A NEW COMMITTEE TO SHRINK COOP RELIANCE ON PLASTIC. THE COMMITTEE WOULD SOLICIT COOP-MEMBER PARTICIPATION AND WORK WITH STAFF TO IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT CONCRETE CHANGES.

MEMBER COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Pension Education and Reporting Committee solicited members to submit questions for the Committee's upcoming annual report in the *Gazette*.

The Personnel Committee shared progress on its search for a new General Manager

to replace Joe Holtz, who will retire in June of 2025. The committee anticipates selection by late spring of this year. The job posting and salary are publicly available on the Coop's website.

The International Trade Education Committee highlighted potential impacts of Trump Administration tariffs and encouraged members to read "What New Trump Tariffs Would Mean for the Coop," published in the *Gazette* last December by *Gazette* reporter Leila Darabi.

PLASTIC REDUCTION

Eight members proposed a new committee to shrink Coop reliance on plastic. The committee would solicit Coop-member participation and work with staff to identify and implement concrete changes.

Fifteen-year-member Jessica Roff supported the need for such a committee by sharing some staggering statistics: "Of all the plastic produced [in the U.S.] since 1950, 91% has never been recycled." She continued, "Many of the things that make plastic problematic to recycle are the same things that harm our bodies and the environment. There are more than 16,000 chemicals in plastic."

Roff and many of the other presenters advocating for the committee's creation combat environmental hazards in their professional lives. They outlined opportunities and challenges while acknowledging the Coop's significant history of environmental advocacy and valuable insights that could come from Coop members and staff.

Members expressed gratitude for the group's work and posed questions about how to forge ahead. Things like reuseable, member-provided containers came up, as well as frustration over the lack of plastic-free options for some food items, like milk. Presenters emphasized that this must happen in community to be successful. Members can submit questions and ideas to reduce.plastic.psfc@gmail.com.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Meeting Chair Imani Q'Ryn announced that this may be her last meeting, after serving the Coop for 20 years. Many cheered and offered standing applause, expressing thanks for her service.

The Board of Directors voted to accept the advice of the general membership. Director Tim Hospodar addressed how the Coop's board of directors meets, acknowledging that this portion of the GM is the one time that the board is mandated to meet, however brief.



Imani Q'Ryn seated at left

7:00 – 7:15	Members of the Board of Directors
7:10 – 7:25	vote to accept the advice of the
7:25 – 7:40	members as expressed by any votes
ors'	taken at tonight's GM, and on the
7:40 – 7:55	minutes of previous GMs as
ee	presented by the Secretary.
7:55– 8:00	
8:00 – 9:30	
Meeting 9:15	



Tim Hospodar

He suggested leveraging this time as an opportunity to more adeptly engage general membership and discuss important issues. Hospodar proposed, "...Perhaps we can maximize this chance to discuss topics that the board finds concerning or disconcerting. He continued, "The Board of Directors does not have a dedicated part of the meeting to report out or raise our concerns."

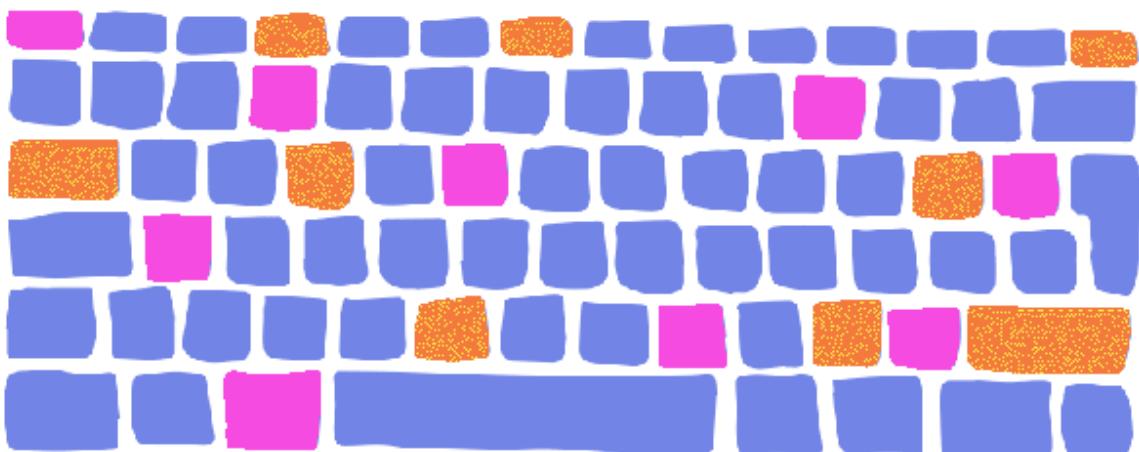
Ironically, the discussion was cut short for the sake of time, and the GM adjourned.

William Doran is a licensed architect, educator and food writer based in Brooklyn, NY. Though originally from New Orleans, LA, he has been a Coop member and New York City resident since 2022. He has taught cooking classes for the Coop (foodcoopcooks.org) and publishes a free quarterly newsletter at adventurouscooks.com.

MARCH 11, 2025

September 16, 2025

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES; MAKING IT THROUGH AIRPORT SECURITY ISN'T ONE

To the Editor,

Today at LaGuardia, I accidentally handed the TSA guy the other white plastic card in my wallet—my Coop ID.

"Uh, do you have a driver's license?" he asked really nicely. I laughed at my blunder. As I passed through, he grinned and said, "Thanks for being a member."

Sasha Aslanian

A NUMBERS GAME

To the Editor:

We wanted to share with the membership a quirky and educational game we play as a family after a PSFC shop. We save the receipt and take turns quizzing each other about purchased items and their attributes. The game almost always starts with asking everyone at the dinner table to guess the most expensive item, followed by the least expensive item from that particular receipt. From there, we often shift to "most expensive per pound" and "least expensive per pound." Eventually the game ends up being "how much were the raspberries?" "how much were the walnuts?" followed by guesses and the receipt-holder indicating to guess higher or lower.

We have found that the kids really get into this game and its lighthearted competitive nature. Plus it's a fun way to introduce kids to economics and give them an understanding of grocery costs. We thought that other members and their kids might enjoy the receipt game too!

Suggested Questions for the Receipt Game:

- Most expensive item (and second most expensive item)
- Least expensive item (and second least expensive item)
- Heaviest weighable item
- Lightest weighable item
- Most expensive per pound
- Least expensive per pound
- Total number of items
- Total cost of the shop
- How much is X?

Matt Knapp and Rachel Natov

PLASTICS REDUCTION

Greetings:

Our family's plastic waste stream includes a lot of plastic containers that held various berries purchased at the Coop. At some of the Farmers Markets, berries are sold in paperboard containers instead.

Perhaps the Coop buyer of berries could explore switching to a paperboard container with our vendors and see if that's feasible. If the lack of the cover is an issue, I note that we sell Physalis berries from Colombia with a plastic film cover secured by a rubber-band. It is a separate piece from the plastic box.

In Cooperation,

THIS IS FOR ALL THE CLUELESS PEOPLE

To the Editor,

On Thursday, I ventured to the Coop looking for dietary items required for the next few days prior to a specific medical exam. The Coop usually brings some peace to my day.

Turning down the bulk aisle, my journey came to a stop due to a large U-boat in the middle of the aisle. I made my way around to find on the other side a volunteer busily texting. I hoped the person they were texting was rushing over to move the cart out of my way. As I continued looking for white and colorless food without fiber, which is the opposite to my normal cravings, I was blocked again. I politely asked this shopper to make room for me, but they didn't respond. Then I realized that they had earbuds in their ears and were probably listening to some Brahms music which was more important than others needing clear passage.

I made it out and started having a snack of my last fiber-laden apple before my exam, and a person a little older than I decided to tie their dog up to the bench right next to mine without even saying pardon or, "Is it ok to leave my dog here?" I am very pro--dog and love my own monsters, but this one who was tied up immediately started sniffing at my food, and I had to physically move the animal away from me to continue with my apple treat.

My moment of peace finally came upon arriving home to tell my dogs about the hungry one that was tied up at the bench, which I believe was put there for humans to sit on, not for dogs to drool over fellow members' laps.

Obstructedly yours,
Mark Paperno

GOODBYE TO A COOP JOB I LOVED

To the Editor:

I'm no Joe Holtz, but the Jeteresque farewell tour of the "Soul of Coop" has got me, on the brink of coop retirement myself, wondering whether I might earn a tiny asterisk in PSFC history.

Since joining, I have had only one job: walker. I love it, largely because you don't have to be inside the Coop but I also really enjoy the brief conversations, and in a few cases, the fact that they are brief. Until spring 2020, I had the same shift my entire coop career. I was planning to keep it forever. My question to the *Gazette*: Is having just one job for a whole career common? Unique? Noteworthy? Who Cares?

Even if I get the asterisk, it will have its own asterisk since, due to the global pandemic I didn't have the exact same shift my entire career. After work slots resumed, I couldn't get my Wed C week 8 a.m. shift back, took the closest thing I could get (Friday E week) and will finish my career in that slot.

Is it weird that with a US government determined to destroy the US government, global warming definitely gonna get much worse, friends terrified of deportation, and [fill in your preferred reasons for rage/fear], I'm feeling a little wistful about my walking shifts (though not wistful enough to keep doing them when I don't have to)?

I'm not trying to steal Joe's thunder. He's a hero. I guess what I want to say is that working at the Coop has been a privilege, and shopping without working will be even better.

If awarded, the asterisk can be left for me in the office.

Thank you,

Kenny Bruno

VOTING VIA ZOOM ON GM

Good morning,

My name is Patricia López. I am an active Coop member.

I am writing because I want to ask for a hybrid GM vote. Because of my work schedule, I can never make it on time and have the opportunity to vote. I assume many fellow Coop members are in the same position.

Improving the accessibility to voting online makes it democratic.

Thank you.

Patricia López

IN SUPPORT OF HYBRID MEETINGS

Dear Fellow Coop Members,

I write today in support of hybrid General Meetings. It is disheartening to me that the Agenda Committee and General Coordinators have stalled in bringing this popular proposal to a vote, after over a year since it was first brought to the Agenda Com-

mittee.

As a Coop member of nearly two decades, I know that our democratic processes are part of what makes the Coop so much more than just another grocery store. I have attended many general meetings over the years, including Zoom meetings that happened during the pandemic. These have been important moments for me to learn firsthand about Coop members' priorities and concerns, participate in the nuts and bolts of Coop governance, and to weigh in on topics from plastic bag use to markups, confirming new committee members and BDS. Casting my vote at the GM is the primary way for me to help shape a Coop that reflects my values.

At an institution that purports to value inclusion, obstructing a vote on hybrid GMs stands out as an antidemocratic and exclusive power move. I am expecting my first child this spring. I would like to be able to continue to stay connected with my Coop community and participate in decisions affecting the PSFC's future. That feels especially important during this transitional moment, with Joe Holtz's imminent retirement. It is high time that hybrid meetings were brought to a vote.

In cooperation,
Jean Rohe

HYBRID GENERAL MEETINGS

Dear Editor,

I am writing to advocate for the implementation of hybrid General Meetings at the Park Slope Food Coop. As a long-time member committed to our cooperative's principles of inclusivity and democratic decision-making, I believe that adopting a hybrid format for our monthly meetings would significantly enhance member participation and equity.

Currently, our in-person General Meetings face several limitations:

- Limited capacity: The Prospect Park Picnic House, where meetings are held, can only accommodate 240 people, representing a mere 1.5% of our membership.
- Accessibility barriers: Many members face challenges attending in-person meetings due to work schedules, childcare responsibilities or mobility issues.
- Reduced engagement: Our Coop has experienced a 9% decrease in membership since in-person meetings were suspended.

Implementing hybrid meetings would address these issues by:

- Increasing participation: Virtual attendance options would allow more members to engage in crucial discussions and votes on Coop matters.
- Enhancing accessibility: Members unable to attend in person could still contribute their voices and votes from home.
- Strengthening our cooperative spirit: By embracing technology to include more members, we reinforce our commitment to collective ownership and decision-making.

While concerns about technical challenges have been raised, many organizations have successfully adopted hybrid meeting models. With proper planning and investment in appropriate technology, we can overcome these hurdles.

As I write, we approach our next General Meeting on February 25, 2025, I urge the Board and General Coordinators to seriously consider implementing a hybrid format. This change would align with our Coop's values of inclusivity and shared responsibility, ensuring that all members have the opportunity to participate in shaping our community's future.

Sincerely,
William Clark

IF ICE COMES KNOCKING

Greetings:

If ICE comes knocking, will the General Coordinators open the doors?

That's been on my mind ever since the latest Coordinators' Corner published on February 18. They name that by "engaging in boycotts or divestments against Israel," the Coop would be exposed to "legal, financial or other harm" from Project 2025 and Project Esther. For the unaware, those are Trump's MAGA manifestos. But if you're reading this, you're most likely uber aware that Project 2025 targets everything under the sun.

I am deeply troubled by the significant risk the General Coordinators would put us, the member-owners, and our community, by capitulating to the fascists that follow those manifestos. This government is denying trans people their documents and healthcare, it is threatening the sanctuary status of cities, it is repealing OSHA guidebooks and dissolving NLRB regional offices. It has let go thousands of national park workers just this past week.

So, if ICE knocks on the doors of the Coop, will we turn over a neighbor, for fear of the legal, financial or other harm they can bring to the Coop?

These are questions that are no longer far-off hypotheticals. My community has spent the last month making rapid response plans, and we actually have to use them. It will be four more years of planning, responding and surviving. Maybe you are insulated in your privilege of being a cliché Coop member, and you think you are not in commun-

ty with anyone on the frontlines, facing direct threats every day. But you are a New Yorker, so that means you are definitely in proximity. Now is the time to do the work and be in community. That means showing up to the General Meetings, and exercising your power, so the Coop does not bend the knee to MAGA.

Lin Mo

THE ROAD TO HELL IS PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS

Dear Coop members:

Some fellow members think an Israeli boycott aligns with Coop values. Does it? The devil is in the details, and members should ask several key questions:

Is it ethical to boycott an entire nation? Why Israel?

Israel has its fair share of challenges, but were Israel as awful as BDS states, should we not boycott all products from problematic countries, including China, Turkey, Vietnam and even the states of FL & TX? Were it legal, should all citizens from those countries be banned at the Coop?

How will this work?

There is a reason the Arab boycott of Israel ultimately failed: We live in a globalized economy. There are inputs from many places in most of the products that we consume. Should all cell phones be banned from entering our premises? Do we implement a very costly & unreliable system to try to track the inputs of all the products we buy? How do we factor dual citizenship when defining Israeli ownership?

Will it help?

This is not about our economic power: The Coop only carries about ten products from Israel at any one time. Resolving conflicts requires dialogue. How does aligning with a group which boycotts academics and all forms of exchange help develop trust on the ground, a prerequisite for a negotiated settlement? If this conflict is so important to members, why not start a dialogue group?

What will be the impact on the Coop?

It has already had a negative impact on the culture and the community. For the dire economic and legal impact, please read the Coordinator's Corner articles on the subject!

The Coop is an amazing model which does a lot of good in our community. Let's not mess it up with a misguided support of BDS.

Bruno Grandsard

THE LIE OF A NEUTRAL POSITION

Greetings:

The 75% threshold was introduced in 2016 specifically to impede a BDS vote; that is the sole purpose of this policy which does not apply to any other aspect of Coop governance. In the midst of a genocide that is inextricably connected to food, water, land and agriculture, the coordinators choose to publish not one but THREE unprecedented, thinly veiled, fear-mongering texts full of wild speculations in an attempt to discourage members from voting their consciousness.

I am deeply disappointed that this is deemed acceptable. Threatening people with unsubstantiated predictions of price increases and cutbacks, playing on people's eco-

nomic fears to push their agenda. How shameful. The Coop establishment can only see “divisiveness” as something that comes from others, but not from their own actions and policies. Why are these inflammatory texts from coordinators not “divisive”? Why is erecting outrageous bureaucratic roadblocks to hybrid voting not “divisive”?

The Coop is indeed at risk, not because of some organizing, but because of its willingness to undercut itself and compromise its integrity in order to prevent what is clearly a popular measure from even being voted on. If the proboycott camp is so marginal, then why impede the vote? If it is so popular, then why are we constantly being addressed as agitators that the Coop needs to be protected from?

The answer should be obvious: Whether they realize it or not, the establishment’s claim of political neutrality is simply untrue. The constant hand-wringing over the safety and comfort of Coop members clearly does not include us. None of this discourse includes us. Just a total disregard for thousands of members; their will, their politics, their discomforts. There is absolutely an insidious racism at play here. The Coop establishment needs to wake up and include ALL of us in the body politic.

Tiffany Malakooti

YOU CAN’T WITCH HUNT THE BOSS

Dear Coop members:

Making decisions together as a diverse community can be strenuous. We must negotiate differences in our values and perspectives. Leaders of democratic organizations must host difficult conversations and facilitate decisions with multiple perspectives. It is a dereliction of duty and gross overstepping on the part of General Coordinators to inhibit agenda items they disagree with (as they are currently doing).

A recent letter (“The General Coordinators Are Not the Enemy”) accuses PSFC Members for Palestine of conducting a “witch hunt” against the GCs. This group advocates a broadly supported democratic vote on a boycott of Israeli goods, and has come against obstructions, delays and opaque processes, exposing the limitations of our democratic governance. These months and years of obstructions are detailed in the GC’s explicit opposition to fulfilling a basic mandate of their jobs: improving member democracy through hybrid GMs and enabling voting on a boycott of products from an apartheid state.

As I was addressed as a pro-Palestine Board member in the aforementioned letter, I want to respond. Let’s remember the power dynamics and leadership structures implicit in the Salem witch trials and other crusades against women and other dispossessed people throughout history. Actual witch hunts are how those with power repress peoples’ movements, criminalize otherness and create scapegoats to distract from actual sources of crisis and tension. GCs are hired by members like us and charged with running the Coop. As American democracy faces unprecedented challenges (from powerful people who describe conflicts with political opponents as “witch hunts” to victimize themselves while wielding bully pulpits to crush dissent), I hope we embrace the fruitful challenges of diversity and democracy. Land and food justice movements have always proved that local liberation is bound up with global liberation. We need the Coop more than ever to prove there are functional alternatives to authoritarianism, constant war and austerity.

*Tess Brown-Lavoie
Board Member
Park Slope Food Coop*

WANT FOR OTHERS WHAT YOU WANT FOR YOURSELVES

Dear Coop Members,

Do we support injustice? It is not just to support a government that oppresses the Palestinian people by killing them, stealing from them, wrongly imprisoning them, calling them animals, etc. The world sees the documented footage and evidence of this continuous abuse and is calling it out. Coop members have a right and a duty to speak about our Coop participating in this horror. Do the Coop coordinators believe that Palestinians don't deserve the same human rights as themselves?

With justice comes peace. Coop members seeking a boycott of Israeli products want to see the Coop stand for human rights for all people, not just a select few. Practicing free speech, organizing peacefully and refusing to benefit from Palestinian people's oppression should not be considered threatening.

Thank you,

Shahidah Tawwab

LET'S GO, HYBRID MEETINGS!

Hi,

My name is Alex Pyle, I have been a member of the PSFC for 6 years, and I would like there to be hybrid voting available for general meetings.

Thank you,

Alex Pyle

STOP DELAYING THE VOTE ON HYBRID MEETINGS

Hi there,

I find it quite bothersome that the GCs continue to delay the vote on hybrid GMs. It's clearly a very popular proposal; virtually every other community group I belong to provide hybrid meeting options, and it makes participating in meeting way easier for people (particularly for parents with young children like myself who don't have the time they used to to travel for meetings).

It also makes one wonder if the GCs are resorting to antidemocratic sabotage, perhaps intentionally delaying the hybrid policy because they know it would finally lead to us making the morally correct and long overdue decision to ban the sale of products from Israel.

I love the Coop—it seems like the only institution that isn't completely dysfunctional these days—and want to be able to attend GMs to participate in Coop business decisions. Please stop delaying the vote on hybrid GMs and make sure a vote finally happens on Tuesday, April 29.

Sincerely,

Alejandro Silva

THE PROPOSED BOYCOTT OF ISRAELI GOODS

Greetings:

This suggestion to boycott Israeli goods has come up before. When it came up previously it led to the most divisive general meeting in the Coop's history.

While I do not support Israeli actions in Gaza and the West Bank, a boycott of a few Israeli products is not an effective way forward for a FOOD store. As a food store our boycott of products that may contain glyphosate is much more straightforward. If you are concerned about Israeli attacks on Palestinians, contact your representatives and senators. For a food store, the stocking of Palestinian products is a more successful approach, and probably does more for Palestinians than a boycott of Israeli products by PSFC could.

In cooperation,

Adam Segal-Isaacson