

'LIVE SMALL, LOVE LIFE, AND KEEP GOOD COMPANY'

January 20, 2026



MEET JIM CHRISTENSEN, A RECEIVING COORDINATOR AS 'CAN-DO' AS THEY COME

January 20, 2026

By Liz Welch

Jim Christensen's eclectic resume includes being named a finalist for a Nicholl Fellowship from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for a screenplay. He was 39 and managing a 20-person staff in a large Minneapolis coffee shop and had written a blue-collar riff on *North by Northwest* that sent up gangster movies. Jim replaced Hitchcock's Madison Avenue executive (Cary Grant) scrambling on Mount Rushmore with a divorced Chicago mechanic rescuing his daughter in the lobby of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum. "I went to LA and met a bunch of agents," he said. "It was heady stuff!"

Ever since then, he said, "It has always been about finding a good day job so I could continue to write."

The recently turned 70-year-old can now add "Receiving Coordinator" (R.C.) at the Park Slope Food Coop to a list of gigs that already includes high school English teacher and soccer coach, advertising researcher and strategist, and manager/trainer of testing and hiring teams that created the TSA in the wake of 9/11. A long-distance relationship lured him to New York where he consecutively managed for the 2010 U.S. Census, was a store manager for Sterling Place, and was a "deliverista" for a 7th Ave. sandwich shop before taking up again self-employment as a painter and handyman.

"I was a sole proprietor, made a business card, and biked my ladder and tool bag all over Brooklyn to do repairs," he said. "It was great! But a bit lonely."

JIM ENJOYED GETTING TO KNOW THE PEOPLE WHO GRAVITATED TO THE REPAIR SHIFT—PAINTERS AND PLAYWRIGHTS, ARCHITECTS, AND JOURNALISTS.

Jim first joined the Coop as a member in 2009 after that long-distance girlfriend made it a stipulation when he moved from Minneapolis to live with her on 7th Ave in Park

Slope. While their relationship did not endure, Jim's appreciation of the Coop did.

"I did the late-night commando cleaning shifts," he said of his early days earning work credits. "They were Sundays 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. but we'd meet just four times a year. I met the most interesting people."



PHOTO BY JENNIFER MACFARLANE

Craving that kind of community in his paid work, he applied for a staff job several years ago, which he did not get. But in 2025, at the encouragement of friends, Jim reapplied—this time for membership coordinator and receiving coordinator positions—and was interviewed the same week for both. As it happens, the Coop’s lead facilities coordinator had recently departed for the New York Aquarium, so management wasted no time in tapping Jim’s handyman experience and skills to help fill the void. For 15 months he fixed many things personally, and organized tools and spaces. Primarily he fielded all repairs requests and evaluated maintenance needs to manage evening Repairs shifts during which members cooperated to cross-train skills and fix things. He transitioned to receiving coordinator in December 2025.

“I loved the Repairs shifts,” he said. “We did all kinds of things, ranging from painting to improvement. A blower in the cooler might need unclogging or a dripping faucet might need to be fixed. People worked cooperatively, often above their skill set. Some even learned how to weld.”

JIM WILL CONTINUE TO DO WHAT HE HAS ALWAYS DONE: “LIVE SMALL, LOVE LIFE, AND KEEP GOOD COMPANY.”

He singled out a bathroom-soap situation as one of their more satisfying small triumphs. Constantly leaking dispensers were a perennial problem until a late-night repair team figured out how the Coop could reduce plastic waste and save money with replacement. “We cut four millimeters from a plastic stirrup-shaped component. This shortened the piston stroke inside the mechanism so it dispenses only as much soap as necessary, making them cost-effective,” he explained. “The team both piloted the modification and also videoed it to share so the next shift could alter the remaining dispensers.”

Jim especially enjoyed getting to know the people who gravitated to that shift—painters and playwrights, architects and journalists. He feels similarly about everyone on

staff.

“The variety of people who work here is astonishing,” he said. “Everyone is nice, professional, skilled and smart. The underlying vibe aligns with our mission statement. It’s not too over-the-top to say I love my colleagues—and I love my job.”

Another loveable facet of his new job: it allows him to read and write. In fact, he continues to write screenplays, including one he and his partner—a writer of short stories and fellow Coop member—have adapted from a memoir set in the Midwest.

As the couple prepare to shop it around, Jim said he will continue to do what he has always done: “Live small, love life, and keep good company.”

Liz Welch is a journalist, memoirist and book collaborator.

MEET THE STAFF: NEW FRIENDLY FACES AT THE COOP

January 20, 2026



September 16, 2025

By Oluwakemi Aladesuyi

Below are excerpts of interviews with the Coop's newest staff members, lightly edited for brevity and clarity.

Andrew Young, Receiving Coordinator



PHOTO BY KATE PREVITE

Member since 2002, staff since August 2024

I was initially resistant when my wife suggested joining the Coop. I thought the whole thing was silly. It's a bit of a cliché but I thought that huge membership, trying to do things in a way that everybody had a voice, would be bureaucratic and slow. What I found once I was working here was that it was all charming. If you wanted to be more involved as a member you could. Over the years we've come here for films or a class. Then there are many other years where I've worked my shift and gotten cheap groceries. But that's the great thing about this place, it's a built-in community. It's there for you if you need it.

“THIS PLACE, IT'S A BUILT-IN COMMUNITY. IT'S THERE FOR YOU IF YOU NEED IT. “

ANDREW YOUNG

As a receiving coordinator I do a lot of things. One is what we call “writing the aisles,” sticking the shelves and making sure things are in place for people to shop. My favorite thing is being a monitor in the receiving room—checking people in for their shift, directing them where to go, working with a large group of people. I am a Shakespeare-obsessive person. Every character in Shakespeare comes into work a shift every month here. There's Falstaff, there's an Iago. They're all here, and that's incredibly vital and entertaining.

A Pitch to New Members: The Coop helps bind the community together. We're in this very unequal neighborhood, and people still come together here and mix together and hash things out. But please, don't put your headphones on during your shift. If I see two people working who've run into old friends they haven't seen, and they're talking for 10 minutes, I'm not going to break that up. That's what this place is about.

What You Might Not Know: Young instituted a special Sunday night deep-cleaning shift using power washers and industrial equipment after noticing that the Coop had lost its deep-cleaning crew during Covid. “People always say, ‘Gosh, you know, I worked really hard, but I felt like I did something and I had a good time.’ It’s kind of like you just feel like the Terminator on the sidewalk.”

Gabriel Concha, Receiving Coordinator



Member since 2007, staff since June 2025

My wife had long known about the Coop, but when she was single she wondered, ‘Does it make a difference to buy an apple for \$2.50 or an apple for \$1.80?’ Then we met, had kids and decided to join.”

My job description is Receiving Coordinator, but I believe there’s an underlined work description: creating community. The goal is for members to chat, to get to know

each other while they work. When people work for the Coop they also begin to realize that they are working for themselves too.

“YOU HAVE TWO HOURS AND 45 MINUTES WORKING WITH ONE PERSON, WHICH IS QUITE A BIT OF TIME FOR NEW YORKERS.”

GABRIEL CONCHA

The other day I saw two people finishing their shift. While they didn't know each other when they began, when the shift ended they hugged and said, 'It's so nice that I talked to you. I really liked talking to you.' This is what we're here for, to promote that cohesive community. It transcends the doors of the Coop.”



A Pitch to New Members: It's hard to take time to get to meet another person deep-

ly, but that is something that the Coop offers. You have two hours and 45 minutes working with one person, which is quite a bit of time for New Yorkers. You can build a relationship, someone you'll see in the street and say "hi" to. It's a great way to feel confident in your community, in how you navigate the planet.

What You Might Not Know: Concha spends his mornings working as a physiotherapist specializing in Body Mind Centering. He helps people with chronic pain through movement therapy. "I help people understand what they have inside their body and how to use it," he explained.

Jacob Slaton, Bookkeeping Coordinator



PHOTO BY JACQUELINE SCADUTO

Member since 2022, staff since August 2025

My wife was talking about this great place with great produce. But when I came, it was the cooperative aspect that drew me in. With a degree in accounting, I'd always thought I'd work for family businesses, mom-and-pops. The reality of modern capitalism is that accountants work with large companies, and that didn't really jibe with me. Working in a community that's based on helping the people around them resonated with my values. It's not profit over everything.

“INSTEAD OF RAISING PRICES LIKE TRADITIONAL STORES, THE COOP CAN FOCUS ON REDUCING EXPENSES ELSEWHERE.”

JACOB SLATON

There's an additional layer of glasses you have to wear when making financial decisions for a coop. We're not trying to make money; we're trying to break even. We don't mark up peaches 80% just because they sell fast when they are in season. The whole idea is to bring produce to consumers at the lowest possible price. That creates an extra wrinkle when you're looking at problems, but that's what regular businesses don't think about. We have benchmarks that allow us to say, “OK, we have a map of where we're going by end-of-year.” But instead of raising prices like traditional stores, the Coop can focus on reducing expenses elsewhere.

A Pitch to New Members: Covid ruined so much when it comes to sharing spaces in-person. It allowed us to stay home, shop online, get groceries delivered. Then you wonder: Why am I not seeing anybody? Why do I feel lonely? You don't build roots by staying in your room or shopping online. While it takes work to get your groceries in-person, you get the opportunity to be around 16,000 other people who have chosen to dedicate their time to creating this place.

What You Might Not Know: Slaton's favorite Coop product is Harry's Berries sourced from a third-generation Japanese American family in California using traditional Japanese agricultural techniques. "I will cut them up and put them in vanilla ice cream in the early part of summer." But they are hand-picked, air-flown strawberries. In other words, expensive. "I'm saving money all year round just for my strawberry fixation."

Oluwakemi Aladesuyi is a journalist, yoga teacher and creative strategist. She is looking forward to buying fresh dates at the Coop.

NEW HIRES SINCE COVID

January 20, 2026

From top: Kamila Nuritova, Gustavo Lopez, Tim Mahoney, Zili Wang and Moussa Thiam. They're all Receiving Coordinators, except Kamila, who works on membership, and Tim, who in addition to receiving, has maintenance and repair responsibilities. Photos by Zachary Schulman.



Kamila Nuritova



• Kamila Nuritova



• Gustavo Lopez



• Gustavo Lopez



• Tim Mahoney



•
Tim Mahoney



• Zili Wang



Zili Wang



• Moussa Thiam



Moussa Thiam