

AISLE SEVEN TEMPTATION: COOKIES, CHOCOLATES AND ENERGY BARS, OH MY

February 28, 2024



By Zach Schiffman

With Valentine's Day behind us, maybe you recently grabbed some extra chocolate bars from aisle seven while waiting in line to check out. While the Coop doesn't have the traditional impulse-purchase bait found in checkout lanes of privately owned grocery stores, there's a level of temptation built into the cookies, chocolate and energy bars accompanying the wait for express checkout.

CHOCOLATE BARS



Shoppers peruse the chocolate offerings.

While aisle seven is not explicitly designed to encourage last-minute purchases, according to Receiving Coordinator Gillian Chi, it's been that way for the seventeen years she's worked at the Coop. Chi says the sales in that aisle are "relatively consistent from week to week," with brands like Divine Chocolate, Chocolove and Tony's Chocolonely remaining popular mainstays over the years.

SOME SHOPPERS GO FOR THE ENTICING TREATS, ESPECIALLY WHEN THE LINE IS MOVING SLOWLY.



The sweet offerings come in all sizes.

New treats can pop up in the aisle in a few different ways: from samples sent to the Coop directly from distributors, product suggestions from members, or new items researched by the coordinators themselves. “Some aisles, like the baking aisle, we’ve been selling the same items for years. But I don’t think we’re specifically more adventurous with chocolate,” Chi said. “We try to bring in new products all across the store.”

ARE YOU AN IMPULSE BUYER?



PHOTO BY JOHN MIDGLEY

Buying by the fistful.

Waiting in the express checkout line one afternoon, patient members talked about their last-minute basket grabs.

Lots of people claimed to not buy anything extra, no matter how long the line was. “I live in a 250-square-foot apartment, and have a mini fridge, so my shopping is very intentional,” one member, named Ruthie, told me. “If I shop on impulse, it’s from the sale rack. I’m on a budget.”

That said, plenty of shoppers do fall victim to the enticing treats, especially when the line is moving particularly slowly. “I feel like it’s the last chance,” said Sarah, who often finds herself adding various nut mixes at the start of the aisle. “I’m like, okay, the line is long. And I’m not going to get back into the line. So I need to grab as many things as possible.”



Reaching for the just-right bar.

A member named Scott said “the sole purpose of this aisle is to purchase the specific chocolate that my wife asks for, which is anything 80% cocoa or more.”

Many shoppers said their last-minute cart additions are for their children. Others said their favorite random purchases include the Quadratini double-chocolate wafer cookies, the mint Newman O’s and the Chocolate Love’s Orange Peel bar.

PLENTY OF SHOPPERS SAY THEY DON’T GRAB ANYTHING EXTRA, NO MATTER HOW LONG THE LINE IS.



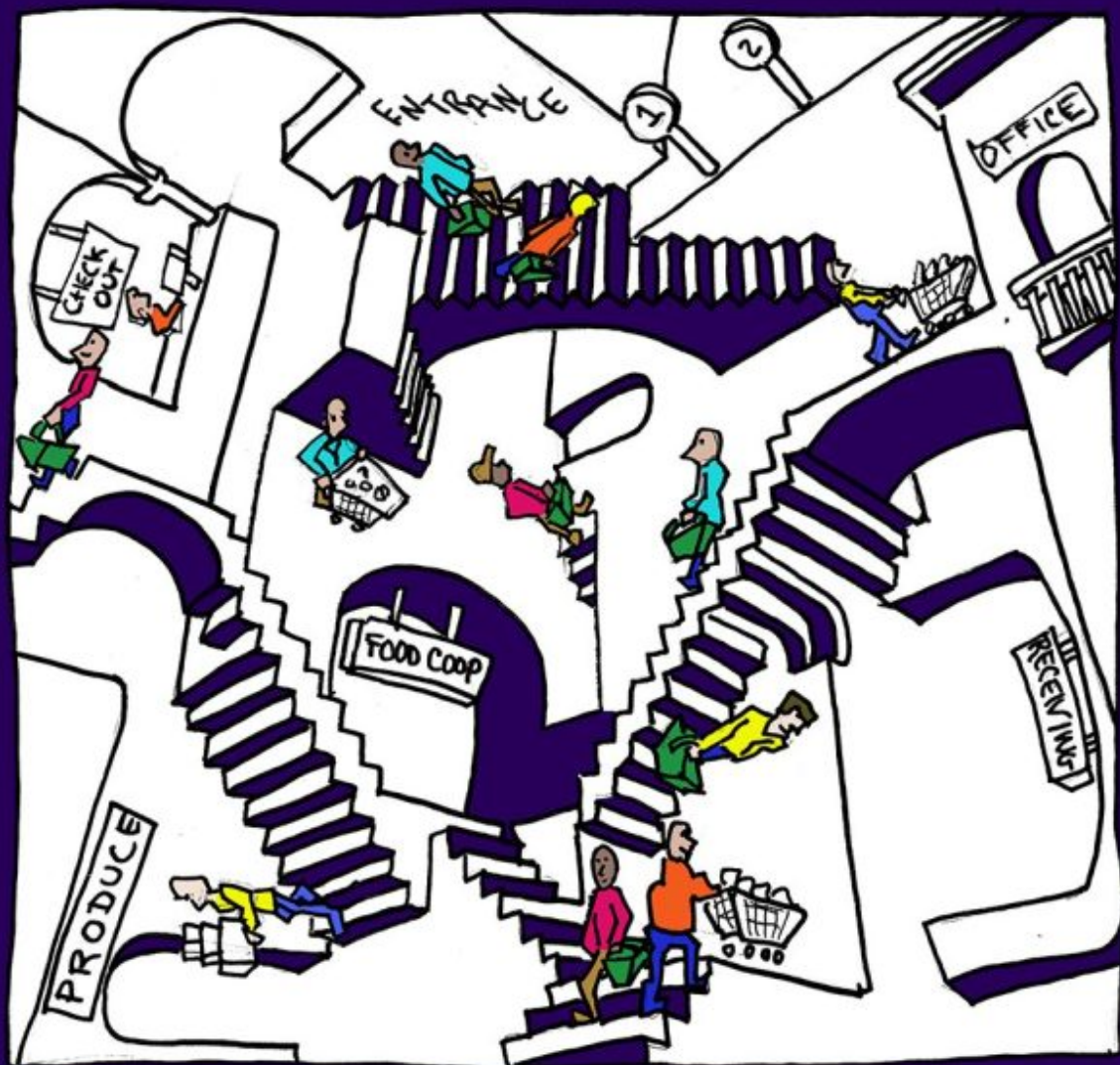
Chocolate choices are serious business.

When the express line wraps all the way into aisle six, as it did on the day these interviews were conducted, some members find themselves impulse-grabbing crackers or canned goods, as well. “I discovered the canned grape leaves when the line was really bad one day,” member Allie says.

The bottom line on impulse buying? “The same happens over in the other aisle,” member Kate said of the regular checkout lane. “It’s just less exciting. It’s soap over there.”

MISSED CONNECTIONS

February 28, 2024



YOU: TALL MAN BUYING SORREL AND PASTRIES

You're a tall man with glasses who was buying sorrel. We talked about how you sometimes replant it in your parents' backyard. You also bought a bagel, a muffin and another kind of pastry, and had your own cloth bag for them. This was probably nine months ago.

A CONVERSATION ABOUT ACUPUNCTURE

You: an older gentleman with a beard working the express checkout. I mentioned I just finished acupuncture school, and you said you and your wife regularly see someone who "changed your life." And then... you blanked on his name! Oh no! You said he's in Park Slope and practices out of his apartment. I would love to have this acupuncturist's name to continue to cultivate my acupuncture community in Brooklyn.

OCEAN VUONG EVENT INFORMATION FOR A CHEESE AND OLIVE PACKAGING FELLOW SHIFT WORKER

We worked a cheese and olive shift together on Wednesday, Jan. 17, and our group talk turned to Vietnam and Vietnamese American culturators. You were delighted to learn that my Professor Ocean Vuong would be giving a FREE livestream talk hosted by MoMA and Asian American Writers Workshop (rescheduled to March 9th). Here's the link. Until the next time we slice cheese and bag spices, stay well!

YOU WERE MAKING PEACH SUNDAES LATER

It was a hot Friday afternoon in August, I was working the express checkout and you were roasting special peaches later to make peach sundaes. You couldn't find corn syrup, which you needed to make the homemade caramel sauce. I don't remember what you look like, but you're funny and you have a really nice voice. Also, I found the corn syrup and it makes no sense where it is.

Dear Gazette Reader: In order to read and respond to unabbreviated versions of the missed connections above, please join our private Reddit community. To do so, please sign up for a Reddit account, sign in, visit this link in a web browser and click "Request to Join." Note that the "Request to Join" button is only shown in a web browser—not in the Reddit app. Should you wish to reach out with thoughts, questions and/or ideas, please email me at psfcmisssedconnections@gmail.com.

*Stay warm,
Arpita Dey*

FILM NIGHT: A WONDERFUL KINGDOM

February 28, 2024

A WONDERFUL KINGDOM

VACATIONLAND
present

{Um Reino Maravilhoso}
A film by Carlos Carneiro

Directed by **Carlos Carneiro** Words by **Miguel Torga** ENG Narration by **Malcolm McDowell** PT Narration by **Simone de Oliveira**
Produced by **Carlos Carneiro** and **Nicholas Weissman** Cinematography **Nicholas Weissman** Editor **Faisal Azam** Sound **Gonçalo Sousa**
Sound Design **Marcelo de Oliveira** Music Composer **Shervin Shaeri** Color **Clinton Hollister** Associate Producer **João Valente**

A Vacationland production © 2021

In the mountains of Portugal, amid the stunning, timeless vineyards of the Douro Valley, lies the heart and soul of old-world winemaking. Once a year, a divine ritual begins: the season's grapes are harvested by the generations-old families who pick, carry and stomp their way through September with blood-red feet, stained by grape juice.

Celebrating tradition over mythology, *A Wonderful Kingdom* is an homage to these hard-working folks, the lifeblood of the region. Narrated by Malcolm McDowell and set to prose by the iconic poet Miguel Torga, this hypnotic, observational documentary unfurls across the epic beauty and austerity of both nature and humanity.

This documentary will be screened at this Zoom link on Thursday, March 21, at 7 p.m.

Director and Coop member Carlos Carneiro will be present for a Q and A after the screening.

To be added to our email listserv for future screening announcements, please send a request to jlymiller@me.com.

IN MEMORY OF KATIE ZABRONSKY

February 28, 2024

By Thomas Rayfiel



PHOTO BY JUN TAN

Katie Zabronsky, who was a Coop member for only four years but made a lasting impression, died on Nov. 18, 2023. Katie joined the Coop in 2019. She worked mostly in food processing, receiving, and stocking. Her partner, Harry Shock, recalled how: "Katie loved the Coop and all its quirks. She always came home from her shift having purchased something new and intriguing. She dubbed these her 'PoW' or 'Purchase of the Week.' It was a very necessary part of every shop. As friends and family returned to NYC, post-pandemic, they all moved into the neighborhood to be near Katie, and, in turn, Katie persuaded them to join the Coop as well."

This is borne out by the testimonies of her many friends. Liz Hart wrote: "Katie adored the Coop and was a huge champion and spokeswoman for it. Before I even moved to New York she made sure to give me a tour during a visit. Katie was so warm. She loved food, cooking, feeding her friends and family, and would often be heard saying, 'It's from the Coop,' whenever she was hosting."

Another friend, Naomi Sabbah, added: "Katie is the reason I joined the Coop! Every time I went to Katie's she would put a snack out on the table or share a new skincare purchase and laugh when I asked where she got it, responding with a smile and a shrug: 'The Coop!' She was a true, pure member in the best sense, never pressuring me to join, or sticking up her nose at me that I hadn't, just being generous with the joy (and items) the place gave her."

Katie was a social worker with the Sanctuary for Families at Queens Family Justice Center, supporting children and teens who had witnessed domestic abuse. Before that, she had worked with the health care consultant Rabin Martin, partnering with the Gates Foundation to broaden access to maternal immunizations, and studied in Uganda where she supported PDI Uganda, an organization in rural, eastern Uganda that supports children's education.

Diagnosed with ovarian cancer at twenty-six, she underwent surgery and chemotherapy. Ten weeks later, she ran a half-marathon to raise \$25,000 for cancer research at Memorial Sloan Kettering. Despite her illness, she received a Master's degree from

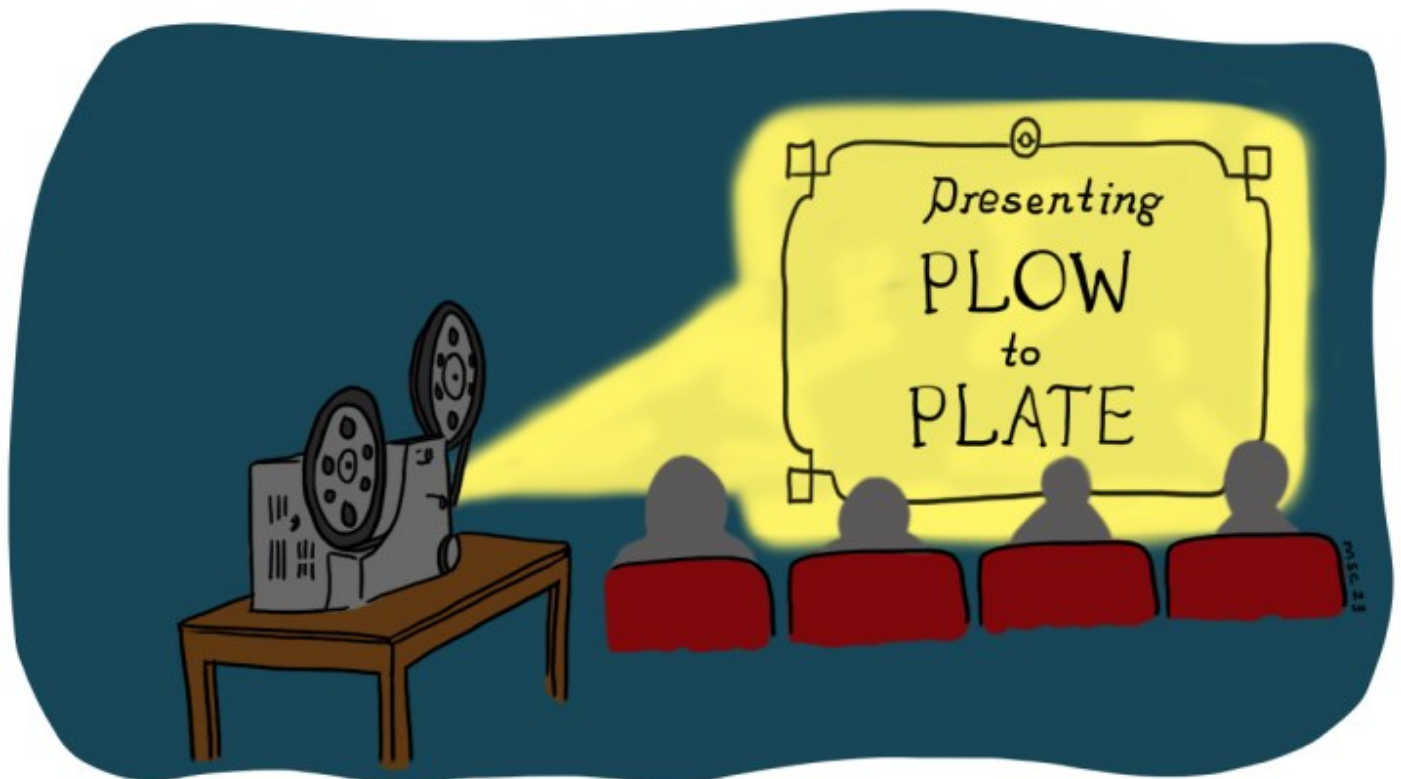
the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College.

Katie is survived by her loving parents, Rob and Lorri Zabronsky; her sister, Rachel Zabronsky and brother-in-law, Jake Sabbah (both Coop members); and her partner, Harry Shock (also a Coop member).

During the first few days of COVID, Katie did a hectic shift in the stock room. At one point, a coordinator yelled, “Forget the goji berries! Focus on cheddar cheese!” (Apparently, hard cheese is a good source of protein and does not go bad quickly, so everyone was rushing to buy it.) For Katie, who told this story to many friends, this epitomized the eccentric, hilarious, but also very touching tone of the Coop, one with which she obviously identified.

PLOW TO PLATE FILM SERIES: PLANT PURE NATION

February 28, 2024



By Adam Rabiner

Plant Pure Nation (2015) serves as a companion film to February's feature, *From Food to Freedom* (2023). Writer and director Nelson Campbell is on the same mission—attempting to be the Johnny Apple Seed of the modern whole-food plant-based nutrition movement, along with his famous father, Dr. T. Colin Campbell.

Both films take a rigorous scientific approach to proving the benefits of the vegan diet. In last month's film, a crew of type 2 diabetics dined for ten days on a strictly controlled diet while living under the same roof. In this film, a series of similarly structured jump-starts were conducted, but the participants picked up their meals from a central location to take back to their homes. In theory, this may have allowed for more cheating, but pre- and post-medical testing showed that even under these less strict conditions, people lost weight, lowered their cholesterol and reduced their medications.

Despite these similarities, the films are complementary rather than redundant. *Plant Pure Nation* focuses much less on the human drama of those taking part in these jump-starts but rather grounds itself in the political drama of simply trying to spread the good news and healthy benefits of plant-based eating, in barbecue-loving states like Iowa, Kentucky and North Carolina (sometimes referred to as the stroke belt), where agricultural interests hold a lot of power. Nelson Campbell's evangelism is often met with the question, "Why haven't I heard this before?" *Plant Pure Nation* attempts to provide that answer.

The answer, as Nelson discovers, is in political interests and pushback. This should not have surprised him, as his family has been experiencing this for decades. The film goes back fifty years to a 1977 McGovern Committee report that highlighted Dr. T. Colin Campbell's research into the relationship between disease and diet. Back then the meat, egg and sugar industries, along with the Salt Institute, actively undermined the nutrition committee's goals, portraying Dr. Campbell and his supporters as "puritanical do-gooders."

In reaction to this, Dr. Campell published his now-famous bestseller, *The China Study*, to get the word out to the masses directly since he was being stymied at the top. His son's films are drawn from the same populist model of direct engagement. But Nelson, like his father, first attempted to work within the political system.

THE FILM GOES BACK TO A 1977 MCGOVERN COMMITTEE REPORT THAT HIGHLIGHTED DR. T. COLIN CAMPBELL'S RESEARCH INTO DISEASE AND DIET.

At the request of state Representative Tom Riner, a Democratic member of the Kentucky House of Representatives, Nelson tried to craft House Bill 550, which would have funded a demonstration project on the benefits of a plant-based diet. At first, the bill had strong support, but the reality of politics set in behind closed doors, as agricultural lobbyists, the Kentucky Farm Bureau and other special interests undermined it. However, just as the powers that be could not silence his father, Nelson decided to conduct his pilot project anyway, starting in rural Mebane, North Carolina.

It was around this time that Nelson came up with the name, Plant Pure, which to him denoted nature, clarity and cleanliness. As he assembled his group of sixteen from a cross section of the community—a politician, a business executive, a journalist, and two local cattle farmers (a husband and wife)—the themes and talking points came into clarity. This experiment was not only about eating better, but about taking control away from the hands of industry and government. It was about independence, freedom and liberty. It involved bottom-up control, not top-down authoritarianism.

These five consecutive jump-starts, each a bit larger and more complex than the previous, eventually led Nelson back to Kentucky, where he and Tom Riner hoped to insert a finding of fact about plant-based nutrition into the record. Yet even this modest proposal forms the basis of a nail-biting political drama. While some legislators are clearly in favor, others are more skeptical. One asks if the word "meat" can be appended to the list of good foods which include vegetables, fruits, grains, legumes and

nuts. Dr. T. Colin Campbell had been asked not to come; and Nelson has been relegated to the balcony.

Following the vote, you can see why Nelson Campbell, like his dad, is taking the message directly to the people. The rally for the *Plant Pure Nation* is underway.

Plant Pure Nation, March 12, 2024 at 7 p.m.

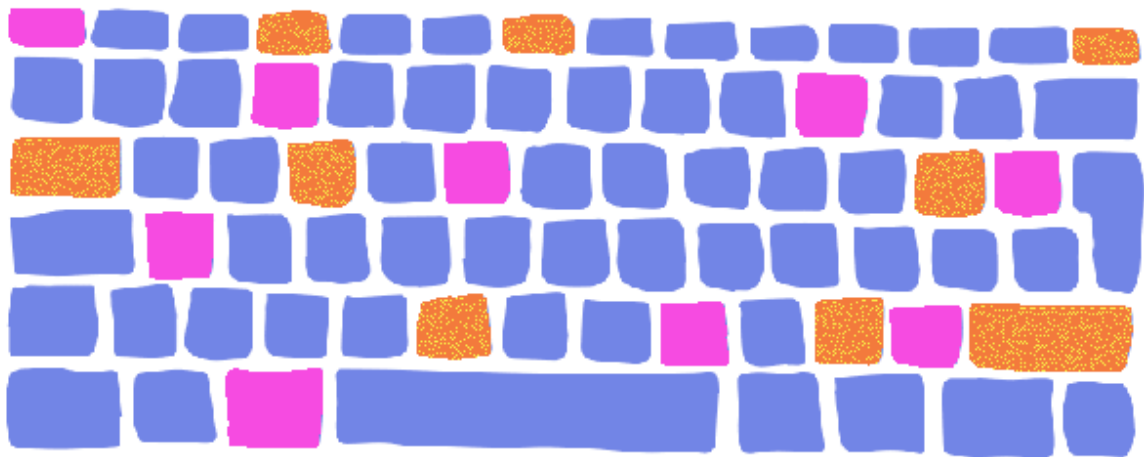
Screening link

To be added to our mailing list for future screening announcements, please email a request to plowtoplate@mail.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

February 28, 2024

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Editors' Note: The *Gazette* is pausing the publication of all member letters and member articles related to the war in the Middle East while we revise our submissions policy.

LINWAITERS' GA-ZINE?

Dear Linewaiters' Gazette,

At the November GM a member asked about the *Gazette* being brought back to a print edition, and the question has stuck with me. The transition to a digital *Gazette* has clearly had many advantages (some of which were covered in detail in an article May 2022), however I agree that something tangible may have also been lost in this move.

The appeal of spontaneously collecting a physical edition while shopping is tempting, and some other recent new publications—such as the *New York Review of Architecture*—have triumphed in their role as primarily physical things, to be folded into pockets or left on tables, and which are full of idiosyncratic sketches and graphics. Even the simple ability for editions of the *Gazette* to be continuously archived at the Brooklyn Public Library to expand on their current collection could be of value.

I understand that the cost and time of producing a traditional print edition in parallel to the digital version might be challenging. However, while walking around Copy Machine Manifestos: Artists Who Make Zines at the Brooklyn Museum this week, it occurred to me that the *Gazette* could learn from the scrappy, improvised and imperfect world of zines. I propose that, for each digital release, someone takes a turn to print out the new articles, letters and graphics, and paste them into a haphazard zine master copy layout. We could photocopy a dozen and leave them by the entrance, and if the stack runs low, we could just photocopy some more! Each edition could be unique and represent the graphic whims of whoever was responsible for the cut and paste job, and each edition would be photocopied to demand—low cost recycled paper, and tailored to how many copies are needed.

Zine-cerely,
Dan Bergsagel

DISBANDING THE COC TONIGHT AT THE GM—AN EXAMPLE OF STAFF OVERREACH AND POOR GOVERNANCE FOR A COOP

To the editors:

I just returned from the January GM a few minutes ago and, as one of the four members of the COC, which was disbanded tonight, I am both a bit relieved yet quite disappointed. Relieved to no longer be in a crossfire of an unwillingness to collaborate and illuminate; disappointed at a very poorly run process.

The agenda items (Oct. and last night) were mostly based on untruths, namely:

- We never attempted to arbitrate committee disputes—that is the job of the Dispute Resolution Committee.
- We never claimed we would reduce staff workload. Not sure where this idea came from.
- We never tried to take on work credit management. That is done by Staff.

After that October discussion—where the COC leader Brian responded to clear up some “misunderstandings”—i.e. false allegations—we thought everything was amended. Then suddenly in early January we discovered there was an agenda item to disband us. A few of us attempted to reach out to the proposing staff member to discuss but were met with a stone wall. No communication.

Earlier today, I took the time to read the Agenda Committee’s memo “How to Develop an Agenda Item for the General Meeting.” Among the suggestions—not evidenced by this process at all, are:

- Write out your proposal or discussion item and check it for clarity.

- Seek background information.
- Publicize your idea.
- Ask for feedback.

It concerns me that this kind of forceful, top-down behavior is at play at the Coop. It also concerns me that the Agenda Committee did not make any effort to fact check the allegations made about the COC in tonight's agenda item—which was filled with falsehoods.

Just a warning—this is a slippery slope. We are a member-owned coop, and our governance should reflect that.

Kristian Nammack

ACCESS FOR ALL COOP FAMILIES

Dear editors,

I've been a member for 10 years, though I spent many of those away from the borough, and then away from the state. When I rejoined last year, I was so happy to find a vibrant and thriving Coop. I brought with me my now 6-year-old daughter, who fell in love immediately with the place, believes (correctly) that you can find "everything" there, and pesters me daily about when she can work a shift. We are passionate about the Coop in our family! I've begun seeking out ways to get more involved, to both give back to and learn from this community that has fed and nurtured us so well. But for reasons I'm sure a lot of parent-members can relate to, I'm limited by work and family obligations. I'd like to attend the General Meetings, but I simply can't. However, if these meetings shifted to a hybrid model that accommodated virtual attendance, this would help so many who want to participate, but currently are not able —

parents, immunocompromised individuals, people who have mobility, health, work, school or any other kind of constraints. I applaud the Coop for recently reinstating masking midweek; it's a powerful way of expressing commitment to and care for each other. The same principle of access and inclusion should be extended to the General Meetings. These, too, should be spaces where all of us feel welcome.

Sincerely,

Genevieve Yue

SOMETHING NEW IS NOT WORKING WELL AT THE PSFC

Dear Coop:

I haven't been able to shop at the Coop for at least the past 30 days, despite having completed four shifts between late September and early January and having two future shifts scheduled. Yes, I had five free passes and they were already used up, because I have a family, and I shop often via bicycle. They did not replenish after the shift I worked in January. Yes, I fell behind in my work shifts. Yes, I have been a member for 30 years but am too young to "retire". Yes, I spoke to Coop staff members about this. I was told that the new system is not going to change because it is working well for the Coop. Attendance for work slots is at an all-time high. Got it. The greater good, for sure. But what about members like me? This is a call to open up a discussion about the need for some leeway, nuance. I kept my money in the Coop during the pandemic when it was struggling and when I had to wait in line for three hours each time that I shopped. Now I need to go to Whole Foods instead of shopping where I have shopped for three decades. There's no good reason that a 30-year member should shop at Whole Foods because of a one-size (doesn't) fit-all policy. I mean, we wear masks two days a week to accommodate certain members. Let's find some creative solutions regarding suspension rules to fit a few more members' needs.

Rebecca Stronger

USING TECHNOLOGY TO HELP WITH COOP INVENTORY

February 28, 2024



By *Walecia Konrad*

THE PARK SLOPE FOOD COOP'S INVENTORY SYSTEM EXPLAINED

Coop shoppers may have noticed the new black-and-white electronic price tags hanging throughout the produce aisle. At first glance, they don't look all that different from the paper price tags they replaced, which are still in use on the rest of the Coop shelves. But these state-of-the-art mini-screens can be changed in an instant, reflect-

ing a new price when, say, locally grown broccoli shows up in the summer, replacing the California crop, or Caraflex pointy cabbage hits the shelves.

Unit Price
\$2.98 LB
0 670274 606767 1 Rows 16 OZ
\$2.98
Nixtamal White Corn Tortilla 5.5"
REGACC Prepared 1.0 05/06/23

PHOTO BY ZACH SCHULMAN

The old static labels are getting an update.

The unobtrusive tags may be the first sign visible to members of a years-long undertaking to update, digitize, share, streamline and consolidate the Coop's massive and unique inventory system.

“THE TECH PART IS EASY, BUT COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE AND FINDING OUT WHAT THEY REALLY NEED IS THE CHALLENGE.”

— *COOP IT STAFF*

INTRODUCING CLOVER

The new system, called Clover, was designed by the Coop's inventory development team, which includes Coop IT staffers Jonathan Miller and Ithran Einhorn, as well as Receiving Coordinator Ken Macdonald, all led by General Coordinator Joe Szladek. Clover isn't an acronym and doesn't stand for anything; it's just a pleasant name that's easy to remember, according to its inventors.



PHOTO BY ZACH SCHULMAN



Joe Szladek (top) & Ken Macdonald

The team set out to update the inventory system and achieve four important goals.

Collect and report daily sales data. Sales data is currently aggregated on a weekly basis. Staffers use that data to determine recent sales and how much more or less of a product should be ordered. It's a delicate science that relies on the price from the supplier, anticipated shopper demand and the Coop's limited storage space. Daily sales data reports help staffers make more accurate buying decisions, Macdonald explained.

Update shelf prices. The Coop is committed to passing any change in price to members immediately, even if it's during the middle of the day. Keep in mind, no other store does that: Most grocery stores keep prices for a set period of time, maybe a week or more. Immediate price changes add to the inventory-tracking challenges at the Coop. Members can see this pricing promise happen in real time with the electron-

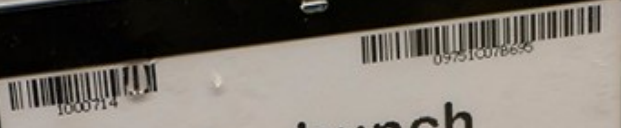
ic price tags in produce. (By the way, the new tags use a minuscule amount of energy.)

Streamline pricing information. Traditionally, receivers are in charge of changing prices on the shelves when new stock arrives. But it's not enough to display the new price to shoppers—it has to show up at check out too. Those two data points have been on two different systems, which causes some headaches. Clover combines the two and closes that gap, explained Macdonald.

Generate orders, invoices and supplier instructions. Buyers can use Clover to generate orders and even indicate to suppliers how to load their trucks to help the Coop with delivery and storage. With this system, a full pallet could be directed into the designated basement storage space, rather than needing to be unpacked and sorted, with items manually stored in different areas.

In addition, Clover allows receiving to communicate with the accounting department. Instead of entering an invoice two times into the two systems, it can be input once, cutting down on multiple layers of paperwork.

"I've been at the Coop for 20 years and spent a lot of time in the basement," Macdonald said. "It was frustrating to not get data on what we had on the shelves, what deliveries were coming in, etc. Now we have all that at our fingertips in real-time."



**Carrots- bunch
rainbow org**

Locally grown
within 500 miles



01-A

Stocking notes
CARROTS FACE OUT
SMALL SPOT

\$2.40bu

PHOTO BY ZACH SCHULMAN

The new electronic labels can change in real time.

PRODUCE IS THE PLACE TO START

Because of its high turnover and constantly changing prices, the produce department had already followed a different inventory tracking system that allowed it to price items each day. After all, farmers may change their prices daily depending on the season, growing conditions and so on. Under the old system, produce buyers would be able to calculate new prices quickly—the cost of the most recent shipment plus the Coop’s markup—but would then have to change the paper price tags on the floor manually, which was a time-consuming process.

Now, the inventory system calculates the new prices and changes the electronic signs automatically. No running upstairs with new tags. Because the produce department moves fruit and vegetables so quickly, the inventory team figured that if the new system works there, it can work anywhere. Produce is the inventory system’s test kitchen.

REINVENT THE WHEEL?

The inventory team set out to implement a new system in 2018, well before the pandemic. At first, staffers researched off-the-shelf inventory systems that could potentially be adapted to the Coop’s needs. Why reinvent the wheel?

But the Coop’s unique inventory challenges—high turnover, limited storage, a commitment to passing on price changes—soon made it clear that a custom-made system designed internally was the right way to go. So the team set out to create its own product.

That’s when Miller started talking to people. “The tech part is easy,” he said, “but communicating with people and finding out what they really need is the challenge.”

Miller wanted to dig deep and figure out what the system could streamline to make things easier for people to get their work done on a daily basis. That also meant ac-

commodating different vendors and suppliers and trying to work with their systems and comfort level. “One vendor might like to take orders over the phone, one might want an email. One likes to be paid by the case, another by the pound. All of this has to be taken into account,” he explained.

A LITTLE HISTORY

Efficient inventory tracking has been the aim of the Coop from the very beginning, according to General Coordinator Joe Holtz. He and others were instrumental in devising the Coop’s original system, in which staffers used special cards to track what was bought and sold the week before and what price was paid for the inventory. The next team would use multiple weeks of information to make future buying decisions.

AT ITS FOUNDING, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE COOP’S DEDICATION TO SELLING GOOD FOOD AT LOW COST MEANT THE STORE COULDN’T AFFORD TO BUY MORE THAN IT COULD SELL.

Like now, tracking inventory back then was both an art and a science. Buyers used the data on the cards to hit the sweet spot of meeting shoppers’ needs while dealing with limited storage space. (Back then, storage space was almost non-existent.)



PHOTO BY ZACH SCHULMAN

Joe Holtz looks through the Coop's old handwritten paper records.

At its founding, it was obvious that the Coop's dedication to selling good food at low cost meant the store couldn't afford to buy more than it could sell. That said, a good price on a product will often drive demand, so when suppliers offer lower prices, buyers are tempted to buy more than previous sales may justify. That doesn't always work out.

Holtz cited an incident involving honey when the Coop first started. At one point, a member-buyer was enticed by a great price on honey from a supplier, and they ordered far more honey than the Coop had actually been selling each week. When the shipment came in, there wasn't room for all that honey in the designated storage area, so the excess was put in a different corner.

The following week, the next person taking inventory didn't see the honey in its unusual storage place and figured it had all been sold. As a result, they ordered another ten cases of honey at a much higher price.

Holtz, of course, pointed to the honey as an aberration, and a great lesson in how buying and tracking inventory is so key to the Coop's success. For the most part, the custom-made card system took into account the unique challenges of the Coop and worked well. "The Coop couldn't have grown without a good inventory system from the beginning," Holtz remarked.

Eventually, the card system was computerized and buyers could more easily access sales data and price history to make accurate purchase decisions. Now, Clover will hopefully move the original thinking and systems even further into the future.



The new price tags might not look electronic, but they are.

WHAT'S NEXT?

When asked about next steps, Miller said they are looking to continue the new system roll out in other areas of the Coop where prices change quickly. Think meat and fish. Afterward, the inventory team hopes to roll out Clover gradually to any area that wants to use it in 2024. "It's not a gigantic cliff everyone has to fall off on a certain

date,” Miller said. “The two systems are working together right now, so we want people to move over to Clover when they want to.”

Shoppers, keep an eye out for the new electronic price tags. Now you know what’s going on behind the scenes when you drop each carefully tracked and priced item into your cart.

THE HOLIDAYS AT THE COOP

February 28, 2024

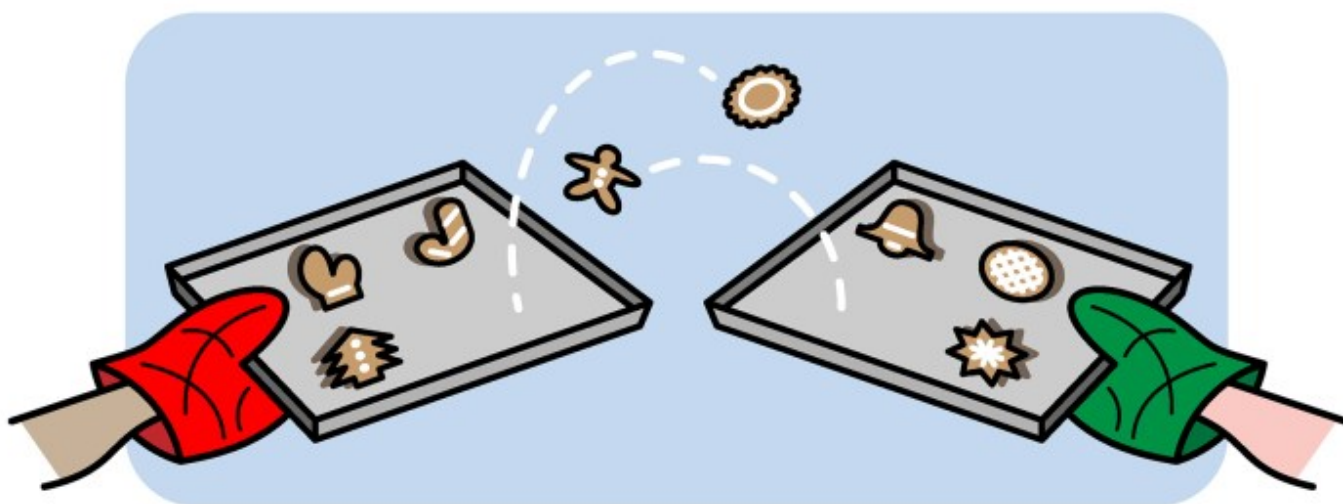


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SAVAGE

A SWEET TRADITION: COOKIE SWAP PARTIES

By Liora Fishman

As the holiday season approaches, I find myself dreading the inevitable onslaught of Secret Santa events I’ll be asked to participate in. At the risk of being a Grinch, the

volume of gift-giving that comes with this time of year can feel overwhelming, expensive and even impersonal. Don't get me wrong—I love the holidays, and I appreciate my family, friends and colleagues who organize gift exchanges. But when tasked with finding an inexpensive gift for, say, a coworker I don't know particularly well, I often find myself coming up empty.

GUESTS TASTE ALL THE COOKIES, SWAP THEIRS FOR OTHERS, AND LEAVE WITH A VARIETY TO TAKE HOME.

Enter: the cookie swap party. It's a time-honored way to celebrate the joy of giving and sharing during the festive Christmas season. Each guest brings a batch of cookies, preferably of their own baking. The more unique the recipe, the better! Guests taste all the cookies, swap theirs for others, and leave with a variety to take home. That is, if they don't eat all of the cookies before they get there.

THE ORIGINS OF COOKIE SWAPS

The concept of cookie exchanges, or cookie swaps, has roots that reach back to Europe in the Middle Ages. It was a time when communities came together to celebrate the holiday season, exchanging small gifts and homemade baked goods. This tradition eventually found its way to America, where it would evolve into the beloved cookie swap parties we know today. In the 1930s and 1940s, a significant shift occurred in American kitchens. The availability of ovens and the convenience of pre-packaged ingredients led to a surge in home baking. With more households now equipped for baking, cookie swap parties started to gain traction.

THE VOLUME OF GIFT-GIVING THAT COMES WITH THIS TIME OF YEAR CAN FEEL OVERWHELMING, EXPENSIVE AND EVEN IMPERSONAL.

Fast forward to the present day and cookie swap parties have become a cherished holiday tradition for many. “During the holiday season, it can be hard to know what to get your friends and family—and it’s overwhelming to pick out gifts for all your loved ones,” said Brett Krasner, who has been a Park Slope Food Coop member since 2021. “Cookie swap parties are a great way to bring a personal, home-baked touch to your holiday gifting without breaking the bank.”



COOKIE SWAP PARTY DELIGHTS

Now that you’re familiar with the historical backdrop, let’s talk about the star of the show: the cookies themselves. Elevate your cookie game with these fancy and delectable ideas, starring ingredients from the Coop:

1. Lavender and Lemon Shortbread Cookies: These delicate shortbread cookies are in-

fused with the fragrant flavors of lavender and fresh lemon zest, providing a delightful twist on a classic favorite.

2. **Raspberry Linzer Cookies:** A personal favorite, these elegant, sandwich-style cookies feature a delicate almond dough filled with raspberry jam and dusted with powdered sugar.
Pro-tip: If you're short on time, Bonne Maman makes a similar pre-packaged cookie available at the Coop (in the Express Line aisle).
3. **Pistachio Cranberry Biscotti:** For a sophisticated treat, bake up a batch of biscotti with pistachios, dried cranberries and a drizzle of white chocolate. There are few things more satisfying than dipping a biscotti into a cappuccino or a cup of tea on a chilly afternoon.
4. **Matcha Green Tea Snowballs:** For a unique twist, incorporate the trendy flavor of matcha into your powdered-sugar-dusted cookies, creating vibrant snowballs infused with green tea.
5. **Salted Caramel Chocolate Thumbprint Cookies:** These indulgent cookies feature a rich chocolate base with a gooey salted caramel center, garnished with a sprinkle of sea salt.

The pastry chef and former Brooklyn resident Jim Bohovic said making cookies based on your family traditions can be a great way to introduce family and friends to exciting new flavors and textures.

He added that he once saw guests at a New York City holiday party take his grandmother's cookies as if they were attending a cookie swap. Though they did not bring cookies to share, he said the guests filled their own plastic baggies with cookies. Bohovic called it a cookie "theft," à la Cookie Monster.



ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SAVAGE

FIVE PANTRY STAPLES FOR HOLIDAY BAKING

When it comes to holiday baking, a well-stocked pantry is your best friend. Here are five pantry staples—excluding sugar and flour, which go without saying—that you'll want to have on hand for your baking endeavors:

1. Spices: Cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves add warmth and depth to your holiday recipes, creating a cozy atmosphere during the winter season.
2. Vanilla extract: A dash of pure vanilla extract enhances the aroma and taste of your baked goods, giving them a touch of sophistication.
3. Nuts: Need an excuse to raid the bulk aisle? Almonds, pecans and walnuts are fantastic for adding texture and flavor to cookies, cakes and pies.
4. Cocoa powder: Quality cocoa powder is a must for rich chocolatey holiday treats like brownies and fudgy cookies, perfect for savoring during the winter months.
5. Extracts and flavorings: Beyond vanilla, extracts like almond, peppermint and orange can elevate the flavor profile of your baked goods, offering variety and a hint of luxury.

For those of us who have allergies or dietary restrictions that might preclude participation in cookie swaps, fear not. Gluten-free flour, nut-free recipes and vegan substitutions have never been better. In fact, some products are so good they can fool even the dairy fanatics in your life. “My partner’s family are Francophiles and obsessed with butter,” said Tamar Lindenbaum, who is vegan and has been a Coop member since 2022. “The only way they’ll eat a vegan dessert is if it tastes buttery. I’ve found that the best way to make a dessert that tastes authentically buttery is by using Miyoko’s vegan butter.”

With these pantry staples and fancy cookie ideas, you’ll be well-prepared to impress guests at your next cookie swap party. So, consider ditching Secret Santa this year and opting for a cookie swap: Gather your friends and family, whip up some extraordinary cookies, and share in the joy of this heartwarming holiday tradition.

The last word goes to the pastry chef we heard from earlier, Jim Bohovic, who said, “Holiday baking means fun, tradition, time with kiddos and sharing.”

PLOW TO PLATE FILM SERIES: STORM LAKE

February 28, 2024



By Adam Rabiner

The principal character of *Storm Lake*, Art Cullen, is the editor of the *Storm Lake Times*, a small-town newspaper in Iowa with a staff of ten, mostly family, and a circulation of around 3,000 readers. With his shaggy mustache and mop-top hair, he is a character, most likely intentionally casting himself as a latter-day Samuel Clemens. Cullen takes his editor's beat very seriously; he was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in journalism in 2017 for investigative articles challenging powerful corporate agricultural interests in the state. But he's also a folksy storyteller, in the vein of Garrison Keillor narrating the lives of those who inhabit his fictional Lake Wobegon.

The stories that Cullen tells—assisted by his wife, brother, son, sister-in-law and other relatives—are both broad and deep. Hyper-local news is covered: City Council meetings; the School Board of Supervisors; the Court House; the plight of local farmers con-

fronting odd weather and climate change; and who in the community had a baby, got married or died. But Cullen also covers nationally-oriented stories such as the 2020 presidential election; the disastrous Democratic Iowa Caucus meltdown; and the onset of COVID 19 that same year, with its impact on the paper and the town.

These stories are woven into the documentary, which also chronicles the struggles of the newspaper to stay afloat in the face of various financial challenges—competitors like Facebook, and the dearth of local businesses that can afford to buy advertisements. Cullen recognizes that he needs to increase his readership, but acknowledges as well that people now want to get news for free.

STORM LAKE

A NEWSPAPER. A FAMILY. A COMMUNITY.

DIRECTED BY
JERRY RISIUS AND BETH LEVISON



STORM LAKE is a production of WHOLE HORSE FILMS and IFC and is being produced by the CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING in association with CROPFEST FILM FUND JUSTICE | FORD FOUNDATION PARK PICTURES
executive producer KATY BRAKE BETTNER SAM REESE PAMELA TANNER BOB SALLY JOHNNY MORGAN GUSTAV LIND KISSER JANE WOLF in association with TIGER ACTION / VAN CAMPETI agency producer MICHAEL KINEMOTO
producer TARA NEFF LAUREN TAVELISTA JESSICA STRANDBERG in collaboration with JOSH BOATRIGHT in cooperation with producer BOB CRIST and a producer BOB and ALAN HANCOCK
based on the book by JERRY RISIUS edited by RACHEL SPERAN producer BETH LEVISON

stormlakemovie.com



In the past fifteen years, as many as a quarter of the newspapers in the United States have shuttered. *Storm Lake Times* is one of the last of its kind, with its two--times-per-week circulation and \$1 per issue price. Founded in 1990, the paper often just breaks even, perhaps making a small profit one year, followed by a small loss the next. To survive, it must supplement advertising fees with support from its community of readers, which, with an influx of diverse immigrants, has become more diverse and Democratic over the years, though the population outside of town remains firmly Republican. For Cullen and his family, keeping the *Storm Lake Times* afloat is not primarily about achieving financial success. It is about providing good local journalism and news, which Cullen believes is the foundation of a successful democracy. Cullen feels that the 10,000 residents who form the community of Storm Lake represent a microcosm of the nation—which is only as strong as its newspaper and banks.

With the demise of many papers, such as Ohio's *Youngstown Vindicator* among others, Cullen estimates that there are around 300 "news deserts": medium-size towns of twenty to thirty thousand people without a local news source. The plight of these papers parallels that of small family farms, which are also endangered by economic forces and policies favoring agglomeration and huge corporate operations. The business models that once supported small farms, small papers and mom and pop stores have fallen apart, leaving rural communities weaker.

Storm Lake resembles a microcosm of parts of the United States as it grapples with common and widespread issues: warmer and wetter weather and its effect on crop yields and planting patterns, the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment, worsening political polarization, the plight of small family farms, and others. There are no easy answers to these problems. For example, if you repress large-scale agricultural production, where does that leave the workers who rely on it for employment?

Ultimately, this film's central theme is the role that a small-town newspaper plays in helping to shore up democracy. Cullen, who likes to quote Madison and Jefferson, and who proudly displays a poster of JFK on his office wall, may not be representative of his rural community. But in some ways his folksy Mark Twain demeanor and Midwest-

ern decency cast him as the quintessential American Everyman comfortably inhabiting a kind of mythic heartland made famous by *A Prairie Home Companion*, “where all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking, and all the children are above average.”

Storm Lake, Dec. 12, 2023 @ 7 p.m.

Screening link: <https://plowtoplatefilms.weebly.com/>

To be added to our mailing list for future screening announcements, please email a request to plowtoplate@mail.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

February 28, 2024



DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

To the Editor:

I am sometimes disappointed to find that a favored food has disappeared from our Coop shelves without explanation, never to reappear. Some time ago, for example, we lost Sesmark Sesame Thins crackers and, more recently, frozen orange juice con-

centrate of any kind. I think it would be helpful for our buyers to post a brief explanation, perhaps on the website, for each distinctive product discontinued; for example, poor sales, producer violation of labor standards, etc.

In cooperation,
Curtis Skinner

EXTENDED SHOPPING HOURS, PLEASE

Dear *Linewaiters' Gazette*,

Can we get a Coordinators' Corner update from the General Coordinators about extending shopping hours? It looks like there are lots of people waiting to join and existing members clamoring for open work slots. What's the plan?

Thank you,
Lisa Guido

PLURALISM IS A DEMOCRATIC VALUE

Dear Fellow Members:

During the Open Forum at the October General Meeting, a member suggested reconsidering the Coop's joining the Boycott, Divestments and Sanction movement. This suggestion was met with applause. When the Open Forum was closed to allow time for the business of the meeting to be addressed (note: the meeting still required a resolution to extend 15 minutes to accommodate all agenda items on the slate), several

attendees called out “Shame!” and “Undemocratic!”

As should be evident to anyone paying attention, a large number of our fellow members object strenuously to the Coop selling Israeli products. As should also be evident, both by expression of views and by sales volume, a large number of members support the sale of Israeli products.

If we truly aspire to democratic ideals, why is it so hard to allow members to make their own choices? BDS supporters should be welcome to exercise whatever commercial behavior comports with their moral cosmology, and fellow members who have different viewpoints should be able to do the same. Imposing one moral position on an issue that clearly holds a myriad of deeply considered perspectives strikes me as monolithic self-righteousness masquerading as “democratic.” Pluralism, no matter how offensive, is a democratic value. Tyranny, no matter how well-intentioned, is not.

Brian Shuman

BDS REDUX

Dear Members:

In years past, Coop members debated the advisability of joining the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, a nonviolent campaign to secure justice for Palestine. Launched in 2005 at the behest of Palestinian civil society organizations, BDS has proven a powerful tool in the effort to end Israeli apartheid. The Coop as a whole never signed on to BDS, but individual members have long chosen to boycott items produced in Israel or made by companies supportive of the Israeli state (e.g., SodaStream).

As shown by the terrible events of Oct. 7 and later, the BDS campaign is more rele-

vant than ever. As I write, more than 10,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed by Israel's barbaric bombing campaign, combined with a blockade that deprives the civilian population of food, water and medical care. According to CNN, "Children are nearly half of all casualties." In my view, it's an ethical imperative to mourn all the victims, Jewish and Palestinian, while absolutely rejecting Israel's genocidal rampage. (Yes, what we are seeing meets "A Textbook Definition of Genocide" according to Holocaust scholar Raz Segal in an article published by *Jewish Currents* on Oct. 13.)

In keeping with our stated commitment to "avoid products that depend on the exploitation of others," I fervently hope that the Coop will now take steps to join the BDS movement. We stood up to help end South African apartheid. Palestine deserves no less.

Jan Clausen

Please note: the article by Raz Segal referred to in the letter can be accessed at *Jewish Currents*. Statistics from CNN are available at: "Civilian death toll: Israeli and Palestinian fatalities continue to rise amid the war with Hamas" | CNN

UNITY AT THE COOP

Dear Members:

Let's keep each other safe in light of recent events in the Middle East.

If we are to accept photographs and personal accounts of Palestinians on the ground, then we are also to accept photographs and personal accounts of Israelis on the ground. The massacre visited upon Israel on Oct. 7th is real. The destructive follow-up of the Israeli invasion is real. The follow up murder to that of a rabbi in Detroit is real. The continuous global threats against Jews and Muslims are real. Present horrors will

be replaced by fresh horrors.

Ongoing battles around who did what first are only fights about where it all started thousands of years ago. The only winners are the normalizers of hatred for Jews and Muslims. The latest headlines can't capture reality any more than they can about immigration. Therefore this is not a fight that the Coop should step into lest we are seen as supporting violence.

We need different dialogue here to discuss this. In our internet-influenced world of trolling, let's do better. Inside this organization, I invite us all to be Pro Coop. Let's take time to listen to each other, cooperate, even when we disagree. Listening is doing something productive. Blaming isn't. Unity for our membership remains the arc of our Coop's intent.

Concern for group B is not reduced by showing concern for group A. It's not pie.

Jesse Rosenfeld

COMMITTEE REPORT CONFUSION?

Dear Editor,

The Linewaiters' Gazette, like all elements of the "Fourth Estate," provides an important function in Coop governance by shedding light on and informing members about critical and overlooked issues at the Coop. This is why I've been dismayed to find in my brief experience trying to submit a committee report to the *Gazette* that it operates in complete darkness. There is no masthead. To contact the *Gazette*, there is only a single email address and it is anonymous. Questions sent to this email address go unanswered. There is no transparency and seemingly no accountability. It is completely unacceptable for our newspaper to operate as it does behind a veil of secrecy.

Sincerely,
Avi Fisher

Coordinator's Note: Committee Reports, like all submissions for Gazette publication or consideration for publication, are sent to a single email address. Content is then distributed to one of four editorial teams. Content that meets standards, which in the case of committee reports includes a limit of 750 words, will advance to publication. When reports require changes, editors generally send feedback to authors if their time permits. It is, however, incumbent upon the writer to adhere to guidelines. Regarding a Gazette masthead: its revival is in the works.