

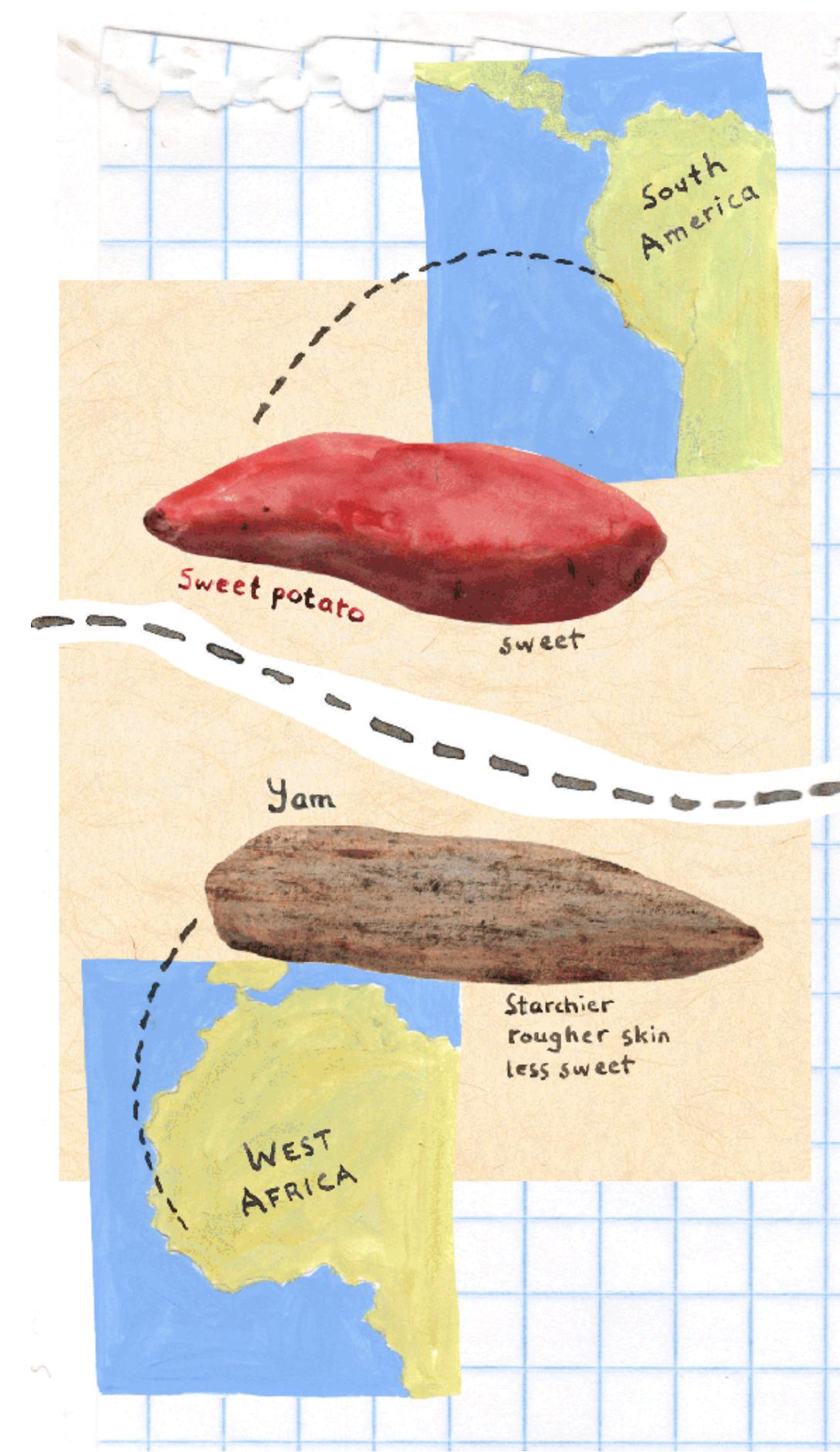
CROSSWORD: STOP

December 9, 2025



WANT TO TASTE BLACK HISTORY THIS YEAR? LOOK FOR SWEET POTATOES IN THE PRODUCE AISLE

December 9, 2025



November 18, 2025

By Femi Redwood

When I walk into the Coop's produce aisle and see boxes of sweet potatoes, I see more than a root. I see history. The sweet potato's journey began in South America, became a survival food for enslaved Africans in North America and later found a lasting place in Black culture. And while pumpkin pies may define the holiday table for some Americans, sweet potato pies are at the heart of celebrations for many Black families.

"Sweet potatoes are almost the way to determine whether it's a Black Thanksgiving or not a Black Thanksgiving," says Tonya Hopkins, a Brooklyn-based food and drink historian, spirit strategist and Coop member.

Yams and sweet potatoes are often used interchangeably, but they're different. Yams are native to West Africa whereas sweet potatoes originated in Peru. When colonizers arrived in the Americas, they began exporting sweet potatoes to Europe and Africa.

AS TIME WENT ON, ENSLAVED COOKS PERFECTED SWEET POTATOES INTO FORMAL DISHES FOR WHITE FAMILIES. ENSLAVED FAMILIES ALSO ATE SWEET POTATOES, BUT AS A NUTRITIOUS NECESSITY.

English royalty loved them, including Henry VIII, who often ate sweet potato tarts. Sixteenth-century Jesuit writings suggest they believed sweet potatoes were aphrodisiacs, which may explain their popularity.

In West Africa, yams were part of a regular diet and were used in soups and stews. Hopkins says Europeans assumed Africans would eat sweet potatoes because they resembled yams, but that wasn't the case. Locals didn't like the taste and only ate the

green, leafy part. Africans who were shackled on boats or enslaved on plantations had no choice. “They were given the fleshy, starchy potato part as this food ration,” Hopkins says.

In America, wealthy colonialists often followed English trends, so they, too, requested sweet potato dishes. As time went on, enslaved cooks perfected sweet potatoes into formal dishes for white families. Enslaved families also ate sweet potatoes, but as a nutritious necessity. “Enslaved people often grew sweet potatoes in their own garden plots,” Hopkins said. They lacked the tools in their own kitchens to make a dessert, but they were able to roast or boil a whole potato over a fire.

BLACK FAMILIES CONTINUED TO TAKE CULTURAL OWNERSHIP OVER SWEET POTATOES AS MANY MIGRATED NORTH. THIS CONTRIBUTED TO SWEET POTATO PIES, ESPECIALLY DURING HOLIDAYS, BECOMING A DISTINCTLY BLACK AMERICAN FOOD.

After emancipation, Black families gained greater access to ingredients like butter and sugar and had more time to cook in their own kitchens. While pumpkins were staples in the North, sweet potatoes remained a staple in the South due to their ease of growth. In fact, scientist and inventor George Washington Carver persuaded Southern farmers to plant sweet potatoes to help them transition away from their reliance on cotton. He even published a sweet potato guide for farmers and cooks.

Hopkins says Black families continued to take cultural ownership over sweet potatoes as many migrated North. This contributed to sweet potato pies, especially during holidays, becoming a distinctly Black American food.

“Sweet potatoes are probably the most recognizable food source in the South during the fall in the Black family beside collard greens,” says Howard Conyers, a pitmaster, family farmer and moonshiner in Manning, South Carolina.

While many of us are disconnected from how our food is farmed, Conyers says he wishes consumers understood how physically demanding it is to farm sweet potatoes. He remembers collecting sweet potatoes as a child after they were harvested with a mule plow pulled by a tractor.

"We used to pick up like a quarter acre to an acre by hand in buckets," Conyers says. Sweet potatoes sold in stores today likely come from commercial harvesters, he says, but those are still physically demanding jobs for workers.

Conyers, who studied agricultural engineering at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University before earning an engineering doctorate from Duke University, grows the same sweet potato seed his ancestors did. "It's an old seed that's probably been passed down almost a hundred years," he says. He continues: "Maybe I'm tasting the sweet potato pie that my grandmother made or my great-grandmother made going back as far into slavery," he says. He notes it likely tastes different from anything you've ever tasted because it's made from heirloom sweet potatoes.

MOONSHINE, LIKE SWEET POTATOES, IS PART OF BLACK HISTORY, THOUGH BLACK EXPERTISE IN THE INDUSTRY IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED.

But while there is reverence for the past, many, like Conyers, are experimenting with sweet potatoes in new ways. Hopkins says they are a "great muse" for experimenting with recipes. Conyers has replaced carrots with grated sweet potatoes in his mother's carrot cake recipe and uses sweet potatoes to make moonshine, another staple of Black history and African tradition.

In 2020, he and his father opened Backyard Distillery, one of the few Black-owned moonshine makers. Moonshine, like sweet potatoes, is part of Black history, though Black expertise in the industry is often overlooked.

Hopkins says the roots of moonshine-making can be traced back to African traditions, and in America, Black folks in the South were among its key makers. It was used for both medicinal and recreational purposes. Hopkins adds that moonshine was also a path to economic freedom for many, including her own family. Her grandmother ran a speakeasy in Camden, New Jersey, during Prohibition and afterwards.

For Conyers, moonshine isn't just a business; it's a continuation of Black creativity and survival. "It should be the spirit of Black people in America. We talk about bourbon and this other stuff, but moonshine is just as important to Black America," Conyers says.

Conyers hopes to expand how he shares these innovation stories and he's optimistic about starting tours next year of his family farm and distillery. "I hope people will come down and see what we're doing at our integrated farm distillery," he says. "So, you can see how we're trying to use the whole ecosystem to tell the whole story of the South through Black people's eyes," he continues.

"SWEET POTATOES WERE HARDY ENOUGH TO SURVIVE THE MIDDLE PASSAGE, PRACTICAL ENOUGH FOR ENSLAVED PEOPLE'S GARDENS AND VERSATILE ENOUGH TO STRETCH ACROSS BOTH PLANTATION KITCHENS AND FREEDOM KITCHENS," - SAID TONYA HOPKINS.

Based on what Hopkins shared, whether sweet potatoes are used in moonshine, pie, cake or any other dish, their botanical persistence and durability mirror the resilience of Black people. "It stores well through hardship and regenerates year after year," said Hopkins. "It was hardy enough to survive the Middle Passage, practical enough for enslaved people's gardens and versatile enough to stretch across both plantation kitchens and freedom kitchens. Its very durability and ability to reinvent itself made it much more than a survival crop."

Want to taste Black history? Try one of these recipes this Thanksgiving. We suggest using Beauregard or Jewel sweet potatoes for the best flavor. You can also use Garnet sweet potatoes, but your pie will be slightly less sweet. At the time of publication, all three of those varieties are available at the Coop. The Coop also carries Japanese, purple majesty and purple sweet potatoes, but those are not recommended because they won't give you the sweet, creamy filling and color of traditional sweet potato pie.

CLASSIC SWEET POTATO RECIPE

- 2 pounds of sweet potatoes
- $\frac{1}{4}$ pounds unsalted butter, softened
- 2 large eggs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup evaporated milk
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cloves
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 9-inch pie crust

Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Grease a baking sheet with your preferred oil or spray it with non-stick spray.
- Wash and dry the sweet potatoes. Pierce them several times with a fork, then place them on the baking sheet. Bake for 45 minutes or until soft.
- Remove the sweet potatoes and lower the oven temperature to 350 degrees.
- Once the sweet potatoes cool, peel and throw away their skin.
- Grease the pie pan with your preferred oil or spray it with nonstick cooking spray. Add the pie crust.
- Add the peeled potatoes to a large mixing bowl and blend. Add the softened butter and continue to blend. Add the eggs and continue to blend. Add both sugars and all the seasonings, then continue blending. Lastly, add the vanilla and evaporated milk and continue blending.
- Pour the filling into the pie crust. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 to 60 minutes, or until

the top is brown. You can also insert a toothpick or knife in the middle of the pie to check if it comes out clean.

- If your pie is done, remove it from the oven and let it cool for at least 30 minutes.

HOWARD CONYERS'S SWEET POTATO CAKE, MODIFIED FROM HIS MOM HALLIE'S CARROT CAKE RECIPE

- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs well beaten
- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup pecan
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 3 cups grated sweet potatoes (peeled)
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 9-inch cake pans

Instructions for the cake

- Mix the oil and sugar, and beat well. Add eggs.
- Sift all dry ingredients, particularly the flour, two to three times. Add nuts and mix with the sugar mixture.
- Lastly, add grated sweet potatoes a small amount at a time.
- Bake in the pans at 325 degrees for 30 minutes.

Instructions for the cream cheese frosting

- $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 stick of margarine or butter
- 8 oz of cream cheese
- 1 box powdered sugar
- 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract

Mix all ingredients, beat well. Spread between layers and on the top.

If you want to support Hopkins' work and learn more about the intersection of food, drinks and history, you can join her Paetron platform.

To learn more about Conyers and his work and arrange a tour during your next southern visit, check out his website.

Femi Redwood is a Murrow Award-winning journalist. For over a decade, she has worked in prestigious newsrooms including VICE News and CBS Newspath, holding a range of roles from on-air correspondent to department manager. She lives in Crown Heights with her wife, Julie, and their cat, Leo.

A NEW SEASON OF THE COOP CONCERT SERIES SPOTLIGHTS MEMBER TALENT

December 9, 2025



November 18, 2025

By Leila Darabi

Photo story by Caroline Mardok

On a mild September evening in Park Slope, about 30 Coop members and neighbors filled ShapeShifter Lab, the music and arts space located diagonally across from the Coop. Inside, the lights were warm, the bar busy and the crowd ready for the first night of the new season of the Coop Concert Series.

This monthly series brings together member musicians and their friends to perform in a professional setting. Nearly everyone involved invoked the name of Bev Grant, who helped run an earlier Coop concert series at the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture.

It ran for more than 15 years, from the early 2000s until it paused in 2020. Grant's work in those years inspired many who are now reviving the idea with fresh energy and a new venue.

Organizer Alexis Cuadrado, a bassist and composer, described the reboot as both homage and expansion. "We wanted to revamp it in a bit of a different way than what it had been before and open it to a more diverse group of performers and more, you know, at all levels—music, origin, style—so like diversity with a capital D," he said.

"THE COOP IS FULL OF MUSICIANS," ORGANIZER ALEXIS CUADRADO SAID. "WHY NOT TURN THAT INTO A REAL COMMUNITY PLATFORM?"

A MUSICAL COLLABORATION

The concerts take place at ShapeShifter Lab, founded by Coop members Fortuna Sung and Matthew Garrison. "It's special because it's really a partnership between the Coop and ShapeShifter," Sung said. "We provide the space, the sound, the bar; they bring the music and community. It's very organic."

Sung and Garrison lead operations and general coordination of the events, in addition to their roles at ShapeShifter Lab on performance days (at the September event, Sung could be found behind the bar). Singer-songwriter Annie Keating handles social media, Ave Carrillo serves as series producer, and Cuadrado and violinist Ludovica Burtone curate the series.

Each concert includes four short sets, about 20 minutes each, and the mix is wide-ranging: jazz, folk, cabaret, world music and experimental performances. Performers can apply online and receive Coop work slot credit for playing. "The Coop is full of musicians," Cuadrado said. "Why not turn that into a real community platform?"



The ShapeShifter Lab.



Food coop concert, September 2025.



Brad Shepik Trio Peace Light—Brad Shepik (guitar), Chris Tordini (bass), Allan Mednard (drums).

A NEW HOME ACROSS THE STREET

Keating remembers the earlier concerts vividly. “I used to play the series back when it was a partnership with the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture,” she said. “We had this, like, crappy little, not even a portable PA. It was basically one mixer thing and like two mics... Now it’s at a proper venue with an amazing sound and light system.”

Keating now helps run the revived version, promoting each event on social media. “We’ve had some really good numbers and exposure on Instagram,” Keating said. “But I think the majority of people at the Food Coop don’t know that we have a concert series. That’s the next step: getting the word out. It’s such a great opportunity, it’s across the street from the Coop and the sound here is amazing.”

“WE HAVE TO NURTURE THE MUSIC SCENE AND PROTECT IT. SO, IT’S NICE THAT THE COOP IS INVOLVED IN THAT AND SEES IT AS VALUABLE,” SAID MUSICIAN BRAD SHEPIK.

FIRST NIGHT BACK

The September concert opened with the Brad Shepik Trio, featuring Shepik on guitar, Chris Tordini on bass and Allan Mednard on drums. Their set included a preview of Shepik’s recent album, *Human Activity: Dream of the Possible*, a ten-movement meditation on climate change.

“I think it’s great that this series is happening,” Shepik said afterward. “We need more live music, period. The number of venues that we’ve seen come and go over the last 30 years,” he reminisced. Noting that the music scene depends on community support, he added that “we have to nurture it and protect it. So, it’s nice that the Coop is involved in that and sees it as valuable.”

Other acts that evening included Brittain Ashford; the Department of Jazz and Human Services, whose set celebrated the first birthday of saxophonist Andrew Brin-Spicer’s baby; and Dolly Trolly closing the night with playful rock harmonies and inventive guitar work from Tara L. Mallon, whose bandmates shared that she became fascinated with unique tuning during the pandemic.

Photographer Caroline Mardok, Shepik’s wife, documented the night, weaving

through the small crowd that mixed longtime Coop members and the friends and families of the performers. The atmosphere felt friendly and informal—a family affair in every sense.



Brittain Ashford (acoustic guitar), Jay Chakravorty (piano, electric guitar).



Dolly Trolly—Tara L. Mallon (guitar), Gerard Kouwenhoven (guitar), Walter Boppert (bass), Lyla Vander (drums).



Chris Tordini (bass) and his daughter after the concert.

THE TEAM MAKING IT HAPPEN

Bringing the series to life each month depends on a small crew of professionals offering their time and talent to the Coop community. Sung and Garrison handle venue operations; Cuadrado curates performers; Keating manages social media and other promotion. “It’s like a small production every month,” Sung said. “We’re artists, too, so we know what performers need to feel comfortable.”

She and the team continue to push for inclusivity. “We really want to expand our di-

versity of the performers,” Sung said. “We don’t see a lot of Black musicians or performers. So this is one of the things we want to overcome and let people know: Hey, don’t think it’s just one genre. It’s not just jazz. We want other things.”

“PLAYING MUSIC WITH OTHERS IS ONE OF THE MOST HUMAN THINGS THERE IS,” SAID SHEPIK. “IT REMINDS YOU THAT YOU’RE PART OF SOMETHING LARGER THAN YOURSELF. THAT’S WHAT THE COOP IS ABOUT, TOO: COMMUNITY, COOPERATION, CONNECTION.”

Cuadrado emphasized that goal, too. “The Coop is full of creative people,” he said. “This is about celebrating that diversity—of music, of culture, of background. It’s what makes the community so rich.”



Matt Garrison, owner of Shapeshifter lab.



Audience members enjoying the show.



Food Coop concert, September 2025.

MUSIC AS CONNECTION

The concerts have become a way to rebuild community after years of restrictions and uncertainty around public gatherings. “There was a certain kind of isolation that we all had to contend with,” Keating said. “A lot of our in-person, real, not-Zoom connections to community were severed, and what we’re trying to do is rebuild that human connection. And I think this concert series is a beautiful avenue.”

Shepik agreed: “Playing music with others is one of the most human things there is,” he said. “It reminds you that you’re part of something larger than yourself. That’s what the Coop is about, too: community, cooperation, connection.”

Many attendees said the evening underscored just how much musical depth exists within the Coop. The musicians, sound engineers, photographers and organizers all came from the same cooperative, and collectively help keep the store running.



Department of Jazz and Human Services—Andrew Brin-Spicer (saxophone), Pete Martin (trumpet), Aidan Scrimgeour, (piano), Nathan Haselby (bass), Dan Sieber (drums).



Department of Jazz and Human Services.

WHAT'S NEXT

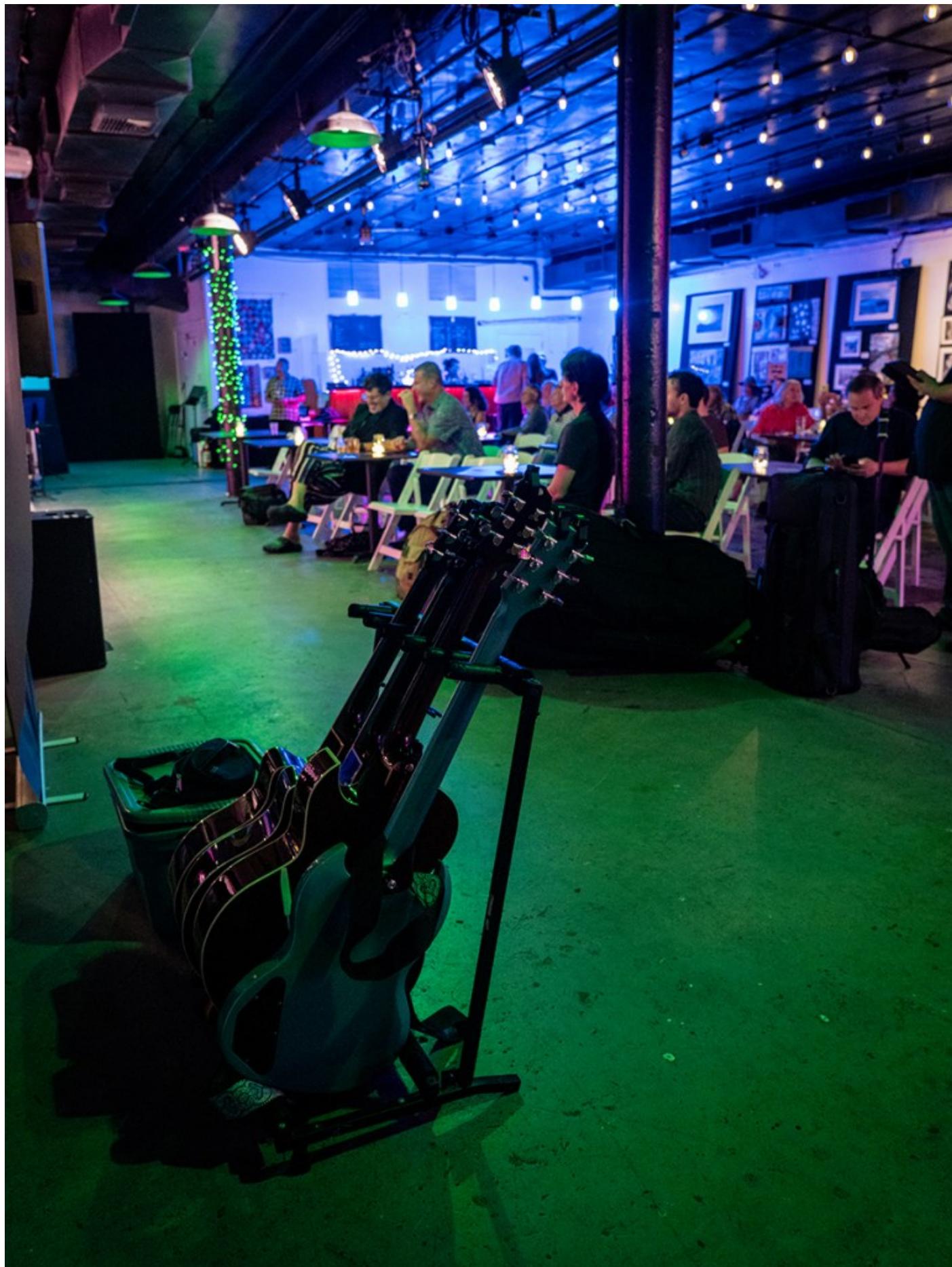
The series continues monthly at ShapeShifter Lab. The October show featured the Jameh Daran Ensemble, Stoddard Blackall, Maggie Carson and Paula T, an evening that ranged from Iranian traditional music to indie pop. The squad shares the lineup for future events on Instagram and their website. All shows are \$10 and start at 6:30 p.m., with doors opening at 6 p.m. The next event is December 5.

Cuadrado added that the group is planning to include performance art and possibly a

children's concert next year.

A STAGE FOR THE COMMUNITY

An idea once nurtured by Grant and other early members has found new life across the street from the Coop. The monthly concerts showcase the remarkable range of musicians who stock shelves, ring up groceries, and share shifts. The Coop Concert Series continues to grow, offering a space where members can share their art, build connections, and keep live music thriving close to home.



Food Coop concert, September 2025.

MEMBER-SUBMITTED ARTICLE: HELP OUR SISTER COOP IN SAO PAOLO!

December 9, 2025



November 18, 2025

By Joe Holtz

Through our practice of the International Cooperative principles, we have been giving advice to the group that has been trying to start the Gomo Coop in Sao Paolo, Brazil.

Over the last several years, we have Zoomed with them and answered many questions about what we do here and why we do what we do.

We have been impressed by their intent to practice participatory cooperation. Their commitment is strong. Successfully launching a new cooperative is financially difficult. Our dollars will go very far in Brazil, where the cost of living is much lower than here. Please seriously consider backing up the advice we have given by donating money to them through their online fundraising campaign.

Joe Holtz is one of the cofounders of the Coop and retired this year after 50 years of employment by the Coop. During that time he has emphasized our Coop's commitment to the International Principles of Cooperation.

Support Gomo Coop! Latin America's first participatory cooperative supermarket!

Inspired by **Park Slope Food Coop**, in the last 10 years, many food coops have been founded in Europe. And now it's Brazil's time.



For a big city like São Paulo, with its urban complexity, mobility challenges, and high levels of social inequality, a food coop is an especially important initiative. It offers a concrete alternative to address the common issues faced by large Brazilian cities: access to organic, healthy, and affordable foods; the valorization of local and sustainable production; and the reorganization of the distribution system, often dominated by large corporations and unsustainable supply chains. **Support our campaign today and help make this alternative a reality.**



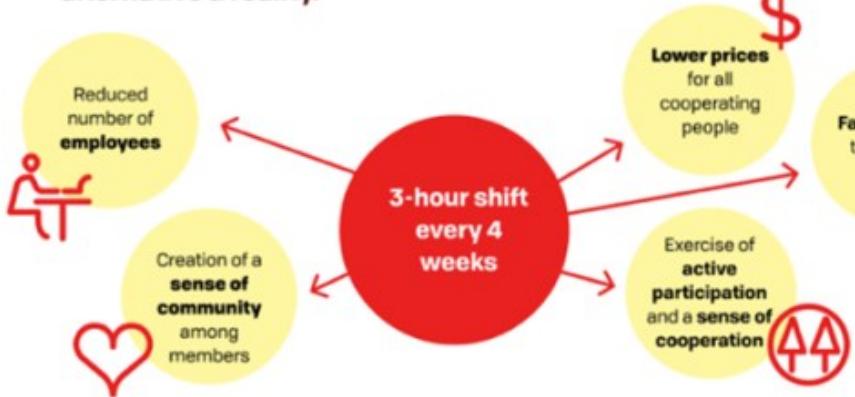
Help us to open our doors

With your support at **PayPal**, we'll stock our shelves with fresh, high-quality, organic, and essential products, sourced directly from the producers. This is the final step towards opening our doors.

sites.google.com/gomocoop/eng



Gomo Coop's future store under construction



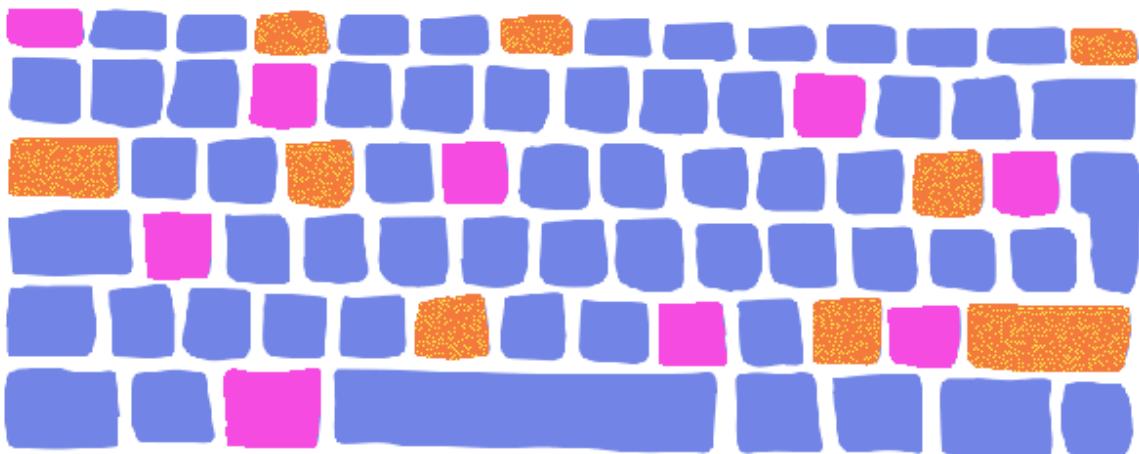
GOMO COOP

Courtesy of Joe Holtz.

NOVEMBER 18, 2025

December 9, 2025

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



CONGRATULATIONS COOP RUNNERS

Dear Members,

Congratulations to Coop members who completed the New York City Marathon on Sunday, Nov. 2. The marathon travels through all five boroughs from its start in Staten Island to the finish in Central Park, passing nearly right by the Coop on its route in Brooklyn along Fourth Ave. On Marathon Sunday, the whole city embraces the spirit of generosity, cheerfulness and bonhomie that I hope we all bring to our community year-round. I wish you all a speedy recovery, and I do believe we carry epsom salt in aisle four to help you along!

Barry Leybovich

FOOD COOP PRODUCT REVIEW

Dear Gazette and PSFC,

I think it would be highly useful for Coop members if the *Gazette* had a product review section with reviews provided by members. I have recommendations, good and bad, that I'd like to share, and would like to hear others' recommendations as well. It would also make members aware of products they didn't even know we sold—like cat-butt magnets or drying racks for plastic bags. Thanks!

Sincerely,

Michael Katz

DISCLOSE THE LEGAL OPINION NOW—“CONFIDENTIALITY” IS NOT A VALID EXCUSE

Dear Coop members:

The topic of the alleged legal opinion (a) stating that hybrid meetings can be implemented without amending the bylaws and (b) validating the practice of allowing the board to vote on matters that do not appear before it as member-initiated agenda items has been an ongoing topic of discussion. (See voluntary article, June 24, 2025, and letters to the editor and General Coordinator responses on Aug. 26 and Oct. 28, 2025.)

The General Coordinators have stated that the legal opinion is not in writing. On the basis of 20 years in commercial litigation in which I reviewed and drafted legal opinion letters, I say that that proposition is literally incredible. It calls into question (a) what question the GCs presented to the unidentified attorney(s) who rendered an opinion and (b) whether the attorney(s) examined the governing documents of the Coop and conducted an evaluation of the events of April and June 2025 in the context of New York law. The decision to change Coop practice on the magnitude of what is happening without a proper legal opinion is plausibly a breach of fiduciary duty.

In the Aug. 26 issue of the *Linewaiters’ Gazette* I called for disclosure of the fabled legal opinion. GC Joe Szladek responded there that the opinion is confidential. That response is not valid. No law is stopping management from disclosing to the membership whatever shred of writing shows the legal reasoning—which they should do for an opinion that supposedly legitimizes the end of the Coop’s historical governance structure and calls into question whether the Coop’s bylaws and guidelines mean anything. Even if the legal opinion were confidential, nothing prevents management from making a limited waiver of confidentiality with whatever redactions are necessary.

Disclose the opinion now.

Sincerely,
Noah Potter

Editors Note:

Noah sent a version of this letter to the LWG on Aug. 29, 2025, for inclusion in the Sept. 16, 2025 issue of the LWG, though it was not published. Noah intended to deliver a version of the letter to the Chair Committee at the Sept. 30 meeting but he was sick that night and, at his request, a fellow member delivered the letter to the Chair Committee to be read (in accordance with the meeting rules). The Chair Committee did not read the revised letter due to his absence. The report on the meeting in the LWG noted a comment during the meeting that he should submit the letter to the LWG.

General Manager Response to Noah Potter's Letter

Dear Coop Members,

Following the April 29 Board meeting, the General Coordinators sought legal guidance from attorneys with extensive experience in cooperative governance. This was not a request for a single, formal legal “opinion,” but part of an ongoing and broader dialogue about the Coop’s governance practices and legal compliance. We have consulted these attorneys numerous times to clarify questions of authority, process and best practices under cooperative law.

We approach these consultations thoughtfully and thoroughly—asking questions from multiple angles to test the consistency and reliability of the attorneys’ guidance. Our goal is to ensure that all perspectives and member concerns are represented in how we frame our inquiries, and that the resulting advice supports sound, transparent decision-making.

Based on advice from the Coop’s governance attorneys, and as previously shared

with members:

- The Board has the authority under the bylaws to take the action it did on April 29.
- A bylaw amendment is not required to allow hybrid General Meetings.

Maintaining confidentiality in communications with legal counsel is both standard and essential. This confidentiality protects the Coop's ability to seek candid, independent advice and to meet its fiduciary responsibilities to the membership. While we share the conclusions of our legal consultations when they directly affect Coop operations or members—as we have done here—the underlying attorney-client communications are privileged and not disclosed. This approach is consistent with standard practices across cooperatives, nonprofits and other member-owned organizations.

Respectfully,
Joe Szladek
General Manager

I MET WITH A SAILOR FROM THE GLOBAL SUMUD FLOTILLA

Dear members,

On Friday, Oct. 10, 2025, at my local coffee shop in Gowanus, I met with a sailor from the Global Sumud Flotilla, an international civil-society maritime initiative aimed at challenging the Israeli blockade of Gaza. This person across the table from me shared that they were only a few days removed from having been taken from international waters at gunpoint by Israeli forces while attempting to deliver humanitarian aid to Palestinians, a mission they described as a moral and legal obligation under the Genocide Convention.

I was struck by this person's bravery and could not help but reflect on the inertia of our cooperative over the last two years to not even table a vote for the boycott of Israeli goods. Have we become so numb that we fail to recognize the humanity of Palestinians? A better Coop and world are possible, just as the many boats sailing toward Gaza have inspired so many to believe.

Sincerely,
Damien Neva

WORDSPROUTS: JOE DOLCE

December 9, 2025



By Sarah Schenck

Come join us for our next WordSprouts event in partnership with the Old Stone House, featuring author Joe Dolce.

Joe will read from his new book, *Modern Psychedelics: The Handbook for Mindful Exploration*.

Wordsprouts: The Park Slope Food Coop Author Series presents:



Joe Dolce

Join us to hear Joe Dolce speak about his new book **Modern Psychedelics, The Handbook for Mindful Exploration**.

As one reviewer puts it, "Dolce has created something for three distinct audiences: experienced travelers seeking new insights, 'infrequent flyers' wanting more skillful use, and the 'psychedelic curious' who need guidance."

Books will be available for purchase, and coop snacks will be served!

**Wednesday November
19, 2025**

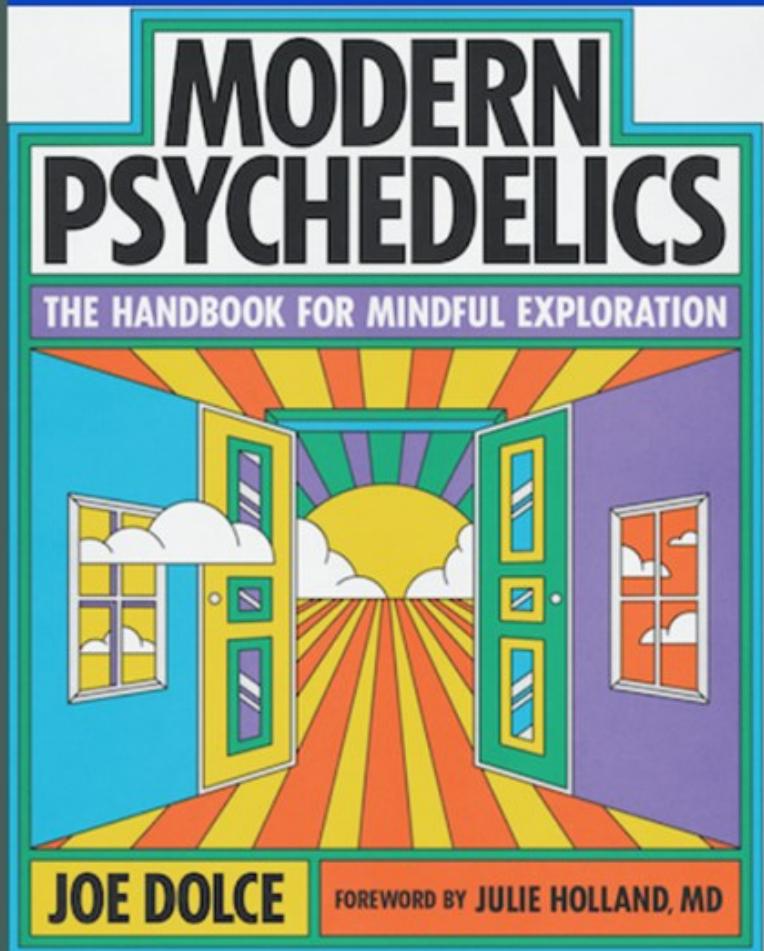
Doors: 6:45pm
Start time: 7pm

Old Stone House
336 3rd Street, Brooklyn

RSVP:
bit.ly/november-wordsprouts



All events are free
and open to all!



Courtesy of Joe Dolce

WordSprouts is a long-running PSFC author series featuring Coop authors sharing their work and creative process.

Our next event:

Author: Joe Dolce (PSFC member)

Literary Genre: Mind Body Spirit/Wellness/Science

When: Wednesday, November 19, 2025—doors open at 6:45 p.m., event begins at 7:00 p.m.

Where: Old Stone House, 336 3rd Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215

Format: In-person only (no recording)

RSVP:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/joe-dolce-at-wordsprouts-the-park-slope-food-coop-reading-series-tickets-1413978962139?aff=oddtdtcreator>

Joe Dolce is a journalist and the former editor-in-chief of *Details Magazine*. He is also the author of *Brave New Weed: Adventures into the Uncharted World of Cannabis* and CEO of Joe Dolce Communications, one of the premier presentation and media training companies in New York City. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

As one reviewer put it, “*Modern Psychedelics*, the handbook we’ve been missing, the bridge between Michael Pollan’s brilliant journalism and the practical reality of people actually using these substances. Where Pollan opened the door with *How to Change Your Mind*, Dolce provides the roadmap for what comes next: how to make informed decisions about psychedelics—and so much more. Dolce has created something for three distinct audiences: experienced travelers seeking new insights, “infrequent flyers” wanting more skillful use, and the “psychedelic curious” who need guidance.

Regarding his favorite Coop shift, Joe says: “I’m shift-fluid. When I’m tired, I like cashier; when I’m energetic, unloading trucks doubles as a workout. When I’m frazzled,

packing cheese and nuts is soothing."

Joe's presentation will be followed by questions from the audience, and drinks and snacks courtesy of the Coop.

The book will be available for purchase at the event for \$24.99 plus tax, or can be ordered from several online booksellers, including Amazon and Hachette.

To get updates about WordSprouts events, check the Linewaiters' Gazette, sign up for the mailing list at psfcwordsprouts@gmail.com and follow us on Instagram at @food-coopwordsprouts.

WordSprouts's committee includes committee leader Sarah Schenck and committee members Susan Horwich and Ruthy Nachmany.

DECEMBER CONCERT SERIES

December 9, 2025

SEASON 2, FORTH CONCERT!!

THE PSFC CONCERT SERIES

FEATURING

FRIENDSHIP EXPRESS!
ILIA (ILUSHA)
FRANK BASILE TRIO
THE 49ERS

FRIDAY,
DEC 5
DOORS 6 PM
SHOW 6:30; \$10

SHAPESHIFTER LAB
837 UNION ST.
BROOKLYN, NY 11215

Get your
tickets here!



Join us for the next *The Park Slope Food Coop Concert Series* on Friday, December 5, at ShapeShifter Lab.

FRIENDSHIP EXPRESS!

Set 1: 6:30-6:50 p.m.

Performing Artist / Band: Friendship Express!

Personnel:

- Elena Moon Park - Violin & Voice
- Eva Imber - Ukulele & Voice
- James Moore - Guitar, Banjo & Voice
- Kenji Shinagawa - Guitar, Mandolin & Voice

About:

Elena Moon Park, Eva Imber, James Moore and Kenji Shinagawa offer an eclectic set of songs about food and collegiality, blending musical styles and joyful energy.

ILIA (ILUSHA)

Set 2: 7-7:20 pm.

Performing Artist / Band: Ilia (Ilusha)

Personnel:

- Ilusha Tsinadze - Guitar & Voice
- Christopher Tordini
- Allan Mednard
- Dana Lyn

About:

Georgian-born, Brooklyn-based guitarist and singer Ilusha Tsinadze explores his multi-cultural background through music, bringing together folk traditions from the Republic of Georgia with contemporary American musical art forms.

FRANK BASILE TRIO

Set 3: 7:30-7:50 p.m.

Performing Artist / Band: Frank Basile Trio

Personnel:

- Frank Basile - Baritone Saxophone
- Noah Garabedian - Bass
- Scott Neumann - Drums

About:

A straight-ahead jazz trio led by baritone saxophonist Frank Basile, featuring rhythm section staples Noah Garabedian and Scott Neumann in a dynamic, classic jazz perfor-

mance.

THE 49ERS (TY CITERMAN AND ANDERS NILSSON)

Set 4: 8-8:20 p.m.

Performing Artist / Band: The 49ers (Ty Citerman and Anders Nilsson)

Personnel:

- Ty Citerman (@tyciterman) - Electric Guitar
- Anders Nilsson (@andersnilsson) - Electric Guitar

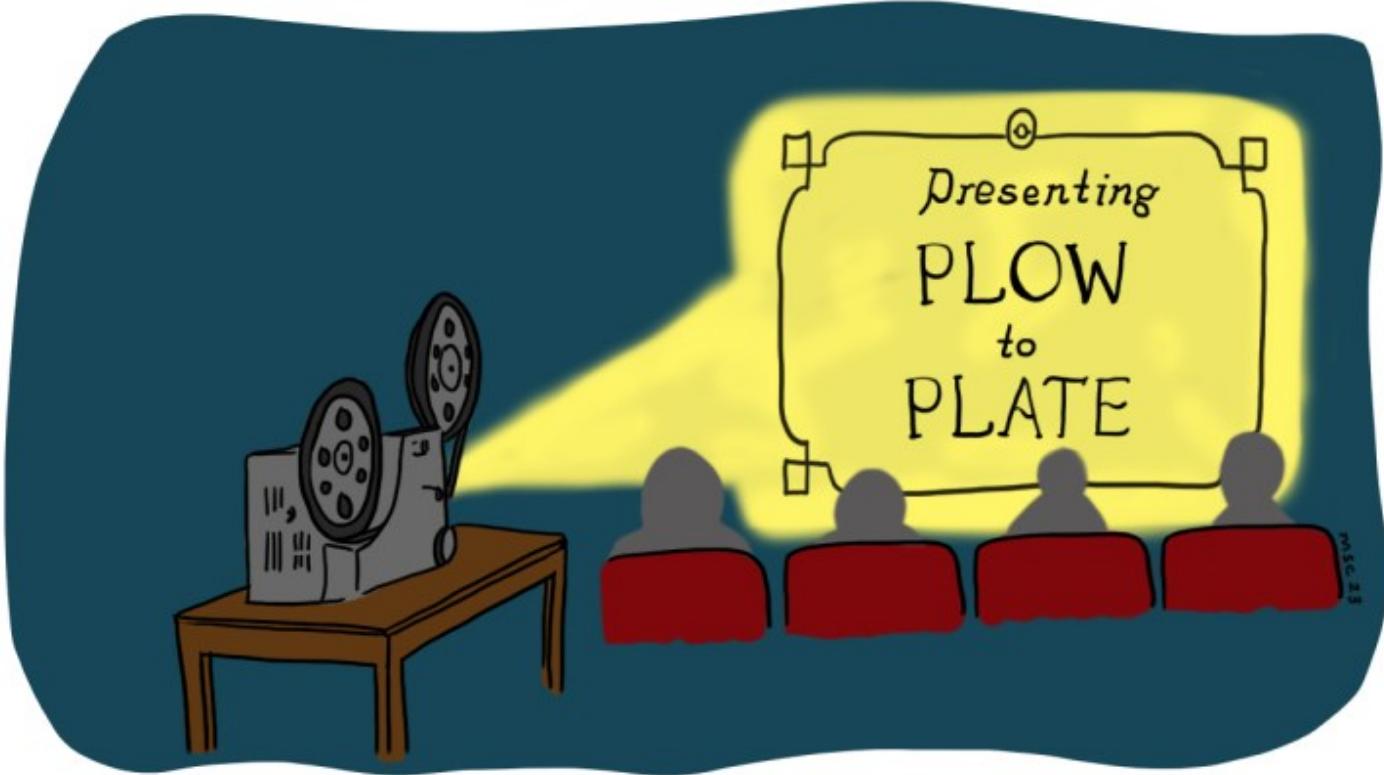
About:

Anders Nilsson and Ty Citerman premiere new and original arrangements of Arnold Schoenberg's wildly inventive piano solo music, reimagined for two electric guitars without effects—pushing the boundaries of sonic texture and classical reinterpretation.

[Buy tickets >](#)

PLOW TO PLATE PRESENTS: SWEETGRASS

December 9, 2025



By Adam Rabiner

Sweetgrass is a documentary about the Allestad family's final sheep drive, the last one hosted in Montana, in the summer of 2003. Directors Ilisa Barbash and Lucien Castaing-Taylor are visual anthropologists whose style of ethnographic filmmaking bears witness to this dying tradition and way of life without resorting to voice-overs or title cards. The camera observes the action and conversations, and while the cowboys and cowgirls may speak (or sing) to the sheep, horses or dogs, they never address the filmmakers.

While sheep still graze public land and cow-people still exist, the social scientists captured the end of an era and way of life. When John Ahern and Pat Connolly drive their 3,000 sheep into the mountainous Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness, first steering the flock down a rural town's saloon-lined main street like an animal parade, it's a journey that four generations of their ancestors partook in.

AS CONSUMERS OF WOOL OR MEAT, WE ARE FAR REMOVED FROM THE ANIMALS.

OUR SWEATER OR LAMB CHOP IS SIMPLY A COMMODITY TO BE PURCHASED AND ENJOYED.

They are aided by some modern-day technology—walkie-talkies, cell phones, flash-lights, and telescopic rifle scopes—but at its core, the trip is the same it has ever been. Their main tools and companions are their horses and sheepherding dogs. They cook over a heavy, cast iron, wood-burning stove, build fires at night to warm themselves and carry a white cloth lean-to tent, supported by wooden branches and rope, that looks like something the Donner Party might have packed. Despite the few amenities, the odyssey remains as physically grueling and dangerous now as before.

As consumers of wool or meat, we are far removed from the animals. Our sweater or lamb chop is simply a commodity to be purchased and enjoyed. Not so for the humans in *Sweetgrass*. Their relationship is deeper and more complex. Though we see them helping to deliver a baby, assisting a newborn to latch on to a nipple or even hand-feeding milk to a lamb via a tube and straw, these animals are decidedly not pets. They are intimate, grappling with them while shearing their wool or straddling them to rustle to a particular pen. But while the farm dog is named Coco and a horse is called Jake, the sheep are numbered and marked with green paint.

The relationship between the humans and sheep ranges from affection, tenderness and protection to outright rage and frustration. In an early scene, before departing on their 150-mile trek to the mountainous pasture lands, one rancher says to a lamb, as he carries him to his mother, “Well, junior, we’ve got to find you some milk. Come here. Oh Lordy, Lordy. There you go.” A bit later, you see a man dressing another young lamb in a custom-fit wool sweater to keep him warm.

THIS SCENE, MORE THAN ANY OTHER, REVEALS THE IMMENSE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CHALLENGES THAT THIS VOYAGE ENTAILS AND WHY, ULTIMATELY, IT IS BECOMING A THING OF THE PAST.

On the other hand, in a later scene, already deep into the trip, worn down, exhausted and injured, a cowboy fires off curses that would earn this film an R rating. He screams at his wards, telling them they can “eat shit and die,” then calls his mom from a hilltop for consolation. He tells her his dog can’t walk and won’t leave camp, his horse is ribs and bones, his knee is popping, it’s bullshit, the sheep are ornery, and he’s miserable. He is at the end of his rope, on the edge of tears. You feel sorry for him. This scene, more than any other, reveals the immense physical and mental challenges that this voyage entails and why, ultimately, it is becoming a thing of the past.

Before getting off the phone with his mom, Pat tells her that he doesn’t want to grow to hate the mountains. Majestically beautiful when filmed from a distance, their steep slopes, which the sheep love to climb and must be wrangled back from, are forbiddingly dangerous. *Sweetgrass* is gorgeous to behold. It’s obvious why so many cowboy westerns are set in Montana. An image of the two men riding horseback on the crest of a hill at dusk, like shadows, or a morning mist lingering over the precious sweetgrass may stay with you long after you are done watching the movie. And a big part of the film’s soundtrack is the sheep’s conversations. The baas, bleats, mehs, and other bleeping sounds may ring in your ears for some time.

Sweetgrass, Tuesday, December 9, 2025 at 7 p.m.

Screening link >

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

From October 2025 through March 2026, Plow to Plate is exclusively featuring Grasshopper Film documentaries.

Adam Rabiner lives in Ditmas Park with his wife, Dina.

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

December 9, 2025



August 26, 2025

By Emmett Lindner

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

tions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Can you tell readers a little about yourself?

I was born in Westchester and grew up in northern New Jersey and went to school in Iowa, Grinnell College. Then, I lived in various other places, Saratoga Springs, and in Paris and London for a while, doing odd jobs and was always writing.

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

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

And you can be more independent as a novelist.

Yes, you can also be more poverty stricken.

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

When did you move to Brooklyn?

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

Did you join the Coop when you first moved here?

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

now.

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



Photograph by Michael Berman.

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

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

they do.

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

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

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

What is your process for writing the obituaries?

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

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

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

I'm very intent on not making it a literary performance in any sense of the word. I just

want to stay out of the way as much as possible. I want to get the information out there, and I love getting quotes from people who knew the person. I don't want to have some kind of flourish that's mine. So mostly it's a question of staying as invisible as possible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JULY GENERAL MEETING REPORT

December 9, 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 psfcwordsprouts@gmail.com. You can also follow the Wordsprouts squad on Instagram at @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 membership 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.

CONCERT SERIES RETURNS FOR FALL

December 9, 2025

GET READY FOR SEASON 2!!

THE PSFC CONCERT SERIES

FEATURING

BRAD SHEPIK TRIO PEACE LIGHT
BRITTAIN ASHFORD

DEPARTMENT OF JAZZ AND HUMAN SERVICES
DOLLY TROLLY

FRIDAY,
SEPTEMBER 12TH
DOORS OPEN @ 6PM
\$10

SHAPESHIFTER LAB
837 UNION ST, BROOKLYN, NY
11215

Get your
tickets here!



August 26, 2025

By Fortuna Sung

Join us for the ninth installment of the Park Slope Food Coop Concert Series—a vibrant evening of live music performed by Coop members, celebrating the incredible depth of talent in our community.



Date: Friday, September 12, 2025

Doors: 6 p.m. **Show:** 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Location: ShapeShifter Lab, 837 Union Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215 (across from the Food Coop)

Cover: \$10

Concert Lineup:

Set 1: 6:30-6:50 p.m.

Brad Shepik Trio Peace Light

Brad Shepik (guitar), Chris Tordini (bass), Allan Mednard (drums)

About: New jazz compositions with a global music tinge

Set 2: 7-7:20 p.m.

Brittain Ashford

Brittain Ashford (acoustic guitar), TBA (piano/electric guitar)

About: "Delicate and defiant... the kind of husky ethereality that can stop you in your tracks." —*The New York Times*

Set 3: 7:30-7:50 p.m.

Department of Jazz and Human Services

Andrew Brin-Spicer (saxophone), Pete Martin (trumpet), Aidan Scrimgeour (piano), Nathan Haselby (bass), Dan Sieber (drums)

About: Original jazz music celebrating the first birthday of Quinn Parker Brin-Spicer

Set 4: 8-8:20 p.m.

Dolly Trolly

Tara L. Mallon (guitar), Gerard Kouwenhoven (guitar), Walter Boppert (bass), Lyla Vander (drums)

About: A snow globe of swirling harmonies... Fleetwood Mac meets B-52s with a healthy dose of whimsy!

The Park Slope Food Coop Concert Series is one of our community's most joyful creative traditions. Initiated by longtime member Beverly Grant—artist, composer, and activist—the series celebrates the diverse talents within our Coop.

Thanks to the dedication of curators Alexis Cuadrado, Ludovica Burtone and Jay Rodriguez, the vision continues to grow as a platform for freedom of expression and shared artistic experience. Come share in an evening of music, connection and community.

[Buy tickets >](#)

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

December 9, 2025



August 26, 2025

By Leila Darabi

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



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

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

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

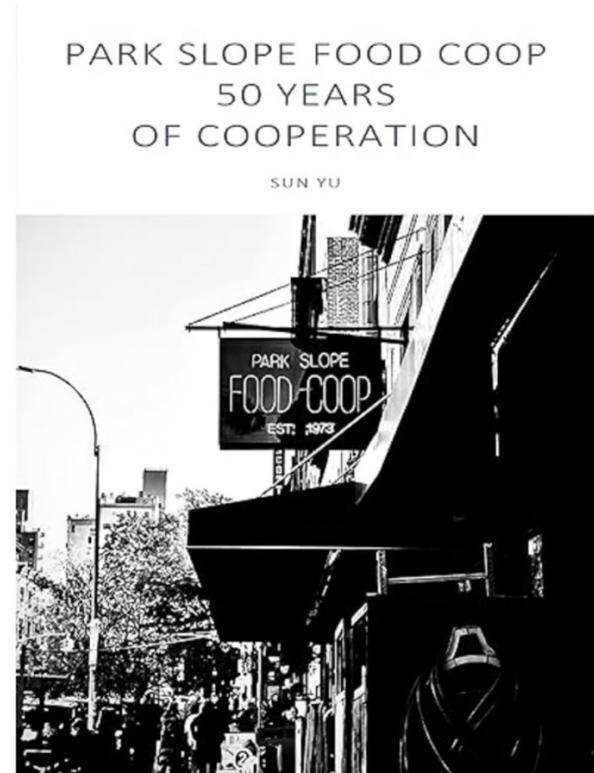
LETTERS BRING TO LIFE PAST CONTROVERSIES

"I just thought this was the most amazing, incredible organization that I had ever seen," Yu said when asked what inspired him to write his book. "The story deserved to be told," he added.

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

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

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



Sun Yu's book. Photograph by Caroline Mardok.

A STORY OF COEXISTENCE

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

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

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

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

WORK MAKES IT WORK

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

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

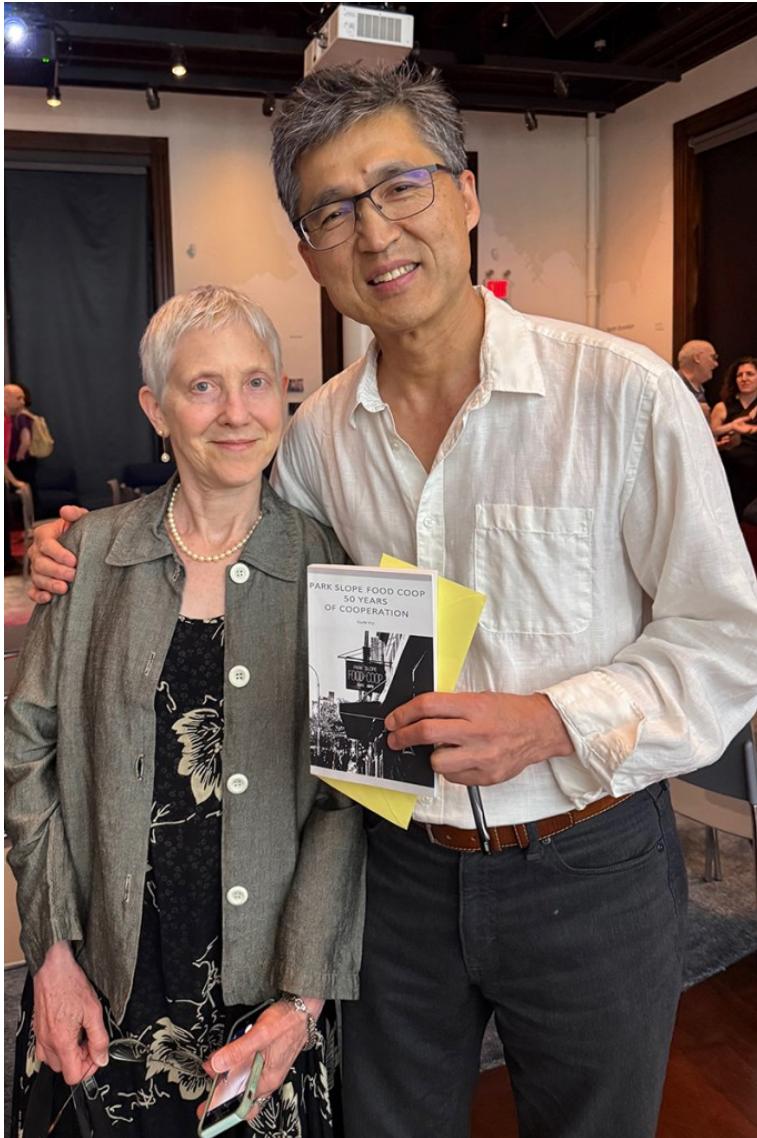
Holtz remains steadfast in his belief that the Coop’s work requirement is central to its success—and its fairness. “If you don’t make everybody work and start letting some people buy their way out of work, that sets up a class system,” he said.



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



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



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

A CHEESE COUNTER DISAPPEARS

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

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

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

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

THE GAZETTE ARCHIVE GOES DIGITAL

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

THE LINEWAITER'S GAZETTE

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

Dear Folks,

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

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



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

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

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

Sample of the old *Linewaiters' Gazette*.

THE LINE WAITERS' GAZETTE

SEPT. 22 1973

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

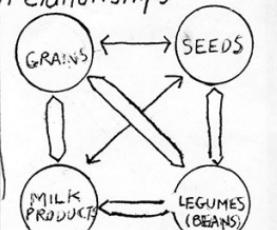
Don't forget to sign up for work requirement

CATS  ARE UP FOR ADOPTION - SPEAK TO COORDINATOR

NEWSLETTER IDEAS? CONTACT JINI 638-7394
KATHY 788-1808

BALANCING PROTEINS WITHOUT MEAT

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



means groups are generally complementary
means only some items in each group are complementary
For more information read DIET FOR A SMALL PLANET
by Frances Moore LAPPÉ

Sample of the old *Linewaiters' Gazette*.

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

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

great."

Linewaiters Gazette



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

June 15, 1978



THE PARK SLOPE FOOD CO-OP, INC.

drawing by Irit Magnes

Gazette from 1978.

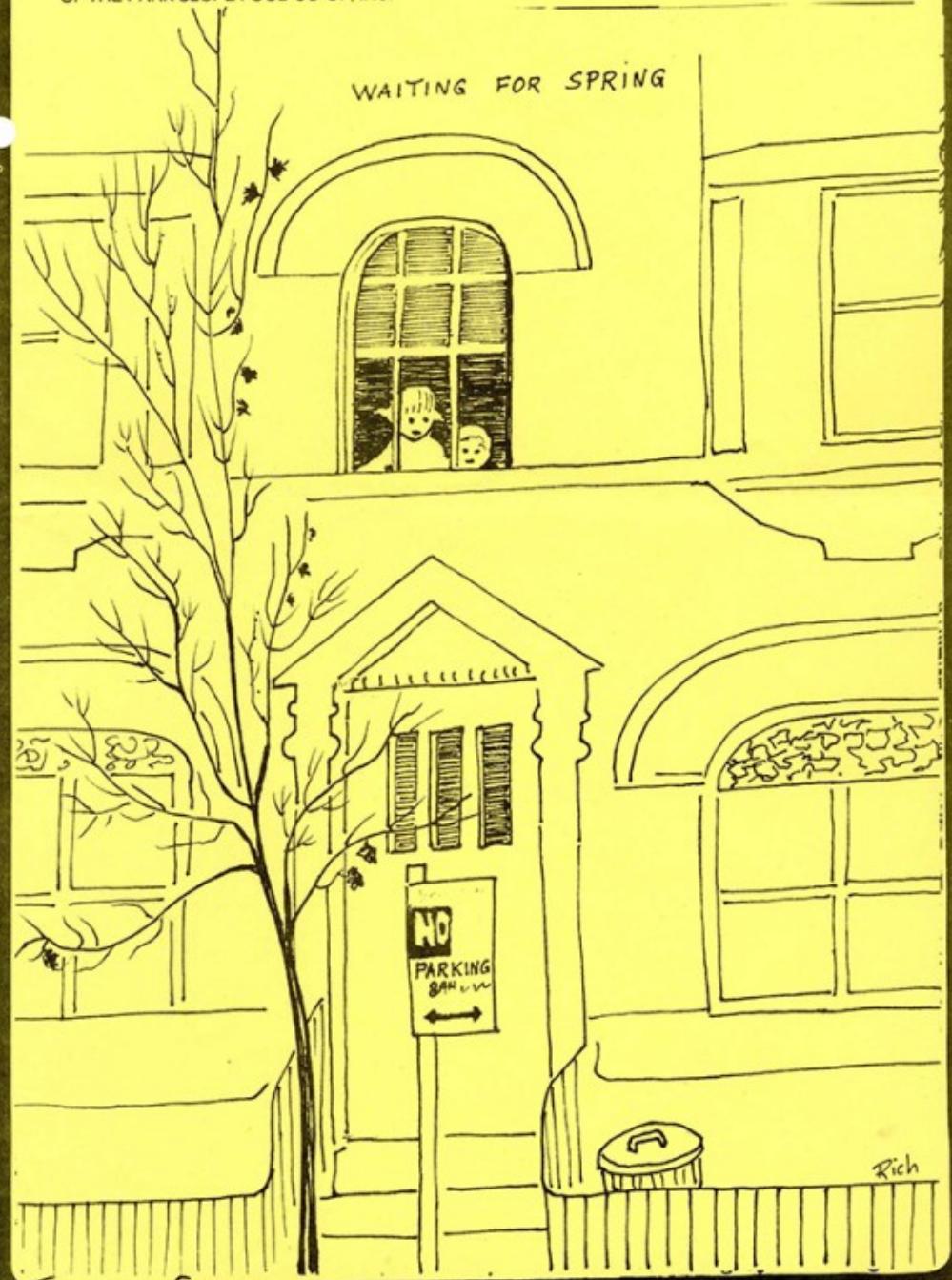
Linewaiters Gazette



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

March 8, 1979

WAITING FOR SPRING



Gazette from 1979.

ILLUSTRATING HISTORY

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

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

THE COOP’S STORY LIVES ON

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

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

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

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

CROSSWORD: FINALE

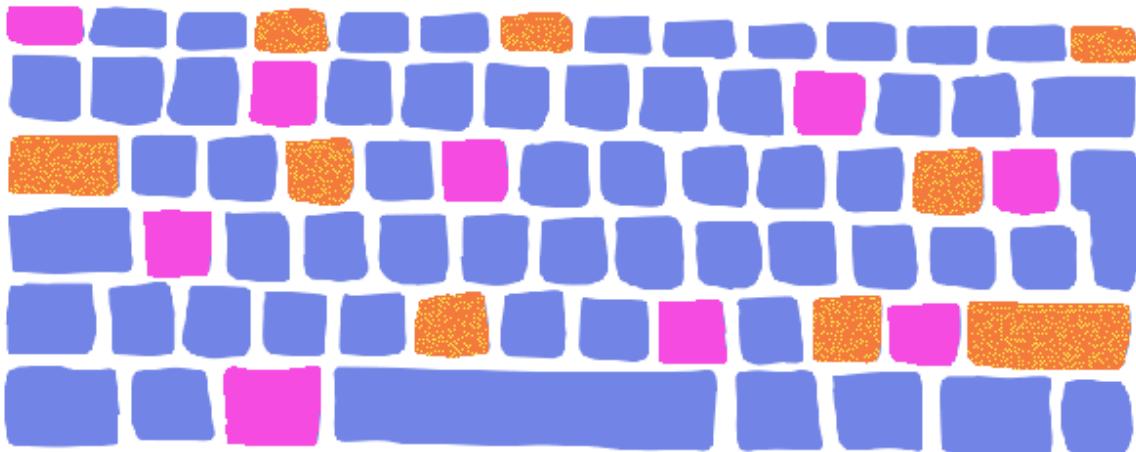
December 9, 2025



AUGUST 26, 2025

December 9, 2025

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



August 26, 2025

DISCLOSE ANY WRITING SHOWING THE LEGAL OPINION—NOW

Dear Coop members:

This letter responds in part to the voluntary article in the June 24 edition of the *Line-*

waiters' Gazette criticizing the General Coordinators' recourse to attorneys for a legal opinion on the validity of the purported action by the board on April 29. I have one criticism of the GC's conduct: it was entirely appropriate for the GCs to seek a legal opinion, but an epic fail not to disclose the opinion itself. The severity of the conduct of the leaders of the BDS faction and their ally—based on magical thinking that making the Coop declare its allegiance to a fusion of the failed Arab boycott and Bolshevik anti-zionism disguised as a human rights movement will do anything but build Omar Barghouti's brand while damaging the Coop—entirely justifies legal fees. They have normalized the practice of directors' votes on items that are not on the agenda. I have litigated corporate control disputes for over 21 years as a commercial litigator, and the proposition that the board can vote on agenda items that would amend the bylaws without prior notice to the membership is literally incredible. Anyone who is concerned about the future of the Coop must see whatever writing exists so the membership can evaluate it.

The GCs reliance on an oral opinion—with no writing that can be examined or even placed in the Coop's records—is irresponsible. Further, unless the firm considers malpractice an acceptable practice, there must be a writing in the law firm's files showing the legal reasoning—an email from an associate to a partner or a memo to the file. If the GCs relied on an oral opinion, then they need to obtain and disclose—now—whatever writing the attorneys generated.

Sincerely,
Noah Potter

General Manager Response to Noah Potter's Letter:

Dear Coop Members,

During the General Meeting and Board meeting on April 29, the Board voted 3-2 to instruct the General Coordinators to issue a referendum ballot to amend the Coop's bylaws to allow for hybrid meetings. This decision was made without first seeking advice

from the members through a vote at that evening's General Meeting.

The General Coordinators sought legal guidance, consulting with a law firm with deep experience in cooperative governance. The key conclusions of the General Coordinators were shared with all members in a message from then-General Manager Joe Holtz:

- The Board has the legal authority to take the actions it did on April 29.
- A bylaw amendment is not necessary to allow for hybrid General Meetings.

Our discussions with attorneys are confidential. This is standard practice for authorized representatives of cooperatives and similar organizations. We are committed to sharing our conclusions that directly impact Coop membership.

Respectfully,

Joe Szladek

General Manager

ANOTHER MEETING, ANOTHER RETURN TO THE MIDDLE EAST

Dear Coop members:

Another meeting where hybrid attendance as a way of back dooring an anti-Israel boycott is rearing its ugly head. What would-be boycotters do not realize is that there will be severe legal repercussions to the Coop for their actions if they choose BDS. Creating a hostile environment is absolutely not legal and this venal movement clearly does that.

There is a growing movement at the state and federal level to stop this kind of thing, and it may well end in the permanent closure of the Coop, destroying community access to low-cost food.

Sincerely,
David Sher

THE COOP REMAINS UNGOVERNABLE

Hello Coop,

The Coop remains ungovernable.

At the April GM, a member uttered their filthy Jew-hate (“Jew” was used as a slur, not “Zionist”) and they were neither removed from the meeting, nor reported by the *Gazette*, nor removed from the Coop. I am not even allowed to name them as per *Gazette* restrictions. The DRC, the Chair Committee and the *Gazette* are all complicit in this cover up.

This is an embarrassment to the Coop as a whole. Why is someone who would be expelled immediately from any other organization still allowed to walk through the front door and pretend innocence? It’s inexplicable because no one has the guts to explain it. Not honestly, not without dodging, deflecting or victim-shaming.

I call for their permanent expulsion, and every moment nothing happens only adds weight to our collective shame that no one is doing anything. Evil flourishes when good people like yourselves do exactly that: nothing.

Cooperation, right there in our name, is ignored. Our General Meetings are overrun by the most inhumane of participants. And our financial bottom line suffers for it, es-

pecially when members of conscience reflexively diminish their spending as protest. - Tolerating Jew-hate is the tip of the spear buried deep in our heart and exemplifies how we are failing to govern ourselves.

And people wonder why a Human Rights Commission complaint was filed against the Coop.

Sincerely,

Jesse Rosenfeld