

JANUARY GENERAL MEETING REPORT

March 3, 2026



ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SAVAGE

March 3, 2026

By Lora Kelley

As the temperature ticked below 20°, more than a hundred Coop members trudged through deep snow to assemble at the Picnic House for the January 27 General Meeting. The tone was fairly subdued as General Manager Joe Szladek gave a summary of the year's finances; the Equity and Access and Community Committee presented the results of its demographics survey; next steps on hybrid meetings were announced; and members discussed supporting other coops. At the end of the meeting, a proposal to institute an official code of conduct resulted in a rare motion to table.



ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE CARSON

OPEN FORUM

The Open Forum took just a few minutes, as only three members shared remarks. First, Chair Committee member David Moss read a note from member Noah Potter addressing the general coordinators, challenging them to “disclose the legal opinion that validates the end of member governance of the Coop,” and asking them to state whether there is any reason why the board cannot vote on its own resolution to align

the Coop with the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions Movement without waiting for membership to vote.

Alyse Barr, in person, stood and spoke about the connections between Israeli companies and Immigrations and Customs Enforcement. She said that, as members of the Coop, “we can stop contributing to the economy of a country that not only oppresses and kills Palestinians, but also aids in our own oppression.” Greg Selig, noting that it was Holocaust Remembrance Day, requested that the Coop make a statement about standing with the Jewish community, and said that the previous remarks included “lies and libels.”

REPORTS

Szladek shared a financial update that covered almost the entire recent year, noting that the end of the fiscal year would come in early February. The Coop is ending the fiscal year with around \$7.5 million in cash equivalents and investments, and made about \$1.2 million in sales per week on average. Sales overall were up compared to the prior year, and membership has grown by about 3 percent.

The leadup to the recent snowstorm presented the Coop with major sales days: Friday, January 23, was one of the Coop’s busiest days ever, with lines down the block, capping off a week that brought in some \$1.4 million in sales.

Szladek said that some of the Coop’s costs have gone up, including healthcare costs for staff and payroll costs. He noted that he hoped to see the Coop break even by the end of the fiscal year, Sunday, February 1, when the annual inventory would occur. When asked about the recent one percent markup increase Szladek cited the Coop’s rising expenses, and added that while the Coop would like to lower prices in the future, any change depends on whether expenses can be brought down, which has been challenging as costs continue to rise.

General Coordinator Eleanor Astrinsky shared that board submissions are due on

March 1. Then, asking for a show of hands of how many present members planned to help with year-end inventory, she explained that every item in the Coop would be counted the following weekend. This “snapshot” of a day at the Coop, she added, helps determine audits and taxes. She expressed thanks to all the staff who would be working that weekend, including those who don’t normally work on Sundays.

She asked the room to cheer and clap for the shovelers who helped clear the sidewalks during the “snowzilla” storm. The Coop used about 350 pounds of rock salt, which she noted is about the weight of a male ostrich. While some big stores had empty shelves, she added, the Coop was “super organized” and had items in stock. “The Coop was amazing. We got everything done,” she said, thanking the staff and members for keeping things running.

COMMITTEES

Leslie Schultz, presenting on behalf of the Personnel Committee, gave an overview of the committee’s role in the Coop, and noted that they were looking to fill an opening in the near future. The committee’s goals include supporting the General Manager, serving as a sounding board, and offering counsel on employment and personnel related matters. Much of the past year was focused on hiring and onboarding Szladek, she added. Barr asked if there were any plans to solicit feedback on Coop leadership’s performance from members, and Schultz said she would keep that question in mind.

Joe Holtz, presenting as a member of the Coop’s Revolving Loan Committee, summarized the work of the committee, which solicits and evaluates applications from other coops for loans. Since the 1970s, he said, the Coop has advised newer coops, and in 2012, a Coop General Meeting voted to create a revolving loan fund committee. The resulting Fund for New Food Coops was funded by three donations of \$20,000 each from the Coop, and by donations from members totaling about \$5,000. So far, the fund has received three loan applications, all from the Greene Hill Food Coop. The first one, for \$10,000, has been completely paid back; the remaining principle of a second loan, in the amount of \$12,000, was combined last year with a loan of

\$60,000. The outstanding balance is about \$64,000; total assets of the fund are \$74,100, with about \$9,300 in a money market fund available to lend.

“We’ve had some really sleepy years,” Holtz said, noting that the committee’s work is done on a volunteer basis by three members retired from worksite obligations, who were elected to their positions and have a fiduciary responsibility. The committee, he added, is now working on a concept proposal to the new mayoral administration “encouraging the administration to consider member-run food coops to achieve its goal of providing low-cost foods in high-need neighborhoods.”

Next, Jordan Dunn of the Equity, Access, and Community Committee presented a “demographic snapshot” of the Coop’s membership, based on a survey it ran from April to June of last year. The purpose of the survey was to identify underrepresented groups at the Coop and see if there were particular communities that saw attrition: 4,711 people, representing about 27% of the membership, completed the survey. The breakdown of survey respondents aligns with the overall membership in terms of zip code and work status (retired and exempt), Dunn said, suggesting that the survey captured a representative sample of members.

Some of the findings:

Member Work Status Distribution

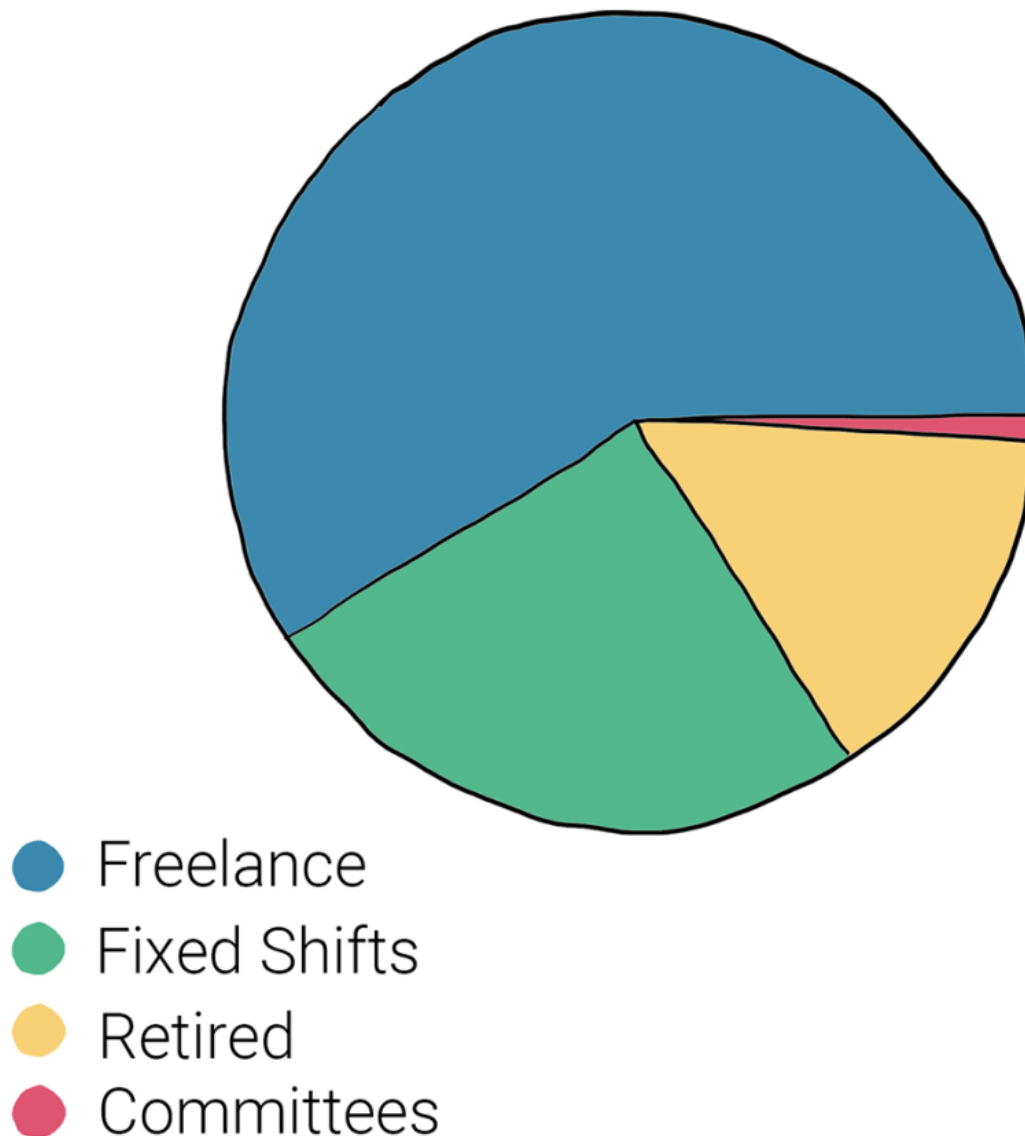


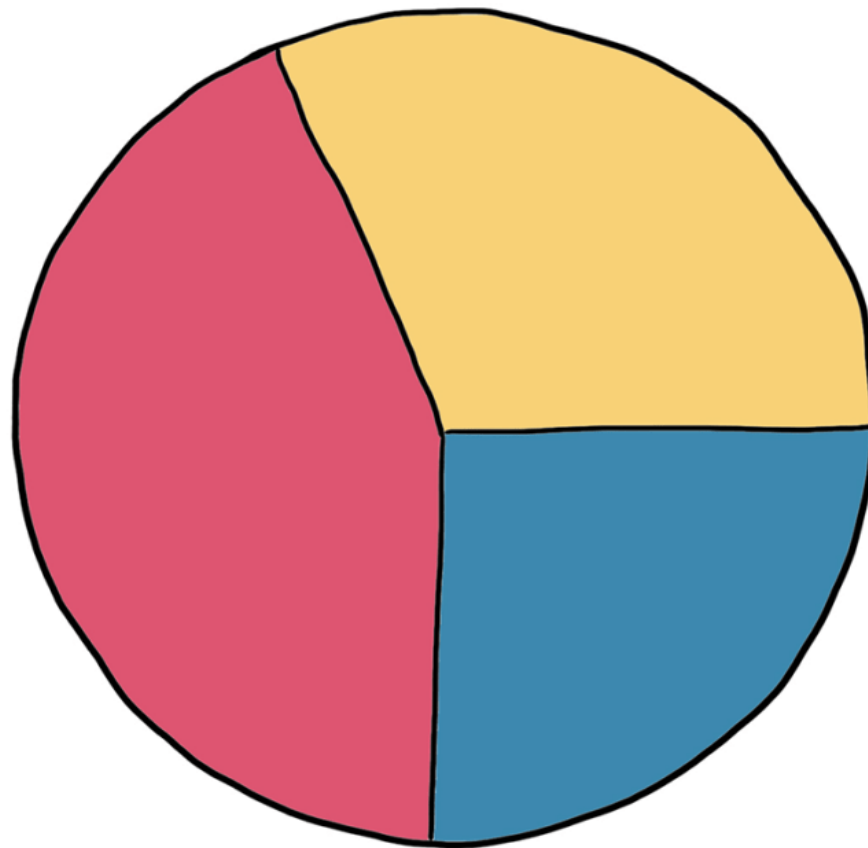
ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE CARSON

- 56% of members work shifts on a freelance basis, 24% are on fixed shifts, 14% are retired and 1% of members serve on committees.
- 63% of respondents identified as female and 31% as male, with 5% indicating they are nonbinary, gender nonconforming, gender fluid or intersex and 2% indicating that they are transgender.
- Responding to a question about sexual orientation, 71% said they are straight and

30% responded that they are LGBTQ+.

- 97% of the respondents speak English at home, and 3% indicated that they don't speak English at home.
- 80% did not report having a disability and 20% indicated that they do have a disability, which included those related to mobility or sensory impairments, mental health-related limitations or chronic illness.
- 76% of the respondents identified as white only; 9% identified as multiracial or multi-ethnic; 8% identified as Asian or Pacific Islander; 3% identified as Black, African or African American only; 1% as Arab, SWANA, Arab or North African only; and 2% as Latino/a, Latine, Latinx, or Hispanic or Indigenous, Native American, or Alaska Native. (Dunn noted that "Unfortunately, there was an error in the survey format, so we had to collapse that 2%" into one response.) About 9% of total respondents left this question blank.
- 51% of members reported that they practice no religion or are atheist or agnostic, 21% are Jewish only (an additional 3% selected both Jewish and "no religion, atheist, or agnostic"), 11% are Christian of any denomination and the remainder wrote in a specific identity, and/or selected multiple identities, while 9.5% preferred not to respond.
- 31% of members live alone, with 42% living in two-person households. About one quarter said they have children under 18 in their household.
- At least half of members walk to the Coop.
- 58% of members have a graduate or post graduate degree.
- 48% of Coop households make over \$150,000 a year. About 70% make more than \$101,000 a year, with just 10% making under \$55,000. 10% reported making over \$350,000.

Member Household Composition



- Children under 18 in Household
- Two-Person Household
- Live Alone

ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE CARSON

The committee's next steps, Dunn said, may include further research, and recommending ways that the Coop could take to increase equity and diversity.

Next, a representative of the International Trade Education Squad shared data on tariffs and noted that the squad was collaborating on a documentary about the World Trade Organization demonstrations in Seattle in 1999.

The hybrid commission of the Chair Committee presented next. At the September

2025 General Meeting, a member explained the board voted to go forward with the hybrid agenda, or the hybrid mandate. That mandate then passed on to the Chair Committee, which did interviews and chose nine members to kick off a hybrid GM working group. The group—which includes regular members, chair members, and staff—has been meeting a few times a week to prepare for hybrid meetings.

One goal, committee member Lisa Pacenza said, is to make the meetings more accessible, noting that the snow that evening could have made it difficult for some members to access the in-person meeting. Another priority is that the meetings be “seamless,” with members able to participate whether they are at home or at the Picnic House, and still feel part of the community. And it’s important, Pacenza added, that the meetings are secure and safe, especially for voting.

Moving forward, hybrid meetings will include a Zoom component, with members required to sign up ahead of time, in order to ensure only members are attending and voting. “We’re not splashing out for a special hybrid setup,” Pacenza said. Members on Zoom would see the stage on video, and hear the audio through microphones, much like members in the room. A moderator would ensure that visuals (such as slides) are visible for Zoom participants. Future votes would involve a Zoom poll for people attending remotely, and the usual paper votes for those in the room. “We haven’t figured out a perfect voting system, but the current system isn’t perfect either,” Pacenza added. The meetings would continue to follow Robert’s Rules of Order. (And, starting in February, people will be required to write their member number on their in-person vote, to ensure that no in-person member is also voting online.)

General Coordinator Matt Hoagland said that flyers and links would be posted soon to solicit feedback on accessibility. “We do want to hear directly from people who have a personal need, so please keep that in mind,” he said, adding that the first meeting with a Zoom component would be in February. The committee was planning two trial runs. “We’ll try to get some more experiences and turn up the heat so we know what to expect when we go live.”

AGENDA

Members of the currently informal—as they put it, “hopefully soon to be formal”—Principle Six Committee spoke next. The group proposes to deepen the 11-year relationship between the Park Slope Food Coop and the Cooperative Economic Alliance of New York City (CEANY). Principle Six, which refers to cooperation among coops, is one of the seven principles guiding coops around the world. Already, seventeen Coop members receive workslot credit for contributing to CEANY including by helping the alliance with media campaigns.

The official committee, which would be voted on at a future meeting, would include 12 members who would offer services on projects to CEANY. An open call will be posted soon, and the committee plans to present a committee report at least once or twice a year and publish updates in the *Linewaiters' Gazette* at least once a year. Members asked a few questions, mostly about logistics, and Holtz replied: “I’m glad that you all have brought this proposal.”

What followed was a bit of confusion: After Moss said the next item would be “adopting community agreements and a code of conduct” and that there would be a vote, a member of the Agenda Committee said that this was supposed to be a discussion item. After a bit of back and forth, Moss announced that the meeting would move forward with voting on the item.

Jason Weiner, a longtime Coop member and staffer, presented on the idea of adopting a formalized code of conduct. Noting that “the GM has been operating for decades without any robust guidance and protection for the individual,” he proposed that the Coop institute a set of agreements based on suggestions from various stakeholders. Weiner put together a draft borrowing from the ideas of trauma-informed care and the Democratic Socialists of America’s code of conduct. He argued that such a code was “long overdue,” and that it could protect members legally and facilitate “an environment for humane interaction.”

After Weiner finished his slides, Moss asked, “What are we voting on?” to which Weiner responded, “We are voting yes or no, whether we should adopt a Coop set of community agreements, and a code.” If the yes vote prevails, Weiner said, the decision would move to the Dispute Resolution Committee and to the Coop’s legal advisors. The text Weiner had shown in his slides, he added, was the draft.

A number of questions followed, including about why this was going for a vote at the meeting and whether members would have a say about the contents of a text that could affect discipline. Members thanked Weiner for his hard work, but some noted that the proposal was substantially different from his July presentation, “A Call for Cooperative Renewal,” which addressed a number of suggestions for Coop governance. (While Weiner had mentioned a potential code of conduct in that presentation, it wasn’t the presentation’s main focus.)

Following some respectful discussion and dissent, a member suggested tabling this vote. After looking up the rules on the Coop’s’ website, Moss—noting that in his 20 years on the Chair Committee, this was the first table he recalled dealing with—read out that tabling a motion means laying aside the main motion, and that it may include the provision that the item be taken up later or at a future meeting. By a show of hands, an overwhelming majority of members present voted to table the proposal.

Rebecca Schoenberg Jones, Coop Secretary, went onstage to ask if there were any corrections to the minutes of the December 2, 2025, General Meeting, and no one raised any.

The five members of the board of directors who were present voted unanimously to accept the advice of the members with regard to the meeting minutes, and the meeting was adjourned.

Lora Kelley is a writer and journalist in Brooklyn.

THE COOP'S LOST AND FOUND: REUNITING MEMBERS WITH THEIR PRIZED POSSESSIONS

March 3, 2026



March 3, 2026

By Kim Velsey

Found: a claim ticket for Dixon's Bicycle Shop, passport photos of a child, medical records, a steel tongue drum, a fishing license, one silver circular dangling earring with mother of pearl. Lost: a USPS receipt, a cherry wood cane, a retainer in a purple case, a brown bag with a lease in it, a Room & Board bag with an electric mousetrap in it,

spend a lot of time. And members spend a lot of time at the Coop—especially when they come in to work a shift, often involving physical labor, and over the course of a few hours shed sweatshirts, earbuds, hats and water bottles. Sometimes, they even leave their pants behind: There are currently several pairs of jeans in the gray lost-and-found bins by the front door (also, a lot of books and orphaned gloves). The bins are intended for non-valuable items.

“WE JOKED THAT IF YOU’RE GOING TO LOSE SOMETHING OF SIGNIFICANCE, THE BEST PLACE TO LOSE IT IS THE COOP. FIRST OF ALL, PEOPLE WILL FIND IT, AND SECOND, THEY’LL KNOW WHAT TO DO. “

MEMBER ERICA HERMAN

Everything else that’s lost or found at the Coop gets logged into the spreadsheet that Dittmar started two years ago, after she took over running the Coop’s lost and found system. Before she digitized the list, it was kept in a notebook, where items reunited with their owners were crossed out. This made searching a bit of a slog, especially as the membership increased and with it, the number of unclaimed personal belongings floating around the store. Last year, about 300 items made it onto the list. And that’s not counting the many gloves, hats, umbrellas, water bottles and tote bags in the gray bins, which after two weeks are put out on the street for free. Glasses and keys are some of the most frequently lost items. Wallets and hearing aids disappear a lot, too. The Coop gets a lot of calls about lost wallets, said Dittmar, but wallets are the easiest items to reunite with their owners. If you lose your wallet at the Coop, the Coop will almost certainly call you.



PHOTO BY ROD MORRISON

Lost and Found bins, located in front of the lockers, containing non-valuable items

Among the items logged into the spreadsheet last year were Erica Herman's wedding and engagement rings. Herman put them on a necklace for safekeeping when she went to lift weights at the gym—stopping at the Coop on the way home—only to notice hours later that the necklace was gone. She and her husband, who'd died unexpectedly a few years earlier, had always said to each other that you wear your life on your ring, meaning that you shouldn't be too precious about it. But she hadn't wanted to destroy her rings carelessly by lifting heavy metal bars etched with patterns for grip. Herman realized that despite her best efforts to keep the rings safe, she must not have closed the necklace clasp completely. And while she'd had the necklace at the gym and maybe at the Coop, she also knew it could have easily fallen off somewhere on the walk there or home. After she retraced all her steps with her daughter, turning up nothing, she left her name and number at the Coop. It felt like a long shot, but a short time later she got a call that the necklace, engagement and wedding bands had been found. "We joked that if you're going to lose something of significance, the best place to lose it is the Coop," said Herman. "First of all, people will find it, and second, they'll know what to do. They won't take it or put a found ring poster up on a pole in the neighborhood."



Found earbuds and headphones

The Coop really does go to a lot of trouble to try to return lost items, Dittmar said. She told me that they once reunited a large amount of cash with its owner (over \$200, stuffed in an envelope) after they were able to watch a checkout area video and see it drop from her pocket. The first AirPods they found inspired her to engage in detective work: using bluetooth, she was able to figure out that the owner had worked at the Coop that day and return it to him. Now, however, there are too many AirPods floating around to track all the owners down (the current count is 14 and you'll have to sort through them yourself if you think yours may be among them). Unclaimed cash is eventually donated to CHiPs. Anything sellable, like jewelry, goes to Housing Works, as long as it's not a singleton earring or something else they won't take.



Found eyeglasses

The Coop also errs on the side of holding onto found objects, which sometimes means keeping things that are most likely abandoned rather than lost. Dittmar recalled an electric scooter they stashed away for months until one day they tried it out, only to discover it was broken. A large framed Maya Angelou quote has been sitting unclaimed in the Membership Office for quite some time. (Dittmar suspects it may have been a street find whose new owner had second thoughts about lugging it home after a big shop, a practice Coop staff heartily discourage.) Another item the staff thought may have been brass knuckles turned out to be a gua sha skincare tool. One of the oldest items kicking around is an undeveloped roll of film.

Lost & Found Only. No Donations.
Items held for 14 days. Do not take anything that does
not belong to you. Thank you.



PHOTO BY ROD MORRISON



PHOTO BY ROD MORRISON

Found jeans and a drum

While the initial wave of relief at finding a lost object can be overwhelming if brief, members who've been reunited with their belongings say there's something else, too, something that lingers: a sense of gratitude that someone took the time to turn it in and someone else took the time to check a spreadsheet and make a call. A few weeks ago Beth London dropped her wallet at the checkout counter and couldn't find it anywhere, despite looking for it immediately with the help of four other members who stopped what they were doing to join in the search. She figured it had fallen in a basket or a box or some other weird place where it was obscured and went home dejected. There was about \$45 in cash in the wallet, which she didn't think she would get back. But she did hope someone would return the wallet itself and her cards. After nothing turned up the first few times she called to check, London thought that perhaps it had been accidentally thrown away. "I had given up. And then I got a call. Every penny was in there," she said. "I was like 'oh my gosh, this Coop is amazing.' I want to thank the unknown person who found it. It made me want to go out and do good things."



ILLUSTRATION BY DEBORAH TINT

Kim Velsey has been a Coop member since 2020. When she's not writing for the Gazette, she's a staff writer at New York magazine.

PROFILE OF A COOP ALLY: CHIPS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PETER ENDRISS

March 3, 2026



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By Oluwakemi Aladesuyi

With its dual mission to ameliorate food insecurity and homelessness in New York City, CHiPS (which stands for Community Help in Park Slope) has been serving our neighbors for decades and, during that time, witnessed how the needs of the most vulnerable among them have changed since its founding in 1971. If you're a member of the Park Slope Food Coop your initial portal to CHiPS might be as one of the options on the shift calendar. Each week Coop members fill about 100 work shifts at CHiPS—making sandwiches, cooking, washing dishes and packaging meals as well as registering guests, managing lines and working with the mobile food pantry. Many more purchase extra food for CHiPS during one of the Coop's three-a-year food drives. "Our more than 50-year relationship has been integral to the Coop," General Coordinator Elinor Astrinsky notes. The Coop drops off dozens of less than perfect produce to CHiPS each week, enabling CHiPS to provide meal service to over 300 people every

day. According to Astrinsky, the Coop's relationship with CHiPS "not only reduces our waste, it also enables us to help our neighbors indirectly."

Peter Endriss, CHiPS's executive director, is at the helm of an organization that has seen the number of people served by its food service and pantry programs increase by 400 percent since the beginning of the pandemic, all while operating the Frances Residence, a private temporary shelter for new mothers. Leading an organization like CHiPS "means a thousand different things at any given time," says Endriss. A W-2 at-will employee, he works with CHiPS' board of directors to help the organization stay on track financially and with its division directors to make sure programming stays on mission and is well measured, relevant and improved with the input of the people CHiPS serves. Endriss's work is expansive, encompassing administration of more efficient food service areas to fixing toilets in the residential units and managing a staff of 25 to 30, and last year, over 6,000 volunteers.

"[CHIPS] NOT ONLY REDUCES OUR WASTE, IT ALSO ENABLES US TO HELP OUR NEIGHBORS INDIRECTLY."

GENERAL COORDINATOR ELINOAR ASTRINKSY

"I could be sitting here and a pipe could burst," Endriss says. "Or we could be presented with a really unique opportunity. [Someone says] I have two cases of avocados. Can we figure out how to pick them up?" According to Endriss, the nonprofit tries to say yes to everything: "Every association, anything that someone wants to do to help out at CHiPS, we're like, yes, let's figure out a way to weave that into our mission."

True to the organization's deep roots, the "C" in CHiPS stands for community, having once stood for "Christian," in deference to the Catholic groups (notably St. Francis Aid) that initially founded the organization. Brother Tom, one of the longest running volunteers at CHiPS, recalls how two Franciscan brothers, a sister of St. Joseph, a

Diocesan priest and a handful of parishioners wanted to do something for the neighborhood. In its earliest iteration it was a Sunday dinner for the elderly. After dinner, volunteers, mostly in their 20s and early 30s, would make rounds to visit the homebound. “The beginning of CHiPS was ad hoc,” Brother Tom says. Sister Mary Maloney, of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, taught at Bishop Loughlin High School in Fort Greene during the day and would make sure the doors of CHiPS were open in the evening to serve soup. Men would sleep on cots in the soup kitchen at nighttime. “Every now and then, one woman would come with a child and that was a little scary to me,” says Brother Tom. But a few years later the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor took the upper level of the building, a former convent for sisters who worked as religious ministers on Rikers, and turned it into a homeless shelter for single mothers and their babies.

Sister Mary Maloney was CHiPS’ first director. “She told me this many times, there was \$500 in the bank which was enough to pay two months rent, but there was no money for food,” says Brother Tom. It all came from the people of the neighborhood. “The first time they had \$1,000 in the bank it was a gift from the synagogue on Garfield Place. The Rabbi gave half from his money and half from the synagogue itself.”

In many ways CHiPS’ deep roots in the Park Slope community continue to be a saving grace in an era when so much government funding has been drying up. Since the beginning of his tenure in 2023, Endriss has seen CHiPS’ annual operating budget nearly double, to about \$2.9 million. In 2026, 40% of that budget is expected to come from individuals contributing small donations each month. The remainder is supported by larger gifts from local businesses, a few corporations and the occasional fundraising drive by public schools or community groups. “We had a local bar do a burlesque show to collect money for CHiPS. We ended up getting a few thousand dollars in donations,” Endriss says. “There are so many community members that want to help in their own way.”

It was that kind of community outreach that initially brought Endriss into the orbit of

CHiPS. In 2014, Endriss was running Runner & Stone, the bakery and restaurant on 3rd Avenue, when he helped organize “CHiPS Night Out” the organization’s first fundraising event, in which local bars and restaurants committed to donating 15% of their net sales on a given day. That led to Endriss’s fundraising for a gala. He served on the organization’s board from 2016-2021 and assumed the role of executive director in June of 2023.

In some ways being executive director is a bow on a career that has been about community and a passion for food that began in childhood. “Since I was five years old I was telling everyone that would listen that I was going to have a restaurant at some point,” says Endriss. “I remember making a diorama in elementary school of the restaurant that I wanted to open,” he added, also noting fond memories of his aunt taking the whole family to a Chinese buffet on Long Island where he tried everything. “I was obsessed with it. I was also obsessed with planetariums. So my idea was to open a Chinese smorgasbord in a planetarium and I made a little diorama with little tables and a big dome top that was going to be where the stars were projected.”

Endriss worked in restaurants throughout secondary school and college. Although he studied natural resource management and engineering at Cornell, and eventually got a masters degree in civil engineering at Stevens University, he found his way back to the kitchen when he started working at a salad station at a *New York Times* 3-star restaurant in Manhattan during a leave of absence from a job inspecting bridges.

“EVERY ASSOCIATION, ANYTHING THAT SOMEONE WANTS TO DO TO HELP OUT AT CHIPS, WE’RE LIKE, YES, LET’S FIGURE OUT A WAY TO WEAVE THAT INTO OUR MISSION.”

PETER ENDRISS, CHIPS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the fourth executive director of CHiPS, Endriss is building on the foundation that

other directors had built. Over 50 years later, Endriss says he still hears stories of Sister Mary Maloney from volunteers. “I came in and got to take all these amazing things that had been built already,” he says, explaining how Denise Scaravella, the second executive director, built so much community goodwill and partnerships and how his direct predecessor, Shivonne McKay, modernized the nonprofit—adding staff and departments, measuring the impact of the nonprofit’s work and being more decisive about programming.



PHOTO CREDIT CHIPS

Denise Scaravella was the previous Executive Director of CHiPs.

“I had this staff that I always describe as a loaded spring. Everyone was so full of ideas and good intent and so mission driven,” says Endriss. “Meetings were like ‘here are five amazing ideas, we just need to pick two of them to start and figure out how to do it.’”

Every day, 300 to 400 people come to CHiPS for its food services. “We are providing end of the line service,” said Endriss. “We’re not necessarily teaching them how to cook. We’re not helping them make more money so they don’t need to come here for food.” But CHiPS is trying to figure out how to connect these individuals with resources further upstream. Last year, it hired a director of case management to make sure there are warm handoffs to organizations that help with English language classes, job training, mental health services or addiction resources, for example. “The idea with any nonprofit is that you put yourself out of business,” Endriss adds.

That said, CHiPS just completed its five-year strategic plan. “We are on the cusp of expanding, or I often correct myself and say right-sizing our operations,” says Endriss. CHiPS has been operating out of the same 100-year-old brownstone for the past 50 years.

Looking towards the future, Endriss sees CHiPS continuing to maintain its strong presence in Park Slope while expanding into a larger building and potentially operating the pantry program from a warehouse.

As CHiPS has grown, so has the scope of the Frances Residence. Beyond providing shelter to nine mothers and their children, the program helps mothers find a path to self-sufficiency. However, shifting federal, state and city policies along with New York’s increasingly high cost of living and lack of affordable housing has made that even harder. Because the Frances Residence is a private shelter, the families who live there might have to go back into the city system for a minimum of three months in order to be eligible to apply for a government housing voucher. According to Endriss, a pilot program to address this was vetoed by the last mayoral administration.

“You do often feel like you’re in a little life raft being tossed around on an ocean of things that are outside of your control,” says Endriss. “That can be frustrating because the issues we face are immediate. Someone needs a place to live now. They need food for their families now. Not two months from now or worse yet a year from now.”

With Endriss at the helm, CHiPS is doing all it can to meet those urgent needs as soon as possible, for as many of our neighbors as possible.

Oluwakemi Aladesuyi is a journalist and yoga instructor, and makes pottery, which you can find on instagram (@lamilamiceramics)

MEMBER WORKSLOT NEEDS

March 3, 2026



March 3, 2026

SEEKING APPLICANTS FOR THE FINANCIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Food Coop is forming a committee of PSFC members with financial expertise to work in collaboration with the Coop's financial team. The Committee will provide professional advice on all aspects of the Coop's finances, strengthen financial knowledge and enhance financial management and administration.

As approved at the General Meeting on December 2, 2025, the Financial Advisory Committee will review the financial performance of, and economic conditions facing, the Coop and provide advice to the financial manager(s) on potential issues or concerns through its regular reports. The Committee will adopt clear financial benchmarks to help the broader understanding of the financial health of the Coop.

This committee is advisory only, intended to provide guidance on financial issues.

Committee members should have a well-developed understanding of financial reporting, accounting and audits. They should represent the diversity of the Coop membership. Highly desirable skills include knowledge of the grocery industry's economics, advanced spreadsheet skills, economic forecasting, and knowledge of the fixed-income investment markets. Members should have a problem-solving orientation and be prepared to bring a professional and cooperative attitude toward solving disagreements.

For more information and how to apply, visit bit.ly/psfc_advisory.

PAGING SYSTEM SUPPORT

The Coop is looking to build a team of members to support our paging system for short-term projects on an as-needed basis.

Applicants should have robust technical experience working in the sound/music fields.

Responsibilities could include: audit of our multi-zone audio systems, triaging and repairing equipment, researching new equipment and upgrades, running wiring for speakers and amplifiers.

If interested, please send an email with your qualifications along with your name and member number to membership-office@psfc.coop with "Paging support team" as the subject line.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE SEEKS NEW MEMBERS EXPERIENCED IN EN-

VIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The mission of the committee is to provide education, research and advisement to ensure the Food Coop is aligned with its environmental policy to support “the best products and practices with regard to the health, safety and preservation of humans, animals and the overall biosphere.” You can learn more about the Environmental Committee’s history and activities [here](#).

We are looking for members with relevant education and/or professional experience in environmental topics. Your work with the committee constitutes your Coop work shift requirement. To apply, fill out our [web form](#).

CONCERT COMMITTEE

Ticket Sales/Check-In Person

The PSFC Concert Committee is seeking a member to help manage the door at ShapeShifter Lab for the monthly concert series. This person will be required to attend one full training session (which will count as a shift) and will be responsible for greeting audience members, managing ticket sales, and other help as needed during the concert and cleanup after the event.

Content Producer/Video Editor/Graphic Designer

The ideal candidate will have experience creating short-form social media content. Their day-to-day responsibilities will include turning still images and/or video clips, ranging from professionally shot material to smartphone footage, into engaging reels and posts for Instagram and Facebook to promote the PSFC’s monthly concert series.

They will also collaborate with the team to develop a new logo for the PSFC Concert

Series and create a social media branding kit that the team can use to produce consistent, on-brand content going forward.

Outreach/MC

The PSFC Concert Committee is seeking an outgoing, engaging person to serve as the public-facing voice of the PSFC Monthly Concert Series. This role includes acting as the MC for each monthly concert held at ShapeShifter Lab from fall through spring.

In addition, the team member will help with public outreach to other Coop members to encourage more performer applications. The goal is to build a dynamic, continually evolving roster of performers that reflects the diverse demographics of the Park Slope Food Coop community.

Apply [here](#).

ACTORS AND DIRECTOR NEEDED! (NOT FOR WORKSLOT CREDIT)

Wordsprouts (the PSFC's reading series) is hosting a staged reading of a play at the Old Stone House on Wednesday, June 24. We're looking for Coop members to perform the roles of two young women, one Black and one white, and we'd also love to recruit a director.

The play, written by PSFC member Beth Harpaz, is called "Lafayette Travels through Time." In it, the sculpture of the Marquis de Lafayette at the 9th Street entrance to Prospect Park comes to life on July 4, 2026. Lafayette is accompanied by James Armistead, a Black soldier who is also depicted in the sculpture.

Two young women passing by tell the men that the democracy they fought for is in peril. Together, they try to figure out a way to save the republic.

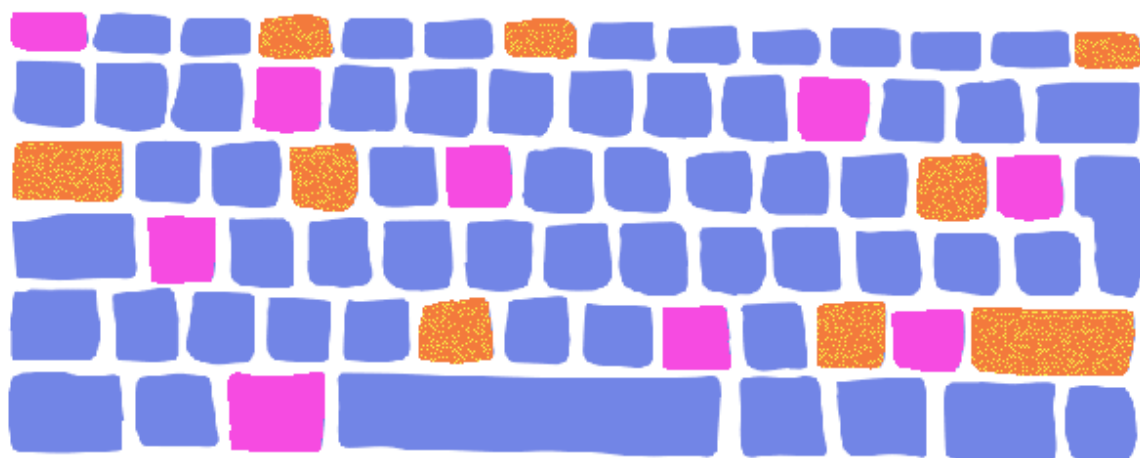
Anybody interested in playing Shira, a 20something Jewish New Yorker, and Claudette, a twenty-something New Yorker of Haitian heritage? Anybody interested in directing? The production will be script in hand, with two rehearsals. No Coop work credit but participants will get a \$50 cash honorarium (provided by the writer/producer not the Coop).

Questions or to apply, contact bethharpaz@gmail.com.

MARCH 3, 2026

March 3, 2026

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



LETTERS POLICY PAUSE

In order to conduct a review of the letters policy and to ensure it is being applied consistently and fairly, the *Linewaiters' Gazette* is temporarily pausing publication of letters to the editor. This pause will allow the Coordinating Editors time to assess current practices and determine whether any clarifications or updates are needed.

The pause is expected to last no more than one or two issues. Letters already submitted, as well as those received during this period, will be held and considered for publication once the *Gazette* resumes printing letters.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation.

Co-Coordinating Editors Lily Rothman, Eric Baldwin and Whitney Curry Wimbish

General Manager Joe Szladek

General Coordinator Ann Herpel

PLASTIC REDUCTION COMMITTEE REPORT

March 3, 2026



MEMBER SURVEY: REDUCING PLASTIC USE AT THE COOP

March 3, 2026

How concerned are you about plastic use at the Coop? How much does the amount of plastic packaging influence your buying choices? Would you find a list of the best member-tested, plastic-free products at the Coop helpful? These questions and more are waiting for you.

The PSFC Plastic Reduction Committee invites all members to participate in its work by way of a five-minute (or less!) survey.

Take the survey [HERE](#).

Members voted overwhelmingly to establish our committee in July of last year, indicating a shared concern about the amount of plastic used at the Coop. Since then, we have been busy observing plastic use in our Coop's aisles, brainstorming solutions together and researching plastic reduction efforts in coops from Albany to Ottawa to Seattle. Now we are looking to you, our fellow worker-owners, to help us prioritize and plan our next steps!

The survey is anonymous and confidential, and we invite all members to contribute. (You can also ask your kids what they think.) Our only request is this: Express yourself! To maximize participation, the survey will remain live until the end of May 2026. We will report on results as soon as they are compiled and analyzed.

If you have any question(s) about the survey, please address them to the Plastic Reduction Committee at reduce.plastic.psfc@gmail.com. And, as always, feel free to share other thoughts or ideas through that email as well.

The Plastic Reduction Committee thanks you in advance for your participation!

WORDSPROUTS: IRVIN SCHONFELD

March 3, 2026

WORDSPROUTS

THE PARK SLOPE FOOD COOP'S READING SERIES

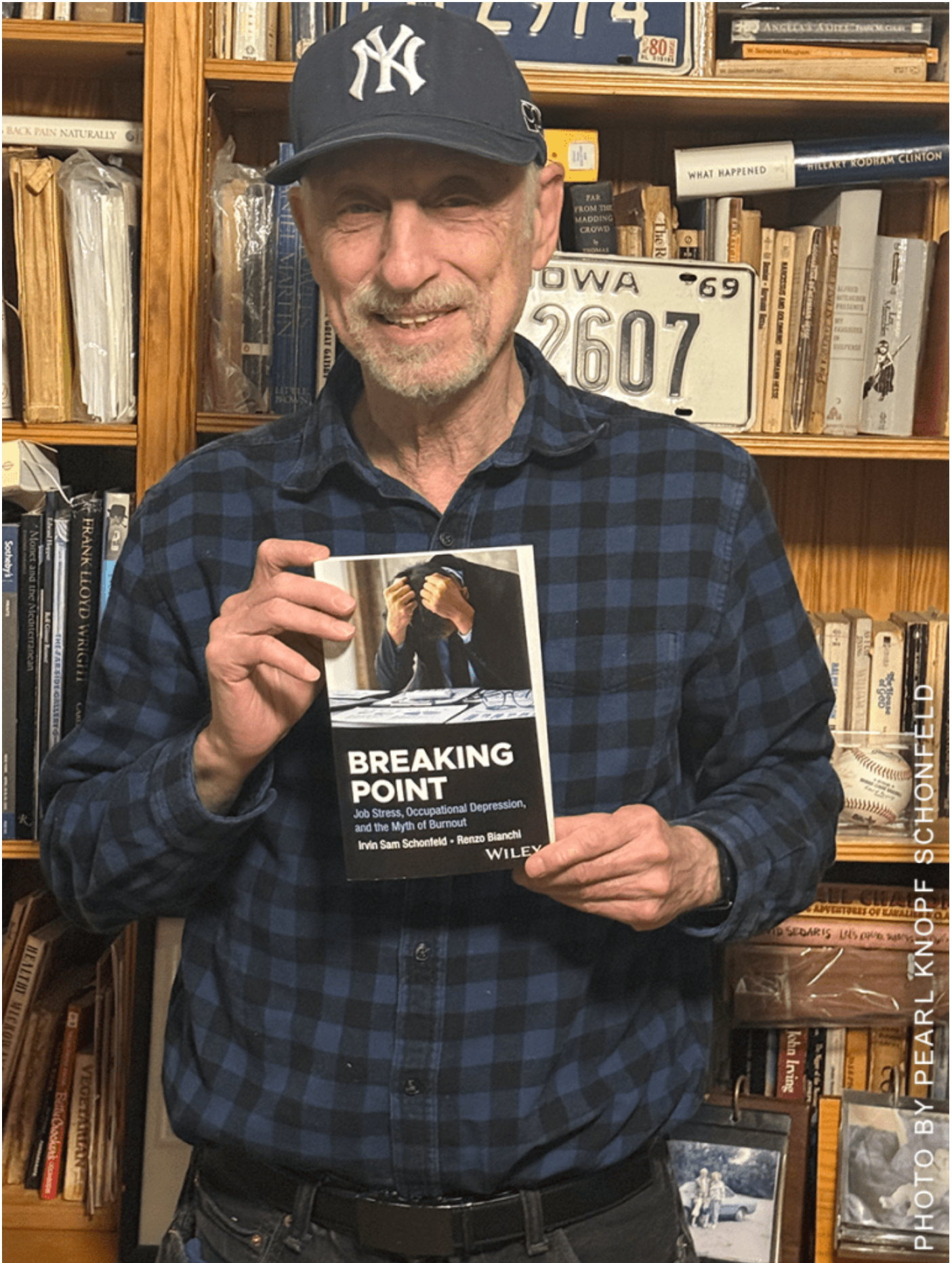


PHOTO BY PEARL KNOPF SCHONFELD

Come join us for our next WordSprouts event in partnership with the Old Stone House, featuring psychologist Irvin Schonfeld, PhD, MPH, Professor Emeritus at the City College of New York and the CUNY Graduate Center.

Irvin will present on his most recent book, *Breaking Point: Job Stress, Occupational Depression and the Myth of Burnout* (Wiley, 2025), co-authored with Renzo Bianchi, Professor of Psychology at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway. Irvin and Renzo take a subversive view of burnout.

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

OUR NEXT EVENT

Author: Irvin Schonfeld (PSFC member)

Genre: Nonfiction (Occupational Health Psychology)

When: Wednesday March 25, 2026 – doors open at 6:45 PM; the event begins at 7:00 PM.

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

Format: In-person only

RSVP [here](#).

Irvin and Renzo approach job-related burnout from an angle that is both skeptical and subversive. They co-developed and currently research the Occupational Depression Inventory, and examine the impact of job stressors on people who work (e.g., teachers, civil servants, etc.). They are particularly interested in burnout/depression overlap. Irvin described the research underlined in the book as delineating the impact of toxic

working job conditions on depressive symptoms and how to address the problem.

Irvin's early experience as a math teacher in the New York City public schools influenced his future studies, as he described, "I informally observed that the chaotic, and sometimes violent circumstances of my school had a baleful effect on many of my teacher colleagues, particularly women teachers. These observations contributed to a future line of research I would not have anticipated at the time I was a teacher."

Irvin has been a Coop member since 1978. His favorite item from the Coop is Le Petit Ecolier European Milk Chocolate Cookies. Now retired from the Coop, Irvin's favorite work shift was the early morning FTOP shift when he and his coworkers put out the produce and took the excess to the CHIPS soup kitchen.

Irvin's presentation will be followed by an audience question period. Drinks and snacks will be provided courtesy of the Coop.

Irvin will be available to sign copies of *Breaking Point: Job Stress, Occupational Depression and the Myth of Burnout* (Wiley, 2025), and will have copies available to sell.

Copies can be ordered from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, or from the book's publisher John Wiley & Sons.

To get updates about WordSprouts events, check the *Linewaiters' Gazette* and sign up for the mailing list at psfcwordsprouts@gmail.com. You can also follow us on Instagram at [@foodcoopwordsprouts](https://www.instagram.com/foodcoopwordsprouts).

The WordSprouts committee includes committee leader Sarah Schenck and committee members Susan Horwich, Ruthie Nachmany, and Tamar Nachmany.

FILM NIGHT: CUBBY

March 3, 2026



**"THE LOVE CHILD OF
NAPOLEON DYNAMITE & LADY BIRD"**

Terry Messard, Fresh Tomato Review



**"DISARMINGLY
ENTERTAINING"**

Rich Cline, Fresh Tomato Review



a film by
Mark Blane



Cubby

2020 BURIED TREASURE AWARD
CHLOTRUDIS SOCIETY OF INDEPENDENT FILM



CUBBY (2019)

With a bold voice reminiscent of heyday 1990s independent cinema, *Cubby* gives a whole new meaning to “adventures in babysitting.” Written and directed by breakout star Mark Blane and shot in crisp 16mm, this quirky dark comedy tells the story of an anxious Midwestern twenty-something who moves to NYC in hopes of becoming an artist. We follow Mark as he navigates his new life in this overwhelming city and with chemically imbalanced flights of fancy, all while fostering a friendship with Milo, a precocious six-year-old he begins to babysit in Park Slope, Brooklyn. This simultaneously off-the-wall and oddly charming debut features a superhero named Leather-Man, a bizarre closet-dwelling roommate, psychedelics and a heartwarming performance by Emmy Award nominee Patricia Richardson (*Home Improvement*). *Cubby* is sure to make you reconnect with your inner child. (Credit: NewFest New York Film Festival)

Mark Blane is an actor, writer, and director living in Brooklyn, NY. His films include the feature *Cubby* (2019) and shorts *Ghost Bike* (2024), *American Assassin Amnesiac* (2024), and the forthcoming film adaptation of *Medea* titled *Needle Road* starring Sinéad Matthews, Heather Burns and Ajay Naidu. He co-wrote and produced the Netflix documentary *The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson* (2017). His work has been supported by Kodak, Brooklyn Arts Council, NYSCA, Sundance and Leslie Lohman Museum of Lesbian and Gay Art, among others. He can be seen on six episodes of the Apple TV show *Little Voice* as well as indie films including *The Apology* and *But I'm Your Brother* (Dir. Noah Morse). As an actor, he is repped by Tyler Kahl at Allegory Talent and Nelson Paredez and Garrett Lindsey at The ESI Network. www.markblane.com

This film will be screened by Zoom on **Thursday, March 12, at 7pm**. Writer and director Mark Blane will be present for a Q+A after the screening.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88425591770>

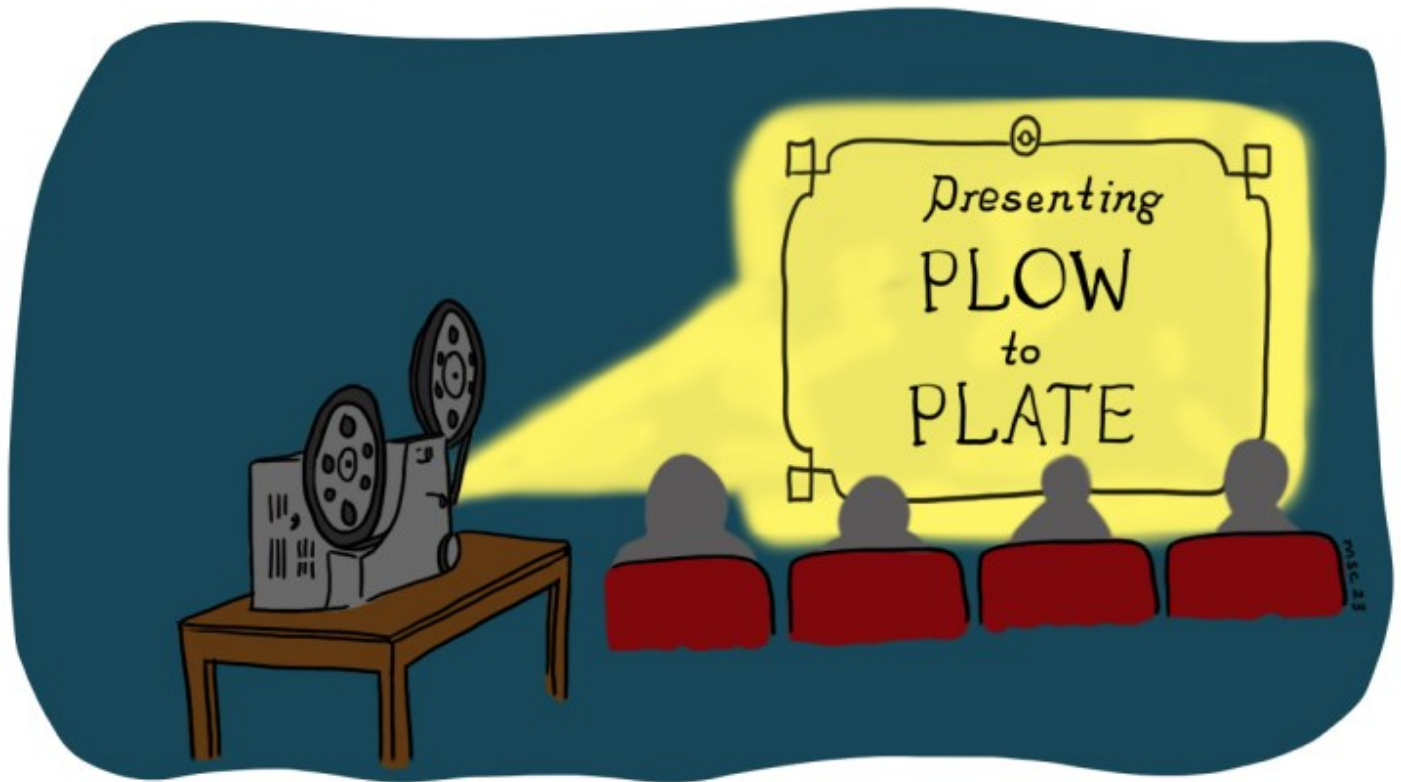
Meeting ID: 884 2559 1770

To be added to our email listserv for future screening announcements, please send a

request to jlymiller@me.com.

PLOW TO PLATE PRESENTS: FRUITS OF LABOR

March 3, 2026



March 3, 2026

By Adam Rabiner

A drone shot above a farm. Below, people are picking strawberries. It looks like California. A conventional tableau. Another film about the exploitation of migrant labor. Yet the 18-year-old narrator is one of the people in the field—Ashley Solis Pavont tells us that she was born in the United States to a family of Mexican healers. So were her three younger siblings, all of whose names, like hers, start with “Ash.” Their mother, Beatriz, told them it symbolizes a meadow of trees with roots that establish the family here in the U.S. After that initial scene, the rest of the movie takes place in their

crowded, rundown house shared with 12 other families; Watsonville High School, where Ashley is a senior; a shop where Ashley is trying to find the perfect graduation dress; a fruit processing plant where Ashley works the 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. shift; and other parts of town. This is not a film about migrants, but rather of a mixed-status family—an undocumented mother raising citizen children. Twenty-two years earlier, a deathly ill Beatriz was brought to the U.S. for urgent medical care and granted a temporary visa. In her fevered state, the nurses caring for her as she lay in her hospital bed appeared as angels.

Beatriz, a spiritual and religious woman, works seven days a week as a house cleaner. Since she is divorced and without financial support from her ex-husband, Ashley must also work to support the family. Ashley observes that her younger brother, 16-year-old Ashford, whose nickname is “Barron,” meanwhile, acts like a little kid, skateboarding, playing video games and hanging out with his girlfriend Ximena, who becomes pregnant by him. Ashley says that he lives in a fantasy world where all the burdens fall on women. While Beatriz encourages her eldest daughter to complete high school to get a better-paying job, she reinforces traditional patriarchal roles and expectations, magnifying Ashley’s challenges. Often too tired from her night shift to go to school, Ashley’s poor attendance jeopardizes her graduation.

Fruits of Labor takes place in 2018 in a more threatening America. There are no video news clips of I.C.E. raids, but Beatriz and Ashley nervously hover around an iPhone listening to reports of arrests, detentions and family separations. Fearing her deportation, Beatriz has Ashley designated as the legal guardian of her siblings. Despite this ominous backdrop, not every American institution is indifferent. Ashley’s high school teaches the history of the United Farm Workers Union and New Deal legislation that exempted domestic and agricultural labor from worker protections—a 12-year-old can legally work in the fields. Hanging from a wall are college and pre-college posters, and the school’s motto echoes Beatriz’s wishes, “Dream Big, Work Hard.” Teachers, guidance counselors and the principal are sympathetic and caring.

Ashley also has support from a girlfriend and a devoted boyfriend, Adrian, with whom

she takes long walks in the countryside or along the shore, discussing matters such as their spirit animals and reincarnation. Ashley is thoughtful, intelligent, curious, articulate, self-aware and yet uncertain and scared. She's a teenager who wishes her life could be more normal, like Ashford's, but who has been prematurely thrust into an adult life of burdens and responsibilities. Her chosen animal is a turtle who just wants to hide in its shell.

Like the family profiled, the film itself is steeped in spirituality. Time-lapse cinematography shows flowers blooming, and animations depict fruits ripening. Imagery of bees and Monarch butterflies suggests ancestral forces and cycles of nature (and perhaps the ties between the U.S. and Mexico, where the Monarchs make their arduous journeys). These forces also help to sustain.

Hanging in the Pavon home is a print of a red, white and blue American flag waving above the word "freedom." This is a family that loves America, even though some aspects of America do not appear, at this moment, to fully love them back. The country depicted in the film has two faces. One is foreboding, while the other is welcoming and encouraging. Like Beatriz long ago in her sickbed, this family chooses to see our better angels.

Fruits of Labor Tuesday, March 10th, 2026

Please join the *Plow to Plate* mailing list by emailing plowtoplate@gmail.com to receive a screening link.

From October 2025 through March 2026, *Plow to Plate* is exclusively featuring films distributed by *Grasshopper Film*. Reversa Films produced *Fruits of Labor*.

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

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE: COOP MEMBERS SUPPORT SNAP RECIPIENTS DURING SHUTDOWN

March 3, 2026



December 9, 2025

By Lora Kelley

On November 1, the Park Slope Food Coop posted on Instagram requesting donations to support members affected by disruptions to SNAP benefits. Within a week, members had given more than \$20,000.

The PSFC SNAP Assistance Fund was organized to provide relief to those who rely on benefits from SNAP, or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, for their Coop

shopping. During the 43-day shutdown of the federal government, which began on October 1, the nation's largest anti-hunger initiative was mired in uncertainty and legal challenges that jeopardized people's ability to access groceries. While officials, lawyers and administrators were scrambling to figure out what was happening, and whether eligible recipients could continue getting benefits, people needed to eat. About one in eight Americans, or 42 million people, rely on SNAP benefits—that includes some 3 million people in New York state.



PHOTO BY KATE PREVITE

There was a lot of collective energy, both among Park Slope Food Coop members and the broader national coop community, to find ways to help people who rely on these benefits.

More than \$5,000 was distributed to Coop members registered for SNAP benefits in the first week after the fundraiser went live, General Manager Joe Szladek said in an interview, and about half of the fund was used overall. Now that the shutdown has ended and SNAP benefits have resumed, excess donations will be diverted to CHiPS

(Community Help in Park Slope).



Now that the shutdown has ended and SNAP benefits are resuming, excess donations will be diverted to CHiPS (Community Help in Park Slope).

As it became clear that SNAP would be interrupted, Coop staff began discussing what to do, Szladek said. He noted that there was a lot of collective energy, both among Park Slope Food Coop members and the broader national coop community, to find ways to help people who rely on these benefits. (The United States Department of Agriculture forbade stores from offering discounts to SNAP recipients.)

“THERE WAS AN OUTPOURING OF SUPPORT FOR EACH OTHER AND FOR THE COMMUNITY.”

GENERAL MANAGER JOE SZLADEK

Some of the staff's ideas included setting up a food pantry at the Coop, or asking members to purchase items to donate to food kitchens. The idea of creating a member-driven fund would be more complicated than those actions—but setting up such a fund seemed like the best way to “honor the dignity of those losing benefits,” allowing them to keep shopping as usual, Szladek said. So the team moved forward with the fundraiser.

“Members stepped up,” Szladek said. “There was an outpouring of support for each other and for the community.” In fact, within 48 hours, more than \$10,000 in donations had come in. The fundraiser was advertised through a single Instagram post and through announcements over the intercom in the Coop. The fundraiser didn't have a hard number goal, Szladek noted, but the aim was to cover average weekly spending for about a month for members who use SNAP at the Coop.

Many members were enthusiastic about the initiative. Rita Wenxin Wang, a member since 2021 who has interacted with SNAP recipients on their checkout shift, said that, as someone “deeply interested in the redistribution of wealth,” they were “glad that the massive Coop community could come together to support members.” Bryony Romer, a member of 30 years who saw the announcement about the fundraiser on Instagram, said that she “was excited to see the Coop leading to mobilize the vast resources in our community to help those at risk of starving.” She added that she loves the Coop because it is a “people-organized place where we all pitch in to make something good happen.”

“I WAS EXCITED TO SEE THE COOP LEADING TO MOBILIZE THE VAST RESOURCES IN OUR COMMUNITY TO HELP THOSE AT RISK OF STARVING.”

BRYONY ROMER

Once the fund started coming in, Szladek explained, the next step was to alert eligi-

ble members. Members of the Coop's information technology team wrote an email to about 450 people, letting them know that this was happening, and what amount they were eligible for. Eligibility was based on past SNAP usage at the Coop, and the amount of support available per member was determined based on that data. In other words, the Coop took the average amount a member spent weekly (based on sales data from prior weeks) and gave eligible members that weekly amount. Members were advised to shop normally, check out, and then suspend their receipt. Then, they could bring the receipt to a staff member, who attached a ticket, and the bookkeepers took care of things from there.



Members eligible for the PSFC SNAP Assistance Fund were advised to shop normally at the Coop during the lapse in SNAP funding due to the government shutdown. This fundraiser was the first of its kind for the Coop, Szladek said, as it "was driven by a gap in members' ability to purchase food." He added that, if in the future, another emergency like this arises, "this mechanism is there."



Szladek noted the Coop has long supported other efforts to keep participation accessible and help feed neighbors facing food insecurity. Each week, about 100 Coop members volunteer with CHiPS, representing 5 percent of overall member labor. Those efforts amount to about 14,000 total hours each year, he added. Szladek encouraged members to keep volunteering at and donating to CHiPS.

“It’s heartening to be part of a community where members will readily help members,” Szladek reflected.

Lora Kelley is a freelance writer in Brooklyn.

UPHILL BATTLES: THE CHALLENGES OF REPLICATING THE SUCCESS OF THE PSFC

March 3, 2026



ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE CARSON

December 9, 2025

By Kim Velsey

When the Park Slope Food Coop opened in 1973, it was one of some 3,000 coops started in the United States during that era, according to Anne Meis Knupfer's *Food Coops in America*—part of a movement to bring lower-priced, healthy foods to communities through a noncorporate grocery model. Only a fraction of that number exists today—somewhere closer to 300—but the Park Slope Food Coop has thrived, growing from a small second-floor bulk-buying operation to a 16,000-member cooperative that is the busiest grocery store in the United States by sales per square foot. Members travel from around the city to shop here, while those hoping to join clamor to secure the

limited spots available for new member enrollment.



Many food co-ops that have closed their doors.

“COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ARE PRECIOUS AND THERE WILL BE SOME CHALLENGING INITIAL TIMES. IS IT POSSIBLE? YES. IS IT EASY? NO.”

JOE HOLTZ

Over the years a number of groups have tried to replicate the Coop’s success in other neighborhoods. The density of New York City, combined with the lack of healthy affordable foods in many neighborhoods, makes the coop model an especially attrac-

tive one here. What's more, the Park Slope Food Coop offers not only advice and mentorship to other coops interested in following its model, but also low-interest loans. Even so, most attempts to replicate Park Slope's model here have faltered or fizzled out. The Bay Ridge Food Coop never got beyond the buying-club stage; the South Bronx Food Co-op closed after three years, in 2010; the East New York Food Coop had a similar run; and the Bushwick Food Coop closed after 13 years, hobbled by a fire, Covid and the inability to secure a new affordable space.



Four New York City food co-op success stories

Others however, have managed to find their footing, notably the Greene Hill Food Co-op in Clinton Hill, which follows the Coop's mandatory member labor model, and the Windsor Terrace Food Coop, which does not. The Flatbush Food Coop is a cooperative that dates to the mid-1970s but has no member labor at all, and the 4th Street Food

Co-op in Manhattan, which opened as the Good Food Coop the same year as the Park Slope Food Coop, exists entirely as a member-run space that is also open to non-members.



Joe Holtz, the Coop’s co-founder and former General Manager, retired over the summer.

Why has it been so difficult for others to follow in the Coop’s footsteps?

Space Challenges

“Space is a big challenge in New York City,” said Joe Holtz, Park Slope’s recently retired general manager, noting the challenge of “finding a space that is big enough and affordable enough.” This, he says, was the problem Bay Ridge Food Coop faced and was ultimately unable to overcome, despite considerable interest from the com-

munity (Holtz recalls that 2,000 would-be members signed up). If a space is too small, or a coop never moves beyond the buying-club stage, members will find themselves doing a lot of work for a coop that offers supplemental groceries at best. Even if a coop starts off strong, it usually needs to scale to allow for staple shopping at some point, which is where a lot of coops fall apart.

CO-OP

GREENE HILL FOOD CO-OP



PHOTO BY FROD MORRISON

Sarah Chinn, pictured outside the Green Hill Food Co-Op. The store is located on Fulton Street, at Classon Avenue.

Sarah Chinn joined the Park Slope Food Coop in 1991 and was a member until the mid-2000s, when she joined the effort to open Greene Hill as one of its founding members. She said that finding a space was definitely the biggest challenge early on. Greene Hill needed something “flexible, that had a basement we could put storage in, that we could put a walk-in fridge in, that was affordable, that was in the neighborhood,” she said. The founders also wanted a place that had good foot traffic, which their Putnam Street store didn’t really have, but the coop nonetheless eked out an existence for its first few years, managing to just barely stay afloat. Then they found out their landlord was selling essentially the whole block and they’d have to leave. The board told the membership that they had to close: Not only did the coop not have the time or wherewithal to move, it didn’t have the money. Chinn and a few other members decided to look for a new store anyway and after touring many spaces, found the coop’s current spot, a few blocks away on Fulton Street. It was that rare phenomenon in New York real estate: a better deal. The Greene Hill Food Co-op’s new space is bigger, has better foot traffic, and “sales just went up and up and up.”

Merchandise and Pricing Challenges



Sarah Chinn was a PSFC member before co-founding the Green Hill Food Co-Op. Figuring out where to buy merchandise, and how much to buy, is another early hurdle: Coops need to find high-quality food suppliers who will offer bulk pricing that makes shopping at the coop less expensive and justifies member labor, in turn helping keep costs low. “When we opened, our Coop understood we had to get fruits and vegetables from the Hunts Point Market in the Bronx,” said Holtz. “We also knew we didn’t have the wherewithal to do it, but there was a small distribution company that wanted to sell to coops and daycares, and they sold to us at very low cost.”

Chinn said, however, that the supplier landscape is more difficult now than it was in the 1970s. The Greene Hill Food Co-op still isn’t big enough to get bulk discounts so their mark-up, which started at 30%, is now 35% for most items, compared to Park Slope’s 25%. Moreover, on “luxury” goods like chocolate and personal care products,

it's 40%. But by leaning heavily into bulk bin items Greene Hill has managed to offer a solid and growing inventory of affordably priced groceries, expanding to bulk cleaning supplies (like laundry detergent) without taking up too much of the limited shelf space. In the beginning, there were also divisions over whether Greene Hill should carry only non-GMO, organic, local foods or add in mass market brands that would help draw in new members and the community on Sundays, when the coop opens its doors to non-members at no extra markup—something that the membership felt was important in a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood like Clinton Hill. Greene Hill settled on a solution that for every organic item, there would be a nonorganic alternative. Bananas also became a year-round staple, even if they weren't local because, said Chinn, “no one is going to shop at the coop if they can't pick up bananas.”



The Green Hill Co-Op is a well-stocked, neatly laid out, and welcoming store.

Membership Challenges

Greene Hill, which started as a buying club in 2011, opened about a year later, and is now going on nearly 15 years—it has one full-time and one part-time employee. The coop recently started doing \$25,000 a week in sales, a milestone, but Chinn said they still sometimes have to close early when someone cancels a shift. And every week, an email goes out listing emergency shifts that need to be filled.

Large-enough membership is a key factor in a coop's success but can be hard to build, especially in the early years when members must put in a lot of time for something less than a full-fledged grocery store. A too-small membership was a big factor in the South Bronx Food Co-op's closure, leading to erratic hours and falling sales, which caused the coop to fall behind on rent. After a deal to sublease part of the space to city greencarts was nixed by the landlord, the coop folded. The Lefferts Community Food Coop, which lasted five years, also struggled with membership. When the landlord listed their building for sale—the coop had what one of its founders described as a “super-generous landlord” who required “minimal rent”—the board decided it was time to throw in the towel.

“PARK SLOPE WASN'T PARK SLOPE RIGHT OFF THE BAT. PARK SLOPE IS A REALLY MATURE BUSINESS THAT HAS BEEN DECADES IN THE MAKING.”

SARAH CHINN

For Holtz, the ability to overcome early crises like Greene Hill's store loss comes down to member labor, and the sense of connection necessary to keep a coop running. “When I hear members talk about our Coop, sometimes I hear them saying things like, ‘Well, they don't have that at the Coop,’ or the neutral, ‘the Coop doesn't have that,’ but most of the time it's ‘We don't have that at the Coop.’”

Managing Expectations, Nurturing Mission



The Lefferts Community Food Coop folded after just five years.

There is another, less tangible but no less significant, challenge for any coop trying to follow Park Slope's model: managing expectations. As Chinn noted, "Park Slope wasn't Park Slope right off the bat. Park Slope is a really mature business that has been decades in the making."

And while there have been plenty of would-be coops that disappeared before ever opening their doors (like Greenpoint) or folded after a few years of not quite making it (like Lefferts) new ones keep trying to open, underscoring the appeal of the coop model, despite all the difficulties of making it work in New York City. For example, the Central Brooklyn Food Coop, which has been trying to find a storefront since September 2022, recently announced that they finally secured one on the ground floor of a newly

constructed building in Bed-Stuy. They are currently building membership, according to their website, so that they'll have enough community members to run it.



PHOTO BY ROD MORRISON

PSFC jam-packed with shopping members pre-Thanksgiving

As a leader of the food coop movement, the Park Slope Food Coop will continue to encourage and support others to follow. Offering cause for optimism, however cautious, Holtz reminded, "Community organizations are precious and there will be some challenging initial times. Is it possible? Yes. Is it easy? No. But are there other people that want to help? Yes."



ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE CARSON

Kim Velsey has been a Coop member since 2020. When she's not writing for the Gazette, she's a staff writer at New York magazine.

OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING REPORT

March 3, 2026



December 9, 2025

By Oluwakemi Aladesuyi

Since the Coop began offering work credits for meeting attendance, General Meetings

have been well attended, and the October 28 meeting was no exception.

Open Forum

The Open Forum session focused on how the Coop could support the community as SNAP benefits faced expiration during the government shutdown. A small discussion group was proposed to address this concern. While it appears that SNAP benefits have since been extended for at least another year, the discussion raised important questions about how the community can continue supporting its members through ongoing economic challenges.

Reports

General Manager Joe Szladek made a financial report for the last 36 weeks. Several one-time expenses contributed to higher personnel costs, including a retirement party for Joe Holtz, consulting fees to help recruit a new general manager and IT support.

Other trends of note:

- Debit transaction fees have increased, though the Coop will be switching vendors soon and will charge lower fees.
- Healthcare expenses are growing faster than inflation each year, becoming an increasingly large portion of personnel costs.
- Sales per member have declined since the Coop switched from a four-week to a six-week work cycle (that is, post-Covid).

On a positive note, sales in the prepared foods section continue to expand.

Looking ahead, the Coop is considering hiring another receiving coordinator as well as staff with significant financial expertise.

One member questioned whether the Coop could rely more heavily on member-led squads rather than hiring additional staff, noting that some coordinating roles had previously been handled by members. The response to that question emphasized that work remains in members' hands, with staff primarily helping to speed up processes.

General Coordinator Matt Hoagland reported on the recurring shift system. Popular positions like office work and checkout fill quickly, but early morning lifting shifts have been difficult to staff.

The International Trade Education Squad (ITES) then presented information about how current tariffs are creating uncertainty across the supply chain.

Elections

Several elections took place during the meeting. The first was for the Hearing Administration Committee, which hears disciplinary issues. The vote tallies were as follows:

Irene Bunnell: 123 YES 2 NO

Stephen Klein: 80 YES 23 NO

Sam Klugman: 121 YES 2 NO

Members also voted to fill several open seats on the Agenda Committee, which reviews items proposed for discussion at General Meetings. Since the October 7, 2023 attacks in Israel and the subsequent war in Gaza, what is and isn't allowed to be discussed at Coop General Meetings has been particularly contentious, especially regarding whether the Coop should support the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement.

Dominique Bravo explained that those who had spoken publicly about "political issues" were not considered eligible candidates for open seats on the Agenda Commit-

tee, a criterion that was decided by current committee members. Agenda Committee vote results are below:

Dominique Bravo: 94 YES 29 NO

Matt Cecil: 99 YES 20 NO

Robbie Gottlieb: 126 YES 3 NO

Alice Procter: 125 YES 2 NO

Finally, Rebecca Schoenberg-Jones was elected Corporate Secretary, a result which met with boisterous applause.

Member Presentations

The pandemic served as a revealing moment for the Coop, exposing fundamental questions about how the Coop operates and how members engage with one another. One of the most significant issues that emerged was the question of how members should meet and participate in decision-making processes.

Yejia Chen presented a proposal to introduce online asynchronous voting, a system that would allow members to review agenda items in advance and vote on them remotely.

Chen gave a robust presentation arguing that this approach would increase participation by making the voting process more accessible to members who might not be able to attend meetings in person as well as for the neurodiverse.

Following the presentation, the proposal sparked a lively discussion that touched on several practical and philosophical concerns. Members raised questions about the costs of implementing voting software and what post-pandemic communication

should look like within the Coop more broadly.

A central concern centered on the Coop's parliamentary procedures: how would on-line asynchronous voting accommodate the spontaneous amendments and adjustments that typically occur during live meetings? In traditional in-person elections, members have the opportunity to comment and make slight modifications to proposals in real-time. Would an asynchronous system allow for similar flexibility? Some suggested that voting software could enable discussion forums and commenting features, though this raised additional questions about whether such forums would require moderation.

Members also expressed concern about potential drawbacks of a hybrid voting system. Would early voting actually disincentivize attendance at meetings, causing people to miss important discussions? If votes were tallied both asynchronously and in person, would this create equity concerns between different voting methods? There was uncertainty about whether asynchronous participation would truly increase engagement or simply fragment it.

Overall, the discussion revealed concerns that the proposal felt somewhat haphazard in its approach to timeline and synchronicity. While the intention to increase accessibility was clear, questions remained about how to preserve the deliberative, collaborative nature of the Coop's decision-making process in a hybrid model.

Oluwakemi Aladesuyi is a journalist, yoga teacher and potter.

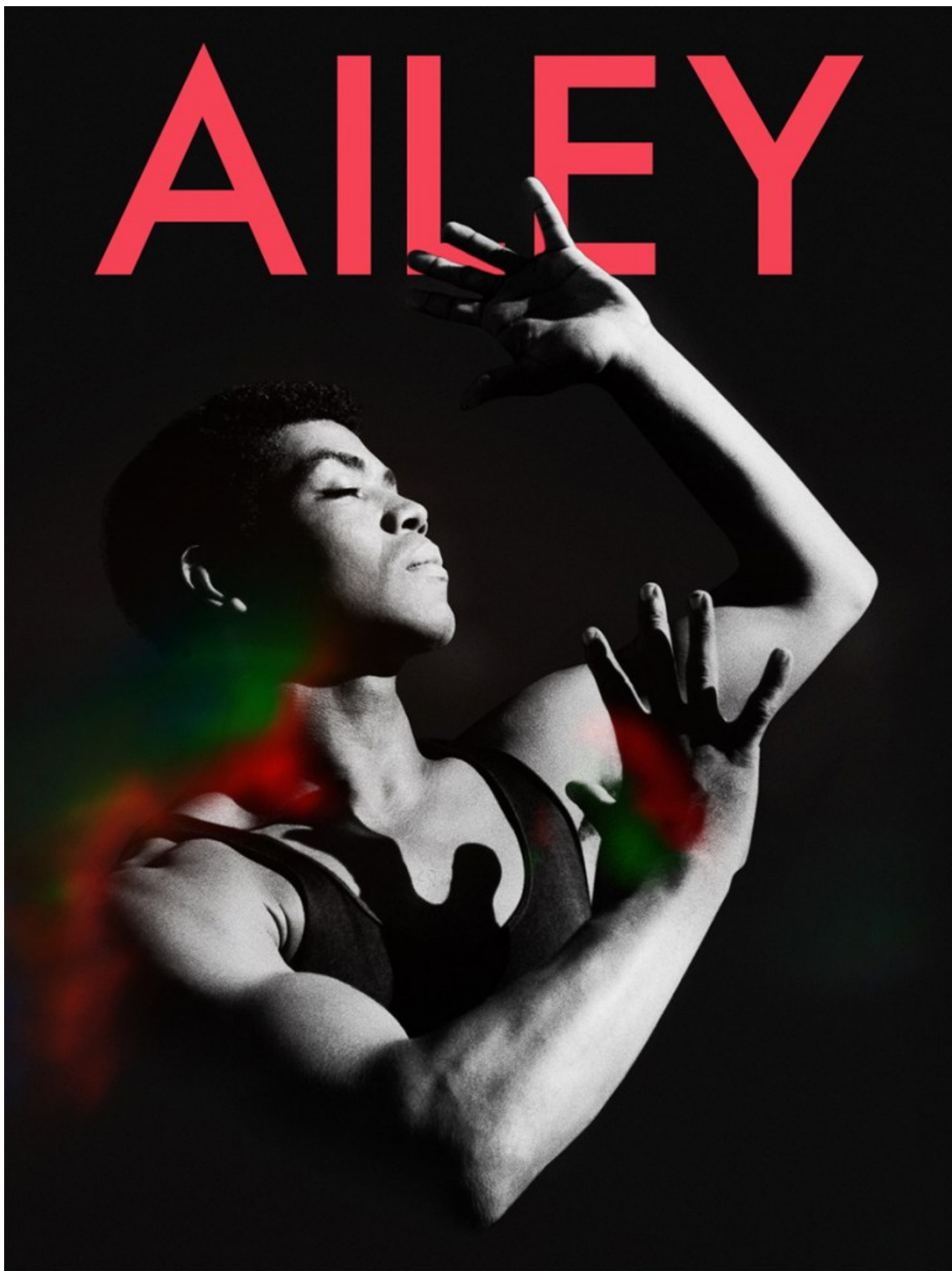
FILM NIGHT: AILEY (2021)

March 3, 2026



Alvin Ailey was a visionary artist who found salvation through dance. An immersive portrait told in his own words and through the creation of a new commission inspired by his life, *Ailey* fully profiles this brilliant and enigmatic man who—when confronted by a world that refused to embrace him—was determined to build one that would.

AILEY



Naiti Gámez is an award-winning director and cinematographer. Her film credits have screened at dozens of festivals worldwide including Festival de Cannes, Sundance Film Festival, Berlinale, Camerimage and many others. TV/Streaming credits include HBO Max, AppleTV+, Showtime, Hulu, PBS, ESPN, MTV, Discovery Channel and more. Naiti has also worked at nonprofit organizations, and as an educator. She holds a B.A. in Latin American Studies from Smith College, and an M.F.A. in Film Production from the University of Texas at Austin.

This film will be screened by Zoom on **Thursday, December 11, at 7pm.** Cinematographer Naiti Gámez will be present for a Q+A after the screening.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81280173727>

Meeting ID: 812 8017 3727

Coop Film Night is a monthly screening series where we showcase some of the amazing artistic talent within the Coop's member community. Directors, actors, producers, editors, cinematographers, and composers share their work via a Zoom screening, followed by a live q&a. We've screened everything from Academy Award winners to short Youtube films, all made or crewed by Coop members! Please join us for a fun and stimulating evening and help us to celebrate the incredible work of your fellow members.

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

CALLING ALL HOME COOKS!

March 3, 2026



A CALL FOR HOME COOKS

The Food Coop Cooking Class Squad is looking for members to teach cooking classes!

Share some of your favorite dishes or family culinary traditions as part of the coop's monthly cooking class series.

Interested? Get in touch!

foodcoopcooks.org/contact



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