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Volume 00, Number 9

May 19, 2020

Coop Strategizes to Stay Afloat

By Hayley Gorenbefer

After pandemic precautions were put in place this spring at the Coop, sales fell through the floor, with transactions dropping 79 percent and overall dollars spent down 37 percent for the week ending April 26. A typical week would have shown 17,000 transactions and perhaps \$1.1 million total purchases—but only 3,436 took place, albeit at about triple the dollar-value per transaction.

With over \$72,000 in lost dollar-value to the Coop that week, plus about \$25,000 in labor costs and extra

a community-supported agriculture system with pre-packaged produce boxes for a set price? Could some sort of curbside pickup work? Holtz noted that in addition to questions of internal logistics and perishability, many members value personally choosing produce. “These are all less than perfect solutions,” he said.

General Coordinator Ann Herpel observed that the lines have been reduced dramatically in recent weeks because of improved, more efficient operations and longer shopping hours.

“We know that a lot of people are not getting here to get food, and it's their Coop—and it breaks my heart.”

—Joe Holtz, General Manager

Meanwhile, a member is working with the General Coordinators on a reservation system that will allow shoppers to sign up for a virtual spot in line through the Coop's website. But technology won't solve all the problems, Holtz said. “It's also about equity,” he said, positing that people at high risk for the most dangerous and potentially deadly effects of COVID-19 likely “won't take the risk.” And assessing the risk of interactions while shopping is no simple thing. “Perception of risk is all over the map, and nobody's wrong,” Holtz continued. “There are scientists disagreeing. The whole country is disagreeing. I just want to be respectful of everybody's sensibilities.”

Changes Like Never Before

Starting Monday, March 23, to comply with COVID-19-related safety protocols, the Coop drastically reduced the number of shoppers per hour and the number of hours open. Lines to get in grew to hours-long, stretching around the block. Member labor was suspended for the first time in Coop history, and through word of mouth and Coop website and social media postings, the Coop hired members as temporary staff, to vastly reduce the volume of personal interactions and exposure. Meanwhile, March projections indicated that the \$3.9 million in Coop cash accounts as of February 3 would keep the Coop functioning only



ILLUSTRATION BY DEBORAH TINT

through August without further measures.

Regardless, the Coop's General Manager and first-ever staff member, Joe Holtz, remains steadfast in his conviction that the Coop will survive: “It's a remarkably sustainable institution. It's improving every week. The volume is going up every week,” he noted. “We'll figure out how to make it work, how to get back to break-even and stop burning money. It's just a matter of time, in my opinion. Our members are not going to let it die; they love it too much!”

Safety Precautions

Early during the pandemic, staff heard from members working in the health field, concerned about so many interactions among staff, shoppers, and thousands of members working a shift per month. “The general coordinators made a very difficult decision and decided to temporarily suspend member labor, because that seems in keeping with what public safety people are saying. But how do you phase it back in?” Holtz wasn't ready to discuss plans currently under consideration to move back from an approximately 99 percent reduction in member labor at this point. When state restrictions ease, he asked “can we go to an 85 percent or 81 percent reduction” of member labor? Is

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MEMBER SUBMISSION

Why Not Curbside Pick-Up?

By Louis Lavelle

I've been deeply impressed, and eternally grateful, for the hard work, dedication, and creative thinking that have gone into the Coop's response to the coronavirus pandemic. We all owe the Coop leadership an enormous debt of gratitude.

That said, I was deeply dis-

turbed by the April 12 “Report to the Member/Owners” by Treasurer Joe Holtz. As Joe explained, we are hemorrhaging cash at an alarming rate, in large part because fewer people are shopping at the Coop. Many people, turned off by the long lines and dangerously cramped conditions inside the Coop, have begun shop-

ping elsewhere. Simply put, if we want the Coop to survive, we have to get them back, and the only way to do that is to address their concerns.

To that end, I would like the Coop to reconsider a proposal that apparently has already been found wanting: curbside pickup. This is an idea that has been implemented by coops throughout the country, and a few have launched

the service during the pandemic. There's no reason we can't do the same.

As I envision this, members would place orders online that would be fulfilled by the Coop's new part-time employees. Once filled, the order goes through check-out, and the member would receive an email or text telling them their order is ready. Payment would then be

made online. Upon arrival at the Coop, the member shows his or her ID and receipt and receives the order.

This solves numerous problems. It eliminates the outside lines. With no members inside the store, you've effectively reduced the possibility of virus transmission between members to zero. Without constant interaction

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Lockdown Movies

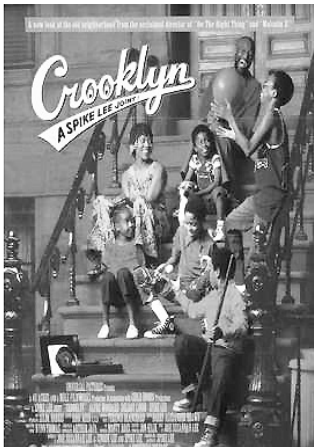
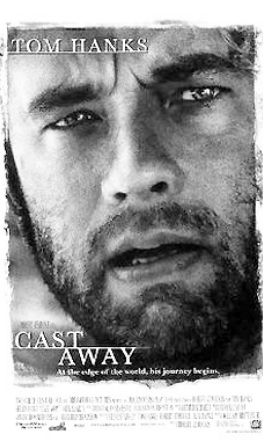
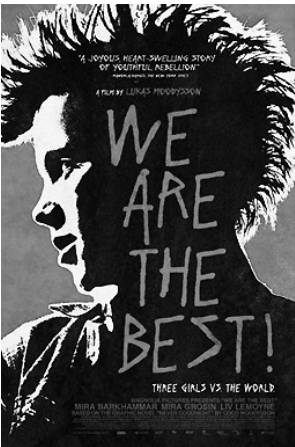
By Jennifer Perkin

Almost everybody, whether they're feeling bored and restless, overworked and overwhelmed, or all of the above, is now spending more time at home. With the cinemas closed for the foreseeable future, it's a good time to catch up on movies you've been planning to watch or revisit old favorites.

Maybe you're in a masochistic mood and looking for entertainment that covers catastrophic times. Or perhaps you're looking for escapism and Hollywood magic. Either way, some of these suggestions may help cut down on your Netflix scrolling.

Leaning Into the Moment

There are the obvious films that are straight up about viruses and pandemics, in a world that looks much like our own. *Outbreak* (1995) and *Contagion* (2011) are the two big ones that have experienced a huge surge in popularity since the arrival of COVID-19. Another illness film is based on a real viral outbreak that took place in Kerala, India, in 2018. *Virus* (2019) depicts the swift action taken by local authorities and medical staff, who managed to track the virus, quarantine 200 people, and contain the outbreak after it had claimed 18 victims. On the other end of the "realism" scale is the blockbuster *World War Z*, from 2013, starring Brad Pitt. It may not be a particularly subtle film, but clocking in at over two hours, it will certainly kill some time.



There is also the broad category of dystopian futures. Both *Children of Men* (2006) and *Twelve Monkeys* (1995), helmed by visionary directors Alfonso Cuarón and Terry Gilliam respectively, envision worlds that went wrong for many reasons, just one component

of which is a virus. *I Am Legend* (2007), based on the book of the same name, is also about a post-virus world; other adaptations of that book are *The Last Man on Earth* (1964) and *The Omega Man* (1971). You could watch all three as a movie marathon, or you could skip them and go straight to the book, which is an excellent read. *Blindness* (2008) is another adaptation of a much better book and focuses on a world where the population faces a mysterious epidemic that causes most people to go blind. *On the Beach* (1959), though based on the aftermath of a nuclear war rather than an epidemic, might feel somewhat relevant; however—fair warning—it is at the very dark and depressing end of the spectrum.

One of my absolutely favorite feel-good films that is also under-seen is the Swedish film *We Are the Best!* (2013).

Although zombie films are slightly off-tangent, they often resonate with themes of quarantining, contagion, and societal upheaval. Some of the more popular zombie classics viewers are revisiting at this time include *Dawn of the Dead* (1978 and 2004) and *28 Days Later* (2003), but I'd personally skew toward more light-hearted zombie entertainment such as *Zombieland* (2009) and *Shaun of the Dead* (2004).

Isolating solo? Maybe find relatable content with a stranded Tom Hanks in *Cast Away* (2000), Brie Larson in the claustrophobic film *Room* (2015), or with Sam Rockwell as a lonely astronaut in the underrated *Moon* (2009).

Escaping from Reality

COVID-19 saturation is real, and there comes a point where you want to switch off from the world. Judging by online chat, lots of people are using all this extra screen time to re-watch classic drama

series like *The Wire*, *Sopranos*, and *Six Feet Under*, or to switch their brain off entirely and laugh to re-runs of *Seinfeld* and *The Office*. Going even further back, I've personally found that now is a great time to revisit *Twin Peaks*. Yes, it can be dark in parts, but it's surreal enough to be so far removed from our times that it's really pure escapism.

There is, of course, also plenty of new content to gorge on, including *The Last Dance*, *Ozark*, *Killing Eve*, and of course, *Tiger King*, which everyone was talking about a few weeks ago.

Sometimes the abundance of choice can feel over-

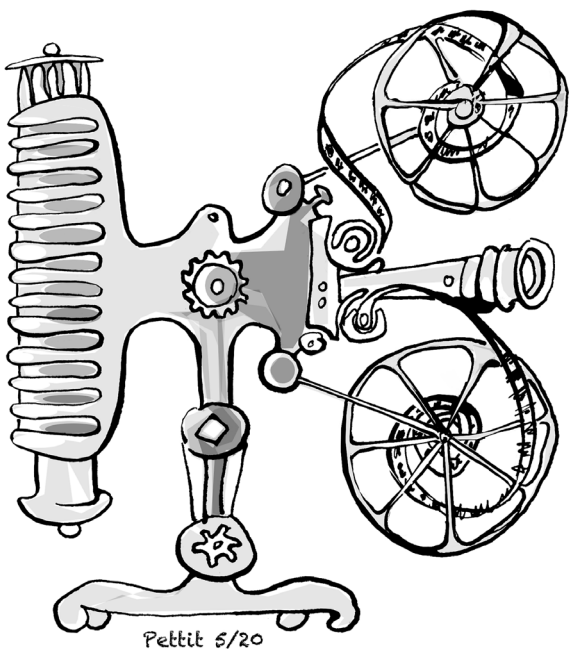


ILLUSTRATION BY ETHAN PETTIT

whelming. Personally, I find watching films made in the 80s is not unlike eating comfort food, whether it's your first or fiftieth time seeing them. *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* or really any John Hughes film is ideal for this purpose, as are most comedies from the era starring Eddie Murphy or Dan Ackroyd, including *The Blues Brothers*, *Coming to America*, or *Ghostbusters*. Also see *Karate Kid*, *Princess Bride*, and *Back to the Future*. The 80s really was prime time for popcorn movies.

Feeling nostalgic for the city just out of reach beyond your doorstep? Revisit Spike Lee gems like *She's Gotta Have It* (1984), *Crooklyn* (1994), or *Do the Right Thing* (1989).

Looking for something heartwarming without being too cheesy? *Amelie* (2001) is a perennial delight, *Hunt For the Wilderpeople* (2016) is simply adorable, and just about any Wes Anderson and most Tim Burton films will sweep you up in whimsy for a couple of hours. One of my absolutely favorite feel-good films that is also under-seen is the Swedish film *We Are the Best!* (2013).

Perhaps it's time to watch that cult classic you never got around to? Try *Harold and Maude* (1971), *Clerks* (1994), *This is Spinal Tap* (1984) or *Withnail and I* (1987).

Feeling nostalgic for New York, the city just out of reach beyond your doorstep? It might be the time to revisit Spike Lee gems like *She's Gotta Have It* (1984), *Crooklyn* (1994) or *Do the Right Thing* (1989), an old-time classic like *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961), a newer classic like *Manhattan* (1979) or the oddball and highly re-watchable *Birdman* (2014).

Hope you enjoy some of these recommendations. Stay safe. ■

This Issue Prepared by:

Editors (development): Ed Levy

Reporter: Jennifer Perkin

Art Director (development): Eva Schicker

Illustrators: Magdalene Carson
Rod Morrison
Ethan Pettit
Deborah Tint

Photographers: Bill Farrington
Joshua Kristal
Mia Tran

Thumbnails: Mia Tran

Photoshop: Adam Segal-Isaacson

Art Director (production): Dilhan Kushan

Web Publishing: Helena Boskovic
Erin Sparling

Editor (production): Nancy Rosenberg

Final Proofreader: Lisa Schorr

Coop Strategizes

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that acceptable? To whom? To shoppers? To existing permanent staff? It's still a big reduction," he said, deeming it "a decision for a future day—and that future may not be that far off, depending on government announcements."

Longer Hours, Shorter Lines, Deeper Cleaning

The Coop accomplishes deep cleaning outside shopping hours, which were reduced but have inched higher again, with updates kept current on the website. With limited science about transmission-risk from surfaces, cleaning is a question of best judgment. Plexiglas barriers have been installed between checkout workers and shoppers, and checkout counters are now "spritzed" between shoppers. "I would love there to be better science," said Holtz, but many members are very appreciative of what we're doing to keep the Coop at probably the upper quartile of taking safety measures."

When the Coop began requiring members to wear masks while shopping, it purchased bandannas to lend out (and subsequently launder) for any members who showed up without masks—but Holtz reported most shoppers showed up with masks. "We haven't had a lot of problems with compliance, which bodes well. So maybe we will start to see a path of some more normalcy."

Financial Fixes, \$2M Campaign

And sure enough, with hard work, some turnaround resources materialized. The Small Business Administration provided vital support through the Paycheck Protection Program in late April, when the Coop received a \$1,454,763 loan. This has fueled the projection that the Coop will have sufficient cash on hand to be able to continue operations through mid-December, based on the current weekly rate of loss.

In addition, after mainstream media coverage of the Coop's financial straits, money started to come in from members, mainly in the form of increases to member/owner equity investments. Between April 13 and April 26, Holtz

reported over \$102,000 in additional "member/owner equity investments" and some donations. Now the Coop has organized a formal campaign, asking members to inject capital by voluntarily increasing their member investments, with a goal of raising \$2 million or more.

"We'll figure out how to make it work, how to get back to break-even and stop burning money. . . . Our members are not going to let it die; they love it too much!"

The Coop's member/owner equity investment has held at \$100 for 30 years, except for members who receive income-based assistance such as EBT (SNAP), Section 8 housing, WIC, Medicaid, etc., whose investment is \$10 for as long as they receive those benefits.

There is no upper limit for increasing the investment. The campaign will build

Members can increase their Member/Owner Equity Investments in a number of ways:

- Inform any checkout worker and use your debit card at the checkout lane for the transaction.
- Use a personal check at the cashier's station to increase your member investment. Make the check payable to the Park Slope Food Coop and include your member number and "MOEI" in the memo field.
- Mail a check to the Coop at 782 Union Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215, or have your bank mail a check. Note "MOEI" and your member number in the memo section of the check.
- Send money directly to the Coop's MOEI Campaign Account at Sterling National Bank (routing number 221970443 and account number 6700602966). Note "MOEI," your member number and your name in the memo section of your electronic transmission.

the Coop's cash reserve to operate beyond December if the Coop must maintain current safety measures to protect staff and shopping members, and it will place the Coop in a stronger financial position to face any future public health crisis. It will also be used to help pay back any portion of the Small Business Administration loan that does not convert into a grant. Ideally, the campaign will also foster a "positive experience of acting together to help preserve the wonderful institution we own together." As the draft campaign literature stated, "These increases come with one benefit only: your knowledge that you were able to and then actually came forward and helped your cooperative at an unprecedented time of need."

Holtz opined that the Coop could back up additional investments, noting that while "of course we're not talking about a scenario of the Coop going out of business," the Coop owns valuable property in the middle of Park Slope.

Remote GM & Bylaws

For the first time in its history, per Holtz, the Coop's Board of Directors took an action without the advice of the members: the Board, which has been meeting weekly since New York went "on pause," scheduled the May 26 General Meeting as a remote event, after the March and April GMs were suspended for safety. The board reported receiving updates from General Manager Holtz, who is also an ex officio member of the board, and pledged minutes of the video conversations will be made available. The Board Members (Rachel Asher, Bill Penner, Imani

O'ryn, S. Tamarkin, Allen Zimmerman) professed unanimous commitment "to maintaining the General Meeting as the democratic decision-making body of the Coop." The May GM will focus on "a presentation of the Coop's current finances and the challenges the Coop faces in the months ahead." There will be no voting on proposals.

Throughout, the Coop will move toward improving access and sustainability, Holtz said. "I'm not comfortable with the status quo, and I want to keep making it better. I'm a Coop survival specialist. I keep focusing on that. We will be fine, and next time there's a virus we will be more ready, both financially and with plans in place. Next time we'll be better, and this time will end, and we will get through it and be strong, and even stronger," he said. "The appreciation we see from Coop members who have been coming here is fantastic. It's heartwarming." ■



ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE CARSON



ILLUSTRATION BY ERIK SCHURNIK



ILLUSTRATION BY ROD MORRISON

Curbside

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with hundreds of members each day, employees and Coop staffers would be safer. With the precautions already in place, they could come to work each day reasonably assured that their lives are

not being put at risk. We might even be able to reinstate a limited member work requirement, eliminating the need for some paid labor and reducing payroll costs dramatically.

Adapting the Building

Without members inside

the store, the building could be transformed to better serve its new purpose. Both the shopping floor and the basement could be used for order fulfillment, and one or more coolers can be used to store orders awaiting pickup.

We wouldn't be starting from scratch. I'm sure other coops that have switched to a curbside pickup model would be happy to share information about how they did it, and what they learned. Given the vast number of products the Coop sells, we might have to initially limit the products sold online. To increase efficiency, we might have to set a minimum order of perhaps \$75 or \$100, resulting in fewer but bigger orders. Since there will be no more shopping in the traditional sense, we could experiment with a 24-hour model, with cleaning, restocking and other tasks taking place during an overnight shift. We could even add a small fee for curbside pickup that would help put the Coop on firmer financial footing.

This won't be easy. In fact much bigger retailers with established e-commerce sites have struggled to fulfill orders in recent weeks. But if this works—and I recognize that it's if, not when—Coop members who are shopping elsewhere will return. Right now they're overpaying for



PHOTO BY MIA TRAN



PHOTO BY MIA TRAN

Areas currently reserved for breaking down containers could be repurposed for a curbside delivery model.

groceries, waiting two weeks for delivery, and getting half the items they ordered. We can do better than that.

This is a radical departure from the Coop as we know it. But if we succeed, we'll be resilient. We'll have a working e-commerce website and a curbside pickup service that we can use whenever we need to, whether it's a resurgence of COVID-19 in the fall, as some predict, or some other pandemic that sends New York City into extended lockdown mode. We could even explore the possibility of continuing the curbside pickup service after the pandemic restrictions are lifted—perhaps in a dedicated facility of its own—leaving the Union Street store for in-person shopping. It would provide

a second shopping option and relieve some of the overcrowding in the store.

Doing nothing to reverse our dire financial situation is a luxury we don't have. As Joe pointed out, if things keep going the way they are we'll be nearly broke by August. I'm not ready to give up yet. ■

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Reply to Lavelle, Lessem and Lipton Regarding Curbside Pick-up

By Ann Herpel, General Coordinator

Thank you for your suggestions regarding shopping assistance for seniors, online ordering, curbside pick-up and delivery. We have heard these suggestions from many members, and in response, I'm taking this opportunity to share what the General Coordinators have learned after significant research and talking to other coops about their experiences.

Shopping Assistance for Seniors and Others

The Coop contacted Invisible Hands (IH), a community-based organization that provides volunteers who shop and deliver food and other goods to seniors and individuals most vulnerable to COVID-19. As we learned, any member who identifies themselves belonging to this category can contact, by online form or phone, Invisible Hands and request a volunteer. Invisible Hands will match the request with one of their volunteers. The details of the shop and payment will be worked out between the member and the volunteer. We explained to the coordinator at IH that the volunteer would need

the Coop member's number to access the Coop, and provide proof that they are volunteering with IH. They agreed to those terms. The IH volunteer pays for the member's groceries and the member reimburses them (by the method of their choice) upon delivery. The General Coordinators encourage any member who believes they need this type of assistance to reach out directly to IH and request services. Here is their website and phone number: <https://invisiblehandsdeliver.org/> or (732) 639-1579.

The Coop does not have the capacity to manage this arrangement or make any special provisions for IH. And if you are looking for an opportunity to volunteer, IH needs your time to help provide this valuable service to New Yorkers in need.

Online Ordering, Curbside Pick-up and Delivery

Many retailers have partially or fully converted to online ordering and curbside pick-up and delivery. From the shopper's point of view, these solutions are ideal and seem to solve so many problems. But from the retailer's

point of view and in the case of the Coop, a traditional brick-and-mortar store dependent upon member-labor, there are many hurdles to cross in designing and implementing these services. I will attempt briefly to outline the challenges we've identified. The General Coordinators have not ruled out providing online ordering and curbside pick-up but other more urgent priorities still consume our time and energies. Our top priority continues to be expanding access through increased shopping hours and improved efficiencies within the Coop to serve members while always adhering to practices that keep our staff and shopping members safe.

The Coop's most serious financial challenges result from the requirements of social distancing that limit the number of shoppers in the store and the suspension of member-labor, which was replaced with paid labor. We believe that we are making good progress expanding shopping hours and increasing sales volume. We cannot allow more members in the store at any one time due to the requirements of social distancing and the safety of

our staff and members, but members are getting faster at shopping and we are getting more efficient in our processes. The time to wait on line to enter the Coop has dropped dramatically in the past few weeks as we've increased our efficiencies in the Coop and as members come prepared with their lists and learn new ways to navigate the Coop.

To set the context for our answers, let me provide some information about the current shopping volume. The Coop currently has 10+ hours of shopping for members per day. On average, in those 10+ hours, there are 525 transactions averaging \$211 in value. Each transaction averages over 60 units or almost 33,000 units sold per day. (The pre-COVID numbers were an average of 21 units per transaction or 56,000 units per day.) The number of transactions per day is down about 75% (from an average of 2,600), but the value of each transaction is 3.5 times higher than our pre-COVID average (\$211 vs. \$66). Since March 23, we have increased the number of shopping hours by 14 hours per week and

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L E T T E R S T O T H E E D I T O R

TO THE EDITORS:

Sadly, had the Coop in its 47 or so years of operation thought to meet the needs of its senior and disabled members and had a shopping delivery program in place, instead of first floating a plan in late 2019, the Coop would be meeting the needs of those senior and disabled persons. My understanding from speaking with my friends is that many people are probably opting to shop at stores closer to their homes, because waiting on line in cold, rainy weather is simply not possible for many seniors and

disabled persons, even with a chair available for sitting. I know that is true for me. The Coop has also lost revenue from members who travel by public transportation to get to the Coop, as many people are reluctant to take public transportation right now. The Coop no doubt has lost a great deal of revenue as a result.

If it were not for the volunteers from Invisible Hands Delivers, I would not have had food for most of the last month.

It's a given that the Coop has lost a tremendous amount of revenue in the past month and will do so

for the foreseeable future.

I am aware of a program called Support and Feed that was started by Billie Eilish and her mom, to provide vegan food from restaurants, including Park Slope's own V-Spot, to first responders, nursing homes, battered women's shelters, and individuals ordering meals. Their Facebook page indicates that they have partnered with certain local programs who do food delivery.

Perhaps the Coop's leadership could explore partnering with one of these groups, or directly with Invisible Hands

and any other food groups in NYC, which were mentioned on NY1, to provide home delivery of food. The Flatbush Food Coop and Perelandra have provided food delivery for the past decade.

*Cooperatively yours,
Carol Lipton*

QUESTION REGARDING CURBSIDE PICK-UP

HI AMAZING LINEWAITERS' GAZETTE TEAM,

I have a question that I

haven't seen addressed in any Coop communications, that I was hoping you could cover in an upcoming edition. Has the Coop considered online/email ordering with curbside pickup and payment? I am sure you have, and there must be a good reason we're not doing it, but I was surprised to see this still isn't an option when so many other coops and stores are switching to that kind of system to avoid exposure to workers (and reduce the need for people to wait in very long lines).

*Thanks,
Erica Lessem*

Reply from GCs

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our weekly sales volume has increased by over \$160,000 to approximately \$730,000. (The pre-COVID weekly sales averaged \$1.1M.) Even at this reduced sales volume, the Coop is still one of the largest by-sales-volume food coops in the U.S. Some of the comparisons made between our operations and those at other coops are not apples-to-apples because our sales volume exceeds theirs many times over. While a mid-size coop might rejoice at fulfilling 50 online orders per day (and we applaud them!), we anticipate that the pent-up demand for online orders at the Coop would far exceed 50 per day.

Online ordering, pick-up, or delivery is costly in one very specific way. The Coop would pay staff for activities that members are currently doing for free: shopping, unloading grocery carts, and packing their items in bags or boxes. (This does not include the additional staff time required to receive online member orders; place orders for goods; receive deliveries; store goods in the basement; stock goods on the floor; bag bulk and food processing

items, including spices, teas, olives, raisins, curry cashews, and so on; cut and wrap cheese; check out the purchased items; and bring them to the member at the curb.) All together, the Coop would be paying a staff person to perform all the functions for a member to purchase groceries from the Coop except for placing the order online and picking it up at the curb. The labor costs per each shop would inevitably increase. A surcharge or fee for this service would be required and such a fee introduces another question of access and affordability. (For the purposes of this response, I will not address the issue of re-introducing member-labor to perform some of these functions. With the NYC region on PAUSE, the GCs are not contemplating phasing in the member-labor system at this time.)

Some members suggest that we eliminate in-store shopping and only provide online and curbside pick-up. Setting aside that this introduces the problem that some members will no longer have access because they choose not to shop online or do not have access to do that, we believe we would only be replacing one set of shoppers (525 in-store) with another

set (525 online orders). After speaking to several coops and National Coop Grocers, we've learned that coops struggle to meet the demands of online ordering and it far outstrips their capacity. They reduce the number of in-store shopping hours in order to fulfill online orders. The solution for these coops is either to limit the number of online orders per day or to set pick-up or delivery times several days after the order has been placed (an experience common to those shoppers using Fresh Direct or Amazon Prime). Neither of these seems ideal because they reduce access.

Other things we've learned that coops around the country are doing:

- Limiting the size of the order to make it feasible for the Coop to fulfill with the staff on hand
- Having a set window for curbside pick-up (typically a couple of hours per day)
- Limiting the number of orders received to be what can be fulfilled in one day
- Hiring additional staff to manage the system of online ordering and fulfillment

Any limitations or constraints that reduce the number of shops or the volume

of sales would present more problems to the Coop, especially as our labor costs to provide these services would increase. We have learned from other coops that increases in the percentage of their sales through online ordering, curbside pick-up, or delivery contributes to decreases in their operating surplus. Why? Because even with a surcharge on these orders or services, the labor costs are higher per sales.

Other challenges we face:

- Providing storage given our limited capacity to hold purchased dry, frozen and refrigerated goods before they are picked up or delivered
- Providing sufficient time to clean and sanitize the Coop over hours with few or no other staff in the building
- Hiring people to work overnight shifts, which might

require us to pay a premium for this labor

- Increasing paid labor overall to manage receiving, in-store operations, and online ordering and pick-up
- Finding a window of time for pick-up when our curbside loading area is free of deliveries
- Buying a vehicle(s) and hiring staff to delivery groceries
- Expanding shopping hours if that time is needed to fulfill online orders

We clearly understand that some members currently are not shopping at the Coop because they don't want to or are unable to wait on line, the shopping hours are not convenient given changes in their family or professional lives, or they are trying to avoid public spaces. We will continue to think of ways to address those needs while also keeping a close eye on Coop expenses and our bottom line. ■

STATEMENT ON THE COOPERATIVE IDENTITY

DEFINITION

A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.

VALUES

Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

PRINCIPLES

The cooperative principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice. The International Cooperative Alliance adopted the revised Statement on the Cooperative Identity in 1995.

They are as follows:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

REFERENCE: ICA.COOP

OBITUARY

Nathan Allman

By Thomas Rayfiel
Nathan Allman, who became a Coop member relatively late in life but whose influence on the Coop began long before, died on March 22 of complications resulting from the coronavirus. He was 85. Nathan joined the Coop in 2007, when he married Ellen Krüger Allman, and retired in 2010, one of the first members eligible to do so under the Coop's age-related retirement policy. Long before that, in the early 1980s, then an insurance broker, he sold the Coop its first employee health insurance policy—

to current General Manager Joe Holtz. But Joe had a problem getting services, and abruptly switched to a new policy with a different provider. Joe recalls the phone call he received from Nathan: "A few weeks later Nathan called me and in a remarkably non-defensive and non-accusatory way explained to me that what I had done was not the way people who engage in business together should behave. He explained that the way to act was to reach out and discuss what the problems were before simply removing yourself from

a business arrangement, before dumping a company or person you were doing business with. This free of charge lesson was something I really took to heart and learned from and went on to use in the ensuing years. I never forgot the lesson from that conversation and, just as importantly, how, without anger or acrimony, Nathan gently taught it." A longtime resident, his family bought their Park Slope house here in the late 1950s, Nathan witnessed great changes as the neighborhood lost much of its diverse character and "stoop culture." But he never stopped being a vital

part of the neighborhood, serving in many civic and community organizations as well as welcoming all newcomers. This same openness applied to the Coop, where he worked checkout. His wife recalls, "He was one of these rare people who never lost his cool when he was out in the world. So no matter how crowded it became or how stressed a member checking out was, he was a balancing influence." Music was one of Nathan's great loves. During his last days, he was being kept in isolation. But his friend, the pianist Fred Hersch, hearing of his condition, dedicated



to him a live-streamed performance of "Valentine," a song of Hersch's that Nathan particularly loved. The nurse held the phone to his ear as it was played. ■

OBITUARY

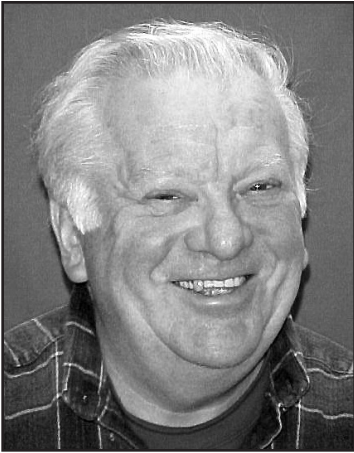
Joe Hennessy

By Thomas Rayfiel
Joe Hennessy, a longtime Coop member and beloved squad leader, died April 9 of complications related to the coronavirus. He was 82. Joe came to the United States from Ireland in 1957. After serving in the Army (with Elvis Presley!) he settled in Queens where he managed a taxi fleet and served in a variety of civic capacities, most notably, Chairman of Queens Community Board 6 and President of the Board of Directors of the Forest Hills MHA Housing Development Fund

Corporation. Joe was particularly sensitive to the plight of immigrants, the taxi industry being one of the areas where many newcomers would first seek employment. "He would always ave their back," Frank Gulluscio, District Manager of CB 6 said. Joe joined the Coop in 1998 and ran the 1:00 Saturday B week shopping squad for many years. Sarah Flanagan, his co-squad leader, recalls how "he really cared about others and always took the time to talk with his squad members, ask about their families, and hear their con-

cerns and hopes. He went out of his way to help, with kind words and also with actions. He understood that people have lives and sometimes need a helping hand, not a slap on the wrist." Another of his co-squad leaders, Pam Kingpetcharat, marveled at how "even during the most hectic Saturday shopping squad shift, he had a way of being light and stern at the same time. There aren't many people like him, but we need more of them, especially as we go through these challenging times." Both women emphasized how proud Joe was of his wife, Cathy, and his family, as well as his dedica-

tion to the community. Another side of Joe was remembered by Reginald Ferguson, who received Joe's help in a disagreement he had with the Dispute Resolution Committee. Joe encouraged him to get an amendment to the bylaws passed ensuring that squad leaders, when subject to complaints, receive due process. "He fought for me," Reginald remembers. "He fought for all of us." Hennessy is survived by Cathy, his wife of 57 years, their three daughters, Patricia, Karen, and Sheila, and eight grandchildren. He appears in a short video featured on the Coop's web-



site, in which he can be seen describing his role as a squad leader ("to make sure the shoppers are treated properly") and professing his love for Fig Newtons. ■



General Coordinator Jess Robinson managing entry into the Coop.



Receiving Coordinator David St. Germain pulling another essential load toward the loading doc.



Take a number. Membership Coordinator Jana Cunningham hands out tracking numbers to hang on shopping carts.

PHOTOS BY ROD MORRISON