

# Sophia's Circle & Weaving for Justice Annual Newsletter

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Friend us on Facebook at Weaving for Justice/Email us at [weavingforjustice@gmail.com](mailto:weavingforjustice@gmail.com)

Visit our website and on-line store at [www.weaving-for-justice.org](http://www.weaving-for-justice.org)

We are also on Instagram at Weaving for Justice

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*Nos sentimos muy cómodas cuando una extranjera pone nuestra blusa. Pensamos que ella no es una mujer egoísta, o sea que no se siente tan alta como a nosotras...Pensamos que tiene un gran honradez a nosotras, un gran cariño a nosotras, y un gran apoya para nosotras.*

*We feel very comfortable when we see a foreigner wearing our blouse. We think that she isn't an egotistic woman, that she doesn't feel that she is better than us.... We think that she honors us, that she has great caring for us, that she gives us a lot of support.*

*Claudia Pérez Pérez of Tsobol Antsetik (Women United), June 2017*

March 2018

Dear Friends,

We open our 2018 newsletter with words spoken by Claudia Pérez Pérez at the Weave a Real Peace (WARP) Annual meeting in Oaxaca, Mexico in June 2017. Claudia was responding to the outpouring of interest by WARP members for the blouses that she and fellow co-op member, Celia Arias Pérez, had brought to Oaxaca to sell. Claudia & Celia were moved to see women from the US of different ages, shapes and sizes put blouses on their bodies that they and members of their co-op had woven. Over the years, we have tried to convey to the weavers how much value their weaving holds, not only for their families and the continuation of Maya culture, but for the enrichment and adornment of the world's people. In Oaxaca that message came through strongly and the women carried it home to Chiapas.



*Celia, Marilyn Anderson, & Claudia*



*Avalon Guarino at the WARP meeting*

Upon their return to Chiapas, Claudia gave an hour-long report to the weavers of Tsobol Antsetik, that started from the minute she and Celia stepped off the bus in Oaxaca until they arrived back home! She spoke of learning about weaving with wool from Zapotec weavers and about life in other places. After her report, Flor de Margarita Pérez Pérez, Claudia's mother and one of the co-op founders, stated that everyone could see that their work will continue because now the younger generation has acquired the courage and strength to take over from the older generation. Margarita's words give us hope that the weaving traditions will continue and that through their earnings the co-op members and their families can continue living on their ancestral lands and not have to migrate in search of wage labor.

We are grateful to WARP, the Tucson Spinners & Weavers Guild, and individual donors for contributing to the fundraiser that made the trip to Oaxaca possible. Because Weaving for Justice is a volunteer network we depend on donations to fund our projects and to pay expenses to hold textiles sales. Weaving for Justice is the main project of Sophia's Circle, a 501(c)3 women's art and cultural heritage organization, through which we fundraise. Our main mission is to assist Tsotsil-Maya women weavers in highland Chiapas, Mexico to sell their textiles through fair trade. We also strive to create more humane, egalitarian, and sustainable societies in the borderlands region of Southern New Mexico, Southwest Texas, and Chihuahua, Mexico.

The weaving cooperatives we assist are **Tsobol Antsetik** (Women United), a group of 30 women and their children in the township of San Pedro Chenalhó, with a meeting house/store in the community of Chixiltón (see our website for directions to the meeting house); **Mujeres Por La Dignidad** (Women for Dignity), a Zapatista collective of over 100 women with its store in Oventic; and a small **doll-making group** based in San Cristóbal de Las Casas. All the women in the weavers groups are in the resistance, that is they do not participate in top-down economic development projects that fail to take their needs into account.

***Our membership form is on the last page of this newsletter. If you are already a member, please take this opportunity to renew your membership.***

## HUMAN RIGHTS UPDATES

Margarita has often reminded us that life is "**one moment happiness, the next sadness.**" Two such moments occurred for her and her family and community in 2017. We begin with a moment of great happiness in the history of the indigenous people of Mexico:

**MARIA DE JESUS (MARICHUY) PATRICIO MARTÍNEZ**, a woman healer from the Nahua community of Tuxpan, Jalisco, was selected by the National Indigenous Congress and the Zapatistas to be their spokeswoman and independent candidate for the President of Mexico. At the beginning of 2018, Marichuy began traveling throughout Mexico to listen to the people of different communities and to invite them to join together to construct another way of life for the indigenous people and all people of Mexico. Her goal and that of her campaign is not to win the presidency, but to organize people and raise their consciousness.

Sadness and terror began to spread over the last few months of 2017 in the townships of **CHALCHUITÁN** and **CHENALHÓ**, where the weavers of Tsobol Antsetik live. Over 5,000 people were displaced from their homes by paramilitaries over a long-standing land dispute between the two townships. We are grateful that none of the weavers in Chenalhó were displaced. (Please go to our website for an essay about the history of the crisis by Ana Cristina Vásquez Carpizo.) Thank you to the many generous people who donated to help displaced people. We were able to send \$3,086 to Cáritas, a Catholic charity in San Cristóbal de Las Casas which delivered corn, blankets, and other necessities to the camps. Special thanks go to Kristi Smith whose donation of fudge from Rainbow Confections in Monroe, Wisconsin raised several hundred dollars and to Carol and Peter Vanier for hand delivering the last installment of donations which went to buy much-needed corn.

**NEW HUIPILS** from Zapatista women weavers in Chamula, Venustiano Carranza, Amatenango del Valle recently arrived. They are lightweight and many have long sleeves. If you live outside of Las Cruces and are interested in purchasing a blouse, we'd be happy to send you photos through email of the blouses. Please contact us at [weavingforjustice@gmail.com](mailto:weavingforjustice@gmail.com)

**NEW BOOKS & A FILM** by weavers and Weaving for Justice members:

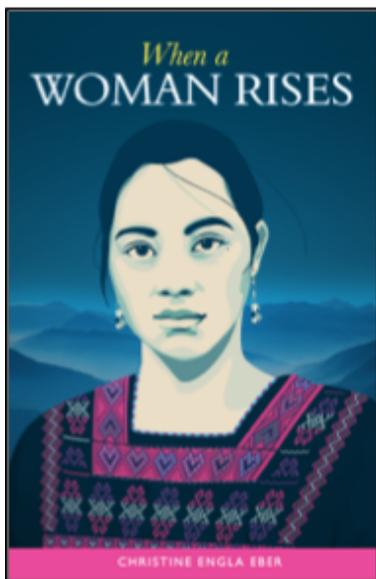
**OUR CLOTHING/K'UTIK/NUESTRA ROPA**



In 2016, the weavers of Tsobol Antsetik began to learn to take photographs to document their work and lives in workshops of The Chiapas Photography Project ([www.chiapasphoto.org](http://www.chiapasphoto.org)) The women have already produced two trilingual books (Tsotsil, Spanish, and English) about their threads and weaving process - **Our Threads** and **Women United Weavers**. Their latest book **Our Clothing** is about how their clothing has changed over the years.

All three books are for sale on the Weaving for Justice website store or at our sales. Our website store also offers woven book marks, cloth number and animal books for children, and nursing mother dolls -- [www.weaving-for-justice.org/online-store/](http://www.weaving-for-justice.org/online-store/)

The photo at left is on the cover of *Our Clothing*.



**WHEN A WOMAN RISES** by Christine Eber, founding member of Weaving for Justice, is her debut novel based on her work as an anthropologist with women in Chiapas since the 1980s. The novel takes place in the Maya township of Chenalhó where Verónica, a teenage girl, is recovering from a disastrous early marriage. Spurred on by a community program of women telling their stories, she asks her mother Magdalena to record the story of her growing up and that of best friend, Lucia. Magdalena, step by step, day by day, summons the soul of her comadre who has disappeared.

Available In June 2018 from Cinco Puntos Press ([www.cincopuntos.com](http://www.cincopuntos.com))



**MAYA FACES IN A SMOKING MIRROR** tells the stories in their own words of eight young Maya adults from Chiapas who are resisting the commodification of earth, themselves, and their cultures. From weavers to farmers, to rock stars to doctoral candidates, the eight women and men tell their stories about working to retain or reestablish their connection to their native cultures. Two of the film's participants are weavers in Tsobol Antsetik, Claudia and her sister, Zenaïda. To see a trailer and purchase or stream the film, go to [www.mayafaces.com](http://www.mayafaces.com) or [www.carasmayas.net](http://www.carasmayas.net)

*Winner of best documentary at the 2018 Las Cruces International Film Festival!*

**WAYS YOU CAN HELP: DONATE MESOMERICAN & ANDEAN TEXTILES** for our Fall 2018 sale at the New Mexico State University Museum. We turn your donations into scholarships for Maya students through partnering with the Museum and the Maya Educational Foundation ([www.mayaedufound.org](http://www.mayaedufound.org)). We have already received promises of new donations for the Fall 2018 sale. If you would like to clean out your closets and donate to a worthy cause, please contact Christine Eber at [ceber@nmsu.edu](mailto:ceber@nmsu.edu). Your donation is tax-deductible.

*The photo below shows Kit, Christine, Janet and a leaf replica of a Maya cosmogram that mysteriously appeared outside the museum entrance on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of our 2017 sale. To date the creator remains anonymous!*



## OTHER WAYS YOU CAN HELP:

- \* **DONATIONS IN HONOR OR MEMORY** of a special person in your life. (Please see the form at the end of this newsletter or donate on our website. Please give us the person's name and address and we will notify them of your donation.)
- \* **HOUSE PARTIES** are another opportunity to support the weavers, socialize, shop for yourself or others, and receive a free gift of a weaving in return for hosting a party. To set up a house sale contact Christine Eber at ceber@nmsu.edu or (575) 621-5999.
- \* **PATRONIZE THE FOLLOWING STORES & VENUES WHERE TEXTILES ARE SOLD:**
  - \* **2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month sale** – You can find us at the Las Cruces Farmers Market from 8:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on the 2nd Saturday of each month. We are inside the **Center for Spiritual Living**, 575 N. Main St. on the Downtown Mall. Please note, this change of day & venue! *Our thanks to **Doug Campion** for allowing us to sell at the other end of the market at the Community Enterprise Center for several years.*
  - \* **Stores selling the weavers' work** - Bowlin's Mesilla Book Center, 2360 Calle Principal, Mesilla; The Mountain View Market, 1300 El Paseo Rd., Las Cruces; Southwest Environmental Center Eco Store, 275 N. Main St., Las Cruces; and Casa Camino Real Book Store and Gallery, 314 S. Tornillo, Las Cruces. Our thanks to these stores for their support!
  - \* **LA FRONTERA, A FAIR TRADE STORE AT NOPALITO'S GALERIA**

In 2017 Weaving for Justice had another successful year at La Frontera, a fair trade store located in Nopalito's Galería in Las Cruces. The store was open in June- August and November-December. Last year groups selling at the store included Centro Santa Catalina of Juárez; Guerilla Prayer Flags of Juárez; Palomas Oilcloth Designs of Palomas, Mexico; and Junt@s Vamos, a support group in Juárez for individuals and their families living with Cancer. In 2018 the Gallegos family began repairing the old adobe house where the gallery is located and plans are currently on hold for La Frontera. If you know of a space in Las Cruces where we could have our store, please contact us at weavingforjustice@gmail.com. In the meantime, we sell the textiles from Chiapas and a small assortment of products from the other groups at the **CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING**, 575 N. Main St., the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month during the Las Cruces Farmers Market from 8 am – 12:30 pm. Please contact us if you would like to volunteer setting up, selling, and taking down.

*Our heartfelt thanks to the Gallegos family for donating space in the gallery for La Frontera for three years and to our trusty volunteers who kept the store open!!*

## THANK YOU!

*We owe a debt of gratitude to all our members and donors and to the following individuals for their support over the past year: Denise Chávez; Meghann Dallin; Judy Forney; Elaine Hampton; Carol Hendrickson; Bill Jungels; Linda & Jack Laughlin; Mimi and Robert Laughlin; Mitzi Linn; Jean McDonnell; Gail Ryser; Jeanne Simonelli; Kristi Smith; Jackie & David Swift; Caroline Thompson; Carol and Peter Vanier; Rebecca Wiggins-Reinhard; Charlene Woodcock; and Til Zimmerman; and to the following organizations: KRWG Radio & TV; KTAL Radio; Fumiyasu Arakawa, Anna Strankman, and Bill Walker of the NMSU University Museum, LC; Doug Campion of the Community Enterprise Center, LC; Carlota Duarte, Juana López López, Lupita Girón Intzin, and Martha López López of The Chiapas Photography Project, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas; Center for Spiritual Living, LC; Laurie Wilkins of Earthbound; Patricia & Ernestina Gallegos of Nopalito's Galería; Maxine Insera and Tom Potts of the Latin American Solidarity Committee of Western New York; Faye McCalmont of the Silver City Fiesta Latina; Elisabeth Nicholson of The Maya Educational Foundation; Spirit Winds Café & Gift Source, LC; Tucson Spinners & Weavers Guild; Weave a Real Peace; Paul Worley of Western Carolina State University; New Mexico International Reading Association; Soroptomist International of Borrego Springs, CA.*

We also welcome two new members to the **Weaving for Justice Steering Committee** – **Lorena Cabatic** and **Sarah Murphy**. **Elaine Hampton** and **Anita Rodriguez** resigned from the committee in 2017, but they remain valued volunteers. Elaine’s advocacy for women in Chiapas is bearing fruit in a new women’s education shelter and sexual abuse prevention education project ([www.ProjectDignidad.org](http://www.ProjectDignidad.org)).

Warmest regards,

*Christine, Crystal, Janet, Kit, Lorena, Mary, Patricia, & Sarah (Weaving for Justice Steering Committee)*

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### MEMBERSHIP FORM

**YES!** I want to support Weaving for Justice in its work on behalf of weaving cooperatives in Chiapas, Mexico. Enclosed is my check payable to Sophia’s Circle in the amount of US \$\_\_\_\_\_ Please mail your form to: Sophia’s Circle, 1825 Myrtle Ave., Las Cruces, NM 88001.

**Membership:** Budget membership \_\_\_\_\_ (**\$15**); Basic Membership \_\_\_\_\_ (**\$35**); additional donation \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your gift!*



These bilingual (Spanish and Tsotsil) cloth books featuring images and names of animals and numbers are available on our website store: <http://weaving-for-justice.org/online-store-books-for-sale/> Each book is \$20 including postage.