



A Cooperative Coffees Newsletter for and about FAIR TRADE

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November 2003

Cooperative Coffees 2003 Annual Meeting – A Southern Success!

By Samantha Slater

Just a month out of what was for most members a first visit to the Deep South, the Americus experience still has us reeling. Even our most travel-savvy members had been badgering our local hosts with their concerns: “What immunizations do we need before heading South?” “Do I need a visa for my passport in order to cross that border?”

“But the truth be told,” says Bill Harris, founding president of Cooperative Coffees and hometown boy to Americus. “I think that the members were charmed by our quaint little town. Our friends at the Windsor Hotel, Habitat for Humanity and the local restaurants really rolled out the red carpet (of course, the Fried Catfish and Hushpuppies, good ol’ Pecan Pie and Peach Cobbler and plenty of that delicious, fair trade coffee didn’t hurt to keep even the squeakiest of wheels quiet!).”

Thirteen of Cooperative Coffee's 17 roaster members from across the U.S. and Canada, as well as coming up from the most remote corner of Mexico arrived in Americus September 18 – 21 to participate in cupping workshops, and discussions about the dynamic world of fair trade and new directions for Cooperative Coffees.

"It was an awesome meeting," said Café Campesino Outreach Coordinator Geoffrey Hennies. "It's wonderful to see people with such diverse interests working together for a common cause. There was a real feeling of teamwork as ideas were discussed and concepts shared."

But it wasn't all meetings and workshops. We all had the chance to meet with the local Café Campesino team and socialize over pizzas and beers, tour the Habitat for Humanity's Global Village Discovery Center, and enjoy a down-home, Southern pork barbecue, grilled veggies and live bluegrass from Americus' own Happy Country Boys at the Café Campesino roastery and warehouse. For the 12 of us who had the good fortune to stay on Sunday, we attended service at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, GA, where former President Jimmy Carter regularly teaches Sunday school. (Cont' page 4)



Fair Trade and Autonomy in Chiapas



Cooperative Coffees announces its Winter 2003-2004 fair trade delegation to Chiapas, Mexico December 29th - January 6th - coinciding with the 10th anniversary of the Zapatista uprising. Participants will have the opportunity to experience the reality and rich culture of Mayan indigenous people struggling for autonomy and self-sufficiency. The delegation, limited to 15 people, will meet with organic farmers, women's artisan cooperatives, Fair Trade coffee co-ops, traditional healers, biodiversity activists, and autonomous indigenous communities. In addition to learning about the farmers' perspective of the powerful coffee industry, participants will witness unforgettable New Year's celebrations.

Chiapas burst into the world's headlines New Year's Day 1994 - the day that NAFTA went into effect - when an uprising led by the Zapatista movement reminded the world that indigenous people are still struggling for their rights 500 years after the European conquest. Join us as we learn about the motivation behind indigenous movements in Mexico and the role of organic and Fair Trade coffee farming plays in creating self-sufficiency in poverty-stricken communities.



Program Highlights :

- Witness and participate in colorful New Year's celebrations, while learning about its important cultural and political significance.
- Visit Fair Trade Coffee Cooperatives to learn about the positive impacts of Fair Trade, while learning about indigenous culture, autonomous indigenous governing systems, and the use of organic agriculture as a means to self-sufficiency.
- Speak with leaders of indigenous organizations specializing in biodiversity and medicinal healing using native plants.
- Discuss the consequences of historical inequality of land distribution and how constitutional reforms to end communal landholding have affected poor campesinos.
- Travel to a highland community to meet and talk with members of a successful women's cooperative.

Cost: \$500

Includes, double-room accommodations (single rooms may be available for an additional \$150); two meals per day; transportation to and from all programmed activities; guides and translators; a qualified trip leader; all program activities; donations and reading materials.

Lunches, tips, and personal expenses are not included and are the responsibility of each delegate.

Cooperative Coffees will do our best to arrange personal meetings to suit your particular interests. Because the program varies according to the focus of each trip and the special interests of each participant, itineraries become available closer to actual date of departure.

How to Register: Contact Chris with any questions about this trip at:

chris@javaforjustice.com
TEL. 231.256.9687

Fair Trade and Producer Initiatives in Nicaragua

Join Cooperative Coffees for a visit to coffee communities working with CECOCAFEN, our partner cooperative in Nicaragua, January 18 – 25, 2004. Participants will have the opportunity to experience the daily reality of organized coffee farmers seeking to overcome the current crisis through innovative and integrated community proposals. The delegation, limited to 15 people, will meet with organic farmers, women's community groups, Fair Trade coffee co-op leaders, and spokespersons for regional and national strategies in favor of sustainable development in Nicaragua in order to better understand the role organic and Fair Trade coffee plays in local development.

We plan a 3-day visit in the community of Yasika Sur, near Matagalpa to participate in the construction of their eco-tourism project – the Fair Trade Coffee Trail. Activities include: reforestation, creating a community run tree nursery, women's training program for the recovery and use of natural medicines to cure common illness, as well as learning about the local history of coffee and the people who produce it.

Our overriding objective for this delegation is to enrich our knowledge of the role that community-based proposals - for both organic/ fair trade farming and complementary projects - play in creating a world of hope and solidarity. Participants can look forward to an informative, impressive, and, above all, enjoyable experience! Take advantage of this opportunity to meet people involved in the fair trade movement and organic agriculture. Exchange ideas while learning more about the unique history and culture of Nicaragua.

Program Highlights :

- Travel to the renowned coffee region of Matagalpa to meet with members of a successful cooperative to learn about the positive impacts of Fair Trade.
- Visit and stay in coffee communities to learn about local culture, coffee production and the implementation of a wide range of alternative projects for self-sufficiency and integrated community development.
- Speak with community leaders promoting reforestation and the recovery of natural medicine and healing.
- Learn about the prospects for positive social change from a grassroots perspective.
- Celebrate the history and the beauty of the people of Nicaragua with other trip participants and new friends.



Cost: \$500

We quote an estimate trip cost based upon double-room accommodations; two meals per day; transportation to and from all programmed activities; guides and translators; all program activities; community donations and reading materials. This DOES NOT include your airfare.

How to Register:

Contact Monika with any questions about this trip at: monika@cooperativecoffees.com

COOPERATIVE COFFEES

Phone: (229) 924-3035 . Fax: (229) 924-6250 . E-mail: info@cooperativecoffees.com . www.cooperativecoffees.com

(Cont' from page 1) **Annual Meeting Ends at Local Diner with President Carter**

We were surprised and inspired by president Carter's capacity to link political history with the present and weave that into religious lessons for humanity's sake. The overriding message coincided perfectly with Carter's concluding thoughts taken from his Nobel Peace Prize Lecture:

"The bond of our common humanity is stronger than the divisiveness of our fears and our prejudices. God gives us the capacity for choice. We can choose to alleviate suffering. We can choose to work together for peace. We can make these changes – and we must."

But we were even more surprised to hear the president ask if there was a group of people in the crowd working in fair trade coffee; we almost fell off our pews when he announced that following the session he would be having lunch with us!

After church, President Carter joined members of Cooperative Coffees for lunch at Mom's Kitchen in Plains, GA. We discussed the concept of fair trade, the continual plight of the small-scale coffee producer and the work we do individually and as a group to promote an expression of fair trade that seeks to create humane terms of trade that allows even the most marginalized producers to find a market that facilitates development and growth in coffee communities.

FairTrade Briefs: Larry goes to DC, Bill goes to Minneapolis, while Dean heads to Peru

Oxfam America and the **MAKE TRADE FAIR** campaign, together with the United Students for Fair Trade and Global Justice sponsored a Student Conference October 24 – 27 called: **Stop the FTAA**. Guest Speakers included Steve Bartlett, the Latin American Liaison for Agricultural Missions talking about Cancún, México and Los Altos, Bolivia as examples of recent success stories in favor of democratic economies and trade policies. During four days of presentations, topics ranged from the Oxfam sponsored Make Trade Fair campaign to family farm based agriculture, environment and the rights of workers around the world.

Our own Larry Larson participated and came back awash with positive energy and ideas: "Not knowing much about the trade agreements and how that shakes down, the conference really helped me understand why so many people are against the FTAA," he said. "It's amazing to learn about how the trans-nationals have jockeyed for position so well - they have the government working for them."

"It was also great to see Oxfam so interested in raising awareness about this, and the whole array of organizations helping students go to Florida to protest that these agreements don't get signed. It was neat to see student involvement and how much depth there is to their thinking. What a

phenomenal job they are doing at organizing on a national level!"

"For example, USFT is creating a matrix of TF licensees, listing how many pounds they do, and evaluating the conduct of the companies. They understand, as we do that coffee, as an example of fair trade, can be a daily experience. And to be a model, the standards must be kept very high."

Meanwhile: Bill Harris goes to Minneapolis for the NCBA 9th Annual Cooperative Development Forum; and Dean Cycon goes to Peru to visit the cooperative PANGOA where he has helped them land their first fair trade contract. We hope to hear more details from their trips in upcoming editions.



Fair Trade Baby Boom – Marjorie Saling Mays arrived October 10, weighing in at 7.5 lbs. "It looks like she is going to be a redhead," says Mike. "Marjorie and Elizabeth are both doing great!" **Congratulations Mike and Elizabeth!**