



# PERMACULTURE CREDIT UNION

Established: May 18, 2000

April 2006

**6th**  
Anniversary

## Getting Smart at the Urban Farm Greg Peterson

Last summer I had the privilege of traveling to Italy for the first time. Two things struck me - the number of fruit trees that everyone had growing everywhere and the cars. Unlike the SUV's that dominate the streets in America the cars in Italy were much smaller and, to my delight, more energy efficient. One car in particular that I fell in love with was the Smart car made by Mercedes, and, on my flight home, I decided that I was going to have one. Little did I know that they weren't yet sold in the States. Undaunted, I tracked down a company called Zap ([www.zapworld.com](http://www.zapworld.com)) that was in the process of getting federal approval to import and market Smart cars and found that there was a prospective dealer in Phoenix. So I called him, put my ducks in a row with the Permaculture Credit Union and my insurance carrier, and began the long wait.

On February 27<sup>th</sup> I received a voice mail from the dealer. He had two Smart cars - a charcoal hardtop and a blue convertible. I only drive blue cars, so the choice was easy. Two days later I took delivery of my new Smart car, with the help of financing through the PCU. I have been driving my Smart car for a few weeks now and the response is priceless. People wave, smile, stop me on the street, follow me till I park, wanting to know what it is and what it runs on which gives me the opportunity to do what I do best, educate.

So what makes the Smart car smart? First of all the gas mileage, reportedly 60 mpg (I'll know better in a month or two,) the safety is incredible with a "tridon safety cell," which is an aluminum safety cage with steel reinforcements designed to hold their shape in a crash, plus airbags. The car is really neat looking. At the end of its useful life, it is recyclable.

I like to think that I live an environmentally smart life, making choices that lighten my ecological footprint, while along the way changing people's minds about how they live. This is where



*PCU member Greg Peterson poses with his MB Smart Car. Both are full scale – both are “smart”! Check out [www.zapworld.com](http://www.zapworld.com) to see some other “smart” solutions like electric ATV's.*

the Urban Farm comes in. It is my platform for attracting people to a place that is designed to model a lighter way of living.

The Urban Farm is where I live. It is a typical urban 1/3 acre lot, right in the heart of north central Phoenix. I have lived here for 16 years and spent a good part of that time transforming the yard to an edible permaculture landscape. What strikes most people when they first arrive is that it doesn't look like a farm at all. It looks like every other house in the neighborhood. It's not until they look a little closer that people discover that the entire yard is landscaped with edible perennials, annuals, herbs and lots of fruit trees including apples, apricots, peaches, figs, ten different kinds of citrus, loquats, and more. My goal is fresh fruit all year round and I am almost there.

The Urban Farm and my Smart car provide me with the platform to teach about the urban issues facing our country and world. Figuring out how to get people's attention by offering gardening classes was a gift. Challenging them to think differently is my goal.

## **Energy Tax Incentive Credits Take Effect**

In July, Congress passed the Energy Tax Incentives Act of 2005. It created a number of energy and conservation tax credits that take effect starting January 2006. There are three categories of credits that are relevant to individuals and families. They are for Alternative Technology Vehicles, Home Solar Hot Water and Electricity, and Home Energy Efficiency Improvements.

For the last several years, taxpayers have been able to deduct \$2,000 from their taxable income for the purchase of a hybrid fuel vehicle. Under the new law, the types of vehicles have been expanded to include the newer high efficiency, clean burning diesel engines, as well as engines that run on hydrogen or fossil-fuel based liquefied gas, or that utilize hydrogen fuel cells. The new law also now provides a tax credit, rather than a deduction. The credits range from \$650 to \$3,400. Since the new credits are applied directly to lower tax, the new system offers a far larger tax break.

The new law also introduced a credit for "Residential Energy-Efficient Property". If you install new equipment on your personal residence for its heating, cooling or energy needs, you can receive a credit of 30% of the cost. Solar hot water heating, photovoltaic electricity generation and fuel cell property qualify. The credit is available up to the following caps, per household: \$2,000 for photovoltaic property, \$2,000 for solar water heating property, and \$500 per half Kw of capacity for fuel cell property.

There is a third new credit that is available for "Energy-Efficiency Upgrades". The new law allows for a 10% credit for qualified energy efficient insulation, doors, and special metal roofing that has been treated to reduce heat. The credit also applies to insulated windows and skylights, but they are limited to maximum credits of \$200. Additionally, the credit is available for 100% of the cost of an energy efficient furnace or hot water boiler (\$150 limit), circulating fan (\$50 limit), or central A/C, Heat Pump, or Water Heater (\$300 limit). In addition to the specific limits noted, there is a \$500 overall lifetime limit on this credit. For each of the credits, there are specific energy efficiency specifications that must be met for the new equipment to qualify. They are not available for all products, only those that are rated above set standards.

*(Tax Credits continued)*

These new credits add some incentive to upgrading and adding technology, but make sure that your investment will qualify before you purchase. Final regulations on the new credits have not yet been completed. Specific products will be certified, and the credits available published. For more information, you can go to: [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) (residential credits) and [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov) (vehicle credits), which will publish information as it becomes available.

The PCU can help you with financing qualified projects, either with a Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC), a share secured loan, or with a signature loan. Qualifying loans can receive a discounted loan rate. If you have been thinking about any of these options, now is the time to act.

## **Two passings noted with sadness**

**Tessa Marie Horan**, a member of the Permaculture Credit Union, died February 1, 2006 while serving in the Peace Corps. She was attacked by a shark while swimming off the island of Vavu'u, Kingdom of Tonga in the South Pacific. Tessa was born at home on March 20, 1981 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She was educated at the Waldorf School, Saint Michaels High School and the College of Santa Fe. She was involved with and lived on an organic farm and was very committed to sustainable living. She attended Ecoversity for permaculture training. Tessa banked at the Permaculture Credit Union where her family maintains an account in her name. The money will be used in the community in her honor. There is also a library fund for Tonga. Check out her website: <http://www.tessahoran.com> for more.

**John Wallace**, one of the early members of the PCU, passed away in late 2005. In the words of Michael Kramer, "John was a true visionary, but he also had this amazing ability to manifest, which is something rare in this day and age. John could dream, but he could turn his dreams into reality, and being in his presence you had this sense that you were part of something big and important and spiritually significant." We will miss them both.

## PERMACULTURE CREDIT UNION

### ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

Will be held on Saturday, May 20, 2006 at 10:00 a.m.

#### Location:

**Plants of the Southwest**  
3095 Agua Fria Street  
Santa Fe, NM 87507

#### Nominations and Election for New Board Members

The ballots for four candidates running for the board of directors were mailed on April 5, 2006 to all the eligible members. They are to be postmarked no later than April 26, 2006. We hope by the time you have received this newsletter you have already sent in your ballot. This is your credit union and these candidates are highly qualified, so please vote. The three candidates chosen will be announced at the annual meeting to take place on May 20, 2006 in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**Your vote counts. Please vote!**

#### PCU NEW SERVICE ANOUNCEMENT

PCU has purchased a new software package that will let us originate (ACH) Automated Clearing House transactions. These transactions will allow our members to electronically deposit or withdraw money into or out of their accounts on a weekly, bi-monthly or monthly interval. Loan payments may also be facilitated by this service.

Our members can save the postage expense for themselves and PCU. This new service will reduce the energy expense and time associated with the delivery of such items. Once a month you will receive a statement that will reflect all electronic transactions posted to your account.

Call the PCU for info on how to use this new service.

#### Thanks to Retiring Board Members

**Donal Kinney** has been a mainstay of the PCU for many years and has served with distinction as Treasurer for most of his time in office. Donal was one of the early organizers and has helped tremendously to put the PCU on a sound financial footing.

**Ed McMillen**, a well-known Santa Fe architect, has also been a stalwart supporter of the PCU, serving on the first Supervisory Committee and subsequently returning as a board member for the past three years.

**Allan Sindelar**, principal in Positive Energy, an alternative energy consulting and engineering firm in Santa Fe, has served on the board for the past three years and is completing his tenure as Chair of the Communications and Marketing Committee.

We thank them all sincerely for their commitment and wisdom, and wish them well in whatever new endeavors they will be engaged.

#### What is Permaculture?

"Permaculture offers a radical approach to food production and urban renewal, water, energy and pollution. It integrates ecology, landscape, organic gardening, architecture and agro-forestry in creating a rich and sustainable way of living. It uses appropriate technology giving high yields for low energy inputs, achieving a resource of great diversity and stability. The design principles are equally applicable to both urban and rural dwellers"

*Bill Mollison*

#### Announcing a new way to support the PCU!!!

##### Go "online" and make a gift today.

Permacultura America Latina (PAL), the fiscal sponsor of the Permaculture Credit Union has added PCU to its online donation page. Please visit PAL's website [www.permacultura.org](http://www.permacultura.org) and click on the "Donate" button. Scroll down through "Projects" and select "PCU(PAL as fiscal sponsor)". Use your credit card for a secure and simple way to support our growth. Thanks again for your generosity

#### FINANCIALS:

|               | <u>January '06</u> | <u>February '06</u> | <u>March '06</u> |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| LOANS         | \$1,903,026.36     | \$1,920,778.70      | \$1,986,390.21   |
| TOTAL SAVINGS | \$2,569,155.70     | \$2,738,260.23      | \$2,600,290.21   |
| ASSETS        | \$2,675,731.72     | \$2,846,916.72      | \$2,708,681.28   |
| MEMBERSHIP    | 811                | 812                 | 814              |



# Permaculture Credit Union

Office Location: 4250 Cerrillos Rd., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor,  
Santa Fe, NM 87507

Mailing Address: PO Box 29300,  
Santa Fe, NM 87592-9300

Toll Free: 1-866-954-3479

Phone: (505) 954-3479

Fax: (505) 424-1624

Web Site: [WWW.PCUONLINE.ORG](http://WWW.PCUONLINE.ORG)

Email: [PERMA@PCUONLINE.ORG](mailto:PERMA@PCUONLINE.ORG)

## Office Hours

Monday – Friday 10:00am – 2:00pm

### Loan Request

Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

Or by appointment for member convenience.

## Management & Staff

Donald J. Sarich

*President/CEO*

Eileen Banashek

*Bookkeeper*

Willina M. Martinez

*Member Services Representative*

## Board of Directors

Nora Haskins – Chair

Hugh Roberts – Vice Chair

Susan Coulter – Secretary

Donal S. Kinney – Treasurer

Edward L. McMillen – Director

Wesley Roe – Director

Allan Sindelar – Director

## Supervisory Committee

Carolyn Agard – Chair

Joseph Ellis – Member

Elizabeth Martin – Member

Phil Vergamini – Member

## Newsletter Editor

Vint Lawrence

Your savings insured to \$100,000

**NCUA**

National Credit Union  
Administration  
a U.S. Government Agency



**Newsletter Printed on:**

100% Recycled Paper

## Privacy Policy:

**We do not disclose any non- public information about our members to anyone except as permitted by law.**

## Permaculture Credit Union Mission Statement

We pool the financial resources of the people who believe in the Ethics of Permaculture and strive to redirect those resources to Earth friendly and socially responsible loans and investments. The Permaculture Credit Union promotes thrift among its members and provides credit at reasonable rates. It creates the opportunity for members to control the use of their money and contribute to the revitalization of their community and the planet.

## MEMBER SERVICES

*We are currently financing up to \$95,000.00 in loans per household. All rates are subject to change without notice.*

### NEW & USED VEHICLE LOANS

### MORTGAGE LOANS (Land & Home Equity)

### BICYCLE LOAN DISCOUNT

### SIGNATURE LOANS

### SHARE & CERTIFICATED SECURED LOANS

### CREDIT CARDS

### STUDENT LOANS

### SUSTAINABILITY DISCOUNTS

We provide sustainability discounts for projects that are earth-friendly. The usual discount is .75% off our current loan rates. Call our office staff for details.

### DIRECT DEPOSIT

Have funds directly deposited into the PCU from your paycheck or other financial institution. Pay your bills by having funds directly transferred from your PCU account.

Pay your PCU credit card with ease online.

## Dividends for Every Member !!!!

On October 1, 2005, our minimum required balance for receiving dividends was lowered from \$300 to \$50. We have many charter members who have less than \$300 in their share accounts. Dividends for every member is our way to say “thank you” for your loyalty and to recognize the folks that have helped us along the way. The strength of this credit union is it's people. It is important that the PCU always be rooted in that truth and act accordingly. We are different from other financial institutions and we will always focus on our members first. Now is a great time to open an account for your children. All accounts will be earning interest from the first day of deposit – helping the Earth at the same time.

## Holiday Closings:

### **Good Friday**

Friday, April 14, 2006

Close at 1:00

### **Memorial Day**

Monday, May 29, 2006

### **Independence Day**

Tuesday, July 4, 2006

## Just a Reminder from the Supervisory Committee:

PLEASE notify the Credit Union of any changes to your address or phone number. We want you to receive your statements and information about our services.