



ESTABLISHED MAY 18, 2000

PERMACULTURE CREDIT UNION NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2008

Carfree Bees

By Paul Cooley

Beekeeping as a business never entered my imagination when I first conceived of putting a hive or two in my backyard. In the spring, our Turkish apricot tree bloomed before anything else. Out under its white blossoms, I would look for bees pollinating the flowers; however, there were never any to be seen. Honeybees certainly came into the neighborhood later in the year, crowding the blossoms of the blue mist spirea around the corner a block away. In the chill of those clear spring days, perhaps my apricot tree was too far for them to travel.

On Easter of 2006, I hived my first package of bees in a top bar hive in a far corner of my yard. A colony of bees, I had been told, builds slowly over the first year. Often, a beekeeper has to postpone gathering honey until a colony's second year, and not until that second year do you have to worry about swarming. My hive, however, began to swarm at the end of May, and by the beginning of winter, I was up to five hives. The following spring, I made various splits from those colonies, and sold some of those to Heather Gaudet, of One Straw Farm. My business, Carfree Bees, was born.

A certain amount of capital is required to start any business, and beekeeping is no different. As a beekeeper working without an automobile, I



Author with bees, bicycle, Sadie and Zebediah.

needed to upgrade my bicycle in order to haul my hives among my bee yards, and, as an at-home-dad, haul my children at the same time. Enough offers of yard space for bee hives came in from friends and acquaintances, that I could also reach my projected goal of forty hives in one season.

The Permaculture Credit Union would have been a good choice for a small loan to build all those hives and upgrade my bicycle. In one season, I could have gone from being a hobbyist beekeeper who sold a few jars at the farmer's market, to a small commercial operation. I could easily see having enough money to rent a storage unit

where I could store and build hives, perhaps even build a small honey house to process honey, order honey jars, labels, maybe some commercial hives, and so on.

In the end, I decided that I would allow my business to grow in an organic fashion using the capital and materials I have on hand. I had no pressing need to become a medium-sized business with flashy equipment. My desire for a loan, and the imagined abundance a loan would facilitate were clearly the product of a culture that has no patience, no feel for the pulse of the natural world, and, ultimately, no future.

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Practical Ways to Boost Your Credit Score

Every time you apply for a credit card, mortgage, car loan, or insurance, your application is judged in part by your credit score. Lenders use your credit score — ranging from 300 to 850 — to determine whether to grant credit, and at what cost. The higher the score, the more likely you are perceived to repay the credit. Consumers with scores less than 600 usually are seen as higher risk and may pay a higher interest rate or are denied credit. Fortunately, you can take steps to boost your credit score. These tips can maximize your score and influence your credit-worthiness.

1. Be punctual. Late or missed payments, foreclosures, and bankruptcies have the greatest negative effect on your credit score. This accounts for 35% of your credit score, so make sure to pay your bills on time.

2. Check your credit report regularly. Don't let inaccurate information ruin your credit score. Consumers are entitled to one free credit report per year, which you can get online at annualcreditreport.com. Even though the credit report is free, getting your credit score will cost extra. You can obtain your credit score from the three major credit-reporting bureaus at experian.com, equifax.com, and transunion.com.

3. Keep debt in check. Try to keep your account balances below 50% of your credit limit. About 30% of your credit score is based on the amount you owe in relation to your credit limit. For instance, if your credit card has a limit of \$2,000, keep the balance less than \$1,000.

4. Avoid excessive inquiries. New inquiries for credit account for 10% of your score, and several new credit requests—in a short period of time—can reduce your score.

5. Keep accounts open. Time is one of the most significant factors that can improve your credit score. Fifteen percent of your credit score comes from how long you've been managing credit. Closing old accounts — especially ones with a good payment history — shortens your credit history and lowers your score. Lenders take into account the average age of your accounts, so an older account can help balance newer credit.

6. Keep a healthy mix. The remaining 10% of your credit score depends on the types of credit you're using. Make sure to have a healthy mix of credit. This includes credit such as a mortgage, a credit card or two, a car loan, and perhaps a retail card.

Article reprinted from the Indiana University Credit Union Newsletter

Permaculture Credit Union — Notice of Privacy Practices for Credit Union Members

Important information about the personal data Permaculture Credit Union collects, and how it is used.

To assure the continued privacy and confidentiality of your personal financial information, your credit union observes these practices and procedures:

Information We Collect:

We collect non-public information about you from some or all of the following sources:

- Information we receive from you on applications or other forms, such as your name, address, social security number, assets, income and debt.
- Information about your transactions with others such as your account balance, payment history, parties to transactions and credit card usage.
- Information we receive from consumer reporting agencies, such as your credit worthiness and credit history.

Information We Disclose

We may disclose all the information we collect as described above as permitted by law. Additionally, we may disclose information to third party financial institutions and financial service providers with whom we have joint marketing agreements to make you aware of other financial products and services that may be of interest to you. Any such joint marketing agreement will include a confidentiality clause, which prohibits the financial institution or service provider from disclosing or using the information for any reason other than to carry out the purpose allowed by the agreement.

Disclosure of Information about Former Members

It is generally not necessary for us to disclose information about former members of our credit union or others that have a relationship with us. However, to the extent we do disclose information, we will adhere to the same policies as described elsewhere in this notice.

Information about an Important Disclosure that does not apply to Permaculture Credit Union

When you receive notices of privacy practices from other financial service providers, you may be given the opportunity to "Opt Out" of certain disclosures other than those permitted by law. Permaculture Credit Union does not disclose information to any third party that requires us to give you an "Opt Out" option.

How we protect your Information

We restrict access to nonpublic information about you to the employees who need to know that information to provide products or services to you. We maintain physical, electronic, and procedural safeguards that comply with Federal Regulations to guard your nonpublic personal information.

What Members Can Do to Help

Permaculture Credit Union is committed to protecting the privacy of its members. Members can help by following these simple guidelines:

- Protect your account numbers, plastic card numbers, PINs (personal identification numbers) or passwords. Never keep your PIN with your card, which can provide free access to your accounts if your card is lost or stolen.
- Use caution when disclosing your account numbers, social security numbers, etc. to other persons. If someone calls you explaining the call is on behalf of the credit union and asks for your account number, you should beware. Official credit union staff will have access to your information and will not need to ask for it.
- Keep your information with us current. If your address or phone number changes, please let us know. It is important that we have current information on how to reach you. If we detect potentially fraudulent or unauthorized activity or use of an account, we will attempt to contact you immediately.
- Let us know if you have questions. Please do not hesitate to call us – we are here to serve you!

PERMACULTURE CREDIT UNION

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday
May 17, 2008
9:30 A.M.

The Commons
2300 W. Alameda
Santa Fe, NM 87507

All PCU members welcome!

Tessa Horan's Legacy

Tessa Horan, PCU member who was killed in a shark attack while serving in the Peace Corps in 2006, continues to inspire even after her death. This year the Tessa Horan Fund has made a decision to focus on belonging to local community. The project will be called "It takes a garden to grow a child." Lehigh Sheppard, a mentor, employer and close friend to Tessa will direct this project. The Fund will collaborate with the Sojourner Café recently opened and run by Lynn Sanchez. Ms. Sanchez is an advocate for young mothers with children. The

ground breaking for the organic garden was set to take place the first day of spring, which is also Tessa Horan Day, proclaimed by the Governor in 2006. Other activities to raise funds throughout the weekend included a film and a musical performance at St. John's College and the Tessa Horan Ascension Race at Ski Santa Fe.

For more information about The Garden Project, contact Lehigh Shepherd 660-2736; the Sojourner Café, Lynn Sanchez 913-9833; the Tessa Horan Memorial Fund, Kristena Prater 670-7731.

Carfree Bees

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A quick look around is enough to see that our culture has become immured in debt.

It has drifted away from a capitalist system to become a corporate hegemony which rests on advertising to the populace in order to keep them in a steady state of desire for new things while making money easily available to them through a pernicious credit system (one which now seems to be showing signs of collapse). As long as the populace has to struggle to pay off debt, they cannot build up their own resources which would allow them to address

their needs through creativity, collaboration, and permaculture.

A credit union, such as the Permaculture Credit Union, allows a group to pool their capital in order to fund projects which would otherwise go unfunded. That there are enough people in the permaculture community that have saved enough money to fund such an institution, allowing loans to be made to those who truly need them for permaculture related projects, is heartening.

We must however, always bear in mind how we use our capital, both natural and monetary. Borrowing

money when it is not necessary is as much an extractive industry as strip mining coal or pumping oil out of the ocean bed. Permaculture, as a principle, should be applied to finances as well.

Paul Cooley became a PCU member in October, 2003. He is an at-home parent, beekeeper and permaculture practitioner. Paul owns no car, but is in business raising bees and removing honeybee swarms on his specially equipped bike. You can read more about him and his projects on his blog:

<http://carfreefamily.blogspot.com>

FACT ACT NOTICE:

This notice applies to all members who borrow funds from the Permaculture Credit Union. **NEGATIVE INFORMATION NOTICE:** We may report information about your loan and deposit accounts to credit bureaus. Late payments, missed payments, or other defaults on your account may be reflected in your credit report.

New Member Services Hours

For your convenience, we have extended our Santa Fe office hours for member services as follows:

Mon-Wed 10:00 – 5:00

Thurs and Fri 10:00 – 5:30

Loan requests are taken during normal business hours or by appointment for member convenience.

PRINCIPLED PEOPLE

What defines us as a credit union is not where we work or live, but the principles we hold in common. Tell us a story or give us an example of how you have implemented the principles of permaculture in your decisions and your plans. We will print some of your stories in subsequent newsletters. Photos are welcome. Send everything to: eileen@pcuonline.org.



PERMACULTURE CREDIT UNION

MISSION STATEMENT

The Permaculture Credit Union pools the financial resources of people who believe in the ethics of Permaculture — care of the earth, care of people, and reinvestment of surplus for the betterment of both. We apply those resources to earth-friendly and socially responsible loans and investments.

OFFICE LOCATION

4250 Cerrillos Rd., 2nd 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
Email: perma@pcuonline.org

OFFICE HOURS

Monday–Wednesday 10:00am – 5:00pm
Thursday–Friday 10:00am – 5:30pm

LOAN REQUESTS

During normal business hours
Or by appointment for member
convenience.

MANAGEMENT & STAFF

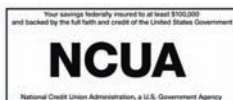
Donald J. Sarich, President/CEO
Eileen Banashek, Bookkeeper

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Hugh Roberts – Chair
John J. McAndrew – Vice Chair
Brendan Miller – Secretary
Barbara Mueller – Treasurer
Wesley Roe – Director
Nora Haskins – Director
Arina Pittman – Director

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

Carolyn Agard – Chair
Joseph Ellis – Member
Elizabeth Martin – Member
Phil Vergamini – Member



Holiday Closings 2008

Memorial Day
Monday, May 26

Independence Day
Friday, July 4

Labor Day
Monday, September 1

Columbus Day
Monday, October 13

USA PATRIOT ACT ANNUAL NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Member Identification Requirements

In accordance with Section 326 of the USA Patriot Act, applicants for new accounts are requested to provide current picture identification that verifies identity including name, address and other identifying information.

In some cases, identification will be requested for current members if original documentation was not obtained with the opening of the account. In all cases, protection of our members' identity and confidentiality is our pledge to you. We support all efforts to protect and maintain the security of our members and our country. This notice is being published as required by law.

PRIVACY POLICY

We do not disclose any nonpublic information about our members and former members to anyone except as permitted by law.

WHAT IS PERMACULTURE?

If you would like to share your own personal definition of permaculture, please e-mail it to eileen@pcuonline.org and we will print it here. Please be succinct!

“The Iroquois Nation demanded that their leaders plan ahead for seven generations, thus practicing permaculture long before it became the rage. By contrast, our current rate of consumption of this planet’s resources is a certain path to pollution, shortages, and resulting wars within one or two generations. Permaculture offers the approach of eliminating ‘waste,’ stacking functions, and turning to alternative sources like wind, sun and biomass to provide clean, renewable energy for us and generations to come.”

— Arvo Thomson has been living and teaching the pesky technological side of permaculture for over ten years at the Solar Ark in northern New Mexico; *website: www.solarark.org*

MEMBER SERVICES

We are currently financing up to \$100,000.00 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 & CERTIFICATE 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.

MEMBER ALERT

DO NOT RESPOND to email scams that ask you for your account number, credit card number, and personal identification numbers. Email messages that ask for this type of information are fraudulent, and should be reported immediately.

This includes seemingly real notification from VISA Security and NCUA (National Credit Union Administration) requesting you to go to a website and log in. We will never contact you and ask for this information.