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Permaculture in Practice: Ramifications of the no-hens rule

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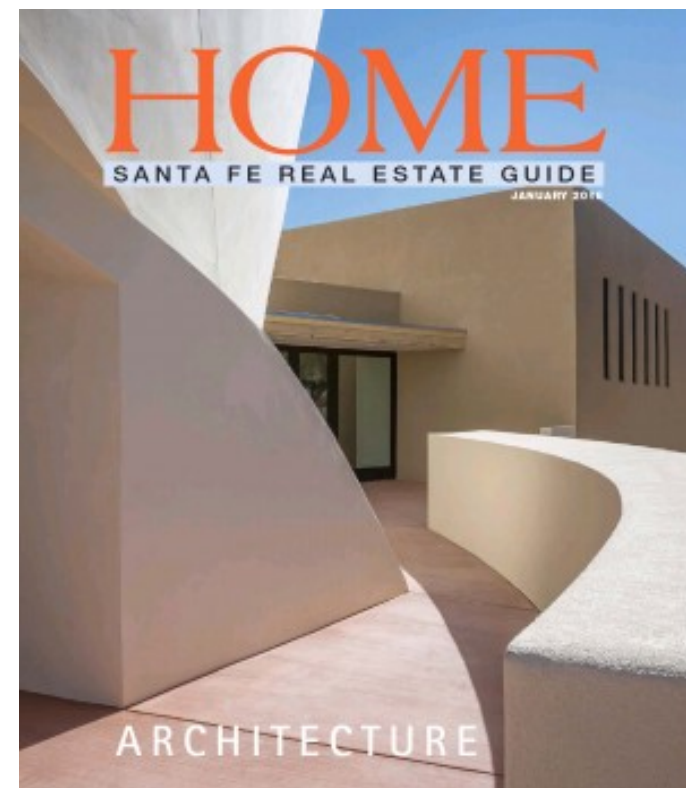
Posted: Saturday, May 17, 2014 7:00 pm

By **Nate Downey**
For **The New Mexican**

Not a moment too soon came her untimely death. Amy Hetager was an inspiration to thousands with her hugely popular Kitchen and Coop Tours in Santa Fe and Albuquerque. At 40, the brilliant activist died with family and friends a mere week before Judge Mark A. Macaron's April ruling. Chickens, he opined, cannot be "recognized household pets" in Eldorado.

Since the founding mothers of the Iroquois Nation, there may have been no legal mind in the land greater than Macaron's, but from my perch he reminds me of a pet chicken, Goldy. I learned how obtuse Goldy was when I had to move our South Capitol flock to a different coop on the other side of our house. Dropped into uncharted territory, it appeared that Goldy died because she literally got stuck in a rut, a rut of her own creation.

Goldy had no signs of injury or predation. She had plenty of nearby food and



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water, but she did not realize that she had access to these essential resources. All she had to do was turn about 80 degrees, and she would have been back in her luxury coop. Instead, the rut she scratched for herself became her last stand until her collapse and subsequent death by dehydration.

Unfortunately, there is a lot more at stake in the Macaron case. Like Goldy, Macaron could have just shifted his perspective and seen a way out. Starting with the movement for gay marriage, in which both voters and courts, when asked, have said that you can marry whomever you want to marry. Now, I know this may be tricky for some of you, but shift with me oh, maybe 45 degrees. In the land of the free, if the state should stay out of the business of telling people whom they can and cannot love, doesn't it follow that the same society should stay out of the business of telling people what animals they can and cannot like?

I strongly believe that regulations need to be followed so that neighbors can have recourse if they are ever bothered by another's pets, but until that bothering occurs, who should say that I can have a dog or a cat but that I cannot have a fish, a lizard, a ferret or a flightless bird? What's next? I'll tell you what's next. A judge tells you that you can't eat fresh eggs for breakfast.

Of course, this is more than a dietary issue. The pathetic souls pushing for a prohibition on fresh-egg consumption in Eldorado are bringing about the demise of our society almost as furiously as the Koch brothers. Live in a cage, die in a cage, I suppose.

Fortunately, the three families who are being sued by Eldorado's current board are continuing to fight against one magistrate's myopia, but they need our help. Having already spent more than \$20,000 on legal fees (against the board's \$60,000), it seems the cost of their appeal could equal the first. Please visit www.gofundme.com/save-our-pet-hens.

Nate Downey is the author of Harvest the Rain (Sunstone Press, 2010) and the

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president of Santa Fe Permaculture Inc. You can contact him through his new company website, www.permadesign.com.

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