



Immersed in restoration
of coral reefs



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Hens for hire? Yes, there's a market for them



Hens are ready for spring delivery to Rent-A-Chicken clients. Photos by Jim Symons

What happens when a farm-raised woman, her “city-boy” husband and their four children go into business for themselves? They turn their 10-acre “gentleman’s farm” into an enterprise that’s really taken off among the agricultural sector.

Actually, Leslie and Mark Sutor’s business, Rent-A-Chicken, is part of the emerging business category called the sharing economy. In this category are businesses that enable people to rent out their homes, cars and other things with the help of websites dedicated to such exchanges. Then there are businesses like Rent-A-Chicken (<http://rent-a-chicken.net>), which operate on a more conventional scale – that of a business owner buying goods and renting them to others. That’s primarily what the Sutors do in Traverse City, Mich. Similar business are located in other states, including Maryland, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

The Sutors rent such breeds as Ameraucanas, Buff Orpingtons and Black Australorps, and have experimented with Silver Laced Wyandottes, Light Brahas, Delawares and some mixed breeds.

“We raise all our girls ourselves, whether from chicks hatched on the farm or purchased from hatcheries,” says Leslie Sutor.

Launched in 2009, Rent-A-Chicken’s clientele has evolved.

“When we first started our business, our typical clients were young families with children eager

to teach their kids the joys and responsibilities of raising their own food,” Sutor recalls. “For the past few years we have seen a marked increase in affluent/retired people who are delighted with the idea of the bucolic lifestyle. Often, keeping hens is seen as a status symbol.”

Sutor estimates that “at least half of our clients are repeat customers and about a quarter buy their girls outright. Our repeat clients have their girls marked when we take them back in the fall so they can have their same girls again next summer.”

Just as Rent-A-Chicken’s clientele has broadened, so has the company’s reach.

“We have started licensing our name to other farmers,” says Sutor. “We now have suppliers in most of Lower Michigan and all of Eastern Colorado.”

Training and support are huge components of the Sutors’ business.

In the summertime, the Sutors deliver two egg-producing hens, a coop and feeding materials to a client’s backyard and set up the coop. They return in the fall to gather the hens and the equipment. And they’re always available to answer a client’s queries about this truly organic pursuit.

“We provide a full tutorial and question/answer upon delivery of the girls in the spring. We are also on call all summer in case any question should arise,” Sutor says. “No question is ever trivial.”

Leslie Sutor relishes the opportunity to not only educate prospective customers about their beloved “girls” but also address inaccurate perceptions about them.

“Some people may have a misconception that chickens are ‘farm’ animals that only belong on a farm,” says Sutor. “Hens are loving, inquisitive, gentle birds that are remarkably easy to care for. They are far less noisy or noisome than even cats and dogs and deserve a chance to be appreciated by people everywhere.”



Hens gather to enjoy a treat.

Immersed in restoration of coral reefs



Ken Nedimyer can trace the genesis of his work benefitting coral reefs to his daughter's 2001 4-H project.

"It initially involved setting up the coral nursery," says Nedimyer. "It then morphed into a service project that involved taking other 4-H students out to the nursery to help us."

His daughter's involvement with the project ended a decade ago, but Nedimyer remains immersed in efforts to conserve the Sunshine State's threatened reefs. He founded a nonprofit called Coral Restoration Foundation (www.coralrestoration.org), based in Key Largo, Fla. As a result of Coral Restoration's propagation techniques, thousands of corals have been grown and sheltered in offshore nurseries, and are then planted on reefs. A cadre of community groups, dive operators, public aquariums, scientists, students and volunteers all play a role in the foundation's restoration efforts. The foundation's work also includes research projects, K-12 education initiatives and workshops.

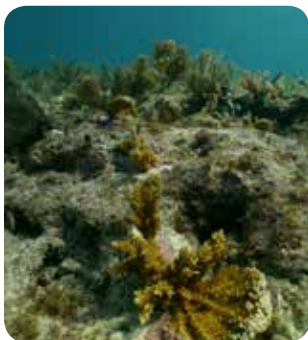


Photo by Pam Hughes

available to help start the project, but this award will help keep our commitment going for another year."

Nedimyer earned the title of Sea Hero of the Year in 2014, an honor that came with a prize of \$5,000. In early 2015, Nedimyer planned to use the prize money for a coral restoration program in Jamaica, which was scheduled to begin on Feb. 23. "We have other funds

The foundation has plans for a host of projects in 2015 and 2016.

"We're going to be adding two more nurseries in the (Florida) Keys, adding several more species of coral and outplant more corals in more areas," Nedimyer says. "We're hoping to expand into (Florida's) Dade and Broward counties and work with some of our existing partners there. Our international company will be starting new programs in at least four new Caribbean countries this spring, and by the end of 2016 we anticipate having as many as 15 different programs going throughout the Caribbean."

Nedimyer, named a CNN Hero in 2012 for his coral-restoration work, is encouraged by the progress made in protecting the world's coral reefs.



The Coral Restoration Foundation works to preserve reefs in Florida and the Caribbean.

"There is hope for coral reefs, and there are many things we can do to help protect and restore them. Growing coral in nurseries and replanting the right corals on the right reefs is one strategy that can help, but there are many others that can also help. There are dozens of other groups, big and small, that are addressing other problems, and they all need to be supported and encouraged," says Nedimyer.

"Climate change isn't the only threat to coral reefs, and many of the threats are local and relatively easy to address. People use climate change as an excuse to do nothing about the problems, but doing nothing is going to ensure that reefs continue to decline. We don't have to settle for dead and dying reefs."

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The three artists featured in this edition of *Unity Magazine* use feathers, paintings, photographs and sculptures to celebrate our planet's environmental treasures.



"Flame" by Eugenie Spirito



"Victory" by Eugenie Spirito

EUGENIE SPIRITO

Eugenie Spirito was born and raised in Los Angeles and became interested in art and sculpture at age 5. Spirito says she has always loved to climb rocks, build stone forts and simply hold rocks in her pocket for good luck.

Starting her career in New York City, Spirito apprenticed with a world-renowned expressionist sculptor who insisted on the use of hammers, chisels and rasps, which she still uses.

"Flame" is carved from a rectangular piece of Portuguese rose marble that a teacher/mentor gave to Spirito. It took 15 years for her to work with the stone and after viewing a fellow sculptor's work, she was inspired to do her own interpretation.

"Because white onyx is a harder stone than marble, 'Victory' was a challenge and contributor to building personal strength," says Spirito. "I wanted to create something abstract yet feminine. Some view 'Victory' as the epitome of a brave female."



"Tribal Woman" by Eugenie Spirito

Spirito wanted to evoke a strong, peaceful spirit in "Tribal Woman." Carved from pink alabaster, she refers to this piece as exuding a healing presence.

A self-described minimalist, Spirito states she uses only what she needs – such as fragments of discarded or broken pieces that she transforms into beautiful artwork.

"Stone sculpture is a medium that can last for hundreds, even thousands, of years," Spirito says. "Stone comes from the Earth in its most basic sense and it will eventually be returned to its source."

CHRIS MAYNARD



"Baby Grouse" by Chris Maynard

Chris Maynard was raised in the Seattle area. His mother was a Sumi artist (not Japanese) who taught in Japan and his father was a surgeon. Maynard attributes his artistic sense and love of feathers (affirmation of his appreciation of life) to his mother; his scientific knowledge and use of scissors, forceps, scalpels and magnifiers to his father.

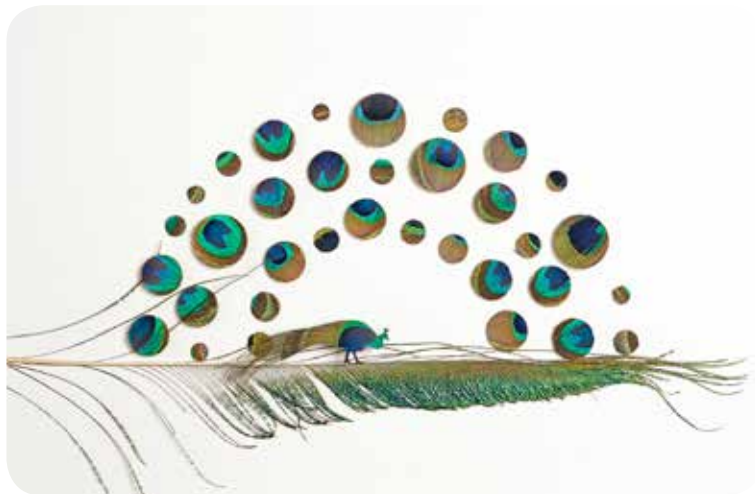
Maynard's methods of arranging feathers must be done with precision. He strives to respect the feathers' curves and shapes by not pasting them flat. He also places his works in shadowboxes to show change in the direction of light.

A grouse camouflaged in the bushes of the Uinta Mountains of Utah was Maynard's inspiration for "Baby Grouse." He methodically positioned each feather to create a scene of mother and baby chicks.

In "Peacock," Maynard wanted to portray the same beauty seen by a female peacock when she chooses a male based on the attractiveness of his feathers.

Although Maynard's signature theme involves birds, he created "Dragon" for a children's picture book. It was a stretch to create the dragon, yet Maynard was able to capture the essence of its fiery breath with his meticulous use of bird feathers.

Maynard's sources for feathers are private aviaries and zoos. Many of the birds whose feathers he uses are alive and well to this day.



"Dragon" by Chris Maynard
"Peacock" by Chris Maynard

Maynard's work is in private collections in the United States and Canada, Asia, Europe and Australia and has been featured worldwide in hard copy magazines and online. He is a member of Artists for Conservation and a signature member of the Society of Animal Artists.

APOLLO

Apollo was born in Southern California and was an avid surfer and skateboarder. His father was a painter who taught Apollo the art of mixing color and working with textures. Apollo's mother worked on projects for NASA space programs and was an award-winning professional ceramicist. During his childhood, Apollo's parents worked at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif. His father created several murals in Fantasyland and his mother worked on electronic circuitry for "It's a Small World."

Apollo spent hours watching and drawing the fish in his grandparents' three fish tanks while imagining a world underwater. When his father was a Merchant Marine traveling the world, Apollo learned to respect the oceans

and environment. He combines realism with animation and attempts to capture the quintessence of the marine spirit.

After a day of painting in Maui, Apollo surfed and snorkeled and became friends with a sea turtle. He snapped underwater photographs of the turtle, thus creating the acrylic-on-canvas piece "Flight of the Sea Turtle."

The white tiger straddling Earth in "Protecting the Planet" is "a silent centennial guarding valuable resources for future generations," says Apollo. "The tiger represents how we should fiercely protect the jungles, forests, animals and waterways on our planet."

Apollo began painting dolphins and whales after moving to Maui. The deep, rich colors in "When Dolphins Dance" highlight the graceful, synchronized ballet of two dolphins against a vibrant background of coral and reef fish.

Working with environmental groups and social charities to raise funds and awareness is a responsibility and a motivating factor in his work, Apollo believes. "It is our duty to become more harmonious with our environment, for what we hold in our hands is a trust for future generations."



"Flight of the Sea Turtle"
by Apollo



"Protecting the Planet"
by Apollo



"When Dolphins Dance"
by Apollo



Uncommon Ground is home to a certified organic rooftop farm. Photos courtesy of Uncommon Ground

Nourishing people and the environment

If experience is truly the best teacher, then it's no wonder that Helen and Michael Cameron are masters in their field. The two restaurateurs – both veterans of the food-service industry – have taken the concept of sustainability to a nearly unparalleled level.

You might say that Uncommon Ground, the Camerons' famed Chicago establishment with two locations, is "green royalty." In 2011 and 2013, the Green Restaurant Association named it the World's Greenest Restaurant.

"We're big advocates for knowing what's in your foods," such as hormones and genetically modified organisms," says co-owner Helen Cameron. We're really trying to put it out there to the audience and the neighborhood that you can grow food in the city."

Uncommon Ground's first location, in the Lakeview neighborhood two blocks from Wrigley Field, opened in 1991 as a coffeehouse/cafe. Among the North Clark Street location's most recent "green" additions is the first certified organic brewery, Greenstar Brewing, in Illinois.



The restaurant produces "a considerable amount of food" on the premises.

The Camerons opened their second restaurant, on Devon Avenue in the Edgewater neighborhood, seven years ago. It's home, says Cameron, to "the first certified organic rooftop farm. But it's not just a garden. It is actually a full-on space for food production."

Inside Uncommon Ground, all of the wood products were produced using timber from fallen trees in Chicago's 500-acre Jackson Park. And every bit of the restaurant's used fryer oil is donated to the Loyola University bio-diesel program.



Despite these and other sustainability measures, says Cameron, "Being green actually saves money. A lot of people think the opposite (is true.)"

A business with such an extensive array of green offerings requires staff members knowledgeable enough to implement them. Those are the kind of employees that Uncommon Ground recruits, trains and hires.

"(We're) probably the only restaurant in the country that has a full-time farm director as part of the management team," Cameron says. Because of that, "we are able to produce a considerable amount of food on the property and focus on types of plants that excel in that environment. It's really been a fantastic adventure. We're not just growing food; we're growing people who know how to grow food."

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No bones about it: Broth is hot

Some people swear that this basic food can calm your stomach as well as your nerves. Others refer to it as the fountain of youth because of its treasure trove of amino acids, collagen and minerals. Another group of adherents claims it reduces joint inflammation and pain, and aids in bone formation. Even LA Laker Kobe Bryant credits it for extending his tenure in the NBA (he's 36 years old).

They're all crazy about bone broth, which cooks have prepared and served for centuries. With the recent buzz, however, you'd think this clear drink was an au courant addition to the cuisine scene. Bone broth owes its elevated profile, in part, to Paleo eating – consuming food (high amounts of meat, nuts and berries) resembling the diet of Stone Age hunter-gatherers.

The buzz about broth, bone or otherwise, isn't limited to Paleo-diet fans. "Nourishing Broth: An Old-Fashioned Remedy for the Modern World," published in paperback in 2014, extols the merits of this century's latest superfood. And when it comes to store-bought versus homemade broth, the version that simmers for hours on a stovetop is the only one that purists stomach. It takes a minimum of eight hours of cooking, plus the addition of some acid (such as vinegar, wine or tomato paste), to extract nutrients from bones. Oh, and "broth-ers" are the people who engage in "broth-ing" (cooking broth).



Broth (many know it by another name – stock) has gained so much in popularity that it now replaces chai and espresso in many teacups or mugs. And don't be surprised to see it on a restaurant menu, if you haven't already. Brodo, a storefront window attached to New York City's Hearth restaurant, refers to broth as "the world's first comfort food." Brodo's "sipping broths" (all gluten- and dairy-free) range from \$4 for an 8-ounce serving to \$9 for a 16-ounce portion of the Ginger-Grass Fed Beef Broth.

Of course, local grocers large and small sell the bones needed to make high-quality broths every day. Sources selling frozen bone broth by the quart or by subscription are also proliferating online.

Beef Bone Broth

- 4 pounds beef bones, preferably a mix of marrow bones and bones with a little meat on them, such as oxtail, short ribs or knuckle bones (cut in half by a butcher)
- 2 unpeeled carrots, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 whole leek, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 medium onion, quartered
- 1 garlic head, halved crosswise
- 2 celery stalks, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tablespoons black peppercorns
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar

Special equipment

6-quart (or larger) stockpot or a large slow cooker

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place beef bones, carrots, leek, onion and garlic on a roasting pan or rimmed baking sheet and roast for 20 minutes. Toss the contents of the pan and roast until deeply browned, 10 to 20 minutes more.

Fill a large (at least 6-quart) stockpot with 12 cups of water (preferably filtered). Add celery, bay leaves, peppercorns and vinegar. Scrape the roasted bones and vegetables into the pot along with any juices. Add more water if necessary to cover bones and vegetables.

Cover the pot and bring to a gentle boil. Reduce heat to a very low simmer and cook with lid slightly ajar, skimming foam and excess fat occasionally, for 8 but up to 24 hours on the stovetop. Add more water if necessary to ensure bones and vegetables are fully submerged. Alternately, you can cook the broth in a slow cooker on low for the same amount of time.

Remove the pot from the heat and let cool slightly. Strain broth using a fine-mesh sieve and discard bones and vegetables. Let continue to cool until barely warm, then refrigerate in smaller containers overnight. Remove solidified fat from the top of the chilled broth.

Recipe courtesy of www.epicurious.com

Nourishing people and the environment

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In the early '90s, Helen and Michael Cameron were firmly entrenched in the food-service sector. Michael, a food and beverage director, and Helen, an executive chef, "came to the realization that we wanted to do our own thing."

"The two of us have this sort of idealism. We didn't set out to own a business and become rich. Our whole motive (was) to provide a really comfortable and happy space" that serves food and beverage, says Helen Cameron. "We want to be that solid place that people rely on. (And) we want to make sure the planet stays healthy."

For those outside Chicago who are unfamiliar with Uncommon Ground and what it's about, Cameron calls the enterprise "a community cultural center" – accented by live acoustic performances and art

displays – that serves farm-to-table food. Among the owners' goals are "choosing the best ingredients we possibly can," being "a place of comfort and happiness that people come to regularly" and ensuring that prices are reasonable. "I'm sure our guests appreciate that."

Independently owned, Uncommon Ground serves brunch, lunch and dinner seven days a week. Its menu includes, among other things, locally produced meats and hormone-free eggs indicative of what Cameron calls "casual comfort food that's very high quality."

"Even though we are a small business, what we do has a big impact," notes Helen Cameron. "We do things based on our heart and our conscious."



Uncommon Ground, says co-owner Helen Cameron, serves "casual comfort food that's very high quality."

On the cover: Efforts are under way to restore coral reefs. *Unity* is a celebration of food, art and culture. Published six times per year, *Unity* is exclusively distributed to clients of Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group, both world leaders in foodservice. To contact us, send an email to marketing@thompsonhospitalityjv.com. ©2015 Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group. Produced by Final Edit, www.finaledit.net

