



Tuesday, November 24, 2009

## Man celebrates nine years of life without money



MOAB, Utah -- Daniel Suelo gets the same question, all the time. "Why?" The 48-year-old kneels in front of the desert cave he calls home, sips cedar tea from a chipped mug and explains, again, why he has intentionally lived the last nine years without using money. It's instinctual to live without money; it's the way we were born, he says. It's political. The addiction to money fuels corruption, he says, and he refuses to

support a corrupt system. There's also a spiritual basis for his life, a philosophical framework. "The understanding that, really, we all possess nothing is the cornerstone of all spiritual endeavors and religions," he says. And there are health reasons. Suelo, who was born with the last name Shellabarger, is unfettered with worries about a mortgage or bills or income. Tanned with a mop of gray locks framing his Buddy Holly glasses, he is a picture of contentment, his lithe frame stretched in the fall sun amid prickly pear cactus and red rock. "I think taking things as they come naturally is the key to good health," he says. A decade ago, Suelo was dizzy with depression. His University of Colorado degree in anthropology wasn't fulfilling. He had just returned from two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ecuador. He was disillusioned with his job working at homeless shelters and enclaves for battered women in Denver and Boulder. Eventually, he concluded his growing despair was tied to fretting over his financial ability to maintain his stuff. Stuff, he realized, he didn't need. So, he gave it all away. "We use all our energy to maintain our possessions, and it becomes an ugly cycle," he says. He doesn't barter or work for food or rent. Barter is another form of money, and Suelo doesn't deal with any form of currency. Today, he embraces an ascetic life of "art and philosophizing." He's hardly the growling hermit, instead circling town on his trash-bin built bike, engaging a wide circle of pals. "He is truly the happiest person I have ever met. He is so deeply peaceful, it's contagious," says Damian Nash, Suelo's college roommate and a high school teacher in Moab. "He is living proof that money can't buy happiness." Every summer, when the heat in Moab reaches unbearable -- especially for a cave-dweller -- Suelo hits the road, visiting friends and gatherings along the West Coast, where he is known only as "Suelo." "I have no idea what the future holds, and I don't worry about it. But the longer I do this, it seems absurd to go back," he says. "It would be like going

back to slavery. There's just too much of a price to pay." His cozy cave is an hour's stroll from town. Maybe 15 feet by 5 feet, the one-man crevice is crammed with buckets holding a few days worth of rice and beans, books and cooking pots. The hole in the wall is tidy, with his bedroll neatly folded into a nook. Cupped ridges on the wall hold knick-knacks. While the cave carries a strong smell of patchouli oil, Suelo doesn't import any odiferous whiff of homelessness. He bathes daily in the stream below his cave. His clothes -- which he found in the trash -- are uncommonly formal for a man who camps year-round. Dress shoes and slacks, shirt buttoned to the top and a fresh wide-brimmed hat form a Suelo style that is more Bohemian chic than homeless bum.

### Extraordinary armless artist who paints with his right foot



BRISTON- The stunning paintings will appear on Christmas cards and sold all over the world. Peter Longstaff's artwork pieces include flickering candles and another depicts a stag in a magical winter wonderland setting. And as well as teaching himself to paint, the 48-year-old has lived life to the full as a pig farmer, father and youth football coach. Peter was one of many babies born with deformities in the late 1950s and early 60s when their pregnant mothers were given

the drug thalidomide to combat morning sickness. But as a boy he learned to use his right foot like a right hand and was independent enough to complete main stream schooling growing up on Teesside. Peter said: 'My right foot is like your right hand. I figured out ways of doing things.' He opens doors and turns on light switches standing on one leg, using a mixture of agility and balance. As a teenager he had to endure cruel comments from 'ignorant people' but took it in his stride. 'You just get hardened to it and block it out. You get used to people looking at you in the street because you are different. 'But, if you let it bother you, you would not do anything,' said Peter, of Briston, near Holt, Norfolk. Peter is part of an international movement of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists (MFPA). Their card and calendar sales support physically handicapped painters like himself. His first career was as a pig farmer - a physical job where he managed to drive tractors, muck out the pigs and bale the hay. But Peter left the business 10 years ago when the market, rather than the workload, got tough. He turned to art and was taken on by the MFPA as a student after being vetted to ensure his work was up to standard. The funds raised by the organisation provide him with grants to help with tuition fees and materials. If Peter progresses to full membership he will earn a wage. His work includes landscapes, picking up on his love of the countryside, as well as images targeted at the cards market. He has had a handful selected which also earns a bonus payment. 'I am more privileged than some other artists who are trying to make money,' he said. Mr Longstaff also said that having never had arms he was also better off than people who later lost limbs. As he put the finishing touches to a woodland scene with a deer in the conservatory of his rural studio, he said: 'I love the skies, the colours of sunsets and sunrises, along with wildlife.' He works on easels or the floor - changing positions to stop getting backache and to deal with detail - and keeps fit and supple with walking and swimming. Divorced, but with a new partner, Peter still spends a lot of time with his son Milo, 12, as father and manager of his Cromer under-13 football team, which involves Tuesday night training and Sunday matches. His ability to get around between home, studio and sports field is down to an adapted Range Rover, which he steers with a plate under left foot, but which is otherwise a standard automatic. He was once stopped by a stunned policeman who spotted he had no hands

on the wheel - but quickly understood when he opened the door. Peter's artwork was on show at the Royal College of Art in London last month as part of their 50th anniversary celebrations.

### **Gal, 95, beats Nazis, has 1936 record restored**



QUEENS- At age 95, she's never soared higher. A former high jumper now living in Queens finally saw her German national record restored yesterday -- 73 years after the Nazis disallowed it because she's Jewish. "I'm very happy they finally did what they did -- I was a damned good high jumper," Margaret Bergmann Lambert said from the Jamaica Estates home she shares with her 99-year-old husband, Bruno. Lambert, who competed under the name of Gretel Bergmann, set the German high-jump mark of 5 feet, 3 inches on June 30, 1936. At the time, she was nominally a member of the German Olympic team, which was about to host the Berlin Games. But in truth, she was being used as a political pawn by Adolf Hitler. The German government discovered Bergmann's talent after she won the 1934 British high-jump championships while

attending school in England. The Nazis forced her to return to Germany by threatening to harm her family if she didn't join the Olympic squad. "I didn't know if they would kill me. I didn't know what they would do," she said. But Lambert knew that she would never be allowed to compete in the Olympics. At the time, the Germans were putting Jews on their teams to appease Americans who were threatening a boycott. The Nazi government pulled her off the squad at the last minute. "They waited until the Americans were on the boat, on the way," she said. "Nobody realized that these people had everything planned out." Teammates got a letter claiming she was injured. After the Games, she fled to the United States with just \$4 in her pocket. "Nobody dared pack anything else," she said. She changed her name and settled down with her husband. They've been married 71 years and have two children. As for finally being recognized as the German record holder, Lambert said, "It took a hell of a long time for them to do it, but I'm not going to do cartwheels over it -- and I couldn't now.

### **No Dope: Ft. Lauderdale Man to Smoke 115,000th Joint**



FT. LAUDERDALE- When you think of the world's most prolific pot smokers, certain names come to mind: Snoop, Cheech and Chong, Willie Nelson. How about Irvin Rosenfeld? The 56-year-old Fort Lauderdale stockbroker will put his name among the greats when he sets a world record tomorrow for weed consumption while lighting up his 115,000th joint. The best part is that it's all legal. Rosenfeld's pot has been provided by the government since

1982, when he became a patient in the Federal Drug Administration's Investigational New Drug Program. Grown on a farm on the campus of the University of Mississippi, the weed is delivered to a local pharmacy where Rosenfeld gets it by the bushel. Rosenfeld suffers from a rare bone disorder called multiple congenital cartilaginous exostoses, which causes severe pain, alleviated by a healthy dose of ganja. He's been getting 300 joints every 25 days for the past 27 years, and said he smokes between 10 and 12 per day. "The first thing I do every morning is smoke two joints as I watch my business shows," Rosenfeld said. "Then another on my drive to work." Rosenfeld said he's never gotten high on the sticky icky, and he's allowed to smoke while operating heavy machinery. Not getting high also means no late-night trips to Taco Bell. "No munchies, no munchies, nothing other people get," Rosenfeld insists. "A lot of patients don't get high." Rosenfeld is an advocate for the Feds providing medicinal marijuana, a policy ended in 1992. While most people who need medicinal marijuana rely on the dozen or so states that allow it, Rosenfeld and three others were grandfathered into the federal program. He said he's lucky to be able to get his hands on what many others can't. "I get lots of calls from people trying to get the medicine," he said. "It's sad, people need it." Rosenfeld said he feels great thanks to the Mary Jane, and that others could be as healthy as him if it were made legal across the board. "I would be bedridden without it, if I would even be alive," he said. "I shouldn't have been alive and I'm still alive, I take no other medicines, I'm in great shape because of the cannabis. It's just sad because the medicine's there." He said he thinks the Obama administration will help people like him who truly need the weed to feel better. "The tide is turning, patients are finally getting the help they need," he said. Rosenfeld's writing a book on his experiences as the nation's longest-running legal pot-smoker, tentatively called "Potluck." He hopes to have it published in the spring. ([Full Article](#))

### Sparkling Reindeer-dung Jewelry Sells At Ill. Zoo



BLOOMINGTON, Ill. (AP) - Sparkly reindeer-dung necklaces are going on sale at an Illinois zoo that hopes to attract the same holiday shoppers who swept up its dung Christmas ornaments last year. The limited-edition Magical Reindeer Gem necklaces will debut Friday at the Miller Park Zoo in Bloomington. The \$15 pendant necklaces contain dried, sterilized reindeer droppings - sprayed with glitter - on a beaded chain. They'll be available at the zoo's gift shop, or by mail for \$20. The ornaments are back, and 450 have already sold this season. About 1,500 are still available for \$7.50, or \$10 by mail. Miller Park Zoological Society spokeswoman Susie Ohley admits it's a bit silly but estimates the zoo could make \$16,500. The zoo lost \$200,000 under city budget cuts

this year. ([Zoo Website](#))