



**Family: Jan Peregrine**

**Artist: Deb Mitzlaff Koenen**

Deb Mitzlaff Koenen's sculpture includes important aspects about Jan Peregrine that, together, represent her life, her "home."

"The top level of the assemblage represents Jan's dream of producing and marketing vegan cheesecakes," says Deb. "The vegan showgirl in the "cheesecake" pose reflects the excitement and possibility of this business venture, which Jan plans to call "Viva La Vegan!"

Deb says a successful business would not only offer an outlet for Jan's creativity and passion for vegan cooking, but would offer adequate income for her and her parakeets, Beasley and Billy. She says it could even enable Jan to travel to warmer climates for alternative treatments and innovative therapies to bring her closer to her second dream— of running another marathon.

The cage not only represents Jan's parakeets, but the confinement and vulnerability one can feel when reliant on other people or trapped by bad weather. Yet, Deb's sculpture also makes reference to Jan's many friends and family who keep her from feeling isolated.

"All of us have different parts of ourselves that we present to others as we get to know them," says Deb. "We also have thoughts, ideas and experiences that we would rather keep to ourselves. However, if you have a physical, mental or emotional disability—whether your condition is temporary permanent or progressive— you may not be in total control over the order in which your persona is revealed to the world."

"People tend to focus on what they notice first," Deb says. . . "No one should be categorized this way, yet a first impression is often made by the part of you that defines you the least. Everyone has a story to tell. You know it's private. You know it's personal. So why is it the first thing you expect someone to talk about? Jan's most private story is tucked away . . . placed at the bottom of the art piece. Yet it still intrigues us. Makes us want to ask. But don't ask."

Visit our blog at [http://www.journalstar.com/blog/stories\\_of\\_home.php](http://www.journalstar.com/blog/stories_of_home.php)



## **Family: Jan Peregrine**

### **Artist: Deborah Mitzlaff Koenen**

Jan Peregrine says she chooses to be a vegan for health reasons. She loves cooking and makes gourmet vegan desserts from her own recipes. Two of her goals are to have her own food business and to write a cookbook. Although an incomplete spinal cord injury left her with physical challenges, she has broad interests and doesn't wish to be defined by that aspect of her life. "I ran a marathon," she says, "and I intend to run another."

*Photo: Deborah Mitzlaff Koenen and Jan Peregrine*

*Photo Credit: Deborah Mitzlaff Koenen*

Visit our blog at [http://www.journalstar.com/blog/stories\\_of\\_home.php](http://www.journalstar.com/blog/stories_of_home.php)