

# Going to the birds

Rare species have a home on Ed Dekeyser's land

Ed Dekeyser's property is literally going to the birds.

It has nothing to do with neglecting the land, but everything to do with his interest in collecting and breeding rare species of birds on it.

Since he started from scratch four years ago, Mr. Dekeyser has raised a flock numbering about 500 birds — mostly various varieties of pheasants.

"It's not a job. I would not do it if I didn't enjoy it," said the Haldimand Township man, who also owns and operates an excavating company.

Mr. Dekeyser described his work as an aviarist as more of a hobby — an expensive one at that, his wife always reminds him, he noted.

More exotic varieties of birds can fetch as much as \$500 to \$2,500. The price may also fluctuate depending on how rare the bird is, he said.

Raising birds is nothing new for him. At age nine, he started with pigeons and has been moving up to more exotic birds ever since.

"It's like a car," he said. "You start with a Volkswagon, get an Olds next, and work your way up."

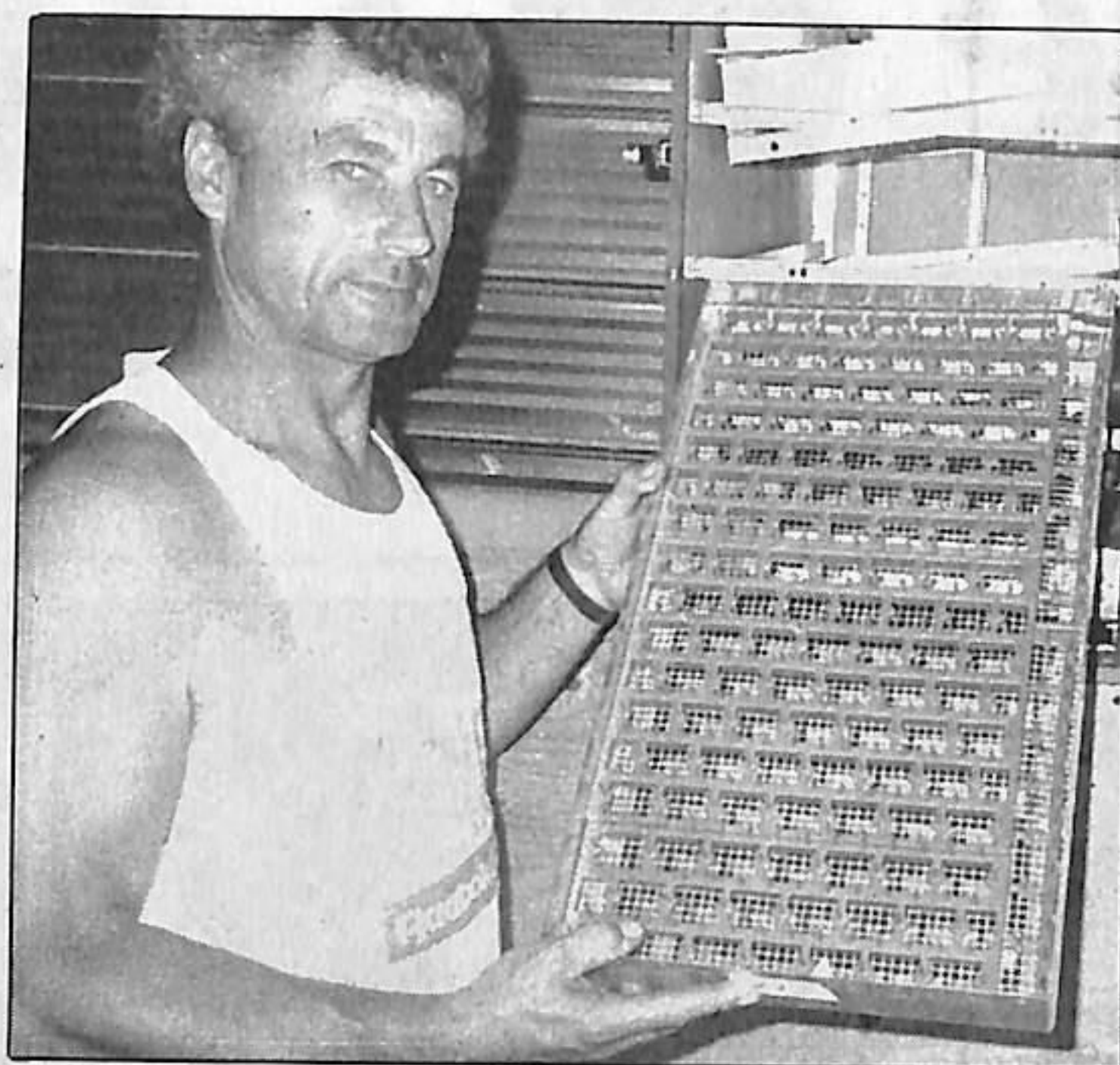
Using his analogy, the flock of pheasants he keeps on his property could probably be labelled an upscale car dealership.

From the Java Green peacock — the "Cadillac" of that bird species — to the cocky and colourful Satyer Tragopan, the varieties of exotic pheasants seem just as at home in Haldimand Township as they would in their native lands of southeast Asia.

Mr. Dekeyser keeps the birds in cages — or aviaries — which they roam around in during the summer. Some of the birds must be moved into a heated barn for the winter, but most can stay outside during the winter.

Mr. Dekeyser said some of the pheasants he raises are native to the area around the Himalayas, and are able to easily cope with the cold in Canada.

Besides withstanding the elements, the aviaries must also be built strong enough to protect against predators that may be after the birds. Mr. Dekeyser has used strong screen wiring on the aviaries, even extending it beneath ground to keep wolves and foxes



**Where it all begins** — Aviarist Ed Dekeyser displays one of two hatcheries he places eggs in. The eggs usually stay in for three to four weeks until the birds have hatched. Mr. Dekeyser has been breeding exotic birds — mainly pheasants — for the last four years.

Photo by Bill Eekhof

from digging their way into the aviaries.

Mr. Dekeyser explained that interest in breeding exotic birds has become more common in recent years. In Ontario, the number of aviarists is more concentrated in the southwest part of the province than here.

He will usually go to at least five bird shows each year — meeting other breeders, buying and selling birds or just looking at what is available.

When investing in a bird, the payback may not come until two or three years later when selling the offspring, Mr. Dekeyser said.

But even then, there is a challenge: some of his pheasants may lay only one clutch of eggs in a season. Each day, he removes any eggs he finds in his aviaries. When he has enough eggs, Mr. Dekeyser will place them in a hatchery unit anywhere from three to four weeks.

Once the birds have hatched, he will place them in heated incubators where the chicks can mature. He will then move them to heated pens, where once big enough, they will be moved into an aviary with other birds.

Besides his passion for raising birds, his hobby also is helpful during the gloom of a recession.

"It gives me a chance to take my mind off the bad times," he said.

— Bill Eekhof

COLBORNE CHRONICLE AUG 31/93

## Rainbow of gladioli highlight show

On Saturday afternoon, Aug. 14, the Garden Club staged our Annual Summer Show in Castleton town hall, as we have been doing for some years. The Hall allows us space for displaying all our lovely flowers, veggies and especially our 'Glads' which form a rainbow of colours along the south wall.

Friday night saw many willing workers on hand to prepare for the show and set up tables for visitors to enjoy sandwiches, cakes, etc. supplied by Sharon Rusk's group. Despite the heat, it was a pleasant way to spend some time with friends and admire the lovely surroundings. The event was well attended and, we hope, enjoyed by all.

The gardens in front of the Hall were a tribute to our Castleton area members who faithfully weed, water and tend these beds and also the ones at the school and the Town entrance. Special thanks to Ernie and Vi Morrison for their constant care and hard work.

There was a strong feeling of loss by all members as we mourn the recent

passing of our President, Marjorie Vaughan. She was very dedicated, giving of her time and talent in so many ways for the continuing growth of the local Horticultural Society in this area.

We will greatly miss her happy personality and love of life which she showed to all who knew her in spite of suffering a great deal with arthritis.

Our 1st vice President, Marjorie Ferguson, performed the duties of President in place of her mother and we sincerely thank her for doing so very capably.

Our Judge was Mrs. Isabelle Challice who once again did a splendid job with our 167 entries.

In her remarks she commented on the difficulty of determining winners when the entries are of such excellent quality. She also stressed how addictive it is to put entries into the shows: the more you do, the more interested you become - in other words "try it, you'll like it."

We also had as guests, Mr. Challice, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Kelly of Port Hope and Miss Hazel Wilson of

Peterborough- all active members of District 4.

The winners of the coveted Red Ribbons were, for Best Glad- Gordon Smith, Best annual, George Maskell and Best Decorative- Gordon Smith ( A nearly perfect basket of Red Gladioli.

Doug Johnston auctioned the lovely Glads generously donated to the Club by several exhibitors, giving many of us a chance to take home these lovely flowers to enjoy for several days. Peg Tozek convened this show with assistance of Joyce Gardner and Bea Turney: Another job well done!

The following were prize winners in the various classes, with number of prizes won: H. Dance 13, J. Filteau 19, A Gresham 10, K. Island 10, A. Jackson 2, B Mutton 5, L. Mutton 2, V. Morrison 5, G. Smith 20.

Our next event is our fall Flower Show on Sept. 20th featuring Dahlias and Chrysanthemums at Prospect Church Hall. Watch for our notices and please keep this date in mind and join us for our last show of 1993 season.

CHRONICLE AUG 31/93

**Bruce & Doris Dingman**  
would delight in sharing their joy, on the occasion of their **50th Wedding Anniversary** with friends and relatives at an Open House to be held on Saturday, Sept. 11th 2 - 4 p.m. at the Cavan Town Hall "Best Wishes only, please"