



"YOU DON'T MIND if I take some of your eggs, do you?" Karen Jensen asks one of the hens in the barn at Kishniga Kennels as husband Henry looks on. Some of the Jensens' other duties as caretakers include feeding 40 Borzoi dogs, a llama, a donkey, five peacocks and several ducks and geese.

Part-time job makes retirement more exciting for the Jensens

By Ann Hauprich-Nielsen
Every weekday at the crack of dawn, 68-year-old Henry Jensen and his wife Karen, 66, leave their Bronte St. apartment and head for Kishniga Kennels in Campbellville.

Between their arrival at 7:30 a.m. and their departure around noon, the Jensens manage to feed five peacocks, 40 Borzoi dogs, a donkey, a llama, several ducks and geese, and a barnyard full of roosters, hens and chicks.

They also clean the cages and stalls, lay fresh newspapers in them, collect eggs from the hens and perform a variety of other tasks that would exhaust most couples half their ages.

The question most strangers ask is "why?" Why does this silver-haired couple work so hard when they might just as easily sleep in every morning and live off their pension cheque from the government?

The Jensens say there are two reasons.

One has to do with their health; the other with their pocketbook.

"We've worked hard all of our lives," Mr. Jensen explained. "It wouldn't be right for us to suddenly do nothing."

"You can't just sit in an easy chair when you retire," he said. "That would kill you for sure."

"As long as we are healthy and can stay on our feet, we

want to keep working," he said.

Mrs. Jensen nodded in agreement.

"It's good to get some fresh air and exercise every day," she said. "And it's good to get out and talk to people, too. I think life must be very dull if you stay at home all the time."

Anyway, to the Jensens, a half day's work is nothing.

The youngest of 12 children, Mrs. Jensen has cooked, catered or otherwise been involved in kitchen work since she was a teenager in her homeland of Denmark.

For years, the mother of six was up at 3 or 4 a.m. baking and preparing food for a summer restaurant the Jensen family operated on a beach near their farm at Limfjorden at the west coast of Denmark.

She also did catering for about 10 years following the family's immigration to Canada in 1958.

Likewise, Mr. Jensen (one of nine children) started working for a living during his teens and earned his keep through farming during most of the past four decades. It wasn't until 1973 that he finally sold his farm in Campbellville to work on a part-time only basis.

This is probably a reason why he and his wife are able to handle their current workload at Kishniga Kennels with such ease.

In fact, both Mr. and Mrs. Jensen feel they are very

fortunate to have the job as caretakers at the kennel and have nothing but words of praise for employers Dr. John Reeve-Newson and Dr. Richard Meen.

"We are lucky to work for such nice people and no door is closed to us here," Mrs. Jensen said. "It's like our home away from home."

"Really this job is perfect for us right now because we still have our afternoons to ourselves if we want to play cards or have friends in or go visiting," she said. "And we can just relax and take a nap if that's what we want to do. It's nice."

The Jensens also said the extra money they earn at their part-time job helps them afford certain luxuries their government pension cheque couldn't possibly provide for.

"We like to travel," Mr. Jensen pointed out. "Last year we put 24,000 miles on our car."

This summer the Jensens will spend a month in Calgary and they said they've been back to Denmark to visit friends and relatives several times in recent years.

"We wouldn't be able to do a lot of the things we enjoy if we didn't have this little job," Mr. Jensen said.

Asked what would happen if the day came when they were no longer needed at the kennel, Mr. Jensen replied: "I guess I would look for a part-time job again. Even if it was just pumping gas."



THE JENSENS relax with a cup of hot coffee and a slice of homemade cake after completing their morning chores. Married 41 years, the couple has six children and 10 grandchildren. And though they're both over 65 years of age, neither wants to stop working at their part-time job.



HENRY JENSEN chats with two of the 40 Borzoi dogs he looks after every morning as part of his job as caretaker at Kishniga Kennels in Campbellville.

INTRODUCTION
Who says a person is ready for retirement at 65? Certainly not Colin MacColl, Herb Higgs or Karen and Henry Jensen. Like a growing number of local pensioners, they enjoy working so much, they don't ever want to stop. In fact, they claim working after 65 keeps them fit in mind and body.

Retirement meant new career for this energetic Milton man

Stories and Photos
By Ann
Hauprich-Nielsen

Herb Higgs of Milton has never been a man content to sit back and watch the world go by.

From the time he was 17 to the present day, Mr. Higgs has thrived on 18-hour days filled with plenty of physical work and social activity.

"Herb can't sit still for five minutes before he's jumping up looking for something to do," says his wife, Faye. "He

has to be on the go or he's just not happy."

Bearing this in mind, it's little wonder Mrs. Higgs and sons Tom and Keith were concerned when Mr. Higgs announced plans to take an early retirement from his job of 34 years at Ontario Steel (now Rockwell International) in 1975.

In fact, according to Mrs. Higgs, the family had long

discussions about what he would do to pass the time once retired.

"I always enjoyed putting around with carpentry and gardening, so I knew I'd find something to keep me busy," Mr. Higgs explained.

But son Tom wasn't convinced "putting around" was a challenging enough endeavor for his father on a long-term basis.

Himself the owner of a successful carpet cleaning operation in Kingston, Ontario, Tom suggested his father follow suit.

Mr. Higgs agreed to give the business a try, and before long "Carpet Care Of Milton" was keeping him busy cleaning rugs and furniture on a regular basis.

"I now work an average of 30 hours a week, so I still have time to do my gardening and other things I enjoy," Mr. Higgs said during a recent interview.

"I really like the job because I get to pick my own hours and meet a lot of interesting people. In fact," he said, "some of my customers have become good friends of ours."

Of course, having his own company is quite a change from the rigid work structure to which Mr. Higgs became accustomed during his years at Ontario Steel and as a farmer and laborer before that.

Born in England in 1912, Mr. Higgs said farewell to his family and friends and ventured to Canada alone as a lad of 17 in 1929.

He said the British Immigration and Colonization Association (BICA) sponsored him for his first job, which was on a farm in Sterling, Ontario. He recalls being paid \$12 a month for his work on that farm and a dollar a day when he labored at the northern lumber camps during the winter months in the early 1930s.

At the time of his marriage in 1938, Mr. Higgs was employed by a company which mined nickel near Sudbury, but he gave that job up at his wife's request to settle on a somewhat run-down farm in Sterling.

Between 1938 and 1941, Mr. Higgs managed to restore the

farm to a good condition and with this accomplishment behind him, he decided to try a job with a little more security working for Ontario Steel in Oshawa.

In 1954, Mr. Higgs was transferred to Milton as superintendent of the Spring Department for the company and later became general foreman for the assembly.

"I enjoyed working for that company and still have a lot of close friends there, but I was getting tired of the rigid structure so I chose to take an early retirement in 1975," Mr. Higgs said.

He believes the decision was a good one as it has enabled him to branch out on his own and to devote more time to leisure activities and things in the community which are of special interest to him.

Among these things are the Milton Minor Hockey Association (Mr. Higgs has been a member for about 20 years and was president for three years in the 1960s) and the Optimist Club of Milton (of which he was charter president.)

In addition to these things, he and Mrs. Higgs regularly attend the activities of the "Mr. and Mrs. Club" at St. Paul's United Church, go square dancing, bicycle riding and do a great deal of entertaining at home.

They take frequent trips to Kingston to visit their son, Tom and his wife and their two grandchildren. They also enjoy driving to visit old friends in Sterling and Oshawa.

Two years ago, they boarded a jet liner for the first time to visit Mr. Higgs' relatives in England. It was his first trip home since he was 17 — and his family had never met Faye.

They're hoping to return for a second visit sometime in the near future.

With all the activities they're involved in today, it makes Mrs. Higgs laugh as she recalls being warned against marrying Herb 39 years ago.

"Herb is seven years older than I am and people used to tell me I'd be sorry for marrying him because he'd be sitting in a rocking chair and I'd still be raring to go."

"If they could see us now!" she chuckled. "It's just the opposite of what they said it'd be. Herb's got so much energy, it's me that's got to run to keep up!"



GARDENING is one of the activities that keeps Herb Higgs of Milton looking much younger than his 65 years. Mr. Higgs also square dances one evening a week and works an average of 30 hours a week at his carpet cleaning business. Mr. Higgs was general foreman of assembly at Ontario Steel (now Rockwell International) at the time of his retirement in 1975.



STILL WORKING HARD at age 71 is Colin ("Coley") McColl of Acton. In spite of his years, Mr. McColl works 40 hours a week as a custodian — and, upon returning home to his Fairy Lake residence, the grandfather of six looks after some 240 homing pigeons.

Man, 71, says 40-hour work week good for health

"If you stop working, you die." This is the belief that motivates 71-year-old Colin ("Coley") McColl of Acton to continue working 40 hours a week as a custodian, when by rights he should be leading the restful life of an Ontario "senior citizen."

But Mr. McColl wants no part of the retirement syndrome.

"If I was to quit working, I'd die within six weeks," he said. "And I don't want to die. I like living too much."

"In fact," he said, "I feel better now than I did 15 years ago. I'm hoping to live to be 110."

As far as Mr. McColl is concerned, his current 40 hour a week job is hardly a heavy workload.

"When I was young, I used to clock into work at 4:15 a.m. and clock out at 9:10 p.m.," he recalled. "I did that for well over 15 years because times was hard back then and you had to make a living somehow."

Born in Scotland in 1906, Mr. McColl came to this country as a red-headed lad of eight with his parents, three brothers and five sisters in 1914.

He quit school at the age of 13 to work at the old iron foundry in Guelph. He stayed there until the foundry was shut down in 1953, leaving Mr. McColl unemployed for the first time in his life at the age of 47.

So, to support his late wife, Mary, and their three sons, Ken, Bill and Colin, Jr., Mr. McColl took a job as caretaker at Robert Little and M. Z. Bennett Public Schools in Acton.

These he remembers as among the best years of his life. "I loved working with the kids around me," he smiled. "You know, I used to play soccer with the pros when I was a teenager in Guelph and the school kids used to ask me to kick the soccer ball around the soccer field with them. It was great fun."

But Mr. McColl hasn't played a game of soccer for the past six years.

In 1971, when he turned 65, Colin McColl was informed he would have to retire from his job as school custodian. "I didn't feel like retiring though," Mr. McColl said. "Just because I was 65 didn't mean I wasn't up to working anymore."

Consequently, the grandfather of six went out job hunting and was hired to do cleaning and maintenance work for the Dills Printing Company.

He's been doing the custodial work at the Dills newspaper offices in Acton, Milton and Georgetown ever since 1971.

On weekends and during spare hours, Mr. McColl keeps busy looking after some 240 homing pigeons at his Fairy Lake home.

"I got my first pair of homers when I was 11 years old and I've gradually accumulated the others during the past 60