

He 'weaves his way' to a happy retirement

For many, retirement looms in the future—an era of boredom, an end to productivity. For Kenneth Lunn, a loom was the beginning of a new hobby and some of the most creative years of his lifetime.

And at 78, his weaving skills continue to improve. In 15 years, he has progressed from his first efforts—rag rugs—to intricate designs for towels, cushion tops, table runners and bedspreads.

His next project is a Navajo rug for a niece. He has decided on the pattern. The only holdup has been the yarn. But he and his wife, Hilda, went to Eaton Rapids last week for the wool and he'll soon start the tedious job of setting up the warp.

"I had three lessons. My teacher, a lady in Hartland, warned me. She

said, 'How badly do you want to learn to weave? It takes a lot of patience.' "I lacked patience. But sometimes—I don't know where or when—I had watched someone weaving and I knew it was something I could do."

THE LUNN's comfortable home is a showcase for his work.

Colorful Navajo-style rugs are used as hangings on the mellow wood paneled walls. He explained a colorful crimson and gray rug that hangs behind his Macomber loom in the living room.

"Those are Ohio State University colors," he grinned. "Both Hilda and I were born in Columbus." As most natives of the Buckeye State, when he says it, Ohio ends with an "a" rather than an "o."

Kenneth Lunn doesn't spend all his

time weaving. He helps spread the word that retirement can be interesting. He has been guest speaker for senior citizen groups and seminars at Schoolcraft College, Tonquish Creek Manor in Plymouth, and the log cabin in Garden City. When workshops on meaningful retirement are planned, he is one of the prime examples that it is possible.

He is a member of the Northville Handweavers Guild and has demonstrated his work at Mill Race Historic Village in Northville.

When Artrain came to Plymouth, he was invited to set up a loom in the freight shed and gave one of his towels to Helen Milliken, wife of the governor of Michigan.

The Lunn's live in that part of Northville Township—just north of Five Mile Road—which is in the Plymouth School District, has a Plymouth mailing address and, until recently, the old GL3 Plymouth telephone number. They have been members of the Plymouth Grange for 27 years.

Once surrounded by farmland, they don't enjoy the encroachment of subdivisions from almost every side. But their acre and a half of land retains its rural atmosphere with its apple trees, rail fence, lawns and large vegetable and flower gardens.

The birds congregate at the feeder outside their dining room window and the pheasants wander a few yards

from the house. A retired carpenter, Lunn built their home 22 years ago.

THE FALL planting was something of an experiment. He said he should have covered the soil with straw, but he didn't have any.

"I planted them in light loam. We have light loam and blue clay before they hit water. If they could find a way to bake that clay someone could make a fortune in the pottery business. There's plenty of it."

Lunn said he is learning all the time in his weaving. "I still make mistakes. Look at the uneven edge on that rug. That was one of the first ones I made."

"I had to go to the Ozarks to learn how to hemstitch the fringed ends. We were in Silver Dollar City, Mo.," he said. "Students at the School of the Ozarks learn and work on the old crafts; they sell them to pay their tuition. I asked one of the girls to show me how to hemstitch and she did."

"I suppose I could have learned around here," he added with a smile, "but I like to say I had to go to a school in the Ozarks to learn to hemstitch."

With his gardens, looms, clubs and pleasant home, Kenneth Lunn is enjoying his retirement. Hilda is right there at his side, encouraging him, admiring his work, and also enjoying his retirement years.



Kenneth Lunn discovered weaving is an interesting and creative retirement hobby. (Staff photo by Gary Caskey)

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