

Flex Time

Working flexi-jobs – what a way to make a living.

BY VALERIE HOWES

Dolly Parton had a hard time with the 9-to-5: It shattered her dreams and only put money in her boss’s wallet. If she’d been anything like today’s movers and shakers, she’d have quit whining and got herself a flexi-job.

Side jobs – whether part-time or seasonal – can be investments in freedom. Just ask Sheldon Hill. The Saskatchewan apiarist and his wife Stella are in start-up mode with their online company, Sweet Pure Honey, which sells artisanal honey and beeswax goodies. But beekeeping season only lasts from spring to fall, so come winter, Hill heads to Fort McMurray for a lucrative supplementary job in the oil industry. “I won’t work both jobs forever, but right now the winter work keeps food on the table for my family and allows us to follow our dream,” he says.

Hill’s flexi-tip: Minimize debt. “Taking a second job means less start-up loans to pay back. Soon I’ll be able to focus on our company and stay home year-round.”

For Montreal visual artist Dita Kubin, weekend work as a guest house manager means never having to sell out. “I want to communicate my own creative vision through my work, so I avoided taking on commercial photography projects to make ends meet,” she says. Art sales fluctuate year-round, so a predictable paycheck from the guest house always keeps Kubin’s bills paid.

Kubin’s flexi-tip: Seek balance. “I do 12-hour days alone in the studio, but at the guest house, I make up for it by spending lots of time with other people.”

Flexi-work can smooth the transition into retirement. For two years, former communications technician and long-time potter Darryl Lentz commuted nearly 300 km on his days off, from the military base of Gagetown, N.B., to Kinkora, P.E.I., to help his wife Cindy establish her Right off the Batt Pottery studio and store. He enjoys their thriving retirement business full-time now after retiring in 2009 at age 46.

Lentz’s flexi-tip: Reverse the ratio. “It’s hard to shut off a 20-year military career, so I’m still with the Reserves, just to keep my finger in the pie.”



ILLUSTRATION: KELLY SCHYKULSKI.COLAGENE.COM