

# There's no place like home for your office

By **NANCY SUNDBROM**  
Special to the Record-Eagle

Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home, but add an office into the mix, and you've got convenience and efficiency as well. Throughout the Grand Traverse region, a number of people have chosen to make their home and business office one and the same, and with positive results. Overwhelmingly, they say the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages, and now that they've had a chance to blend the two spaces, it would take a lot to convince them to give up the arrangement.

Anne Noble has been able to fulfill her dream of residing in northern Michigan while pursuing her passion for timber frame construction. An award-winning commercial interior designer, Noble now runs Grand Traverse Timberpeg and is a manufacturer's representative for Timberframe homes. She and her husband, John Rabideau, moved to Leelanau County almost three years ago and began building a Timberframe home that would be a demonstration model as well as their home and office.

Located on Bodas Road near Sugarloaf Resort, the home has many elements pulled from Noble's lifelong fascination with barns. There is a sense of openness, an impressive cathedral ceiling, exposed beams throughout the interior, ceilings with a distinctive sense of geometry and expansive windows that take advantage of the spacious views of the property. Noble's upstairs office is in a loft space that could have been a bedroom, and is accented with a skylight, soaring beams overhead and panoramic views.

"It was all part of the inspiration," said Noble, who uses the space to work on design and site plans, "and there's a wonderful sense of warmth and comfort no matter what part of the house you're in. Timberframe offers a lot of simplicity and honesty, so when you walk into the home, you understand what went into putting it together. For me, it's like living in the coolest fort you ever played in as a kid."

Noble jokes that one of the advantages to having a home and office under one roof is that she's more motivated to keep it clean. She gives regular open houses (call 228-5111 for appointments or visit her Website at [gt-timberpeg.com](http://gt-timberpeg.com) for more information), and the home is actually a spec and available for sale, which means she can expect visitors at any time.

"We just love being there, and I don't think I've ever had a better place to work. It's certainly the best commute I've ever had," said Noble. "When we sell this house, we plan to build another one just like it."

Colleen Bagley and Bill Haskin are the owners of Money Mailer of Grand Traverse and Old Mission Tax, respectively. They designed and built their

home as a unique place to live and work, a title it was given when it was featured last year on the Traverse Symphony Orchestra Home Tour.

Haskin's office is downstairs in the walkout basement level with a separate area for an assistant plus a separate storage room for files and materials, and there are two upstairs offices, including Bagley's and an assistant's office with shared equipment. They have three

*Record-Eagle/Elizabeth Conley*  
**Ann Noble of Cedar works in her timberframe home office. She is a manufacturer's representative for Timberframe Homes and the residence also serves as a model home.**



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**Anne Noble,  
Grand Traverse Timberpeg**

networked computers, a wireless high-speed Internet connection, six-line phone system and a TV/stereo system in each office.

"Key factors in our design scheme were to be sure we weren't stepping on each other's toes throughout the workday," explained Bagley. "Bill needed space to spread out so he has a football field-sized desk, and I need proximity to my gardens, so I have a sunroom with plants next to my office with garden beds and a pond just outside the door."

Bagley and Haskin situated their desks to maximize the view, which overlooks Bowers Harbor and a valley with vineyards and orchards. "In all cases we took into account Feng Shui issues," said Bagley, "such as power positions allowing views of the entry doors and driveway to see arrivals and departures, and plenty of light and air flow."

The couple also made sure to personalize their offices. Haskin's has a golf motif and

nature art theme where woodland animals co-mingle with tigers (as in Woods) and bears (Jack Nicklaus). Bagley's office features signed photos and prints from her days in TV and at Grand Traverse Resort, plus stuffed animals collected from travels to several continents.

"We love working out of our home," said Bagley. "Our commute is one to two flights of stairs except on days when we're out of the office seeing clients. We are comfortable seeing clients in our home, but to increase that comfort we've added extra safety touches such as indoor/outdoor carpeting on wooden walkways outside to reduce slipperiness in winter plus walkway lighting, and two doorbells, one on each floor. The only inconvenience is it's hard to ignore the phone which can and does ring at any time of the day or night and can intrude on personal time."

Nancy Sundstrom is a local freelance writer.

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