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Office space idea gives home new lease on life

Subhead

Erin Dwyer
Developments

John and Dawn Harvey have opened their home to business - so to speak.

The couple has turned their former home on Hovey Road in Quispamsis into the KV Business Centre, a space featuring self-contained, furnished offices for lease complete with kitchen facilities, storage, a common board room, wi-fi Internet access, fax service and other amenities.

The idea of converting their former home came to the Harveys last summer when they were looking at moving into a new house.

"We had put a lot of blood, sweat and tears into the place and we really didn't want to walk away from it," John Harvey said.

Instead, they borrowed the idea from what's done in large centres, such as Toronto, where an entire floor of a condominium complex is converted into leasable space, and used it this winter to convert their suburban bungalow into six office spaces.

Harvey, who is the New Brunswick agent for Data Business Forms, is the first, and so far only, tenant.

"And I'm lonely," he said.

He hopes not for long. Last month, the couple acquired a leasing agent.

Harvey said the business centre is ideal for two types of clients - mobile professionals, like out-of-province sales representatives moving into the area, and home-based business people who have outgrown their corner of the rec room.

"They can show up with a cell phone and a laptop and they are in business because we supply all the basic office furnishings," Harvey said.

Harvey said it's ideal for small businesses.

"Small business is so important to the economy and everyone is trying to find a way to leverage their money to get the most out of their dollar," he said. "This is one way."

For more information on the KV Business Centre, phone 646-0808 or visit www.office.9k.com.



(Peter Walsh/Telegraph-Journal)
John Harvey, owner of the KV Business Centre, hopes to have plenty of company at his newly opened office space leasing business.

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St. Martins, once the site of shipbuilding and shipping, is steeped in tradition.

But now a new business in the small seaside village is bringing back another steeped ritual.

Mrs. Brown's Team Room, which opened in July, is offering afternoon teas in true British fashion in the relaxing atmosphere of a 19th century shipbuilder's home.

"I'm sure he built ships that carried tea at that time," owner Jackie Bartlett pondered about the original homeowner.

Bartlett opened the tearoom in her home at 133 Main St. after retiring a year ago to St. Martins - a place she had visited numerous times during summer holidays.

"But there was never anywhere to have a cup of tea," she said.

So when she moved to St. Martins, she decided to pursue her retirement dream and open a tearoom where she could serve afternoon tea - an old British tradition that seems to be hot again in a world of fast frothy lattes to go, and one that she grew up with.

"I grew up in Scotland and some of my fondest memories are afternoon teas with my grandmother or with friends."

In her travels across Canada and Europe, she discovered to her distraught most restaurants don't know how to serve a decent cup of tea - a finding that the Tea Association of Canada supports. Its research shows that 60 per cent of tea drinkers - whose numbers are swelling across Canada as researchers discover the health benefits of tea - do not order tea in restaurants.

"You get dribbley pots and teabags thrown in lukewarm water," Bartlett said.

At Mrs. Brown's Tea Room, visitors are served a freshly brewed pot of tea steeped from tea leaves that they have chosen from some 30 different kinds, including the house tea, Taylor of Harrogate's Yorkshire Red, which has been awarded the "Best Cup of Tea in England," and Rooibos Provence, a South African red bush tea with hints of lavender and currants, which is part of a new health craze. All of the teas are also sold in the business' teashop.

They can either sip just a cup of tea or have it served in "afternoon tea" style with freshly baked scones, tea sandwiches and homemade desserts.

There is also a teddy bear tea served with teddy bear-shaped sandwiches and sweets for children - or children at heart. Recently, a couple of elderly women decided they wanted just a spot of tea and opted for the children's menu.

"They were two ladies in their 80s and they were just giggling like little girls over their teddy bear tea and their cookies," Bartlett said.

"It was just so sweet to see."

The tearoom is open every day from 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, call 833-4499 or visit www.mrsbrownstearoom.com.

Music from the Heart has moved to an expanded studio.

With a growing number of students, Saint John music teacher Elaine Boulanger move her family and her business this summer into a larger and more central location at 145 Metcalf St.

She turned an entire floor of a three-unit house into a place where students can learn music, converting a living room into a waiting room and bedrooms into studio spaces.

Location was a deciding factor.

"I had to do it for the business because it's so central for everybody to get to," Boulanger said.

Boulanger knows all about the importance of location. After moving from Red Head to Millidgeville in 2004, her student load tripled.

"Instead of turning students away, I hired teachers."

Recently, she added two more teachers, increasing her staff to five, including herself. The other teachers are Sarah Jacquard (piano), Chris Braydon (guitar), Tifani Cook (piano) and Maggie Stephenson (piano).

"If all the teachers are full, there will be over 160 lessons happening each week," she said.

Music from the Heart offers instruction in piano, voice, theory, and guitar.

As well as private lessons, group classes are available for singers and young piano students and a Mini Mozart class is offered to children as young as four.

For more information, visit elaineboulanger.com or call 672-2305.

Erin Dwyer writes the Developments column for the Telegraph-Journal. It appears Tuesday. If you have an item or suggestions contact us at dwyer.erin@telegraphjournal.com or 1-506-645-3338.

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