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Telecommuter Connection: Martha Phinney Goodwine Gone to the Dogs

With 12 years of telecommuting experience under her belt, Martha Phinney Goodwine is one of the more seasoned home-based employees here in New England. Goodwine began working from her Amherst, N.H., home in 1996 when the company closed the Merrimack, N.H., facility. Since 2005, she has been working from her home in Hollis, N.H.



Martha Phinney Goodwine

"I had never considered telecommuting before the opportunity was presented to me, but with a new, secluded (thus quiet) home and a new Dalmatian puppy to train, the timing seemed right. I made the decision to telecommute and I have come to love it," she said.

But it wasn't love at first sight for Goodwine. "It was a little unsettling at first—the isolation every day." Having spent almost 20 years in busy office environments (the Mill and Parker Street sites in Maynard, Mass., as well as sites in Acton and Marlborough, Mass., and Merrimack and Nashua, N.H.), she missed the fellowship of co-workers.

"I also recall hearing the doubt in people's voices when I said I worked from home. Was I really working?" she says. "And, I had my own doubts about being 'out of sight, out of mind'. Would my career get derailed? Would I be laid off?"

"Clearly, none of those things happened and today I couldn't be happier or more thankful for the opportunity to work from home," she said. "I try to stay connected by traveling occasionally or by attending local meetings and networking events. It gives me a chance to wear the clothes gathering dust in my closet and to meet with colleagues face-to-face. And what a treat to visit the cafeteria and have someone else make my lunch!"

She loves the flexibility, especially now that she has remarried and added a second dog, a Weimaraner, to the family. However, she says, "one thing telecommuters learn quickly is that you work far more hours at home than in the office. You can't walk out the office door at the end of the day and leave it all behind you—and you really don't have sick days or snow days like you do when you're in an office.

"I feel like the mailman working at home—nothing can deter me! I have virtual meetings with people at all hours of the day and night," she said. "For one three-month period I had weekly meetings at midnight because the facilitator was in Spain."

But she wouldn't trade that schedule for the world. The flexibility allows her to spend time with her dogs and to help with her favorite charity, [Wynn Dog Rescue](#), based in Jaffrey, N.H. The organization rescues abused and neglected dogs, called Satos, from Puerto Rico. Goodwine, who majored in pre-veterinary medicine at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, helps to take care of the dogs first when they are in quarantine and later during visits from prospective adoption families. She also provides training tips to the new adoption families and says she intends to do much more in retirement.

Cycling is also a passion for Goodwine, who has raced up Mount Washington three times, placing second in the women's division in two of those attempts. She has also toured many states in the U.S., Italy, Spain, and Austria in Europe, and the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Today, with two dogs and walking six to eight miles every day, she has tapered off from the 2,000 miles she logged during past racing seasons and now cycles just for fun and exercise.

Goodwine began working at Digital Equipment Corp. (DEC) as a temporary worker during her college years, working summers and vacations to earn board money for her horse. After graduation, she joined DEC full time in 1978, starting in the corporate international relocation department and then moving to international field service as a project specialist. Feeling that her undergraduate pre-veterinary education wasn't going to be an asset in her new position, she returned to college, earning a bachelor's degree in business from Boston University and a MBA from Southern New Hampshire College. In the early 1980s, she was hired as an entry level accountant and has been in finance ever since.

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