

BUSINESS

KENNEBEC JOURNAL

DOWNEAST DOG NEWS

Full of good tales

By MECHELE COOPER
Staff Writer

Holly Sherburne doesn't read the dog news monthly she publishes to Pippin, her black lab mix, or Molly, her Austrian cattle dog. But they do help with ideas.

The publication, distributed around the state, has become a must-read for pooch lovers.

Downeast Dog News was started by Sherburne, a Gardiner Area High School graduate, eight months ago and is the go-to newspaper for doggie information on nutrition, health, grooming and training.

Sherburne, 35, who now lives in Warren with her husband, Peter Cella, an electrical contractor, got the idea while living on the West Coast.

"They had a free monthly dog newspaper out there that I looked forward to every month," Sherburne said. "I thought it was so much fun to read and wanted to start one when I got back here."

Her publication can now be found in more than 200 locations from Wells to Aroostook County. Circulation has grown from 10,000 issues a month to 14,000, she said.

But it took hard work and determination. She had to be out on the road every weekend this past summer and attended different functions to get the word out. She also talked to potential advertisers to see what they wanted. What was most important to them was the quality of the paper she would use.

"That's why it's printed on high-quality, white paper," she said. "I want the ads to be seen. And I even hear people say they read all the ads because they're really nice-looking and interesting."

Sherburne attended the University of New Hampshire after graduating from Gardiner in 1989, then moved to Oregon where she lived for 13 years.

She has a master's degree in environmental health and worked in that field for six years. When she came back to Maine, she got a job as a Webmaster for Bowdoin College. She did that for two years, then applied to Coastal Enterprises for a business loan.

"My goal is for Downeast Dog News to serve as the premier resource for sharing news, information and stories about Maine's dog community," she said. "Addi-



Contributed photo

DOGGONE GOOD IDEA:Holly Sherburne started Downeast Dog News eight months ago. It's the go-to newspaper for doggie information on nutrition, health, grooming and training. Monthly circulation is now 14,000, she says.

tional goals are to cultivate a community of responsible dog ownership and to support dog-friendly businesses and Maine-made products and services.

The newspaper

includes nine articles and has built herself a Web site, www.downdognews.com

Sumac Grant-Johnson of Lincolnville has written a number of articles, including topics on fly-ball, a relay race for dogs with jumps and tennis balls, and the Canine Good Citizenship Program. The American Kennel Club's program is designed to reward dogs who have good manners at home and in the community.

"I think it's fantastic, and something much needed in the area," Grant-Johnson said. "I'm a dog trainer and we do a variety of classes and seminars. It's a great way for all us dog people to collaborate and connect, which is sometimes hard to do."

Sherburne's parents, Dale and Russell Sherburne of Brunswick, are thrilled that their daughter took the risk to go after her dream and that it turned out such a fun, informative high-quality paper. Dale Sherburne said they pitch in

and deliver papers each month.

"We're proud of what Holly's done and what her paper stands for, and we're glad to be a part of it," Dale Sherburne said.

Karen Duguay, owner of Wags Day-care for Dogs on the Leighton Road in Augusta, is one of Sherburne's advertisers. She keeps recent copies on her counter for customers.

"I think it's great," Duguay said. "It's something needed in this area and my customers love it. They pick up a copy every time it comes out."

Sherburne said her goal is to increase the paper's size.

"We provide a network and help advertisers," she said. "But also we help people make connections. There's definitely a big community."

Subscriptions are \$25 a year.

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because dog news is good news!
Volume 1 • Issue 8 • December 2006

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