



By [Sharon Handy](#)

# Secretary of State turns to Mainer to train family dog

*John Kerry reunites with yellow Labrador puppy named Ben*

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Courtesy Frances Plessner

**MORRILL, Maine** —U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry broke away from international diplomacy on Tuesday to come to Maine to pick up his yellow Labrador puppy from a Waldo County dog trainer.

Kerry hired Frances Plessner, owner of Puddleduck Kennel in Morrill, in September to train Ben, his 5-month-old puppy. On Tuesday, the secretary of state returned to Maine to pick Ben up, Plessner said.

Plessner, who has trained dogs for almost 25 years, described Ben as "very smart and a great companion." Over the last two months, Plessner said Ben learned to sit, heel, come, stay and go to his place, in other words, his dog bed.

On Monday, members of the U.S. Secret Service visited Plessner's home in advance of Kerry's arrival on Tuesday. Plessner said she kept Kerry's trip a secret, even from her own sister, who lives a short distance away.

"My sister called me on Monday and said, 'I think there's a drug bust in town because I saw the SUVs. I think it might be on your road,'" Plessner said.

Plessner said she believes Ben will be a "true companion" for Kerry, who clearly loves his dog.