



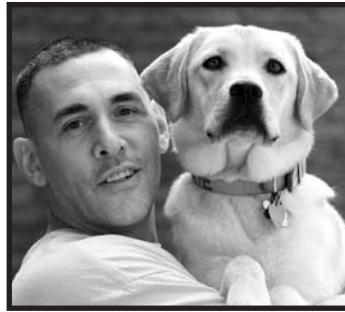
Puppies Behind Bars

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PHOTOS BY RADHIKA CHALASANI

TRAINING INMATES TO RAISE SERVICE DOGS FOR THE DISABLED AND EXPLOSIVE DETECTION CANINES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

Summer 2010

All Because of Pelé

CHRIS GOEHNER SOUNDS LIKE A GUY WITH A very bright future. Executive vice-president of student government at Central Washington University, he's studying political science and public policy, and planning to spend the summer in Washington, D.C., working for a senator on the Veterans Affairs Committee. His wife may not be able to accompany him to the capital—"I'm telling her to think of it as a three-month deployment," says Goehner, a Navy veteran—but he wouldn't dream of going without his service dog, Pelé. And therein hangs a tale of triumph.

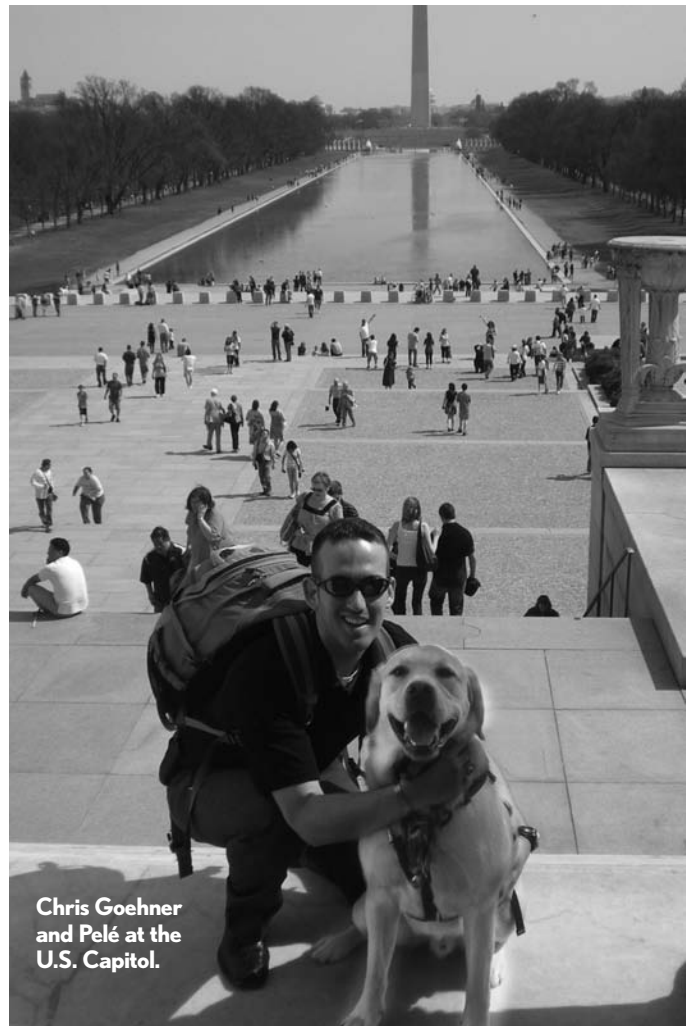
Goehner's world was dramatically altered, like those of so many young men and women, by the war in Iraq. In 2004, "life was going as good as it can for a kid just out of high school," he says: a solid network of friends, weekends on the beach, a new wife. He was on the fast track to a successful career in the Navy.

But by May 4, 2006, Goehner was contemplating suicide. After two tours in Iraq, where he had worked as a medic with a "MASH"-style shock trauma platoon, he was torn up inside by the invisible wounds of post-traumatic stress disorder (P.T.S.D.). The sleeplessness, the nightmares, the fear. And the sense of loss: "I knew I should not think of self-harm, but I just felt empty and like I should not be back home stateside. My unit and mission was

done for the moment, but I wanted to do more. I wanted to stay until the job was done.

"I hit the wall, and could not understand what was in my head, how to think," he recalls. "Things that never used to bother me now had an intense effect. I had trouble establishing relation-

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Chris Goehner and Pelé at the U.S. Capitol.

PHOTO BY CHRIS GOEHNER

ships again. It was hard for me to trust people.” A man who had always been sensitive, with lots of feelings, Goehner found himself emotionally numb, with a head full of thoughts that were driving him crazy. He couldn’t put two sentences together for his college assignments. His first marriage was a casualty too.

Then he did a very courageous thing: He got help. Therapy and heavy medication helped stabilize him, but the going was still rough. It wasn’t until 2009 that a friend emailed him a newspaper article about Puppies Behind Bars and its Dog Tags program, which provides wounded warriors with service dogs.

Enter the yellow Lab, Pelé. In November 2009, Goehner was one of the first class of veterans to train with their new service dogs inside Mid-Orange Correctional Facility, where Pelé had been raised by inmates. Never having been in a prison before, the veteran prepared by watching non-stop episodes of any show about any type of prison environment—which led him to expect “a place with much more concrete ... guys yelling and

Discovering that some of the inmates had been in the military was especially meaningful to Goehner.

“Those inmates have helped me as another brother, and are giving us as veterans a gift.

They did a crime that got them into prison, but they are reaching outside the walls to help others.”

walking around in little cliques, fearful of the surroundings.”

But Mid-Orange felt safe to him. And after learning about the inmates, eating lunch with them, and seeing their commitment to the puppy-raising program, Goehner had a new take on prison life.

“Yes, the inmates have been there a while, but they are still working towards something. My raiser gave me so much to learn and understand about my service animal. He ensured we felt comfortable using the commands and showed us how to apply them in our life. He was patient with me, listened to my concerns, and helped me leave the prison with a functional working relationship with my Pelé.”

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The help they gave him was both fast and measurable. Thanks to Pelé, he was able to cut way back on his medications. Within a month, he had reduced the dose of one drug from 600 mgs to 100 mgs, and is now down to 25. He can sleep, because he knows Pelé will wake him up from a nightmare by jumping on the bed. The dog

also prevents Goehner (who has remarried) from accidentally hitting his wife, Stephanie, during the night, by jumping up and mouthing his arm.

Though at first Stephanie had to work at standing back and letting Chris and Pelé become a unit, she is now wholehearted in her praise. “Pelé is an amazing partner for Chris,” she

says. “His personality is so cheerful and fun, he is by far one of the goofiest dogs we have ever met, but the change into ‘work’ mode is amazing!” As Goehner notes, “Steph no longer has to worry about what will happen if people set me off. She knows that Pelé will grab my sleeve and tug me out of the room.”

Earlier this year, Goehner traveled to Washington, D.C. to advocate for student financial-aid reform, navigating crowds and stresses that would have been insurmountable without his canine companion. A three-hour travel delay? Everyone on the plane was upset, Goehner says—except Pelé. And in Washington, “because of Pelé,” Goehner ended up talking to sena-

“I don’t really deal with angry people any more,” he reports. “It’s amazing to see how happy other people are to see Pelé.”

tors, representatives, and other officials, handing out P.B.B. pamphlets along the way. He is grateful for every chance to share his story, especially with veterans who are reluctant to get help for P.T.S.D. “They hear what has happened for me, and are now willing to talk about their experience. It is as if the taboo of P.T.S.D. is finally something we can talk about.”

All along the way, at home and on the road, Goehner adds, his interactions with other people are colored, and vastly improved, by their reactions to his service dog. “I don’t really deal with angry people any more,” he reports. “It’s amazing to see how happy other people are to see Pelé.”

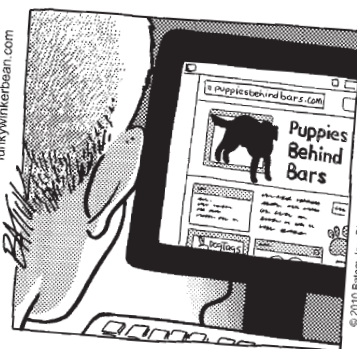
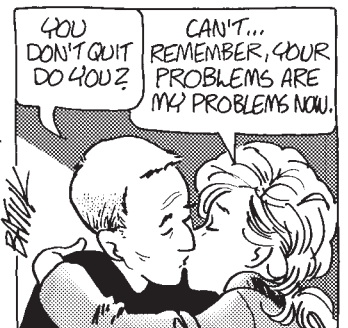
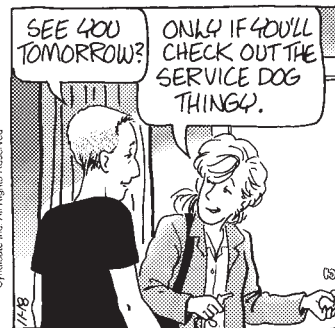
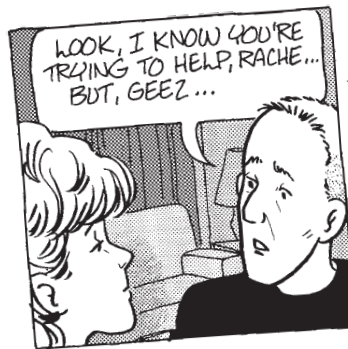
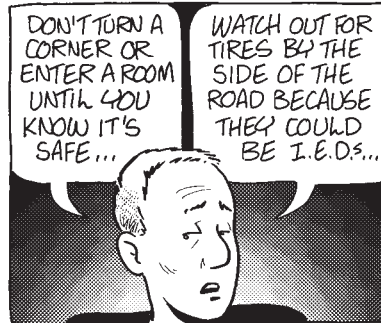
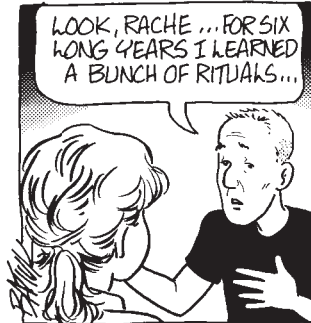
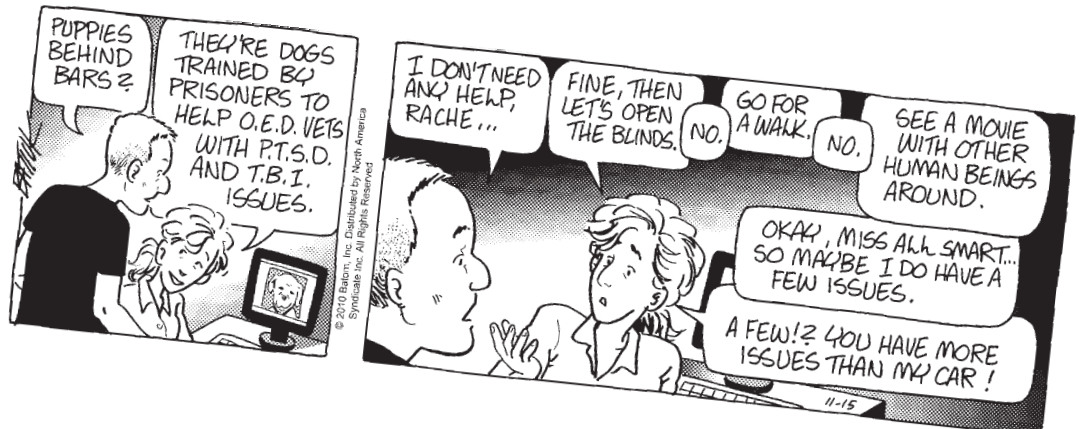
Even his most recent visit to Arlington cemetery was different, because of Pelé. As Goehner wrote in an email to P.B.B. right after the experience:

“Going to see the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier again with Pelé was hard, emotionally. Pelé sat and watched as the guard marched from one end to another; it was as though Pelé was paying his respects to the men as well. Pelé saluted before he left Arlington, and in a way, as I walked through, I was showing the others in the grave [that Pelé is] my buddy who is keeping me from laying down beside them. There is nowhere else I can go to see a tribute to all of our military and our purpose as service members. I was able to walk a little bit taller, and Pelé popped along a little bit happier, knowing that we both showed our respects for them, together.”

See Us In the Funny Pages!

COMIC-STRIP CREATOR Tom Batiuk believes that America's funny pages should reflect what's happening in the world. "I want to put my characters through what real people are going through," he says—and that includes "the longest war the country's ever fought." So Wally, one of the characters in Batiuk's longest-running strip, *Funky Winkerbean*, went to Iraq and Afghanistan, returning home with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Looking for a way to continue the story line, Batiuk happened to hear P.B.B. president Gloria Gilbert Stoga on N.P.R., and realized he'd found the perfect narrative device. After talking to Gilbert Stoga and to one of the vets with a P.B.B.-raised service dog, Batiuk began the ongoing tale of Wally's partnership with his service dog, Buddy. P.B.B. thanks him for allowing it to excerpt a few of those strips—and for the heart and humor with which he captured an all-too familiar problem.



PAX LEADER

GLENN CLOSE, THE RENOWNED ACTRESS and longtime Puppies Behind Bars supporter, has co-directed—with Sarah Harvey—a new documentary, *Pax*, about wounded veteran Bill Campbell and his P.B.B.-raised service dog. Close's directorial debut premiered on May 12 at the G.I. Film Festival in Washington, D.C.



Glenn Close, Bill Campbell, and Pax.

The screening, at the Canadian embassy, was followed by a panel discussion on post-traumatic stress disorder (P.T.S.D.), moderated by former ABC News co-anchor Bob Woodruff and featuring Close, Harvey, Campbell's wife, Domenica, P.B.B.'s Gloria Gilbert Stoga, and Brigadier General Loree Sutton, the army's highest-ranking psychiatrist.

Newsletter readers will be familiar with Campbell's story: He returned home from Iraq completely disabled by P.T.S.D. and traumatic brain injury, but reclaimed his life with the help of Pax, a yellow Lab raised by inmate Laurie Kellogg at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women as part of P.B.B.'s Dog Tags initiative, which provides service dogs for disabled veterans. *Pax* follows Campbell's first meeting with Kellogg, which took place in prison. "I have been inspired and moved by one story after another, but never as much as I am by the story of Bill Campbell and Pax," Close wrote in her Lively Licks blog on the website Fetchdog. "A dog, ini-

tially loved and trained by a woman who has lost her freedom, but wants to give back to society, is enabling the life of a veteran of the Iraq war who was imprisoned by his disabling injuries. The story speaks for itself."

"A dog, initially loved and trained by a woman who has lost her freedom, but wants to give back to society, is enabling the life of a veteran of the Iraq war who was imprisoned by his disabling injuries.

The story speaks for itself."

That may be so, but Close has played an essential role in getting the world to listen. Her presence at P.B.B. fundraisers, her Fetchdog blog, her appearance on Oprah's show last year, and now her documentary film—all help ensure that wounded veterans know the Dog Tags program exists, and that P.B.B. gets the public support it needs to continue its work.

PHOTO BY PRISCILLA RATTAZZI

DONATION FORM

I would like to sponsor and name a puppy (minimum donation: \$3000.)

Please accept my donation for:

- 1 puppy's weekend visit to NYC (\$35) A sleeping crate for 1 puppy (\$85)
 Leashes and bowls for 1 puppy (\$50) Other amount

Please charge my credit card:

- Visa MasterCard AmEx

(Please list name as it appears on card. List billing address.)

Card Number: _____ Exp: _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

- Add my friend to your mailing list

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State & Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

(Tax ID # 13-3969389) Please mail your tax-deductible contribution with this form to:
PUPPIES BEHIND BARS | 10 East 40th Street, 19th floor, New York, NY 10016

CFC# 11902

Puppies at a Glance:

A quick look at P.B.B.'s 14-year history, and current impact, by the numbers.

Puppies raised: **624**

Puppies graduated: **401**

Number of dogs that have become

• Service dogs: **57**

• Service dogs for veterans (Dog Tags): **23**

• Guide dogs: **83**

• Explosive-detection canines (E.D.C.s): **247**

• Companions to disabled kids: **13**

Prisons involved: **6**

Inmate puppy-raisers (current): **124**

Puppies being raised (current): **76**



Paroled puppy-raisers who've worked at P.B.B.: **8**

U.S. states where Dog Tags service dogs work: **16**

Countries where E.D.C.s work: **16**

U.S. states where E.D.C.s work: **25** plus the District of Columbia



PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: RADHIKA CHALASANI; XAN RUBEY, DOGHOUSE STUDIOS; RADHIKA CHALASANI

A puppy is sponsored and named and placed into the arms of her highly skilled inmate raiser, who is prepped with textbooks and supplies. Throughout the 18 months that the pup spends in prison, she outgrows many collars and leashes and devours bags and bags of dog food. The pup and her inmate raiser attend weekly P.B.B.-instructed classes where they learn to use her training toys. She leaves prison for routine veterinary check-ups and ventures out with specially trained volunteers on socialization outings that expose her to family life, restaurants, stores, and nursing homes. Upon graduating, she earns her working-dog certification and is ready to serve a disabled individual or law enforcement official.

Sponsor and name a puppy!

Be part of a P.B.B. story and support us!

THE GIFT OF GAISMAN

PHILANTHROPIST CATHERINE V. “Kitty” Gaisman, who died this May, became involved with P.B.B. through one of its founding board members, the late great Joan LaCaille.

A generous and enthusiastic supporter, Gaisman sponsored 15 dogs over the years, and would often talk about the letters she received from their puppy raisers, and how important they were. “Like her very close friend Joan, Kitty really understood, and embraced, the essence of our work,” says P.B.B.’s Gloria Gilbert Stoga. “She was a wonderfully elegant, sophisticated, and gracious woman. We will miss her dearly.” Gaisman devoted much of her life to New York’s Mount Sinai hospital, graduating from their school of nursing in 1940, serving as a volunteer overseas during World War II, then working as a nursing supervisor at the hospital. Ultimately, she and her husband, Henry J. Gaisman, would be responsible for helping fund and shape many programs at the Mount Sinai Medical Center.

PHOTOGRAPH BY RADHIKA CHALASANI

STAR MUSCLE

As the newsletter went to press, P.B.B. friends and supporters were looking forward to a “pick-up” spring benefit: cocktails on May 26 with the wildly talented **John Turturro**, whose film credits include *O*

Brother, Where Art Thou?, *Margot at the Wedding*, *The Big Lebowski*, and all three *Transformers* movies. Turturro planned to announce a \$100,000 anonymous challenge grant.

LOVING LAS VEGAS

Vibram, which provides the soles for most U.S. military footwear, and has been a stalwart P.B.B. partner, hosted a benefit for the program in Las Vegas. Marine veteran **Jacob Hyde** attended with his P.B.B.-raised service dog, **Mya**. The event was a sure bet, as Vibram picked up all the expenses, and threw a \$11,500 check into the pot as well. The odds are that board member **Kevin Donahue**, who runs Vibram’s parent company, Quabaug, had something to do with P.B.B.’s Vegas win.

A PRESIDENT WITH CLASS

Gloria Gilbert Stoga, P.B.B.’s founder and president, is headed back to school:

Harvard Business School. H.B.S. selected Gilbert Stoga as one of three nonprofit executives given full scholarships to attend a week-long course in July on “Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management.”

PAWS FOR APPLAUSE

NOTES FROM HQ

Since coming aboard in March, **Tenika Thompson** has been applying her 15 years of nonprofit database experience to managing the P.B.B. system. “I have always been a dog lover,” Thompson says, “and the idea of prison inmates making a difference in society while serving their sentences intrigued me greatly.” Speaking of inmates who’ve made a difference, former puppy-raiser **Michael Varella**, who was released from Mid-Orange prison in December, is helping out at P.B.B. in a couple of ways: providing at-home “special ed” for pups with socialization issues that can’t be dealt with in prison, as well as lending a hand at the office twice a week.

TRUST BUT VERIFY

For the third year in a row, P.B.B. has received **Charity Navigator’s** highest rating for sound fiscal management—

four stars. In its notification letter, America’s largest independent charity evaluator reported that: “Only 13% of the charities we rate have received at least 3 consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that Puppies Behind Bars consistently executes its mission in a fiscally responsible way, and outperforms most other charities in America. This ‘exceptional’ designation from Charity Navigator differentiates Puppies Behind Bars from its peers and demonstrates to the public it is worthy of their trust.” Charity Navigator’s evaluations, available online at www.charitynavigator.com, are free to the nonprofits it rates and to the public.

DUDLEY DOES RIGHT

On April 27, Gloria Gilbert Stoga brought an engaging visual aid to her talk at Philadelphia’s Acorn Club. **Dudley**, a “Glab” (golden/Labrador retriever mix) bred by P.B.B., performed service-dog commands and charmed the audience of 85 local charitable and social leaders. The presentation, organized by P.B.B. board member **Bonnie McCausland**, also included a video clip from “The American Veteran” and a lively Q&A session.



Puppies
Behind
Bars

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