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# PUPPIES BEHIND BARS



PHOTOS BY VALERIE SHAFR

TRAINING INMATES TO RAISE PUPPIES TO BE GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND  
AND EXPLOSIVE-DETECTION DOGS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

THE PUPPY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

Winter 2002 /2003

## N.Y.P.D. PUPS: Tennis Balls, Dynamite, and Keeping the City Safe

**N**.Y.P.D. Detective Ken Silva has just been "in the field," which on this late October morning means he's been playing with a two-year-old black Labrador retriever named Bowman up at Fort Schuyler in the Bronx. At least, that's what Bowman thought they were doing, as he looked for his "toy"—a dynamite-scented tennis ball that Silva and police officer Glenn Ostermann kept hiding from him.

Bowman, it should be noted straight away, is among the most popular dogs to have graduated from the Puppies Behind Bars program. "Every once in a while we get a dog who is the greatest, who everyone just adores—Bowman is one of those dogs," says P.B.B. president Gloria Gilbert Stoga. Now Bowman is also on track to become one of New York's Finest: an explosive-detection canine.

On weekdays, Fort Schuyler, a Marine/Navy reserve center, is staffed only with a skeleton crew, which makes it a perfect place for Silva, who's the kennel master and head dog-trainer for the N.Y.P.D. Bomb Squad, to educate his canine students. "We're at the very early stages of training Bowman," Silva says, "so what we did today is just bring him to a strange environment and try to see if he has that 'play drive,' which he does have. He'll play in any kind of environment: he doesn't care where he is. So he's playing with his handler. He's associating the smell of

explosives with the tennis ball. And he thinks he's looking for his toy."

Next, Bowman will learn to sit when he finds the ball. (While narcotics-detection dogs are trained to scratch when they locate something, for obvious reasons explosive-detection dogs need a different signal.) At the same time, Silva will be teaching Ostermann, Bowman's handler, to read the dog's behavior, "to see what his dog is interested in, what he's not interested in," as Silva describes it. "He's got to notice things the dog may have missed—there may be a bunch of boxes in the corner, and he may not be satisfied that his dog checked them thoroughly, he's gotta bring the dog back to look at those boxes—stuff like that. He's gotta learn search patterns, what to look for, things of that nature."



N.Y.P.D. Detective Ken Silva and Bowman

Three weeks in, Bowman is doing superbly, Silva says. Eventually, he will know the smell of thousands of different explosives, from dynamite to C-4. By Christmas, he should be joining a fellow-P.B.B. graduate, Sheeba, as a full-fledged explosive-detection dog. New Yorkers may be able to spot them working United Nations gatherings or the U.S. Open tennis tournament.

Sheeba was raised at the Edna Mahan women's prison in New Jersey; and Bowman got his training

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## N.Y.P.D. Pups

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at the Fishkill, New York, men's facility, but neither had quite the temperament or confidence to become guide dogs. In the past, they might have gone on as companions to blind children, or to some other helping role. But last spring, during Fleet Week, Gilbert Stoga took an early morning jog past the Intrepid, where the N.Y.P.D. bomb squad was checking vehicles for explosives. She had recently returned from visiting the canine-training headquarters of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms and was enthusiastic about a new P.B.B. initiative: raising dogs to be used by A.T.F. in the United States and abroad. Running past the N.Y.P.D. bomb-squad technicians and their dogs, she realized P.B.B. could do the same for local law enforcement. Since then, while Sheeba and Bowman have joined the N.Y.P.D., Duke and Kitty have gone on for training at A.T.F. and will graduate in the spring as explosive-detection canines. They will join Alex, Demi, Pekoe, and Rudy, all P.B.B.-raised pups now working for A.T.F. in the U.S., South Africa, Cypress, and Italy.

In July, Silva and police officer Paul Perricone, Sheeba's handler, paid a visit to the inmate puppy-raisers at Edna Mahan. "Skeptical" is the word Silva uses to describe his attitude before he visited the prison. But he says they were really impressed by the way the program was set up: "Everything seemed to be geared around the dogs." He could see how attached the dogs were to the inmates and how clean everything was. As for the women, he adds, "We had a great conversation with them, especially with Shakirah, Sheeba's raiser. They were all willing to hear what I had to say, they were all very interested, they were all enthusiastic."

A native New Yorker, Silva is the kind of guy who gets straight to the bottom line: "You can pretty much tell just by looking at a dog whether the dog's happy or unhappy, and the dogs at Edna Mahan all looked very, very happy." The new partnership with P.B.B. has made the N.Y.P.D. Bomb Squad's kennel master happy too. "I've gotten some good dogs from shelters, but there's a lot more work involved," he says. "I can get a dog from P.B.B. and immediately start the explosives training and not have to spend a lot of time doing obedience and stuff like that. From my end, it's a no-brainer. I know I'm getting a quality dog. It's almost like a gift."

## The Pia Principle

As they always seem to do, the pups took center stage at P.B.B.'s New York fundraiser on October 23rd. One of the first guests to arrive was Victoria, guide dog to Willi Richards, who kept her poise even as Pia Lindstrom's Central Park West apartment filled with guests, chatter, and other P.B.B. graduates. Lucie, guide dog to Judy Goldman, came all the way from Pittsburgh for the event. Sheeba, who is the first P.B.B.-trained puppy to become an explosive-detection dog, arrived with her N.Y.P.D. handler, Paul Perricone. Ken Silva, kennel master and head trainer for the

N.Y.P.D. bomb squad, was accompanied by his dog, Gus.

But the gathering's cuteness quotient went through the roof with the arrival of little Pia, a wriggling bundle of black Lab, who had recently started her training at the Bedford Hills prison. The puppy Pia, named in honor of the hostess, was presented to Lindstrom by P.B.B. president Gloria Gilbert Stoga, and photographers snapped away as the glamorous blonde entertainment journalist cuddled with her namesake.

A Labrador puppy is a tough act to follow, but Willi Richards spoke eloquently about the confidence and comfort Victoria has brought him and told of his visit last year to the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, where he

*Left: N.Y.P.D. officer Paul Perricone and N.Y.P.D. explosive-detection canine Sheeba thank Pia Lindstrom for hosting the cocktail party. Below: (L to R) P.B.B. board member Joan LaCaille with Heather Cohane and Frances Hayward. All three women have P.B.B. puppies named for them.*



*Above: Tricia Nixon Cox and Jack Carley. Right: N.Y.P.D. officer Paul Perricone introduces Sheeba to Kitty Gaisman, who sponsored Sheeba's P.B.B. training.*





met and thanked the women who raised her to be such a wonderful guide dog. Then Detective Silva and Officer Perricone talked about Sheeba, explosive-detection dogs in general, and their role in keeping New York safe.

Jack Carley, Lindstrom's husband, turned from gracious host to inspirational auctioneer, persuading guests to bid higher and higher for a fantastic and elaborate three-foot-tall gingerbread castle. This confectionary triumph was created especially for the occasion by Carl Rothe, former assistant pastry chef at the Plaza, who is now a trainer for P.B.B. Mary Kiyonaga's generous offer took the cake, so to speak, though when the auction started she had no idea she was even going to bid. "All of a sudden I just found myself lifted up, and before I knew it I was the proud owner," she told P.B.B. afterward. She then turned her charitable act into a double-header, by donating the gingerbread castle to the children at the Ronald McDonald House on East 70th Street, which provides a place to stay for families of kids being treated at Sloan Kettering. "It's such a great program they have there," she says. "And they were so delighted."

The evening raised more than \$50,000, both from longtime supporters



and from new friends who came to learn about P.B.B.'s work. Everyone left with what one guest called "the best goodie bag I've ever gotten": each contained a gingerbread dog-house (complete with puppy) made by Rothe, dog treats donated by Wow Bow Distributors Ltd., Tommy or Dazzling perfume courtesy of Estée Lauder, and P.B.B. notepads and light-up pens.

From the warm welcome Lindstrom and Carley gave their guests to this delightful parting gift, it was an evening made possible by the growing and generous community that Puppies Behind Bars has inspired.

*Left: Pia hugs Pia. Inset: The gingerbread castle was going, going, gone!*

- On September 14, **The Poughkeepsie Journal** ran a front-page article on P.B.B. and longtime volunteer **Sue Murray**, who recently received permission from her employer, **Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp.**, to take our pups to work with her. Readers may remember Sue from the Summer 2001 newsletter, which reported that she had won **Central Hudson's Volunteer of the Year** award for her work with P.B.B.
- **The N.Y.P.D. bomb squad's** visit to the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility (see story on front page) landed P.B.B. on page one of the July 24 **Star-Ledger**, while three New Jersey television stations—**WMBC, Channel 12**, and the **New Jersey**

## PUPS IN PRINT

**affiliate of Fox TV**—brought in crews to film the pups at work.

- **Dog News** ran a glowing two-page article about the program in its October 25 issue, complete with four of the beautiful photos **Valerie Shaff** has taken for P.B.B. over the years.

- **Liz Smith** gave readers of her October 6 **New York Post** column a heads-up about P.B.B.'s October fundraiser, urging them to go and support "a wonderful organization which does terrific work." **Dan's Papers**, in its November 8 issue, spread the word to the Hamptons by devoting half a page to photographs from the party, along with a description of P.B.B.'s work.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Chris Rogers, who had worked at Puppies Behind Bars ever since he was released from the Fishkill men's prison on September 18, 2001, died on October 12th.**

**A memorial service was held on the 23rd, at Marble Collegiate Church. Chris raised two puppies, Doris and Hunter, while he was in the program at Fishkill, and had the pride and joy of knowing Hunter graduated from the Guide Dog Foundation last spring. During his 13 months as office manager, Chris became an essential part of the P.B.B. family. All those whose lives he touched miss him dearly.**



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Please accept my donation for:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please mail your tax-deductible contribution with this form to:

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## TEACHING TALENT :

A belated welcome to **Carl Rothe** and **Karen Jacobs**, P.B.B.'s newest instructors. Rothe, who with managing director Lisa Bruno runs the programs at the Fishkill and Mid-Orange men's prisons, arrived last November with a great deal of puppy expertise: he had worked with the dogs' socialization and testing at Guiding Eyes for the Blind and was also G.E.B.'s liaison with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. One of his other gifts, honed as a former pastry chef, was on display at P.B.B.'s annual fundraiser (see story on page 2). Carl recently said goodbye to his first two graduates, Rudy and Nina, brother and sister Labs who arrived at Mid-Orange the day he did and who have gone on to The Guide Dog Foundation. "I feel like they're my babies," he says.

Karen came to P.B.B. in July, also from G.E.B., where she had spent three and a half years at the training school. She's been helping set up the new program at the Danbury, Connecticut, federal prison, alongside Lisa Bruno. Her career began when she

came home one Christmas and watched a tape her mother had made for her of a TV program about extraordinary service dogs. "I thought, How wonderful they are—someone must train these dogs," she remembers. So she wrote to every service-dog organization she could find, asking about a job. At P.B.B., she says, one of the thrills is

"testing the dogs, seeing how they've learned and how much they can do, and seeing the pride in their raisers' faces."

## PAWS FOR APPLAUSE

### MONDAY THE MERRIER :

Eight employees of the Hunterdon Developmental Center in Clinton, New Jersey, came into the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for training on September 30, and shortly thereafter started taking P.B.B. pups to work with them each Monday. The center, operated by the New Jersey Department of Human Services, houses and treats mentally and physically handicapped adults. The pups bring cheer to everyone in the center, and provide physical therapy for some residents, who brush the dogs' coats or throw balls for them to

retrieve. "This is where our teaching the dogs to be comfortable with being handled all over and learning to 'stand' on command comes in very handy," says P.B.B.'s Gloria Gilbert Stoga. "The dogs bring great joy to the residents while they are becoming used to such things as wheelchairs, walkers, and physical therapy machines, which is important for our pups' socialization." Sounds like another "win-win" P.B.B. partnership!

### ANNIE, GET YOUR GRANT :

**Annie Teillon** joined P.B.B. in October as director of development. She studied pre-veterinary medicine at UVA, then worked for Merrill Lynch in its health-care investment banking division, but from the moment Teillon heard about P.B.B., she knew she wanted to become part of its mission. When she found that there were no positions open, she asked to be put on the mailing list. Four months later, after the Stavros S. Niarchos Foundation agreed to provide funding for a development director, she saw the job advertised in last summer's newsletter. Welcome, Annie—and thanks for staying on the case.

# PUPPIES BEHIND BARS

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