

# PUPPIES BEHIND BARS



VALERIE SHAFF. PHOTOS

TRAINING INMATES TO RAISE PUPPIES TO BE GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND

THE PUPPY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

Spring 1998

## ADVISORY BOARD

William D. Badger  
*President and Chief Executive Officer  
Guiding Eyes for the Blind*

Robert E. Denham  
*Former Chairman and Chief Executive  
Officer  
Salomon, Inc.*

Albert R. Dowden  
*President and Chief Executive Officer  
Volvo North America Corporation*

Glenn S. Goord  
*Commissioner  
New York State Department of  
Correctional Services*

Henry A. Kissinger  
*Chairman  
Kissinger Associates, Inc.*

Nancy Kissinger

Curt Landtroop  
*Portfolio Manager  
General Motors Investment  
Management Corporation*

Marcie  
*Guide Dog to Curt Landtroop*

William J. McDonough  
*President  
Federal Reserve Bank of New York*

Elise O'Shaughnessy  
*Contributing Editor  
Vanity Fair Magazine*

Libby Pataki  
*First Lady  
State of New York*

Fredrick J. Patrick  
*Deputy Criminal Justice Coordinator  
City of New York*

Guy L. Pidgeon, D.V.M.  
*President and Chief Executive Officer  
The Animal Medical Center*

Elliott Stein, Jr.  
*Managing Director  
Commonwealth Capital Partners*

Alan J. Stoga  
*President  
Zemi Investments, L.L.P.*

## A New Leash On Life

### *How We Got Started*

In 1990, my husband and I adopted a Labrador Retriever from one of North America's most prestigious guide-dog schools, Guiding Eyes for the Blind in Yorktown Heights, New York.

"Arrow" had been on his way to becoming a guide dog but was released from the program for medical reasons. Upon adopting Arrow, I began reading about the special breeding and training that had gone into him and was amazed to discover how much time, effort, love, and money (\$25,000) is behind each guide dog.

A large part of the extraordinary effort that goes into these special dogs comes from "puppy raisers" — individuals or families who take specially bred puppies into their homes when the pups are just eight weeks old and who spend the next sixteen months teaching them basic obedience skills and socializing them to enter the world at large. Socializing the dogs is actually the main component of a puppy raiser's task, for socialization is what helps these dogs become

confident. Confidence is the most important trait for a guide dog to have, but as it is not hereditary, it is the one trait which cannot be bred into dogs. Dogs become confident by



VALERIE SHAFF

being around human beings and by being introduced to a variety of situations at a measured pace. After sixteen months, the dogs leave their puppy raisers, return to the guide-dog school from which they came, and are

*continues inside*

## How We Got Started *(cont)*

given a series of tests to determine their level of confidence. If they pass the tests, they go on to three months of professional guide-dog training.

Two guide-dog schools, one in Ohio and one in Florida, found that prison inmates make excellent puppy raisers, and programs were started in both states to take advantage of this discovery. Not only do inmates have unlimited time to spend with the puppies, but they benefit from the responsibility of being puppy raisers in ways that are especially important to their rehabilitation: they learn patience, what it is like to be completely responsible for a living being, how to give and receive unconditional love, and — since puppy raisers take classes and train the dogs together — how to work as a team.

After several months of research, I decided to leave my job on New York Mayor Giuliani's Youth Empowerment Services Commission and devote myself full-time to founding a non-profit organization dedicated to training prison inmates to raise puppies to be guide dogs for the blind. Puppies Behind Bars, Inc. formally came into existence last July, and we began the Puppy Project in November 1997. We currently have five puppies in the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, New York State's only maximum-security prison for women.

Since each puppy is assigned to a primary raiser and an alternate, ten violent felons have become devoted participants. The pups live in the cells with their primary raisers, go to classes administered by the Puppy Project three times a week, and are furloughed one or two weekends a month to "puppy sitters"

who take the dogs into their homes in order to expose them to things they won't experience in prison. These can be as simple as hearing doorbells or the sounds of a coffee grinder, and as complex as learning how to ride in a car and walk down a crowded sidewalk.

The puppies will live at Bedford Hills for sixteen months, after which they

will spend their lives as companions to people who need them.

After working with the puppy raisers and their puppies for the past four months, I am proud of what is being accomplished. The inmates have taken tiny little creatures, who were not housebroken, did not know their names, and obeyed no commands, and have transformed them into well-behaved young pups who are a joy to be around. The raisers, too, have matured: the responsibility of raising a dog for a blind person and the opportunity to give back to society are being taken very seriously. Puppy raisers show the pups tenderness and love which had not been given expression before, and are deeply committed to supplying the solid foundations upon which guide dogs are made.

The puppies have affected the lives not only of their puppy raisers, but of virtually all the inmates and staff at the prison. It is literally impossible to walk a puppy around without being stopped by inmates who want to pet the dogs or who want to just say "hi" to them, and I am constantly being approached by corrections officers and senior staff who ask me about the puppies' training. One of our particularly sensitive pups goes to several different areas of the

prison: the sixteen- and seventeen-year-old inmates play with her; domestic violence classes use her to get the women to open up and talk; and she even visits inmates who are about to go before the parole board, for it has been found that her presence has a calming effect on the women.

Puppies Behind Bars is in need of funds to continue and expand our work. In addition to administrative costs, we must pay for dog supplies, educational supplies for the puppy raisers, and travel.



VALERIE SHAFF

will be tested to determine their suitability for guide-dog work. If they are deemed suitable, Puppies Behind Bars will donate them to guide-dog schools across the United States and Canada that need potential guide dogs at that time. If they do not continue on the track to guide work, Puppies Behind Bars will donate them to families of children with serious illnesses, where they will make trustworthy, loyal companions for a child who is suffering. In either case, these puppies, raised in such a unique environ-

Keica W., an inmate at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, is not a puppy raiser but is so interested in the program that she chose to write about it for a college course she is taking. The following excerpt is from her paper:

**"...The purpose of training these animals fulfills a desire to do something good because inmates usually have so many bad feelings about themselves. With the participation in this program, some of those feelings have a chance to change. Sometimes an inmate may feel a need to right a particular wrong she may have committed. This program gives her some power at correction psychologically.**

**The helping of a blind person gives the inmate a reason to like herself.**

**The training and caring for these animals create the desire of wanting to be a good trainer and starts the goal-setting process. Participation in one good cause often activates thoughts of taking on other good causes. With that, the inmate is psychologically and actively paying a serious debt to society."**

We also need weekend puppy sitters who are willing to commit to taking a pup one weekend a month for thirteen months. Anyone interested in puppy sitting should contact us for an interview and information about the required training session.

**If you are interested in becoming a weekend puppy sitter, making a donation, or having copies of this newsletter sent to someone you know, please call Puppies Behind Bars at 212-750-2073.**

Thank you.  
Gloria Gilbert Stoga,  
President  
Puppies Behind Bars, Inc

## An Interview with Curt Landtroop

**C**urt Landtroop, a bond portfolio manager at the General Motors Investment Management Corporation, joined the board of Puppies Behind Bars, Inc. last September and has been one of the guiding forces behind it. He weighed two and one half pounds when he was born several months premature and developed a condition called retrolental fibroplasia (RLF) from receiving too much oxygen in the incubator, which saved his life but resulted in total blindness. Married to a sighted woman, he lives on the Hudson and has a five-year-old son. He does much of his business on the telephone, aided by special adapted technology that has enabled him to use a computer and has provided voice and Braille access to market and data services such as Bloomberg and Dow Jones Telerate.

But his greatest boon is not technological, it is Marcie, a six-year-old yellow Lab, his fourth guide dog, who has been with him for four years. Mr. Landtroop talked with Puppies Behind Bars about how important a well-trained guide dog is, and gave some insights into the way a guide dog and a blind person work together.

**PBB: What is Marcie's personality like?**

**Landtroop:** She is the first female dog I've had. Generally speaking, I get males, because they are a little stronger, but even though Marcie is small (she's only about 68 pounds, while I am six feet tall and weigh 185 pounds), she has a lot of zest. She loves to work all the time, seven days a week, which is good for me because I am very active. During the week, her work schedule is demanding in that we commute three and a half

# My Eyes

hours daily. For her recreation, I run her in the woods on weekends with my son. Also, at work, I take off her harness and leash and frequently my colleagues play fetch with her by throwing a ball in the trading room.

**PBB: So even though she's small, she's spiritually the perfect dog for you?**

**Landtroop:** Yes, she is a perfect fit spiritually and even her size is a perfect fit. It's a funny thing, when you go to a guide-dog school to get your dog, the first day there, your pace of walk, balance, and strength are evaluated by the training department in order to match you up with the dog that is best suited to you. The next day, everyone gets presented with their dogs, and it used to be a kind of status thing that the bigger the dog, the better. But for me that has changed to where I think "the smaller, the better," because it is a lot easier to get a smaller dog on buses and planes, and into taxicabs. Yet I knew a 105-pound woman whose guide dog was almost as large as she was. Despite its size, the dog had a docile personality and they made a great team. It's amazing how often the training staff gets it just right in combining the person and the dog to create a great traveling unit.

**PBB: How long did it take you and Marcie to get used to each other?**

**Landtroop:** A month or two. Normally, you train at the guide-dog school for two to three weeks after you have been matched with your dog. You and your dog are in a class of about 12, and you live at the school while you are training. You get up with them, take them out in the morning, go everywhere with them—the whole bit. Every time you get a dog, even if you have had guide dogs before, you go through this training period. With Marcie, the school [Guiding Eyes for the Blind] gave me home training, where the trainer comes to your home and works with you on an individual basis, so it only takes about one week. For example, on the second

# Have A Cold, Wet Nose



Curt  
Landtroop  
with son  
Zach and  
guide dog  
Marcie

the beauties of having a guide dog is that if you tell a dog to “go,” and there’s a problem of some sort (for example, a car you didn’t hear coming, or a cliff that’s straight ahead of you), the dog will not go because it will not walk you into danger. It’s called “intelligent disobedience.”

As a human, when this happens, you are supposed to figure out there is a problem and take appropriate action, such as walking the dog in a different direction.

**PBB:** *Is Marcie always with you or can she go off with someone else?*

**Landtroop:** At home, if my wife, Diane, and my son, Zach, want to take her for a walk, she goes off, but other than that, she is usually with me. If I don’t need her, she can do whatever she wants. I know she is well-trained enough that she’d never present a problem. I don’t ever have problems with her at work, either, except that I did have to send out an office memo asking my colleagues not to feed her treats or entice her in any way with food, because that is bad training and could cause problems.

**PBB:** *What would you like to tell us that we haven’t asked?*

**Landtroop:** The bond between a blind person and his or her guide dog is unique. When you lose a dog, it’s like losing a very close friend. You go through so many experiences with your dog. For example, with my dog Flame, one of Marcie’s predecessors, I particularly remember a terrific blizzard in New York in 1979 or 1980. At the time, I was working at the General Motors building in midtown and living on 65th

and York Avenue, and to get to work, people had to walk through the narrow passageways that had been dug on the sidewalks, with snow up to the lamp-posts because the drifts were so high. There wasn’t room in the narrow passageways for both me and Flame, so we

had to climb over the drifts. It was a once in a lifetime experience.

Flame was a very special dog. In the 1970s, before I got married, CBS did a story on me and, since I was in the investment business, the reporter offhandedly asked if Flame had a nose for money. As a matter of fact he did: one night we were on our way to a bar and he sniffed and sniffed around on the sidewalk and picked up a \$100 bill and handed it to me. He was always retrieving things and handing them to me. For instance, he once went up to the conveyor belt at an airport, identified my luggage,

and grabbed it with his mouth.

By providing safe and effective mobility, a guide dog allows for greater confidence, which leads to a greater sense of empowerment and fulfillment. There is a closeness to your guide dog that is hard to imagine. It doesn’t take away from my closeness to my wife and son, but there is such a selfless giving on the part of these dogs. Marcie really enjoys what she does. Even if she is playing ball, as soon as I pick up her harness, she stops playing immediately, comes running over, and leaps into her harness. She loves her work.

**“One of the beauties of having a guide dog is that if you tell a dog to “go,” and there’s a problem of some sort (for example, a car you didn’t hear coming, or a cliff that’s straight ahead of you), the dog will not go because it will not walk you into danger. It’s called ‘intelligent disobedience.’ ”**

day I had Marcie, we went into the city together, so the one week of training is very intensive.

**PBB:** *How does it work? How does Marcie know where you want to go?*

**Landtroop:** I direct her. The person directs by using hand signals and by using his body. A widely held misperception is that the dogs make decisions, especially as to when to cross a street. This is not true. Dogs are color blind; they don’t see lights. I, or other people who are blind and use a dog or a cane or whatever, listen to traffic. When traffic starts on the street that is parallel to you, then you know you can cross. One of

# Follow The Leaders

**P**uppies Behind Bars is extremely fortunate to have secured relationships with the world's top veterinary and teaching hospital, the Animal Medical Center, and the international leader in pet nutrition, the Iams Company.

The ANIMAL MEDICAL CENTER, a non-profit veterinary hospital located in Manhattan, was founded in 1910 and currently treats more than 70,000 animals every year. The Center provides routine care and emergency services for pets as well as other services ranging from acupuncture to ultrasound to arthroscopic surgery. Its internship program for veterinary technicians and its internship and residency programs for doctors of veterinary medicine draw candidates from around the world. Dr. Nyssa Reine, who is the veterinarian providing medical care to our five puppies, always greets the pups with a big hug and kiss; they actually look forward to going to the Center to see her.

A P.B.B. Advisory Board member and President and C.E.O. of the Animal Medical Center, Guy Pidgeon, D.V.M., enthusiastically embraces the concept of the Puppy Project. As he says, "Through the Animal Medical Center's Guide Dog Program, we have a long history of helping the visually impaired take the best care possible of their guide dogs,

and for years we have watched these noble dogs faithfully serve their companions. We are delighted to participate in the Puppy Project's goal of getting more of the best dogs feasible into the hands of more blind people."

The IAMS COMPANY, headquartered in Dayton, Ohio, is dedicated to researching and developing the best food possible to enhance the well-being of dogs and cats around the world. The company was founded in 1946 when Paul Iams, dissatisfied with existing pet foods on the market, developed a complete, balanced diet for dogs. Continuous research led to the development of new and improved product lines, and today there are more than fifty dog- and cat-food products that carry the Iams name, including prescription diets. Puppies Behind Bars decided to feed its puppies Iams' Eukanuba® line of dog food, given its superior nutritional value and reputation, and was deeply grateful when the company agreed to donate the product. All five pups are currently eating (inhaling is probably a more apt description) Eukanuba Puppy Chow but will advance to Eukanuba Adult as they get older.

With a long history of supporting community service programs that improve the quality of life for people and pets, the Iams Company eagerly es-

## Canine Camera

The photographs of puppies and their raisers in this newsletter were taken by Valerie Shaff. The Puppy Project is deeply grateful to Ms. Shaff for taking the time to come to the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility to document the first stage of the program. Though the women were somewhat hesitant at first, Ms. Shaff's easy manner and outgoing personality won them over, as her photos clearly show. Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *House & Garden*, and *Martha Stewart Living*, and her commercial clients include the Gap, Ralph Lauren, and Atlantic Records. In May, her book *If Only You Knew How Much I Smell You: True Portraits of Dogs* will be published by Bulfinch Press/Little, Brown and Company. It features 55 of Ms. Shaff's photos, accompanied by verse written—from the dog's point of view—by the humorist Roy Blount, Jr.

poused the concepts behind the Puppy Project. As Connie McKamey, Charitable Contributions Coordinator for Iams, puts it, "Whether as pets or as working companions for the visually or physically impaired, we understand the wonder that is love between people and their dogs and cats. We are proud to provide the best nutrition to help grow healthy, happy dogs who will spend years at the side of their blind companions. This is truly a rewarding program for everyone involved."

### THANK YOU!

- Kathleen McGilverly for designing this newsletter.
- Kaufman & Kubarych for providing a pro-bono office.
- Chris Rogers, Pierre Mangué, and Dan Gamulka of Arnold & Porter for preparing the papers of incorporation for P.B.B. and the papers for its recognition as a tax-exempt organization.

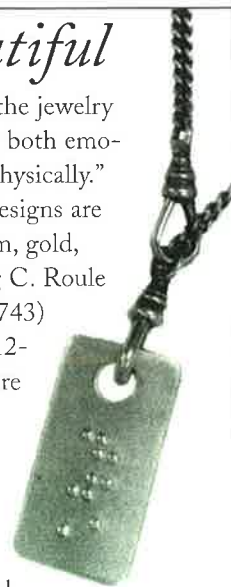
## All Things Braille and Beautiful

Christopher Roule, a designer in Manhattan, has created jewelry using the raised-dot language pioneered by the 19th-century French inventor Louis Braille (who was blinded in an accident at age three). Mr. Roule's creations include bracelets, necklaces, key chains, and rings with inscriptions written in Braille on one side and in English on the other. "To me, Braille is a language which breaks the physical barrier," he told *The New York Times*, "while incorporating it into



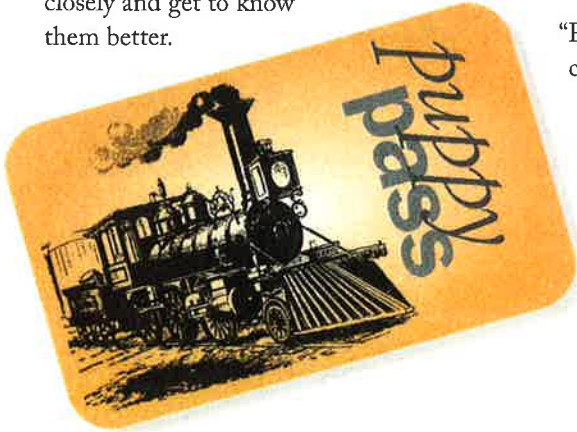
jewelry helps the jewelry communicate both emotionally and physically."

Mr. Roule's designs are available in platinum, gold, and silver by calling C. Roule Design (212-969-8743) or faxing him at (212-533-6744). For more information visit [www.roule.com](http://www.roule.com). Part of the proceeds will go to organizations which help the blind.



# Buy a Puppy a Train Pass

**O**ur pups travel a lot. They all visit Manhattan at least one weekend a month to get exposure to the sights and sounds of the city. They also come in for their inoculations and check-ups at the vet. In addition, they go to Gloria Gilbert Stoga's house every four to six weeks so that she can observe them more closely and get to know them better.



All this travel is great for the puppies' socialization—and they are walking ads for the Puppy Project—but it costs money. Won't you consider helping our puppies get out and about?

Just \$25 will buy a month-long "Puppy Pass." Your contribution is completely tax-deductible and will help give our puppies the variety of experiences and exposures they need to help build their confidence.

*Send your check to:*

**Puppies Behind Bars  
845 Third Avenue  
19th Floor  
New York, NY 10022**



**DESPERATELY  
SEEKING SITTERS...**  
If you are interested in becoming a **WEEKEND PUPPY SITTER** please call **PUPPIES BEHIND BARS** at **212-750-2073**.



VALERIE SHAFF, PHOTOS

- **\$25** (one puppy)
- **\$50** (two puppies)
- **\$125** (the whole gang).

*P.B.B. is recognized by the I.R.S. as a charitable organization under code 501*

# PUPPIES BEHIND BARS

**845 Third Avenue, 19th Floor  
New York, NY 10022**