



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

The LINK-Letter

August 2011

A monthly report of news about the connections between animal abuse and other forms of violence from the National Link Coalition -- www.nationallinkcoalition.org

[Phil Arkow](#), Editor



The Good News...

“PAW & ORDER: SDU” ASSISTS CHILD SEX ABUSE VICTIMS

An innovative animal-assisted therapy program in Houston, Texas, is called “Paw & Order SDU : Special Dog Unit”. [Belinda Smith](#), Chief of the Animal Cruelty Section of the Harris County District Attorney’s Office, reports the program is a collaboration with the Houston Bar Association Animal Law Section. Handlers and dogs go to the Children’s Assessment Center weekly to visit with children before they meet with forensic therapists. The dogs wear bright orange “Paw & Order” bandanas and the children are given the same bandanas as well. The [Children’s Assessment Center](#) is one of the largest children’s advocacy centers in the U.S. and has served over 50,000 sexually abused children. Smith speaks frequently about The Link to Texas humane conferences and law schools.



Nick the dog shows off the official orange bandana of the Harris County District Attorney’s Office’s Paw & Order unit. Also pictured are Marron Nassar and Harris County District Attorney Patricia Lykos.

The Possibly Not-So-Good News...

USE OF “COURTHOUSE DOGS” IN SEX ASSAULT CASES QUESTIONED



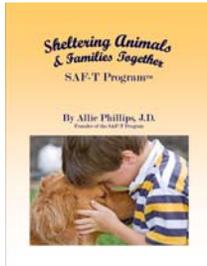
Rosie and a social worker at the Dutchess County, NY courthouse.

(Photo by Kelly Shimoda)

While therapy dogs can be crucial comforts who console sex abuse victims during stressful forensic examinations and courtroom trials, a New York case is questioning the new role for dogs as testimony enablers and may lead to a landmark appellate court decision, according to the [New York Times](#).

Rosie, the first approved courtroom dog in New York, was by the side of a 15-year-old girl who testified that her father had raped and impregnated her. The father was convicted in June and sentenced to 25 years to life. The court ruled that Rosie was similar to a teddy bear that a 1994 state appeals court said could accompany a child witness. But defense attorneys argued the dog may have unfairly swayed jurors with her cuteness, sending unconscious messages to the jury implying the girl was telling the truth. “There’s no way for me to cross-examine the dog,” said one attorney. The defense’s appeal may establish legal principles on the issues of dogs in the witness box.

2ND ANNUAL NATIONAL SAF-T DAY SCHEDULED



The 2nd Annual National SAF-T Day will be held Saturday, October 1st, at women's shelters around the U.S. that have built on-site housing for family pets. Held the first Saturday in October, this event brings together participating SAF-T ([Sheltering Animals and Families Together](#)) shelters across the country. Participants will host dog walks to raise funds for their SAF-T program, and raise awareness about the linkages between violence to animals and people. The inaugural event in 2010 was highly successful with 17 shelters participating.

The 2011 event is co-sponsored by the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, Pets of the Homeless, Ahimsa House, and Red Rover (formerly United Animal Nations). SAF-T will produce updated guidelines later this year for housing family pets at domestic violence shelters.

TEXAS PET PROTECTION ORDER LAW GENERATES TV COVERAGE

When Texas became the 21st state to enact statutes allowing judges to include pets in domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders, KHOU-TV in Houston aired an [in-depth feature](#) on July 14 describing the new law and its impact on prosecutors, animal shelters and women's shelters. "Women stay in relationships where they are at risk of harm or death to protect their pets," said Rebecca White of the Houston Area Women's Center. "We see it every day."

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

Orlando, Fla.



[Orange County Animal Services](#) recently conducted an Animal Hoarding training with Child and Adult Protective Services personnel. Coordinator Kathleen Kennedy reports that the response was so positive that they are putting together a "meeting of the minds" (it's not quite a task force just yet) with Code Enforcement, Sheriff's Office, Health Services, private family counseling agencies, and the Office of Aging, among others. "Our goal is to establish protocols, resources, etc. so we can approach hoarding situations in a more comprehensive manner," she says.

GRANT FUNDS STUDY OF RESOURCES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PETS

The [Ohio Domestic Violence Network](#) has received a grant from the Kenneth A. Scott Charitable Trust, a KeyBank Trust, to develop a database of statewide resources that support the care and/or safe relocation of pets of domestic violence victims. The first phase involves a dialogue with Ohio's domestic violence programs to discuss existing pet/animal support resources in their service area, how they refer, to whom, etc., to be posted in the password-protected area of the ODVN website. The data will help implement a strategic ODVN priority and support survivors, their animal family members, and community partners. [Lesley Ashworth](#) is the lead contact on the project.

THE LINK UNDERLIES IDAHO FELONY ANIMAL CRUELTY EFFORT



Idaho residents gather signatures for the felony cruelty ballot initiative.
(Idaho Mountain Express photo)

The potential for animal abuse to be an indicator of other forms of violence is behind an effort in Idaho to enact that state's first felony-level animal cruelty statutes. Currently, only Idaho and North and South Dakota lack felony penalties for serious acts of animal cruelty.

A [ballot initiative has been drafted](#) that would classify a third repeat animal cruelty offense as a felony, rather than a misdemeanor, with stiffer financial and jail penalties. Advocates are attempting to collect 60,000 signatures from registered voters to get the measure on the November 2012 ballot. Jo-Anne Dixon of the Animal Shelter of the Wood River Valley notes that it is difficult to state how large a problem animal cruelty is because law enforcement isn't focused on addressing it. "If you're not looking for it, you're not going to find it," she says.

OHIO COUNTY CONTRACTS FOR ANIMAL CRUELTY PROSECUTOR



Jeff Holland

While a small but growing number of prosecutors in large cities have designated assistant district attorneys to handle animal cruelty cases, rural Tuscarawas County, Ohio has taken a different approach. The County will [pay the local humane society to engage the services of a private attorney](#), J. Jeffrey Holland of Sharon Center, as a special prosecutor. Holland will be paid \$50 per hour for out-of-court services and \$60 per hour for courtroom time, up to \$1,000 per case. Holland has served as special prosecutor for animal cruelty cases in over a dozen courts in Ohio for the past 18 years and has conducted training on animal cruelty law for the Ohio Humane Agents Association, Ohio Federated Humane Societies, the Ohio Veterinary Medical Association, Ohio State University, and the Ohio Dog Wardens' Association.

THE LINK IN THE LITERATURE

Animal Cruelty among Adopted Children



Kate Trujillo

A research study investigating the therapeutic use of live and robotic dogs with adopted children uncovered surprising findings regarding the children's histories of animal cruelty. In a study of 43 children who had been adopted from the child welfare system, Kate Trujillo and colleagues in Denver, Colo. reported that 23% of the children had histories of animal abuse, including killing puppies, rabbits and kittens, plucking birds' feathers, and sexual abuse of animals. Intriguingly, boys with histories of cruelty to animals were not cruel to the therapy animals and responded positively, with reduced levels of anxiety, after sessions with either a live therapy dog or a robotic dog.

Trujillo, K., Lamendola, W., Ascione, F., & Lange, N. (2011). Developing emotional security among children who have been adopted. Presentation at International Society for Anthrozoology conference, Human-Animal Interactions: Challenges and Rewards, Indianapolis, Ind., Aug. 4-6.

The Intergenerational Cycle of Violence... in Birds?

An ongoing focus of Link research is the inter-generational cycle of violence: do children who are abused grow up to be more abusive? The first evidence that “child abuse” can be transmitted down the generations in wild animals was reported in the Nazca booby, a tropical South American seabird. Highly crowded nesting grounds often result in bouts of violence, and visiting adults are aggressive to chicks or try to have sex with them. Researchers Martina Müller and David Anderson of Wake Forest University found a strong correlation between the frequency that chicks had been attacked and the frequency that they themselves attacked chicks when they reached adulthood. Researchers believe the abuse “conditions” them for life by raising levels of stress hormones that later trigger aggressive behaviors, and may affect other aspects of the birds’ personalities.

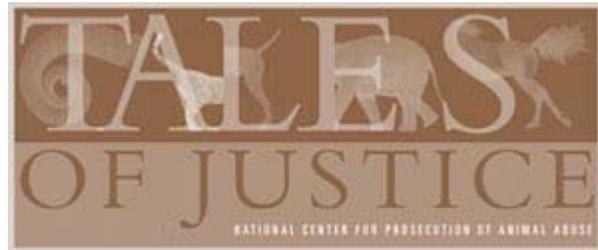


An adult Nazca booby attacks an unrelated chick.

Walker, M. (2011, Aug. 8). Abused baby boobies grow up to abuse other chicks. www.bbc.co.uk/nature/14418174, reporting on research by Müller and Anderson published in *The Auk*, 128(3).

NEWSLETTER FOR CRUELTY PROSECUTORS PUBLISHED

The first newsletter to assist prosecutors with animal cruelty cases has been distributed by the National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, a project of the National District Attorneys Association. *Tales of Justice* debuted in August to 18,000 child protection and court officials. *LINK-Letter* readers may [sign up](#) to be put on the mailing list.



A Tale of Two Barbaras:

BARBARA BOAT, BARBARA SHAFFER JOIN NLC STEERING COMMITTEE



[Barbara Boat, Ph.D.](#), has been named to the National Link Coalition’s “G-10” Steering Committee. Boat is a licensed clinical psychologist and associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, and Director of the Program on Childhood Trauma and Maltreatment. She is also Executive Director of the Childhood Trust at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center. She chairs Ohio Link coalition efforts and has served on the Subcommittee on Children Who Witness Domestic Violence, Hamilton County Family Violence Prevention Project, and also as Director of SHIP (Strategic Humane Interventions Program) in Cincinnati. She has written extensively about child sexual abuse and the link between animal cruelty and elder abuse.

Also joining the NLC's Steering Committee is [Barbara Shaffer](#), Senior Director of Chapter Services for Prevent Child Abuse America. She provides consultation and technical assistance to PCA chapters across the nation as well as national and community collaborations. She has worked in the prevention field for over 20 years while managing multiple direct service programs. In these programs Barb has provided project management, community organizing, program development, clinical supervision, and research evaluation. She integrates the principles of strength-based family support and the engagement of collaborative partners in all of the roles she has had throughout her career. Barbara has a MSW and is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

WEBINARS TO TRAIN D.A.s ON ANIMAL CRUELTY PROSECUTION

The National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse (NCPAA), a program of the National District Attorneys Association, is partnering with the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Animal Legal Defense Fund to offer a series of free online webinars. The first webinar is set for Sept. 8 from 3-4 p.m. EDT and will discuss why NCPAA was formed, and services and resources available to prosecutors and allied professionals. This webinar is primarily for prosecutors and law enforcement interested in or handling animal abuse cases; however, it is relevant to animal control and humane investigators, veterinarians, shelter staff, and rescue organization volunteers. [Register here...](#)

LINK TRAINING:

Coming Soon to a Venue Near You...



Shawnee, KS – Aug. 18-19: Ken Shapiro will conduct two [training programs](#) for clinicians working with adults and children on the AniCare approach to interrupting the cycle between animal abuse and human violence.

Gurabo, Puerto Rico – Aug. 25-26: Maya Gupta and Nancy Bell will co-lead two training workshops on AniCare and AniCare Child for the Health and Wellness Initiative for Women Attending Universidad del Turabo. For details contact [Ursula Aragunde Kohl](#).

Las Cruces, NM – Sept. 9-11: Ken Shapiro, Tamara Ward, and others will present a three-day workshop on AniCare, AniCare Child and AniCare Training for Trainers. Through a grant from the NM Department of Public Safety, these workshops are free to psychologists, therapists, and social workers. For details visit [NM AniCare](#).

Christchurch, New Zealand – end of September: Dr. Nik Taylor will give a lecture on Animal Abuse and Social Violence at the New Zealand Centre for Human-Animal Studies at the University of Canterbury. For details contact [Annie Potts](#).

Saskatoon, SK, Canada – Sept. 23: Phil Arkow will conduct a workshop on The Link for the Saskatchewan SPCA's annual Animal Welfare Conference. For details contact [Sandra Anderson](#) .

Medina & Summit Counties, OH – Sept. 30: Phil Arkow will present two trainings for the [Battered Women's Shelter of Summit and Medina Counties](#).

Chesapeake, VA – Oct. 5: Allie Phillips will present on the Link at The Family Violence Awareness Conference. For more information, contact Carter McKay at (757)668-6122.

York, PA – Oct. 6: Phil Arkow will deliver the keynote speech on The Link at the [Federated Humane Societies of Pennsylvania](#) annual conference.

South Bend, IN – Oct. 12: Phil Arkow will conduct a community Link training under the auspices of the [St. Joseph County Prosecuting Attorney's Office](#).

Scottsdale, AZ – Oct. 14: [Chris Risley-Curtiss](#) will conduct a workshop on treating animal abuse at the National Association of Social Work annual conference.

Ocean City, MD – Oct. 26, 2011: Allie Phillips will train on "Children Exposed to Animal Abuse: The Linkages between Violence to Children and Animals" at the [Mid-Atlantic Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect](#).

Baltimore, MD – Oct. 28-29: The Animals and Society Institute will conduct two [training programs](#) for clinicians working with adults and children on the AniCare approach to interrupting the cycle between animal abuse and human violence.

Philadelphia, PA – Nov. 8: Phil Arkow will conduct a training program on The Link for the Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth & Family Services. For information contact the [Council](#).

Washington, DC – Nov. 16-19: Nuria Querol i Vinas will present a paper, "Implementation of the Multidisciplinary Program for Woman Victims of Domestic Violence and Their Companion Animals at the [American Society of Criminology](#) annual conference.

Phoenix, AZ – Jan.20, 2012: Allie Phillips will train on "The Linkages between Violence to People and Animals" at the [Arizona Prosecuting Attorneys' Advisory Council](#) Winter conference.

Washington, DC – Feb. 28-Mar. 1, 2012: Allie Phillips will train on "Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T)" at the [2nd World Conference on Women's Shelters](#).

Calgary, AB, Canada – May 6-9, 2012: Phil Arkow will conduct a workshop on Kids, Critters and Sexual Abuse at the [Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse](#) biennial conference.

Link to the Link's LinkedIn Link!



The National Link Coalition has established a LinkedIn social network site. Join us and connect with your colleagues. Just control-click on the LinkedIn logo and it will take you to the site.

About the National Link Coalition

The [National Link Coalition](#) is an informal network of individuals and organizations addressing the intersections between animal abuse and other forms of violence through research, legislation, program implementation, and public awareness. Organized in 2008 at a historic summit in Portland, ME, the National Link Coalition's vision is:

The Link between violence against humans and violence against animals is widely known and understood. We believe that through the recognition and integration of this understanding into policies and practices nationwide, humans and animals will be measurably safer.

Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee:

<u>Phil Arkow</u>	Consultant, ASPCA; Animals and Society Institute; Chair, Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project, The Latham Foundation Stratford, N.J.
<u>Lesley Ashworth</u>	Consultant, The Link, Worthington, Ohio
<u>Barbara W. Boat, Ph.D.</u>	Associate Professor, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine Executive Director, Childhood Trust, Cincinnati Children's Hospital
<u>Maya Gupta, Ph.D.</u>	Executive Director, Ahimsa House, Inc., Atlanta, Ga.
<u>Jane A. Hunt</u>	Violence Prevention Specialist, St Paul, Minn.
<u>Mark Kumpf, CAWA</u>	Past President, National Animal Control Association, Dayton, Ohio
<u>Randall Lockwood, Ph.D.</u>	Senior Vice President, Forensic Sciences and Anti-Cruelty Projects, ASPCA Falls Church, Va.
<u>Anna Melbin</u>	Former Housing Director, National Network to End Domestic Violence Yarmouth, Maine
<u>Maria Luisa O'Neill</u>	Program Services Coordinator, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence Denver, Colo.
<u>Emily Patterson-Kane, Ph.D.</u>	Animal Welfare Scientist, Animal Welfare Division, American Veterinary Medical Association, Schaumburg, Ill.
<u>Allie Phillips, J.D.</u>	Director, National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse Senior Attorney, National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse National District Attorneys Association, Alexandria, Va.
<u>Christina Risley-Curtiss, MSSW, Ph.D.,</u>	Associate Professor and Animal-Human Interactions Coordinator, School of Social Work, Arizona State University, Phoenix, Ariz.
<u>Barbara Shaffer, MSW, LCSW</u>	Senior Director of Chapter Services, Prevent Child Abuse America, Breckenridge, Colo.
<u>Kathleen Schoen</u>	Director, Family Violence Program, Colorado Bar Association Colorado Alliance for Cruelty Prevention, Denver, Colo.
<u>Hugh Tebault III</u>	President, The Latham Foundation, Alameda, Calif.
<u>Philip Tedeschi, MSSW, LCSW</u>	Clinical Director, Institute for Human-Animal Connection, University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work, Denver, Colo.