



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

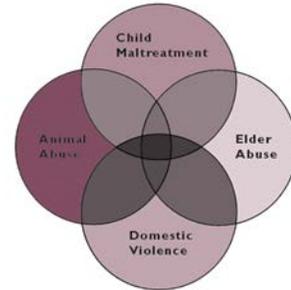
The LINK-Letter Vol. 6, No. 4 April 2013

A monthly report of news about the connections between animal abuse, cruelty and neglect and other forms of violence



www.nationallinkcoalition.org

[Phil Arkow](#), Editor



**April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month
and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month!**

Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board Adds Animal Abuse Data

National Link Coalition Steering Committee member [Maya Gupta, Ph.D.](#), was recently asked to consult on a feature of animal abuse for the State of Georgia's [Domestic Violence Fatality Review Report](#).

Gupta, director of Atlanta's Ahimsa House domestic violence pet support service, reports that through years of working closely with the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Georgia Commission on Family Violence, much progress has been made. "We've been able to effect a conceptual shift in those agencies from 'There's no evidence that links animal abuse to domestic violence fatalities' to 'The reason there's no evidence is that the questions about animals aren't being asked and the records aren't being gathered during fatality reviews,'" she says.



In creating the 2012 annual report, the section on pets was expanded from a pop-out box on one page to a four-page feature. In noting that Georgia ranks 10th in the nation for the rate in which men kill women, most of which are domestic violence-related murders, the report observes:

"Over the last nine years, the Fatality Review Project has found that pet abuse, more often than not, goes undocumented. In part, this is due to the fact that survivors are reluctant to bring up the issue for fear they will not be taken seriously. It is the role of advocates and other helping professionals to help survivors overcome barriers so every member of the family can be safe; we must start the conversation by asking survivors about pet abuse."

The report includes an extensive list of recommendations for what advocates, family violence intervention providers, law enforcement, mental health professionals, legal professionals, and family violence task forces can do to address the links between animal abuse and domestic violence.

Student Awareness of Link Leads to Database and Specialty Court

Students interested in ending animal abuse led to the New Mexico House of Representatives approving a measure by a vote of 43-0 on Feb. 26 that requests both the Departments of Health and Public Safety to examine the feasibility of creating a statewide database of animal abuse incidents. Citing Link research establishing significant correlations between animal abuse and family violence, gang-related crimes, substance abuse, and illegal gambling, House Memorial 46 was introduced as a result of a school project by eight-graders.



Rep. Tim Lewis “would assist the state’s law enforcement organizations to predict and prevent violence and other criminality” and “ameliorate public health and safety problems.” Such a database would also close a critical gap: state law stipulates increased penalties for offenders with multiple cruelty convictions, but no state database tracks these offenders.

Students at Rio Rancho Cyber Academy participated in Project Citizen, a national program to help students become involved in their communities. The students identified animal abuse as being a significant problem in New Mexico, as evidenced by the state having the second-highest per capita rate of pet ownership and being one of the five worst states for animal protection laws. The measure, introduced by Rep. Tim D. Lewis, a Rio Rancho teacher, observed that awareness of animal abuse



Sen. Candelaria

A second New Mexico memorial, SM 78, introduced on Feb. 26 by Sen. Jacob Candelaria, cited The Link in requesting that the Bernalillo County Municipal Court establish a specialty court to handle animal abuse cases. A similar court was established recently in Tucson, Ariz. (*See LINK-Letter April 2012.*) The measure, affecting the Albuquerque metropolitan area, cites “numerous psychology, sociology and criminology studies [that] have shown a strong correlation between animal abuse and human violence.”

Mexico Considering Link Legislation

Núria Querol i Viñas, M.D., founder of Spain’s national Link coalition [GEVHA](#) (Grupo para el Estudio de la Violencia hacia Humanos y Animales), has been a frequent speaker at Latin and Central American events to raise awareness of The Link and to institute Link programs in Spanish-speaking countries. In 2011 she was invited to speak to the Mexican government and at a National Conference on Animal Protection in Mexico.



Dr. Núria Querol (center) at a recent Latin American Link presentation

As a result of those initial overtures, Mexico has voted recently to consider animal abuse as a felony crime. Dr. Querol has been invited back to Mexico this month for a series of conferences about animal abuse and interpersonal violence in Mexico City, Zacatecas and Cancún.

The Link in the Legislatures

Animal Fighting Labeled as Racketeering in Michigan, Illinois

Recognition of the links between animal abuse and human crimes, and of the seriousness of animal abuse cases, got a boost in Michigan recently when Senate Bill 358 was enacted. The new law adds animal fighting to an extensive list of crimes defined as “racketeering” when they are committed, conspired or abetted for financial gain. Animal fighting joins such other crimes as controlled substance violations, gambling, fraud, bribery, arson, breaking and entering, child sexual abuse, credit card fraud, embezzlement, extortion, and numerous others that can be prosecuted under racketeering statutes.

Similar legislation was enacted last June in Illinois to recognize dogfighting as an organized crime and to allow the prosecution of leaders of dogfighting networks under anti-racketeering (RICO) laws. The Illinois law enables the state to seize assets from dogfight leaders, which could serve as a useful deterrent.

Reporting and cross-reporting:



New York AB 3766 would require any person charged with enforcing cruelty to animals laws to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment, and any person mandated to report child abuse or maltreatment to file a report of suspected animal abuse or maltreatment. The bill is in the Social Services Committee.



New York AB 3283 would require any employee of a veterinary hospital or clinic, boarding kennel, shelter or rescue center, or facility that provides services for animals to report an animal’s injury, illness, or condition to the police if animal cruelty or abuse is suspected. Employees who reasonably and in good faith file such reports would be immune from civil or criminal liability. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.



Washington HB 1186 and **SB 5102** would grant immunity from civil and criminal liability for veterinarians who report suspected animal cruelty in good faith. **SB 5204** and **HB 1202** would create new categories of failing to provide care and of leaving an animal unattended in a motor vehicle, both civil infractions that do not meet statutory requirements for cruelty, and would permit law enforcement officers, fire personnel, and animal control officers to intervene. It would also amend state cruelty and animal fighting language.



Alabama HB 51 would require a wide range of human and veterinary health professionals, teachers, law enforcement officials, social workers, mental health professionals and others to report suspected animal cruelty or torture. Good-faith reporters would have immunity from civil and criminal liability. Failure to report would be punishable by a fine. Law enforcement agencies receiving such reports “shall process the case in the same manner as any other criminal investigation.” The bill is in the House Agriculture & Forestry Committee.

Abuse Registries:



Washington HB 1786 would direct the attorney general to maintain a publicly available registry of persons convicted of animal abuse. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

Pet Protection Orders



Kentucky HB 195 would allow a court to direct the care, custody or control of pets in domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders. It is in the House Judiciary Committee.



New Mexico SB 473 would allow a court to grant possession and control of any animal and order any party to stay away from the animal during a protection-from-abuse order.

Animal Abuse in the Presence of a Child



New York AB 706 would include animal cruelty in the presence of a child as an element in endangering a child's welfare, and within the definition of a neglected or maltreated child.



Oregon SB6 would upgrade animal neglect from a misdemeanor to a felony if the incident occurs in the presence of a minor child. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Other



Connecticut HB 5677 and **HB 6310** would appoint a State Department of Agriculture veterinarian to act as an animal advocate in family relations matters, civil cases, and criminal proceedings (including cruelty cases) that involve the care, custody and well-being of animals.



New Mexico SB 459 would appropriate \$50,000 to provide training for social workers and law enforcement personnel regarding animal cruelty laws and the social and legal consequences of animal cruelty.



New Mexico SB 83 and **HB 224** would allow psychological counseling for cruelty offenders; such counseling would be mandated for offenders convicted of the new crime of "extreme" animal cruelty, and for children convicted of animal cruelty.



New Mexico SB 473 would define animal abuse used to coerce or control an intimate partner as meeting the statutory definition of domestic violence or stalking.

Link-Themed Play Created for Church and Community Groups



Sue Bargeloh

A short, five-person play to draw church and community audiences into a discussion of the ethical issues of animal welfare and the links between animal abuse and other forms of family violence has been created. Sue Bargeloh, whose background includes theater and adult/community education, wrote the script for "The Least Among Us" after attending the 2012 New Mexico Conference on The Link. The 10-minute script features five persons discussing the ethical dilemmas of whether a church should support animal welfare causes. Accompanying notes help users to stage directed readings and provide background materials on The Link. "My goal is to raise awareness of The Link between animal abuse and human violence in the hopes that more people will understand how violence towards animals also weakens and harms the human community," she says. For a free copy of the script, [e-mail Bargeloh](#) or call her at 505-412-5561.

Child Cruelty Offenders Offered Empathy Education in Australia

A unique Australian program aims to prevent anti-social behaviors by counseling children as young as six years of age who have committed animal cruelty. The BARK (Building Animal Relationships with Kids) program for young offenders in Malaga, a suburb of Perth, wants to stop what director Kedy Kristal calls the “cruelty connection” between children harming animals and then growing up to commit violence against humans.

The seven week program, designed for children aged six to 12, teaches empathy, trust, respect and responsibility toward animals. Most of the children are referrals from the Department of Child Protection after having been placed in foster care, or are from domestic violence shelters.

“The children might have had a pet who they had to leave behind because they’ve left their home due to violence, or they’re starting to treat animals with cruelty because that’s what they’ve seen Dad do,” Kristal told the [Australian](#) news media.

“Don’t just put it down to children not understanding what they’re doing,” she said. “It’s not OK just to leave it and say it’s just children messing around, because there usually is a deeper reason.

“Young people are very open to role model and peer encouragement and learning new information. It’s about getting in there really early and re-educating them about how to treat animals and then how to treat other people.”

The BARK therapy group is run by the Patricia Giles Centre, which also has [“Safe Families, Safe Pets,”](#) a fostering service for dogs when families have to go into a domestic violence shelter, and is held at the regional RSPCA office. Safe Families Safe Pets is funded by the Attorney General’s office and coordinates and supports families who need to have their dogs fostered for up to three months.

The Link in the Literature

Annotated Bibliography of Link Literature Planned

The [Animals & Society Institute](#) is undertaking a compilation of an annotated bibliography of peer-reviewed research studies on The Link. The project will help both researchers and practitioners who want to better understand the complex dynamics interrelating animal abuse and interpersonal violence. Coordinating the study is [Jessica Austin](#), MPA. Austin has an extensive background in public health and is currently working on her M.S. in anthrozoology at Canisius College, where she is interested in veterinary ethics, human-feline relationships, and the human-animal violence link. A [comprehensive bibliography](#) of over 800 journal and mainstream reports on The Link has been compiled by National Link Coordinator Phil Arkow, but these studies have not yet been annotated.



Jessica Austin

Identification of Early-Stage Animal Hoarders

Animal hoarding has frequently been linked to a wide range of problematic behaviors and situations requiring social services and mental health interventions. In this new study of Brazilians who each owned more than 20 cats, the authors reported that these owners were significantly older, scored

significantly higher pet attachment scores, displayed significant positive relationships between hoarding behavior and anxiety, and demonstrated disparities in functioning, veterinary care and home organization when compared to typical cat owners. The authors speculate such individuals may represent an understudied group of early-stage animal hoarders; they caution that external factors such as culture and societal animal control policies should not be overlooked as alternative explanations for keeping pets at excessive levels.

-- Ramos, D., da Cruz, N.O., Ellis, S.L.H., Hernandez, J.A.E., & Reche-Junior, A. (2013). Early stage animal hoarders: Are these owners of large numbers of adequately cared for cats? *Bulletin of Human-Animal Interaction*, 1(1), 55-69.

Animal Abuse in Eastern Europe Explored

A pilot study examining rates of animal abuse and interpersonal violence in Eastern Europe reports a significantly higher prevalence of exposure to animal abuse among teenagers in Bistrita, Romania, as compared to Berlin, Germany. Researcher [Mal Plant](#) reports that the Romanian abuse occurs more often in public areas than in the home, and that 86.3% of Romanian youth had seen animal abuse many times, compared with 34% of Berlin teens. Unpublished findings report that individuals who have abused animals correlate high with aggressive and suicidal tendencies, diminishment of empathy, mood swings, and incidents of theft. Plant reports a significant number of children who admitted to abusing animals also ran away from home frequently, possibly to escape domestic violence which is often directed against male teenagers in Romania. The pilot study also asks whether in an environment such as Eastern Europe in which a ready availability of animal victims live on the streets, does animal abuse act as a buffer preventing inter-personal aggression or does it promote violent tendencies and serve to increase aggression.

News from Local Link Coalitions

Arizona Coalition Featured in Magazine

The Humane Link Coalition and animal cruelty task force of Phoenix, Ariz., were spotlighted in a full-page article in the April, 2013 issue of [Phoenix Magazine](#). "Beastly Behavior," written by Amanda Kippert, described a local case where a call to police about animal welfare issues revealed a child abuse situation. The article quotes Gilbert, Ariz. prosecutor Alison Ferrante who created a multidisciplinary animal cruelty task force and who is training police officers on The Link. Sgt. Jesse Sanger of the Gilbert Police Department noted how his department has seen numerous cases of abuse that started with animals and escalated to other family members. "Violence is violence and we need to stop it before it escalates," said Humane Link Coalition member Kari Neinstedt.



Link Coalition Organizing in Syracuse, N.Y.

A new Link coalition is in the process of forming in the Syracuse, N.Y. region. Please contact [Heather Estey](#), Practice Manager, Veterinary Medical Center of Central New York, at 315-446-7933 for details.

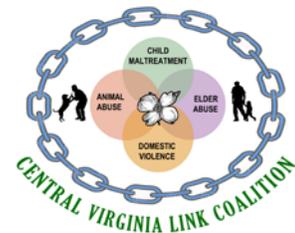
SNAAP Publishes Newsletter, Holds Workshops, Raising Funds

The [Safety Network of Abused Animals and People](#), the Link coalition for the Washington, D.C., area, has published a newsletter to help raise awareness in the nation's capital about the need to help the human and animal victims of domestic violence. SNAAP Executive Director [Blair Warner](#) reports the organization needs volunteers to provide Safe Haven transportation and fosters for pets fleeing domestic violence situations. The group is reaching out to establish contacts with representatives from domestic violence, animal welfare, child welfare, prosecution, social work, veterinary, and law enforcement agencies in the Washington, Maryland and Virginia region. Networking meetings are being held and SNAAP will participate in a fundraising Marine Corps Marathon on Oct. 27 in Arlington, Va.



Central Virginia Link Coalition Convenes

The [Central Virginia Link Coalition](#) held its second meeting on March 23 to broaden the reach of the organization and engage more individuals and groups in the concerted effort against violence. Fourteen community members attended representing Albemarle, Louisa, Orange, Nelson, Fluvanna, Augusta, Culpeper, and Arlington Counties. The group discussed strategies whereby social workers and animal control officers could share case information to avoid duplication of efforts and prevent future violence.



Dr. Don Henry, immediate past president of the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, discussed veterinary forensics, the [One Health Initiative](#) linking human and veterinary medicine, and ways in which VVMA could assist the Coalition. Ron Pulliam, a retired licensed professional counselor, described his center for therapeutic horseback riding for young people with cognitive and emotional difficulties.

Members discussed several potential projects, including promoting legislation for mandatory cross-reporting between DCF and animal control officers as West Virginia and several other states have done. The next meeting will be June 8 and the group will reach out to nearby Link coalitions in [Washington](#) and [Baltimore](#).

The Link in the News

Domestic Violence 911 Call Results in Animal Torture Charges



A 911 call to Bernalillo County, N. Mex., sheriff's deputies from a woman who claimed her husband had threatened to kill her led to multiple charges of animal cruelty and torture against an Albuquerque man. Detectives found 11 pit bulls, a Doberman pinscher and a Chihuahua beaten and locked up inside cages and a bedroom without food or water, covered in feces, and with cuts and untreated broken bones consistent with dogfighting injuries. [KRQE-TV](#) reported that Antonio Bornot, 48, was charged; the animals were turned over to animal welfare officials who were not clear as to whether they could be adopted into new homes. A judge ordered Bornot to not have access to firearms or dangerous weapons and to not return to the scene of the alleged incident.

Father Charged with Animal Cruelty at Domestic Violence Hearing... Based on Daughter's Video

A Port St. Lucie, Fla. man attending a court hearing on a restraining order his wife had previously sworn out found himself in jail and charged with torturing his family's cat after his 12-year-old daughter showed a secret videotape of the incident on her cellphone. [WPBF-TV](#) reported that James Fiengo was arrested after the graphic video depicted him enjoying the torture of "Joey" the cat. Police said his children were so upset at his chronic abuse of several family pets that the girl secretly recorded the abuse on her cellphone and showed it to her mother, who called police. The video depicts him choking and slapping the cat while holding it up by its tail and head.



James Fiengo is led to jail

Animal Cruelty/Domestic Violence Incident Draws 16-Month Sentence

A man who pled guilty to throwing his girlfriend's dog out of a 5th-floor window during a domestic violence argument was [sentenced to 16 months in custody](#) on animal cruelty charges. Terrance Hawkins, of Los Angeles, was convicted on evidence presented by the spcaLA in the death of "Bizzie," an American Eskimo dog who died after 12 days in intensive veterinary care. "Where domestic violence is present, animal cruelty and child abuse can usually be found – we call it 'The Link,'" said spcaLA President Madeline Bernstein. "The cycle of violence continues until it is broken by law enforcement, education or other intervention." spcaLA also offers an Animal Safety Net of free boarding and veterinary care for the animals of domestic violence victims, and the Teaching Love and Compassion (TLC) violence-prevention program for at-risk youth and juvenile offenders.

Divorce Custody Dispute over Dog Results in Dog's Death

A man accused of slitting his dog's throat in a custody battle for the pet with his wife in a bitter divorce case was [charged with cruelty to animals](#). James Stewart Robinson, of Vestavia, Ala., surrendered to Jefferson County sheriff's deputies after a felony warrant was issued for his arrest. Robinson reportedly tried to blame his wife but forensic analysis from the ASPCA and the University of Florida forensics lab, plus electronic data recovered, indicated that Robinson killed "Rufus," an American Staffordshire terrier. Robinson also apparently sent his wife a photo of the dog with its throat slit.



James Robinson

Man Charged with Raping Child, Having Sex with Dog



Derwayne Sharp

A Greensboro, N. Car. man has been charged with first-degree rape, sexual exploitation of a minor, and a "crime against nature" for allegedly raping a young girl and having sex with a dog. Derwayne Wesley Sharp, 38, was arrested on charges stemming from the incident, which allegedly occurred in 2005. There was no indication from [news accounts](#) why it took so many years for the charges to be filed. Sharp was being held in the Guilford County jail under \$525,000 bond.

Link Training Opportunities

Coming Soon to a City or Computer Near You...

April 1-30 – various locations: April is [Child Abuse Prevention Month](#), proclaimed in 1983 and coordinated nationally by the U.S. Children’s Bureau’s Office of Child Abuse and Neglect.

April 1-30 – various locations: April has been designated [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month](#) by the ASPCA, which offers resources for veterinarians, law enforcement, advocates, and shelters.

April 9 (online): [Allie Phillips](#) will conduct a free webinar on animal abuse and child maltreatment for the National Children’s Alliance.

April 9-10 – Knoxville, Tenn.: Elizabeth Strand and Nancy Bell will [train](#) on the AniCare Approach of assessment and treatment of animal cruelty offenders to interrupt the cycle of animal abuse and violence towards humans.

April 11 – Fort Collins, Colo.: [Lila Miller](#) will present on the role of the veterinarian in handling animal cruelty at Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

April 11-13 – Knoxville, Tenn.: The 3rd [Veterinary Social Work Summit](#) will include: Phil Arkow on how social workers can use The Link to build empathy and social capital; Maya Gupta on ethical dilemmas and evaluations in domestic violence pet support programs; and Mary Lou Randour and Nancy Blaney on what mental and health professionals should know about animal abuse.

April 14 – New York, N.Y.: Phil Arkow will discuss The Link to the [L.O.V.E. Task Force](#) of the Church of the Holy Trinity.

April 16 – (online): Judge Maria Felix and Deputy County Attorney Kendrick Wilson, of Pima County, Ariz., will present a free webinar on “Animal Welfare Court: The Development of a Specialty Court Focused on Animal Abuse Cases,” in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, in partnership with the ASPCA and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

April 16 – Port of Spain, Trinidad: [Lila Miller](#) will present on the role of the veterinarian in handling animal cruelty at the [Caribbean Animal Welfare Conference](#).

April 22 – Baltimore, Md.: Allie Phillips, Michelle Welch and Caroline A. Griffin will present on “Dealing with Media, Public Pressure, and Scrutiny in Animal Cruelty Cases” at the Maryland Bar Association’s [4th Annual Animal Law Symposium](#).

April 25 – Madison, Wis.: [Lila Miller](#) will present on the role of the veterinarian in handling animal cruelty at the University of Wisconsin College of Veterinary Medicine.

April 25 – Washington, D.C.: SNAAP – the Safety Network of Abused Animals and People – will meet to bring together professionals from numerous disciplines to collaborate on the co-occurrence of domestic violence and animal abuse in the D.C. metro area. Contact [Blair Warner](#) for details.

April 26 – Grand Junction, Colo.: [Jane Hunt](#) will discuss “Pets: Caught in the Crossfire of Family Violence” at the 21st Judicial District Probation Department’s annual domestic violence summit.

May 10-12 – Milan, Italy: Nuria Querol y Vinas will present on The Link in a workshop on “Innovative Perspectives to Study Domestic Violence Dynamics” at the 2nd [International Congress of Criminological Sciences](#), “Criminal Behaviors: Impact s, Tools and Social Networks.”

May 13-15 – Orlando, Fla.: The [International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association](#)’s 6th annual conference features numerous speakers addressing Link issues.

May 14 – Seattle, Wash.: Allie Phillips will present on “Caught in the Cross Fire: When the Abuse of Animals Co-Occurs with Family Violence” at the Washington State [Children’s Justice Conference](#).

May 14 – Kitchener, Ont., Canada: Phil Arkow will present Link trainings to the Annual General Meeting of the [Kitchener-Waterloo Humane Society](#).

May 15 – Kitchener, Ont., Canada: Phil Arkow will present Link trainings to the [Human-Animal Vulnerability Coalition](#) of Waterloo Region.

May 16 – Marianna, Fla.: Maya Gupta will present a workshop on The Link in rural communities at the [Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence Training Institute](#).

May 23 – (online): Rachel Touroo, DVM, director of veterinary forensics for the ASPCA, will present a free webinar on “The Role of the Forensic Veterinarian in Animal Abuse Cases,” in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, in partnership with the ASPCA and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

June 8 – Charlottesville, Va.: The Central Virginia Link Coalition will discuss opportunities to link human and animal violence prevention agencies and individuals. For details contact [Dr. Julie Palais](#).

July 26-27 – Bento Gonçalves, Brazil: Phil Arkow will train on The Link for veterinarians, and guidance to respond to suspected abuse, at the [Medvep](#) 2nd Congress of Veterinary Specialties.

July 30-31 – São Paulo, Brazil: Phil Arkow will present [eight Link workshops](#) for ABMVL (Brazilian Legal Veterinary Med. Association) and ITEC (Education, Conservation and Animal Welfare Institute).

Nov. 2 – New York, NY: The 3rd [Zoobiquity Conference](#) will present a species-spanning conversation among physicians and veterinarians treating similar diseases and public health issues.

Nov. 7-8 – Almoradi, Alicante, Spain: Nuria Querol i Vinas will discuss preventing future aggression by looking at the early indicators of family violence at the II [International Congress on Juvenile Violence and Juvenile Offenders](#).

ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



The National Link Coalition is an informal, multi-disciplinary collaborative network of individuals and organizations in human services and animal welfare who address the intersections between animal abuse, domestic violence, child maltreatment and elder abuse through research, public policy, programming and community awareness. We believe that human and animal well-being are inextricably intertwined and that the prevention of family and community violence can best be achieved through partnerships representing multi-species perspectives.

OUR VISION: 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.

To subscribe to The Link-Letter (free!) – Just send an e-mail to Coordinator Phil Arkow (arkowpets@snip.net) and tell us what organization(s) you're with and where you're located.

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