



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



www.nationallinkcoalition.org

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ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ohio Becomes 28th State to Enact Pet Protection Orders

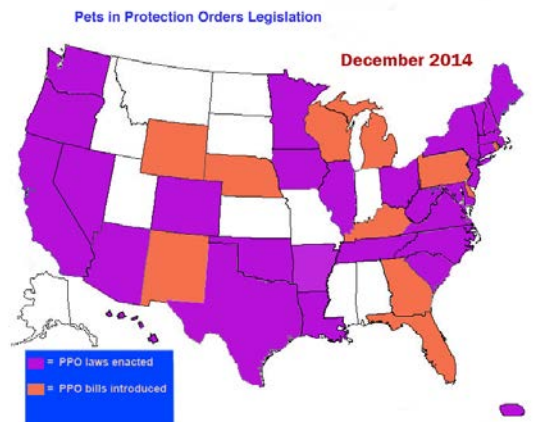
After two previous efforts over six years went down in defeat, Ohio closed out the 2014 legislative season by becoming the 28th state to enact a law allowing courts to include companion animals in protection-from-abuse orders in domestic violence and stalking cases. The Senate gave unanimous approval on Dec. 10 to SB 177 and sent it to Gov. John Kasich for his signature.

A related bill, HB 243, which would have also mandated children who are adjudicated as delinquent for committing cruelty to a companion animal to undergo a psychological evaluation and, if recommended, counseling, was not enacted.

A survey in 2012 by the Ohio Domestic Violence Network reported that 40% of domestic violence survivors in Ohio claimed their pets had been killed, harmed or threatened.

“The inability to flee an abusive relationship places domestic violence victims, their children and pets at a much greater risk of emotional and physical trauma, and even death, Vicki Deisner, Midwest legislative director for the ASPCA, told the [Columbus Dispatch](#). The new law will “encourage victims to seek help and give them the security they need to escape a dangerous environment.”

In addition to the 28 states with Pet Protection order laws, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have also enacted similar statutes. Earlier in 2014, Virginia, Iowa, South Carolina and New Hampshire enacted PPO legislation. PPO laws were first introduced in 2006 in Maine, New York and Vermont.



States in purple have PPO laws; states in orange have had PPO bills introduced since 2006.

Technical Assistance Guidance Published

The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence has published a handy nine-page technical assistance guide to help domestic violence agencies understand the power of the human-animal bond, the implications of animal abuse in domestic violence scenarios, and resources that can help provide a response that protects all vulnerable members of the family.



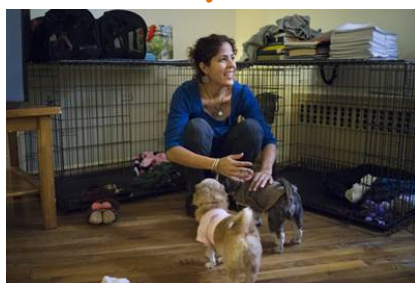
Why Pets Mean So Much: The Human-Animal Bond in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence offers statistics about the rates of pet ownership and incidence of animal abuse linked with domestic violence, as well as ways in which the human-animal bond can facilitate healing, attachment and comfort among traumatized children and spouses.

Developed by the Animal Welfare Institute, the guidance offers recommendations for agencies, including: asking questions about pets in hotline calls and intakes; including pets in safety planning; responding to clients with non-traditional pets; taking advantage of pet protection orders; locating pet-friendly shelters; and getting help for children who have witnessed or engaged in animal abuse. Several references and resources are included.

“Companion animals play a crucial role in the lives of families, especially those in crisis where abusers use that bond against their victims, in the process causing suffering to humans and animals alike,” concludes the report. “Thus it is urgent that all advocates on behalf of domestic violence survivors be acquainted with the role of animal abuse in the cycle of family violence and with the resources that are available to help those families get themselves and their pets to safety.”

The guidance is [available on VAWnet](#), the NRC DV’s information-dissemination network regarding practice, policy and research.

Pet-Friendly NYC Shelter Makes *The Wall Street Journal*



The nation’s newest pet-friendly domestic violence shelter, New York City’s URI PALS program, got a huge national publicity buzz on November 10 when the [Wall Street Journal](#) wrote a feature of “a shelter for abuse victims that welcomes furry ‘children.’” The facility, which is in the process of expanding its animal holding capacity, also features a dog-run park in the back yard so pets don’t have to leave the premises. A grant from the ASPCA has allowed URI PALS to hire a full-time coordinator for the program, and the ASPCA also assists with spay/neuter and medical services, vaccinations and behavioral support.

Manual Published to Assist Attorneys and Advocates of Survivors with Pets



Animal Welfare
Institute

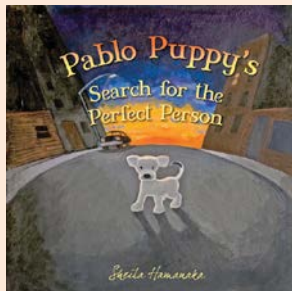
Despite extensive research and anecdotal accounts of the co-occurrence of domestic violence and animal abuse, many survivors with pets still lack adequate services to protect all vulnerable members of their family. To address this gap, the Animal Welfare Institute has just published [a 14-page manual](#) for attorneys and advocates working with domestic violence survivors in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

[Representing Domestic Violence Survivors with Pets](#) describes the legal underpinnings for protection-from-abuse orders in general, and pet protection orders specifically, under both “Underlying Offense” and “Stay Away” provisions. The manual itemizes four steps that advocates should undertake when assisting a petitioner with pets:

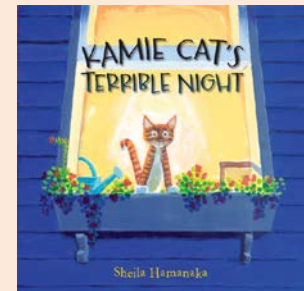
- Ask the petitioner if she has any pets or service animals
- Research the state’s protection-from-abuse and pet protection order laws
- Include evidence-based animal abuse as an underlying offense
- Request appropriate relief in both temporary and permanent orders

The manual also lists resources in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. Although the manual is specific for these jurisdictions, which already have enacted pet-protection-order statutes, its guidance will be of great benefit to attorneys and advocates in other states as well.

Pet Books Donated to Children in Domestic Violence Shelters



Meanwhile the Animal Welfare Institute also received national publicity by donating picture books about pets to children in over 600 domestic violence shelters. [The Huffington Post](#) reported that the two books, Pablo Puppy’s Search for the Perfect Person and Kamie Cat’s terrible Night, both written by Sheila Hamanaka, will help abused children heal and encourage humane treatment of animals.



“Animals can be a key to trying to reach a child’s heart, to promote healing and to regain trust and to reduce anxiety. Children can heal, but first you have to stop the abuse and get them out of the situation,” said AWI’s Mary Lou Randour.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CHILD MALTREATMENT

Connecticut Cross-Reporting Advancing

The pioneering cross-reporting program in Connecticut ([see LINK-Letter July 2011](#)) was made easier this Fall through a modification. Where the original 2011 law required only *confirmed* cases of animal cruelty to be cross-reported verbally between the Departments of Agriculture and Children & Families, Public Act 14-70, enacted in 2014, now requires cross-reporting of *suspected* animal abuse and that such reports be written rather than verbal. The reports are cross-referenced by the two departments with addresses where suspected child maltreatment is being investigated.



Ray Connors & Anne McIntyre-Lahner

[Ray Connors](#), state supervisor of animal control, called the new written reports user-friendly: once animal control officers or DCF case workers know what they should report, it makes it much easier for them to fill in the blanks and submit a report, he said.

The form requires basic information, including: the date, time and location of the alleged cruelty; name and contact information of the animal owner; description of the animal; nature of the cruelty; how the official learned of the suspected abuse; names and addresses of all suspects; and any previous histories. A copy of the form is available in the [Resources section](#) of the National Link Coalition's website.

The new system is working exceptionally well, Connors told *The LINK-Letter*: during the first two years of implementation, prior to the introduction of the forms, only two cases were submitted. In October, 2014 alone – the first month after the forms were introduced – eight cases were reported. The eight cases involved striking a dog; assaulting a dog and breaking its pelvis; pouring hot cooking oil on a dog; sexual assault on a dog; hoarding and abandoning cats; emaciated dogs; and lack of care of horses and rabbits. Connors said most of the incidents also involved domestic violence.

“Getting two state agencies together – that was cool!” said Anne McIntyre-Lahner, Program Director with Connecticut DCF. “Now that we know the addresses of cruelty cases, we can see if there are any children in these homes and intervene more effectively.”

Virginia Network Dedicates Newsletter to The Link

The Virginia Child Protection Network devoted its entire 16-page Fall, 2014 newsletter to The Link. Nine articles examined the animal abuse/child abuse link, the domestic violence/animal abuse link, the impacts upon children who witness animal abuse, and animal-assisted therapy for offenders and victims. Other articles describe Virginia's local Link coalitions, pet-friendly domestic violence shelters, Virginia Beach SPCA'S programs for youth, the Center for Human-Animal Interaction at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, the Center for Human-Animal Relationships at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, and two Children's Advocacy Centers. Several articles list specific ideas of what agency staffs can do.



The newsletter, edited by Dr. Joann Grayson at James Madison University, is mailed to over 13,000 multidisciplinary professionals across the U.S. and is [available online](#) as well. It is sponsored by the Child Protective Services Unit of the Virginia Department of Social Services. Several members of the National Link Coalition were instrumental in providing information and editorial assistance.



Children’s Witnessing or Committing Animal Cruelty Seen as a Toxic Adverse Childhood Event

Barbara W. Boat

Like so many projects in the human health and social sciences fields, the Adverse Childhood Events (ACE) Study – an ongoing investigation initiated in 1995 to study the links between childhood adversities and later-life medical status – failed to consider childhood animal cruelty as a potential toxic stressor in a child’s environment. Barbara Boat has long argued that children’s exposure to animal cruelty is a potential adverse experience that can contribute to toxic stress and long-term related health outcomes.

Given that high ACE scores correlate with shortening the lifespan by almost 20 years, Boat argues that it is incumbent that health and child welfare officials should routinely include inquiry about children’s perpetration and witnessing of animal cruelty among their interview and assessment questions.

“In recognition that abuse of animals may qualify as an adverse experience and layer onto the other stressors that can change the trajectory of the child’s development, it is vitally important children be interviewed about their experiences with animals,” Boat writes in this lead article for the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse’s quarterly journal.

Such questions not only better inform forensic interviews but also help to customize more appropriate and effective interventions

-- Boat, B.W. (2014). *Connections among adverse childhood experiences, exposure to animal cruelty and toxic stress: What do professionals need to consider?* National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse *Update*, 24(A), 1-3.

THE LINK AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Oklahoma Offender Rehabilitation Programs Include Dog Training

Animal-assisted therapy with convicted offenders has received a significant boost in the form of a \$100,000 donation which will enable the Mabel Bassett Correctional Center for Women in McLoud, Okla., to kennel dogs being trained by the inmates to become pets for senior citizens. The Guardian Angel Program is modeled after a similar program at the Lexington (Okla.) Assessment and Reception Center which for years has had an inmate dog-training program.



An offender calms her dog during the groundbreaking ceremony at the Mabel Bassett Center.

The donation by local resident Derrill Cody in memory of his late wife Serelva will enable inmates at Mabel Bassett to house and care for the dogs they train. The new center, expected to open in late Spring, will also allow space for parenting and reading classes.

“It’s going to provide a really nice and healthy environment for the ladies to work with their dogs,” said John Otto, a Norman veterinarian who helped implement the program at Mabel Bassett.

“When you come to prison, you’re not allowed affection,” April Wilkens, serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole on a murder charge, told [The Oklahoman](#). “It’s so wonderful to feel this again. I’m excited what it’s going to do for us and for the dogs. We’re rescuing each other.”

Chicago Program to Curb Youth and Animal Violence Spotlights

Lex Canis, the newsletter of the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, published an extensive profile in its [Fall, 2014 issue](#) of Cynthia Bathurst, Executive Director and Co-Founder of [Safe Humane Chicago](#), a unique and innovative program that reduces violence for both children and animals. Bathurst got involved in community policing and organizing because of the crime she saw in her Lincoln Park neighborhood and in Chicago generally.



“My background in research as well as my personal experiences led me to understand the close connection between violence against people and violence against animals as well as the power of the human-animal bond,” said Bathurst, who holds a Ph.D. in English, post-graduate work in probability theory and more than 25 years in mathematical analysis.

In 2000 she co-founded the nonprofit D.A.W.G. – the Dog Advisory Work Group, a court advocacy program for following cases of animal abuse or fighting whose 750 volunteers have attended more than 7,000 court hearings. In 2007, Safe Humane Chicago was formed to focus on the welfare of animals as a way to reduce all forms of violence and create safer, more humane neighborhoods.

Safe Humane Chicago trains high school student leaders to bring in adopted street dogs into grade schools to teach safety, responsible guardianship, the negative impacts of dog fighting, and the benefits of positive relationships with pets. The Lifetime Bonds program teams at-risk and incarcerated youth with shelter dogs to learn how to interact positively.

Animal Abuse/Human Violence Link Cited in Bust of Multi-State Dogfighting Ring

In announcing the indictments of 22 persons involved in an alleged dogfighting ring operating in 18 locations in Maryland and West Virginia, authorities emphasized the violence involved in animal fighting and noted that eight of the defendants have previous convictions for violent crimes against humans, including murder and sex offenses.



Lt. Col. Sean Miller addresses a press conference

The indictments, handed down by a Baltimore grand jury, followed a year-long multi-state investigation. Authorities said several alleged members of the ring had links to dogfighting in New York and North Carolina, [The Baltimore Sun](#) reported.

Authorities seized 225 dogs, at least 20 weapons, animal fighting paraphernalia, and dog breeding stands which prosecutors said are referred to by dogfighters as “rape stands.”

Dogfighting is “a cruel world,” said Baltimore police Lt. Col. Sean Miller. “The connectivity to violent crime and violence is apparent.”

“Because there is a link between animal abuse and human violence, it is important that these crimes be taken seriously,” said Katie Flory, chair of the Baltimore Mayor’s Anti-Animal Abuse Commission.

Baltimore County Adds Animal Abuse Prosecution Unit



Adam Lippe and April Doherty

Baltimore County, Md. has joined the ranks of prosecutors around the world who are using the Link between animal cruelty and human violence as the basis for beefing up their prosecutions of animal abuse. Founded in 2012 by Assistant State's Attorney Adam Lippe, the Baltimore County Animal Abuse Unit was established to combat the influx of animal abuse cases. Lippe had successfully prosecuted an 11-man dogfighting ring in 1999 and, as so often happens, wound up having all successive animal cruelty cases dumped on his desk.

Lippe and paralegal April Doherty took the idea for a designated unit to State's Attorney Scott D. Shellenberger, recognizing that like human trafficking, specialized attention is required on certain cases. Once word gets out about such units, there tends to be an increase in calls: the unit today is prosecuting 45 to 50 cases a year, compared to 10 prior to the unit's formation.

Lippe and Doherty provide training classes to help law enforcement officers handle these cases. "Animal abuse is something that has come to the forefront, similar to domestic violence, and this training is something law enforcement has needed," said Sgt. Sheryl Cindric of the county police department.

Public support is also generating an increase in community outreach and education, including an annual Animal Abuse Leadership Summit Education and Connection Program. The public is being urged to report suspected animal abuse to 911.



Postcard-sized handouts encourage the public to call 911 to report animal abuse.



Criminologists Learn of Spanish Link Initiative

The 2014 American Society of Criminology conference, meeting in San Francisco, heard two papers about Link incidence and response in Spain. Dr. Núria Querol, founder of the [GEVHA Link coalition](#) in Spain and professor of anthrozoology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, reported that two local police agencies in Polinyà and Castelló have specifically added animal abuse to their protocols by including it as an item in risk assessment in intimate partner violence and child abuse, and as a risk factor for offending. The two police agencies are also offering emergency shelter for animals through a partnership with the Freedom Paws Link Project.

Both agencies are participating in research with Spanish health officials, having found co-existence of animal abuse in 93% of 46 domestic violence cases evaluated. Researchers found a wide range of types of animal abuse, including beating (57%), death (19%), neglect (24%), burning (2%), verbal violence (67%), suffocation (2%), drowning (2%), and shooting (7%). While adult males committed 81% of the animal abuse, adult females committed 2%, sons 5%, daughters 12%, and other relatives 2%. Over 19% of victims acknowledged that their animals had developed behavioral problems as a result of violent acts which contributed to the human victims' suffering by not knowing how to help their pets.

Courtroom Dog Helps Sex Assault Victim Testify Against Her Father



Trauma dog Hawk comforts the unidentified child, in this courtroom sketch.

Canada's first courtroom dog made a big impression in a Calgary, Alberta courtroom on Dec. 2, helping an alleged sexual assault victim to testify against her father. The girl, age 7, sat in a remote witness room beside "Hawk," a specially trained three-year-old Labrador retriever with the Calgary Police Service's victim assistance unit. Comforted by Hawk, the girl testified via closed-circuit TV, [the CBC](#) reported.

The girl and the courtroom were shown a video of police detectives interviewing her about the alleged crime. The father is charged with sexual assault with a weapon and forcible confinement against his wife and the girl. Hawk joined the Police Service in 2013. In October, 2014, the court issued an order allowing Hawk to be used with the girl and her nine-year-old brother.

THE LINK AND VETERINARY MEDICINE

Link Included in Veterinary Technician Training

Connecticut's Norwalk Community College has reportedly added a unit about the Link between animal abuse and human violence, and the responsibilities of veterinary professionals to respond to suspected abuse, in its veterinary technology program. [Bob Kocienda](#), director of Norwalk's Center for Youth Leadership, tells *The LINK-Letter* that he asked vet tech program coordinator [Dr. Anne C. Hermans](#) to strengthen the curriculum by adding a Link unit, which she did "immediately, with great care, and straight away." The two-year, full-time A.S. degree program is working toward accreditation by the American Veterinary Medical Association.



BUILDING PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK



In the post-9/11 world, probably everyone has seen a poster in their travel venues saying something to the effect of "If you see something, say something." The [Animal Rescue League of Boston](#), recognizing the implications that animal cruelty can have not only on the animals but on humans as well, has adapted this slogan for their "See Something, Say Something" campaign. The goal is to encourage more Bostonians to recognize animal abuse as a significant problem and to take action by reporting it.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... ELDER ABUSE

Pilot Program Helps APS Clients Keep their Pets

An innovative partnership to help elderly clients of the Texas Adult Protective Services system to keep their pets is being piloted in two cities under a grant from the Banfield Charitable Trust. The Trust, a philanthropic arm of the nationwide chain of Banfield pet hospitals to help struggling pet families, has awarded a \$30,000 Pet Advocacy grant for pilot programs in San Antonio and the Lubbock/Amarillo region.



Funds will help seniors with pets to pay for basic veterinary care, pet food, grooming, temporary shelter and boarding, and basic pet supplies. Grants cannot be used to assist clients who are hoarders with four or more animals; for serious medical conditions or non-necessary euthanasia; or for clients who will not be reunited with their pets.

The program is being tested because some APS clients refuse to cooperate with service plans because they fear their pets may go without proper care, said [Rachel Duer](#) of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and [Dianne McGill](#), CEO of Banfield. Volunteers and other free resources for seniors are often non-existent or difficult to locate. Meanwhile, APS caseworkers often pay for pet supplies and services out of their own pockets and care for their clients' pets on their own time.



“Pets provide seniors with a significant source of unconditional love and acceptance for their owners, stability, routine, and a sense of normalcy during life transitions,” they told the Texas APS Conference in November. “Pets also provide a sense of responsibility and purpose.” Pets may

symbolically represent the children of empty-nest adults and be the only social outlet or interaction for socially isolated elderly APS clients.

Under the pilot program, funds can be used when there are no family members, community supports or volunteer resources available to assist with APS clients' pet needs. Funds can also be expended as part of a service plan to remedy immediate danger factors or ongoing abuse, neglect or financial exploitation. APS specialists will not provide transportation for pets, and will make clients sign a release of liability.

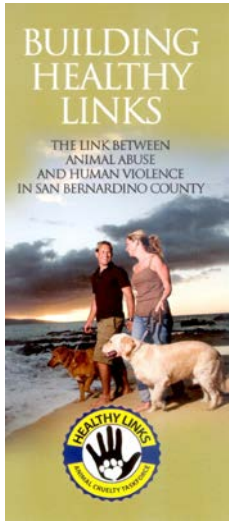
The pilot runs from July 2014 - July 2015. Banfield hopes to replicate the program in other states.

Permission to Reprint

The news items and training opportunities contained in *The LINK-Letter* are intended to disseminate as widely and as freely as possible information about the connections between animal abuse and interpersonal violence. Permission is hereby granted to re-post these articles in other newsletters, websites, magazines, and electronic publications provided that appropriate credit is given to the National Link Coalition and with links to www.NationalLinkCoalition.org.

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

San Bernardino County ACTF Educates Public and Professionals



San Bernardino County's pioneering Animal Cruelty Task Force addressing The Link in Southern California continues to advance, thanks to the publication of two brochures and extensive training programs.

The *Building Healthy Links* brochure describes the Link between animal abuse and human violence in the county (the largest in the U.S. by area). Noting that animals are woven into the basic fabric of our communities and our lives, and research supporting how healthy human-animal relationships enhance well-being, the brochure describes how unfortunate it is that animals are abused and that this is often linked with other family violence.

"Unless all forms of abuse including child and elder abuse, domestic violence and animal abuse, are taken seriously, we are missing the opportunity to intervene and disrupt the cycle of violence," the brochure states. The brochure encourages the public to report suspected domestic violence and child, elder and animal abuse to the national WeTip crime-reporting hotline.

A second brochure describes the Task Force, comprised of 26 law enforcement, humane, animal control, and state agencies. The Task Force is coordinated by [Claudia Swing](#) of the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office.



Both brochures are available on the National Link Coalition's [Resources web pages](#).

Meanwhile, 80 participants attended a two-day training program on Nov. 13-14. National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow presented on The Link and its implications for the criminal justice system. Other speakers included: Eric Sakach of the Humane Society of the U.S. discussing animal fighting; Madeline Bernstein of the L.A. SPCA describing investigating and prosecuting hoarding cases; and Gillian Deegan of the Animal Legal Defense Fund discussing evidence collection and courtroom testimony.

"We as a society are only as good as we treat each other and our pets," District Attorney Mike Ramos told the audience.



Brazil Link Coalition Advancing its Work

Rita de Cassia Maria Garcia, who has been organizing a coalition in São Paulo addressing "O Elo" – The Link – reports that the group ([See LINK-Letter August, 2013](#)) continues to make progress. A PowerPoint presentation is being prepared to train medical and nurses' councils and other organizations. A recent meeting discussed an initiative called "Rede Lar em Paz" – Network Home Alone. And she tells *The LINK-Letter* that she has been named a professor in the Department of Veterinary Medicine at the Federal University of Parana where she is including shelter medicine, public health and veterinary forensics in the curriculum and building a Link page on the university's website. "We are walking... slowly, but walking!" she writes.

SpotAbuse Makes the News in Milwaukee

Milwaukee's unique collaborative SpotAbuse.org campaign (See [LINK-Letter June 2014](#)) – linking the district attorney, police, animal control, humane society and domestic violence shelter – got a shout-out in the [Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel](#) on Dec. 17 about the FBI's adding four types of animal cruelty to its Uniform Crime Reports (See [LINK-Letter October 2014](#)). SpotAbuse aims to reduce the incidence of domestic violence by having the public call 911 when they see suspected animal cruelty.

Carmen Pitre, executive director of Sojourner Family Peace Center, said, "Understanding the link between animal abuse and domestic violence is critical to protecting victims in our communities." Anne Reed, president of the Wisconsin Humane Society, told the newspaper that the campaign "reflects the progress we've made as a society in recognizing the seriousness of animal abuse and how it affects individuals and whole communities."

"Studies show a high correlation between those who commit acts of cruelty against animals and those who harm humans," said Jill Karofsky, Victim Services Director at the Wisconsin Department of Justice. WDOJ will collect animal abuse cases as a separate category in 2015 and include it in 2016 data reports.



Alberta Coalition Program Completes First Year

The Alberta Alliance for the Safety of Animals and People, which introduced Pet Safekeeping in 2013 to care for animals of people in emergency shelters, celebrated its first anniversary by publishing an annual report. [Tim Battle](#), Education Director for the Alberta SPCA and AASAP supervisor, notes that 37 calls were received, and seven animals sheltered, once initial planning and procedures were completed in July. As word spreads, the volume of calls is steadily increasing.



After hiring a part-time coordinator, AASAP laid groundwork for a pilot program in the Edmonton area. Preliminary work included establishing protocols, memoranda of understanding, risk assessment and mitigation procedures, and pet acceptance criteria. Pets accepted into the program receive veterinary examinations and are offered complimentary spay/neuter services. AASAP is guided by an advisory board of 15 animal- and human-services agencies.

The report describes lessons learned as the team continues to reassess and refine procedures, staff training and pet transportation. The program may expand to the entire province, recognizing that rural areas are underserved and survivors face additional difficulties. The program coordinator will become full-time in 2015.

"Perhaps the greatest lesson learned was that no two cases are the same – except they all involve people in extremely distressful and dangerous situations, whose relationships to their pets is often the only positive thing in their lives," writes Battle. "In many cases it's this relationship that empowers the victim to continue to strive for a better life, while at the same time the abuser threatens the pet to further intimidate and control the victim. The need for our program has been proven with each call received."

New Mexico Link Coalition Describes Progress



New Mexico's extensive Positive Links Committee was featured in a four-page article in the Fall, 2014 [The Latham Letter](#). Tammy Fiebelkorn, chair of the Committee and organizer of the annual New Mexico Conference on The Link, described resources currently available in the state, including the Bernalillo County Animal Cruelty Task Force, the Dona Ana County Animal CSI forensics program, counselors for AniCare and AniCare child therapy, three pet-friendly domestic violence shelters, and the statewide Companion Animal Rescue Effort (CARE) that helps domestic violence survivors place their pets in foster care.

The article also described the annual Link conference, the group's new website, a status report on the planned *Deadly Link* documentary film, growing Link awareness by government officials, and extensive training programs. The committee is currently working with criminal justice officials to develop an animal court in Bernalillo County and a statewide animal therapy referral service that courts can use.

Sweden's Link Coalitions Collaborating



Our two LINK Coalitions in Sweden – Se Sambandet (See the Connection) and VOOV (Veterinary Concern for the Abused) are working closely together. Organizer [Nathalie Nordén](#) tells *The LINK-Letter* that a joint conference on November 18 focused on the challenges in current legislation.



Speakers included ethicists, lawyers, prosecutors, animal welfare officers, veterinarians, and police officers who work with victims of violent crimes. "Hopefully, the day will bring clarity regarding needed changes in Swedish legislation," Nordén writes.

Meanwhile, a motion has been introduced into Sweden's Riksdagen by Member of Parliament Birgitta Ohlsson that would address the welfare of pets in domestic violence, based on the premise that animal abuse adversely impacts women and children. The proposal would also require health care professionals and social services agencies to report animal welfare issues to animal control authorities.

THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE

(If you're having trouble finding any of these articles, please let us know. We may be able to help you track them down.)

Exploring the Role of Veterinary Nurses in Animal Welfare

Veterinary nurses' unique skills, compassion and experience often make them best placed to drive animal welfare improvements, according to this British journal article. Veterinary nurses (or technicians) not only attend to patient care, but also can act as owners' consciences as "Welfare Ambassadors," and as veterinarians' consciences as well. They are also well placed to improve welfare in the local community, volunteering for charities and at community events for animals that might never otherwise get veterinary attention. More than anything, the veterinary nursing profession can speak out about welfare issues in veterinary practice and in wider society.

– Yeates, J. (2014). *The role of the veterinary nurse in animal welfare. Veterinary Nursing Journal, 29(7), 250-251.*

Impact of Courtroom Dogs in Child Abuse Cases Studied

With growing interest in using courtroom dogs therapeutically in children's advocacy centers and to help child sexual abuse victims overcome daunting challenges of testifying in court, criminal justice officials are facing a multitude of issues. Several recent law journal articles have explored this important topic:

Noreal Weems, a J.D. Candidate at the University of Maryland's Francis King Carey School of Law, provided an extensive review of the situation in this new article. Weems addressed case law, reasons and benefits, and the effects of using real and stuffed animals in the courtroom. Weems offered recommendations and strategies. Weems concluded that allowing children to be accompanied by stuffed and live animals provides child victims with calming effects that result in beneficial courtroom proceedings and situations where "everyone wins."

-- Weems, N. (2014). *Real or fake: Animals can make a difference in child abuse proceedings. Mid-Atlantic Journal on Law & Public Policy, 2(1), 117-131.*

Casey Holder described the impact of testifying upon children, and case law affecting such special circumstances in children's testimony as closed-circuit TV, comfort items, support persons, and courtroom facility dogs, in a *Houston Law Review* article. She discussed the potential impacts of prejudice, confrontation, distraction, and enabling legislation, and the legal foundations by which using courtroom dogs is "a logical step forward." Holder cited benefits of increased coherency and efficiency during trial, and described policies that protect defendants' rights, guidelines and jury instructions.

-- Holder, C. (2013). *All dogs go to court: The impact of court facility dogs as comfort for child witnesses on a defendant's right to a fair trial. Houston Law Review, 50(4), 1158-1187.*

In one of the earlier reports on the phenomenon, Ellen O'Neill-Stephens described a case study. A boy who was a crucial eyewitness to domestic violence was reluctant to testify against his father until the prosecutor's trained assistance dog sat with him during the competency hearing and trial. "The dog's calming presence creates a more humane and efficient system that enables judges, lawyers and staff to accomplish their work in a more positive and constructive manner," she wrote.

--O'Neill-Stephens, E. (2009, Summer). *Courthouse dogs: A case study. ABA Animal Law Committee Newsletter, 9-10.*

Writing in the *Animal Law* edition of the American Bar Association's magazine for solo practitioners, Debra Hart-Cohen described how the use of "support persons" and "comfort items" by victims and witnesses in courts has been widely accepted and increasingly includes animals. This article traced the history of therapy animals in general; and courtroom dogs in particular, and provided examples of how dogs were being used in several states.

-- Hart-Cohen, D. S. (2009). *Canines in the courtroom. GP Solo Magazine, 26(5).*

Marianne Dellinger described how courts and prosecutors' offices around the country have started using service dogs to support emotionally frail child witnesses who are unwilling to testify were it not for the dogs' calming influence. Such "therapeutic jurisprudence" is helping to bring criminal defendants to justice, she wrote. Reviewing arguments by opponents who fear that the dogs' potential to prejudice juries infringe on defendants' rights to a fair trial, Dellinger analyzed the legal foundations for therapy dogs. She concluded that legally sound reasons exist for using dogs in courts, but only in cases where witnesses can demonstrate a truly compelling need for emotional support and only where there is proper balancing with defendants' rights.

-- Dellinger, M. (2009, Spring). *Using dogs for emotional support of testifying victims of crime. Animal Law Review, 15(2).*

What Are Counselors' Ethics when Animal Abuse is Disclosed?

Does the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics precepts to "do no harm to others" extend to animals? What are the counselor's ethical responsibilities and client confidentiality restrictions when a client self-discloses current or future intent to maliciously injure animals? This article uses current neurobiological research on animal consciousness and experiences of pain, the growth of animal-assisted psychotherapy, and greater awareness of the mental health benefits of pet ownership to argue that it is contradictory to use animals as co-therapists but not protect the welfare of the client's and public's pets. While there are high levels of uncertainty in forecasting client violence, a growing body of evidence linking animal cruelty to antisocial personality disorders, polysubstance abuse, early childhood trauma, and potential for serial homicide dictates that the ACA Code of Ethics should be revised to include animal-related considerations.

-- Wollheim, P. (2014). *The case for animal-protective counseling practice. Counseling Today, 57(5), 46-50.*

Use of Therapy Dogs to Reduce Stress among Sexually-Abused Children Undergoing Forensic Examinations

Animal-assisted therapy interventions can now include children undergoing forensic examinations in children's advocacy centers. This study, conducted at a center in Texas, reported that therapy dogs had a positive effect on reducing heart rate and salivary biomarkers such as immunoglobulin A and salivary alpha-amylase stress indicators. Researchers concluded that therapy dogs have potential to enhance the forensic interview process to better help sexually abused children handle the associated stress.

-- Krause-Parello, C.A., & Friedmann, E. (2014). *The effects of an animal-assisted intervention on salivary alpha-amylase, salivary immunoglobulin A, and heart rate during forensic interviews in child sexual abuse cases. Anthrozoös, 27(4), 581-590.*

WANTED: A FEW GOOD IDEAS

The National Link Coalition is seeking to expand our collection of resources to help communities implement interdisciplinary programs in the prevention of animal abuse and human violence. We're asking our members to share their promising practices with us. What works in your community? How did you make it happen? What kind of results have you seen?

Please send us such things as:

- Questionnaires or forms you use on intakes, assessments, interviews or referrals that include questions about clients' animals
- Cross-reporting protocols and forms between animal, child, elder and domestic violence agencies
- Statistics about the use of pet protection orders in your state
- Safety plans that include pets
- Public awareness posters, bookmarks, pins, flyers, etc., educating the community about the Link
- Procedures for caring for animal victims of domestic violence, both via off-site referrals and on-site pet safekeeping
- Institutional policies and trainings educating staff to The Link and their response

Send them to National Link Coordinator Phil Arkow and he'll use them to help the rest of the world share your successes – and save more lives in the process.

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Bills We're Watching:

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



H.R. 5267 – the Pets And Women’s Safety (PAWS) Act – would expand existing federal domestic violence protections to include pets of domestic violence victims. It would prohibit crossing state lines to harm a domestic partner’s pet, and establish a federal grant program to provide assistance and housing to victims’ pets in need of emergency shelter.



New Jersey A 494 would provide specific statutory authority to allow courts to include animals in domestic violence restraining orders. The bill affects animals belonging to either party or a minor child in the household. The bill is in the Assembly Women & Children Committee.

Animal Abuse in the Presence of a Child



Illinois HB 3768 would make it a Class 4 felony, with subsequent violations classified as Class 3 felonies, to commit aggravated animal cruelty or abuse in the presence of a minor. The bill is in the Rules Committee.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



Illinois HB 3284 would declare any building used in animal fighting a public nuisance and would allow authorities to abate such building and seize any vehicle, vessel or aircraft used in such fights. The bill is in the Rules Committee.



New Jersey SB 736 and a newer version, **AB 3596** would create a new crime of “leader of a dog fighting network” which would be added to the list of offenses considered “racketeering activities” under New Jersey’s anti-racketeering (RICO) law. The bills are in the Senate Judiciary and Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committees.

Therapeutic Interventions for Child Abuse Victims



New Jersey A-2155 would establish a three-year pilot program within DCF to provide animal-assisted therapy to victims of childhood violence, trauma, or children with behavioral healthcare needs. The bill is in the Assembly Women & Children Committee.

Interventions for Animal Abuse Offenders



New Jersey S-2449, “Shyanne’s Law,” would require convicted adult animal abusers to receive mental health evaluations. Currently, only juvenile offenders receive mental health screenings. The bill is in the Senate Law and Public Safety Committee.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Animal-Sacrificing Devil Worshipers Charged with Two Murders



Algarad (left) and Burch

The home of a Clemmons, N. Car. home where the skeletal remains of two men were found buried in the backyard also were blanketed in trash and animal carcasses, with floors covered in human and animal excrement and walls spray-painted in graffiti and covered in mold and hundreds of satanic photos and drawings. Pazuzu Algarad, 35, a self-proclaimed devil worshiper, and his self-proclaimed wife, Amber Burch, 24, have been charged with killing and burying Joshua Wetzler, 37, and Tommy Dean Welch, 36. The [Winston-Salem Journal](#) reported that Algarad had told friends he had to sacrifice a rabbit or small animal once a month and got high from eating the “still-beating heart” of sacrificial animals and bathing in or drinking their blood. A 2010 psychiatric report on Algarad mentioned his expressed need to perform animal sacrifices as well as experiencing panic disorder and agoraphobia. Algarad reportedly had also bragged about killing two prostitutes. Algarad was born John Alexander Lawson in San Francisco, and reportedly changed his name to the name of the demon at the center of *The Exorcist*.

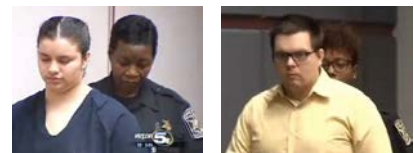


Chase (left) and Natalie

Prosecutors believe the motive was that she did not want the responsibility of caring for the children and wanted her own family. [Detectives said](#) she was jealous of her stepdaughter and burned her with cigarettes and hot candle wax, pulled out her hair in clumps, beat her with a fly swatter, and locked her in a suitcase on the day she died. She reportedly told a cellmate that she and DeBlase first poisoned their dog to see how long it would take “to kill a living thing.”

Father Convicted of Poisoning His Children Tried Out the Technique First on Dog

A father in Alabama has been [convicted](#) of slowly poisoning his two children with anti-freeze and then dumping their bodies in the woods. John DeBlase, 31, was convicted on three counts of capital murder for killing his daughter Natalie, 5, and son Chase, 3 by sneaking anti-freeze into their food over a period of several months. DeBlase’s common-law wife, Heather Leavell-Keaton, has been implicated in the deaths.



Heather Leavell-Keaton and John DeBlase

Convicted Dog Killer Charged with Killing his Mother

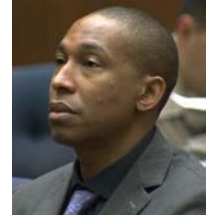
A man convicted for beating his dog to death with a baseball bat in 2012 and leaving it for dead in a dumpster has now been accused of killing his mother. Vancouver, B.C. police arrested Brian Whitlock, 28, on Nov. 9 following a tense, eight-hour standoff at the home where the body of his mother had been discovered the previous night. Whitlock had admitted to beating his dog “Captain”, believing the dog to be possessed, and was sentenced to 60 days in jail and a lifetime ban on owning animals. Police told [Canadian TV news agencies](#) that they would be reviewing his psychiatric history to determine if that was a factor in the homicide incident.



Brian Whitlock

Prosecutor to Re-Try Firefighter in Cat-Feeding Incident

The potential for confrontational neighborhood disputes over animals to turn violent was demonstrated quite vividly recently in Los Angeles, where a firefighter and his mother have been charged with assault for allegedly punching a neighbor over her feeding stray cats. In a graphic surveillance video aired on [KABC-TV](#) that captured the September, 2013 incident, Ian Eulian and his mother, Lonietta Fontaine, can be seen repeatedly poking and punching Rebecca Stafford while she sat behind the wheel of her car, then dragging her out until she fell unconscious into the street. Eulian and Fontaine claimed they responded in self-defense after Stafford threw cat kibble in their faces. The case went to trial, but after a hung jury the prosecutor announced plans to re-try the case.



Ian Eulian



Brian Oldham

“I Killed Your Dog. You’re Next.”

A Brooklyn, N.Y. man who allegedly killed his ex-girlfriend’s Chihuahua by slamming it against the floor reportedly told her, “I killed your dog. You’re next.” Brian Oldham, 24, faces two years in prison on charges of aggravated animal cruelty in the death of “Ice,” who died of traumatic brain injury, according to [media reports](#). Oldham was released from prison in 2013 after serving three years for selling drugs.

Dead Dog Found Buried in Yard of Man Accused of Threatening His Ex



Douglas Ferrell

Delray Beach, Fla. police arresting a man on charges of aggravated stalking found the body of a dog believed to be his ex-girlfriend’s buried in his yard. [According to police reports](#), Douglas Ferrell, 23, was to have been taking care of his girlfriend’s Chihuahua, “Andy,” while she was vacationing in Venezuela. When Ferrell told her he had lost her dog, she told him that she needed space from the relationship while she looked for Andy. He then reportedly called her more than 30 times in two days and sent her threatening texts, videos and social media posts that police called “extremely threatening and disturbing.” “It would be a shame if something happened to your car and your house just because you would not call me,” read one text. Police said he had also texted her that her dog was not lost and that if she wanted to see Andy alive she needed to meet with him. Ferrell allegedly also sent her a video saying how he likes hearing the dog’s cries of pain. Police were investigating filing possible animal cruelty charges as well, and said that Ferrell is on probation for possession of a controlled substance and has a restraining order against him from a different woman.

Man Charged with Killing, Injuring Girlfriend’s Dogs in Jealous Rage



Keith Chisum

Police in Lubbock, Texas charged Keith Chisum with three counts of animal cruelty for allegedly killing one of his girlfriend’s dogs, and injuring two others, after she told him she wanted to break up with him. [According to arrest warrants](#), the girlfriend told police that Chisum thought she was cheating on him: she said she wasn’t but said she wanted to break off their relationship. When he called her to tell her that her dogs were bleeding, she went home to check and found two animals with serious head injuries and the third dead in the back yard. Chisum was released from jail after posting a \$15,000 bond.

Animal Cruelty Offender Gets Life Sentence in Double Homicide

A man previously convicted on misdemeanor animal cruelty charges and later convicted of shooting two University of Southern California students in their parked car was sentenced on Nov. 17 to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. Superior Court Judge Stephen A. Marcus said the murders committed by Javier Bolden, 22, and his “cavalier attitude,” had “stained the reputation of Los Angeles.” A jury convicted Bolden in October in the April 11, 2012 shootings of graduate students Ming Qu and Ying Wu in a case that rocked southern California. In 2011, Bolden had been convicted of misdemeanor animal cruelty and of threatening a school official, which earned him three years of probation and 21 days in jail.



Andres Sanchez-Loevano

Police Seek Alleged “Kitten Killer” in Domestic Violence Case

Police officials in Denver, Colo., posted an appeal to the general public in late November seeking the whereabouts of Andres Sanchez-Loevano, 23, wanted on suspicion of aggravated animal cruelty for allegedly killing a kitten during a domestic violence dispute on Nov. 17. [The Denver Post](#) reported that police were calling him the “kitten killer” and a hotline had been set up at Denver CrimeStoppers for anyone with information about the incident.

Man Charged with Torturing Girlfriend’s Dog – While Police Watch!

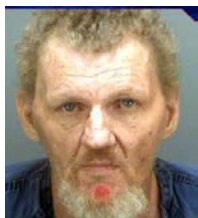
Charles Urbach, 27, of Des Moines, Iowa, was charged with animal torture for allegedly beating his girlfriend’s dog six to eight times and pouring a bucket of water on it in 19-degree weather. The incident occurred while police officers were on the scene taking a report from a neighbor who had earlier witnessed a similar event. Police told [WHO-TV](#) that Urbach admitted abusing the dog, a 10-pound Shih Tzu named “D.J.,” after it went to the bathroom on the floor. Animal torture is an aggravated misdemeanor in Iowa.



Charles Urbach

DCF Called when Mother Charged with Felicide and Assault

Child protective services workers were alerted after a Dudley, Mass. woman was charged with animal cruelty and assault and battery for allegedly using her husband’s screwdriver to stab her family’s incontinent pet cat to death. Police told the [Worcester Telegram & Gazette](#) that Michelle E. Stegenga, 37, was frustrated because “the cat was peeing on everyone’s clothes, ruining them.” The assault charge stemmed from Stegenga reportedly scuffling with her daughter, who had called police. The Department of Children and Families was notified because there were other children in the home.



Dennis Emery

Man Threatens Dog in Domestic Dispute, Then Kills Himself

Pinellas Park, Fla. police investigated an incident on Nov. 25 when Dennis Emery was involved in a domestic disturbance with his wife, apparently threatened to shoot one of their 13 border collies, cocked the gun, lowered the hammer, and then inexplicably fired the gun at his own face. Emery, who had had run-ins with police 34 times since 2012 and had been arrested three times in less than a week in October, had said the dogs’ barking had been a constant annoyance. Police were treating the shooting as accidental but had not ruled out suicide, according to [WTVT-TV](#).

11-Year-Old Charged in Animal Abuse Case

An 11-year-old child, whose identity was not revealed due to the defendant's age, and two adults have been charged by the Massachusetts SPCA with felony animal abuse involving a pit bull puppy named "Max" who suffered multiple traumatic injuries and could no longer walk. Jacquelyn Hadley, 26, her boyfriend Jason Nieves, 31, and the child were arraigned in Springfield, Mass. District Court. Suffering from a broken leg, fractured ribs and brain trauma, Max was turned in to an animal shelter by Nieves and a friend who reportedly pretended the dog was a stray. Following weeks of treatment, Max made a near-miraculous recovery and was placed up for adoption, the [Springfield Republican](#) reported.



Max, following rehabilitation

The MSPCA investigation report claimed the puppy never received veterinary care or pain medication despite suffering chronic escalating abuse at the hands of the 11-year-old. An MSPCA investigator said the child not only acknowledged hitting the dog, sometimes with a shovel, but showed pleasure in recounting the abuse. After visiting the home and interviewing the couple, the MSPCA investigator filed a child abuse complaint against them stating the 11-year-old was left alone with the younger children.

Hadley and Nieves had reportedly feared reporting the abuse because it might cause trouble for the 11-year-old. Child welfare officials visiting the house on another matter had suggested removing the dog for its own safety. Nieves had pled guilty in 2012 to assaulting a child in the same house and was sentenced to four years of probation.



James Michael Foran

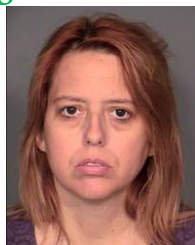
Registered Sex Offender Charged with Sexual Assault of Dog

James Michael Foran, 47, a registered sex offender, of Bristol, Tenn., was charged with sexually assaulting a dog, according to [Washington County, Va., sheriff's deputies](#). The dog's owner told police he felt his female Labrador mix had been sexually assaulted. Foran was arrested after a DNA sample taken from the dog was a match.

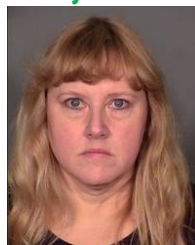
Parents Charged with 58 County of Child Sex Abuse, Incest and Bestiality



Christopher Sena



Terrie Sena



Debra Sena

A Las Vegas, Nev. man, his current wife and ex-wife are facing at least 58 felony charges of child sexual assault and bestiality after detectives uncovered a horrifying sex ring involving eight children, several of which were their own, and forcing children to commit acts of incest. Police charged Christopher Sena, 48, his wife, Debra Sena, 50, and ex-wife Terrie Sena, 43, the [Las Vegas Sun-Journal](#) reported. The incidents, which allegedly were videotaped over a 12-year period, were said to include forcing two children to have sex with the family dog. Police collected hours of video footage with victims as young as 3. Several victims told police that Sena would force them to have sex with him or his wives or watch as they had sex with his wives. One girl, who told police she would hit herself in the stomach with a two-by-four because she feared getting pregnant with his child, said she had been forced to have sex with him two to three times a week over 12 years.



Nathan Schloss

Animal Torture Case Uncovers Alleged Sex Abuse

Police in Iowa City, Iowa investigating a video allegedly depicting Leo Nopoulos, 21, torturing his roommate’s cat, “Fritz,” for more than three hours uncovered a second video reportedly depicting the roommate repeatedly sexually abusing an incapacitated woman. Police believe the roommate, Nathan Schloss, 23, may have had multiple sexual assault victims. Schloss was charged with 18 counts of sexual abuse and additional charges were expected to be filed, [KCRG-TV reported](#). Police said Schloss’ victim was assaulted repeatedly between May 13, 2012 and Sept. 8, 2013, and had no idea that the abuse was occurring or that the incidents were being recorded: in at least one case, police had to inform the alleged victim that she was sexually assaulted.



Taylor Isaac Jenson

Man Charged with Assaulting Wife and Dog on Christmas Eve

A Portland, Ore. man spent Christmas in jail after he allegedly arrived home drunk on Christmas Eve and strangled the family dog because he felt his wife loved the dog more than him. Taylor Isaac Jenson, 29, was charged with animal abuse and assault for also throwing both the dog into the Christmas tree and attacking his wife when she tried to intervene. [The Oregonian](#) reported their 10-year-old daughter was home at the time, and that Jenson had recently been discharged from the U.S. Navy and was having trouble readjusting to civilian life.

Actor Charged with Cooking and Eating Ex-Girlfriend’s Rabbit

A TV and movie actor in North Hollywood, Calif., was charged with felony animal cruelty and criminal threats after allegedly eating his former girlfriend’s pet rabbit and threatening to do the same to her. Police said Dimitri Diatchenko, 46, killed, skinned and cooked the rabbit and ate half of it while texting his ex-girlfriend step-by-step pictures of the act. When she returned to the home they shared, he reportedly said he would kill and eat her as well. Diatchenko has played Russian roles in “Bones,” “Sons of Anarchy,” “Get Smart,” “Chernobyl Diaries,” and “Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull,” the [Los Angeles Times](#) reported.



Dimitri Diatchenko



Erika Murray

Mom Charged in Deaths of Three Babies, Animal Cruelty

Erika Murray, 31, was indicted on nine charges of murder, neglect, abuse, reckless endangerment, concealing a fetal death, and animal cruelty after police in hazmat suits retrieved three dead infants among mounds of used diapers and feces from her Blackstone, Mass. home. Her boyfriend, Ray Rivera, 38, was indicted on seven counts of assault and battery on a child, reckless endangerment of a child, animal cruelty, and cultivating marijuana. Seven children had lived in the squalid home, according to [WHDH-TV](#): the four surviving children were removed by state officials. The skeleton of one of the three babies was reportedly found stuffed in a backpack inside the closet in the children’s bedroom. Rivera, through his attorney, maintained he was unaware that five of the seven children were living in the home. DNA tests confirmed that Rivera was the father of all seven children.

School Superintendent Charged with Dogfighting, Animal Cruelty and Child Abuse

Pauline Ruth Winbush, 52, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources in the Palmdale, Calif. School District, and her boyfriend, Kevin Ray Williams, 50, were charged by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office with four felony counts of dogfighting, 17 felony counts of animal cruelty, and one count of child abuse.

[News media reports](#) said animal control officers had initially found a horse belonging to the couple roaming the streets: subsequent investigations discovered 19 pit bulls allegedly living in feces- and urine-filled crates inside the house where a couple and a minor child lived. The dogs, some of which showed signs of dogfighting, all had to be euthanized. Winbush has been placed on paid administrative leave.



Pauline Winbush

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Jan. 14 – Glynco, Ga. (Federal Law Enforcement Training Center). [Allie Phillips](#) will train Navy prosecutors on “When the Abuse of Animals Co-Occurs with Family Violence” at the NCIS Advanced Family and Sexual Violence Training.

Jan. 14 – Puerto Rico: [Sonia Estévez](#) will conduct a Link symposium on “Crueldad Animal: Delito Grave a Nivel Federal” for local FBI and federal Justice Department officials.

Jan. 22 – Oklahoma City, Okla.: The [Oklahoma Link Coalition](#) will meet at Chesapeake Community Plaza.

Jan. 23 – Washington, D.C.: The [National Coalition on Violence Against Animals](#) will meet to discuss issues focusing on animal cruelty and its relationship to other forms of violence.

Feb. 6 – 8 – Minneapolis, Minn.: [Nicole Eller-Medina](#) will present on The Link as part of a panel discussion on “What is the Role of Veterinarians in Animal Cruelty Investigations?” at the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association conference.

Feb. 18 – (Online). Allie Phillips will present a webinar on “Understanding the Importance of Animal Abuse as a Predictor and Indicator Crime” for the [Canadian Federation of Humane Societies](#) as part of an animal abuse prosecution webinar series.

Feb. 19 – Oklahoma City, Okla.: The [Oklahoma Link Coalition](#) will meet at Chesapeake Community Plaza.

Feb. 19-22 – Columbus, Ohio: Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM, will present on animal sexual abuse and case reports of non-accidental injury and animal hoarding at the [Midwest Veterinary Conference](#).

Feb. 24 – Staunton, Va.: Allie Phillips will present on “The Co-Occurrence of Animal Abuse and Family Violence: Strategies and Policies for Keeping Families Safe” and “Effectively Incorporating Therapy Animals with Maltreated Children” at the 15th Annual [Shenandoah Valley Multidisciplinary Conference](#).

Feb. 26 – (Online): Jessica Milligan will discuss “Is there HOPE? How and Why a Prosecutor should be Proactive in Combating Animal Cruelty” in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse.

March 4 – (Online): Allie Phillips will present “Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T)[™]: An Innovative Solution for Families and Pets in Crisis” for the [Humane Society Academy](#) First Strike: Ending Violence 2015 series.

March 18 – Hammonton, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train [New Jersey Department of Children & Families](#) workers on “Animal Abuse as a Risk Factor for Child Maltreatment and Family Violence.”

April 13 – Edinburgh, Scotland: Allie Phillips will present on “Therapy Animals Helping Maltreated Children: Strategies for Successful Implementation in Child Protection Agencies and Courtrooms” at the 2015 [British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse Congress](#).

April 15 – June 10 – (Online): A 40-hour, 9-week distance-learning Victim Assistance Academy, which will include Link programming, is being offered by the [National Organization for Victim Assistance](#). Sessions are held on Wednesdays.

Apr. 16 – Oklahoma City, Okla.: The [Oklahoma Link Coalition](#) will meet at Chesapeake Community Plaza.

Apr. 23 – Phoenix, Ariz.: Phil Arkow will be the keynote speaker at the [Association of Professional Humane Educators](#) conference, speaking about how focusing on The Link can advance humane education efforts.

April 23-24 – Portland, Ore.: Allie Phillips will present on “The Co-Occurrence of Animal Abuse and Family Violence: Strategies and Policies for Keeping Children Safe” at the 2015 Clackamas County [Child Abuse and Family Violence Summit](#).

Apr. 30 – Fresno, Calif.: Phil Arkow will present an all-day multidisciplinary training on The Link on behalf of the [Central California Animal Disaster Team](#).

June 11-12 – Denver, Colo.: Phil Arkow will introduce The Link as a species-spanning approach to animal shelter administration at the [Society of Animal Welfare Administrators’](#) Management Conference.

To subscribe to The Link-Letter (*it’s 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.



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.

Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee

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Chair, Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project,
The Latham Foundation
Stratford, N.J.

Lesley Ashworth

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