



# NATIONAL LINK COALITION

*Working together to stop violence against people and animals*

**The LINK-Letter Vol. 10, No. 6 June 2017**

*A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER*



**ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE**



[www.NationalLinkCoalition.org](http://www.NationalLinkCoalition.org)

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## ***THE LINK AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE***

### **Alleged ISIS Terrorist Thwarted after Stabbing “Dirty” Family Dog**

An investigation into a stabbing of a family dog that was seen as “dirty” in the eyes of Islam uncovered a suspected suicide bomber who had not previously been on law enforcement’s radar. Federal authorities arrested Gregory Lepsky, 20, of Point Pleasant, N.J. after finding the makings of a pressure cooker bomb in his residence following the dog stabbing.



**Gregory Lepsky**

[NJ.com](#) reported that Lepsky was charged with attempting to provide material support to a terrorist organization. Court documents said that Lepsky was arrested after one of Lepsky’s relatives called police to report that he had a weapon and threatened to kill his family dog; while searching the home, officers found the pressure cooker bomb in his closet. Investigators also reportedly found instructions on how to build a pressure cooker bomb; social media statements about wanting to blow himself up and become a martyr on behalf of the Islamic State; and a statement from another IS supporter that Westerners who could not travel to Syria could support the cause by conducting terrorist attacks at home.

An FBI review of Lepsky’s cell phone, which had the ISIS flag as its background photo, found that between Jan. 14 and Feb. 4 he had conducted some 3,340 internet searches, many of which related to ISIS propaganda and terrorist attacks.

The [Asbury Park Press](#) reported that police found the dog was still alive but had a large slash mark on its back. After being taken to a local hospital because of blood on his body, Lepsky reportedly told hospital staff his name was “Allah Abdel Rochmad” and that he planned to “kill as many people as possible” in New York City, but that police thwarted his efforts to be a suicide bomber, according to the federal complaint. Lepsky reportedly told authorities he regretted trying to kill his family dog because police would not have otherwise figured out his plan.

## Law Enforcement and Animal Welfare Celebrate Unique Partnership

New York City Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill (left) and ASPCA President & CEO Matt Bershadker celebrate the unique partnership between the two organizations (*See the [September 2013 LINK-Letter](#)*). The collaboration has resulted in significant increases in the number of animal cruelty cases investigated and prosecuted. The program was showcased at the International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association's 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in May in New York City, which drew over 350 veterinarians, prosecutors, law officers and others from as far away as Spain, Taiwan and Australia.



## Nevada Becomes 43<sup>rd</sup> State to Outlaw Bestiality



Gov. Brian Sandoval

With the stroke of a pen, Nevada became the 43<sup>rd</sup> state to ban animal sexual abuse on May 23 when Gov. Brian Sandoval signed **AB 391** into law. The measure adds a new section to Nevada's Revised Statutes, Chapter 201 ("Crimes Against Public Decency and Good Morals") that now defines bestiality as a gross misdemeanor that can be upgraded to a Category D felony if the animal dies or suffers serious bodily injury as a result, or if the offender has a prior conviction for animal cruelty.

Offenders will be required to permanently forfeit any animals in the home and cannot work with or volunteer where animals are present. Courts can authorize offenders to undergo psychological evaluation and counseling and to pay costs for the care and medical expenses of the animals. The measure will also cover anyone who causes, aids, promotes or observes bestiality.

Accepted animal husbandry, veterinary and conformation judging practices are excluded. The bill had previously passed both the Assembly and the Senate unanimously. Its provisions take effect Oct. 1, 2017.

## THE LINK AND... CHILD MALTREATMENT

### Psychological Risk Factors for Childhood Animal Abuse Examined

Despite growing research into human-animal relationships, relatively little is known about childhood cruelty to animals. This systematic review investigates the potential psychological risk factors for childhood cruelty to animals. The aim was to assemble, synthesize and evaluate the quality and breadth of existing empirical research and to highlight areas in need of further study. The review reveals a myriad of potential psychological risk factors associated with childhood animal cruelty, but highlights the decrease in publications on this topic over time and the lack of high-quality publications. The authors, based in the School of Health and Social Sciences and the Division of Psychiatry at the University of Edinburgh, write that investigating the factors underlying cruel behavior toward animals has great implications for animal welfare and child wellbeing, and is vital for designing and implementing successful universal and targeted interventions to prevent cruelty to animals.

-- Hawkins, R.D., Hawkins, E.L., & Williams, J.M. (2017). Psychological risk factors for childhood nonhuman animal cruelty. *Society & Animals*, 25(1).

## *ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE*

### **Veterinary Study Examines Animal Abuse Within Domestic Violence**

What does the Link between domestic violence and animal abuse look like in a community as large, diverse and dynamic as New York City, with 9,000,000 people and their animals? Newly-released statistics demonstrate that it's a serious issue and that veterinarians can play a significant role in addressing intimate partner violence.



**Rob Reisman, Elizabeth Brandler and Ellen Vancelette presented their study's findings at the IVFSA Conference** in terms of infectious diseases, but violence is another area where this kind of collaboration can have an impact," Reisman said.

"I've learned as a veterinarian that I can not only have an impact on animals, but also on violence in society," said Dr. Rob Reisman, Forensic Science Supervisor for the ASPCA. Speaking at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association, Reisman and ASPCA colleagues Elizabeth Brandler and Ellen Vancelette described their research into the nature of the animal cruelty/domestic violence Link in the Big Apple.

In recent years, the One Health movement has brought veterinarians and physicians together over a wide range of common interests. "With One Health, we usually think

Since the ASPCA turned over investigation of animal cruelty cases to the NYPD in 2014, there have been 27,611 reports to the city's 311 call center. These have resulted in 228 summonses, 445 arrests, and over 2,000 animals assisted.

But 65 of these cases have also involved domestic violence as well. Of these 65 cases:

- 54 (83%) led to the arrest of a suspect
- 5 (8%) have been closed
- 3 (4.5%) are still pending, awaiting apprehension of the suspect
- 3 (4.5%) are still pending

In the majority of cases (68%), the suspect is an intimate partner of the complainant. In 26% of cases another family member is suspected of the animal abuse, while in 6% the relationship is unknown, he said.

91% of the defendants are men; their average age is 32. Of the intimate partners, 57% are boyfriends, 22% are spouses, 3% are fiancés, 3% are ex-boyfriends, and 16% involved the couple.

The study also examined the nature of the animals involved and their injuries. The victims were 56 dogs, 21 cats, and one hamster. Smaller and younger dogs are more vulnerable in domestic violence disputes. 25 of the 78 animals involved, and a majority of the cats, were deceased. Half of the animals that sustained skull fractures had been thrown to the ground or against a wall. New research has differentiated physical injuries sustained in blunt-force trauma from those occurring from motor vehicle accidents.

Prosecution of animal abuse linked to domestic violence, under New York State law, has an unusual dynamic. Because animals are considered property, defendants can be prosecuted not only for animal cruelty but also for other charges related to the control of a domestic partner, including arson, criminal mischief, larceny, burglary, coercion, intimidation, sexual abuse, and endangering the welfare of a child. Reisman presented several case studies where defendants were charged under multiple statutes and pled guilty; all were sentenced to incarceration and were placed on the animal abusers registry.

“Law enforcement officers and social workers, when they go out on a domestic violence case and see an animal, should routinely ask if the animal is also being abused,” said Brandler. “We’re seeing more and more that they are.”

## Domestic Violence Publication Spotlights SAF-T Shelters

The growing need to assist families with companion animals needing to escape domestic violence, and the innovative solution of pet-friendly Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T)™, are the focus of an article in the latest issue of [Domestic Violence Report](#). Allie Phillips, founder of SAF-T, writes about the statistics describing how prevalent animals are in American households and how the human-animal bond can be used as a weapon against vulnerable women and children. She cites studies describing the incidence of animal abuse co-occurring with intimate partner violence and the number of shelters that are beginning to ask questions about the need for pet care on crisis lines and intakes. The article also includes dramatic case studies depicting the critical need for more housing availability for the animal survivors of domestic violence.



Allie Phillips

-- Phillips, A. (2017, April/May). Sheltering animals and families together. *Domestic Violence Report*, 22(4), 57-60.

## Publication Draws Attention to Domestic Violence Link, PAWS Act

Steven Feldman, Executive Director of the Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI), authored an article in a recent edition of [Pet Product News](#) entitled “Pets Need Shielding from Domestic Violence.” Citing statistics describing how many women are precluded from leaving abusive homes in fear for what will happen to their animals, Feldman encouraged people in the pet industry to write to their members of Congress in support of the Pet and Women Safety Act (PAWS Act), [H.R. 909/S. 322](#). The bills would establish a federal grant program to ensure that domestic violence survivors have access to safe shelter for their pets.

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## Animal Abuse Called the “Golden Thread” of Coercive Control

CAADA-DASH Risk Identification Checklist for working with Perpetrators

	Yes	No	Never
1. Did the current or most recent incident result in an injury to your partner?			
2. Do you think your partner is frightened of you?			
3. Do you think your partner is going to get hurt?			
4. Have you ever had to stop your partner from seeing friends, family, doctors, colleagues or made life difficult for the child?			
5. Do you think your partner is having dependant or much thought of the animal?			
6. Have you and your partner separated from each other or tried to separate in the last year?			
7. Do you have children that you do not live with - if so do you and your partner currently disagree or get into arguments about the child contact?			
8. How often do you feel the need to check on your partner or check on their animal or family or friends when they aren't expecting you?			
9. Is your current or most recent partner pregnant or had a baby within the last 12 months?			
10. Do you think your partner is getting worse?			
11. Do you think you are being abusive more often than you need to be?			
12. Do you try to control what your partner does in your home?			
13. Have you ever used a dog, cat, or other animal, a chain, collar, leash, or anything else to hurt your partner or pet, or someone else in your family?			
14. Have you ever put your hands round your partner's throat and held them that way?			
15. Have you ever touched your partner sexually in ways that you suspect, or have made her feel uncomfortable or hurt her or someone else?			
16. Have you ever involved someone else in threatening your partner or other family members?			
17. Have you ever hurt anyone beside your partner?			
18. Have you ever threatened the family pet or other animal, such as a neighbor's dog or something like that?			
19. Do you currently have money worries or have you recently lost your job or worry about losing it?			
20. Are you currently drinking alcohol or using drugs?			
21. Have you ever used drugs or alcohol to the point where people tell you it is a problem or you shut to worry it is a problem or start spending money you can't afford on drugs or alcohol or pass out from drug or alcohol use?			
22. Are you currently depressed or have any other problems with your mental health? Are you taking any medication for depression or other mental illness?			
23. Have you ever thought about or threatened suicide or tried to kill yourself?			
24. Have you ever had a bail order or injunction/order telling you not to contact or hurt your partner or the children? If so, have you ever ignored that order and done something it said you shouldn't do. Like calling on them to give the bail guards or something like that?			
25. Have you ever been in any trouble with the police? Do you have any criminal convictions (you can explain that you can ask the police to check that records but would prefer it if there were honest with you in the first place). If so what type of criminal activity?			

A standardized risk assessment form is used by domestic violence and law enforcement agencies in Great Britain to help front-line practitioners and police officials identify high-risk cases of domestic abuse. The CAADA-DASH Risk Identification Checklist asks domestic violence survivors 24 questions about their history of being injured, fearful, isolated, depressed, threatened, and numerous other factors. A point scale helps interviewers assess the client's risk factors. Some versions of the form ask, “Has (.....) ever mistreated an animal or the family pet?”

In response to an inquiry as to the number of survivors who indicated histories of animal abuse, Andy Myhill, an Evidence and Evaluation Advisor at Britain's College of Policing, responded that 5% responded positively to the question about mistreatment of animals, a rate considerably lower than numerous other studies around the world. However, Myhill is somewhat critical of the CAADA-DASH questionnaire and inconsistencies with which it is implemented. He is part of a group that is piloting a revised risk assessment for frontline police officers.

Myhill and his colleagues suggest that although police tend to prioritize criminal offenses and especially physical violence and injury to the victim, coercive control may more likely be the “golden thread” running through risk identification and assessment for domestic violence. Risk assessment tools structured around coercive control can help police officers move beyond an “incident-by-incident” response and toward identifying the dangerous patterns of behavior that precede domestic homicide.

In an evaluation of DASH reports, factors associated with a course of coercive and controlling conduct, including perpetrators' threats, controlling behavior, sexual coercion, sub-lethal physical violence, and victims' isolation and fear, were the most representative of the overall construct of domestic abuse.

Threats to animals have long been documented as one of numerous patterns of coercive control embedded within intimate partner violence. Studies in the U.S. report that as many as 71% of women in shelters claimed their partner had harmed or threatened pets or livestock.

“In my experience of reviewing domestic abuse cases, although I have of course seen examples of ‘violence’ towards animals, many of the more worrying cases have included ‘control’ through animals/pets – especially threats to harm them or take them away,” writes Myhill. “This is the route we have gone down in the pilot. My personal view is that the violence to animals/people link would be best factored in at a second stage, when more in-depth risk and needs-type assessments might be conducted for victim and perpetrator. That would be after the initial frontline assessment has established whether or not there is ongoing abuse that represents a threat.”

-- Myhill, A., & Hohl, K. (2016). The “Golden Thread”: Coercive control and risk assessment for domestic violence. [Journal of Interpersonal Violence](#).

-- Robinson, A.L., Myhill, A., Wire, J., Roberts, J., & Tilley, N. (2016). *Risk-Led Policing of Domestic Abuse and the DASH Risk Model*. Cardiff, Wales: Cardiff University School of Social Sciences.



## ANIMAL ABUSE AND... ELDER ABUSE

*June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day  
(United Nations Resolution 66/127, adopted Dec. 19, 2011, represents a day when the entire world  
voices its opposition to the abuse and suffering inflicted to some of our older generations)*

### Elder Abuse Link Law Enacted in Washington State

**Washington HB 1153** addresses financial exploitation and physical neglect of seniors and people with disabilities by increasing penalties, reducing barriers to prosecution, and expanding the scope of protection for vulnerable persons. 1<sup>st</sup>-degree animal cruelty, including sexual contact with an animal, is listed among many crimes which prosecutors may cite as reasons for filing charges. The measure was approved by the House 92-4 on Feb. 27 and by the Senate 47-0 on April 10. It **was signed into law on May 10** by Gov. Jay Inslee and will become effective on July 23.



Gov. Jay Inslee

## THE LINK AND VETERINARY MEDICINE

### Opioid Epidemic, Link Cases Fuel Veterinary Skepticism

The training that veterinarians are receiving to recognize discrepancies in their clients' stories that might indicate potential animal abuse is taking on an additional dimension with recurring reports of clients lying about their pets' conditions – and in some cases even harming them – to fraudulently obtain opioids and other narcotics.

[CBS News](#) reported that veterinarians who have been trained to be skeptical and to look for signs of animal abuse are also looking for signs of substance abuse as well. “We’re always looking for signs of animal abuse,” Dr. Duffy Jones, a veterinarian in Atlanta, told the network. “We typically believe what people tell us and we don’t want a pet in pain, but now we’re taking a bit more of a critical look at exactly what the client is like and what the dog is like – does it fit?”

Veterinarians are reporting cases of “vet shopping” – clients going to multiple clinics in an attempt to avoid raising suspicions – and suspicious new clients that may be indicative of clients trying to score veterinary drugs for themselves. These behaviors are similar to patterns long recognized in clients trying to disguise cases of animal abuse.

In one Kentucky case, a woman cut her dogs with razor blades just so she could take the dog’s pain medication. Heather Pereira was sentenced to four years in prison.



Heather Pereira

## Multi-disciplinary Effort Breaks Down Silos in Alberta

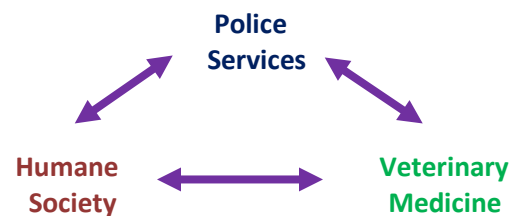
A multi-disciplinary collaboration is breaking down “silos” in Calgary, Alberta and bringing together veterinarians, humane officials and police to create more effective prosecutions of animal cruelty cases in the Canadian province.

Margaret Doyle, a forensic veterinarian, and Brad Nichols, Senior Manager for Animal Cruelty Investigations at the Calgary Humane Society, told the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association conference that they each independently had “light bulb moments” four years ago that helped them realize how their work overlapped. Doyle was executing a search warrant on a pit bull breeding operation that “exposed a new and ambitious veterinarian to the world of animal cruelty investigations.” Nichols attended an IVFSA conference and learned that there were many veterinarians who were interested in working with law enforcement.

They realized that current models of enforcement are not as effective as they could be. Although police, veterinarians and animal shelters are dealing with the same families, they tend to work in “silos,” in isolation from each other. Calls to the police about animal abuse often are directed to a new officer who is untrained on animal welfare issues. Most cruelty cases in Canada are handled by nonprofit humane societies or SPCAs that lack police departments’ extensive resources. Veterinarians are not receiving training on animal cruelty and are not mandated reporters in Alberta.



**The former Calgary model**



**The new Calgary Model**

Working with Detective Shawna Baldwin of Calgary Police Services, they identified and addressed four communication gaps that were separating their areas of expertise:

**Lack of Information Sharing:** Police, the humane society, and veterinarians now have access to each other’s records and databases which allows peace officers to be better prepared. Records such as animal license registries, veterinary files, and prohibition orders give each group additional critical information.

**Lack of Resource Sharing:** The humane society now has access to police DNA laboratories, crime scene experts, and back-up security. Police now have access to the shelter’s resources and animal handling and welfare expertise. Meanwhile, other community agencies, such as housing authorities, can be brought in as needed to share their information. “We try to bring in as many people as we can. It makes things so much easier,” said Nichols.



**Margaret Doyle and Brad Nichols address the IVFSA Conference**

**Lack of Collaboration when Filing Charges:** Prosecutors can now draw on the expertise of the police, humane society and veterinary forensics in determining what crimes to include in the charges, and recommendations for probation conditions.

**Officer Safety Issues:** Collaboration helps peace officers understand how dangerous animal cruelty cases can be to their safety, both from the animals and from irate owners and animal hoarders, and to respond accordingly.

The results of this collaboration have been significant, they said. Prosecutions are now more likely to be “front-loaded”: better prepared with more quality evidence. 83% of cases have resulted in convictions. Many defendants have opted to plead guilty rather than go to court. More charges have been filed and officers are safer.

The collaborations have extended in a ripple effect to other agencies. Awareness of the domestic violence/animal abuse Link has led to greater involvement from other police agencies. The Alberta Veterinary Medical Association, housing agencies, and the University of Calgary have taken notice. Prosecutors are now specifically assigned to handle cruelty cases. And collaborative media messages and pamphlets are being distributed addressing such issues as dogs left in hot cars, cold weather alerts for pets, and caring for outdoor cats.

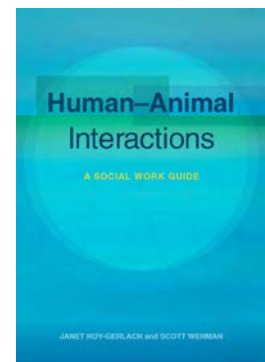
## ***THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE***

### **Human-Animal Interactions and the Social Worker**

Despite increasing recognition of the relevance of human–animal interactions (HAIs), the topic remains largely ignored by social work educational and training programs and practice. As a result, the significant roles that animals can play in communities and in human interventions and interactions — as household companions, therapy animals, service dogs, or targets for punishment and revenge in Link situations — are often overlooked.

In *Human–Animal Interactions: A Social Work Guide*, Janet Hoy-Gerlach and Scott Wehman provide a comprehensive examination of HAIs and their applicability to the helping professions. The book reviews HAIs’ history; biological, physiological, and social benefits; and associated risks and ethical concerns. Relational aspects of HAIs are also considered, including the role of companion animals in family systems, the loss of companion animals, and various contexts in which social workers may have to address violence toward animals. The book explores emerging HAI specialization areas within social work practice, including veterinary social work and practice within humane societies. One-third of book sale royalties will go to the Toledo Area Humane Society, which provides MSW internships and innovative human–animal support programming.

– Hoy-Gerlach, J., & Wehman, S. (2017). *Human-Animal Interactions: A Social Work Guide*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.





## Link Research from Italy Parallels Other Countries

While the relationship between animal abuse and interpersonal violence has been widely studied in the U.S. and elsewhere, relatively little research has been conducted in Italy. In 2009, LINK-ITALIA began investigating this relationship. A multidisciplinary team analyzed 278 cases in which one or more instances of animal abuse were followed by crimes against humans. Of the abusers, 93% were male, 17% of whom were children or teenagers. Among the victims, 54% were women, 24% children, 3% elderly people, 5% adult men, while 14% of the crimes involved more than one victim. 61% of the women avoided or delayed escaping their abusers because they feared for their pets. 19% of the human victims died.

The main categories of abuse linked to both animal and human victims were: domestic violence, rape, stalking, bullying and organized crime. The authors speculate that because more people keep pets in Italy than in the U.S., investigation of animal abuse in Italy is likely to show a stronger relationship to abuse on humans and a stronger preventive effect than is the case in the U.S.

The results of this study have led to a number of projects and collaborations with police forces, lawyers' associations, victim support communities, schools, prisons and NGOs in order to collect more, and more in-depth, data. Three shelters have been established, two of which can house abused animals (or animals belonging to abused victims) and one which can house human victims with their pets.

-- Sorcinelli, F., Manganaro, A., & Tettamanti, M. (2012). *Abusi su animali e abusi su umani. Complici nel crimine* (Animal Abuse and Human Abuse: Partners in Crime). *Rassegna Italiana di Criminologia*, 6(4), 224-232.

## NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

### South Florida Walk Raises Funds and Fun



The [South Florida Link Coalition](#) held its 1<sup>st</sup> Annual 1 Mile Walk for the Link on April 29<sup>th</sup> in awareness of the Link between family violence and animal cruelty. The event featured exhibitors, donated donuts and bagels, and raffle prizes. The route was marked with testimonial posters (above left) from local Link survivors. Co-sponsors included the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, Palm Beach County Victim Services, Palm Beach Atlantic University, the Center for Family Services, Explorers, SHARE: Shepherd Help and Rescue Effort, Friends of Palm Beach County Animal Care and Control, Side Project, and Printsicle, LLC. WPTV and CBS Channel 12 News covered the event. Funds raised will support the coalition's pet foster efforts.

## Link Coalition Launched in “Big D”

A new Link coalition has been launched in the Dallas metro area, bringing the power of community collaborations, resources and education to bear on preventing and intervening in many forms of family and community violence. Under the guidance of Chair Linda Ross, and through the support of host agency the SPCA of Texas and many other groups, the [North Texas Link Coalition](#) is up-and-running.



The mission of the North Texas LINK Coalition is to facilitate the North Texas area’s recognition and understanding of the dynamic connection between animal abuse and the cycle of family and societal violence. The vision is a future where the North Texas area is knowledgeable about the LINK and partnerships are created with the common goal of helping those caught in the cycle of violence.

The Coalition has three main purposes:



1. To educate the North Texas community to recognize the link between animal abuse and other forms of violence.
2. To advocate for the implementation of policies and procedures at North Texas agencies and organizations to identify suspected abuse and to notify the appropriate agencies.
3. To advocate for the implementation of standard policies and procedures in North Texas agencies and organizations for the purpose of collecting, reporting, and sharing data.

The group’s new website includes extensive resources on what The Link is, signs of abuse, how to intervene and report, resources, and a list of members, including representatives from child protection, adult protection, domestic violence and sexual assault, and animal welfare. An attractive brochure explaining the Coalition has been made available. The Coalition was recently featured in the [Senior Voice](#) newspaper.

The Coalition has a charter which includes letters of commitment and attendance from participants and committee structures. The group plans to hold bi-monthly meetings plus an annual meeting.

“I hope you are as thrilled as we are to get this Coalition off the ground,” Ross tells *The LINK-Letter*. “We have a number of incredible members and are always adding new organizations and individuals that share our mission and vision.”

## Benvenuto! Meet Our Link Coalition in Italy!

Word has just reached the National Link Coalition that we have a sister Link coalition in Italy. [Link Italia](#) was founded in 2009 and became an association for social advancement in 2012. Link Italia is the first association of professionals in Italy who aim to bridge the serious scientific, cultural and social gaps about the Link between animal abuse and human violence as well as other antisocial, criminal and deviant behaviors.

Link Italia was founded by Francesca Sorcinelli, a professional educator who now serves as the group’s President. Based in Modena, the group has followed the American example by engaging inter-disciplinary partners that now include such public entities such as local police,



municipalities, veterinary associations, and others who are partners in many projects. A key partner is the State Forestry Corps, specifically the Investigative Unit for Crimes on Animals (N.I.R.D.A.). The group has effected several annual inter-agency Memoranda of Understanding concerning the maltreatment of animals, interpersonal violence, crime and deviance. They are accredited by several organizations for continuing education of social workers.

Link Italia has organized conferences and seminars and drafted technical appraisals that have been used in court cases to acknowledge the societal danger of defendants who had inflicted abuse on animals. In one such case the court handed down a particularly severe punishment, compared to the standard in Italy.

Sorcinelli has published several Link works, including *Crudeltà su Animali e Pericolosità Sociale* (Cruelty on Animals and Social Dangerousness), *Investigare la Crudeltà su Animali* (Investigating Animal Cruelty), and *Veterinaria Forense* (Veterinary Forensics). She has also contributed to several books, essays and scientific papers.

“As a result of these activities, even in Italy, attention is being drawn to the Link phenomenon, although the road is long, winding and, often, lonely,” writes spokesperson Silvia Quilleri.

## “Softies” Raise Awareness and Funds to Address Animal Abuse

Community collaborations in Baltimore got a big publicity boost in May when [Maryland Dog](#) magazine ran an extensive feature on “Softies” – normally macho sports figures and celebrities who “show their soft side” in a public service campaign designed to show juveniles that being kind to animals is cool.

Show Your Soft Side ([See the October 2016 LINK-Letter](#)) was created in 2011 to change the mindset of young people who often view the maiming and torturing of defenseless cats and dogs as a sign of “toughness” or “manhood.” The campaign’s message that compassion toward animals is a strength, not a weakness, quickly resonated with children and adults, and grew into an international phenomenon. Today, the campaign has 150 “Softies” and reaches 350,000 to 1.3 million people a week through posters made available, free of charge, to teachers and schools across the country. In the process it has raised over \$400,000 in cash and in-kind donations for BARCS (Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter).



**Baltimore Orioles infielder  
Manny Machado and “Kobe”**



**Baltimore Ravens tackle  
Carl Davis and friends**

Caroline Griffin, secretary/treasurer, said, “Our ultimate goal is to stop animal cruelty before it starts. It’s true that a picture is worth a thousand words. Kids universally gravitate toward these tough, successful athletes with their pets. For many people, animal cruelty is simply too disturbing to even contemplate and the campaign galvanizes people without making them turn away.”

“When kids see their heroes – guys who are the best and baddest in their fields – turn into marshmallows when they’re around their cat or dog, it sends a very powerful message,” said co-founder Sande Riesett. “Show Your Soft Side is a great way to bring attention to animal abuse. Everyone sees the gruesome pictures. The Soft

Side Campaign reminds us all of the happiness animals bring to our lives; their intrinsic value. And they do it in a way that we hope will reach kids. Kids look up to these Softies. If these tough guys who have fame and money care about animals maybe we should too. That's the goal. To get these kids thinking in a different way..."

## Canadian Link Pioneer Retires

Anyone who has followed the progress of The Link in Canada is aware of Tim Battle. As the Director of Education for the Alberta SPCA in Edmonton since 1999, Tim began developing pioneering humane education resources and educational programming to teachers, students, professionals and the public throughout the vast province.

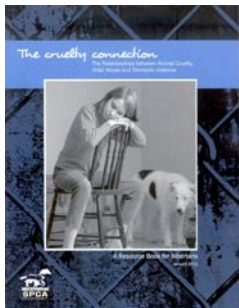
But like so many others in the field, Tim recognized that addressing either the results of animal abuse, or even the preventive measures through humane education, only worked on part of the problem. Recognizing that animal abuse is embedded within a larger matrix of other family violence is a more effective way to get to the root of family violence; a research study conducted in Alberta in 2010 reported that:

"The philosophy in the animal welfare community is switching to addressing human problems that underlie crises with animals.

"Animal shelters' service philosophy is evolving to recognize that treating symptoms of animal welfare problems, such as animal homelessness, abuse and neglect, is only a stopgap solution: to be truly effective, underlying causes such as community and family dysfunction and violence must be addressed."



Tim Battle and "Lucky"



In 2010 Tim began research for a [groundbreaking publication](#), *Inside the Cruelty Connection: The Role of Animals in Decision-Making by Domestic Violence Victims in Rural Alberta*. In 2012 he helped found the Alliance for the Safety of Animals and People (AASAP), a multi-disciplinary Link coalition with representatives from human services, legal education, animal health and welfare and other professional communities. The program resulted in MOUs between women's shelters, humane societies and veterinary clinics, grants from the Edmonton Community Foundation, the hiring of a full-time Pet Safekeeping Program Coordinator, and several community service awards. Discussions are under way to expand programming to Medicine Hat and Red Deer.

On May 31, Tim retired from the SPCA, and we at the National Link Coalition will miss him and wish him well. Tim lives in Edmonton with his wife, two teenaged children and their dog Lucky, a rescued border collie. We can't imagine that he'll stay inactive for long. Congratulations, Tim, and best wishes on the next phase of your adventure, eh?



## RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK



Stacy Wolf and “Harry Truman”

### Link Cited as Key in Advancing Legal Protections for Animals

Increasing recognition that acts of violence against animals also affect people, combined with the development of veterinary forensic skills to help the prosecution of animal cruelty cases, have resulted in significant advances in legal protections for animals over the past two decades.

This was the focus of a 20-year retrospective of animal welfare law and a look at where the field is headed presented by Stacy Wolf, Senior Vice President of the ASPCA’s Anti-Cruelty Group. Speaking to over 350 participants at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association’s conference, Wolf noted, “It’s pretty darn amazing seeing all this unfold.”

Beginning with a seminal 1997 quote from the FBI about animal abuse’s Links with interpersonal violence, Wolf noted several specific developments over the past two decades affecting animal welfare and the law:

**Felony-level crimes:** The notion that really heinous acts against animals, especially when the perpetrators enjoy seeing animals suffer, are connected to potential acts of violence against people, has had a huge effect. Society is concerned with animal welfare in its own right, but the Link is one of the strongest reasons why in the past 20 years we have seen the number of states with felony-level cruelty laws expand to now include all 50. “And it’s not just that these laws are on the books, but they’re being taken more seriously,” she said.

**“It has long been accepted among professionals who must assess dangerous populations that the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior and a past behavior of violence is the single most important predictor of future violence.... Violence against animals is violence and when it is present it is...synonymous with a history of violence.”**

**-- FBI Supervisory Special Agent Alan C. Brantley at a Congressional Briefing, May 13, 1997**

**Pet Protection Orders:** Recognition of the Link has led to 32 states now allowing courts to include animals in domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders. These provisions not only protect animals but give judges important additional tools: enabling them to cite perpetrators for other crimes including violating protection orders and contempt of court.

**Animal Fighting:** Not only is dog fighting now a felony, and cock fighting illegal, in all 50 states, but there are now increased penalties. These address not only the actual fighting but ancillary activities involved with animal fights, such as allowing one’s property to be used, attendance, possession of fighting paraphernalia, and training animals.

**Veterinary Reporting of Abuse:** 35 states now mandate or permit veterinarians to report suspected animal maltreatment. Wolf reminded participants that their role is not to determine whether a situation meets the legal standard of cruelty, but rather to be the animals’ first line of defense by reporting the situation. “What makes you so valuable as an expert is your ability to give an objective explanation of what happened to the animal. If your suspicion is that the client’s story doesn’t make sense, report it,” she said.



**The Veterinarian's Role in Cruelty Cases:** The nature, severity and causes of injury of death are keys to the success of prosecution. As cruelty cases have become more complex and there is more call for prosecution, veterinary forensics is bringing more sophistication to bear and is helping judges and juries to solve cases with more clarity and conclusive evidence. The footprint of veterinary medicine and its influence in fighting animal cruelty is increasing, with practitioners now being more active in reporting abuse, caring for abused animals, conducting scholarship and research, training veterinary students, learning veterinary forensics, and serving as expert witnesses, she said.



## Extending the Collaborative Message from the U.S. to Latin America

Julio C. Aguirre Ramirez (left) and Nuría Querol journeyed all the way from Colombia and Spain, respectively, to attend the Veterinary Forensics Conference in New York City. They promoted the next such training opportunity – a historic 1<sup>st</sup> International Congress on Veterinary and Criminological Forensic Medicine, held on June 1-3 in Medellin, Colombia. This was to be the first such veterinary and Link training program offered in the Latin American nation (See the [April 2017 LINK-Letter](#)).

Lisa Lunghofer, Director of Human-Animal Programs for the [Animals & Society Institute](#), presented a day-long workshop on Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence at the Humane Society of Huron Valley in Ann Arbor, Mich. The workshop focused on the connection between animal abuse, interpersonal violence and antisocial behavior, and on what those who work with children need to know about childhood animal abuse. More than 30 professionals from diverse disciplines attended. Karen Patterson, Director of Volunteers and Humane Education at HSHV, said, “Violence is a community problem, so the only way to solve it is to work together as a community. The contacts and partnerships made, not to mention the essential information presented about the link between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence and what we all can do about it, will help create a better, safer place for both people and animals.”

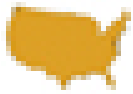


## THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

### Bills We're Watching... and Laws We're Celebrating

The National Link Coalition is encouraged by the increase in the number of violence-prevention bills being introduced that are based on Link principles. Join us as we follow these measures and salute our victories that will do a better job of protecting people and animals – and please let us know of new measures that are introduced in your state.

## *Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders*



**H.R. 909** and **S.322 – the Pet And Women Safety (PAWS) Act** – was re-introduced and now has 225 bi-partisan co-sponsors in the House and 12 in the Senate. The PAWS Act would prohibit threats or acts of violence against a victim’s pet in interstate stalking and interstate violation of protection orders. It would allocate \$3 million annually through 2021 in grants for shelter and housing assistance for victims with pets, support services to help victims secure safe housing that allows pets, and for pet-related services. Grants could also be used for training on The Link and for identifying best practices. Abusers would be required to make restitution to the victim for costs incurred for veterinary services. **H.R. 909** is in the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations. **S.322** is in the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.



**Hawai’i HB 155** would have allowed either party to order the other to restrain from transferring, encumbering or disposing of pets during divorce, separation or annulment, particularly if one party poses a threat of physical harm to the animal. Courts could have ordered a party to pay for pet support, and consider the animals’ well-being and whether future ownership should be individual or joint. The measure was approved by the House Agriculture Committee and was referred to the Judiciary Committee, **but no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned on May 4.**



**Indiana SB 323** allows a court to grant an order of protection to: (1) award possession and care of an animal to a petitioner; (2) prohibit a respondent from taking action against the animal; and (3) direct a law enforcement officer to accompany the petitioner to retrieve the animal.

**The bill was signed into law on April 21** by Gov. Eric Holcomb and becomes effective on July 1.



**Michigan HB 4026** would define “causing or attempting to cause physical harm” to a family member’s animal as an act of domestic violence in addition to any animal cruelty charges that might pertain. It would allow domestic violence shelters that accept animals to receive state funding and to include veterinary care among the emergency health care services that they provide among the criteria for needing funding. The bill is in the Committee on Law and Justice.



**Nevada** law currently defines harming an animal to harass a spouse or partner as domestic violence. **SB62** would have increased the penalty for this act to a Category B felony if the abuser is convicted of a similar act in Nevada or a similar felony in any other state. The bill was in the Judiciary Committee but **no action was taken before the time limit for legislative action expired.**



**Texas SB 339** and **HB 142** would have created a new offense of illegal sexual contact called “indecent assault” and allowed victims to obtain protective orders. Violations of these protective orders would have included harming, threatening, or interfering with the care, custody or control of a pet, companion animal or assistance animal belonging to the protected party. **SB 339** was in the Senate Criminal Justice Committee, and **HB 142** was reported out favorably by the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee and was sent to Calendars, but **no action was taken on either bill when the Legislature adjourned.**



**Rhode Island H5556** would require courts to consider the best interest of the animal in awarding possession of a domestic animal in a divorce or separation proceeding. The House Judiciary Committee recommended that the bill be held for further study.

### *Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment*



**Michigan HB 4025** would increase the penalties for animal abuse committed in the presence of a child to a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year's imprisonment, \$2,000 fine, and 300 hours of community service. The bill is in the Committee on Law and Justice.



**New York S1432** and **A5048** criminalize knowingly causing a minor to attend a place where exhibition of animal fighting is being conducted. **S1432** passed the Senate and was joined with **A5048** in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



**New York S2470** and companion bill **A2140**, and **S728** and companion bill **A3845**, would increase penalties for aggravated animal cruelty in the presence of a child. **S2470**, **S728** and **A3845** are in their respective Agriculture Committees and **A2140** is in the Assembly Codes Committee.



**Texas HB 289** would have made it a violation to harm or threaten a pet, companion animal or assistance animal belonging to a child under a protection-from-abuse order. The bill was in the House Human Services Committee, but **no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned.**

### *“CASA for Animals”*



**New Jersey A 2041** and its companion **S 433** would allow courts to issue “animal protection orders” forbidding persons convicted of animal cruelty from having contact with the abused animal or other animals, either permanently or for a specified period of time. **A 2041** passed the Assembly. Both bills are in the Senate Economic Growth Committee.



**Rhode Island H5061** would require courts to order the appointment of an animal care advocate wherever the custody or well-being of an animal is at issue. The House Judiciary Committee has recommended that the bill be held for further study.

### *Animal Abuse and Elder Abuse*



**Washington HB 1153** addresses financial exploitation and physical neglect of seniors and people with disabilities by increasing penalties, reducing barriers to prosecution, and expanding the scope of protection for vulnerable persons. 1<sup>st</sup>-degree animal cruelty, including sexual contact with an animal, is listed among many crimes which prosecutors may cite as reasons for filing charges. The measures were approved by both the House and Senate and **was signed into law on May 10** by Gov. Jay Inslee.

### *Animal Sexual Abuse*



**Kentucky HB 143** would have made the sexual assault of a dog or cat a first-offense Class D felony, and a Class C felony if committed in the presence of a minor. Currently, bestiality is illegal in Kentucky only if it occurs in conjunction with prostitution. Offenders would have been barred from owning dogs or cats for 5 years for a first offense, and lifetime for subsequent convictions. **The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.**



**Kentucky HB 480** would have created a new offense of sexual assault against an animal and allowed a peace officer to seize an animal. Accepted animal husbandry and veterinary medical practices would have been exempted. **The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.**



**Massachusetts S.805** would amend Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. Ch. 272, § 34, which currently uses the archaic language prohibiting “the abominable and detestable crime against nature either with mankind or with any animal,” to prohibit “a sexual act on an animal, uses an object to sexually abuse an animal, or knowingly permits a sexual act with an animal on any premises under such person’s control.” The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



**Missouri HB 431** would allow persons convicted of having sex with an animal to petition to have their names removed from the state sex offenders registry. The bill has passed the House Judiciary Committee and the Rules & Legislative Oversight Committee



**Nevada AB 391** adds a new section to Nevada’s Revised Statutes, Chapter 201 (“Crimes Against Public Decency and Good Morals”) that now defines bestiality as a gross misdemeanor that can be upgraded to a Category D felony if the animal dies or suffers serious bodily injury as a result, or if the offender has a prior conviction for animal cruelty. Offenders will be required to permanently forfeit any animals in the home and can not work with or volunteer where animals are present. Courts can authorize offenders to undergo psychological evaluation and counseling and to pay costs for the care and medical expenses of the animals. The measure will also cover anyone who causes, aids, promotes or observes bestiality. Accepted animal husbandry, veterinary and conformation judging practices are excluded. The bill passed both the Assembly and the Senate unanimously and was **signed into law on May 23** by Gov. Brian Sandoval. Its provisions take effect Oct. 1, 2017.



**Texas HB 1087** would have prohibited various sexual acts with animals as bestiality, punishable as a felony. Currently, bestiality in Texas is illegal only if it occurs in conjunction with child pornography or the distribution of obscene material. The bill was reported out favorably by the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee and had been sent to Calendars, but **no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned.**



**Vermont H.325** would prohibit sexual contact or fondling between a person and an animal, possessing, advertising or selling an animal for sexual purposes, abetting, observing or participating, and forcing a child under 16 to engage in sexual contact with an animal. It would exempt bona fide veterinary and animal husbandry purposes. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



**West Virginia HB 2664** would have added bestiality to the code of crimes against chastity, morality and decency. Individuals who engage in, abet, observe, permit, advertise, or promote bestiality, or induce a child to commit bestiality, would have been guilty of a misdemeanor, or a felony upon previous convictions or serious bodily injury or death to the animal. Courts would have been able to order offenders to surrender all their animals, prohibit ownership of animals for five or 15 years, and undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation or counseling. The bill was in the House Judiciary Committee but **no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned.**

## *Animal Abuse and Other Crimes*



**California AB 197** would add animal abuse, child abuse, elder and dependent adult abuse, and other crimes to the list of “violent” felonies that could be prosecuted as a 3<sup>rd</sup> strike with additional years of imprisonment under the Three Strikes Law. The bill is in the Committee on Public Safety.



**Indiana SB 306** would have increased the penalty for attending an animal fighting contest from a Class A misdemeanor to a Level 6 felony. The bill was in the Committee on Corrections and Criminal Law but but **no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned.**



**Kentucky HB 135** would have redefined animal torture to include deliberate neglect or physical abuse that results in death or serious physical injury to a dog or cat. Offenders would have been barred from owning dogs or cats for 5 years for a first offense, and lifetime for subsequent convictions. **The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.**



**Massachusetts S.1159** would add the crimes of animal cruelty and fighting as specifically enumerated offenses which would allow the prosecution to ask for pre-trial detention on the grounds of the defendant’s dangerousness. The bill would also mandate *Cross-Training*. The bill is in the Committee on Municipal and Regional Government.



**New Jersey A 2738** would expand the criminal and civil acts of animal cruelty to include the theft or release of an animal during the commission of a burglary. The bill is in the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.



**New Mexico HJM 6**, a Joint Memorial, requests that the state Departments of Public Safety and Children, Youth & Families consider training on The Link between animal abuse and family violence in their training curricula for field workers and other appropriate staff. The measure passed the House by a vote of 67-0 and has been referred to the Senate Rules Committee.



**New York S1680** and companion bill **A3038** would expand the definition of aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to animals during the commission of a felony. **S1680** passed the Senate on Jan. 30 and was referred to the Assembly Agriculture Committee; **A3038** is in the Codes Committee.



**New York S251** would expand animal fighting prohibitions to criminalize promoting, attending, facilitating, training, breeding or selling fighting animals, or selling, manufacturing or owning animal fighting paraphernalia. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.



**Oregon HB 2026** would appropriate money from the General Fund to the Department of Justice to fund a position dedicated exclusively to assisting local district attorneys and law enforcement with the prosecution of cases involving the “detriment or risk of detriment” to animals. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee with subsequent referral to the Ways and Means Committee.



**Rhode Island H5728** would impose further penalties for deliberate or unintentional harming of animals during the commission of any crime. Any sentence imposed would run consecutively to any sentence imposed for the underlying offense. The House Judiciary Committee has recommended the bill be held for further study.





**Texas HB 1357** would have defined as “family violence” coercive, controlling or punishing acts or threats of abuse directed against an animal owned by a member of the household or someone with whom the abuser has had a dating relationship. The bill also made technical corrections to assist prosecutors in animal cruelty cases. The bill was approved unanimously by the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee on April 21 and had been sent to Calendars, but **no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned.**

### *Animal Hoarding*



**New Jersey A3638** would establish animal hoarding as an animal cruelty offense and require mental health evaluation for all animal cruelty offenders. The bill was reported favorably out of the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.



**New York A44** would create the crime of companion animal hoarding, defined as ownership, possession or custody of more than 25 companion animals living in conditions likely to jeopardize the health and well-being of the animals and/or people. Offenders would be required to undergo mental health evaluation and may be required to undergo counseling and be prohibited from owning animals. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.



**Rhode Island S390** would define animal hoarding and add it to the list of conduct that is considered cruelty to animals. The Senate Judiciary Committee recommended the bill be held for further study.

### *Cross-Reporting*



**Iowa S.F. 129** would have required veterinarians who suspect animal abuse, neglect or torture to report the incident to law enforcement agencies with good-faith immunity from civil and criminal liability. Law enforcement officials would have been required to file a child endangerment alert report with the Department of Human Services if a minor child witnesses suspected animal abuse, neglect or torture. Courts could, and in some cases would have been required to, order psychological or psychiatric evaluation or treatment. The bill would have created seven new criminal offenses describing animal abuse, neglect, torture, abandonment, and endangerment. The bill was in the Senate Agriculture Committee but **no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned.**



**Maine LD 157** would have required veterinarians who suspect an animal to be the subject of cruelty or neglect to report the case to the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. Currently, Maine veterinarians are permitted to report cruelty or neglect, and are required to report only “aggravated” animal cruelty. **The bill passed the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee but died in the Senate.**



**Massachusetts S.295** would add domestic violence workers, animal control officers, and humane officers to the list of mandated reporters of suspected child sexual abuse. The bill is in the Education Committee.



**Massachusetts S.1159** would require employees or contractors of the Department of Children & Families, Department of Elder Affairs investigators, and Disabled Persons Protection Commission investigators to report suspected animal abuse. The bill would add animal control officers as mandatory reporters of child abuse, elder abuse and abuse against disabled persons. The bill would also affect *Animal Abuse and Other Crimes*. The bill is in the Committee on Municipal and Regional Government.



Three companion measures address cross-reporting in Michigan. **HB 4441** would amend the Child Protection Law to add animal control officers to the list of professions mandated to report suspected child abuse or child neglect. **HB 4442** would amend the Michigan Penal Code to require Child Protective Services employees to report suspected animal abuse or neglect to an animal control or law enforcement officer in the jurisdiction where the animal was found, with anonymity, the presumption of having acted in good faith, and immunity from civil or criminal liability. Failure to report, or making a false report, would be punishable offenses. **HB 4443** would amend the Code of Criminal Procedure to make the intentional false reporting of animal abuse a felony. The bills are in the House Judiciary Committee.



**New York S621** and companion bill **A4904** would require veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty to police, SPCAs, peace officers, district attorney's offices, animal control officers, the department of agriculture and markets, or other appropriate government agencies and to turn over necessary records. New York veterinarians are currently permitted to report but are not required to do so. The bills, sponsored by Sen. Phil Boyle and Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal, are in the respective Higher Education Committees.



**Rhode Island H5392** would require all child protection and domestic violence caseworkers report suspected animal abuse to animal control and humane agencies, and that animal control and humane officers be mandated to report suspected child abuse and domestic violence to child protection and domestic violence agencies. The House Judiciary Committee has recommended the bill be held for further study.

### *Psychological Evaluation of Offenders*



**Mississippi HB 575** would have defined malicious intent to torture, maim, disfigure, mutilate, burn, suffocate, drown, or starve to death a domesticated dog or cat as felony-level aggravated cruelty and allow up to 10 acts to be considered separate offenses. The bill would have mandated psychological evaluations for offenders. The measure would have mandated police and sheriffs to utilize a form to be devised by the Attorney General, in collaboration with the Mississippi Sheriffs' Association and the Mississippi Association of Police Chiefs, for reporting all investigations of simple or aggravated cruelty to a dog or cat into the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). **The bill died in committee on Jan. 31.**



**New Jersey A2367** and **S529**, "Shyanne's Law," would require mental health evaluation for all animal cruelty offenders, and mental health counseling if warranted by the evaluation. Currently, mental health counseling is mandated only for juvenile offenders. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Natural Resources and Senate Economic Growth Committees.



**New Mexico HB 210** would create a new category of "extreme cruelty to animals" and would require persons convicted of this offense to undergo psychological counseling. The bill is in the House Consumer & Public Affairs Committee.

## ***THE LINK... IN THE NEWS***

### ***You Can't Make This Stuff Up!!!***



**Goodhue Co. Sheriff's Deputy  
Matt Bowron with canine  
officer Ambush**

### **Naked Thief Pleads Guilty to Stabbing Police Dog**

A Minnesota man who was found naked in a tree in -10° weather was sentenced to time serve for stabbing a police dog and motor theft and is being transferred to Kansas to await trial there on other charges. Wabasha County, Minn. District Court Judge Terrence Walters handed down the felony sentences on Shane Michael Cronin, 27, of Lake City, placed him on 10 years probation and ordered him to pay \$13,330.91 in fines and restitution. The [Rochester Post-Bulletin](#) reported that police had been looking for Cronin in conjunction with the theft of a car, a firearm and jewelry from a woman's home. After leading sheriff's deputies from several counties on a high-speed chase, Cronin bailed out of his car and ran through the woods, shedding his clothes along the way. Deputies released a police dog named "Ambush" who was later found stabbed near the tree where Cronin was hiding. Ambush underwent surgery at a Rochester veterinary hospital and was reported to have recovered enough to return to active duty.



**District Court Judge David Hick denied  
bail for Ball via video link**

### **Dog Stabber Arrested in Shooting of State Trooper**

A man with a lengthy criminal record that includes animal cruelty is being held without bond in connection with the shooting death of Virginia State Trooper Michael Walter. Travis Ball was arraigned via video conference on charges of malicious wounding and firearms offenses; he has not yet been charged with homicide in the May 26 shooting of the Virginia Special Agent, who died from a gunshot wound to the head while talking with two men who were in a parked car in Richmond. Legal analysts told [WTVR-TV](#) that the filing of homicide charges are being deferred until a July 13 court appearance to delay the start of expedited proceedings that must occur whenever charges are filed for capital murder. Ball has previous charges of assault and battery, obstruction of justice, unauthorized use of a vehicle, destruction of property, and animal cruelty on his record. Richmond Animal Control Supervisor Rob Leinberger tells *The LINK-Letter* that Ball was charged with cruelty for stabbing a dog in May 2013 and was subsequently convicted in April 2014. When questioned about Ball's criminal record, his sister Ashley told the TV station, "Yes, he has previous charges, but nobody's perfect. Everybody makes mistakes."

Meanwhile, [WRIC-TV](#) interviewed Psychiatrist Bela Sood with the Children's Hospital of Richmond who agreed that there is a connection between how people treat animals and how they treat people. "Because often times, when you have done a crime, the taboo for moving to another one is lesser and lesser and lesser," she explained. "And so you see this evolving pattern."

### **Animal Cruelty Raid Nets Animal and Child Abuse Charges**

Caleb and Tiffany Cottrell, of Stockbridge, N.Y., were charged with animal cruelty and endangering the welfare of a child after Madison County Sheriff's Deputies and USDA officials raided their farm and found what [Spectrum News](#) called "deplorable" conditions. Officials found dead cows and seized four horses in distress, all of whom were expected to make a full recovery. The child welfare charges were filed as a result of having their child live in the conditions of the residence.



**Kenneth Fenske**

### **“Furry” Party Investigation Leads to Charges of Child Sexual Abuse, Bestiality and Animal Cruelty**

A man accused of raping an 8-year-old boy while dressed in a fox costume at a “furry” party will stand trial on sex charges, and two other men have been charged with animal cruelty and bestiality. The Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office is prosecuting Kenneth Fenske, 57, of Milford, Pa. and five other men in the incident linked to “furry” parties in which authorities said people dress up and identify as different animals, sometimes to fulfill a sexual fetish. The Bucks County [Intelligencer](#) reported that authorities claim Fenske, wearing a full-body red fox costume and going by the name of “Lupine,” assaulted the boy, now 15, three or four times at parties that his parents took him to in 2009.

Fenske was charged with being part of an alleged ring of child sexual abuse. Also arrested in the case were Philip Stallworth, 27, of Milford, who prosecutors said filmed himself having sex with dogs; and Stephen Taylor, 30, of Henrico, Va., who was charged with bestiality and animal cruelty. Also charged were Taylor’s roommate Craig Knox, 35; Jeffrey Harvey, 40, of West Wyoming, Pa.; and David Parker, 38, of Stroudsburg, Pa.

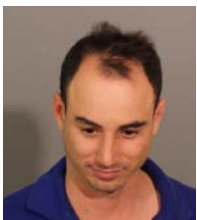


**Carol Bowditch**

### **British Couple Convicted in “Bucket List” Bestiality and Child Pornography Investigation**

A British couple has been sentenced in a bestiality case that also uncovered extensive examples of child pornography. Carol Bowditch, 64, of Lincolnshire, accepted a plea bargain and got 12 months of community service after being filmed having sex with three dogs: a St. Bernard named “Oscar,” a black Labrador named “Badger,” and a German shepherd named “Rocky”. Her husband, Daniel Galloway, 65, pled guilty to aiding and abetting his wife into participating in a bestiality party and was sentenced to one year behind bars, the [Lincolnshire Echo](#) reported.

Police said he created 12,332 indecent images of children, distributed 1,863 of them, and possessed 191 “extreme images” of Bowditch having sex with dogs. Prosecutor Victoria Rose told the court that the incident occurred “after they watched some doggy porn on the Internet and he asked her if she would give it a go.” Police said they pair were part of an international underground network of bestiality enthusiasts where onlookers would observe the woman having sex with multiple dogs and then have sex with her. When officers asked one female participant why she was involved in such an activity, she reportedly said, “It’s something that’s on your bucket list!”



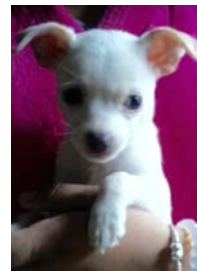
**Wesley DeSouza**

### **Altercation with Wife Results in Dog’s Death and Multiple Charges**

Wesley Teixeira DeSouza, 39, of Danbury, Conn., was arrested and charged with assault, strangulation, risk of injury, disorderly conduct, and cruelty to animals for allegedly killing a small dog during a physical altercation with his wife on May 4. The Putnam *Daily Voice* reported that two minor children were present in the home during the incident and that he was being held on \$25,000 bond.

## Dog-Beating, Wife-Intimidating Felon Gets Maximum Sentences

The Staten Island, N.Y. man who was convicted in April of aggravated animal cruelty, intimidating a witness and criminal contempt for beating his wife's two-pound puppy so violently that it had to be euthanized ([See the May 2017 LINK-Letter](#)) had the book thrown at him by a judge who wasn't persuaded by his pleas of innocence. State Supreme Court Justice William E. Garnett sentenced Jerry Moore, 39, to consecutive, maximum prison terms of two years for aggravated animal cruelty and 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub>-to-4 years for witness intimidation for threatening his wife after she reported the animal abuser to police. [StatenIslandLive.com](#) reported that Moore could spend as much as six years behind bars. Assistant D.A. Jane Grinberg had asked the judge to impose a maximum sentence. "The act of beating 'Bambi' is so senseless, so ruthless, so brutal that these acts cannot be tolerated by society," she told the court. Garnett also issued full orders of protection for Moore's wife and their two children and banned him from owning another animal.



Bambi had to be euthanized

## Parents, Grandparents Arrested in Deplorable Animal Hoarding/Child Abuse Case

Four people are facing charges, and two children were remanded into protective custody, after police and Housing Code Enforcement officials in Hogansville, Ga. found the toddlers in a home with 31 animals in conditions so deplorable and unfit for habitation that Police Sgt. Jeff Sheppard said, "You couldn't even tell where the floor ended and the feces began." Investigators needed air tanks and protective clothing to enter the home, filled with suffocating ammonia gases emanating from the feces, vomit and trash, [WRBL-TV](#) reported. One hallway was coated in thousands of spiders. The animals included five dogs, seven chickens, multiple cats, rabbits, hamsters, rats, and a pot-bellied pig. The children's parents, Eamantha Crain, 22 and Zacharia McCoy, 22, and grandparents Brandi Pybus-McCoy, 41 and Nicholas Luciano, 29, were charged with multiple counts of cruelty to children, unlawful dumping of human waste and child maltreatment.



Above: the children's grandparents and parents. Left: a view inside the home.



Jessica Holtmeyer, circa 1998

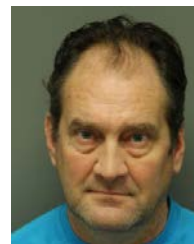
## Court Ruling Could Affect 1998 Homicide with Link History

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court is reconsidering the mandatory life sentences without parole that were imposed on numerous juveniles prior to the 2012 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that such sentences violate the U.S. Constitution's ban on cruel and unusual punishments. One case affects Jessica Holtmeyer, who was 16 in 1998 when she and a group of friends called "The Runaway Gang" hanged another teen, Kimberly Dotts, whom they feared would snitch on their plans to run away to Florida. Prosecutors in Clearfield, Penna., at the time said that Holtmeyer had said "It was fun to hang someone. It would be fun to do that again," shortly before they hanged the girl again and smashed her face with a rock the size of a basketball. [News media accounts at the time](#) said Holtmeyer was known as a bully at school amid reports of her setting cats on fire and strangling a poodle.



### Father Charged with Child/Animal Abuse in Dog-Burning Case

John Robert Ankner, 51, of Cary, N. Car., was arrested by police upon his release from a hospital where he was being treated for burns suffered when he allegedly choked the family dog and burned it in his living room fireplace in front of his young child. [WNCN-TV](#) reported that Ankner was charged with felony cruelty to animals and misdemeanor child abuse.



John Robert Ankner

### Feuding Couple Charged with “Crimes Against Nature”

A Pittsylvania County, Va. Couple who had been involved in a stormy relationship that involved assault, battery and property destruction were charged with bestiality on May 15 for allegedly committing “crimes against nature” involving videos of the woman having sex with animals. The [Chatham Star-Tribune](#) reported that Kelly Hardy, 53, and Arthur Anderson Warren, 59, were charged with the bestiality offenses after a Pittsylvania County Sheriff’s Deputy went to Warren’s home to serve a warrant on him for another incident. According to the deputy, Warren said he had a video on his cell phone of Hardy with an animal and asked the deputy whether having sex with animals was legal. There were apparently two videos on the phone; when asked why he filmed the incidents, Warren reportedly said that he was a man and that Hardy was just lying there and wanted him to see her. After the couple had reportedly broken off their relationship, Warren grabbed a hammer and began tearing down her dog pen and was convicted of misdemeanor property destruction and trespassing. Hardy was acquitted in a separate case of assault and battery in which she allegedly attacked Warren and chipped one of his teeth.



Arthur Warren and Kelly Hardy



Kelsey Michelle Culp

### Alabama Couple Charged with Bestiality and Child Pornography

Shelby County, Ala. Sheriff’s deputies arrested Kelsey Michelle Culp, 22, on May 30 and charged her with the crime of bestiality after she allegedly “caused, aided, or abetted another in engaging in sexual contact,” with a female dog, according to the Shelby County Reporter. Culp’s charges stemmed from one of the same incidents for which Daniel Ray Dunn, 28, was arrested on May 26 and charged with producing child pornography and sodomy in the first degree. Dunn was being held in the Shelby County Jail on bonds totaling \$506,000. Culp was released on a \$6,000 bond. The Shelby County Sheriff’s Office was still investigating the case and appealed for other victims to come forward.

### Woman Convicted in Brutal Stabbing of Mother Who Turned Her In for Killing a Puppy

An Ulster County, N.Y., woman who brutally stabbed her mother 227 times because the older woman had had her arrested for killing a puppy was convicted of second-degree murder. An Ulster County Court returned the verdict on April 27 against Sarra Gilbert, 28, who stabbed her mother, Mari Gilbert, 52, in July, 2016. Prosecutors contended that Gilbert had plotted the killing for several months in retaliation for the mother’s having had Gilbert arrested and because she had temporary custody of Gilbert’s young son. The [Daily Freeman](#) reported that both the prosecutor and Gilbert’s attorney said it is almost certain that she will kill again. Gilbert is due to be sentenced on Aug. 4.



Sarra Gilbert

## ***LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES***

**June 17 – Cagliari, Italy:** Francesca Sorcinelli, President of [Link-Italia](#), will lecture on “Animal Maltreatment and/or Killing as an Integral Part of Interpersonal Violence on Women and Minors” at the Italian Association of Sociologists and Victimology Support International Observatory and Network.

**June 24 – Reno, Nev.:** The [National Coalition on Violence Against Animals](#) will meet in conjunction with the National Sheriffs’ Association Annual Conference.

**June 24 – San Benedetto del Tronto, Italy:** Francesca Sorcinelli, President of [Link-Italia](#), will lecture on “Abuse of Animals and Abuse of Humans: Partners in Crime” at the Vegan Festival.

**June 27 – Oakland, Calif.:** Phil Arkow will present “The Link Between Human Violence and Animal Abuse: Creating Safer Communities through Species-Spanning Partnerships,” at the [East Bay SPCA](#) as part of the Alameda County District Attorney’s Animal Abuse Task Force outreach and training.

**June 28 – Santa Rosa, Calif.:** Phil Arkow will present “The Link Between Human Violence and Animal Abuse: Creating Safer Communities through Species-Spanning Partnerships,” at the [Sonoma Humane Society/Forget-Me-Not Farm](#).

**June 29 – San Mateo, Calif.:** Phil Arkow will present “The Link Between Human Violence and Animal Abuse: Creating Safer Communities through Species-Spanning Partnerships,” at the [Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA](#).

**July 25 – Grand Rapids, Mich.:** Allie Phillips will co-present on “Compassion Fatigue and Healing” at the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan’s Annual [Child Abuse Training](#).

**July 28-30 – Ithaca, N.Y.:** Randy Lockwood, Stacy Wolf and Robert Reisman will present multiple workshops and a mock trial at ASPCA/Cornell Maddie’s® Shelter Medicine Program [Conference](#). Lockwood’s keynote address will be “Investigating Animal Cruelty – The Past, Present and Future.”

**Aug. 11 – Rochester, Mich.:** Maya Gupta will present a keynote on “Welfare Intertwined: The Positive and Negative of Human-Animal Connections” at the Animal-Assisted Interventions: Creating a Competent, Compassionate and Cross-Disciplinary Future Conference hosted by Oakland University’s Center for Human-Animal Interventions.

**Sept. 8 – Regina, Sask., Canada:** Phil Arkow will discuss “A Practical Guide for an Effective Response by Veterinary Professionals to Animal Cruelty, Abuse and Neglect” at the [Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association](#)’s 2017 Conference.

**Sept. 9 – Bellevue, Wash.:** Phil Arkow will discuss “The Dark Side of the Human-Animal Bond” at the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of [Pet Partners](#).

**Sept. 17-21 – Cairns, Qld., Australia:** Ingrid Reilly will present on The Link between animal abuse and domestic violence at the [International Women & Law Enforcement Conference](#).

**Sept. 18-19: Albuquerque, N. Mex.:** “Positive Links,” [The New Mexico Conference on The Link](#), will hold its biennial conference featuring many national and regional speakers on a variety of Link-related topics. For the first time since the conference started in 2003 it will be a two-day event to allow more time for training and networking.

**Sept. 20-22: Columbus, Ohio:** Barbara Boat will present on “Knowing a Child’s Experiences with Animals Can Inform the Advocacy Process” at the [Ohio CASA/GAL 2017 Celebrate Kids! Conference](#).

**Sept. 21-22 – Regina, Sask., Canada:** Randy Lockwood and Erin Wasson are among the speakers at the Saskatchewan SPCA’s [2017 Link Conference](#).

**Oct. 14 – Redmond, Ore.:** Phil Arkow will present on The Link at the [Pet Evacuation Team](#)’s Animal Welfare Conference.

**Oct. 14 – Portland, Ore.:** Allie Phillips and Diane Balkin will be on a panel regarding “Criminal Cruelty Cases: Integrating Animal Law into the Mainstream” at the [25<sup>th</sup> Annual Animal Law Conference](#).

**Oct. 19 – Virginia Beach, Va.:** Nancy Blaney, Michelle Welch and Glenna Tinney will discuss “Increasing Collaboration Among Animal Welfare and Domestic Violence Agencies” at the National Animal Care & Control Association/Virginia Animal Control Association [Training Conference](#). Also on the agenda: “NIBRS: The Critical Role of Animal Control and Humane Law Enforcement in Reporting Animal Cruelty to the FBI,” presented by Dan DeSousa and Mary Lou Randour.

**Oct. 24 – Battle Creek, Mich.:** Allie Phillips will present on “Working Effectively with Your Prosecutor’s Office” at the [Great Lakes Animal Welfare Conference](#).

**Oct. 26 – Bartlett, N.H.:** Phil Arkow and Jerilee Zezula will present on “The Cruelty Connection” at the [New Hampshire Attorney General’s Annual Conference](#).

**Nov. 6-10 – Sanford, Fla.:** “The Cycle of Violence” will be included in the week-long Module C classes offered in the National Animal Care & Control Association’s National Animal Control and Humane Officers (NACHO) [Training Academy](#).

**Nov. 14-16 – Portland, Ore.:** The [7<sup>th</sup> National Animal Cruelty Conference](#), sponsored by the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and the Animal Legal Defense Fund, will be held.

**Dec. 4-6 – Ottawa, Ont., Canada:** The inaugural Canadian Link Conference will be held, under the auspices of the [Canadian Federation of Humane Societies](#).

**July 3-8, 2018 – Vancouver, B.C., Canada:** Phil Arkow will present on The Link, Clinical and Diagnostic Indicators of Animal Abuse, and Addressing Practice Management Concerns in Responding to Suspected Abuse at the [Canadian Veterinary Medical Association](#) Convention.

To subscribe to The Link-Letter (*it’s free!*) – Just send an e-mail to Coordinator Phil Arkow ([arkowpets@snip.net](mailto:arkowpets@snip.net)) Please 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

#### Phil Arkow, Coordinator

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

#### Lesley Ashworth

Founder/President, American Veterinary Charitable Fund  
Consultant, Ohio Domestic Violence Network  
Former Director, Domestic Violence/Stalking Program,  
Columbus City Attorney's Office/Prosecution Division  
Blowing Rock, N. Car.

#### Diane Balkin, J.D.

Contract Attorney, Animal Legal Defense Fund  
Past President, Int'l. Veterinary Forensic Sciences Assn.  
Denver, Colo.

#### Barbara W. Boat, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Univ. of Cincinnati College of Medicine  
Exec. Director, Childhood Trust, Cincinnati Children's Hospital  
Cincinnati, Ohio

#### Cym Doggett, LCSW

Project Director, Southern Regional CAC,  
National Children's Advocacy Center  
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#### Maya Gupta, Ph.D.

Senior Director of Applied Research,  
ASPCA Research & Development Division  
Woodstock, Ga.

#### Jane A. Hunt

Coordinator, Community Health Improvement Plan  
Larimer County Department of Health  
Ft. Collins, Colo.

#### Mark Kumpf, CAWA

Past President, National Animal Control Association  
Director, Montgomery County Animal Resource Center  
Dayton, Ohio

#### Randall Lockwood, Ph.D.

Senior Vice Pres., Forensic Sciences & Anti-Cruelty Projects,  
ASPCA  
Falls Church, Va.

#### Natalie Martinez

Programs Manager  
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
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#### Paul Needham

Chair, Education Committee,  
National Adult Protective Services Association  
Shawnee, Okla.

#### Maria Luisa O'Neill

Account Representative, Wages & Investments  
U.S. Department of the Treasury,  
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#### Emily Patterson-Kane, Ph.D.

Animal Welfare Scientist, Animal Welfare Division  
American Veterinary Medical Association  
Schaumburg, Ill.

#### Allie Phillips, J.D.

Director, Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)  
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#### Gale Rasin, J.D.

Retired Associate Judge, Baltimore City Circuit Court,  
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#### Chris Risley-Curtiss, MSSW, Ph.D.

Associate Professor Emerita,  
Arizona State University School of Social Work  
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Alexandria, Va.