



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



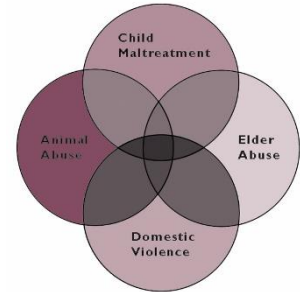
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Number of Pet Co-Sheltering Safehouses Continues to Increase

The number of domestic violence shelters in the U.S. and Canada that have provisions for caring for the pets of survivors appears to have increased substantially in recent years, according to figures compiled by [RedRover](#), the Sacramento-based organization that assists shelters and survivors with pet issues.

RedRover President & CEO Nicole Forsyth used the latest (2017) figures from the National Network to End Domestic Violence to identify 1,873 domestic violence programs in the U.S., of which 77%, or 1,442, said they provide shelter for people and could theoretically shelter pets as well. The comparable number of shelter facilities in Canada was 522.



Nicole Forsyth and friends

238 American shelters, or 16.5%, said they provide on-site co-sheltering of pets in some capacity beyond service animals. Earlier estimates had put the number of co-sheltering safehouses at 10%. An additional 450 facilities, or 31.2%, said they provide pet foster care off-site through cooperative agreements with community resources.

Comparable figures for Canada suggest 30 shelters, or 5.7%, provide on-site housing and another 35, or 6.7%, offer off-site foster care.

New York Expands Awareness of Pet Protection Orders

Two bills introduced last May into the New York State Assembly were signed into law on Dec. 16 [A 7395](#) and [S 6158](#) now require police officers and prosecutors investigating domestic violence incidents to advise victims of many options, including the ability to include pets and service animals in an order of protection.

THE LINK &... CHILD PROTECTION

Florida Bill Would Mandate Child/Animal Abuse Cross-Reporting

A bill being introduced in the 2020 legislative session in Florida would declare it the state's policy to recognize that because animal abuse is a type of interpersonal violence that often co-occurs with child, elder and domestic abuse, reporting and cross-reporting protocols and collaborative training would be established between child protective and animal control services agencies.



S 7000, sponsored by the Senate Children, Families and Elder Affairs Committee, would declare it the Legislature's findings and intent that "early identification of animal abuse is another important tool in safeguarding children from abuse and neglect, providing needed support to families, and protecting animals." The bill emphasizes that education and training for child and animal protection personnel "should include information on The Link between the welfare of animals in the family and child safety and protection."

The bill would require child protective investigators who know or suspect that animal abuse, neglect or abandonment has occurred to report it to a supervisor within 72 hours for submission to a local animal control agency. Reporters will be presumed to have acted in good faith and will be immune from civil and criminal liability and administrative penalties.

The bill would also require animal control officers who know or have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused, neglected or abandoned to report the situation to the central child abuse hotline. The bill would also require animal control officers who report to provide their names, instead of reporting anonymously, which is currently the situation. At present, all residents in Florida are required to report suspected child maltreatment.

Failure to cross-report would be a second-degree misdemeanor for child protective workers and a third-degree felony for animal control officers.

The measure would require the Department of Children and Families, in conjunction with the Florida Animal Control Association, to develop a one-hour training curriculum for all child protective investigators and animal control officers on the identification of and accurate and timely cross-reporting of abuse. The bill is in the Senate Education Committee.



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

...to protect ALL vulnerable members of the family

Connecticut's Child/Animal Protection Cross-Reporting Gets Great Shout-Out

Connecticut's pioneering statewide cross-reporting system between the Department of Children & Families and local towns' animal control officers received a big publicity boost in December when the [Hartford Courant](#) featured an extensive article on how responding to animal abuse can prevent child maltreatment.

"Animal cruelty is often the first red flag: nearly 50 animal abuse reports in Connecticut linked to child endangerment in past two years" was the headline on the Dec. 9 article by reporter Josh Kovner.



Josh Kovner

Through the animal abuse incidents cross-reported from animal control officers, DCF learned of cases where dogs were hanged, beaten, burned, and starved in front of children. "In domestic violence cases, children have seen abusive fathers hold pets hostage as leverage against their mother," Kovner wrote.

"It's heartbreaking. Animal cruelty is often the first red flag," said Diane Rosell who has been involved with designing training on The Link for animal control officers and DCF staff.

DCF caseworkers now carry laminated cards describing the basic signs of suspected animal abuse and instructions on how to report it ([See the July 2019 LINK-Letter](#)). The National Link Coalition has modified the Connecticut cards into a template format that any DCF and animal protection agency can modify and adapt to their needs ([See the September 2019 LINK-Letter](#)).

In 2018, DCF received 69 animal cruelty reports through the animal control officers' headquarters at the Department of Agriculture; 46 such reports were forwarded to DCF in 2019. But hundreds of other animal cruelty investigations were initiated, suggesting that not all animal control officers are actively looking for suspected child abuse and neglect.

DCF officials said they plan to modify the state's child abuse telephone hotline and begin to ask callers whether they suspect any animal cruelty in the home as well.

"Whether a child is witnessing the family dog being beaten, or their mother, or their grandmother, it's all violence in the home, and that is a key indicator of potential harm to a child," said Kenneth Mysolgard, head of external affairs at DCF and one of the agency's most experienced investigators.

The article also quoted Diana Urban, the former state legislator who sponsored the cross-reporting law because she recognized The Link between animal and child abuse; DCF official Jacqueline Ford; National Animal Care & Control Association Executive Director John Thompson; and National Link Coalition coordinator Phil Arkow. Gordon Willard, President of the Connecticut Humane Society, said cross-reporting is part of a "cultural shift that is slowly but surely recognizing animal abuse for what it is."

THE LINK &... LAW ENFORCEMENT



Op-Ed Explores The Link and Canadian Animal Cruelty Law Enforcement

Canada, like the U.S., has an inconsistent and often incoherent patchwork of systems charged with enforcing animal protection laws. Noting how “animal cruelty is also increasingly being recognized as linked to other types of crimes, notably the abuse of women and children,” Kendra Coulter and Amy Fitzgerald had an op-ed published in the [Toronto Globe and Mail](#) on Dec. 31 encouraging Canadian provinces to follow Ontario’s new model of making animal cruelty enforcement a strict law enforcement program rather than “off-loading” it to nonprofit humane societies and SPCAs – provided that such programs are funded adequately.

Canadian enforcement of anti-cruelty laws is often off-loaded to well-intentioned charities with vastly different levels of resources, heavily reliant on donations, they wrote. The result is a confusing and inefficient mix of investigations by public, nonprofit, and independent contractor personnel.

“This unevenness and off-loading are highly atypical for law enforcement, which is normally deemed a core government responsibility by parties of all political stripes. Today’s animal protection patchwork stems from a time when horse carriages were the dominant mode of transportation. It also reflects continuing ambivalence about our relationship with animals – and our relative willingness to show leadership and spend public money protecting them,” Coulter and Fitzgerald wrote.

Liability concerns and court decisions compelled the Ontario SPCA to withdraw from animal cruelty enforcement after a century of service, forcing the sprawling province to create a dedicated, public and centrally coordinated animal protection force with a model that – when adequately staffed and funded – could become a template for other jurisdictions. Coulter and Fitzgerald also emphasized that the physical and psychological challenges of investigating suspected crimes against animals is incredibly difficult, necessitating adequate and appropriate protective and communications equipment, mental health support programs, and species-specific training.

Canada’s situation is similar to that in the U.S. The National Link Coalition’s [National Directory](#) of 6,513 Abuse Investigation Agencies revealed that 47% of agencies charged with investigating animal abuse are under the aegis of animal control or animal services, many of which lack full law enforcement powers ([See the December 2017 LINK-Letter](#)). 46% are police or sheriffs’ agencies, many of which do not have dedicated and trained personnel specialized in the intricacies of animal cruelty forensic investigations. 7% are humane societies and SPCAs. Most states have a mix of public and private investigatory responsibilities.

Coulter is Chair of Labor Studies at Brock University and Fitzgerald is a criminologist at the University of Windsor. They have written previously about the particular risks faced by female animal cruelty investigators ([See the April 2018 LINK-Letter](#)) and the public’s Link-based support for a thoughtful, well-coordinated public model of animal cruelty law enforcement ([See the April 2019 LINK-Letter](#)).

“Animals are sentient beings whose well-being is a matter of significant and growing public ethical concern. There are many reasons why strengthened animal protection should be a resolution and commitment we honor,” they concluded.

A Special Salute to “Bunny” Welsh

The National Link Coalition joins many colleagues in the law enforcement and animal protection communities in offering special congratulations to Carolyn “Bunny” Welsh upon her retirement as Sheriff of Chester County, Penna. Welsh has been a tireless advocate for including animal welfare and The Link between animal abuse and human violence in the law enforcement communities, both locally and on the national level. She serves as the co-chair of the National Coalition on Violence Against Animals, a program of the National Sheriffs Association where she has served in various leadership capacities for many years.



Carolyn “Bunny” Welsh

Welsh has served with the Chester County Sheriff’s Office for nearly two decades and is one of only two female sheriffs in Pennsylvania and one of only 38 female sheriffs in the U.S. In 2009 she was named the first female President in the 88-year history of the Pennsylvania Sheriffs’ Association. She has received the Breaking the Glass Ceiling Award from the National Center for Women and Policing and has been inducted into the International Police Association Hall of Fame. She has been recognized as one of “30 Remarkable Women Making Domestic Violence History” by the Pennsylvania Coalition against Domestic Violence.

Thank you, Bunny, for your ongoing work to protect people and animals. We wish you the best of luck in your retirement.

THE LINK... AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Newspaper Mass Murderer Reportedly Starved Cat Prior to Shooting



Jarrod Ramos

The gunman who blasted his way into the newsroom of the Annapolis, Md. *Capital Gazette* and murdered five journalists on June 28, 2018, reportedly took his cat to a veterinarian a month before the shooting where it was diagnosed as a case of starvation. The [Baltimore Sun](#) reported that documents unsealed after Jarrod Ramos’ guilty plea revealed that the gunman told veterinary staff that he hadn’t been feeding the cat and didn’t realize that his failure to feed the cat would lead to its death. The cat had to be euthanized.

Authorities surmised the incident might play into the gunman’s legal defense as part of an insanity plea when he comes to trial next March. His attorneys were granted court orders requiring two veterinary clinics to turn over records related to the pet. Forensic psychiatry experts told the newspaper that such information could be helpful in determining Ramos’ state of mind, possible mental health issues, and how he handled personal relationships.

Ramos pleaded not criminally responsible – Maryland’s equivalent to an insanity plea. Doctors with the Maryland Department of Health said they believed he was sane.

Two States Introduce Bills Allowing “CASA for Animals”

Following the model established many years ago allowing judges to name court-appointed special advocates (CASA) for children in child abuse prosecutions, two more states have introduced legislation that would extend similar provisions for animals that are the victims in animal cruelty cases.

Florida SB 1048 would provide for the appointment of an advocate for the interests of an animal in certain court proceedings, at the court’s discretion, and require the Florida Bar Association’s Animal Law section to maintain a list of attorneys and certified legal interns who meet specified requirements to be appointed as advocates. The bill is in the Agriculture, Judiciary and Rules Committees.

New Hampshire HB 1164 would create a special advocate for cats and dogs that are neglected or otherwise treated cruelly. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

Similar “CASA for Animals” provisions have been enacted in Connecticut and Rhode Island.

THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE

Link Awareness Offers a Way to Increase Reports of Animal Abuse

What is believed to be the first study of its kind to examine the motivational reasons why people choose to report or not report animal abuse found that while animal abuse is common, the most common public response is to take no action, and that the only factor which might improve the number of cases reported is awareness of The Link between animal cruelty and human violence.

The study surveyed 1,801 participants in Victoria, Australia. “It is hard to effectively address a problem without a good understanding of its prevalence and nature,” the authors wrote. While the Australia RSPCA receives 55,000–60,000 reports of mistreatment each year, we do not know how well these data reflect what is actually happening in the community.

The survey found:

- Animal mistreatment was common, with 25.7% of respondents having witnessed mistreatment.
- Neglect with perceived underweight animals was the most common issue.
- Only 9% of witnesses reported what they saw to RSPCA Victoria.

The authors recommended a Link approach to resolve these “sobering” findings. The substantial number of unreported cases are likely similar to other related social issues such as domestic violence and child abuse in which reported cases are just the “tip of the iceberg.” “Taking the lead from more developed fields of prevention and intervention such as interpersonal violence and public health, understanding the extent of such an issue is the first crucial step in developing informed intervention strategies,” they wrote.

Although attitudes to reporting were positive, these did not predict reporting behavior. “Together, these results demonstrate that case data are not reliable indicators of the true prevalence of animal mistreatment; it is common and grossly underreported, highlighting the need for effective, evidence-based prevention programs,” they wrote.

Of particular interest was why people choose to report (or not) to authorities. They cited research by Taylor and Signal that found that people's propensity to report mistreatment increased among individuals who are female, working in white collar jobs, and have an awareness of the link between animal cruelty and family violence. "Only one of these factors is open to change (awareness of the link between animal cruelty and family violence) and it would be beneficial for prevention initiatives to understand more about the attitudinal factors that influence reporting," they said.

The survey included extensive questions including: to what extent reporting would be likely to help the animal; whether reporting is the individual's responsibility; the person's confidence in recognizing signs of animal mistreatment and knowing who to report to; and concerns about negative repercussions for failing to report. (These are many of the same concerns raised by veterinarians, child protection workers and others who are often reluctant to report suspected animal abuse.)

Generally, attitudes towards reporting animal mistreatment were positive. 88% of respondents thought that reporting mistreatment would help the animal and 98% thought it is the right thing to do. However, 11% thought that it would not help the animal.

While the majority of participants took some form of action, the single most common response to witnessing mistreatment was no action (27%) which the authors called concerning. "However, it is consistent with what is known as the 'bystander effect' which is well documented in other areas such as sexual harassment, sexual assault and shoplifting," they wrote.

-- Glanville, C., Ford, J., & Coleman, G. (2019). *Animal cruelty and neglect: Prevalence and community actions in Victoria, Australia. Animals, 9, 1121.*

Argentine Study Examines Psychopathy, Criminality and Animal Abuse

What may be the first scholarly look at The Link to emerge from Argentina has been published and examines the Links between psychopathy, criminality and animal maltreatment. The authors note that psychopathy has traditionally been linked to criminality and antisocial behaviors, including abuse and cruelty toward animals, and that animal abuse is often associated with different forms of criminal and interpersonal violence. However, the relationship between violence against animals and people is not entirely clear: some authors have focused on the escalation hypothesis, a tendency for these behaviors to graduate from perpetrating animal cruelty to perpetrating violence against humans, while for others there is no distinct temporal sequence of escalation behaviors. Meanwhile, others have argued that sometimes certain forms of abuse toward animals are manifested in children as part of a normal evolutionary development. This chapter reviews current research highlighting the complexity of the phenomenon of animal abuse and expands the perspective focused on the psychopathology of the perpetrator of violence, including the dynamics and socioeconomic context where it is manifest, all of which need to be addressed in an integral way to consider the impact on both humans and animals.

-- Cajal, M., Irurzún, J.I., Nadal, Z., Solimena, N., & Widensky, B., et al. (2018). *Psicopatía, criminalidad y maltrato animal. In, M. Díaz Videla & M.A. Olarte (Eds.). Antrozología, multidisciplinario campo de investigación. Buenos Aires: Editorial Akadia, pp. 112-133.*

Research Position Available

The ASPCA is seeking a Director of Research to join its Strategy & Research team working on often novel or groundbreaking research. The position will collaborate with departments within the ASPCA's Policy, Response & Engagement division, focusing on empowering communities to prevent, identify and respond effectively to animal cruelty. The individual will be a research liaison to departments of humane law enforcement, veterinary forensics, community engagement, and national field response to large-scale cruelty cases and disasters. The director would design and execute formal studies and program evaluations. The position is remote-based and can be performed from a home office. More details are [available here](#).



Postdoctoral Fellowship Available

The Department of Philosophy at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., Canada is inviting applications for a two-year Postdoctoral Fellowship in Animal Studies for a researcher with demonstrated expertise in animal ethics, law and public policy. The fellowship is a multi-disciplinary position particularly interested in research that critically examines the moral, legal and political dimensions of how human-animal relations are governed. The recipient will teach a course in Animal Ethics and help to organize a workshop or conference. The position will start on July 1, 2020 and pay \$45,000 per year. [Click here](#) for more details.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE

Kentucky Cross-Reporting Bill Gets Publicity

One of three bills addressing veterinarians' reporting of suspected animal abuse that were pre-filed for introduction into the 2020 Kentucky General Assembly received significant publicity on a Paducah TV station. [WPSD-TV](#) reported on [HB 108](#) which would provide civil and criminal immunity to veterinarians who, in good faith, report suspected animal abuse to animal control or peace officers, provide records relating to such reports, and testify in any judicial proceedings relating from such reports.



[Rep. Cherlynn Stevenson](#)

The measure is sponsored by Rep. Cherlynn Stevenson (D – Lexington) to correct a gap in state law. Under current Kentucky law, a veterinarian cannot violate her or his confidential relationship with a client unless the practitioner receives a waiver, court order or subpoena. The measure would protect veterinarians who make such reports, as is currently the situation in more than 30 other states.

Dr. Russell Jones, a veterinarian licensed in both Illinois and Kentucky who is the medical director of the McCracken County Humane Society in Paducah, told WPSD that the measure has pros and cons: it would benefit animals, because more veterinarians could report suspected abuse and it would hold people accountable. But it might risk turning away people who are looking to veterinarians for help. Jones said he believed the actual impact would be minimal. Illinois veterinarians are mandated to report suspected animal abuse and are similarly immune from civil and criminal liability for making good-faith reports.

Two other similar measures were pre-filed for the 2020 legislative session. [SB 21](#) would require veterinarians to report suspected abuse, provide immunity for a good-faith report, and allow veterinarians to release information in order to report abuse. [HB 60](#) would require veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse to an animal control officer.

BUILDING LINK AWARENESS

Pittsburgh Newspaper Recognizes The Link in Call for Tougher Laws

In a [Dec. 3, 2019 editorial](#) entitled “Our View: Animal Laws Protect Pets and People,” the Pittsburgh, Pa. *Post-Gazette* praised the recent passage of Pennsylvania’s landmark “Libre’s Law” ([See the July 2017 LINK-Letter](#)) and noted that stronger anti-cruelty laws are important not only for animal welfare but also to protect human safety .

“Take sentiment out of it, answering the crimes is vital because of what acts of violence against helpless animals might indicate about the abusers.”

-- Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette*, Dec. 3, 2019

“Pet owners who have experienced the companionship, loyalty and sheer comic relief offered by our animal friends understand why animal abuse demands justice,” the Editorial Board wrote. “Take sentiment out of it, answering the crimes is vital because of what acts of violence against helpless animals might indicate about the abusers.”

Pennsylvania overhauled its antiquated animal cruelty statutes in 2017 with the passage of “Libre’s Law” which increased penalties for serious animal abuse from misdemeanors to felonies and provided for escalating penalties for repeat offenders. The bill’s sponsor, state Rep. Todd Stephens, said at the time that reform of archaic laws was “especially concerning because of the Links between animal abuse and other forms of abuse.” The bill was named after “Libre,” a starving Boston terrier left for dead in Lancaster County.

The *Post-Gazette* editorial wrote that authorities now can level charges that match the severity of the crimes and take action when care is not humane. Since the law went into effect, the Erie Humane Society has filed felony and misdemeanor charges against seven people.

“Some deride the notion that those who torture or kill animals belong in prison next to those who commit crimes against humans,” the newspaper wrote. “Those who abuse animals sometimes need help,” it added, citing a remorseful, financially strapped veteran who pleaded guilty to felony and misdemeanor counts in a dog starvation case and who instead received treatment to address post-traumatic stress disorder.

But others might abuse animals to threaten family members, the editorial said. “Violence against animals sometimes predicts future violence against people. The law shines a light on and enables legal interventions in cases of human pathology that left unchecked could result in something worse than appalling animal cruelty.”

The newspaper also welcomed the recent passage of the federal PACT Act which closes a gap in federal law regarding the depraved filming of animal cruelty and torture ([See the December 2019 LINK-Letter](#)). U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey (R – Penna.) said that “warped people who get pleasure from torturing animals sometimes torment helpless people, including children,” the editorial concluded.

Link Featured in Largest Chinese-American Newspaper in U.S.

Awareness of how animal abuse doesn't occur in a vacuum but is often Linked with other forms of family and community violence, reached the Chinese-American community in December in an extensive series of three articles published in the *World Weekly*, a supplement to the Sunday *World Journal*. The National Link Coalition was quoted extensively in the eight-page series which discussed animal hoarding, "crush videos," the FBI's inclusion of animal abuse in the NIBRS data-collection system, and several recent Link cases involving Asian-American suspects.



The *World Journal* is the largest Chinese language newspaper in the U.S. and one of the largest Chinese language newspaper outside of China, with a circulation of 350,000. We thank reporter Jeff Han for bringing the Link issue to the attention to his many thousands of readers.

Animal/Human Abuse Link Featured in One Health Awareness Month

The One Health Commission, which focuses on the health Links connecting human and veterinary medicine, has included The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Abuse in its social media challenge for January as part of [One Health Awareness Month](#).



The Commission has established a calendar for January featuring 31 suggested daily One Health topics where people can either post something new on social media or share a post from other participants. The suggested topic for Saturday, January 18 is The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Abuse, with suggested sub-topics of "What is The Link," "Breaking the Cycles of Violence," "Wildlife Trafficking and Human Trafficking," and the "Link Bibliography."

January 17's suggested topic is "Benefits of the Human-Animal Bond." Many of the daily topics focus on global concerns including: the impact of climate change on food security and safety and human, animal and ecosystem health; animals as environmental indicator sentinels; loss of biodiversity; occupational health risks for agricultural and animal workers; zoonotic and vector-borne diseases; and One Health considerations in disaster preparedness.



Cheryl Stroud

One Health Awareness Month is the result of a bipartisan U.S. Senate Resolution 462, introduced by Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D – Calif.) and Martha McSally (R – Ariz.) and enacted on Dec. 19 to promote collaboration among animal, environmental, plant, and public health scientists. One Health Commission Executive Director Cheryl Stroud encourages participants to conduct presentations about One Health issues at local schools and libraries and to let legislators know about the One Health Awareness Month resolution and the importance of One Health.

Gruesome Link Case Featured in Netflix Documentary Series

One of the most gruesome and recognized Link cases in recent years has drawn widespread media and Internet attention with the airing of a Netflix documentary series depicting the infamous activities of Luka Magnotta (*See the [June 2012 LINK-Letter](#)*). *Don't F**k With Cats: Hunting an Internet Killer* describes the story of Magnotta, a Canadian murderer who posted videos of himself killing kittens prior to murdering Chinese student Lin Jun in Montreal in 2012.



Luka Magnotta

Magnotta, a 29-year-old porn actor at the time, posted the videos on a blog called Necrophilia Serial Killer. He dismembered Jun's body and mailed his feet and hands to Montreal's Liberal and Conservative party headquarters. The Netflix series chronicles the manhunt for Magnotta conducted by a group of amateur sleuths who tracked him down before he was captured in Berlin, Germany.

Magnotta also sent an e-mail to a British newspaper that read, "Next time you hear from me it will be in a movie I am producing that will have some humans in it, not just pussies.... Once you kill and taste blood it's impossible to stop." Magnotta also reportedly wrote, "It's not cool to the world being a necrophiliac. It's bloody lonely."

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

We've Moved!

When we started Link work in Colorado back in the 1980's, we never imagined that our work would take us beyond the Rocky Mountains. But as John Lennon wrote, "Life is what happens while you're busy making other plans" and the next thing we knew we were headquartered in New Jersey for 25 years. And then, it was time for a change again.

So we're now based in the beautiful foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains in western North Carolina. Friendly people, stunning scenery, the Appalachian Trail running outside our door, lower taxes, and lots of opportunities to extend the Link message throughout The South.

Come visit us if you're in the Asheville area. Our new contact information is:

Phil Arkow, Coordinator
The National Link Coalition
16 Grasshopper Drive
Etowah, N. Car. 28729 USA
Phone 828-595-9750
Fax 828-595-9758

Our existing email arkowpets@snip.net and website www.NationalLinkCoalition.org remain the same.

Kathleen Wood, Kendall Houlihan Join the National Link Coalition Steering Committee

Kathleen Wood, a staff attorney in the [Animal Legal Defense Fund](#)'s Criminal Justice Program, has joined the steering committee of the National Link Coalition. A native of southern California, Wood has an undergraduate degree from UCLA and a law degree from Notre Dame. She now resides in ALDF's hometown of Portland, Ore.



Kathleen Wood

Wood is quite familiar with The Link through her work in writing ALDF's bench book for judges (*See the [September 2019 LINK-Letter](#)*) and website pages on animal abuse and human violence issues. She is also responsible for compiling ALDF's annual compendium and ranking of states' animal cruelty legislation. "I respect the National Link Coalition so much. I'm honored to be a part of it," she says.

Wood has worked with ALDF since 2016. She replaces **Diane Balkin**, who retired as a senior staff attorney with ALDF in December, as ALDF's delegate. Balkin will remain on the steering committee where her expertise in prosecutions and veterinary forensics is invaluable. ALDF's Criminal Justice program works to collaborate with prosecutors and law enforcement on animal cruelty cases through providing free legal assistance including research, professional training, finding and securing expert witnesses, legislative assistance, and grant funding to help cover the costs of caring for seized animals and forensic work.



Kendall Houlihan

Kendall Houlihan, Assistant Director of Animal Welfare for the American Veterinary Medical Association, has also joined the National Link Coalition's steering committee representing AVMA. She succeeds **Emily Patterson-Kane**, Animal Welfare Scientist, who remains on the steering committee in her new role as Research Director for the ASPCA.

Houlihan earned her undergraduate degree in preprofessional studies and art history at the University of Notre Dame and her DVM from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana in 2009. She was a staff veterinarian in two companion animal practices in the Chicago area before joining AVMA in 2014. She came to AVMA searching for opportunities to advocate for animal welfare and the human-animal bond on a broader scale than private practice made possible.

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

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Link Bills We're Watching

As we enter the 2020 legislative season, we celebrate our victories in 2019 and keep an eye on bills that are still working their way through federal and state legislatures, and on new bills being introduced. Please let us know if you hear of other bills not included here:

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders **VICTORIES IN 2019:**



California AB 415 would expand provisions of the California Victim Compensation program to allow the costs of temporary housing for the pets of domestic violence victims to be reimbursable as part of relocation expenses. The bill passed the Assembly 76-0 and the Senate and **was signed into law** by the Governor on Oct. 8.



California AB-109 and **SB 109**, the Budget Act of 2019 which makes appropriations for the support of state government for the 2019-2020 fiscal year, includes the allocation of \$5,000,000 for providing shelter, food and basic veterinarians' services for the pets of individuals in homeless shelters; significant numbers of individuals came to be homeless due to domestic violence. The bills **were enacted into law** on Sept. 27.



Colorado HB 19-1177 creates "Extreme Risk Protection Orders" that allow courts to prohibit persons from having or obtaining a firearm upon a finding that the person presents a significant risk to self or others. In determining grounds for the issuance of such an order, courts can consider the person having been arrested for domestic violence and/or animal cruelty. **The bill was signed into law on April 12.**



Indiana HB 1615 amends existing provisions in IC 31-9-2-42 which include "beating" an animal without justification within the definition of "domestic or family violence" to read "abusing" an animal. The bill passed both houses overwhelmingly and **was signed into law on April 29.**



New Hampshire HB 361 adds animals to the tangible property whose disposition may be determined by courts during divorce or annulment settlements; this property settlement "shall address the care and ownership of the parties' animals, taking into consideration the animals' wellbeing." **The bill was signed into law by Gov. Chris Sununu.**



New York A 7395 and **S 6158** require police officers and prosecutors investigating a domestic violence incident to advise the victim of many options, including the ability to include pets and service animals in an order of protection. The bills were consolidated and the measure was signed into law on Dec. 16.



Rhode Island H 5023 and **SB 225** now allow courts to provide for the safety and welfare of all household animals and pets in protection orders for adult and child victims of domestic abuse and sexual exploitation. **The measure was signed by the Governor on June 28 and took effect immediately.**





Texas SB 194 adds “indecent assault,” which encompasses numerous actions of illegal sexual gratification, to the list of crimes for which victims can obtain a protection order that includes harming or threatening the victim’s animals. Such pet protection orders are already in place for victims of domestic or family violence, sexual assault or abuse, and stalking. **The measure was signed into law on June 14 and took effect Sept. 1.**



Utah SB 45 defines an act of aggravated animal cruelty intended to coerce, control or intimidate a spouse or partner as an act of domestic violence as well as animal cruelty. **The bill was signed into law on March 27.**



Wyoming HB 235 allows courts to issue protection orders granting sole possession of any pets kept by the petitioner, the respondent, or a minor child “for the purpose of protecting the household pet.” The order orders the respondent to not contact, abduct, remove, conceal, or dispose of the household pet. **The new law took effect July 1.**



New for 2020



Florida HB 705/SB 752 would require every county in the state to designate at least one shelter that can accommodate persons with pets. Pets would have to be contained in secure enclosures in a separate area. The bill is in the Oversight, Transparency & Public Management Subcommittee.



Florida SB 1082/HB 241 would allow courts to award temporary exclusive custody and care of non-agricultural animals to petitioners and to order defendants to temporarily have no contact with the animal and to not harm or take the animal away. The bill is in the Agriculture, Judiciary and Rules Committees.



Kentucky HB 216 would include violence against an animal used as coercive conduct within the definitions of “domestic violence and abuse” and “dating violence and abuse” and would allow judges to award possession of a domestic animal to the petitioner in a protection-from-abuse procedure. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.




Michigan HB 4498 would enjoin and restrain respondents served with personal protection orders, which include protection of pets, from possessing, using, transporting, selling, purchasing, carrying, shipping, receiving, or distributing a firearm or ammunition. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.




New York A 588 would create a felony crime of animal cruelty to companion animals that is intended to threaten, intimidate or harass a family or household member, with additional penalties if committed in the presence of a minor child. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.




New York A 767 and S 1251 would amend language in pet protection orders to allow the court to grant petitioners exclusive care, custody and control of animals kept by the petitioner, respondent or child, and to order the respondent to stay away from, take, transfer, conceal, harm, or dispose of the animal. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Rules Committees.

 **New York A 1097** and **S 6222** would require courts to consider the best interest of companion animals in awarding their possession in a divorce or separation proceeding. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committees.


 **Pennsylvania SB 90** and **HB 1075** would create “Extreme Risk Protection Orders” that would allow courts to prohibit persons from having or obtaining a firearm upon a finding that the person presents a risk of suicide or of causing death or serious bodily injury to another person. Factors that could help make such a determination include a history of domestic abuse and/or animal cruelty. **HB 1028** would allow household members to file a petition for a “Firearm Restraining Order” prohibiting a respondent from having firearms, weapons or ammunition if the respondent presents an immediate and present danger to physical safety, as represented by acts of domestic violence or killing or threatening to kill pets or other animals. The bills are in their respective Judiciary Committees.


Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment **VICTORIES IN 2019:**


 **Colorado HB 19-1220** allows any witness, including victims of child sexual abuse, to be accompanied by a court facility dog.





New for 2020


 **H.R. 2808**, the Child & Animal Abuse Detection and Reporting Act, would amend the Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act (CAPTA) to include data on animal abuse in the National Child Abuse & Neglect Data System (NCANDS). The bill was introduced by Rep. Ann McLane Kuster (D – N.H.) and John Katko (R – N.Y.) with 20 co-sponsors and is in the House Education and Labor Committee.

 **New York A 831** would increase the penalty for aggravated animal cruelty from two to four years if committed in the presence of a child. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.


 **New York A 955** would make it a misdemeanor to knowingly cause a minor child under age 16 to attend an animal fight. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.


 **New York A 1211** and **S 3415** would permit mandated reporters of suspected child abuse to report suspected animal cruelty, notwithstanding confidentiality provisions, if the act were committed by a person also suspected of child abuse or maltreatment. Individuals already permitted to report suspected child abuse (which includes everyone in New York State) could also report suspected animal cruelty. Reports made in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability. **S 3415** passed the Senate and both measures are in the Assembly Children & Families Committee.

 **New York A 2664** and **S 3327** would amend the definition of child endangerment and other related statutes to include committing acts of animal cruelty in the presence of a child and to strengthen penalties for existing animal cruelty charges when committed in the presence of a child. The bills are in the Assembly Codes and Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committees.


 **North Carolina H 507** would make it a felony to bring a minor under the age of 18 to a dog- or cockfight. The bill passed the House 113-0 and is in the Senate Rules & Operations Committee.

Animal Abuse and Elder Abuse New for 2020

 **New York A 1153** would bar landlords from denying residential occupancy or evicting persons over age 62 solely for keeping a common household pet. Property owners could establish reasonable rules for the care and handling of pets. The bill is in the Assembly Housing Committee.


 **Pennsylvania SB 819** would extensively revise the Older Adults Protective Services Act and would impose a 25-year ban on individuals convicted of having sexual intercourse with animals from working in long-term care nursing facilities, personal care homes, home health care agencies, and adult daily living centers. The bill passed the Senate and is in the House Aging & Older Adult Services Committee.


Psychological Evaluation of Offenders VICTORIES IN 2019:


 **Colorado HB 19-1092** allows courts to order mental health treatment to adult and juvenile offenders convicted of cruelty to animals; current law only allows courts to impose anger management treatment. The bill also requires courts to impose a ban of three to five years upon a felony conviction for adults and permits such a restriction for juvenile offenders. **The bill was signed into law on May 1.**



New for 2020

 **California SB 580** would amend current procedures requiring animal abuse offenders on probation to complete counseling for behavior or conduct disorders, to instead undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation, treatment, and a responsible animal owner education course as the court deems appropriate. The bill passed the Senate 38-0 and is in the Assembly Public Safety Committee.

 **New York A 984** and **S 385** would require courts to impose mandatory psychiatric evaluation and treatment for juvenile and adult offenders convicted of aggravated cruelty to animals. **S 384** would require juvenile offenders to undergo psychiatric evaluation and treatment where necessary. The Assembly bill is in the Agriculture Committee. The Senate bills are in the Domestic Animal Welfare Committee.

 **New York A 987** and **S 2007** would prohibit a person convicted of “Buster’s Law” from having a companion animal unless authorized by court order after they complete appropriate psychiatric or psychological testing. **A 987** is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee; **S 2007** is in the Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committee.

Animal Sexual Abuse **VICTORIES IN 2019:**



H.R. 724, the “PACT Act” (Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture) was signed into law on Nov. 25. The new law builds on the Animal Crush Video Prohibition Act, which passed in 2010 to make the creation, sale and distribution of animal “crushing” pornographic videos illegal but which did not make the acts of cruelty themselves illegal. Under the PACT Act, offenders will face fines and up to seven years in prison.



California AB 611 closes loopholes to make any sexual act with an animal a crime; current law prohibits sexual assault of animals only for the purpose of sexual gratification. It authorizes the seizure of animals in such cases. It also adds this misdemeanor offense to the list of crimes which would prevent a convicted offender from owning animals for a specified period. **The bill was signed into law** by the Governor on Oct. 8.



Kentucky SB 67 creates a new section of KRS Chapter 525 to establish the felony offense of sexual crimes against an animal and amend KRS 436.605 to add sexual crimes against an animal to the list of crimes for which an animal control officer may utilize peace officer powers. **The bill was signed into law** on March 26.



Maryland HB 641 amends §10-606 of the Annotated Code of Maryland defining Aggravated Cruelty to Animals to include “sexual contact with an animal.” It further defines aggravated cruelty to animals as a crime of violence. Persons convicted of sexual contact with an animal will be included among Tier III sex offenders. **HB 641 was signed into law by the Governor on April 18.** The new law took effect on Oct. 1, 2019.



New for 2020



Massachusetts S.891 would replace the archaic “Crime against nature” – the “abominable and detestable crime against nature, either with mankind or with a beast” – with a new crime of a “sexual act on an animal.” The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



Pennsylvania HB 1312 would deny offenders convicted of sexual intercourse with animals the right of having their criminal records expunged. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Wisconsin SB 139 would increase penalties for bestiality from current misdemeanor levels to a variety of felony charges for sexual contact with an animal; advertising, harboring, transporting, providing or transporting animals for sexual contact; and creating, distributing or possessing animal pornography. Penalties would be further enhanced if a child is involved. The bills would also require offenders to register as a sex offender; current law only permits courts to order such registration. **SB 139** was passed by the Senate and sent to the Assembly.

Cross-Reporting **VICTORIES IN 2019:**



Florida HB 7125 allows veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse to law enforcement or certified animal control officers without notice to or authorization from the client unless the suspected violation occurs at a commercial food-processing animal operation on agricultural land. **The measure was signed into law.**



Illinois SB 1778 recodified language mandating that domestic violence crisis line and program personnel, animal control officers and field investigators of the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Animal Health and Welfare immediately report suspected child abuse and neglect. **The bill became law on Aug. 23.**



Oregon HB 2227 adds animal control officers to the list of individuals mandated to report child abuse. **The measure was signed into law by the Governor on May 22.**



Oregon HB 2500 allows veterinarians addressing the effects of animal abuse to sue the person inflicting the abuse. Plaintiffs who prevail will be able to collect compensatory damages for expenses incurred in providing veterinary care, plus costs and reasonable attorney fees. **The bill was signed into law and becomes effective Jan. 1, 2020.**



Washington HB 1919 expands provisions against animal fighting to include fighting paraphernalia and mutilating or abandoning fighting animals, but a requirement that the Washington State Patrol establish and maintain a statewide toll-free hotline to allow the public to report animal abuse **was deleted in a substitute bill.** The deleted section would have facilitated community reporting and law enforcement response to animal abuse by creating a central repository of incidents of animal abuse, neglect fighting, and sexual abuse for inclusion in the FBI's National Incident Based Reporting System. The State Patrol would have referred incidents to local law enforcement agencies for investigation as appropriate. The animal fighting provisions were **signed into law by the Governor on April 29 and took effect July 28.**



New for 2020



Florida S 7000 would declare that "early identification of animal abuse is another important tool in safeguarding children from abuse and neglect, providing needed support to families, and protecting animals." It would require child protective investigators to report suspected animal abuse to a supervisor within 72 hours for submission to a local animal control agency. Reporters would be presumed to have acted in good faith and would be immune from civil and criminal liability and administrative penalties. Animal control officers would have to report suspect child abuse to the central child abuse hotline. Failure to cross-report would be a second-degree misdemeanor for child protective workers and a third-degree felony for animal control officers. The Department of Children and Families, in conjunction with the Florida Animal Control Association, would develop a one-hour training curriculum for all child protective investigators and animal control officers on the identification of and accurate and timely cross-reporting of abuse. The bill is in the Senate Education Committee.



Florida HB 621/SB 1044 (“Allie’s Law”) were pre-filed for the 2020 Legislative session. It would require veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty to a dog or cat with immunity from civil and criminal liability; prohibit the alteration or destruction of certain records; and specify that failure to report is grounds for disciplinary action. The bills are in the House Business & Professions Subcommittee and the Senate Criminal Justice Committee.



Kentucky SB 21 would require veterinarians to report suspected abuse and provide immunity for a good-faith report; it would also allow veterinarians to release information in order to report abuse. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee. **HB 60** would require veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse to an animal control officer. The bill is in the Licensing, Occupations & Administrative Regulations Committee. **HB 108** would provide civil and criminal immunity to veterinarians who, in good faith, report suspected animal abuse to animal control or peace officers, provide records relating to such reports, and testify in any judicial proceedings relating from such reports. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.



Michigan SB 352 would require Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services workers to report suspected animal abuse or neglect to an animal control or law enforcement officer, with confidentiality and immunity from civil and criminal liability. Failure to report would be a crime, with escalating penalties based on whether the animal abuse is a misdemeanor or a felony. The bill passed the Judiciary & Public Safety Committee and is in the full Senate.



Michigan SB 429 would permit veterinarians to report suspected abuse or neglect of a companion animal to an animal control shelter or law enforcement agency. The bill is in the was approved by the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety and is in the full Senate.



New York A 1170 would require veterinarians who reasonably and in good faith suspect that a companion animal is the victim of cruelty, abuse or neglect to report the incident and disclose necessary records to law enforcement and humane investigators. Currently, N.Y. veterinarians are permitted to make such reports. Both the existing and proposed law accord veterinarians who report in good faith – to protect the health and welfare of the patient or the public – immunity from civil and criminal liability. The bill is in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education.



Ohio HB 33 would require veterinarians, social services professionals, counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists to immediately report suspected abuse of companion animals. Dog wardens and deputy dog wardens would be required to report violations concerning companion animals to appropriate social services professionals in situations where a child or older adult resides with the alleged violator and where the animal abuse has an impact on the child or older adult. Good-faith reporters would be immune from civil and criminal liability. The measure is in the House Criminal Justice Committee.

“CASA for Animals” New for 2020



Florida SB 1048 would provide for the appointing of an advocate for the interests of an animal in certain court proceedings, at the court’s discretion, and require the Florida Bar Association’s Animal Law section to maintain a list of attorneys and certified legal interns who

meet specified requirements to be appointed as advocates. The bill is in the Agriculture, Judiciary and Rules Committees.



Maine LD 1442 would allow a court to appoint volunteer advocates for justice in animal cruelty cases, either under its own initiative or upon the request of a party or counsel. Advocates could monitor the proceedings, consult with individuals and records relevant to the case, and present appropriate information and recommendations. The bill passed both the House and Senate and was held by the Governor for review at the beginning of the next legislative session which began on Sept. 19.



Michigan HB 4592 would allow courts to appoint pro bono lawyers or law students as advocates to represent the interests of animals in criminal prosecutions. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



New Hampshire HB 1164 would create a special advocate for cats and dogs that are neglected or otherwise treated cruelly. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



New York A 25, S 3027 and A 702 would create court-appointed advocates for animals. **A 25** and **S 3027** are in the Judiciary Committees; **A 702** is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



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

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Houston Man with Elder Abuse History Gets Six Years in Prison in Domestic Violence Link Case

A Houston, Texas man who stomped his ex-girlfriend's cat to death was sentenced to six years in prison, a term that was extended due to his also having been convicted in 2016 of injury of an elderly person in the assault of his 72-year-old great-grandmother.



Javontae Thrasher

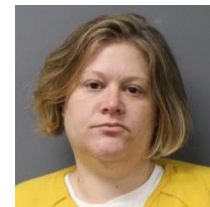
"This is a case that shows the direct link between animal abuse and violence toward other people," Jessica Milligan, head of the animal cruelty section at the Harris County District Attorney's Office, told the [Houston Chronicle](#). "Someone who can hurt his own great-grandmother, then kill a cat in a domestic dispute is someone who is capable of violent behavior against people, including children, in the future. We take that seriously, and we are grateful the judge took this seriously as well."

Javontae Isaiah Thrasher, 22, was breaking up with his girlfriend when she tried to leave their apartment with the cat in her arms, Harris County prosecutors said. A witness told police she saw Thrasher knock the tabby to the ground, kick it "like a soccer ball" and stomp it six or seven times. Thrasher then picked up the cat and put it in a Dumpster.

Thrasher pled guilty to a third-degree felony charge of cruelty to animals, punishable by two to 10 years in jail.

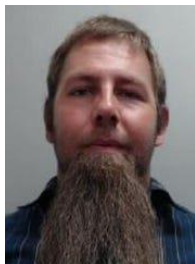
Mother Charged in Hanging Deaths of Children, Animal Sexual Abuse

Lisa Rachelle Snyder, 36, of Albany Township, Pa. was charged with murder, tampering with evidence, endangering the welfare of children, animal cruelty, and sexual intercourse with a dog after her two children were found hanging in the basement of their home. The [Allentown Morning Call](#) reported that court records said that Snyder had searched the internet for information about death by hanging and CO poisoning and on the day before the hanging ordered the dog leash that was found wrapped around the children's necks. The dog-related charges stem from at least three allegedly sexually explicit photos of Snyder with the family dog that were found. Berks County Children & Youth had previously removed two children but that they were later returned to their mother.



Lisa Snyder

Shot Dog Survives Murder-Suicide Attack in Home of Sex Offender



Michael Walpole

Cape Coral, Fla. police say a case where a mother, son and family dog were shot was a murder-suicide. The [Fort Myers News-Press](#) reported that police found the bodies of Joanne Lynn Walpole, 59, and her son, Michael Edward Walpole, 37. The investigation found that Joanne Walpole shot the dog, her son and then herself. The dog survived and was being cared for by Lee County Animal Control. Michael Walpole was a registered sex offender, having been convicted in 2012 of lewd or lascivious conduct on a minor.

Ex-Domestic Violence Offender Charged with Illegal Trapping that Killed Dog



Jaymz Partida, Sr.

A Montana man who was convicted in 2006 with aggravated assault for allegedly beating his partner with a metal baseball bat was one of two men charged in December with animal cruelty for reportedly setting illegal traps that killed a family dog. [The Missoulian](#) reported that Jaymz Antonio Partida, Sr., 45 was cited by both city and state authorities for trapping violations, which are defined in Missoula's city code as animal cruelty. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks game wardens responded to a report of a dog caught in the trap. The dog did not survive. If convicted, Partida could forfeit

his trapping license and face a \$1,500 fine and six months in jail. Partida was sentenced to 12 years in prison for the 2006 domestic violence incident and was on parole at the time of the trapping case.

28 Dogs Removed from Home Where Abuse of Foster Children is Alleged

Police in Oxford, Mass. removed 28 dogs from a home where former foster parents Raymond Blouin, 65, and Susan E. Blouin, 61, each face charges of indecent assault and battery on a minor after prosecutors alleged that years of sexual, mental and physical abuse of foster children took place. The [Worcester Telegram & Gazette](#) reported that Susan Blouin's former boyfriend, Philip A. Paquette, of Rhode Island, also faces charges of allegedly raping a boy twice, threatened the boy's life and forced him to eat dog feces. Police officers noticed an overwhelming odor of dog feces and urine. Investigators from the Animal Rescue League, which seized the dogs, were determining the animals' welfare and whether animal cruelty charges would be filed. [WCVB-TV](#) reported that Raymond Blouin was a registered sex offender who had earlier been convicted of sexually abusing young girls and that Susan Blouin, a registered nurse who was fired following the filing of charges, was accused of forcing a former foster child to walk around naked, sleep in a dog cage and wear diapers until the child was 10 years old.



Raymond Blouin

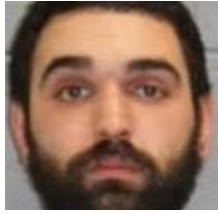
Couple Charged with Animal Sexual Abuse in Louisiana Homicide



John J. Jenkins and Ann Griffin

John Jacob Jenkins, of Lacombe, La., was charged with second-degree murder and sexual assault of an animal after a dead woman was found at his residence and investigators reportedly found pornographic images, allegedly produced by Jenkins, of people engaged in sexual activity with animals. The [New Orleans Advocate](#) reported that Jenkins, a triathlete and hospital nursing supervisor, was charged in the death of Jennifer DeBlonde Jacob, 37, a mother of three and a former co-worker of Jenkins. The St. Tammany Parish

coroner said she died from a lethal combination of illegal and prescription drugs including heroin and meth, and that Jacob had been sexually abused both before and after death. The alleged pornographic evidence also resulted in the arrest of Ann Griffin, 47, a co-worker of Jenkins who was also charged with animal sexual abuse. Authorities speculated that Jenkins may have had a pattern of using illegal drugs to incapacitate victims on order to prey upon them and were seeking other potential victims.



Christopher Monteleone

Domestic Violence Incident Leads to Death of Girlfriend's Cat

What is believed to have been a domestic violence incident that escalated into the killing of his girlfriend's cat caused Christopher Monteleone, 25, of Naugatuck, Conn., to be charged with animal cruelty and being held on a \$100,000 bond.

[The Patch](#) reported that interviews with both the accused and the victim and physical evidence, including the animal's remains, determined that the cat's death stemmed from a history of domestic abuse toward the victim and her cat.

Connecticut Driver Charged with Alleged DUI and Mutilating Rabbit



Patryk Sochocki

An alert Connecticut State Trooper who saw a vehicle driving erratically and smelled marijuana when he pulled the driver over also reportedly found the gruesome remains of a rabbit that Patryk Sochocki, 25, of New Britain had allegedly mutilated within 20 minutes of buying it at a pet store. The [Manchester Journal Inquirer](#) reported that Sochocki was charged with felony animal cruelty amid allegations that he had cut off the rabbit's back legs, tail and genitalia with a pair of scissors, as well as operating a motor vehicle while under the influence, use of drug paraphernalia, and moving violations. The rabbit had to be euthanized.

Tennessee Man Charged with Domestic Assault, Animal Cruelty and Narcotics

Officers in North Knoxville, Tenn. responding to a domestic disturbance call found a victim hiding in a truck with her child. [WBIR-TV](#) reported that the woman allegedly told officers that William Derek Chastain, 33, tried to kill her dog, threatened to beat her, and made her clean up the dog's feces and urine while it was being hit, choked and shocked with a shock collar. Investigators also reportedly found meth and assorted prescription pills. Chastain was charged with domestic assault, animal cruelty and drug possession. DCS took custody of the child and animal control took possession of the dog.



William Chastain

Homicide Suspect Charged with Skinning Neighbors' Dogs to Make a Fur Coat

A David, Ky. man whose charges of murdering his stepfather were dropped after a psychiatric evaluation has been charged with felony animal cruelty for allegedly killing and skinning four of his neighbors' dogs because he wanted a "doggy coat." Kentucky State Police said that Jonathan D. Watkins, 38, was charged with four counts of animal torture or death and two counts of tampering with evidence after a trooper reportedly found four animal skins on Watkins' front porch, a large hunting knife in his holster and apparent blood on his clothing, the [Floyd County Chronicle](#) reported. Watkins was arrested in 2010 for the murder of his stepfather but charges were dropped after a court ruled he was not criminally responsible for his conduct; the state failed to issue a petition for involuntary hospitalization.



Jonathan Watkins

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Jan. 10 – Dallas, Texas: The [North Texas Link Coalition](#) will meet.

Jan. 14 (online): Allie Phillips will conduct a webinar on co-sheltering pets and people for the [Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault](#).

Jan. 25 – Tokyo, Japan: Keiko and Sakiko Yamazaki will lecture on how The Link affects children as part of the Animal Literacy Research Institute's 2nd [Advanced Animal-Assisted Intervention Workshop](#).

Jan. 16 (online): Trevor Whipple, Law Enforcement Consultant for the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, will present a [webinar](#) on "Animal Cruelty and Violent Crime: What First Responding Officers Need to Know" for the Justice Clearinghouse.

Jan. 30 (online): Adam Leath, Director of Volusia County Animal Services, will present a [webinar](#) on "Engagement of Public/Private Partnerships in Animal Cruelty Investigations" for the Justice Clearinghouse.

Jan. 30-31 – Owasso, Okla.: Kathleen Romero of the Oklahoma Link Coalition will present at the Demand Project's [Beyond Awareness Summit](#) addressing crimes against children and sex trafficking.

Feb. 7 – Washington, D.C.: Jim Crosby will conduct a free [8-hour pilot training](#) to provide law enforcement officers with the information, tools and resources needed to avoid adverse encounters with dogs

Feb. 9 – Washington, D.C.: The [National Coalition on Violence Against Animals](#) will meet.

Feb. 18 (online): Jake Kamins, Animal Cruelty Deputy District Attorney for Oregon, will present a [webinar](#) on "Animals as Victims: Charging and the Law" for the Justice Clearinghouse.

Feb. 19 -- Ithaca, N.Y.: Phil Arkow will address the veterinarian's role in responding to family violence to the Ethics and Animal Care class at the [Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine](#).

Feb. 22 – Bryn Mawr, Pa.: Phil Arkow will present a webinar for the Bryn Mawr College [Graduate School of Social Work & Social Research](#).

Feb. 25 (online): Claudine Wilkins of Animal Law Source will present a [webinar](#) on "Dangerous Dog Cases, Tips on Investigations and Prosecution" for the Justice Clearinghouse.

March 5-7 – New Orleans, La.: Mary Lou Randour will present a report on initial findings of the FBI's NBRIS data on animal cruelty incidents, and Kathleen Wood and Brittany Hill will present on mental health treatment options for animal cruelty offenders, at the [American Psychology-Law Society conference](#).

March 11 -- Joye Estes will present on "Bestiality and The Link" to the [Kentucky Animal Care & Control Association](#).

March 13 – Columbus, Ohio: Vicki Deisner and Janey Hoy will speak about The Link at the [Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services’ 35th Annual Conference](#).

March 26-27 – Novato, Calif.: Phil Arkow will present on The Link to staff of the [Marin Humane Society](#) and community agencies.

March 27 – Louisville, Ky.: Joye Estes will teach at the University of Louisville Journal of Animal & Environmental Law [Symposium](#).

April 23 (online): Jake Kamins, Animal Cruelty Deputy District Attorney for Oregon, will present a [webinar](#) on “Working with Your Local Vets: Creating Veterinary Partnerships among Law Enforcement, Prosecution and Your Veterinary Community” for the Justice Clearinghouse.

May 7 (online): Virginia Senior Assistant Attorney General Michelle Welch will present a [webinar](#) on “Understanding The Link between Animal Abuse and Other Human Crimes: What Probation Officers Need to Know” for the Justice Clearinghouse.

May 7 – San Antonio, Texas: Allie Phillips of SAF-T and Cappi Patterson of Buddy Nation will present on “In Harm’s Way with a Pet: Situations and Solutions” at the Humane Society of the U.S.’s [Animal Expo](#).

May 8 – San Antonio, Texas: Melinda Merck will present on “Analysis of Video Evidence and Patterned Injuries in Cruelty Cases: The Important Role of the Veterinarian” at the Humane Society of the U.S.’s [Animal Expo](#).

June 16 (online): Phil Arkow will present a webinar on “Improving Public Safety by Stopping Animal Cruelty: The Link” for the [Justice Clearinghouse](#).

June 21 – Tampa, Fla.: The [National Coalition on Violence Against Animals](#) will hold its annual meeting.

July 9 (online): Martha Smith-Blackmore and Jessica Rock will present a [webinar](#) on “Processing Evidence in Animal Crime Cases” for the Justice Clearinghouse.

July 30 (online): Jake Kamins, Animal Cruelty Deputy District Attorney for Oregon, will present a [webinar](#) on “Working and Managing Inter-Agency Relationships: Investigating and Prosecuting Animal Abuse Cases” for the Justice Clearinghouse.

Oct. 8-10 – Knoxville, Tenn.: The [6th International Veterinary Social Work Summit](#) will focus on Animals and Poverty: How Poverty Impacts the Human-Animal Relationship.



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.

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Former Director, Domestic Violence/Stalking Program,
Columbus City Attorney's Office/Prosecution Division
Blowing Rock, N. Car.

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