



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

The LinkLetter

April 2011

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

[Phil Arkow](#), Editor

Arkansas, Maryland Enact Pet Protection Orders



ARKANSAS and **MARYLAND** now make 19 states, and 21 political jurisdictions, that allow courts to consider the welfare of animals in domestic violence cases. In Arkansas, HB 2001 allows a court in a hearing for domestic abuse relief to direct the care, custody or control of any pet by either party in the household. (The original bill included “animals,” but was amended to restrict protection only to “pets.”)

Maryland HB 407 authorizes District Court Commissioners, in an interim protective order, or judges, in a temporary or final protective order, to award temporary possession of a pet belonging to either the respondent or the person eligible for relief. (The original bill would have ordered a respondent to remain away from a pet or service animal, or to refrain from cruelty or aggravated cruelty toward it.) The District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and 17 other states (pictured in purple) have enacted pet protection order laws. (States in light blue have introduced PPO bills.)

Orlando Plans Pet Shelter for Domestic Violence Cases

[Harbor House of Central Florida](#) has been working for several years to build the only on-site kennel in central Florida where domestic violence survivors can bring their pets. CEO Carol Wick reports that an architect’s rendering has been presented and the project has gone out for bid. An extensive capital campaign is themed, “Help Us to Ensure No One Gets Left Behind.” Postcards depicting women with their children and pets ask, “Why would you ask her to leave either of her babies behind?”



Animal Cruelty Investigations Team Formed in N. M.



The Doña Ana County, NM Sheriff's Department has formed an Animal Cruelty Investigation Team within their Criminal Investigation Division. [Patricia Feeser, DVM](#), who has received training in veterinary forensics, reports that the team consists of her and two criminal investigators. The team investigates misdemeanor and felony animal cases including dog- and cock-fighting and hoarding. Based in Las Cruces, the team is available to other law enforcement

agencies in New Mexico.

The team has a 35-foot forensic van which is essentially a fully equipped mobile veterinary facility. This van allows the team to triage animals on-site and initiate emergency procedures when indicated. The team also has a heated/cooled trailer which can transport 44 animals to shelter facilities.

The team has also developed an advanced training course for law enforcement about how to investigate animal cases. The course covers probable cause, crime scene documentation, veterinary forensics, and the handling of animals as live evidence.

Pet Safe Havens Program in the U.K.

"I can't leave because he says he'll kill the dog." Words like these from domestic violence survivors, all too common in the U.S., also occur with alarming frequency in the United Kingdom, where British Link advocates are also addressing the need for foster care for animals in abusive families.

Among the Link programs in the U.K. is the Pet Retreat, a network of foster-care volunteers coordinated by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) in collaboration with women's refuges and human services agencies. Since 2002, the RSPCA has fostered over 850 animals in over 600 families. [Carolyn Southwell](#) is program manager. The RSPCA also shares information and cross-reports with child investigatory agencies to provide early warning and risk assessment information on child abuse. An [RSPCA website](#) features a dramatic 10-minute video describing the program. As a survivor says in the video, *"Having our cat back made our family complete again."*



According to our colleagues at [The Links Group](#), other U.K. pet fostering services are provided by [Dogs Trust Freedom Project](#), [Paws for Kids](#), [Petlink Raystede Home for Animal Welfare](#), [Wood Green Animal Shelters](#), and [Pet Fostering Service of Scotland](#).

The Link in the Legislatures

MISSISSIPPI ENACTING FELONY ANIMAL CRUELTY

MISSISSIPPI is about to become the 47th state to enact a felony provision for animal cruelty with a bill containing several Link provisions. SB 2821, which applies only to domesticated dogs and cats, has

passed both houses and is due to be signed by Gov. Haley Barbour by April 26. The law would declare aggravated animal cruelty – intentionally torturing, maiming, mutilating, starving or disfiguring a dog or cat – a felony upon a second conviction. The bill would also: require offenders to make financial restitution to the animal’s owner; exempt from civil and criminal liability veterinarians and others reporting suspected animal cruelty and drivers who unintentionally hit a dog or cat; and require non-governmental animal welfare organizations to register with the county sheriff each year and to mandate spaying or neutering of all dogs and cats adopted or reclaimed by their owners. In imposing sentences, courts: may require offenders to make restitution to agencies that cared for the animals; may require offenders to undergo psychological evaluation and counseling at their own expense; and prohibit offenders from working in facilities with dogs and cats. North and South Dakota and Idaho still lack felony cruelty laws.

LINK BILLS WE’RE WATCHING:

In **TEXAS, SB 279** which would include pets in protection orders, passed the Senate and is in the House Judiciary Committee.

MASSACHUSETTS SB 682, which would include pets in protection orders, has been referred to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.

NEW MEXICO HB 319, which would increase penalties for animal cruelty and make bestiality a crime, is in the House Business and Industry Committee.

OREGON SB 616 would authorize courts to include an order providing for the safety and welfare of parties’ animals in family abuse prevention restraining orders.

OHIO HB 25, which would include provisions for psychological assessment and counseling for animal abusers and include animals in domestic violence protection orders, is in the Criminal Justice Committee.

CONNECTICUT HB 6226 would mandate animal control officers’ cruelty investigations to be forwarded to the Commissioner of Children and Families for inclusion in investigations at that address. DCF employees would be mandated to report suspected animal cruelty or neglect to the Commissioner of Agriculture. The two commissioners would develop and implement cross-training procedures.

News from Link Coalitions

Washington, DC

Washington’s new Link Coalition, SNAAP (Safety Network for Abused Animals and People) held its inaugural meeting on March 23. Ten persons, representing animal protection, law, domestic violence, housing, and family medicine participated. The group reviewed Safe Havens programs operating in the D.C. area, cross-training possibilities, and ways to identify pet-friendly transitional housing for clients of the District Alliance for Safe Housing (DASH). The group plans a website and brochures about safety planning and other resources for pets caught up in domestic violence. The next meeting will be held in early May. For details contact [Blair Warner](#).

The Link in the News

Long Island Judge Sorry that Maximum Sentence Isn't Enough



RIVERHEAD, NY - A judge who lamented that the law is inadequate to punish a Long Island woman who tortured and killed dozens of family pets and abused her seven children handed down the maximum two-year jail term on March 30. Prosecutors noted that Sharon McDonough, who forced her children to watch the animal torture, buried 42 dogs in her backyard for fear their microchips might identify her if the carcasses were found in the trash cans where she dumped the bodies of the cats she also killed.

“The penal law is inadequate to adequately address the true magnitude of the actions here,” said Suffolk County Court Judge C. Randall Hinrichs. He agreed with prosecutors who described McDonough’s actions as “sinister, barbaric and evil.”

McDonough had pleaded guilty to animal abuse and child endangerment charges after creating what her son, who turned in his mother to authorities, called “a concentration camp for the animals.” His six younger sisters are now in foster care and Hinrichs issued a permanent order of protection requiring her to stay away from them when she is released. The children lived amid animals kept in wretched cages filled with urine and feces. McDonough acknowledged once placing duct tape over the mouth of a cat and hanging it from the ladder of a daughter’s bunk bed until it died.

Defense attorneys noted that McDonough had been in an abusive marriage with a husband who was killed in a car accident in 2008.

Man Charged with Tossing Girlfriend’s Dog Off Bridge

A Middletown, NJ man faces three counts of abusing, abandoning, and inflicting unnecessary cruelty on a living creature, plus multiple domestic violence charges, for allegedly throwing her four-month-old Labrador mix off a bridge following a domestic dispute. William E. Deppisch, 23, was charged April 10 in the incident. The dog, Jack, was retrieved by police. The Monmouth County SPCA says the dog survived the 15- to 20-foot fall and is expected to recover.

Link Training: Coming Soon to a Venue Near You...

Seattle, WA - April 17: The [Seattle-King County Veterinary Medical Association](#) will sponsor a workshop on “Animal Cruelty: What it looks like, how to document it and whom to call... A seminar for veterinary professionals,” featuring Randall Lockwood and Bonnie Yoffe-Sharp.

New York, NY - April 21: The New York City Bar Association Animal Law Committee will host a panel discussion on the pros and cons of [animal cruelty databases and offender registries](#), featuring Phil Arkow.

Denver, CO - April 27-28: The University of Denver Institute for Human-Animal Connection and the Colorado Alliance for Cruelty Prevention will host an Advanced Animal Abuse Forensic Evaluators Workshop. Speakers include Randall Lockwood, Frank Ascione, Diane Balkin, and [Philip Tedeschi](#).

Pittsburgh, PA – Apr. 29: Phil Arkow will train on the implications of animal abuse and domestic violence at the 6th Annual [Pittsburgh Conference on Child Maltreatment](#).

Santa Fe, NM – April 29 – May 1: Ken Shapiro, Tamara Ward, and others present a three-day workshop on AniCare, AniCare Child and AniCare Training for Trainers. Through a grant from the NM Department of Public Safety, these workshops are free to psychologists, therapists, and social workers. For details visit [NM AniCare](#).

Orlando, FL - May 1-3: [The International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association](#) will host its 4th annual conference. Topics will include discussion of ritualistic abuse by Randall Lockwood and Dave Hunt.

Orlando, FL - May 3-7: [HSUS Animal Care Expo](#) will include a session on recognizing and responding to "rescue hoarders" presented by Randall Lockwood and Tim Rickey.

New York, NY – May 6: Allie Phillips, Phil Arkow, Carol Moran, and Jenny Coffey will be among the speakers at the [Alliance for the Safety of Animals and People](#) conference on The Link.

Philadelphia, PA – May 31: Phil Arkow will conduct a training on the implications of animal abuse and domestic violence for the [Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth & Family Services](#).

Virginia Beach, VA – June 2: Allie Phillips will present on the Link at the [Virginia Coalition for the Prevention of Elder Abuse](#).

Vandalia, IL - June 7: Randall Lockwood will conduct a workshop on animal cruelty and family violence for the [Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Council](#).

Shelbyville, IL - June 8: Randall Lockwood will conduct a workshop on animal cruelty and family violence for the [Illinois Family Violence Coordinating Council](#).

New Brunswick, NJ – June 8: Phil Arkow will conduct a training on animal abuse and domestic violence for the [New Jersey Association of Domestic Violence Professionals](#).

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

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

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

About the National Link Coalition

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

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

Members of the National Link Coalition

Steering Committee:

[Phil Arkow](#)

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

[Lesley Ashworth](#)

Consultant, The Link, Worthington, Ohio

[Maya Gupta, Ph.D.](#)

Executive Director, Ahimsa House, Inc., Atlanta, Ga.

[Jane A. Hunt](#)

Violence Prevention Specialist, St Paul, Minn.

[Mark Kumpf, CAWA](#)

Past President, National Animal Control Association, Dayton, Ohio

[Randall Lockwood, Ph.D.](#)

Senior Vice President, Forensic Sciences and Anti-Cruelty Projects, ASPCA, Falls Church, Va.

[Emily Patterson-Kane, Ph.D.](#)

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

[Allie Phillips, J.D.](#)

National District Attorneys Association, Alexandria, Va.

[Kathleen Schoen](#)

Director, Family Violence Program, Colorado Bar Association; Colorado Alliance for Cruelty Prevention, Denver, Colo.

[Hugh Tebault III](#)

President, The Latham Foundation, Alameda, Calif.

[Philip Tedeschi, MSSW, LCSW](#)

Clinical Director, Institute for Human-Animal Connection, University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work, Denver, Colo.