



# NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

## The LINK-Letter

September 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](http://www.nationallinkcoalition.org)

[Phil Arkow](#), Editor



## British Study Examines Links Between “Status Dogs” and Violence



A research project undertaken for Great Britain’s RSPCA by criminologists at the Cardiff University Centre for Crime, Law and Justice provides a highly comprehensive review of links between ownership of “status dogs” (those used for fighting or to enhance owners’ sense of being “macho”) and young persons’ involvement in offending and antisocial acts.

The [72-page report](#) examines the role of fighting and “status” dogs in the UK, the prevalence of dog fighting, reasons why people own status animals, the links between these animals and criminal and violent behavior, and suggestions for preventative strategies.

Describing “the humanization of dogs and the canine-ization of youth” in urban youth gangs that are akin to dog packs, Gordon Hughes, Jenny Maher and Claire Lawson say youths’ criminality is linked to dogs in four ways: committing an offense with the dog; committing an offense on the dog; theft of a dog; and committing an offense to protect or avenge their dog. An extensive literature review argues that status dogs are a way for urban youths to establish their masculinity while being on the periphery of violence. Owning a “socially deviant” animal perhaps indicates the owner has a deviant identity.

Although media and political discourse, rather than academic research, have been the driving force behind examining the status dog problem, evidence suggests: there is a link between youth engagement in animal abuse and later or concurrent criminality and violence; a link between the ownership of status dogs and violence toward people and animals and criminality; a relationship between status dogs, gangs and animal abuse; and that dog ownership can be both positive and negative forces for young people.

The researchers noted that the widespread prevalence of status dogs has forced animal cruelty prevention to take a backseat to enforcement. They urge that animal welfare issues cannot be isolated from social concerns and a multi-agency approach using multiple strategies of education, communication, prevention, intervention and legislation is indicated “to prevent the harms associated with the status dog problem among troublesome and troubled young people.”

Hughes, G., Maher, J., & Lawson, C. (2011, April). *Research Project Report: Status Dogs, Young People and Criminalisation: Towards a Preventative Strategy*. Horsham, UK, & Cardiff, Wales: RSPCA and Cardiff University.

## Community Groups Rally to Raise Link Funding, Awareness *Baltimore, MD: Bikers Ride to Educate Kids*



After a rash of high-profile animal abuse cases in Baltimore, a group of law enforcement professionals took a unique approach to keep it from happening again. Dozens of burly Baltimore bikers, looking more like bandits than cops, held an inaugural Keep the Peace ride and rally on Aug. 20. The event, meant to attract inner-city kids, was designed to combat animal abuse and raise awareness of the connections between animal cruelty and domestic violence.

The Peacekeepers Motorcycle Club and the mayor's Anti-Animal Abuse Advisory Commission organized the event, which included organizations providing resources to combat not only animal cruelty and dog fighting, but also domestic abuse. The Peacekeepers Motorcycle Club, created in 2004, consists primarily of law enforcement officials and military veterans engaged in public service and supporting the youth of Baltimore. Several riders noted the likelihood of animal abuse transferring to human violence.

“If you can teach a child to care about an animal, that translates into caring about other people’s feelings and you’re less likely to do harm to a person because you have that capacity for empathy,” said Gale Rasin, of the Mayor’s Anti-Animal Abuse Commission.

“We are trying to call attention to all of the animal abuse that has been happening in Baltimore City,” said Detective Derrick Layton. “We believe there is a correlation between abusing animals and seeing it at home, and growing up and committing violent crimes,” Layton said.

## *Orlando, FL, Akron & Medina, OH: Dog Walks Raise Funds for Women’s Shelters*



Noting that “pets are not pawns” in domestic violence, Harbor House of Central Florida is holding its 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Paws for Peace fun walk on Nov. 5. The mile-long stroll is the premier event in the Paws Campaign to raise funds to build and operate Orlando’s Harbor House Paws Kennel. The walk, followed by a festival, “Dog-On-It” agility show and the official kennel groundbreaking, also builds awareness of the link between animal abuse and domestic abuse. The [Harbor House website](#) enables participants to form teams and obtain pledges to help reach the \$40,000 goal.

Meanwhile, two domestic violence groups in Ohio will kick off Domestic Violence Awareness Month on Oct. 1 by connecting the link between domestic violence and animal abuse. The [Battered Women’s Shelter of Summit & Medina Counties](#) will hold its 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Wag & Walk Against Abuse fun walk at the Akron Dog Park. Funds raised from the event, co-sponsored by “Pawsibilities” (the Humane Society of Greater Akron), will support protective shelter for families suffering domestic violence. The [Domestic and Sexual Abuse Coalition of Medina County](#), in partnership with the Medina County SPCA, will stage its 4<sup>th</sup> annual Walk With Your Best Friend Against Abuse event.



## Connecticut Youths Spread Link Message

Dimi Nikiforides (left) and Stewart Chioda, wear dog mascot costumes at Brien McMahon High School in Norwalk, Conn., to raise awareness of the link between animal cruelty and violence against people. The project is part of the school's [Center for Youth Leadership](#). "Who expects to see two dogs standing in a hallway at school?" asks Stewart. "Everyone - and I mean everyone - looks at us holding signs as they walk to class. And we give teachers statistics and discussion topics in case students ask questions when they get to class. We've even had several teachers invite us in to their classrooms to lead discussions."



## The Link in the Literature

### *Parents' reporting of childhood cruelty to animals in China*

Several mechanisms have been established whereby researchers can analyze parents' reports of their children's acts of animal cruelty, but none to date have compared whether fathers' reports are in concordance with mothers' reports, and whether reports differ depending on whether sons or daughters perpetrate the abuse. In this study – believed to be the first cross-cultural research on The Link in China – parents of boys reported more cruel behaviors toward animals than did parents of girls. Chinese parents reported significantly more animal cruelty than in comparable studies in Malaysia, Japan and Australia. Curiously, only 25.6% of boys and 21.7% of girls had pets, rates considerably lower than in Western households. The authors speculate girls' cruelty to animals may be less likely to be known by both parents since it is rarer and less expected. They recommend that in assessing children's behavior toward animals, reports from both parents, rather than just one, should be utilized.

Xu, X., Mellor, D., & Wong, J. (2011). Childhood cruelty to animals: Do mothers' and fathers' reports agree? *Anthrozoös*, 24(3), 263-271.

## News from Local Link Coalitions

### *Kansas City*

Fourteen therapists and counselors working in residential treatment centers, domestic violence shelters, hospitals and schools have expressed interest in organizing a Link coalition in the greater Kansas City Kansas/Missouri area. KC-CAN (Caring Animal Network) coalesced at an August training program for AniCare and AniCare Child, the [Animals and Society Institute's](#) assessment and treatment protocols for animal cruelty offenders. The coalition's theme is, "Together we CAN create a more humane community." Persons interested in participating should contact [Heddie Leger](#) at 816-820-5829.

### *Washington, DC*

The Capital region's new Link coalition, SNAAP (Safety Network for Abused Animals and People), has launched a [website](#). Executive Director [Blair Warner](#) reports the group, which was organized last March, held its second meeting on Wed., Sept. 7 at 5 p.m. Contact Blair at 818-261-1579 for details. SNAAP and the Washington Humane Society offer foster care for pets of individuals entering domestic violence shelters, and community education programs; SNAAP has already received seven requests for safe havens and has a pool of 10 foster families. SNAAP needs pet foster families and is collecting pet supplies for domestic violence shelters and pet foster care programs.

### *Boston*

Carol Yelverton has left the [Safe People Safe Pets](#) coalition as its executive director.

## National Link Coalition Welcomes National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges



Emilie Meyer, an associate attorney with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' Family Violence Department, has joined the National Link Coalition's "G-10" Steering Committee.

Meyer is a 2008 graduate of the University of Nevada at Las Vegas Law School who brings her love of animals to her work at the Council. Her interest in The Link was particularly motivated by telephone calls from battered women calling a hotline, including one in which the woman reported her partner had hobbled her horse because she had gone to a safe house. "I knew about how urban pets were affected by domestic violence, but I hadn't thought about horses and the degree of attachment people can have for these animals," she says. The Link is a way to conceptualize animal abuse in a way that is

meaningful for judges, she notes, "If we can catch judges' interest so they understand this emotional attachment, they can better understand interpersonal abuse."

## The Link Comes to Mexico



[Nuria Querol i Vinas](#) has been invited by the government of Mexico City to present at a conference organized by the Secretary of Education of the Government of the Mexico Federal District about animal abuse and the law and humane education, as well as a conference at the Autonomous University of Mexico. Nuria, a physician in Barcelona, Spain, is the Founder of [GEVHA](#) (Grupo para el Estudio de la Violencia Hacia Humanos y Animales), Spain's Link coalition.

## Florida Domestic Violence Group Spotlights The Link



[AARDVARC](#) -- An Abuse, Rape and Domestic Violence Aid and Resource Coalition -- is a nonprofit organization in Seminole County, Fla., dedicated to fighting family violence. Its members went from being victims to becoming advocates, and launched the organization in 1996. The website describes many aspects of abuse, including ethnic and cultural concerns, immigration issues, abuse in gay and lesbian households, religious issues, and an entire [page](#) on "pets as pawns."

## Link Training Opportunities

### *Coming Soon to a City Near You...*

**Madrid, Spain – Sept. 16:** Nuria Querol I Vinas will present on the Link between violence against animals and people at the [III EQUO Universidad de Verano](#).

**Christchurch, New Zealand – Sept. 21:** Dr. Nik Taylor will give the keynote lecture on addressing animal abuse and social violence at the [New Zealand Centre for Human-Animal Studies](#) at the University of Canterbury.

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

**Ann Arbor, MI – Sept. 29:** Allie Phillips will train the Washtenaw County Juvenile Court staff and prosecutors on The Link, in a program sponsored by the Animals and Society Institute.

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

**Chesapeake, VA – Oct. 5:** Allie Phillips will present on the Link at The Hampton Roads Military Civilian Family Violence Prevention Conference. For more information, contact Carter McKay at (757)668-6122.

**York, PA – Oct. 6:** Phil Arkow will discuss The Link between Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse at the banquet of the [Federated Humane Societies of Pennsylvania’s](#) Annual Fall Conference.

**South Bend, IN – Oct. 12:** Phil Arkow will conduct a community Link training under the auspices of the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the [St. Joseph County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office](#).

**Scottsdale, AZ – Oct. 14:** Chris Risley-Curtiss will present on “Treating Animal Abuse” at the [National Association of Social Workers/Arizona Chapter’s](#) annual summit.

**(Online) – Oct. 17:** Randall Lockwood will present a free webinar on “Prosecuting Animal Hoarding” in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, a program of the National District Attorneys Association, in partnership with the ASPCA and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

**Warren, PA – Oct. 24-25:** Phil Arkow will conduct two Link trainings under the auspices of [A Safe Place](#).

**Ocean City, MD – Oct. 26:** Allie Phillips will speak on “Caught in the Cross-Fire: When the Abuse of Animals Co-Occurs with Family Violence” at the [Mid-Atlantic Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect](#).

**Plantsville, CT – Oct. 27:** Phil Arkow will train on The Link at the [Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians’ 2011 Scientific Symposium](#).

**Baltimore, MD – Oct. 28:** The [Animals and Society Institute](#) will conduct a training program for clinicians working with children on the AniCare approach to interrupting the cycle between animal abuse and human violence.

**Oviedo, Spain – Nov. 2-5:** Nuria Querol i Vinas will present a paper on “The Prevention of Animal Abuse and Family Violence” at the 33<sup>rd</sup> [Spanish National Congress of Family Medicine](#).

**Philadelphia, PA – Nov. 8:** Phil Arkow will conduct a training program on The Link for the Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth & Family Services. For information contact the [Council](#).

**(Online) – Nov. 10:** Allie Phillips will lead a free webinar on investigation and prosecution strategies involving The Link in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse,

a program of the National District Attorneys Association, in partnership with the ASPCA and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

**Washington, DC – Nov. 16-19:** Nuria Querol i Vinas will present a paper, “Implementation of the Multidisciplinary Program for Woman Victims of Domestic Violence and Their Companion Animals” at the [American Society of Criminology](#) annual conference.

**Westminster, London, UK – Nov. 23:** The Links Group UK will hold a [conference](#), “Joining the Dots: The Link Between the Abuse of Vulnerable People and Animals,” featuring 11 speakers. Topics include: non-accidental injury in people and animals; a critical review of Link evidence; the Link in homicide prevention; confidentiality; pet fostering; and guidance for veterinarians.

**(Online) – Dec. 7:** Diane Balkin will present a free webinar on “The Veterinarian as Expert Witness in Animal Abuse Cases” in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, a program of the National District Attorneys Association, in partnership with the ASPCA and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

**Phoenix, AZ – Jan. 20, 2012:** Allie Phillips will present on “The Linkages between Violence to People and Animals” at the [Arizona Prosecuting Attorneys’ Advisory Council](#) winter conference.

**Washington, DC – Feb. 28-Mar. 1, 2012:** Allie Phillips will present on “Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)” at the [2<sup>nd</sup> World Conference on Women’s Shelters](#).

**Camden County, NJ – Mar. 11, 2012:** Phil Arkow will train volunteers of the Center for Family Services’ [Services Empowering Rights of Victims](#) program on The Link.

**Calgary, AB, Canada – May 6-9, 2012:** Phil Arkow will present a workshop on “Kids, Critters and Sexual Abuse” at the [Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse](#) biennial conference.

## About the National Link Coalition

The [National Link Coalition](#) is an informal network of individuals and organizations addressing the intersections between animal abuse and other forms of violence 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; Animals and Society Institute;  
Chair, Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project, The Latham Foundation  
Stratford, N.J.

**Lesley Ashworth**

Consultant, The Link, Worthington, Ohio

**Barbara W. Boat, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine  
Executive Director, Childhood Trust, Cincinnati Children's Hospital

**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.

**Anna Melbin**

Founder, Catalyst Consulting & Training  
Former Housing Director, National Network to End Domestic Violence, Yarmouth, Maine

**Emilie Meyer, J.D.**

Associate Attorney, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Reno, Nev.

**Maria Luisa O'Neill**

Program Services Coordinator, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Denver, Colo.

**Emily Patterson-Kane, Ph.D.**

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

**Allie Phillips, J.D.**

Director, National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse  
Deputy Director, National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse  
National District Attorneys Association, Alexandria, Va.

**Christina Risley-Curtiss, MSSW, Ph.D.,**

Associate Professor and Animal-Human Interactions Coordinator,  
School of Social Work, Arizona State University, Phoenix, AZ

**Barbara Shaffer, MSW, LCSW**

Senior Director of Chapter Services, Prevent Child Abuse America, Breckenridge, Colo.

**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.