



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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OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Study Explores Concept of a “Pet Advocate” for Domestic Violence and Homeless Shelters

Citing studies showing the importance of the relationship that homeless individuals, including victims of domestic violence, have with their pets, Lisa Jane Bruce wrote her [M.A. dissertation in Sociology](#) at the University of Montana last May about a Pet Advocate Program for the Homeless in Missoula. Her paper examined the need for a community-wide program in Missoula to house pets while their owners access emergency shelters, and proposed the formation of a community-wide “Pet Advocate Program” under the auspices of the Humane Society of Western Montana.



Humane Society of Western Montana

Bruce’s research found that in answering questions on the YWCA shelter’s lethality assessment intake survey, 18 out of 113 women (16%) reported their batterer had hurt or killed their pets. Eight residents requested the services of a Pet Advocate, a service Bruce had coordinated since 2011.

Bruce noted that the Pet Advocate service is not widely publicized and is made known to residents only if they express the need for finding a place for their pets to stay. Such requests resulted in placements for a total of 234 nights in 2013 while their owners resided in the Pathways shelter or emergency housing program.

Bruce interviewed 18 multidisciplinary community professionals, all of whom supported the concept of a free, single community-wide pet advocate program rather than multiple housing pet options run by separate agencies. The Humane Society of Western Montana, which partners with the YWCA, offered to take on this program if funding and staffing were available. Several prototype models were considered.

Attorney General Pledges Aggressive Prosecutions of Animal Abuse/Domestic Violence Cases

After a trial lasting four days, a Providence, R.I. Superior Court jury took only two hours on Sept. 11 to convict Luis Laboy, 44, of malicious killing of a dog, assault and several domestic violence charges in the death of “Blacky,” Laboy’s ex-girlfriend’s 3-month-old Chihuahua puppy. Testimony revealed that the victim, going to Laboy’s apartment to pick up personal items she had left behind, discovered the dead puppy. Laboy grabbed her by the arm, pushed her away and smashed her cell phone. She fled the apartment with Laboy chasing after her holding the dead puppy in his hand, throwing it at her as she ran down the stairwell and once again as she drove away. A necropsy determined the puppy died from blunt force trauma to the skull.



R.I. Atty. Gen. Peter Kilmartin

While out on bail, Laboy harassed the victim and her new boyfriend by calling and sending threatening text messages. He has been charged with cybertalking, making obscene phone calls and violating a no contact order. Those cases are pending.

“Animal abuse cases are handled by the team of specialized prosecutors in our Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Unit, as the malicious treatment and killing of animals is an element we often see with domestic violence abusers,” said Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Kilmartin. “The nature of this crime and the senseless violence against a weaker person or animal is deplorable and will continue to be prosecuted aggressively by this Office.”

Laboy remained out on bail pending sentencing, at a date yet to be determined.

Pet-Friendly Shelter Spotlight: My Sister’s Paws

Founded in April, 2013, My Sister’s Paws is a program of [My Sister’s Place](#), the domestic violence shelter serving Athens, Hocking and Vinton Counties in southeastern Ohio. The program houses pets of women entering the shelter at an off-site, undisclosed location. Pets must be spayed or neutered upon entering the program, vaccinated, and treated for parasites: all costs are covered by My Sister’s Paws.

Clients sign contracts covering the care of their pets upon entering the shelter, says [Shelley Lieberman](#), founder of the program. Pets are given quality food and bathed and groomed as necessary. When residents transitioning out of the shelter are unable to reclaim their pets because they cannot find pet-friendly rentals or family members, the animals are rehomed through the Athens County Humane Society and Avalon rescue.

A \$20,000 grant from the Kenneth A. Scott Charitable Trust this summer will enable My Sister’s Place to build a small pet shelter on-site. Plans include six indoor cat cages and four indoor-outdoor dog runs. Construction will start in the Spring of 2015. The additional facility will enable My Sister’s Paws to help even more women, children and pets to escape their abusers, Lieberman reports.



Animal Sex Abuse Used as Blackmail in Domestic Violence

In a remarkable lead-in to Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Huffington Post on Sept. 12 published [“Why Didn’t You Just Leave?”](#), a series of first-person interviews with six survivors who detailed, in graphic and disturbing terms, the violence they experienced and the tumultuous processes by which they finally found the courage to leave. The interviews describe a horrific litany of assaults including shootings, aggravated stalking, paranoia-fueled attacks, and social and financial isolation.



Gabbe Rowland

In one interview, [Gabbe Rowland](#), 25, of Falmouth, Mass., recounted how her abuser, a convicted offender with a history of heroin use, repeatedly raped, beat and strangled her, then forced her to take heroin with him nightly to experience how it felt. Rowland related the following in her interview:

“On the third night, he thought of a new way to destroy me. He pulled out a camera and forced me to give his pit bull oral sex while he videotaped it. He said he wanted to prove what kind of cheater I was. He told me he would use the video to blackmail me if I left him or told anyone about the abuse. He would make sure everyone saw the video, including my birth mother in Chile. It gave him that much more power and control over me. I felt like I was stuck with him no matter what. I was trapped. I felt like his property. I was literally just his punching bag.”

“He did everything he could to beat me down until I felt worthless. It almost worked,” she said. “Almost.” Rowland eventually pressed charges. Her abuser was sentenced to six years in prison.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE

National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse Launched



Responding to the growing rise in animal cruelty crimes and adverse officer-dog encounters, the National Sheriffs’ Association has created the [National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse](#) (NLECAA) to promote greater awareness of animal cruelty and animal behavior among the nation’s police forces.

The NLECAA will be an information clearinghouse and forum on animal abuse and its link with other crimes, said John Thompson, Interim Executive Director of the National Sheriffs’ Association. “NSA’s Center will be a one-stop-shop to provide law enforcement with training, information and resources to deal with animal abuse and officer-dog encounters.”

With more than half of American households owning dogs, there is a greater than 50% chance a law enforcement officer will encounter a dog when responding to a home in the U.S., Thompson noted. “It is extremely important that law enforcement be aware and know how to respond to a dog’s body language. Officers who receive training on canine behavior will know how to reduce the dog’s stress and increase their own safety.”

Numerous national partner organizations, including the National Link Coalition, have signed on to promote the effort to make American communities safer. “Better understanding of the nature of animal abuse encourages proactive involvement in the prevention of animal cruelty and enforcement of animal abuse laws,” said Thompson.

FBI Approves Adding Animal Abuse to Data-Reporting Forms

A chronic obstacle facing organizations addressing animal cruelty and its links to human violence was overcome in September when FBI Director James B. Comey signed and approved recommendations from the Criminal Justice Information Services Advisory Policy Board to add animal cruelty crimes to the Uniform Crime Report - National Incident-Based Reporting System (UCR/NIBRS).



FBI Director James B. Comey

The approval means that once the new system is implemented – a process expected to take several years – agencies will be able to track the incidence of animal cruelty cases. Currently, there are no state or national systems for capturing the number or disposition of animal abuse cases enforced by a patchwork of municipal, county and humane enforcement departments.

Under the new system, animal cruelty crimes will be reported by more than 18,000 law enforcement agencies that participate in NIBRS and use the standardized UCR. Animal cruelty will be listed as a Group A offense with four sub-categories: simple/gross neglect; intentional abuse and torture; organized abuse; and animal sexual abuse. Cruelty will be defined as: Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly taking an action that mistreats or kills any animal without just cause, such as torturing, tormenting, mutilation, maiming, poisoning, or abandonment. Included are: duty to provide shelter, food, water, and care if sick or injured; transporting or confining an animal in a manner likely to cause injury or death; causing an animal to fight with another; and inflicting excessive or repeated unnecessary pain or suffering. The definition does not include proper maintenance of animals for show, sport, food, or lawful hunting, fishing or trapping.

The UCR program was conceived in 1929 by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and administered since 1930 by the FBI to meet the need for reliable crime statistics. NIBRS was implemented in 1989 to improve the quantity and quality of crime data collected by law enforcement by capturing more detailed information on each single crime occurrence.

“Today, overwhelming scientific research has demonstrated the close relationship between animal cruelty crimes and other types of crimes, including interpersonal violence, property crimes, and drug offenses. Often it is a marker of a perpetrator with a higher tendency toward violence. Until recently, violence towards children, the elderly, and other domestic violence had been considered to be unrelated to violence towards animals. The correlation that has now been established between animal abuse, family violence, and other forms of community violence can be tracked and documented by law enforcement!” exclaimed John Thompson, Interim Executive Director of the National Sheriffs Association and member of the National Link Coalition’s Steering Committee, who spearheaded the effort (*See LINK-Letter February 2014 and July 2014*).

“The National Sheriffs Association is committed to providing law enforcement officers with information about the realities of animal abuse and its close link to other crimes. We are gratified by the FBI’s response and Director Comey’s commitment to improve public safety,” he added. “While we may not see the fruits of our work for many years, when it comes to data collection, we will see the immediate rewards as law enforcement becomes much more aware of the animal cruelty problem.”

D.A. Begins Online Tool and Pilot Program to Combat Cruelty

A new online tool for the public to report animal cruelty in Houston, Texas, and a new pilot program called HOPE (Helping Our Pets through Education) to educate elementary school children on proper care for their pets was announced on Sept. 16 by Harris County District Attorney Devon Anderson.



“Many of the animal cruelty cases we see start with young people and they frequently stem from a lack of education, a lack of compassion, and the cyclical nature of abuse,” she said. “The goal of this program is to instill empathy in our young people, to teach students how to recognize animal abuse, and to show them what they can do to stop it.”

The initiative will be led by Animal Cruelty Specialist and Assistant District Attorney Jessica Milligan. Prosecutors will go to schools throughout the Harris County area and give one-hour presentations on proper pet care, animal cruelty laws, and the consequences of being a neglectful pet owner.

“We believe that children learn abusive behaviors from their surrounding environments and that if they observe it, they will continue the cycle themselves if they don’t learn that it’s wrong,” said Milligan. “We also believe that individuals who abuse or neglect animals are more likely to carry on that abuse towards people later in life.”

Students will also have a chance to interact with the program’s mascot, “Hope”, and hear her story. Hope is a 3-legged, black border collie mix found at an animal cruelty scene in the Trinity Riverbed starved, burned, and with gunshot wounds to her face, chest, and leg. A witness took her to an emergency clinic and she was later rescued by the Milligan family.

The DA’s office is also now accepting animal cruelty reports from the public. Reports can be made by filling out an electronic form on the [website](#).

BUILDING PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK **Santa Barbara Link Training Inspires Participants**

When Link expert Allie Phillips and a panel of local prosecutors spoke to an audience of prosecutors, law enforcement, animal control and shelter officials in Santa Barbara, Calif. in September, they were encouraged by the warm reception and by an hour’s worth of questions asked by participants. Presenting a persistent message urging the public to report animal abuse, Phillips offered a one-day training session on how best to protect animals and prevent crime.



Allie Phillips

Questions ranged from asking what is the maximum number of animals one can have on a property, to the value of calling 9-1-1 to report suspected animal abuse, to caseworkers’ dilemmas of dealing with parents who do not think their children’s acts of animal cruelty are significant. Participants also expressed interest in opening a pet-friendly domestic violence shelter in the region.

The program was hosted and moderated by Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce Dudley, the Santa Barbara [Noozhawk](#) reported.

ANIMAL WELFARE AND HUMAN HEALTH



Animal Protection Group Aids Ebola Effort

With the global focus on the deadly Ebola outbreaks across western Africa, it was intriguing to learn that one of the many local agencies involved is an animal welfare charity. The [Liberia Animal Welfare and Conservation Society](#) is located in Lofa County, one of the regions hardest hit by the epidemic and where the virus entered the country from nearby borders with Guinea and Sierra Leone. Morris Darbo, program coordinator for

LAWCS, tells *The LINK-Letter* that deplorable road conditions make access to remote villages impossible for automobiles, but LAWCS' motorcycles are able to deliver buckets, chlorinated water, soap, and educational materials to get villagers to practice sanitary hand-washing. LAWCS is raising funds to purchase these materials which are otherwise unaffordable for subsistence farmers living on less than \$1-a-day wages. A website has been established for [online contributions](#).



THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE

Human-Animal Bond Explored in Domestic Violence Context

With 68% of American households believed to have pets, and with as many as 71% of survivors of intimate partner violence reporting that their animals were harmed or threatened by the batterer as a way to intimidate, retaliate or seek revenge, animal abuse is a potent force creating additional layers of fear in domestic violence. The Animal Welfare Institute developed this Technical Assistance Guideline for the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence to assist advocates in aiding survivors and their pets when seeking safety. The Guideline is available on the [National Link Coalition's website](#).

-- Animal Welfare Institute (2014, September). *Why pets mean so much: The human-animal bond in the context of intimate partner violence: Technical assistance guidance*. Harrisburg, PA: National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

Bystander Response to Child and Animal Abuse Studied

While the literature on bystander response to acts of interpersonal violence is well established, research into the emotional responses and motivations that prompt people to report suspected animal cruelty is much more limited. This study compared college students' emotional and empathic responses and willingness to report suspected abuse of a baby as compared to cruelty to a puppy. Respondents generally were bothered more by the child abuse scenario, but results were mediated by whether respondents currently had a pet and their level of attachment to it. Those currently living with a pet demonstrated significantly higher distress levels toward a puppy abuse scenario than the infant abuse scenario. Those who had children were more bothered by the child abuse case.

-- Daly, B., Taylor, N., & Signal, T. (2014). Pups and babes: Quantifying sources of difference in emotional and behavioral reactions to accounts of human and animal abuse. *Anthrozoös*, 27(2), 205-217.

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

Link Awareness Month Declared in Albuquerque



On Sept. 3, the Albuquerque City Council designed September as Link Awareness Month. Tammy Fiebelkorn (left), Chair of the Forming Positive Links Committee and Organizer of the New Mexico Conference on The Link, accepted the proclamation and extended an invitation to all the City Councilors to attend the September 22 conference. Also accepting the proclamation were representatives from the New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Animal Protection of New Mexico.



Then, a few weeks later, the annual [New Mexico Conference on The Link](#) was again held at the National Hispanic Cultural Center. At left, New Mexico Attorney General Gary King addressed the largest crowd ever to attend the annual event. Organizer Tammy Fiebelkorn tells *The LINK-Letter* that she saw more networking, and more plans for groups to work together in the future, than ever before. The 2014 conference featured two tracks: one for prosecutors and law enforcement officers, and one for social workers and domestic violence personnel.



A [12-minute video](#) produced by The Deadly Link interviewed several participants about why they attended, how they plan to incorporate what they learned into their work, and the violence-prevention partnerships that have emerged in New Mexico over the years as a result of the conferences.

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Bills We're Watching:

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



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



Michigan HB 5658 would allow family divisions of circuit courts issuing personal protection orders to enjoin a spouse, former spouse, co-parent, date or household resident from injuring, killing, torturing, threatening or removing an animal, and from interfering with the petitioner’s efforts to remove animals. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee. Another bill, **SB 285** would make it illegal to kill, torture, maim, disfigure, or poison an animal with the intent to cause mental suffering or distress to another person or to exert control over another person. **SB 285** cleared the Senate and passed the House Committee on Criminal Justice and is awaiting a second reading on the House floor.



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



Ohio HB 243 and **SB 177** would allow courts to include companion animals in domestic violence, anti-stalking and temporary protection orders. **HB 243** would also require children adjudicated as delinquent for committing animal cruelty to undergo psychological evaluation and counseling, and adult offenders to be sentenced to probation supervision. **SB 177** cleared the Senate Criminal Justice Committee on May 13 and passed the full Senate by a unanimous 33-0 vote on June 3 and went to the House Judiciary Committee.

Animal Abuse Committed by a Child



New York A-4618 and **S-2656** would require juveniles and adult cruelty offenders to undergo psychiatric analysis and evaluation and, when necessary, treatment. The records of juvenile offenders would not be sealed and could be used in future prosecutions. The bills are in the respective Agriculture Committees.



Ohio HB 243 would require a child who is adjudicated a delinquent child for committing cruelty to a companion animal to undergo a psychological evaluation and, if recommended, counseling. The bill would also require courts to sentence adult offenders to probation. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

Animal Abuse in the Presence of a Child



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



New York A-706 would include animal cruelty in the presence of a child as an element in endangering a child's welfare, and within the definition of a neglected or maltreated child. The bill is in the Codes Committee.

Reporting and Cross-Reporting



New York A-3766 would require anyone who enforces animal cruelty laws to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment, and any person mandated to report child abuse or maltreatment to file a report of suspected animal abuse or maltreatment. The bill is in the Children & Families Committee.



New York A-3283 would require any employee of a veterinary hospital or clinic, boarding kennel, shelter or rescue center, or facility that provides services for animals to report an animal's injury, illness, or condition to the police if animal cruelty or abuse is suspected. Employees who reasonably and in good faith file such reports would be immune from civil or criminal liability. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



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



Massachusetts HB 1594 would replace the archaic definition of bestiality as “the abominable and detestable crime against nature, either with mankind or with a beast,” with more contemporary terminology making it illegal to “commit a sexual act upon an animal, use an object to sexually abuse an animal, or knowingly permit a sexual act with an animal.” The bill will be reviewed by a study committee during the legislative recess.



Michigan HB 5063 and **SB 605** would require prosecutors handling animal abuse offenses to report the individuals to the state police for entry into the department’s criminal history database (ICHAT – Internet Criminal History Access Tool). Companion bills **HB 5062** and **SB 603** would waive the normal fees when animal control or animal protection shelters request criminal background checks from the state police’s ICHAT files. **HB 5062** was passed by the House on June 12 and referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.



New Jersey SB 736 would create a new crime of “leader of a dog fighting network” which would be added to the list of offenses considered “racketeering activities” under New Jersey’s anti-racketeering (RICO) law. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



New York AB 893 and **AB 1659** would recodify animal cruelty laws and move them from the Agriculture and Markets laws into the Penal Code. The bills are in the Codes Committee.



New York AB 4517 and **SB 2560** and **SB 5112** would classify physical injury or death occurring to animals during the commission of a felony or the immediate flight therefrom as Aggravated Cruelty. **SB 2560** was passed by the Senate and is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee, along with **AB4517**.



Rhode Island HB 7099 would allow judges to impose more severe sentences than those specified in animal cruelty statutes when “substantial and compelling” circumstances exist, including the character and background of the offender and the extreme nature and circumstances of the offense. The bill is being held for further study in the House Judiciary Committee.

Animal Hoarding



New York AB 1466 would create a new crime of Companion Animal Hoarding, based upon recognition that living conditions in these homes frequently fall well below accepted standards for animals and human beings, and that such cases are frequently accompanied by self-neglect and neglect of children and the elderly living in the household. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.



Pennsylvania HB 860 would establish animal hoarding as a third-degree misdemeanor, and require psychological evaluation prior to sentencing. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

Therapeutic Interventions for Child Abuse Victims



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

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Animal Abuser Charged in Homicide of Father and Son

An animal abuser convicted in 2010 for piercing kittens' ears and necks and marketing them as "gothic kittens", and her boyfriend, pleaded not guilty in Luzerne County, Penna., Court on Sept. 8 to homicide charges. Holly Crawford, 39, and James Roche, 32, were charged in the April, 2014 shooting deaths of Ronald Evans, 73, and his son Jeffrey, 43. Police said Crawford had had an ongoing sexual relationship with Ronald Evans, and Roche wanted to confront him, the Wilkes-Barre [Citizens Voice](#) reported. Crawford had gained international notoriety in 2008 for marketing "gothic kittens" online. She had also served three years in prison for a series of robberies and thefts to support her drug abuse.



James Roche and Holly Crawford

Police Find 50 Dead Cats in Freezers of Alleged Child Pornographer

Palm Beach County, Fla. sheriff's deputies serving a warrant to arrest a man on child pornography charges discovered 50 dead cats stuffed in freezers in the man's home, plus 30 live cats and kittens living on the property. The stench caused officials to have to wear masks in arresting Douglas Westcott, 55, of Lake Worth. The [Broward-Palm Beach New Times](#) reported that police also found several photos of underage juveniles in the filthy home. Animal Care & Control impounded the cats and was planning to perform necropsies, while Westcott refused to give up custody of the animals. It was not clear whether animal cruelty charges would be filed in addition to three counts of possession of child porn.



Douglas Westcott

Trio Arrested on Drug, Weapons and Animal Abuse Charges

Police officers in Greenville, N. Car. , responding to complaints about a home with suspected gang and drug activity, seized 10 doses of crack cocaine, a bag of marijuana, two loaded rifles, and a significant amount of ammunition. They also found a young female pit bull puppy with duct tape around her head and whose ears had been cut off. The dog was taken to Greenville Animal Control, where she is expected to make a full recovery. Police arrested Delanta Gregory, 44, and David Howard, 19, on drug and weapons charges, and Aaron Hatcher, 24, who was also charged with felony animal abuse, [WNCT-TV](#) reported.





Ryan Watenpaugh

Man Charged with Feeding His Girlfriend’s Dog to Her

Ryan Watenpaugh, 34, of Redding, Calif., was charged with domestic violence, stalking, false imprisonment, and animal cruelty for allegedly killing his girlfriend’s dog and feeding it to her. The woman told police he had assaulted her: she got away, but when she returned her Pomeranian, “Bear,” was missing. Police told KRCR-TV that the couple had later reconciled and he had cooked her a meal. Watenpaugh subsequently sent her a text message asking how her dog tasted. Watenpaugh allegedly left a bag containing Bear’s paws on her doorstep at 1 a.m. After a search of his home turned up an AK-47 assault rifle and several high-capacity magazines, officers said they were considering also filing weapons charges.

Dog Takes Witness Stand in Animal Cruelty/Burglary Case

“Ozzy,” a West Highland terrier, took the witness stand in his own defense in a Manassas, Va. courtroom on Sept. 26 as Prince William County Judge Craig Johnston sentenced Khanh Hoang Hong to 18 months in prison for animal cruelty, and 5-year suspended terms on charges of felony burglary and animal larceny. Hong had pleaded guilty to the charges, stemming from an incident in April 2013 when he broke into the home of his former girlfriend, Sharon Betts, and stole “Ozzy” and his mate, “Pieper”. Investigators found that Hong had bound the two dogs’ mouths and legs with duct tape, sealed them in trash bags, and tossed them in his car. He tossed the bag containing “Pieper” from the car, where she was found dead four days later. “Ozzy” managed to chew through his restraints and escape: he lost his front teeth and has four metal rods in a rear leg. Assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney Sandy Sylvester cited links between animal abuse, child abuse and domestic violence in asking the judge to impose a stiff sentence. Sylvester told [NBC news media](#) that she intends to continue to prosecute animal cruelty cases vigorously because she has seen several cases in which men threatened or harmed their girlfriends’ pets to try to control them.



Khanh Hoang Hong

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

OCT. 1 – 31: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

Oct. 1 – Columbus, Ohio: Phil Arkow will speak to two veterinary college classes and the [Albert Schweitzer Fellowship](#) event.

Oct. 4 – (various locations): Domestic violence shelters will celebrate [National SAF-T Day](#) to celebrate programs that shelter animals and families together.

Oct. 6-8 – Phoenix, Ariz.: Diane Balkin, John Thompson, Chris Risley-Curtiss, Barbara Boat, and Allie Phillips will conduct sessions on investigating and prosecuting child abuse/animal abuse cases, the poly-victimization of childhood animal abuse and trauma focused intervention, childhood animal cruelty as a toxic stressor on the developing brain, and the use of therapy animals in child sexual abuse cases, at the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse’s [Strategies for Justice](#) conference.

Oct. 9 – Virginia Beach, Va.: Chris Risley-Curtiss and Chris Brosan will describe the Loudoun County Stop Abuse and Violence Effort at the [Virginia Animal Control Association](#) 2014 Conference.

Oct. 9 – Lansing, Mich.: A discussion on the Link between animal cruelty and human violence – with a focus on family violence and juvenile crime – will be featured at the State Bar of Michigan Animal Law Section’s [conference](#), “Making Your Case: Investigation and Prosecution of Animal Cruelty Crimes.”

Oct. 10 – Quincy, Ill.: The [Quincy Humane Society](#) and the 8th Judicial Circuit Family Violence Coordinating Council will sponsor a summit, “Exploring the Link between Human Violence and Animal Abuse.” Speakers will include Randy Lockwood and Terry Mills of the ASPCA and Ledy VanKavage of Best friends Animal Society.

Oct. 10 – Bay City, Mich.: Sherry Ramsey and Jill Fritz will lead a seminar on “Making the Connection Between Domestic Violence and Animal Cruelty” for the [Bay County Domestic Violence Community Response Team](#).

Oct. 16 – Oklahoma City, Okla.: The [Oklahoma Link Coalition](#) will meet.

Oct. 16 – (online): Joe Stafford and Rod Novotny will present a free webinar on “Collaborative Animal Cruelty Investigations,” in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, in partnership with the ASPCA and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

Oct. 17 – Salt Lake City, Utah: Barbara Boat will present on “Animal Cruelty, Child Abuse and Domestic Violence: A Toxic Triad” at the [Academy on Violence and Abuse conference](#).

Oct. 17-19 – Barcelona, Spain: Núria Querol, Sònia Pujol and David Carrasco will participate in a roundtable about The Link and the Freedom Paws Link Project at the [AnimalADDA Fair](#).

Oct. 22 (online): Phil Arkow will conduct two webinars on “The Prevention of Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse in Military Families” for the [National Organization for Victim Assistance Academy](#).

Oct. 27-29 – Dillon, Colo.: Justie Coyle and Jim Pyle will present on The Link and how it affects its victims at the [Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance](#) conference.

Oct. 28 – Boston, Mass.: Phil Arkow will be the keynote speaker at the [Animal Rescue League](#)’s Fall educational event.

Oct. 30-31 – San Vicente del Raspeig, Spain: Núria Querol will discuss “Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence” at the University of Alicante [Congress on Criminology](#).

Nov. 5 – Stamford, Conn.: Phil Arkow will discuss “Species-Spanning Medicine: The Implications of Animal Abuse and Other Family Violence for Physicians” at [Stamford Hospital Grand Rounds](#).

Nov. 7 – Oklahoma City, Okla.: Phil Arkow will conduct a workshop on animal abuse’s links with domestic violence at the [OKC campus](#) of Oklahoma State University.

Nov. 12 – Blacksburg, Va.: The Virginia Attorney General’s [Law Enforcement Conference on Combating Animal Fighting](#) offers CE training credits for law enforcement, attorneys and veterinarians.

Nov. 14 – Ontario, Calif.: Phil Arkow will present on the impact of The Link for prosecutors and law enforcement agencies on behalf of the [San Bernardino County Animal Cruelty Task Force](#).

Nov. 18 – Dover, Del.: Phil Arkow will discuss the role of veterinary personnel regarding animal abuse and interpersonal violence, and Rob Reisman will discuss animal abuse forensics and pathology, at the [Delaware Veterinary Medical Association](#)’s Winter CE Conference.

Nov. 20 – Anchorage, Alaska: Allie Phillips will conduct a day-long training on The Link for first responders in conjunction with the [Alaska Child Maltreatment Conference](#).

Nov. 20 – San Antonio, Texas: Phil Arkow will present on Animal Abuse, Hoarding and the Elderly, and Animal-Assisted Interventions with the Elderly, at the 31st Annual [Adult Protective Services Conference](#).

Nov. 20-21 – San Francisco, Calif.: Nuria Querol i Vinas will present on how Spanish law enforcement agencies are incorporating animal abuse in policing, and on cooperative research between health and law enforcement professionals regarding domestic violence and animal abuse, at the [American Society of Criminology](#) conference.

Dec. 11 – (online): Lora Dunn will present a free webinar on “Ethical Issues when Working on Animal Cruelty Cases,” in a [webinar series](#) presented by the National District Attorneys Association’s National Center for Prosecution of Animal Abuse, in partnership with the ASPCA and the Animal Legal Defense Fund.

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ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



The National Link Coalition is an informal, multi-disciplinary collaborative network of individuals and organizations in human services and animal welfare who address the intersections between animal abuse, domestic violence, child maltreatment and elder abuse through research, public policy, programming and community awareness. We believe that human and animal well-being are inextricably intertwined and that the prevention of family and community violence can best be achieved through partnerships representing multi-species perspectives.

Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee

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

Lesley Ashworth

Founder/President, American Veterinary Charitable Fund
Consultant, Ohio Domestic Violence Network
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