



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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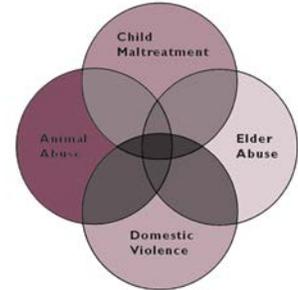
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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Phil Arkow, Coordinator and Editor

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THE LINK AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Travis County, Texas, Adds Animal Cruelty Prosecution Team

Travis County, encompassing Texas' capital city of Austin, has become the latest jurisdiction to recognize the need for specialized prosecutors assigned to animal cruelty cases. [Lex Canis](#) reported that as a result of requests made to the Animal Advisory Commission, the Travis County District Attorney's Office has now assigned two personnel to prosecute these increasingly complex types of cases. Austin Police Sgt. Joaquin Perez spoke on behalf of the proposal, noting that the increased focus in the prosecutor's office would greatly assist both the Austin Police Department and the Travis County Sheriff's Office, which has [dedicated a detective to the full-time investigation of animal abuse](#).



Rosemary Lehmborg, D.A.



Justice Rosalie Abella

Canadian Supreme Court Upholds Bestiality Acquittal in Juvenile Sexual Molestation Case

In a 6-1 ruling that the [Toronto Star](#) called "surprising," the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the acquittal of a British Columbia man on bestiality charges while sustaining his conviction on 12 counts of sexually molesting his two stepdaughters over a 10-year period. The decision ([See the October 2015 LINK-Letter](#)) hinged on the court's decision that under Canadian and common law bestiality cannot be proven if no actual penetration occurs.

The defendant was said to have smeared peanut butter on the crotch of one of his stepdaughters and then had the family dog lick it off. The incident occurred only after he had unsuccessfully attempted to force the dog to have sexual intercourse with the girl, who was 16 at the time.

Justice Rosalie Abella, the sole dissenting vote in the ruling, argued that bestiality laws should protect animals as well as the public. A bill in Canada's Parliament, C-246, would strengthen that nation's anti-cruelty laws and redefine bestiality.

New Hampshire Bans Animal Sexual Assault

New Hampshire Gov. Maggie Hassan has signed into law **HB 1547** which now makes the Granite State the 41st state to outlaw bestiality. The bipartisan measure was approved by legislators who recognized compelling links connecting sexual assault against animals and humans (*See the [June 2016 LINK-Letter](#)*).

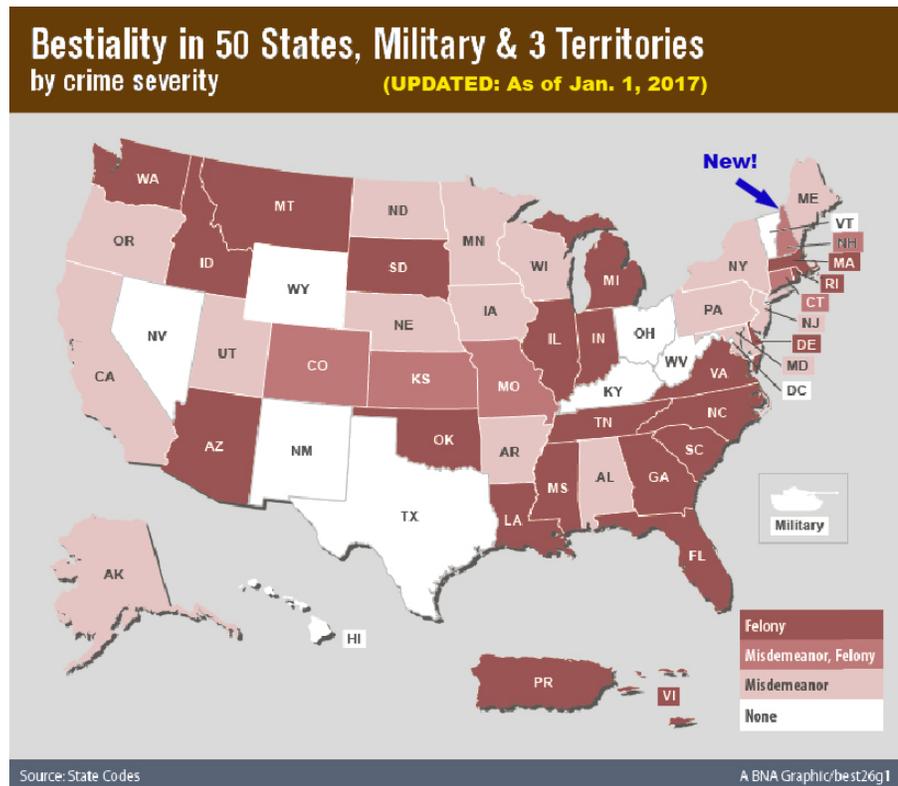
The new law will take effect Jan. 1, 2017, as a Class A misdemeanor for a first offense and Class B felony for subsequent convictions. The statute, RSA 644:8-g, is lodged among other “breaches of the peace” including transporting untethered dogs in the back of pickup trucks, interfering with police dogs and horses, regulating animal experimentation in school science classes and science fairs, and the animal cruelty statutes.

The measure bans: engaging in sexual contact or penetration with an animal for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification; offering an animal for such purposes; and photographing or filming such practices. Convicted offenders will have to register on the state’s sex offender registry and undergo psychological assessment and counseling at their own expense.

With the enactment of this law, bestiality is still legal in Hawaii, Kentucky, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Texas, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming, plus the District of Columbia. New Jersey enacted a bestiality ban in late 2015. Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have bans; U.S. military personnel do not.

“Case after case has shown that bestiality has strong ties to pedophilia and child pornography and the FBI has found high rates of sexual assault of animals in the backgrounds of many serial sexual homicide predators,” said Lindsay Hamrick, New Hampshire State Director for the Humane Society of the U.S.

HB 1547 bill was supported by the National Link Coalition ASPCA, Humane Society of the U.S., NH Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence, NH Police Chiefs Association, NH Federation of Humane Organizations, Animal Welfare Institute, and Animal Legal Defense Fund.



Ohio City Bans Animal Sexual Assault

While the State of Ohio remains one of nine states in which bestiality, or animal sexual assault, remains legal, the city of Warren has taken matters into its own hands and enacted a statute specifically making bestiality a first-degree misdemeanor. The measure passed the Warren City Council unanimously on June 22nd.



The [Youngstown Vindicator](#) reported that while council members were careful to protect the city's image by emphasizing bestiality is not a serious issue in the community, they were responding preventively following one case earlier in the month when Salvador Rendon, 61, was charged with having sex repeatedly with two boxer dogs owned by his daughter. Rendon pleaded no contest to one count of animal cruelty and was sentenced to 30 days in the Trumbull County Jail.

Link Broadcast Reaches National Audiences



John Thompson, Deputy Director of the National Sheriffs Association and a member of the National Link Coalition's Steering Committee, was interviewed about The Link for an extensive five-minute feature that was broadcast on the [Full Measure program](#) on June 12. The show is a weekly Sunday news program focusing on investigative, original and accountability reporting. *Full Measure* is broadcast to 43 million households in 79 markets on 162 Sinclair Broadcast Group stations, including ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, CW, MyTV, Univision and Telemundo affiliates.

"For years, The Link has connected animal cruelties to adult murders and to a 'Who's Who' of American Psychos," said host Sharyl Attkisson in introducing Thompson.

"I think the most important thing is that law enforcement needs to understand that if someone's abusing an animal, they're probably doing something else," Thompson told the national audience.

Other participants in the program included Mary Lou Randour of the Animal Welfare Institute. "Because you harm an animal once in your life doesn't mean you're going to become a serial killer. But research is very clear that people who engage in animal cruelty and continue to throughout their life – childhood, adolescence, and adults – commit many more serious offenses and serial killers are one example of that."

The program covered the FBI's new procedure of including animal cruelty crimes within the National Incident-Based Reporting System and the challenges of getting local law enforcement agencies to contribute to the new protocol.

Animal abuse "is an evil that hits dead center of every community," said Thompson. "And we've ignored it, the culture has slid it to the side. And those days are over now. The light is on, it's just gonna take a while for everyone to see it."

THE LINK AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE

AAHA Article Addresses The Link

Several Link authorities were cited in an American Animal Hospital Association magazine article describing how the reporting of suspected animal abuse can save the lives of pets and people. Writing in the May, 2016 issue of AAHA's *Trends* magazine, Maureen Blaney Flietner interviewed the National Link Coalition's Phil Arkow, John Thompson and Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM, in open discussions about veterinarians' need for additional training.



Phil Arkow, John Thompson and Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM

The article described AAHA's new position statement (*see the [December, 2015 LINK-Letter](#)*) calling on practitioners to report suspicions of animal abuse to appropriate authorities. The biggest stumbling block to reporting, said Smith-Blackmore, is "self doubt." Veterinarians often doubt that they have the training to know for sure that their suspicions are accurate when conversations with clients trigger suspicions of possible abuse. "When these conversations come up, so should the veterinarian's radar. If we, as professionals, are trying to answer the questions about what may really be going on, we should recognize that it is time to turn these suspicions over to an authority who can investigate."

The article also described mounting evidence linking animal abuse with interpersonal violence, tips for collecting and preserving evidence, resources for veterinarians, and how law enforcement is paying additional attention to animal abuse especially in the wake of the new FBI protocol that will list animal abuse in federal crime reports. Several case studies were also presented.

-- Flietner, M.B. (2016, May). Speak up: How the reporting of suspected animal abuse saves lives of pets and people. *Trends*, 51-56.

Mississippi State Students Raise \$6,800 for Domestic Violence Pet Support

The domestic violence pet-support program at Mississippi State University's College of Veterinary Medicine was the beneficiary of \$6,800 in donations and supplies raised by two CVM students who wanted to get involved.

Second-year students Samantha Storey and Amanda Cain learned about the Safe Haven for Pets program in a professional development course. Founded in 2009 by professor Dr. Sharon Grace (*See the [December 2013 LINK-Letter](#)*), Safe Haven has provided 38 animals more than 1,200 days of shelter for families staying at the Care Lodge domestic violence shelter in Meridian, Miss.

Cain and Storey approached Grace last fall with a plan for a holiday fundraiser. They set up collection boxes in the Animal Health Center and gained support from the dean's office, Pre-Vet Club, Alpha Psi, SCAVMA, the veterinary technology program, and the Student Cattlemen's Association.



"The massive response and excitement from people was just wonderful. We were definitely not expecting it, but we're so thankful," Storey told the college's *Pegasus Press* magazine. One hospital staff member donated 12 handmade blankets for the children who come with their mothers to Care Lodge.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Safety and Safekeeping of Pets and Livestock Described in Groundbreaking Saskatchewan Study

The Saskatchewan SPCA has released a new report called [The Link: Interpersonal Violence and Abuse and Animal Safekeeping](#). Building on earlier work done by the neighboring Alberta SPCA, the 63-page report is the result of a partnership with Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions (STOPS) to Violence and an advisory committee that included the Ministry of Justice, the Provincial Association of Transition Houses (PATHS), and the University of Regina.



The Link:
Interpersonal Violence and
Abuse and Animal Safekeeping

The study reported that the safety of both companion animals and livestock is a barrier to individuals leaving abusive situations in urban and rural areas: 37% of domestic violence agencies had been requested to provide or facilitate temporary care or safekeeping for animals. 95% of human services representatives reported that concern for the safety and safekeeping of animals impacted individuals' decision-making. 77% reportedly knew of someone who did not leave an abusive relationship due to concern for the safety and safekeeping of their animals.



The findings illustrated the need for collaboration between the human service and animal protection sectors to close gaps in services. 77% of animal welfare representatives reported no current collaborations with domestic violence agencies; 53% of human services representatives reported no partnerships with animal welfare organizations.

“We had a woman who needed our services for a couple of pets. I’ve never seen anybody who loved her animals quite like this one. She was actually fleeing the country, not just the home. So we kept her animals until they could safely leave the country. People will do anything for their pets.”

Interviews with participants reiterated findings reported elsewhere: animals are often victimized in coercive control measures; and fear of negative repercussions and options for animal care and safekeeping that are difficult to access cause individuals to delay leaving abusive situations.

Rural regions experienced additional, unique challenges, including concerns with confidentiality and people’s livelihoods being dependent upon larger animals.

“In these situations, victims will often put themselves in danger in order to ensure that their animals are being properly taken care of,” the report noted.

The information and collaborative spirit among animal welfare agencies and human service organizations gathered throughout this project has instilled hope that much can be done to ensure the safety of both humans and animals and lead to positive change within the community at large, said SSPCA officials.

The project involved questionnaire responses and semi-structured telephone interviews from 39 animal welfare and 56 human service representatives in urban and rural regions of Saskatchewan. Several important themes emerged and a list of recommendations was created:

- Develop education and training workshops on The Link for human service organizations, animal welfare agencies, and the general public.
- Establish partnerships between animal welfare agencies and human service organizations to better provide services.
- Provide information about services available for both animal welfare and human service providers in urban and rural areas.
- Train service providers in supporting individuals to plan for animal safekeeping when leaving situations of violence and abuse.
- Create a provincial registry of resources and services for animal care and safekeeping.
- Ensure that domestic violence intake processes ask whether animal abuse is occurring/has occurred within the home.
- Formulate policies among animal welfare and human service organizations to ensure a clear understanding of each sector's responsibilities. Establishing guidelines will remove ambiguity that may arise when working together.
- Generate specific and focused animal action plans for individuals leaving interpersonal violence in urban and rural regions of Saskatchewan.

“I know a goldfish isn’t the most high up on someone’s priority, but at the same time, for some of the kids that have come into the shelter, that little goldfish is their world.”

Colorado Study Details Risks to Children in Animal Abuse/Domestic Violence Scenarios

The long-awaited [final report](#) from the five-year Colorado study on the impact of animal abuse and domestic violence on children has been published, establishing distinctive patterns in how animal abuse is coercive control and how children often repeat the cycles of violence against animals or intervene proactively to protect their pets. The study acknowledges that children may be at greater risk when domestic violence perpetrators also engage in animal abuse (*See the [December 2015 LINK-Letter](#)*).



The project was funded by grants from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the ASPCA through the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work. Teams interviewed 291 pet-owning mothers and their children at 22 domestic violence shelters and programs in Colorado, and then conducted follow-up interviews 18 months later with 180 of the mother/child pairs. The high percentage of Hispanic participants enabled researchers to extract data differentiating Latino U.S.-born from Mexico-born partners, further elucidating Link research in minority communities.

Among the findings:

- 32% of families left their pets with family or friends, but 35% were forced to leave their animals at home or with their abuser. Only 5% of pets were with the family in the shelter.
- 30% of the women reported their partner threatened the animals; 26% reported the animals were harmed or killed. 10% said their child had harmed an animal. 26% said a child had witnessed harm to an animal.

- 84% of the women whose animals were harmed said they were very close to their pets and relied on them as a source of comfort and friendship.
- 17% of the children said someone (usually the mother’s partner) threatened an animal. 23% said the partner tried to hurt the animal on purpose. 21% of the children saw the pet get hurt or killed.
- 95% of the children who witnessed animals being harmed said they were upset by the incident.
- Children were more than twice as likely to harm an animal when the mother’s partner had harmed an animal.
- Of the children who harmed an animal, 69% felt sorry for it. Harmed animals included mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, worms, and insects.
- Children who were exposed to animal abuse were 5 times more likely to have “severe problems” and 3 times more likely to be “struggling” versus their more resilient peers.
- Physical violence against mothers was higher when partners had threatened – but not harmed – their pets.

“I would always hide my cat when my dad was drinking because I did not want [my dad] to hurt him. I would hide him in my closet with stuffed animals.”

The study also presented recommendations for advocates including:

- As a standard practice on all intake calls and interviews, after asking about children also ask whether she has any animals and whether they have been hurt or threatened.
- Help children and mothers to process any sadness or guilt regarding animal abuse or having to leave a pet.
- Teach families how to include pets in their safety planning, such as: identifying family or friends who can care for the pets; documenting all ownership records in her name; including pets in protection-from-abuse orders; and keeping pet supplies, food, toys and medications in the emergency “go” bag.

“That day that my dad said he would burn my dog on the grill, I took him into my room and locked [my dog] in the closet with food and water until the next day.”

Survivors Tell Their Stories

Individual stories about how animals become pawns in the power-and-control battles that mark domestic violence are often even more compelling than the statistics. The *Guardian* (formerly known as the famed *Manchester Guardian*) in the United Kingdom has a U.S. bureau that posted an online article on June 16, describing two case studies from New York City’s Urban Resource Institute’s PALS pet sheltering program. “‘My dog is family’: Domestic abuse victims and the pets they can’t leave” describes how when abuse causes the breakup of a home, it’s not just the people who suffer. The article is available [here](#).

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CHILD MALTREATMENT

Connecticut Supreme Court Upholds Use of Dog in Child Abuse Case



A second state has upheld the right of victims of child sexual abuse to be accompanied by a dog while testifying. On June 14th, the Connecticut Supreme Court affirmed an earlier trial court ruling that the presence of the comfort dog did not unfairly prejudice the jury or deny the defendant his due process.

After a jury trial, Devon D. was convicted on 11 counts of sexual assault and risk of injury to three of his children. He appealed the verdicts, claiming that the three cases should not have been tried jointly and that one of his children should not have been permitted to testify with a dog at her feet for comfort and support. The Connecticut Appellate Court agreed

with him and reversed the guilty verdicts and remanded the cases for new trials.

However, the state appealed on grounds that there were sufficient precedents for trying the cases together. The state also challenged the Appellate Court's conclusion regarding the dog, arguing that the trial court properly exercised its discretion by balancing the dog's presence as helping the child to provide complete and reliable testimony against the possibility of prejudice to the defendant.

David Meyers, a licensed clinical social worker, testified that the dog, named "Summer," would sit near the child during her testimony and would decrease the child's level of anxiety. Devon D.'s attorney objected, claiming Summer's presence would improperly influence the jury by making it appear the child was someone with whom they should sympathize, and suggested that alternative procedures – such as having the child testify via closed-circuit TV or holding a teddy bear – would be more appropriate.

The trial court let the girl testify with Summer present, stating that it "should allow all reasonable tools to make the courtroom a place of comfort and reliability for any witness, but especially a child witness, who, it is alleged, has faced child sexual abuse."

Although the Appellate Court ruled that the trial court had overstepped its rights of discretion, the Supreme Court agreed with the original trial court. Although Connecticut statutes do not specifically authorize the use of dogs in courtrooms, the Supreme Court concluded that trial courts have inherent discretionary authority to order special procedures or accommodations to assist a witness in testifying.

"We conclude that the pivotal question is not whether the special procedure is necessary but whether it will aid the witness in testifying truthfully and reliably. We further conclude that the record in the present case demonstrates that the trial court expressly found that Summer would help [the child] to testify more reliably and completely and that Summer's presence would not violate the defendant's right to a fair trial," the Supreme Court ruled. "Finally, the record indicates that the trial court took extensive measures to ensure that the jurors never saw Summer."

The Connecticut verdict follows a recent similar situation in Michigan ([see the May 2016 LINK-Letter](#)), where the Michigan Appeals Court ruled that the presence of a dog did not adversely prejudice the jury in convicting a man of sexually abusing his niece.

Connecticut Cross-Reporting Program Gains Momentum

The pioneering protocol enacted in Connecticut (See the [February 2016 LINK-Letter](#)) where the Departments of Agriculture and Children & Families cross-report to each other took another step forward on June 20th when 110 animal control, child welfare, domestic violence, and health care providers convened for a day-long training on “Understanding The Link.”

Speakers included National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow, DCF Commissioner Joette Katz, State Rep. Diana Urban, Chief Animal Control officer Ray Connors, DCF officials Tim Monahan and Dakibu Muley, and Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence CEO Karen Jarmoc. The training was sponsored by the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center’s Injury Prevention Center.



State Rep. Diana Urban (left) and DCF Commissioner Joette Katz have been working closely together to implement Connecticut’s cross-reporting protocols.

“Child and animal protection organizations have recognized the intersection, noting that abuse of both children and animals is connected in a self-perpetuating cycle of violence,” said Katz. “Children who witness animal abuse are at a greater risk of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and trauma.

“In Connecticut, child protective services, animal control and law enforcement agencies are sharing resources and expertise through cross-training to address violence. It’s important to have this cross-section of participants as it takes all of us to address this critical issue,” she added.

“By learning and working together, we can better our response to children and families impacted by violence so that Connecticut’s young people can grow up in an environment that is free from violence and its devastating impact.”

Monahan, Program Manager for DCF’s Academy for Workforce Development, reiterated the emphasis on interagency collaboration. “Our mission statement at DCF is around partnerships to keep kids safe,” he said, in reviewing for the animal control officers the procedures of what and how to report suspected child maltreatment to the DCF 24/7 Careline.

“You don’t have to be sure that a child is being abused or mistreated,” he said. “The threshold is just suspicion.”

Muley echoed the importance of such reports, noting that the Careline receives over 90,000 calls a year, 29,000 of which are referred for further investigation. “It is important in the data-rich environment that we all live in that we share information,” he said.

In 2015, animal control officers reported 87 suspicions of child maltreatment. 38 of these addresses (43.6%) were already known to DCF; 9 (10.3%) were cases already under DCF investigation and 8 (9.1%) resulted in new investigations being started.

Connors invited DCF personnel to be continually on the lookout for suspected animal abuse and report it according to the protocol. “You’re an extra set of eyes for us,” he said. “Look around the house. Tell us about cases we might be interested in.”



THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONNECTION

Connecticut’s animal control officers were also encouraged to make contact with the domestic violence agencies serving their towns and coordinate with them when animals are victims of family violence as well. **DCF’s Tim Monahan described reporting procedures for the ACOs**

“I want to underscore how important it is to have a working relationship,” Jarmoc told the participants. “These relationships are happening more often and the outcomes for people and pets are better and meaningful.”

Each town in the state is served by one of 18 domestic violence agencies that must meet 83 performance standards, one of which is responsiveness to animal abuse issues. “This is a high priority on our list,” she said.

These member programs respond to 41,000 victims a year; 30,000 people are arrested. Shelters are currently operating at 114% capacity. Families are staying in shelter longer with greater difficulty in finding long-term transition housing options.

One response is the Companions in Crisis program ([See the February 2014 LINK-Letter](#)), a unique Memorandum of Understanding between CCADV and the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Foundation to provide free temporary shelter for the pets of domestic violence survivors by local veterinarians.



CCADV members complete a Universal Intake form that assesses whether pets are part of the family and if their safety is a concern. If so, advocates discuss options with the caller including safety planning and the Companions in Crisis program. If the caller agrees to put the animals in the program, she is advised that she will not have direct physical access to them for the duration of the temporary care in the interests of safety for all involved. Advocates will assist with transportation arrangements on behalf of the victim.

Services and access to the program are victim-defined and trauma-informed, Jarmoc said. Participation is completely voluntary and is not conditional for accessing the domestic violence shelter. Should the victim choose not to participate, the member program must still discuss options, provide suitable services, review safety planning, and assist the victim in identifying a transition plan if applicable.

“A key element to the success of all this is the relationship-building,” she told the animal control and child protection personnel in attendance.

Three Webinars Describe Impact of Animal Abuse on Children

Lisa Lunghofer, Human-Animal Programs Director for the Animals & Society Institute, produced a series of three webinars over the past few months about the impact of animal abuse on children. The webinars addressed “Animal Abuse and Children: An Important Risk Factor”; “Assessing Children’s Relationships with Animals”; and “Intervening with Children Who Witnessed or Engaged in Animal Abuse.” The webinars are free and [available online](#).



Lisa Lunghofer

Abused Dog the Guest of Honor at Children’s Advocacy Center



U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon) took time out from Congress to attend a celebration of Earl the Dog, a canine who had been badly abused in Eugene, Ore. and now helps out at [Kids FIRST](#), Eugene’s Children’s Advocacy Center. Earl had been badly beaten and was brought in life-threatening condition to the veterinary hospital of Ingrid Kessler (at right), who also serves as the Center’s Board President. With aggressive care, Earl recovered and the Center held an Open House in late June to accommodate the many people who wanted to meet the resilient pooch. Kessler tells *The LINK-Letter* that the Open House offered tours of the facility to let the community know about its intervention and advocacy programs focusing on child abuse and witnessing domestic violence. “It’s a great way for us to broach the subject of child abuse in a palatable way,” she says. One-third of all interviews

conducted at the Center involve a child who also witnessed domestic violence.

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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

BUILDING AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK

“Animal Advocacy Day” at the NY State Assembly Considers The Link



Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis joins Assemblyman Matthew Titone and his dog Bari, a trained therapy dog.

Citing studies that “those who abuse animals are proven to be more likely to commit acts of domestic violence,” state legislators in Albany, N.Y. met with advocates and their pets in early June on the state’s 6th annual Animal Advocacy Day and worked to enact several key Link-themed bills.

“Kirby and Quigley’s Law” (**A 1596/S2936**), named for two dogs brutally murdered during a home break-in last February, would expand the definition of Aggravated Cruelty to Animals to include harm to a companion animal during the commission of another felony. [The Legislative Gazette](#) reported that the dogs’ owner, Denise Krohn, of Florida, N.Y., has been holding vigils in the Assembly chamber.

Felony-level Aggravated Cruelty to Animals has existed in New York State only since 1997 when “Buster’s Law,” named for a Schenectady cat that was doused with kerosene and burned to death, was enacted. The *Legislative Gazette* reported that the perpetrator of that crime was subsequently imprisoned for various crimes including attempted rape, sexual abuse and unlawful imprisonment of a 12-year-old girl.

In honor of Animal Advocacy Day, the Senate passed several bipartisan Link-themed bills on June 7 including:

- **S2935/A2484**, which would establish a statewide registry of persons convicted of animal abuse, similar to registries of sex offenders.
- **S7394/A10661**, which would extend protections offered to the pets of domestic violence survivors by giving courts discretion to forbid contact between the abuser and any pet that is cared for by the survivor.
- **S1795**, which would make it a misdemeanor to allow a minor under the age of 16 to witness or attend an animal fighting event.

European Animal Rights Movement Addresses The Link

The “Occupy” movement, which captivated activists several years ago, has moved into the realm of animal rights with the development of a Luxembourg-based website, Occupy for Animals. Amid an extensive array of dozens of pages dedicated to such issues as vegan eating, factory farm conditions, issues affecting working animals and wildlife trafficking, one lengthy page, [“Hurt an Animal – Hurt a Child.”](#) depicts the impact of animal abuse upon children.

TRIGGER WARNING: the page contains extremely graphic photos and videos.



National Link Coalition Convenes Summit

Every two years, the National Link Coalition steering committee gets together face-to-face to review our progress, plan our future, and learn from the field about exciting new trends. The 2016 Summit, held in Minneapolis at the National Sheriffs Association convention, featured rapid-fire presentations that inspire us about new developments. Our sincere thanks go out to all who made the Summit a success!

Ann Olson described how the Animal Folks of Minnesota reporting manual is encouraging veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse. Several other states are considering adopting the manual and modifying it for their own practitioners.



Rita Smith described the National Football League's concerted effort to educate officials and 32 teams about domestic violence and sexual assault. "The NFL has the capacity to change the culture in this country," she said.



Nuria Querol described efforts in Spain to get animal abuse more widely recognized as a crime through criminological studies and greater enforcement. The VioPet program of pet safety programs for domestic violence survivors improves victims' resilience.



Mark Kumpf described the challenges of implementing four types of animal cruelty as reportable crimes in the FBI's NIBRS database. "Once there's enough data in the system to be able to make correlations between animal abuse and other crimes, this will be what makes people go 'ooh' and 'aah,'" he said.



Martha Smith-Blackmore described how increasing demand for forensic support in animal cruelty investigations, and juries' routinely expecting more CSI-type information, are fueling greater law enforcement interest in animal sexual assault prosecutions.



Pam Schreiner described the University of Minnesota's CENSHARE program – the Center to Study Human-Animal Relationships and Environments – and how statistical analysis can clarify the effects of human-animal interactions.



Paula Frakes described equine-facilitated learning as a means to combat caregiver fatigue. In an age of "Nature-Deficit Disorder" in a technology-based society, all populations are experiencing a deprivation of nature-based activities.



Howard Lawrence described how a partnership of animal care and control, law enforcement, emergency and municipal services agencies, and the media facilitated the ASPCA's turning New York City's animal cruelty enforcement over to the NYPD.



THE LINK IN THE LITERATURE

Co-Occurring Histories of Animal Cruelty and Interpersonal Violence Reviewed

Working from a subsample obtained from the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit III — Crimes Against Children, the criminal histories of 150 adult men arrested for physically abusing, sexually assaulting, or neglecting animals between 2004 and 2009 were reviewed. Findings included:

- 144 of the 150 offenders (96%) had other criminal charges prior to and/or within six years after the animal cruelty arrest. 41% were arrested for interpersonal violence and 18% were arrested for a sex offense such as rape or child molestation.
- Assault was the most common crime in the offenders' criminal histories.
- 38% of the animal cruelty offenders were intoxicated at the time of the offense.
- Common motivations for animal cruelty included perceived misbehavior (e.g., toileting accidents) and attempted retaliation against the animal or a person.
- In the majority of cases, the animals were victimized by their owners or their owner's current or former intimate partner, suggesting a family violence dynamic

Significant relationships were discovered between active animal cruelty (such as beating or stabbing) and both interpersonal violence and substance abuse as well as between sexually abusing animals and sexual offending against humans. The authors noted that results point to the need for increased collaboration between animal welfare agencies and social service and legal entities responsible for protecting domestic violence victims, children, elders, and other at-risk groups.

-- Levitt, L., Hoffer, T.A., & Loper, A.B. (2016, in press). *Criminal histories of a subsample of animal cruelty offenders. Aggression and Violent Behavior. Available online.*

Societal Cycles of Violence Impact Individual and Family Links

Malcolm Plant's ongoing studies (*See the [April 2013 LINK-Letter](#)*) comparing prevalence of animal abuse in Romania and Germany, and the impact on youth of eradication programs that kill stray dogs in public view, are featured in this new article. The current studies investigated the ramifications of an environment where the national culture creates an ethos of socially acceptable animal abuse. Animal abuse was negatively associated with affective empathy and national culture; more frequent animal abuse was found in Romania. Affective empathy fully mediated the association between gender and animal abuse. Girls were found to be higher in affective empathy, and participants who were higher in affective empathy committed less animal abuse. Witnessing animal abuse was also predictive of engaging in animal abuse, but not independent of national culture. In Romania, rural adolescents were more likely to abuse animals and have higher exposure to domestic violence than their urban counterparts, which in turn was associated with more animal abuse. These findings support the notion that socially accepted mistreatment of animals at a societal level can spill over into the increased abuse of animals by individuals. The authors conclude that societal cycles of abuse impact familial cycles and that legalized aggression influences young people's development of relevant cognitive structures and consequent aggressive behaviors.

-- Plant, M., van Schaik, P., Gullone, E., & Flynn, C. (2016, in press). "It's a dog's life": Culture, empathy, gender, and domestic violence predict animal abuse in adolescents – Implications for societal health. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. DOI: 10.1177/0886260516659655

Childhood Animal Cruelty and Bestiality Linked with Adult Crimes

Since the 1960s, when the psychiatric community first took notice of childhood animal cruelty as a potential risk factor for violent acts against humans, there has been increasing evidence that children who engage in animal cruelty may be at increased risk of interpersonal offenses in adulthood. Less is known about the potential risk that children and adults who engage in bestiality may pose for interpersonal sexual or nonsexual violent acts. The authors: reviewed the legal status of animal cruelty in the U.S.; summarized the history of psychiatric interest in and research of animal cruelty; described current knowledge regarding the link between animal cruelty and violence; and proposed a novel classification scheme for individuals who engage in bestiality. This approach can assist forensic psychiatric examiners in determining the risk that such behavior poses for future interpersonal offending.

-- Holoyda, B.J., & Newman, W.J. (2016). Childhood animal cruelty, bestiality, and the link to adult interpersonal violence. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 47, 129-135.

Honors Thesis Examines the Domestic Violence/Animal Abuse Link

This paper explores research on the relationship between cycles of domestic violence and animal cruelty. It not only depicts an under-acknowledged relationship between the two subjects, but also considers this relationship from multiple perspectives. This paper summarizes what constitutes animal cruelty and domestic violence, what causes people to treat other people and animals in this manner, and who are more likely to be perpetrators of abuse and also victims of domestic violence. Additionally, this paper reflects on policy implications of existing research in terms of laws and services already in place and what more can be done. Finally, this paper presents resources for those who wish to make a difference regarding cruelty towards people and animals.

-- Staley, L. (2016). A vicious cycle of abuse: The relationship between domestic violence and animal cruelty. The College at Brockport: State University of New York Senior Honors Theses. [Paper 127](#).

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

Three Prominent Leaders Named to Steering Committee

The National Link Coalition is proud to announce that three individuals who are respected leaders in their fields have joined our multi-disciplinary Steering Committee. Their presence will help expand the Link's outreach to new professional audiences and provide us with valuable input and insights from their areas of expertise.



Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM, of Boston, Mass., is a veterinarian and an adjunct professor at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine and a Fellow of the Center for Animals and Public Policy at Tufts University. She is President of a private veterinary forensics consulting firm, [Forensic Veterinary Investigations, LLC](#).

Martha was recently appointed to the International Association of Chiefs of Police's Forensic Science Committee, and she is an associate member of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. She is a founding Board Member of the International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association.

She is the past-chair of the Animal Welfare Committee of the American Veterinary Medical Association and past president of the Association of Shelter Veterinarians. She is an author and editor of the *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters* and frequently consults on animal cruelty cases around the country.

Gale E. Rasin, J.D., of Chestertown, Md., retired from the Baltimore City Circuit Court, 8th Judicial Circuit after 17 years on the bench where she presided over civil, criminal and family dockets. She initiated the Mental Health Case Management Docket, and continues to preside over it as a retired judge. Judge Rasin currently has a private practice in alternative dispute resolution.



Prior to serving on the Circuit Court, Judge Rasin sat on the District Court for Baltimore City for 12 years. She has also served as Director of the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit of the Office of the Attorney General of Maryland, where she investigated medical providers for fraud as well as abuse of vulnerable adults. Judge Rasin also prosecuted fraud and criminal tax matters as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland and served as an Assistant State's Attorney for Anne Arundel County.

Judge Rasin was graduated from Duke University (magna cum laude) and Georgetown University Law Center. She has taught as an adjunct professor at the University of Baltimore Law School and in the MBA program at Johns Hopkins University.



Cym Doggett, LCSW, is the Project Director for the [Southern Regional Children's Advocacy Center](#), a project of the National Children's Advocacy Center. She is responsible for overseeing training and technical assistance for multidisciplinary teams and children's advocacy centers in 16 states in the Southeast working to provide a collaborative, coordinated response to child abuse.

Since joining the NCAC in 2005, she has conducted trainings and provided oversight and technical assistance for over 20,000 professionals. She specializes in multidisciplinary team training, CAC development, strategic planning, board development, and child protective services.

She previously served as the director of the Department of Human Resources in Madison, Clarke and Choctaw counties in Alabama, where she was responsible for child and adult protective services, foster care, adoptions, day care, child support, food stamps, and other benefit programs.

Cym received her MSW from the University of Alabama and also completed the Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTIONS FOR TRAUMA VICTIMS

Ranch Therapy Helps Teen ACES Survivors

Winston Churchill once said, “The outside of a horse is good for the inside of a man.” And as the popular song says, seldom is heard a discouraging word when you’re home on the range.

Both maxims appear to be the case at Home on the Range, a 1600-acre working cattle ranch and residential treatment center in Sentinel Butte, N. Dak., where animal-assisted interventions are making a huge difference for teens who scored high for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES).



The trauma-informed and resilience-building practices at Home on the Range are based on the finding of ACES, the groundbreaking long-term study by the CDC of 17,000 individuals, that childhood trauma is linked to adult onset of chronic disease, mental illness, violence, and being a victim of violence. Higher ACES scores increase an individual’s risk of chronic disease, mental illness, attempted suicide, substance abuse, heart disease, cancer, and up to a 20-year shorter lifespan.



The ACES study measured 10 types of childhood toxic stress, but neglected to include witnessing or perpetration of animal cruelty (See the [November-December 2014 LINK-Letter](#)).

The 48 teens at Home on the Range, who have committed crimes, been referred by the courts, or who have suffered abuse at home, are learning empathy and resilience by working with the 80 head of cattle and 17 horses on the ranch. They help with farm chores and animal care, tag and bottle-feed calves, and help administer shots as part of a goal of helping them attain greater autonomy and independence.

“It’s a lot safer for the kid to open up with animals because a horse isn’t going to be judgmental,” Laura Feldmann, a clinical social worker who is certified in animal-assisted social work, told the [ACES Too High](#) newsletter. “Horses are going to give you honest feedback.”

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Bills We’re Watching... and Laws We’re Celebrating:

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



H.R. 1258 – the Pet And Women Safety (PAWS) Act – was re-introduced with a new number and 190 bi-partisan co-sponsors. The bill 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. The bill has been assigned to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations. A companion measure in the Senate – **S. 1559** – with 26 co-sponsors has been referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.



Alaska HB 147 would allow victims to petition the court for a protective order that the abuser may not remove, harm or dispose of any animals in the household, and to grant her exclusive care and custody of them. Peace officers investigating domestic violence cases must inform victims of this provision. The bill would also declare pets to be marital property and give courts authority to decide individual or joint custody when people divorce, with consideration of what would be best for the animal. It would also define an act of animal abuse in this context as domestic violence. The measure has cleared both houses and is awaiting transmittal to the Governor's office.



Indiana SB 343 would have allowed courts to grant a protection orders to: (1) grant possession and care of an animal to a petitioner; (2) prohibit a respondent from taking action against the animal; and (3) direct a law enforcement officer to accompany the petitioner to retrieve the animal. The bill was in the Judiciary Committee when the General Assembly adjourned.



Michigan SB 28 would make it a crime to knowingly kill, torture, mutilate, maim, disfigure, or poison an animal, or threaten to do so, with the intent of causing mental suffering or distress to a person or to exert control over a person. The bill passed the Judiciary Committee and is in the Committee of the Whole.



Michigan HB 4478 allows courts to issue protection-from-abuse orders preventing respondents from injuring, torturing, neglecting, threatening, or removing the petitioner's animals. It applies to current or former spouses; individuals with whom the petitioner has a child in common or where there has been a dating relationship; or an individual presently or formerly residing in the same household. The bill was signed by Gov. Rick Snyder on May 3.



New Mexico S 55 would have appropriated \$500,000 to the Children, Youth & Families Department to enhance the system of providing temporary care and housing for animals belonging to victims of family violence. In 2015 the Legislature enacted a statute appropriating \$300,000, to be paid in six annual installments of \$50,000 each. The bill was approved by the Public Affairs Committee and was been sent to the Finance Committee, where it was postponed indefinitely.



New York S7394/A10661 would extend protections offered to the pets of domestic violence survivors by giving courts discretion to forbid contact between the abuser and any pet that is cared for by the survivor. **S7394** passed the Senate on June 7 and was referred to the Assembly Judiciary Committee.



Pennsylvania SB 594 would increase penalties for killing, torturing, maiming or poisoning an animal belonging to someone who is protected by a protection-from-abuse order to a \$2,000 - \$15,000 fine and/or two years' imprisonment. The bill was approved by the Senate and is in the House Judiciary Committee.



Wisconsin SB 97 was signed into law on March 1 by Gov. Scott Walker. Judges or circuit court commissioners issuing temporary restraining orders or injunctions not only in domestic violence cases but also in child abuse, individual-at-risk and harassment situations may order the respondent not to remove, hide, damage, harm, mistreat, or dispose of a household pet. Petitioners or family members acting on their behalf may retrieve a household pet.

Animal Abuse in the Presence of a Child



Idaho HB399 would make the torture of a companion animal in the presence of a minor a felony. The bill is in the House Ways & Means Committee.



Massachusetts H3446 would criminalize animal abuse in the presence of a child under age 14 and would increase penalties for such cruelty to up to 10 years in prison and/or a \$10,000 fine. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



Michigan H5680 would make it a misdemeanor, punishable by a \$500 fine and 100 hours of community service, to inflict cruel treatment on a companion animal in the presence of a child. The bill is in the Criminal Justice committee.



New York A534 defines “aggravated” animal cruelty as causing extreme physical pain or done in an especially depraved or sadistic manner, a Class E felony. It would make the commission of aggravated cruelty in the presence of a child a Class D felony. The bill is in the Codes Committee.



New York A944 and **S1795** would criminalize knowingly causing a minor to attend a place where exhibition of animal fighting is being conducted. **A944** is in the Codes Committee. **S1795** passed the Senate on June 7 and was referred to the Assembly Codes Committee.

“CASA for Animals”



Connecticut HB 5344 will allow courts, effective Oct. 1, 2016, to appoint attorneys or law school students as advocates for any animals involved in prosecutions concerning custody of the animals or their welfare.



Massachusetts SB 851 would authorize actions to recover non-economic damages for the injury or death of companion animals and authorize a guardian ad litem to recover damages. The Joint Committee on the Judiciary approved the bill on April 4 and referred it to the Joint Rules Committee for further study.



New York A3443 would authorize a guardian ad litem to be appointed by a court in tort causes of action for wrongful injury or death of a companion animal. It would also allow restraining orders and other injunctive relief for the wrongful injury or killing of a companion animal. The bill has been referred to the Rules Committee.

Interventions for Animal Abuse Offenders



New York A1445 and **S1174** would increase penalties for animal fighting and aggravated cruelty to animals and would require a psychiatric evaluation for defendants convicted of aggravated cruelty. The bills are being held for consideration in the Agriculture Committees.



New York A1673 and **S814** would require unsealing of court records that juvenile offenders convicted of animal cruelty offenses and require them to undergo psychiatric evaluation and treatment where necessary. The bills are being held for consideration in the Agriculture Committees.

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



California HR28 encourages the Superintendent of Public Instruction to ensure the incorporation of humane education in the core curriculum in order to disrupt the cycle of human and animal abuse by decreasing a child's potential to be abusive or neglectful. The measure resolves that compliance with Education Code provisions should include educating students on the principles of kindness and respect for animals and observance of laws, regulations, and policies pertaining to the humane treatment of animals. The Resolution was adopted by the Assembly on May 2.



California SB 1200 would initially would have required the standards for the selection and training of law enforcement and probation officers to include a requirement for training on domestic violence and the nexus between animal cruelty and violence against persons, has been amended. The amended bill only requires law enforcement agencies to include arrests for animal cruelty in their annual reports to the Governor. The amended bill was approved 39-0 by the Senate on June 2 and was sent to the Assembly.



Florida S314 and **HB129** would have amended juvenile justice provisions to allow prosecutors to charge juveniles between the ages of 16 and 18 as adults for committing any of 17 crimes including aggravated animal cruelty by intentional acts. Prosecutors would have been required to gather considerable data regarding the children, including any histories of abuse or neglect. **S314** passed the Senate by a vote of 40-0 but died in the House. **HB 129** died in the House Justice Appropriations Committee.



Michigan HB 4353 would allow animal shelters to consider an individual's criminal history when determining whether or not to allow that individual to adopt an animal. Convicted animal abusers could not adopt for at least 5 years following conviction. The bill is passed the Judiciary Committee and is in the Committee of the Whole. **Senate Bill 219** would prohibit offenders convicted of animal fighting or bestiality from owning animals other than livestock for 5 years. The bill cleared the Senate by a 37-1 vote on Jan. 28 and is now in the House Judiciary Committee.



New York A346 and **S6919** would create a statewide task force to study how to improve investigations of animal abuse and enforcement of anti-cruelty laws. The bills are in the Agriculture Committees.



New York A1596 and **S2936** would expand the definition of aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to animals during the commission of a felony. **A1596** is being held for consideration in the Codes Committee. **S2936** passed the Senate on March 7 and was sent to the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



The **Oregon** Veterinary Medical Examination Board has proposed Rule No. [875-030-1101](#) which would provide for a screening of applicants and licensees to determine if they have a history of criminal behavior that would preclude their fitness to practice as a veterinarian or certified veterinary technician.

Animal Hoarding



New York A1265 would create the crime of companion animal hoarding. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

Animal-Assisted Therapeutic Interventions for Abuse Victims



Connecticut Raised Bill No. 5140 would allow volunteer teams of therapy animals and their registered handlers, with whom a child victim of assault, sexual assault or child abuse feels comfortable, to be present during courtroom testimony. The bill was approved by the Joint Committee on Children and the House Committee on Judiciary but was tabled on April 6 by the House.

Cross Reporting



Georgia HB 892 would clarify that a veterinarian can report suspect animal cruelty without violating confidentiality requirements. The bill was in the Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee when the Legislature adjourned.



Kansas HB 2451 would have added animal control officers to the list of other professionals who are mandated reporters of child abuse, with immunity from civil liability for good-faith reporting. The bill was in the House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice when the legislature adjourned.



Kentucky HB 269 would have amended the veterinarian-client-patient relationship provisions to allow veterinarians to provide information without the owner's consent to public health, animal welfare, wildlife, or agriculture authorities employed by federal, state or local government agencies who have a legal or regulatory interest in the protection of animal or public health, with immunity from liability. The measure passed the House Agriculture & Small Business Committee and the Rules Committee and was approved by the House 67-30. The bill was in the Senate Agriculture Committee when the legislative session ended.



Maryland SB 722 and **HB 1586** would have required a veterinarian who has reason to believe that an animal has been subjected to abuse or neglect to make a specified report. **SB 722** received an unfavorable report from the Senate Judicial proceedings Committee. **HB 1586** was in the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee when the legislature adjourned.



Massachusetts S863 and **H132** would add domestic violence workers, animal control officers and humane officers to the list of mandated reporters of child abuse. **S863** was approved on April 4 by the Joint Judiciary Committee and was referred to the Joint Rules Committee for further study. **H132** was approved by the Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities and by the House Steering, Policy and Scheduling Committee and was ordered on June 2 to a third reading.



New York A5082 would require anyone mandated to report suspected child abuse who also encounters suspected animal abuse in the course of their duties to make an immediate report to local police or SPCA agencies. Failure to report would be a Class A misdemeanor and civilly liable. An extensive list of medical, social work, therapy, education, camp, day care, counseling and law enforcement professionals are mandated reporters of child abuse. The bill is in the Social Services Committee.



New York's S6659 and **A9346** would change language regarding reporting of suspected animal abuse from "the veterinarian may report" to the appropriate law-enforcement agency to "shall report." The bills are in the Higher Education Committee.

 **Pennsylvania HB 760** would protect veterinarians, certified veterinary technicians and assistants from civil liability if they report suspected cases of animal abuse in good faith to law enforcement authorities. The bill passed the House on Sept. 29 and is currently in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



 **Virginia HB802** expands the definition of those who are granted immunity from civil or criminal liability or administrative sanction for reporting, in good faith, suspected animal cruelty from “veterinarian” to “any person regulated by the Board of Veterinary Medicine,” thereby including veterinary technicians. The bill passed the House and Senate and **was signed into law on March 1.**

 **Wisconsin SB 727** would have expanded the reporting requirement to apply to a violation of any animal cruelty law; a veterinarian making a report of animal mistreatment in good faith would be immune from civil liability. (Current Wisconsin law requires a veterinarian to report to a humane officer or law enforcement officer only when the veterinarian has reason to believe that an animal has been in a fight in violation of the law relating to animal fighting.) The bill was in the Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety when the legislative session ended.

Animal Sexual Assault

 **Michigan SB 219**, which amends several sections of the state penal code regarding animal cruelty crimes, adds a provision that anyone convicted of animal sexual abuse (called “the abominable and detestable crime against nature” in the bill) is not only guilty of a felony but shall be prohibited from owning or possessing an animal for five years. The prohibition appears to also apply to persons convicted of anal sex with a human being. The bill cleared the Senate by a 37-1 vote on Jan. 28 and is now in the House Judiciary Committee.



 **New Hampshire HB 1547** establishes the crime of bestiality as a Class A misdemeanor for a first offense and a Class B felony for subsequent offenses. Convicted offenders will be required to submit to psychological assessment and counseling at their own expense. The bill was signed in to law in June.

 **Ohio SB 195** would prohibit a person from engaging in sexual conduct with an animal, and related acts. It would provide for the seizure of the animals involved and authorize the sentencing court to require offenders to undergo psychological evaluation or counseling. The bill is in the Criminal Justice Committee.



 **Oklahoma HB2398**, the “Justice for J.W. Act,” would increase the maximum sentence for a person who forces another person to engage in “the detestable and abominable crime against nature” committed “with mankind or with a beast” from the current 10 years to 20 years. The bill passed the House and the Senate and was signed into law on May 6 by Gov. Mary Fallin.

 **Canada C-246** would amend the Criminal Code to not require penetration in the definition of bestiality. It would also address offenses regarding gross negligence, animal fighting, and brutal and vicious killing of animals, and institute a lifetime ban on animal ownership upon a second conviction for animal cruelty.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS



Son Charged with Elder Abuse, Animal Cruelty

Animal rescue group volunteers reportedly vomited when they approached a dangerously filthy house in Wagoner County, Okla., where an elderly man was found living with 30 animals but unable to care for himself. Police charged Michael Dean Sloan, 58, with animal cruelty and elder abuse for leaving his 79-year-old father, Robert Sloan, to live alone in the house for over

a year while he and his daughter moved to a hotel and collected a settlement check. "There was feces on the wall, the furniture, there's cockroaches and bugs everywhere, maggots everywhere," a Wagoner Animal Guardian Society official told [KOTV](#). "It's a horror story." The elder Sloan was taken to a nursing home by Oklahoma adult protective services.

Elder Abuse Tip Leads to Child and Animal Abuse Charges

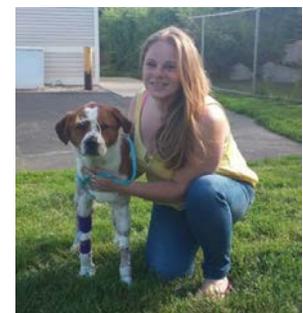
Authorities conducting a welfare check after receiving a tip about a vulnerable elderly woman instead wound up charging her grandson and his wife with two counts of child abuse and 24 counts of animal cruelty. Philip Daniel Heatley, 23, and Courtney Lynn Heatley, 22 of Berkeley, S. Car., were charged after the woman, who was in her mid-80s and found to be in no apparent danger, told deputies that there was a dead dog in her shed. Authorities discovered the carcasses of a dog, ducks, chickens, a goat, a pony, rabbits, and several other unidentified animals, [WBTW-TV](#) reported. The Heatleys and their two children, aged 8 months and 5 years old, were found living in deplorable conditions in a small camper on the property. Both children were placed into emergency protective custody. Philip Healey was also charged with game violations.



Philip and Courtney Lynn Heatley

Man Charged with Beating Dog While Forcing Girlfriend to Watch

Police in Carver, Mass. arrested Matthew Devaney, 29, on charges of assault, kidnapping and animal cruelty for allegedly tying up his girlfriend for several hours and forcing her to watch as he brutally beat her dog. "Cooper," a 3-year-old spaniel mix, was reportedly undergoing extensive medical treatment and a GoFundMe page had raised thousands of dollars to help pay for Cooper's recuperation.



"Right now his life is at stake," Cooper's unidentified owner told [NECN news](#). "His kidneys were badly damaged. He has bruising all over his body, possible liver laceration, there's blood in his abdomen. I'm devastated. That's, like, my child. I feel incredibly guilty that this happened to him. There was nothing I could do to protect him.

"I'm bruised and sore," she added. "Unfortunately, my dog got more of the attack than I did. Mentally, I am a complete mess."

Link Cited in Sex-for Heroin Case; Mother Sentenced to 51 Years-to-Life



April Corcoran & Shandell Willingham

A resident of an apartment house where a woman repeatedly traded her 11-year-old daughter to a drug dealer for heroin cited [The Link](#) as a possible explanation for what the Ohio Attorney General and sentencing judge said was the worst case they had ever seen.

Hamilton County Common Pleas Court Judge Leslie Ghiz [sentenced](#) April Corcoran 32, of Pleasant Plain, Ohio, to 51 years to life. Corcoran had pled guilty to 27 counts of complicity to rape, human trafficking and child endangerment. Corcoran also admitted injecting the girl with heroin sometimes as a reward.

The girl was sodomized, raped, forced to perform oral sex and frequently videotaped by Shandell Willingham, 42, Corcoran's drug dealer, over a period of several months in 2014. Prosecutors said that on numerous occasions she dropped the girl off at Willingham's apartment, left and came back several hours later after he had had sex with the girl.

Willingham, who has been convicted in Indiana on unrelated drug and child pornography charges, still faces 26 similar felony charges as Corcoran. He also had a domestic violence charge that was later dismissed. Corcoran had had few prior interactions with law enforcement and no criminal record in Ohio.

The girl, now, 13, is living out of state with her father and stepmother.

Ghiz said she had to take breaks while reading evidence admitted into the court case. "I don't know that you grasp the damage that has been done to this poor child," Ghiz said, noting that the girl is undergoing medical care, has had suicidal thoughts and is taking medications.

"Every case of human trafficking is horrible," Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine said. "But this is just about as bad as anything I've ever seen."

Keith Benson, a resident at the apartment complex, told [The Cincinnati Enquirer](#) that he was only a little surprised to hear what was allegedly happening in his building.

"Things like this happen a lot down here," he said. "Probably not to this degree, but there's constantly being reports of animal abuse and fights breaking out around. It's a little bit surprising but not entirely unexpected."

Mother, Daughter Facing Trial in Animal Cruelty and Domestic Violence Cases



Kelly D. Palermo

A July 26 trial date has been set for a mother who, along with her daughter, was charged with aggravated animal cruelty. Police say the mother got angry at the daughter's cat and held it down while the daughter stabbed it to death. [The Chicago Tribune](#) reported that Kelly D. Palermo, 51, of Chicago, was visiting her daughter, Samantha Palermo, 22, of Elmhurst, Ill., when Kelly became angry at the cat. She allegedly held the animal down while Samantha stabbed it to death. Samantha is also facing domestic violence charges involving other family members, plus battery and resisting-arrest counts, from an incident earlier this year.

Alleged Dog Beater Is a Convicted Killer



Police video of the attack resulted in the arrest of Wilfredo Arroyo (left)

media that her husband was merely trying to give Blue a spanking after the dog bit him and the attack on the bystander was a case of self-defense.

A search for a Staten Island, N.Y. man who was captured on video beating a dog and then slashing the face of a bystander who attempted to intervene led New York City police to charge a man said to be a convicted killer. Police arrested Wilfredo Arroyo, 36, on charges stemming from the May 24 attacks on a pit bull named “Blue” and the unnamed good Samaritan. The [New York Daily News](#) reported that Arroyo was convicted in 2004 in the 2001 brutal stabbing death of Latin Kings member Jose “King Rambo” Santiago; he was paroled in 2014. Arroyo’s wife told news



DeAngelo Roseboro

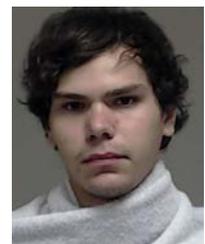
Homicide Suspect Charged with Animal Cruelty in Torturing of Three Dogs with Firecrackers

A man who is charged as an accessory to murder in the death of a City Council member was arrested by Rock Hill, S. Car. police and charged with three counts of animal cruelty for allegedly torturing three dogs by throwing fireworks at them.

DeAngelo Roseboro, 21, was arrested on July 6, and detectives found an 8-minute video recorded live on Roseboro’s cell phone reportedly showing him and another man, Tevin Anderson, 25, lighting dozens of firecrackers and throwing them so they would explode near the dogs. The [Rock Hill Herald](#) reported that Anderson was also charged with three counts of animal cruelty. Roseboro, one of four men charged as an accessory in the 2014 murder of Chester City Councilman Odell Williams, has been out on bond for more than a year, court records showed.

Man Faces Felony Charge for Beating Girlfriend’s Dog to Death

Michael John Ennis, 22, of Allen, Texas, was arrested and booked into the Collin County Jail on June 7 on a felony animal torture charge for allegedly beating his girlfriend’s dog so severely that it had to be euthanized. The [San Antonio Express-News](#) reported that Ennis allegedly beat “Roberto,” a 3-year-old terrier mix, at his girlfriend’s home in Farmer’s Branch, a suburb of Dallas. The Dallas County District Attorney’s Office and the Texas SPCA got involved in the subsequent investigation which included a necropsy and warned that animal cruelty is an early warning sign of violent tendencies that can be acted out against people. “There is a well-documented link between animal cruelty and human violence,” said SPCA President James Bias. “Bringing these individuals to justice will help stop the cycle of abuse.”



Michael J. Ennis

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

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Aug. 11 – (online): Phil Arkow will conduct a webinar with representatives from two pet-friendly domestic violence shelters entitled “What About Me? Animal Abuse, Domestic Violence and Sheltering On-site” for the [Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#).

Aug. 12 – Seattle, Wash.: Diane Balkin and Kate Burke will discuss the admissibility of past animal abuse in prosecuting current child abuse cases at the Washington State Bar Association’s [2nd Annual Animal Law Summit](#). Other speakers will discuss pet protection orders, the legality of bestiality, mandatory consideration of animals’ best interests in custody disputes, and numerous other Link-related issues.

Aug. 24-27 – Xalapa, Vera Cruz, Mexico: Frank Ascione will present on The Link at the [II International Congress on Animal Rights](#).

Aug. 31 – Philadelphia, Pa.: Paul Needham will present on The Link and verbal abuse at the National Adult Protective Services Association’s 27th Annual Conference.

Sept. 13 – (Online): Allie Phillips will present on her program Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T) on a webinar for the [Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance](#).

Sept. 14-16 – Austin, Texas: Several Link topics will be featured at the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys’ [6th National Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference](#), including family violence, animal fighting, and the role of the veterinarian.

Sept. 15 – Mashantucket, Conn.: Phil Arkow will train on the domestic violence/animal abuse Link at the [Connecticut State Animal Control Officers’](#) conference.

Sept. 23 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada: Frances Wach, Tracy Knutson, and Crystal Giesbrecht will present on “The Link Between Interpersonal Violence and Animal Abuse,” and “Working with Victims of Interpersonal Violence,” at the Saskatchewan SPCA’s [Animal Welfare Conference](#).

Sept. 25 – Louisville, Ky.: Jennifer Woolf, DVM will speak on “Everything You Never Wanted to Know About Animal Cruelty (But You Know You Should Ask)” at the 105th Annual [Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association](#) Meeting and 43rd Mid-America Veterinary Conference.

Sept. 27 – Winnipeg, Man., Canada: Phil Arkow will speak on Animal and Family Abuse at the inaugural international [One Welfare Conference](#).

Sept. 28 – Norman, Okla.: Phil Arkow will present on The Link at the [Oklahoma Attorney General’s](#) annual Domestic, Sexual Violence and Stalking Partnership conference.

Sept. 29 – Black Hawk, Colo.: Phil Arkow will present on how The Link can shift the paradigm of animal shelters at the [Colorado Animal Welfare Conference](#).

Sept. 30 – West Lafayette, Ind.: Lila Miller will present on the veterinarian’s role in recognizing, documenting and handling animal abuse cases at Purdue University’s [2016 Veterinary Conference](#).

Oct. 6 – Seattle, Wash.: Phil Arkow will deliver the keynote presentation on “Advancing Animal Care and Control via Species-Spanning Services and Systems” at the [National Animal Care & Control Association Training Conference 2016](#). Other conference presentations will include Belinda Lewis speaking on “Crime Scene Processing,” and a discussion of animal control officer’ role in the FBI’s NIBRS reporting system by Mary Lou Randour, Dan DeSousa and Martha Smith-Blackmore.

Oct. 12 – (online): Phil Arkow will present two webinars on Interpersonal Violence and Animal Cruelty for the National Organization for Victim Assistance’s [Victim Assistance Academy](#).

Oct. 15 – Batavia, N.Y.: Phil Arkow, and representatives from Lollypop Farm and the Erie County SPCA, will conduct a Link training at [Genesee Community College](#).

Oct. 17-21 – Keene, Plymouth, Rochester, Manchester, & Concord, N.H.: Phil Arkow will present Link training to the New Hampshire Division of Children, Youth & Families, and other government, domestic violence and animal care and control [agencies](#).

Oct. 19 – Spartanburg, S. Car.: Barbara Boat will present on “Cruelty to Animals – Cruelty to People” at the Academy on Violence & Abuse’s [2016 Global Health Summit on Violence and Abuse](#).

Oct. 23-26 – Denver, Colo.: Diane Balkin will present at the [Animal Grantmakers](#) Conference.

Nov. 2-3 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada: Phil Arkow will present on The Link as the John Gunion Rutherford Memorial Lecture at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, speak to the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association, and lead a [community workshop](#) for social work and animal protection advocates.

Nov. 3 – (various locations): The One Health Commission, One Health Initiative, and One Health Platform will sponsor the 1st Annual [One Health Day](#), a worldwide series of events highlighting transdisciplinary, collaborative approaches to overarching community health and welfare issues.

Nov. 4 – Phoenix, Md.: Nancy Blaney will present at the Baltimore County State’s Attorney’s Office Animal Abuse Unit [Animal Abuse Leadership Summit](#).

Nov. 5-6 – Sydney, Australia: [Lucy’s Project](#) will hold its 2nd annual conference on Perspectives of Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse. Speakers will include Allie Phillips, Lydia Tong, Catherine Tiplady, representatives from RSPCA offices, academia, and domestic violence programs.

Nov. 9 – Stamford, Conn.: Phil Arkow will train on the Link between domestic violence and animal abuse during Grand Rounds at [Stamford Hospital](#).

Nov. 15 – Portland, Ore.: Maya Gupta will present at the National Council on Pet Population and Society of Animal Welfare Administrators’ [2016 Research Symposium](#) on broken human-animal bonds.

Dec. 1 – Ontario, Calif.: Phil Arkow will present on “Overcoming Challenges at the Intersections of Animal Abuse and Other Family Violence” at the San Bernardino County District Attorney’s annual [Animal Cruelty Task Force](#) training.



ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



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

Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee

Phil Arkow, Coordinator

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

Lesley Ashworth

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Former Director, Domestic Violence/Stalking Program,
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Exec. Director, Childhood Trust, Cincinnati Children's Hospital
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