



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



www.NationalLinkCoalition.org

[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Volunteers Collaborate to Make Shelter Pet-Friendly

Until recently, the Emergency Support Center in Longview, Wash., had only limited accessibility for animals belonging to domestic violence survivors, and was only able to accept service animals. That all changed over the Thanksgiving weekend when a unique collaboration began renovating three rooms to make them friendly to non-working animals.



Seventeen volunteers from [RedRover](#), the Sacramento nonprofit that provides grants to help domestic violence shelters add pet facilities, and [Rescue Rebuild](#), a Philadelphia-area nonprofit that usually renovates animal shelters in need,

converged in Longwood to renovate the three rooms. This is the first project of its kind for both organizations, said RedRover's Nicole Forsyth, in which her staff contributed labor instead of a grant.

Similarly, Rescue Rebuild's Bryn Donnelly told the [Longview Daily News](#), "It's not much of a leap. It's just an extension of the work we're doing already."

The remodeling involved pulling out carpeting and installing new tile, adding doggy doors that lead to a fenced yard, and building window perches and a suspended rope bridge for visiting cats. The three rooms are located along a common hallway segregated away from shelter residents who may be allergic to the animals or who have other issues with them.



The shelter held a pet food drive this summer and received hundreds of pounds of animal food plus cat towers, cat litter and boxes, collars, and pet clothes. The shelter has a foster housing arrangement with the Humane Society of Cowlitz County to house any aggressive animals. A local veterinary hospital is providing free basic veterinary services.

Survivors have told shelter staff "how therapeutic it is to have their pet with them," Development Manager Christy Brittain said. "Just petting an animal can help relieve anxiety."

Domestic Violence/Animal Abuse Links Being Addressed in Australia

Several exciting new developments are addressing the Link between domestic violence and animal abuse “Down Under,” where participants in the second annual Lucy’s Project conference ([See the November 2016 LINK-Letter](#)) learned of new initiatives and an infusion of international ideas.



Lydia Tong (left) and Judy Johnson spoke to the conference

Senior Constable Ingrid Reilly, Domestic Violence Liaison Officer for the New South Wales Police, reported that harm to animals is now recognized as one of 25 “safety assessment tool” questions asked of victims to establish their level of risk. Forthcoming changes in the process will expand the definition of “personal violence offenses” to include an animal being beaten to intimidate a victim. This designation gives the offense more weight in court and helps substantiate a survivor’s application for an AVO (Apprehended Violence Order), the Australian equivalent of an American protection-from-abuse order. Reilly is putting together an information package /presentation for other police to share her knowledge about The Link.

Judy Johnson of the Eastern Metropolitan Region, Regional Family Violence Partnership in Melbourne, tells *The LINK-Letter* that the conference featured strong representation from services that shelter animals from abuse. These included the RSPCA’s Safe Beds for Pets, EDVOS’ Pets in Peril, RSPCA & D.V. Connect, and the Safe Families Safe Pets Program. Until more Australian domestic violence services build pet safehousing facilities at their shelters, most agencies have primarily partnered with local animal shelters to house the pets of women escaping domestic violence.

Glyn Scott, founder of the Love Hope and Gratitude shelter for women, their children and pets, gave a harrowing account of the violence that had been inflicted on her from an early age and which continued through her adult life. Her book, *Hope Was All I Had*, depicted her journey of tragedy and triumph.

Dr. Lydia Tong, forensic veterinary pathologist, researcher and Vice President of Lucy’s Project, talked about “The Butterfly Effect” – how something small can develop into something major on the other side of the world. She described Non-Accidental Injury in animals and a seminar at the University of Melbourne Veterinary College that addressed what graduates should do about the issue of domestic violence and animal abuse. This is believed to have been the first Link cross-training of vets in Australia.

Richard Wainright and Lisa Craig of Peel Community Legal Service in Western Australia discussed the “My Saving Grace” project that recorded on video the stories of women who have endured violence from their intimate partners that involved the abuse of their pets. The video will be released soon.

Nik Taylor and Tania Signal of Flinders University, who have researched The Link extensively, proposed taking The Link between domestic violence and animal abuse to new ground in Australia by developing cross-reporting mechanisms, creating professional training opportunities, and advocating for broader awareness of The Link and research on the role of animals in post-domestic violence lives.

A third Lucy’s Project Conference is planned for South Australia in 2017, Johnson reports.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CHILD MALTREATMENT

Research Project to Track Animal Abuse as a Marker for Child Abuse



Laiza Bonela, a veterinarian in Brazil, is conducting a doctoral study at the Veterinary School of the Federal University of Minas Gerais. The project involves establishing a program of prevention and control of abuse of companion animals as a strategy for the surveillance of child abuse in the city of Belo Horizonte, the sixth largest city in Brazil with a population of 1.4 million.

“The objective is to work in partnership with the municipal police, public health system, social workers, and the public sector responsible for pets – the management of Zoonoses Control,” she writes. She is seeking input from other agencies or researchers who have been involved in this approach. Please [contact her](#) if you can assist her in her research.

THE LINK IN THE LITERATURE

Literature Review of 36 Years of Link Articles

The growing number of research articles about the Links between animal abuse and human violence, combined with increasing global interest in this topic and the specialization of interests necessitated by such a multi-disciplinary field, has led three Brazilian veterinarians to conduct a meta-analysis of such articles, particularly as they address the role and responsibilities of veterinarians in this area. Reviewing 78 articles published between 1980 and 2016, Stefany Monsalve, Fernando Ferreira and Rita Garcia reported, not surprisingly, that 78% of articles were published in North America and none came from South America or Africa. 98% of the articles found Links between animal abuse and interpersonal violence with co-occurrence rates varying from 25% to 86%. However, only 7% of these studies were published in veterinary journals. The article emphasizes the need for additional research to be carried out in other countries to account for cultural variations, and noted the absence of control groups used for comparative purposes in most of the research studies.

Articles were classified in four categories: animal abuse and domestic violence; risk factors for the development of childhood animal abuse; animal abuse as a predictor of criminal behavior; and the veterinarian’s role in The Link. The report is a comprehensive and well-organized compilation of much of the scholarly literature addressing this emerging topic

-- [Monsalve, S., Ferreira, F., & Garcia, R. \(2017, in press\). The connection between animal abuse and interpersonal violence: A review from the veterinary perspective. *Research in Veterinary Science*.](#)

Permission to Reprint

The news items and training opportunities contained in *The LINK-Letter* are intended to disseminate as widely and as freely as possible information about the connections between animal abuse and interpersonal violence. Permission is hereby granted to re-post these articles in other newsletters, websites, magazines, and electronic publications provided that appropriate credit is given to the National Link Coalition and with links to www.nationallinkcoalition.org

Risk Factors in Adolescents' Violent Behaviors Include Animal Abuse

This research paper examined risk factors associated with Western Australian secondary school students' involvement in violence-related behaviors. Using data compiled from anonymous self-completion questionnaires from 542 school students aged 13-17 years, the authors reported that students involved in greater acts of animal cruelty had increased odds of being involved in all forms of violence measured. Gender was significantly associated with being a victim and perpetrator of violent behaviours. Males were significantly more likely than females to be a victim of threatening and physical violence at school, and to be a perpetrator of physical violence at school and in the community. Males were significantly more likely than females to watch violent media, with exposure to violent media associated with physically hurting someone at school.

-- Baxendale, S., Lester, L., Johnston, R., & Cross, D. (2015). Risk factors in adolescents' involvement in violent behaviours. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, 7(1), 2-18.

Impact of Commercial Animal Abuse on Slaughterhouse Workers

The question is often raised as to whether the mass industrialized killing of animals performed by meatpackers and others in the slaughterhouse industry contributes to increased rates of domestic violence, child abuse and community violence. Only a handful of studies to date have examined this topic in depth ([See the September 2016 LINK-Letter](#)). Recently, we learned of several additional articles on this critical topic. We have not had the opportunity to review them but we present them below for your further interest. Our full list of articles known to us on this topic is located in our online [bibliography](#). If anyone has additional materials to add to this growing list, please let us know!

Broadway, M. J. (2000). Planning for change in small towns or trying to avoid the slaughterhouse blues. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 16(1), 37-46.

Jerolmack, C. (2016). The slaughterhouse: A hall of mirrors. *Society & Animals*, 24(2).

McNair, R. (2002). Perpetration-Induced Traumatic Stress: The psychological consequences of killing. Greenwood Publishing Group.

Porcher, J. (2011). The Relationship between workers and animals in the pork industry: A shared suffering. *Journal of Agricultural & Environmental Ethics*, 24(1), 3-17

Richards, E., Signal, T., & Taylor, N. (2013). A different cut? Comparing attitudes toward animals and propensity for aggression within two primary industry cohorts—farmers and meatworkers. *Society & Animals*, 21(4), 395-413.

THE LINK AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE

Link Outreach Addresses Australian Veterinarians



Anne Fawcett and patient

Anne Fawcett, a small-animal veterinarian, journalist and lecturer at the University of Sydney, Australia, recently interviewed National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow for her [Small Animal Talk blog](#). Phil discussed how he came to be involved in The LINK, four ways in which The LINK is manifested, and reasons why Australian veterinarians should become mandated reporters of abuse as has occurred in other countries ([See the December 2015 LINK-Letter](#)). Thanks for helping to spread the LINK message "down under," Anne!

THE LINK AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Online Course Launched for Animal Cruelty Offenders



A California foundation has launched a signature curriculum designed to inspire changes in attitudes and actions toward animals in individuals who have mistreated them. Available only to those referred by members of the criminal justice system, animal services and humane officers, and other specified professionals, the [Benchmark Animal Rehabilitative Curriculum \(B.A.R.C.\)](#) is a comprehensive referral-based, online animal cruelty prevention and education course.

The first of its kind in the country, B.A.R.C. uses videos, text, articles, quizzes, and a final exam to create positive changes in behavior by increasing students' awareness of the value and needs of all sentient beings, as well as the potential consequences of failing to meet those needs. With 16 classes, the online curriculum covers intentional animal cruelty, neglect, illegal animal fighting, hoarding, and tethering. The course also addresses when discipline or training crosses the line is considered cruelty, leaving pets alone in vehicles, why grooming is a necessity and not a luxury, and responsible pet ownership.

The program is spearheaded by Deborah Knaan, a pioneering prosecutor who earned national accolades for Los Angeles County by establishing the nation's largest unit of 28 specially assigned and trained prosecutors to handle animal cruelty cases. Knaan recently left her position as Deputy District Attorney to serve as Executive Director of the nonprofit [Susie Spector Foundation](#).



Deborah Knaan



Also joining the foundation as Deputy Executive Director is Nicole Herft, Ph.D., J.D., an animal law and organizational psychology expert who co-founded the Animal Law Guild. B.A.R.C. began accepting referrals from qualifying agencies on December 1.

Nicole Herft

Available nationally, B.A.R.C. will serve as a valuable resource for professionals seeking to add an educational component to their rehabilitative plans. Prosecutors, judges, and probation officers can require that a person participate in B.A.R.C. as either a condition of pre- or post-filing diversion, or as a term of probation. B.A.R.C. can also be an effective tool for animal services professionals in cases where education, rather than a citation or criminal charges, is more appropriate, Knaan said.

B.A.R.C. is not intended to be a substitute for mental health and addiction counseling, treatment or incarceration. "In some cases," Knaan noted, "incarceration is absolutely appropriate. Education serves another important purpose. Even if someone goes to jail or prison for abusing an animal, at some point they're going to get out. And, in all likelihood, they're going to have contact with animals again. The question is, do we want them getting out with the same mindset and attitude toward animals? Or do we want them to learn something from the experience, so that going forward they'll, hopefully, view and treat animals differently?"

Based in Studio City, Calif., the Susie Spector Foundation works to raise awareness through education to inspire change in attitudes and actions that impact the welfare of animals.

British Legislation May Address Link Issues

Anna Turley, a Member of Parliament from Redcar, North Yorkshire, has introduced a Private Member's Bill No. 43 that would increase the maximum sentences available to the court for specified offenses related to animal cruelty. We have learned that she may be adding several significant amendments to the bill.



Anna Turley, MP

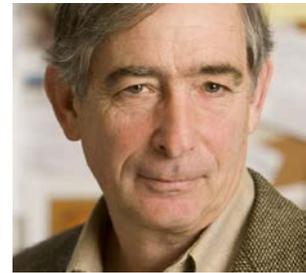
The proposed amendments would reportedly:

- create a registry of animal abusers;
- require animal cruelty investigations to include evidence of interpersonal violence; and
- mandate veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse.

The measure is co-sponsored by several other MPs, including Kevin Foster, Alex Cunningham, Kerry McCarthy, Liz McInnes, Wendy Morton, Philip Hollobone, Sarah Champion, Jim Dowd, and Margaret Ferrier. The bill was originally introduced in the House of Commons last July 4 and is scheduled to be heard again next Feb. 24. We hope to keep you posted as to developments with this significant piece of legislation.

Stephen R. Kellert (1943 – 2016)

Stephen R. Kellert, Ph.D., whose pioneering research into human-animal relationships laid the groundwork for The Link, humane education, and our affinity for animals, died on Nov. 27 after a long battle with multiple myeloma. Known as the “Godfather of Biophilia,” he was the Tweedy Ordway Professor Emeritus of Social Ecology at the Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. His work focused on understanding the connection between nature and humanity with a particular interest in humans’ need for nature, environmental conservation, and sustainable design and development.



In the 1970s, working under a grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, he identified a typology of 10 values which Americans have regarding animals: Naturalistic, Ecologicistic, Scientistic, Aesthetic, Humanistic, Moralistic, Utilitarian, Neutralistic, Negativistic, and Dominionistic. The study identified numerous factors, such as education level and childhood history, which help determine individuals’ attitudes toward animals and the most appropriate strategies for humane education.

In the 1980s, he collaborated with Alan Felthous on seminal retrospective studies of inmates addressing childhood cruelty toward animals and the emergence of later acts of aggression against people.

During the 1980s he helped develop an emerging theory known as “biophilia,” a term coined by biologist and environmental theorist Edward O. Wilson, which describes humanity’s innate connection with the natural world. This intrinsic connection, forged throughout our evolutionary development, plays a central role in our capacities to think, feel, communicate, create, and find meaning in life.

In recent years he helped pioneer biophilic design, an emerging discipline that aims to improve well-being by promoting connections between people and nature in the built environment. A memorial service will be held in early January at Kroon Hall at Yale, the biophilic building he originally inspired.

THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS FOR THE ABUSED

Underdog Project Helps Abused Youth and Dogs in South Africa

An animal-assisted therapy program in South Africa is using The Link to pair shelter dogs and at-risk youth, both of whom have been victims of poverty and social and emotional neglect and often outright abuse, to improve the futures of both.



Established as a nonprofit in Cape Town, the [Underdog Project](#)'s motto is "Building young lives, one dog at a time." The Underdog Project addresses social and emotional needs of youths and children using non-invasive animal-assisted activities and training similarly at-risk shelter dogs. Positive, force-free dog training techniques ensure the well-being of both dogs and learners and builds in them patience, compassion and a sense of responsibility.

"Inspired by your newsletters, we have built the idea of linking NGOs, shelters, caseworkers and police as a multi-pronged response team into our sustainability plan. We have to start really small, by simply shifting people's thinking in the area in which we work, and opening their ideas to this as an existing issue with a proven solution," Ciara Louw tells *The LINK-Letter* in thanking us for our newsletters which she finds to be

"absolutely fascinating and so inspiring."

Violence in South Africa has been an ongoing concern, with particular adverse implications for children and animals. Louw reports that where children in the developed world experience an average of three major traumas such as the death of a loved one or divorce before the age of 18, South African children experience on average 10 traumatic incidents a year.

"Often it is a violent crime like family abuse, dog fighting, or gang violence. If children are being marginalized in this way, can you imagine what that means for animals in the same communities?" she asks.

"We are growing our little organization," she adds. "This year we employed our first full-time facilitator and directly impacted close to 100 children and around 40 dogs (the majority of whom go on to loving permanent homes). In 2017, we are employing two full-time and two part-time personnel – three of whom come from the same kind of compromised communities as the kids in our programs. They are all ambassadors for humane treatment and positive reinforcement - advocates of treating people and animals with respect."



The program also hosts interns and has a speakers' bureau. "We like to think we are slowly but surely growing awareness and creating a bigger movement that will hopefully ripple out way beyond us." She thanks *The LINK-Letter* for sharing workable ideas from around the world. "I believe that it's always a good way of working to build on what people have achieved successfully elsewhere rather than starting from scratch."



Link-based Canine Education Intervention Helps At-Risk Youth in Albuquerque, New Mexico

An innovative canine-education intervention program for at-risk youth in Albuquerque's Bernalillo County's Youth Services Center is promoting a positive culture in the lives of residents at the detention facility about "The Link" between animal abuse and community violence.

[The Paz Project](#) (Spanish for "peace" and sounding like "paws"), begun in January, involves Center residents in positive socialization with animals. Staff and teachers, who become certified foster parents with partner agencies, bring their foster pets to work at the YSC. There, youth work with the animals on walking, grooming and basic training to prepare them for adoption into new homes.

The canine enrichment program is designed around The Link between animal abuse and violence in the community. Through education, companionship and engagement, the Paz Project promotes civic behavior with animals, especially dogs, among Center residents. These experiences are designed to reduce violence, promote responsibility and compassion, and counter the impact of interpersonal and inter-species violence.

The initiative is "aimed at educating at-risk youth about the devastating and multi-dimensional effects of animal maltreatment on community safety, and equipping them with resources and support so that they can choose to serve as positive change agents in the future," says Anne Martinez, assistant director of administration.

"Life can be rough," says a resident about the canine therapy program, "and having something that doesn't judge you helps on days when you're feeling down."

The program is a collaboration that involves Animal Protection of New Mexico, Bernalillo County Animal Care Services, and the Peoples Anti-Cruelty Association.

"Leveraging resources is always possible when you reach out to others with a shared mission," Martinez says. "In this case it's public safety. And what is growing is public good."

The Center intends to expand the Paz Project after repurposing a special residence unit, allowing youth the opportunity to live with their canine companions full-time. This expansion would allow even more animals to receive care and provide greater enrichment to residents.

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

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

New Mexico Coalition Distributes Domestic Violence Booklet, Plans Legislation and Conference, and Conducts Trainings

Our Link coalition in New Mexico – [Positive Links](#) – continues to make great strides. Board President Tammy Fiebelkorn tells *The LINK-Letter* that in 2016 the coalition trained a wide variety of groups on The Link between animal abuse and human violence, including the staff of several domestic violence shelters, focusing on ways they can help entire families recover. Recent trainings include:

- School of Social Work students, Santa Fe and Las Vegas
- Staff, Animal Welfare Coalition of Northeastern New Mexico
- Members, Animal Law Section of the New Mexico State Bar
- Members, Tribe of San Felipe



“From time to time we are approached by an elected official or governmental staff for assistance with developing or refining a policy related to The Link. This could take the form of providing data or helping to craft policies to help protect animals and humans from family violence,” says Fiebelkorn.

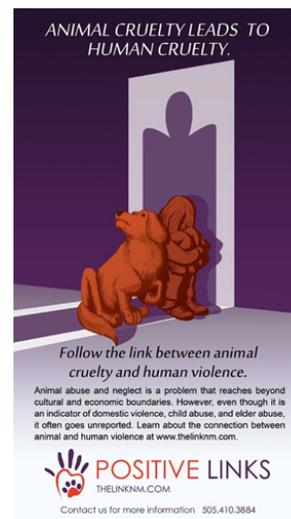
On Sept. 12, Fiebelkorn presented an overview of The Link to the New Mexico State Legislature’s Courts Corrections and Justice Committee. She gave legislators a laundry list of policy changes needed to reduce all forms of family violence in the state. Rep. Jim Dines (R-Bernalillo County) discussed introducing a memorial in the next legislative session encouraging the state departments of Public Safety and Children, Youth and Families to include The Link in their training plans for field staff.

The coalition is also distributing a new resource for attorneys and advocates from the Animal Welfare Institute. [Representing Domestic Violence Survivors with Pets in New Mexico](#) aims to simplify the inclusion of pets in protection orders for attorneys and advocates, allowing survivors to take control of their lives and escape abuse. The text discusses legal issues surrounding the inclusion of pets in civil protection orders, gives details about New Mexico law, and provides links to relevant forms and outside resources.

The publication is similar to earlier AWI booklets designed to assist domestic violence survivors and their pets in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C. (See the [January 2015 LINK-Letter](#)).

Positive Links is helping two domestic violence shelters in New Mexico to become pet-friendly. “It takes a lot of planning and preparation, but it means the world to the women and families who get to keep their companion animals with them during this intensely stressful time,” she says.

Fiebelkorn also tells *The LINK-Letter* that the New Mexico Conference on The Link Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence will return in September 2017 as a two-day event. Details are currently being worked out.



A poster donated by graphic designer Tim Stevens is spreading the word

Link Task Force Brings Progress to Central New York State



A multi-agency response to animal abuse, that combines law enforcement efforts with public education outreach, is establishing Link strategies, supporting animal shelters and enhancing public awareness of animal cruelty's links to other violent crimes in Syracuse, N.Y. Formed in 2013 as an advisory body to the Parks and Recreation Committee of the Syracuse Common Council, the CNY Animal Cruelty Task Force today lists a string of notable accomplishments:

- **25 animal First Response kits** provided to Syracuse police officers and dog control officers so first responders have pet supplies when investigating animal cruelty crimes and other animal-related emergencies.
- **Animal Court**, whereby one judge, assistant district attorney and probation officer handle animal cruelty cases one day each month.
- **ASPCA Legal Training**, bringing members of the ASPCA's Legal Advocacy Department to Syracuse to provide specialized CLE credit training to legal professionals, law enforcement and veterinarians.
- **Volunteer Advocate Lawyers for Animal Court**, attorneys who serve on a volunteer basis to monitor and report on the welfare of victims of animal abuse as their cases move through the judicial process.
- **CNY Animal and Dog Control Officer Conference**, a two-day event held in the Spring of 2016 that attracted over 50 participants from across New York State.

Task Force facilitator [Nicole Heath](#) tells The LINK-Letter that the group's members include city advisors, animal advocates, a Certified Animal Behavior specialist, veterinarians, and members of the Onondaga County Bar Association.

South Florida Fundraiser Garners Over \$1,000

The South Florida Link Coalition held a fundraiser on Nov. 3 and raised over \$1,000 in just two hours. Coordinator Amber Ahern tells *The LINK-Letter* that the raffle was an extremely successful event, and sent us some photos from the occasion. Way to go!



BUILDING AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK

Podcast Spotlights National Link Coalition

The National Link Coalition was featured in a podcast presented by the PetsEmpower Foundation, a Boston-based group working to raise funds to assist survivors of domestic violence with sheltering and veterinary care. The group strives to keep people and their pets together when circumstances such as domestic violence, homelessness, sudden job loss, illness and natural disasters threaten those relationships. The 10-minute interview with National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow is available for download on the National Link Coalition's [website](#).



Stephen Jenkinson

National Link Coalition Highlighted in Britain

Stephen Jenkinson, a canine expert and pet columnist, gave a shout-out to the National Link Coalition in his column in the [December issue](#) of *Your Dog*, the U.K.'s biggest-selling glossy monthly magazine for British dog owners. A resident (with his border collie "Jess") of the far-flung Orkney Islands, an archipelago off the northern coast of Scotland, Jenkinson writes about the healing powers of the remote islands' natural beauty.

But in moving there he also discovered a "darker side" of island life that included alcoholism and domestic abuse. "While *Your Dog* readers will understand how pets provide a daily reason to live, or beat addiction, many vulnerable pet owners are equally aware of the growing evidence of links between domestic and animal abuse," he wrote, directing readers to our website.

Thanks, Steve, for bringing The Link to the attention of your readers!

Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence Addressed in Indian Country

Diana Webster, Sarah Deer and Liz Murphy of the [Native America Humane Society](#) presented on "The Link Between Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse in Indian Country" at the 15th National Indian Nations Conference at the Agua Caliente Reservation in Palm Springs, Calif. The conference was dedicated to the theme of Justice for Victims of Crime.

The presentation described traditional attitudes toward wild and domesticated animals, through creation stories, tribal and clan affiliations, hunting practices and philosophies, among numerous Native American tribes and the adverse impacts of colonization upon Indians' treatment of animals. They examined the current status of animals within tribal communities and the high rates of animal abuse and domestic violence, and correlations between the two, in Native American societies ([See the October 2015 LINK-Letter](#)). Describing four primary challenges – overpopulation, lack of community resources, lack of knowledge and code enforcement, and lack of awareness, they proposed several solutions including revitalizing tribal laws, additional funding for animal population management programs, greater response to feral dog problems, and enhanced penalties for abusers. They suggested that domestic violence statutes could be rewritten to include domestic animals and livestock as protected property under civil and criminal laws.



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 over 200 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 31 co-sponsors has been referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.



Alaska HB 147 was signed into law on Oct. 27. The law, which takes effect on Jan. 17, 2017, will 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 law also declares pets to be marital property and gives courts authority to decide individual or joint custody when people divorce, with consideration of what would be best for the animal. It also defines an act of animal abuse in this context as domestic violence.



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 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 have increased 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 was in the House Judiciary Committee but was removed from the table on Oct 24.



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

 **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 was in the Judiciary Committee but was ordered held for further study on Oct. 24.

 **Michigan H5670** 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 was approved with amendments by the Criminal Justice committee on Sept. 20 and referred for a second reading.

 **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.

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 Hoarding

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

“CASA for Animals”



 **Connecticut HB 5344** allows 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.

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 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. The bill was amended to only require law enforcement agencies to include arrests for animal cruelty in their annual reports to the Governor. The amended bill was signed into law on Aug. 29.



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.



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.

Cross Reporting



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.



Michigan HB5779 would require animal control officers to report suspected child abuse. The bill is in the House Committee on Families, Children and Seniors.



Michigan HB5780 would require Child Protective Services employees who have reasonable cause to suspect animal abuse or neglect, to make oral and written reports to an animal control officer or law enforcement officer. The employee's identity would remain confidential and be revealed only with consent or by judicial process. CPS employees acting in good faith would be immune from civil or criminal liability; failure to make such a report or knowingly making a false report would be misdemeanor crimes. The bill is in the House Committee on Families, Children and Seniors.



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 was signed into law on March 1.

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 passed the Senate on Nov. 30 and the Assembly on Dec. 8 and is headed to the Governor's office.



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 have amended 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 measure was defeated in its second reading in the House of Commons on Oct. 5.

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.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Child Porn Investigation Leads to Bestiality Arrest

Police in Henrico, Va., serving a warrant on man wanted in Pennsylvania on charges of child rape and child pornography, wound up charging his roommate with bestiality and animal cruelty after they allegedly found multiple images of the roommate having sex with Rottweiler dogs. [WTVR](#) reported that Craig M. Knox, 36, who was awaiting extradition to Pennsylvania on his charges, reportedly told police that his roommate, Stephen Matthew Taylor, 27, was having sex with the dogs. Taylor reportedly admitted to performing oral sex on one of the dogs. Eight Rottweilers and numerous digital devices, which reportedly contained multiple images of bestiality, were seized. One dog was examined by a veterinarian and was found to have infections in his penis, rectum and anal glands.



Craig Knox, left, and Stephen Taylor

Animal Fraud Complaint Leads to Child Endangerment Charges



Trisha Meyer

Police in Cypress, Texas charged a woman with child endangerment and theft after they investigated a suspected fraudulent sale of a kitten and found the woman’s 14-year-old daughter sharing a home with a menagerie of dangerous animals. The [Houston Chronicle](#) reported that police were investigating Trisha Meyer, 34, for allegedly selling a kitten for \$3,000 to a man in California who said he never received the cat. Officers arriving at her home found three tigers, a cougar, several monkeys, a skunk, and a fox roaming freely inside. Meyer was finally tracked down and arrested on Nov. 7 in Pahrump, Nev., and was to be extradited back to Texas.

Domestic Violence Offender Charged with Throwing Dog In Front of Car

A Florida man with a history of domestic battery, battery and probation violations was arrested by police in Ocala on charges of aggravated animal cruelty and resisting arrest for allegedly throwing a dog in front of several moving vehicles. Michael Britton, 55, reportedly fought with arresting police officers after eyewitnesses said they saw him throw the dog into traffic on several occasions, the [Ocala Post](#) reported. The dog, named “Yoshi,” survived the ordeal and was being treated at the Humane Society of Marion County. Ocala police officer Brendan Ferguson, who found the dog after it wandered off, planned to adopt the dog.



Michael Britton



Woman Gets Probation on Bestiality and Drug Charges; Assault Sentencing Still Pending

A Brisbane, Australia waitress being investigated for drug trafficking received probation after pleading guilty to having had sex with her pit bull, but will still serve time for stabbing a woman with a fork and biting a child. Jenna Louise Driscoll, 27, admitted to having had sex with her dog on three occasions in 2014 in an attempt to

arouse her partner. Videos of the acts were found on her phone when police investigated her on the drug charges. In sentencing her, District Court Judge Terry Martin called the offenses “repugnant” and “appalling,” and handed down a 2-1/2-year suspended sentence while awaiting sentencing on the other charges, the [Daily Mail](#) reported. Martin noted that Driscoll had had a dysfunctional childhood and had been subjected to emotional and physical abuse while growing up.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Dec. 12 – North Grafton, Mass.: Terry Mills from the ASPCA will conduct a workshop on “Investigating Animal Fighting and Its Links to Other Crimes” at the Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine.

Dec. 28 – West Palm Beach, Fla.: [The South Florida Link Coalition](#) will hold its monthly meeting.

Jan. 16-20, 2017 – Salt Lake City, Utah: “The Cycle of Violence” will be included in the week-long Module C classes offered in the National Animal Care & Control Association’s National Animal Control and Humane Officers (NACHO) [Training Academy](#).

Jan. 18 – Pittsfield, Mass.: The [Human/Animal Violence Education Network \(HAVEN\)](#) will hold its regular meeting at the Berkshire Humane Society.

Jan. 23 – Thompsonville, Mich.: Allie Phillips will present on Therapy Animals Supporting Kids at the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan’s [conference](#) on Emerging Trends in Child Abuse and Neglect.

Feb. 5 – Washington, D.C.: [The National Coalition on Violence Against Animals](#) will meet.

Feb. 11-12, 2017 – Orlando, Fla.: Randy Lockwood will present on responding to animal hoarding at the [Florida Animal Control Association](#) Conference.

Feb. 22 – Minneapolis, Minn.: Randy Lockwood and Laura Niestat will conduct a day-long training on Animal Cruelty Investigations - The Role of the Veterinarian at the 120th annual [Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association](#) meeting.

Feb. 23 – Columbus, Ohio: Rachel Touroo will present on Veterinary Forensics at the [Midwest Veterinary Conference](#).

Mar. 6-10 – Phoenix, Ariz.: “The Cycle of Violence” will be included in the week-long Module C classes offered in the National Animal Care & Control Association’s National Animal Control and Humane Officers (NACHO) [Training Academy](#).

Mar. 9 – Hammonton, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train staff of the New Jersey [Division of Child Protection and Permanency](#) on “Animal Abuse and Dangerous Animals as Risk Factors for Child Abuse and Other Family Violence.”

Mar. 13-17 – Knoxville, Tenn.: Bethanie Poe will present on “The Link between Human and Animal Violence” as part of the University of Tennessee’s [Veterinary Social Work](#) intensive.

Mar. 20-24 – Dallas, Texas: “The Cycle of Violence” will be offered in Module C of the National Animal Care & Control Association’s National Animal Control and Humane Officers (NACHO) [Training Academy](#).

Mar. 30 – Madison, Wis.: Randy Lockwood will present on “Forensic Psychology Meets Veterinary Forensic Pathology: Making the Connection” at the [Wisconsin VMA Conference](#) on “What’s Your Place in Animal Welfare?”

Mar. 31 – Nashville, Tenn.: Phil Arkow will present four programs in a Link track at the [American Animal Hospital Association](#)’s Yearly Conference.

April 2 – Plano, Texas: “Correlation between Animal Cruelty and Crimes Against Person” will be presented in the Texas Animal Control Association’s [T.C.C.I. course 101](#).

Apr. 22 – Austin, Texas: Phil Arkow will speak on The Link at the [Texas Unites for Animals](#) conference.

May 11 – Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.: Dan DeSousa and Nelson Ferry will present on “The critical role of animal control officers in the FBI’s National Incident-Based Reporting System at the Humane Society of the U.S.’ [Animal Care Expo](#).

July 28-30 – Ithaca, N.Y.: Randy Lockwood, Stacy Wolf and Robert Reisman will present multiple workshops and a mock trial at ASPCA/Cornell Maddie’s® Shelter Medicine Program [Conference](#). Lockwood’s keynote address will be “Investigating Animal Cruelty – The Past , Present and Future.”

Sept. 8 – Regina, Sask., Canada: Phil Arkow will discuss “A Practical Guide for an Effective response by Veterinary Professionals to Animal Cruelty, Abuse and Neglect” at the [Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association](#)’s 2017 Conference.

Sept. 9 – Bellevue, Wash.: Phil Arkow will discuss “The Dark Side of the Human-Animal Bond” at the 40th anniversary celebration of [Pet Partners](#).

Nov. 6-10 – Sanford, Fla.: “The Cycle of Violence” will be included in the week-long Module C classes offered in the National Animal Care & Control Association’s National Animal Control and Humane Officers (NACHO) [Training Academy](#).

Dec. 4-6 – Ottawa, Ont., Canada: The inaugural Canadian Link Conference will be held, under the auspices of the [Canadian Federation of Humane Societies](#).



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

Founder/President, American Veterinary Charitable Fund
Consultant, Ohio Domestic Violence Network
Former Director, Domestic Violence/Stalking Program,
Columbus City Attorney's Office/Prosecution Division
Blowing Rock, N. Car.

Diane Balkin, J.D.

Contract Attorney, Animal Legal Defense Fund
Past President, Int'l. Veterinary Forensic Sciences Assn.
Denver, Colo.

Barbara W. Boat, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Univ. of Cincinnati College of Medicine
Exec. Director, Childhood Trust, Cincinnati Children's Hospital
Cincinnati, Ohio

Cym Doggett, LCSW

Project Director, Southern Regional CAC,
National Children's Advocacy Center
Huntsville, Ala.

Maya Gupta, Ph.D.

Former Executive Director,
Animals and Society Institute
Atlanta, Ga.

Jane A. Hunt

Coordinator, Community Health Improvement Plan
Larimer County Department of Health
Ft. Collins, Colo.

Mark Kumpf, CAWA

Past President, National Animal Control Association
Director, Montgomery County Animal Resource Center
Dayton, Ohio

Randall Lockwood, Ph.D.

Senior Vice Pres., Forensic Sciences & Anti-Cruelty Projects,
ASPCA
Falls Church, Va.

Natalie Martinez

Programs Manager
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Denver, Colo.

Paul Needham

Chair, Education Committee,
National Adult Protective Services Association
Shawnee, Okla.

Maria Luisa O'Neill

Account Representative, Wages & Investments
U.S. Department of the Treasury,
Internal Revenue Service
Denver, Colo.

Emily Patterson-Kane, Ph.D.

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

Allie Phillips, J.D.

Director, Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)
Lansing, Mich.

Gale Rasin, J.D.

Retired Associate Judge, Baltimore City Circuit Court,
Chestertown, Md.

Chris Risley-Curtiss, MSSW, Ph.D.

Associate Professor *Emerita*,
Arizona State University School of Social Work
Phoenix, Ariz.

Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM

President, Forensic Veterinary Investigations, LLC
Boston, MA

Hugh Tebault III

President,
The Latham Foundation
Alameda, Calif.

John Thompson

Deputy Executive Director/Chief of Staff
National Sheriffs Association
Director, National Coalition on Violence Against Animals
Alexandria, Va.