



# NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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## ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### States' Legislation Address the Domestic Violence/Animal Abuse Link

As the 2017 legislative sessions opened, many states introduced bills that address animal abuse becomes coercive control in cases of intimate partner violence. Here are some of the bills in the current legislative season we're watching. Please keep us posted of similar new developments in your state!

- *Indiana to Consider Pet Protection Orders*

**Indiana SB 314** would allow a court to grant an order of protection to: (1) award 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, authored by Sen. Vaneta Becker, has been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Sen. Vaneta Becker

- *Michigan Bill Would Define Animal Abuse as Domestic Violence*



Rep. Robert Kosowski

Michigan could join nine other states in which an act of animal abuse intended to intimidate or control a family member may also be construed as an act of domestic violence. **HB 4026**, would define "causing or attempting to cause physical harm" to an animal in which a family member has an ownership interest as an act of domestic violence in addition to any animal cruelty charges that might pertain.

The bill also would allow domestic violence shelters that accept animals to receive state funding and would include the provision of veterinary care among the emergency health care services that shelters may cite among their criteria for needing funding. The bill, sponsored by Democratic Caucus Whip Robert Kosowski, is in the Committee on Law and Justice.

Other states in which intimidating animal abuse is also construed as domestic violence include Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Indiana, Maine, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Tennessee. Minnesota allows courts to impose double penalties for animal cruelty or torture where the act is done to threaten, intimidate, or terrorize another person. Arkansas defines intimidating animal abuse as "emotional abuse" (*See the [February 2016 LINK-Letter](#)*).

## Aloha! – Link Legislative News from the Islands...

- *Hawai'i Legislation Addresses Pets of the Homeless*



While considerable evidence exists regarding the emotional attachments that domestic violence survivors often have with their pets and how fear for the animals' welfare frequently serve to keep people trapped in abusive relationships, much less is known about the relationship that homeless individuals – many of whom became homeless as a result of domestic violence – have with their animals (*See the [October 2016 LINK-Letter](#)*). Two bills working their way through the Hawai'i state

legislature begin to address this concern.

The islands' tropical climate, in part, has resulted in a large homeless population and ongoing conflicts between tourists who complain about them, municipal officials who say they adversely affect business, and the needs of this population. **SB 158** and **HB 83** would create designated "puuhonua" safe zones where homeless persons may reside. Animal companions of homeless persons would be permitted in these zones. The bills have been referred to the Senate Housing, Ways & Means, and Water & Land Committees, and the House Human Services and Finance Committees.



- *Hawai'i Bill Would Extend Pet Protection Orders to Divorces, Separations and Annulments*

Following in the wake of groundbreaking legislation in Alaska which allows courts to award custody of pets in the animals' best interests in cases of divorce or annulment (*See the [November 2016 LINK-Letter](#)*), a bill in the Hawai'i State Legislature would similarly affect animals dislocated as a result of divorce, annulment or separation.

**Rep. Cindy Evans**

**HB 155**, sponsored by Rep. Cindy Evans, is designed to strengthen the well-being and protection of pets by addressing their support and maintenance during and following these proceedings. The measure would allow either party to order the other to restrain from transferring, encumbering or disposing of any of their property, including any pet animals, particularly if one party believes the other poses a threat of physical harm to the animal. Courts could order parties to pay for the support and maintenance of pets and, similar to the Alaska provisions, consider the well-being of the animals and whether future ownership should be individual or joint.

The measure has been referred to the House Agriculture and Judiciary Committees. Hawai'i enacted pet protection orders in cases of domestic violence in 2009, but this is believed to be only the second state to try to extend such provisions to divorces, separations and annulments.

- *Texas Bill Would Define Coercive Pet Abuse as Family Violence*

**Texas HB 1357** would define as "family violence" coercive, controlling or punishing acts or threats of abuse directed against an animal owned by a member of the household or someone with whom the abuser has had a dating relationship. The bill also makes technical corrections to assist prosecutors in animal cruelty cases.

## New Study Examines The Link from Online Forums

A growing body of research has found that domestic violence survivors who seek refuge in shelters often report the abuse of companion animals or livestock is a form of psychological control and a barrier to their escaping. However, researchers conducting these studies have been challenged by the means through which these data are obtained. A new study attempts to rectify this gap in our understanding of the animal abuse/domestic violence Link.



Michelle Newberry

Michelle Newberry, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Psychology, Sociology and politics at Sheffield Hallam University in the U.K., has taken a different approach. She noted that the traditional use of interviews and questionnaires with survivors in shelters may restrict the quality and depth of data collected because these methods increase the probability that victims will withhold information due to embarrassment or ethical constraints.

**“He held my daughter's cat out the window and said he would drop it if we did not come home.”**

Her current study utilized a novel method previously overlooked in the literature on companion animal abuse in an attempt to overcome these problems. Domestic violence victims' stories of companion animal abuse were obtained from online forums where victims voluntarily shared their experiences.

Seventy-four stories were analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis. The study investigated the circumstances surrounding the abuse, how victims explain abusers' behaviors, whether certain behavior patterns could be identified, and the effects of animal abuse on children as well as adults.

**“When he smashed the fish tank I sat there stunned and unable to move.”**

Newberry identified four key themes with several sub-themes:

- *The Victim-Companion Animal Bond*
  - Animals possessing characteristics the perpetrator lacks
  - Animals providing emotional support for victims and children
  - Animals protecting the victim
  - Risk-taking to protect an animal
- *Companion Animals Used to Control Victims*
  - Isolation of victims by restricting contact with friends and family
  - Financial control
  - Preventing the victim from leaving or coercing her to return
- *Victims' Perceptions of Abusers' Behavior*
  - To discipline the animal
  - Jealousy
  - The abuser's upbringing
  - Use of alcohol
- *Support for Victims and Companion Animals*
  - Police perceiving animal abuse as unimportant
  - Lack of services for survivors with pets

**“He told me if I left he would put poison in my cat's milk.”**

“Victims’ experiences may have been captured in more detail since the study was not constrained by ethical problems inherent in interview and questionnaire-based studies, such as victims’ experiencing feelings of shame and embarrassment, or knowing that the researcher has a duty to disclose information pertaining to an at-risk child to the relevant authorities.

This latter issue may be particularly relevant for victims experiencing/witnessing more minor forms of abuse/animal abuse which have not yet been brought to the attention of the authorities,” she wrote.

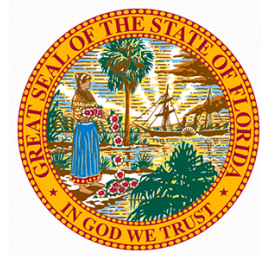
**“They are just jealous of how much love we have for our animals. It’s his fault, though if he didn't call me a slut he probably would get tuna for breakfast too!”**

Newberry’s findings have policy implications for police, domestic violence shelters, child protection organizations, and animal welfare organizations.

-- Newberry, M. (2016). *Pets in danger: Exploring the link between domestic violence and animal abuse. Aggression and Violent Behavior, 32.* (Available online Nov. 10, 2016. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2016.11.007>)

## Florida Law Allows Protection Orders When Animals Are Threatened

While Florida is not one of the 31 states that have enacted laws specifically allowing courts to include pets or livestock in protection-from-abuse orders, one statute in the Sunshine State allows petitioners to file injunctions for protection against domestic violence when the respondent has “intentionally injured or killed a family pet.” The court may also consider this as a factor when determining whether there is reasonable cause to believe the petitioner is in imminent danger of becoming a victim of domestic violence.



Under terms of F. S. A. § 741.30, petitioners for ex parte orders, and the factors which courts may consider, may cite any of a lengthy list of factors that put them at risk. In addition to the harm to pets, the list includes such other actions as assault, stalking, kidnapping or harming children, physical restraint, criminal history of violence, violation of another protection order, destruction of personal property, use of weapons against the petitioner, and “any other behavior or conduct that leads the petitioner to have reasonable cause to believe he or she is in imminent danger of becoming a victim of domestic violence.”

## Foster Care Manual for Domestic Violence Pets Now Available



For the first time since the program's inception in 1998, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (spcaLA) is offering its Animal Safety Net (ASN) program to other animal welfare agencies to help them start a foster care program for the pets of domestic violence survivors. ASN intervenes in the cycle of violence by providing a safe haven for the pets of survivors, thereby freeing them and their family to seek the support and services that they need (*See the [November 2015 LINK-Letter.](#)*)

The 130-page guide includes an introduction to the cycle of violence; ASN statistics; and how to work with the community. Procedures for working with clients include: terms of agreement; client intake processes and scenarios; returning and relinquishing animals; forms; and FAQs. Another section describes processes for pet intake and getting to know the animal better. When animals need to be placed into long-term care, the manual describes strategies for matching pets with foster parents.

Statistics compiled of ASN participants model data reported elsewhere:

- 64% of clients would not have gone into shelter had they not been able to place their pet with ASN
- 92.6% of clients said having a photo of their pet, provided by ASN, helped comfort them
- 100% of clients said that knowing their pets were safe made things emotionally easier for them
- 23% of ASN pets had been previously abused
- 80% of participants said their pets would have been killed, hurt, abandoned, or neglected if they had been left behind.

Pets entering the Safety Net are spayed or neutered and given updated vaccinations, comprehensive blood work, a microchip, and a new identity (new name, collar, and ID tag) to reduce the potentially dangerous risk of the abuser finding it.

Available as a pdf download, the manual includes an extensive assortment of forms and contracts. The manual is being made freely available for educational purposes providing that spcaLA is acknowledged. The manual is available both in the National Link Coalition website's [Resources section](#) and on the [spcaLA website](#).

### *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](http://www.nationallinkcoalition.org)

## *THE LINK AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM*

### **US DOJ Sees Link Collaborations as Critical for Public Safety**

In April, 2013, the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (DOJOJP) convened the first meeting of an Animal Cruelty Working Group, believed to be the first time the federal government's top law enforcement agency recognized the significance of animal abuse as it impacted public safety. Meeting in the immediate aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombings, the group noted at the time:



*“The topic of animal cruelty may seem unimportant in the face of events like the Boston bombing, school shootings, and other recent tragedies, but we know there’s a history of animal cruelty in the backgrounds of many perpetrators of violent acts.”*

More recently, the Working Group hosted a roundtable on July 28, 2016 to highlight the successes and challenges of collaborating on abuse cases and how law enforcement and animal welfare experts can work together to combat animal cruelty. More than 100 participants from state and local government, federal agencies and non-profit organizations attended.



On Dec. 15, 2016, DOJOJP [published a blog](#) describing how law enforcement can increase public safety and mitigate other criminal behaviors by actively working with animal care and control agencies to combat animal cruelty. DOJOJP Diagnostic Center Policy Advisor Alyse Altenburg said there remains a great need for collaboration, data tracking and information sharing among all entities enforcing animal cruelty laws. These efforts have the potential to contribute to enhanced public safety while ensuring animal welfare remains a priority.

**Alyse Altenburg**

“Animal cruelty cases carry dual importance in law enforcement as there is a suspected link between cases of animal cruelty and occurrence of other violent behaviors like domestic violence, child and elder abuse and public safety concerns,” she wrote. “Research suggests that animal cruelty may also serve as an indicator for future violent behavior and capturing animal cruelty data may enhance law enforcement efforts and investigations in mitigating criminal behavior.

“The importance of collaboration among state, local and federal organizations investigating cases of animal cruelty cannot be overstated. Animal cruelty cases are often highly complex, involve numerous individuals and may take place over a number of years. Collaborating on animal cruelty cases and coordinating with animal welfare organizations is essential to providing life-saving care to the affected animals and preserving key evidence. “

## Mississippi Bill Would Mandate Reports to FBI NIBRS System

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's program to include four types of animal abuse within its National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) -- to begin to get statistics on the incidence of animal abuse and case outcomes -- is prompting states to legislate compliance. A bill introduced on Jan. 13 into the Mississippi Legislature, **HB 575**, would mandate local police and sheriffs to utilize a form to report all investigations of simple or aggravated cruelty to a dog or cat to the FBI.



Rep. Greg Snowden

Reports will be made on a form to be devised by the Attorney General, in collaboration with the Mississippi Sheriffs' Association and the Mississippi Association of Police Chiefs.

The landmark NIBRS program ([see the March 2016 LINK-Letter](#)) delineates four types of animal abuse: simple or gross neglect (animal hoarding); intentional abuse and torture; organized animal abuse (animal fighting); and animal sexual abuse.

The bill was introduced by Speaker Pro Tem Greg Snowden. The bill was referred to the Agriculture and Judiciary Committees and, if enacted, would take effect July 1, 2017.

The NIBRS provision is added to other terms in the bill that would expand the definitions of felony aggravated cruelty to dogs and cats and mandate psychological evaluations for convicted offenders. These provisions pertain only to domesticated dogs and cats because the existing Mississippi anti-cruelty statute, known as the Dog and Cat Pet Protection Law of 2011, is limited in scope to these species because "these are the animals most often serving as the loyal and beloved pets of the citizens of this state." Other species are specifically excluded from its enhanced protection provisions.

## Iowa Bill Would Require Veterinary Reporting, Child Protection Alerting, and Psychological Counseling

An omnibus animal welfare measure introduced in the Iowa State Senate by Rep. Tony Bisignano would require veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty, law enforcement officers investigating animal cruelty to alert child protective services, and address psychological evaluation and treatment for offenders.



Iowa **S.F. 129** would require veterinarians who suspect that an animal that has been subjected to animal abuse, neglect or torture to report the incident to local law enforcement agencies. Reports made in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability.

The measure also requires law enforcement officials to file a child endangerment alert report with the Department of Human Services if a minor child witnesses suspected animal abuse, neglect or torture. The measure would also permit, and in some cases require, courts to order psychological or psychiatric evaluation or treatment.

It also creates seven new criminal offenses describing animal abuse, neglect, torture, abandonment, and endangerment. The bill is in the Senate Agriculture Committee.

## Oregon Bill Would Create Statewide Animal Abuse Prosecutor



Rep. Brian Clem

A bill introduced into the Oregon State Legislature would cause that state to join Virginia (*See the [February 2015 LINK-Letter](#)*) as the only two states believed to have special prosecutors tasked with assisting with animal cruelty prosecutions on a statewide level. Oregon **HB 2026** would appropriate money from the General Fund to the Department of Justice to support a position dedicated exclusively to assisting local district attorneys and law enforcement with the prosecution of cases involving the “detriment or risk of detriment” to animals.

The measure, sponsored by Rep. Brian Clem, would take effect Jan. 1, 2017. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee with subsequent referral to the Ways and Means Committee.

## ANIMAL ABUSE AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE

### Mandatory Reporting Proposed in New York, Maine, Iowa

A bill in the New York State Senate would mandate veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty. Veterinarians in New York are currently permitted to make such reports, with good-faith immunity from civil and criminal liability, but are not required to do so. **New York S621** would require veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty to police, SPCAs, peace officers, district attorney's offices, animal control officers, the department of agriculture and markets, or other appropriate government agencies and to turn over necessary records. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Phil Boyle, is in the Senate Higher Education Committee.

Similarly, **Maine LD 157** would require veterinarians who suspect an animal to be the subject of cruelty or neglect to report the case to the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. Currently, Maine veterinarians are permitted to report cruelty or neglect, and are required to report only “aggravated” animal cruelty. The bill is in the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee.

**Iowa S.F. 129** would require veterinarians who suspect that an animal that has been subjected to animal abuse, neglect or torture to report the incident to local law enforcement agencies. Reports made in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability. Currently, Iowa has no established procedures for veterinary reporting of abuse.

### British Links Training Assists Veterinary Team Members

[The Links Group UK](#) will hold a Veterinary Training Initiative on June 1 to help veterinary teams better approach clients presenting suspected cases of animal abuse.



The training, to be held at the People’s Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) head office in Tedford, Shropshire, features Links Group Chair Dr. Freda Scott-Park; Paula Boyden, Veterinary Director of Dogs Trust; and Phil Wilson, Senior Prosecutions Case Officer for the RSPCA. Topics include: the evidence linking human and animal abuse; recognizing Non-Accidental Injury and signs of abuse; a Crimestoppers overview of The Link; step-by-step processes for responding to and documenting animal abuse in the veterinary clinic; and the legal perspective for successful prosecutions.

Boyden and Scott-Park recently conducted Link training for over 100 veterinarians in Norway.

## Public Health Authors Call for Greater Veterinary Role in Responding to Intimate Partner Violence

Noting that a great number of women who experience Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) are reluctant to disclose it, and that these women's concerns for their animals' well-being likely bring them to veterinary clinics regardless of whether the pets themselves have been abused, a team of public health specialists has published a commentary calling for greater veterinary involvement in preventing domestic violence.



Molly Allison, MPH

“Veterinary practice staff members can potentially play a unique role in IPV intervention, especially in instances where IPV occurs in conjunction with pet abuse,” wrote Molly Allison and her colleagues at the University of Kansas Medical Center’s Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health. The commentary appeared in the Jan. 1, 2017 issue of the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*.

The authors argue that while standardized training and protocols for identifying and addressing IPV are lacking, veterinary staffs can still take proactive steps to keep family violence from escalating. These strategies include: disseminating information about IPV and animal abuse; creating a relationship-centered care model; and developing partnerships with violence protection agencies.

“Making educational materials on IPV and animal abuse available to clients may encourage potential victims to view veterinary clinics as supportive, nonjudgmental environments,” they wrote. However, simply presenting information may inadvertently convey a wrong message that it is exclusively the victim’s responsibility to seek help. A multilayered approach, which includes compassionate listening, shared decision-making, relationship-centered care, and building confidence and knowledge among staff members to provide guidance to women, may be more effective in positively affecting the well-being of animals by leading women to seek help sooner. Such an approach is a long-established health care model in physician-patient relationships.

Additional training in the skills needed for veterinarians to appropriately address animal and human abuse should be included in veterinary school curricula and continuing education, they wrote. Partnering with local violence prevention organizations can help veterinary practices to collaborate with women in developing safety plans for themselves and their pets. Practices could also consider establishing a memorandum of understanding with these agencies to provide pro bono or low-cost care or boarding for pets of women affected by violence.

AVMA market research has long established that women comprise the overwhelming majority of clients in small-animal practices. Recently, veterinary associations in Scotland and New Zealand have defined veterinary medicine as a “three-dimensional profession” with one of the highest likelihoods of encountering IPV victims. These associations have taken progressive steps to include the profession in proactive responses to domestic violence ([See the October 2015 LINK-Letter](#)).

## *ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CHILD MALTREATMENT*



### **What Provisions Exist for Abused Children Who Have Pets?**

An ongoing concern in child protective services is how to address the human-animal bond that may exist between children and their pets. This bond may be especially powerful if the child has been a victim of abuse and the pet is a close emotional support and confidant. Caseworkers often report situations in which children believe their animals protect them from nighttime incursions from abusive parents, and children

who would willingly go into foster care or group homes only if they could take their pets with them.

Unfortunately, many child protective services workers have not been trained to recognize the significance of these emotional bonds. Children's relationships with their animals are frequently overlooked completely, or are an afterthought at best, amid the plethora of other factors being evaluated to assure positive outcomes for abused children. Two overarching questions have not been widely discussed:

- **Should an abused child be permitted to take his or her pets along into foster care or an adoptive family?**
- **Should foster or adoptive homes be screened for the presence and welfare of animals, with children who would benefit from animal companionship placed in these homes?**

No systematic, national data are known to exist regarding these issues. However, it has recently come to the attention of *The LINK-Letter* that at least three states – Texas, Georgia and Alabama – have established minimal provisions in these areas. These provisions affect child safety, but not emotional attachments.

The **Texas** Administrative Code, Title 40, Part 19, Chapter 749 (Minimum Standards for Child-Placing Agencies) includes Subchapter O (Foster Homes: Health and Safety Requirements). Rule §749.2917, effective Jan. 1, 2017, reads:

#### **What are the requirements for animals that are present at a foster home?**

- (a) Any animals on the premises of a home must be kept free of disease and must not create health problems or a health risk for children.
- (b) Animals must be vaccinated and treated as recommended by a licensed veterinarian.
- (c) The caregivers must have documentation at the home showing that dogs and cats have been vaccinated for rabies as required by Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 826.

**Georgia's** Division of Family and Children's Services issues a [Foster Parent Manual](#) to all foster families. The 145-page manual, last updated in 2006, addresses an extensive list of issues including: vaccination requirements for dogs, cats and ferrets; special approvals for exotic animals; guidelines for safety precautions that protect children from dog bites; guidelines for pet selection and training when bringing a new animal into the home; safe behaviors and socialization techniques for children interacting with dogs; and breeds of dogs believed to be more or less likely to be aggressive. The manual notes, "A close

nurturing relationship with a pet can provide a very therapeutic experience for a child. Unfortunately, this may not prove to be true with the child’s relationship with other animals, or even the same animal under less friendly circumstances.”

The [Alabama](#) Department of Human Resources’ [Minimum Standards for Foster Family Homes](#) similarly addresses only safety issues. Animals may be kept in the foster home only if they have been vaccinated if required by law. Animals shall not be kept if they have demonstrated any aggressive behavior. Lizards, snakes, turtles and other animals that could pose a threat must be kept confined. Children may be allowed to handle pets if it is determined that it is reasonably safe to do so.

We have heard anecdotal reports that because leaving the pet behind can be traumatic for a child, the Texas Department of Family Protective Services can have an animal removed and accompany the child, but only if it is currently vaccinated and if the foster parent agrees to take the animal as well. It is not clear whether this is an informal administrative policy or whether such provision is included in the Code.

The National LINK Coalition would like to know if similar provisions are in place in other states. Readers are encouraged to contact us and provide us with specific statutory or regulatory citations and language regarding pets and foster care or adoptive families. We hope to be able to compile more information on this important topic.

## Texas Bill Would Include Pets in Child Abuse Protection Orders

Modeling language used in 31 states that allow courts to include harm to a victim’s animals as a condition which could be deemed to be a violation of a protection-from-abuse order, a bill introduced in the Texas Legislature this January would create a similar situation for protection orders issued on behalf of abused children.

**HB 289**, pre-filed by Rep. Dade Phelan before the 2017 Legislature convened, would amend Chap. 261, subchapter F of the Family Code and Sec. 25.07(a) of the Penal Code to add child abuse protection orders to the conditions pertaining to such orders issued in cases of family violence, sexual assault or abuse, stalking, or trafficking. These terms include: committing further acts of family violence; communicating with, harassing or threatening a protected family member; possessing a firearm; and visiting a protected family member’s residence, place of employment, school, or child care facility.



Rep. Dade Phelan

Sec. 25.07(a)(5) would include any action that “harms, threatens, or interferes with the care, custody, or control of a pet, companion animal, or assistance animal that is possessed by a person protected by the order or condition of bond.” If approved, the measure would take effect Sept. 1, 2017.

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

## NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS



Alicia Kennedy

### Steering Committee Developing Link-based Strategy and Response in Victoria, Australia

A new group in the state of Victoria, Australia, is addressing Link issues. Alicia Kennedy, a veterinarian and founder of [Cherished Pets](#), a social veterinary enterprise with a social mission to support companion pet ownership in vulnerable people, tells *The LINK-Letter* about the need for community collaboration on the Bellarine peninsula south of Melbourne.

Kennedy interacts regularly with local social and human health service providers, and in the last six months she became involved with several cases of domestic violence where pets are involved. “It seems in our area of Victoria there is not a regional strategy or response plan for pets in these cases. I have been providing case management services pro bono.”

As a result of this apparent void and huge need, Kennedy initiated a community meeting last November that brought together local agencies, the police, local government, animal welfare, veterinary, and health bodies to get a conversation rolling. “The response has been overwhelming and we are now acting as a Regional Steering Committee to develop a Strategy and Response Plan for companion pets in domestic violence cases. It is very exciting indeed,” she says.

Kennedy has also engaged the Australian Veterinary Association in this initiative and they are sending a state representative to the meetings. A further strategy session is planned for February.

Another group in the Melbourne area is also addressing animal abuse and interpersonal violence. The Eastern Metropolitan Regional Family Violence Partnership has included Link issues into training curricula and has amended the mission statement to include “build a system that provides safety and justice to all women, children and animals experiencing family violence in our region” ([See the June 2016 LINK-Letter](#)).

### HAVEN Reports Busy Year Building Public, Professional Awareness



Participants listen to a HAVEN Link training

Our Link coalition in the Berkshires of Western Massachusetts – [HAVEN](#) (Human/Animal Violence Education Network) – reports that 2016 was an incredibly busy year for visiting area organizations to acquaint them with The Link. HAVEN was included in 21 trainings, reaching over 500 police and sheriff’s officers, college students, nutritional program officials, domestic violence staff and volunteers, senior citizens, health educators, the Council on Aging, prosecutors, victim assistance staff, animal control officers, veterinary technician students, and others in the area. Meanwhile, retired Judge Martha P. Grace conducted four trainings for Massachusetts District Court judges, the Animal Law course at Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, and Youth & Family Services post-doctoral fellows. Way to go!

## ***BUILDING AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK***

### **Massachusetts Task Force Recommends Extensive Link Measures**

A blue-ribbon, multi-disciplinary panel of authorities in Massachusetts has published a report summarizing their thorough investigation of the state's animal protection laws and identifying solutions to fill in gaps. Several of the key recommendations specifically address Link issues.

The 107-page [\*Findings and Recommendations of the Animal Cruelty and Protection Task Force\*](#), published in July 2016, culminated a comprehensive investigation. Eleven law enforcement, prosecution and animal care and control professionals, aided by 14 advisors, met 23 times over a two-year period. The Task Force was authorized by a state law enacted in 2014 that increased penalties for animal abuse and required veterinarians to report suspected cruelty (*See the [September 2014 LINK-Letter](#)*).

The Task Force published 33 recommendations addressing: updating of state laws; seizure of animals in cruelty cases; animal control; education and training; reporting suspected animal cruelty; housing policies; an animal abuser registry; and The Link between animal abuse and other forms of violence. The Link recommendations included:

- Amend statutes to **remove barriers to reporting suspected animal cruelty**, using uniform and user-friendly reporting systems to facilitate, standardize, and enhance collaboration and information-sharing among reporters. The Task Force recommended making the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Elder Affairs, and the Disabled Persons Protection Commission mandated reporters of animal cruelty. They also recommended that animal control officers be made mandated reporters of child abuse, elder abuse and abuse against disabled persons. The Task Force suggested that others involved in animal care, such as veterinary assistants and pet groomers, could be added as mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect.
- Develop specific **training for law enforcement** personnel on animal cruelty and the connection to domestic violence.
- **Educate veterinarians** about recognizing animal cruelty and understanding current law.
- Address **animal hoarding** through the creation of: a state multidisciplinary team to train and implement emergency responses; a task force to focus on early intervention; mental health counseling; and a Department of Mental Health and Department of Corrections forensic assessment protocol for early intervention, sentencing, treatment, and rehabilitation.
- Amend state laws to include an **animal sexual abuse** conviction as a predicate offense for sex offender registration.
- Amend the state's **dangerousness statute** to include the crimes of animal cruelty and animal fighting as bases for a request for a determination of detention and/or release upon conditions.
- Explore adding **animal cruelty as a domestic violence offense**.
- Explore the use and awareness of **domestic violence pet protective orders** and ensure they are utilized when needed.

“Because forms of violence are so interconnected, investigating one type of abuse often can help address other violence that may be found in a home; sharing information between agencies is often referred to as ‘cross-reporting,’” the report noted. “The intent of cross-reporting is not to engage professionals in an investigation outside of a field of expertise, it is to create an avenue to make a report across agencies to engage in a preventative approach.”

Citing research studies conducted in Massachusetts, the report concluded that “When our policies and programs recognize this link, all our family members can be better protected.”



Rep. Jim Dines

## New Mexico Measure Would Encourage Link Training

A resolution introduced in January in the New Mexico Legislature requests that the state Departments of Public Safety and Children, Youth & Families consider training on The Link between animal abuse and family violence in their training curricula for field workers and other appropriate staff.

New Mexico [HJM 6](#), a Joint Memorial sponsored by Rep. Jim Dines, contains an extensive preamble noting studies which demonstrate strong correlations between animal abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, and elder abuse. The preamble further notes that because animal abuse is often the most publicly visible sign of family violence it serves as an early indicator of other abuses. The preamble states that training on The Link could help the two departments, whose staffs are uniquely positioned to recognize and respond, to highlight and prevent existing and potential child abuse, domestic violence and animal abuse. The measure is in the House Health & Human Services Committee.

## Veterinary College Training Addresses Animal Fighting as a Crime Against Society

Martha Smith-Blackmore, DVM, a Massachusetts forensics veterinarian and member of the National Link Coalition’s steering committee, was featured in the [Boston Globe](#) for her participation in a training at Tufts University’s Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine that introduced the audience to animal fighting as a “crime against society” with powerful associations to interpersonal violence. Seasoned law enforcement officials, veterinary students and animal control officers cringed as they watched graphic displays of the brutal nature of dogfighting that the newspaper called “an especially dark corner of American society.”



Martha Smith-Blackmore

“Often, when there’s a dead dog found floating in the harbor, these cases go unsolved,” said Smith-Blackmore. “There’s the potential for them to be solved if we have the right people in the right place with the right investigators.”

Other participants at the four-hour training included Terry Mills, director of blood sports investigations for the ASPCA, and Alan Borgal, director of law enforcement for the Animal Rescue League of Boston.

## *THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES*

### **Bills We're Watching... and Laws We're Celebrating**

As the 2017 state legislative season kicks into high gear, the National Link Coalition is encouraged by the increase in the number of bills being introduced to prevent animal, child and elder abuse and domestic violence that are based on Link principles. Join us as we follow these measures and salute our victories that will do a better job of protecting people and animals – and please let us know of new measures that are introduced in your state.

#### *Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders*



**Hawai'i HB 155** would allow either party to order the other to restrain from transferring, encumbering or disposing of pet animals during divorce, separation or annulment, particularly if one party poses a threat of physical harm to the animal. Courts could order a party to pay for support and maintenance of pets, consider the animals' well-being, and whether future ownership should be individual or joint. The measure is in the House Agriculture and Judiciary Committees.



**Indiana SB 314** would allow a court to grant an order of protection to: (1) award 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 has passed the Senate.



**Michigan HB 4026** would define “causing or attempting to cause physical harm” to an animal in which a family member has an ownership interest as an act of domestic violence in addition to any animal cruelty charges that might pertain. It would also allow domestic violence shelters that accept animals to receive state funding and would allow them to include veterinary care among the emergency health care services that they provide among the criteria for needing funding. The bill is in the Committee on Law and Justice.



**Nevada** law defines harming an animal to harass a spouse or partner as domestic violence. **SB62** would increase the penalty for this act to a Category B felony if the abuser is convicted of a similar act in Nevada or a similar felony in any other state. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



**Texas SB 339** and **HB 142** would create a new offense of illegal sexual contact called “indecent assault” and allow victims to obtain protective orders. Violations of these protective orders would include harming, threatening, or interfering with the care, custody or control of a pet, companion animal or assistance animal belonging to the protected party.

#### *“CASA for Animals”*



**New Jersey A 2041** and **S 433** would allow courts to issue “animal protection orders” forbidding persons convicted of animal cruelty from having contact with the abused animal or other animals as the court may determine, either permanently or for a specified period of time. The bill passed the Assembly and is in the Senate Economic Growth Committee.



**Rhode Island H5061** would require courts to order the appointment of an animal care advocate wherever the custody or well-being of an animal is at issue. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.

### *Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment*



**Michigan HB 4025** would increase the penalties for animal abuse committed in the presence of a child to a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year's imprisonment, \$2,000 fine, and 300 hours of community service. The bill is in the Committee on Law and Justice.



**New York S1432** criminalizes knowingly causing a minor to attend a place where exhibition of animal fighting is being conducted. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.



**New York S2470, S728** and **A2140** would increase penalties for aggravated animal cruelty in the presence of a child. **S2470** and **S728** are in the Agriculture Committee and **A2140** is in the Codes Committee.



**Texas HB 289** would make it a violation to harm or threaten a pet, companion animal or assistance animal belonging to a child under a protection-from-abuse order.

### *Animal Abuse and Elder Abuse*



**Washington HB 1153** and **SB 5099** would address growing threat of financial exploitation and physical neglect of seniors and people with disabilities by increasing penalties, reducing barriers to prosecution, and expanding the scope of protection for vulnerable persons. 1<sup>st</sup>-degree animal cruelty, including sexual contact with an animal, is listed among many crimes which prosecutors may cite as reasons for filing charges. The bills are in the House Appropriations and Senate Law & Justice Committees.

### *Animal Sexual Assault*



**Kentucky HB 143** would make the sexual assault of a dog or cat a first-offense Class D felony, and a Class C felony if committed in the presence of a minor. Currently, bestiality is illegal in Kentucky only if it occurs in conjunction with prostitution. Offenders would be barred from owning dogs or cats for 5 years for a first offense, and lifetime for subsequent convictions. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



**Massachusetts SD 110** would amend Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. Ch. 272, § 34, which currently uses the archaic language prohibiting “the abominable and detestable crime against nature either with mankind or with any animal,” to prohibit “a sexual act on an animal, uses an object to sexually abuse an animal, or knowingly permits a sexual act with an animal on any premises under such person’s control.”



**Missouri HB 431** would allow persons convicted of having sex with an animal to petition to have their names removed from the state sex offenders registry.



**Texas HB 1087** would prohibit various sexual acts with animals as bestiality, punishable as a felony. Currently, bestiality in Texas is illegal only if it occurs in conjunction with child pornography or the distribution of obscene material.

## *Animal Abuse and Other Crimes*



**California AB 197** would add animal abuse, child abuse, elder and dependent adult abuse, and other crimes to the list of “violent” felonies that could be prosecuted as a 3<sup>rd</sup> strike with additional years of imprisonment under the Three Strikes Law.



**Indiana SB 306** would increase the penalty from attending an animal fighting contest from a Class A misdemeanor to a Level 6 felony. The bill is in the Committee on Corrections and Criminal Law.



**Kentucky HB 135** would redefine animal torture to include deliberate neglect or physical abuse that results in death or serious physical injury to a dog or cat. Offenders would be barred from owning dogs or cats for 5 years for a first offense, and lifetime for subsequent convictions. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



**New Jersey A 2738** would expand the criminal and civil acts of animal cruelty to include the theft or release of an animal during the commission of a burglary. The bill is in the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.



**New Mexico HJM 6**, a Joint Memorial, requests that the state Departments of Public Safety and Children, Youth & Families consider training on The Link between animal abuse and family violence in their training curricula for field workers and other appropriate staff. The measure is in the House Health & Human Services Committee.



**New York S1680** and **A3038** would expand the definition of aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to animals during the commission of a felony. **S1680** is in the Rules Committee; **A3038** is in the Agriculture Committee.



**New York S251** would expand animal fighting prohibitions to criminalize promoting, attending, facilitating, training, breeding or selling fighting animals, or selling, manufacturing or owning animal fighting paraphernalia. The bill is in the Higher Education Committee.



**Oregon HB 2026** would appropriate money from the General Fund to the Department of Justice to fund a position dedicated exclusively to assisting local district attorneys and law enforcement with the prosecution of cases involving the “detriment or risk of detriment” to animals. The measure would take effect Jan. 1, 2017. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee with subsequent referral to the Ways and Means Committee.



**Texas HB 1357** would define as “family violence” coercive, controlling or punishing acts or threats of abuse directed against an animal owned by a member of the household or someone with whom the abuser has had a dating relationship. The bill also makes technical corrections to assist prosecutors in animal cruelty cases.

## *Cross Reporting*



**Iowa S.F. 129** would require veterinarians who suspect animal abuse, neglect or torture to report the incident to law enforcement agencies with good-faith immunity from civil and criminal liability. Law enforcement officials would be required to file a child endangerment alert report with the Department of Human Services if a minor child witnesses suspected animal abuse, neglect or torture. Courts could, and in some cases would be required to, order psychological or psychiatric evaluation or treatment. The bill creates seven new criminal offenses describing animal abuse, neglect, torture, abandonment, and endangerment. The bill is in the Senate Agriculture Committee.



**Maine LD 157** would require veterinarians who suspect an animal to be the subject of cruelty or neglect to report the case to the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. Currently, Maine veterinarians are permitted to report cruelty or neglect, and are required to report only “aggravated” animal cruelty. The bill is in the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee.



**Massachusetts SD 2011** would add domestic violence workers, animal control officers, and humane officers to the list of mandated reporters of suspected child sexual abuse.



**New York S621** would require veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty to police, SPCAs, peace officers, district attorney's offices, animal control officers, the department of agriculture and markets, or other appropriate government agencies and to turn over necessary records. New York veterinarians are currently permitted to report but are not required to do so. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Phil Boyle, is in the Senate Higher Education Committee.

## *Psychological Evaluation of Offenders*



**Mississippi HB 575** would define malicious intent to torture, maim, disfigure, mutilate, burn, suffocate, drown, or starve to death a domesticated dog or cat as felony-level aggravated cruelty and allow up to 10 acts to be considered separate offenses. The bill would mandate psychological evaluations for offenders. The measure would also mandate police and sheriffs to utilize a form to be devised by the Attorney General, in collaboration with the Mississippi Sheriffs’ Association and the Mississippi Association of Police Chiefs, for reporting all investigations of simple or aggravated cruelty to a dog or cat into the FBI’s National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). The bill was referred to the Agriculture and Judiciary Committees.



**New Jersey A2367** and **S529**, known as “Shyanne’s Law,” would require mental health evaluation for all animal cruelty offenders, and mental health counseling if warranted by the evaluation. Currently, mental health counseling is mandated only for juvenile offenders. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Natural Resources and Senate Economic Growth Committees.



**New Mexico HB 210** would create a new category of “extreme cruelty to animals” and would require persons convicted of this offense to undergo psychological counseling. The bill is in the House Consumer & Public Affairs Committee.

## *Animal Hoarding*



**New Jersey A3638** would require mental health evaluation for all animal cruelty offenders and would establish animal hoarding as an animal cruelty offense. The bill was reported favorably out of the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.



**New York A44** would create the crime of companion animal hoarding, defined as ownership, possession or custody of more than 25 companion animals living in conditions likely to jeopardize the health and well-being of the animals and/or people. Offenders would be required to undergo mental health evaluation and may be required to undergo counseling and be prohibited from owning animals. The bill is in the Agriculture Committee.

## *THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE*

### **Child Protection Systems Modeled After Animal Protection Work**

While many Link advocates are aware of how the “Little Mary Ellen” case of 1874 caused SPCAs and humane societies to investigate child abuse and gave rise to the nascent child protection movement, the linked history of the two movements is somewhat more complex. In this paper, Elizabeth LeBow and Debbie Cherney of the Cornell University Department of Animal Science argue that the framework for the creation and enforcement of child protective laws was modeled almost entirely after animal protection. Although animal and child protection have subsequently diverged due to the notion of social work for families, the American child protection movement would not be the same were it not for the preceding animal protection movement. Early issues which stalled the development of child welfare legislation included: different definitions of “childhood”; public values supporting independence, privacy and parental autonomy; absence of enforcement agencies; and no defined standards as to when the state could intervene. Meanwhile, much as there were divergent opinions in animal protection as to whether the best strategy was enforcement or education, the child protection field was marked by differing opinions regarding enforcement or social welfare approaches. Following early successes of SPCAs, child protection saw significant expansion of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the establishment of juvenile justice systems and advocacy for child protection laws across the U.S.

-- LeBow, E.W., & Cherney, D.J. (2015). *The role of animal welfare legislation in shaping child protection in the United States. International Journal of Education and Social Science, 2(6).*

### **Book to Examine Community Link Issues**

A new international handbook scheduled for publication in April fills a large gap in current scholarly literature on animal abuse studies. The editors move beyond the debate that has traditionally dominated the discourse of animal abuse – the link between one-on-one interpersonal violence and animal abuse – and towards those institutionalized forms of animal abuse which are routine and socially acceptable such as: eating meat, vivisection, animal sexual assault, sport and hunting, animal trafficking, animals in youth gangs and in war, species extinction, and the passivity of national and international organizations in combating animal abuse.

-- Maher, J., Pierpoint, H., & Beirne, P. (2017). *The Palgrave International Handbook of Animal Abuse Studies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.



## Do Animal Cruelty and Firesetting Lead to Future Criminal Behavior?

The “Macdonald Triad”, published in 1963, showed correlations between histories of childhood arson, bedwetting and cruelty to animals as markers for future antisocial behaviors. The purpose of this new study was to determine whether animal cruelty and firesetting can serve as markers of fearlessness and disinhibition. File data analyzed from 496 male sex offenders revealed that animal cruelty correlated significantly better with fearlessness than with disinhibition and firesetting correlated significantly better with disinhibition than with fearlessness. A multiple regression analysis controlling for age at time of discharge, participant race, and offender category (rapist and child molester) also confirmed this hypothesis. Animal cruelty and firesetting failed to predict violent offending after controlling for fearlessness and disinhibition, respectively. The results suggest that animal cruelty may serve as a marker for fearlessness and callous–unemotional traits, whereas firesetting may serve as a marker for disinhibition and low self-control.

-- Walters, G. D. (2016). *Animal cruelty and firesetting as behavioral markers of fearlessness and disinhibition: Putting two-thirds of Macdonald’s triad to work.* *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 28(1), 10-23.

## THE LINK... IN THE NEWS



### Man Charged with Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence in Shooting of Girlfriend’s Donkey

A Michigan man was charged with felony domestic animal cruelty and misdemeanor domestic battery when sheriff’s deputies in Indiana arrested him for allegedly shooting and killing his girlfriend’s pet donkey. The [Michigan City News-Dispatch](#) reported that Olvydas Abromavieius, 50, of Union Pier, Mich., was arrested in LaPorte County, Ind. on New Year’s Day. Officers responding to a report of a domestic disturbance found the donkey, a 5-year-old named “Jack,” bleeding from a gunshot wound near its left eye. The donkey died before a veterinarian could arrive.

**Olvydas Abromavieius** Abromavieius’ girlfriend also told deputies that he had battered her.

### Animal Cruelty Ex-Con Charged with Threatening Officer’s Family

A homeless man from Key West, Fla., who had been convicted in 2015 for beating his Chihuahua-mix dog in public, is now facing felony charges for allegedly threatening violence to the family of a law enforcement officer. David Anthony Gross, 52, was arrested on Jan. 4 after police said he crashed his car and did not stop for officers who were following him. Gross was also charged with drunk driving, leaving the scene of an accident and driving without a license. Gross had recently finished a jail term after violating his probation from the animal cruelty conviction and twice threatened harm to the family of his arresting officer. The [Miami Herald](#) reported that in June 2015,



Gross was arrested on animal cruelty charges after witnesses in Marathon told police he **David Gross** beat, choked and abused “Batman,” a malnourished, thin dog who already had a mangled front leg from it being broken and not properly set. Gross swung Batman from his leash, bouncing him up and down, and threatened to throw him in the water, they said. Gross pleaded no contest to misdemeanor animal cruelty and failing to register as a convicted felon from Michigan. Judge Ruth Becker sentenced him to six months plus a year of probation, plus the forfeiture of Batman.



**Robert Sibley**

## Grandfather Trying to Cure Erectile Dysfunction Convicted of Child Pornography and Bestiality

A British grandfather received a suspended 12-month jail term after admitting to watching more than 146,000 online pornographic photos, including scenes of child sexual abuse and sex with animals, in a failed attempt to cure his erectile dysfunction. Robert Sibley, 67, of Harrogate, North Yorkshire, told York Crown Court that he had tried Viagra but found it too expensive, [The Mirror](#) reported. Authorities combing through Sibley’s computer found depictions of inter-species intercourse and 127 images of child porn. The sentencing Judge Andrew Stubbs QC said, “It’s a concern that he’s developed this substantial interest in young children, who suffered appalling abuse.” Stubbs ordered him to carry out 100 hours’ community service and pay £425 in court costs. He was also placed on the sex offenders registry for 10 years and is forbidden to use the Internet.



**Frank E. Bybee**

## Sheriff’s Deputy Charged with Elder Abuse, Attempted Murder, Forgery, and Other Allegations in Missing Dog Case

A Sarasota County, Fla. sheriff’s deputy who allegedly took \$1,000 from an elderly woman to help care for her dog – and who then reportedly gave the dog away and forged several of her checks to himself in the amount of \$65,000 – was charged with grand theft, exploitation of the elderly, battery, burglary, forgery, and attempted murder. The [Sarasota Herald-Tribune](#) reported that the 18-year veteran, detective and patrol deputy Frank Eugene Bybee, befriended the 79-year-old woman after responding to a call for service last Oct. 21 and then began making regular visits to her home in an effort to gain her trust. By December, she called police to report that Bybee was harassing her and the sheriff’s office launched an internal affairs investigation. After the alleged forgery was uncovered, the woman said Bybee came to her home, held her down, forced prescription medication into her mouth, and left her car running in the garage to fill the house with carbon monoxide. Bybee’s arraignment was scheduled for Feb. 24. The dog, a 2-year-old Yorkshire terrier named “J.J.”, had been sold on Craigslist but was subsequently located and returned home.

## Four Children Removed from Roach- and Feces-Infested House



**Tiffany Thompson, Jackie Thompson, and Brittany Lieggi**

Three people in Elizabethtown, Ky., were arrested and charged with multiple counts of endangering the welfare of a minor when police responding to a domestic dispute found four children, allegedly including a newborn, living in a house infested with cockroaches and dog and cat feces. [WDRB-TV](#) reported that police said the cockroaches covered the walls, floors, slices of pizza, in a baby crib, and even in a jar of pickles. Police arrested Brittany Lieggi, 30, the mother of three of the children, and Jackie Thompson, 32, and Tiffany Thompson, 31, who are listed as the parents of the newborn boy.

Child protective services removed the four children from the home.

## Sheriff's Deputy Charged with Bestiality, Child Pornography



Andrew Sustaita, Jr.

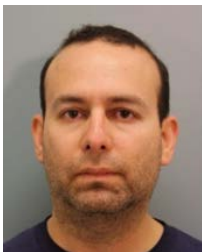
A former Harris County, Texas sheriff's deputy who was accused of bestiality in January subsequently had three additional felony charges of child pornography lodged against him when investigators allegedly discovered some 200 photos of child porn in addition to a bestiality video on his laptop. The Harris County District Attorney's office told the [Houston Chronicle](#) that Andrew Sustaita, Jr. also allegedly produced and participated in the bestiality video which involved sex with a dog. Sustaita, who had served as a constable with the department for six years, was relieved of his duties following his arrest.

## Man Charged in Deaths of Mother's Bunny and Kitten

Detectives in Muncie, Ind. believe that Clinton Edger Ricker, 32, shot his mother's kitten and rabbit with a BB gun and threw them in a wood-burning stove. Ricker was arrested on animal cruelty charges despite his claim that he was trying to get rid of the rabbit in a mercy killing because it had a fatal tumor. Ricker gave no explanation behind the kitten's death. [The Star Press](#) reported that officers arriving at the home found the burnt animals on the porch. Ricker is also facing a charge of threatening police officers for saying he should have killed them instead of the animals. Court records indicate Ricker has previously been convicted of burglary, theft, forgery, and other offenses. "We see a decent amount of neglect cases, left out in the cold, not fed, beaten, but executed and incinerated is not anything in eight years I've been around I've heard of," explained Det. Kyle Monroe with the Muncie Police Department.



Clinton Edger Ricker



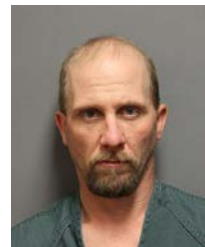
Hector Campos

## Neighborhood Feud Turns Deadly Over Dog

Authorities in Spring, Texas, charged Hector Campos with murder for allegedly shooting his next-door neighbor in a feud over her dog. [KHOU-11 TV](#) reported that witnesses saw him shoot the woman after he yelled at her for kicking her small dog. Neighbors took videos of the incident. Another neighbor took out his own gun and held Campos at gun point until Harris County deputies arrived. The 53-year-old victim, who was not named, was taken to a hospital where she later died. Detectives said that Campos and the victim had had a history of problems, including his blaming her after his wife left him several months ago.

## Man Pleads Guilty to Shooting, Burning Wife's Dogs

A Pennsylvania man has pleaded guilty to two misdemeanor counts of animal cruelty, and is awaiting trial on charges of aggravated assault, for shooting his wife's two dogs and burning their bodies following an argument with her over another man. Steven Saxe, 38, of Sweet Valley, admitted the gruesome crime that a Luzerne County SPCA humane officer called "heinous." The [Wilkes-Barre Citizens' Voice](#) reported that prosecutors said that after Saxe and his wife, Noelle, got into a fight, he burst into the other man's home waving a pistol and threatening several residents. The next day, Noelle reported her two dogs, "Elmo" and "Lucky," had been shot and their bodies dumped into a smoldering burn pit. Sentencing was scheduled for March 6.



Steven Saxe

## ***LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES***

**Feb. 15 – Camden, N.J.:** Phil Arkow will speak about the animal abuse/domestic violence Link at the [Center for Family Services](#).

**Feb. 22 – Vineland, N.J.:** Phil Arkow will speak about the animal abuse/domestic violence Link at the [Center for Family Services](#).

**Feb. 22 – Minneapolis, Minn.:** Randy Lockwood and Laura Niestat will train on Animal Cruelty Investigations - The Role of the Veterinarian at the [Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association](#) meeting.

**Feb. 22 – West Palm Beach, Fla.:** The [South Florida Link Coalition](#) will meet.

**Feb. 22 – Geelong, Vict., Australia:** The [regional steering committee](#) to develop a strategy and response plan to domestic violence and animal abuse will meet.

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

**Feb. 23 – Sewell, N.J.:** Phil Arkow will speak about the animal abuse/domestic violence Link at the [Center for Family Services](#).

**Mar. 1 – London, U.K.:** [The Links Group UK](#) will meet at Dogs Trust.

**Mar. 1 – Pittsfield, Mass.:** [HAVEN](#) (Human/Animal Violence Education Network) will meet.

**Mar. 2 – Denver, Colo.:** Allie Phillips will speak about co-sheltering at an Institute for Human-Animal Connection [conference](#) for domestic violence and animal shelter partners.

**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 the N.J. [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,” and Jenny Edwards will present on “Understanding Bestiality and Its Application to Veterinary Social Work,” as part of the University of Tennessee’s [Veterinary Social Work](#) intensive. The NASW has approved CE contact hours for the Intensive.

**Mar. 16-18 – Seattle, Wash.:** Jenny Edwards will present on “Bestiality and the Link to Human Sexual Abuse and Offending” at the [American Psychology-Law Society conference](#).

**Mar. 19 – Estevan, Sask., Canada:** Dennis Will, Anne Allen, and Kaley Pugh will discuss animal abuse as a reliable indicator of domestic violence in humans, the parallel evolution of child and animal protection laws, and challenges for veterinary professionals in reporting suspected cruelty and neglect as part of the Saskatchewan VMA’s [Conversation About Animal Welfare in Saskatchewan](#).

**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. 29: West Palm Beach, Fla.:** The [South Florida Link Coalition](#) will meet.

**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](#).

**April 7 – Austin, Texas:** Genie Wright and Susan Skinner will present on “The Link Between Animal Cruelty and Domestic Violence,” and other speakers will present on veterinary forensics and animal cruelty investigation and prosecution, at the [2017 Animal Law Institute](#) of the Texas Bar Association’s Animal Law Section

**April 9-11 – Ottawa, Ont., Canada:** Barbara Cartwright will present on “Beyond the Violence Link: Connecting Our Collective Vulnerability to Build a Humane Canada,” and Ayala Sher and Dayna Desmarais will present on “Companion Animal Fostering for Those Fleeing Domestic Violence: When a Community Comes Together,” at the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary [Canadian Federation of Humane Societies](#) conference.

**April 9 – Yorkton, Sask., Canada:** Dennis Will, Anne Allen, and Kaley Pugh will discuss animal abuse as a reliable indicator of domestic violence in humans, the parallel evolution of child and animal protection laws, and challenges for veterinary professionals in reporting suspected cruelty and neglect as part of the Saskatchewan VMA’s [Conversation About Animal Welfare in Saskatchewan](#).

**April 18 – Bowling Green, Ky.:** Allie Phillips will give a keynote address on “The Co-Occurrence of Animal Abuse and Family Violence,” and a workshop on “Therapy Animals Supporting Maltreated Children in the Criminal Justice System,” at the [Spring Conference](#) for the Community Collaborations for Children Regional Network.

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

**Apr. 24-25 – Grand Junction, Colo.:** “Changing Societal Attitudes about Animal Abuse and Human Violence” and “The Human-Animal Bond in Domestic Violence Cases” will be presented at the Mesa County Domestic Violence Task Force’s [Domestic Violence Prevention Academy](#).

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

**May 16-18 – New York City, N.Y.:** The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual [International Veterinary Forensic Sciences Association](#) conference, sponsored by ASPCA, will feature 21 sessions addressing such topics as: domestic violence and animal cruelty; law enforcement and intervention alternatives; multidisciplinary approaches to investigating animal crimes; cruelty offender assessment; human medicine’s experiences in recognizing and reporting non-accidental injury; and the role of veterinary nurses in animal abuse situations.

**May 22 – Dallas, Texas:** Maya Gupta and Kelsey McKay will present on “Animals and Domestic Violence: Another Tool of Manipulation” at the [Conference on Crimes Against Women](#).

**June 1 – Tedford, Shropshire, UK:** [Paula Boyden](#), Freda Scott-Park, and Phil Wilson will discuss The Link in an all-day training for veterinarians.

**June 2 – Dallas, Texas:** Animal hoarding will be discussed at the [Hoarding Conference](#) sponsored by Mental Health America of Greater Dallas.

**June 8-9 – Flagstaff, Ariz.:** Diana Webster and Christina Schwamberger will discuss The Link at the [Navajo Nation Bar Association](#) Annual Conference.

**June 25 – Reno, Nev.:** The [National Coalition on Violence Against Animals](#) will meet.

**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 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of [Pet Partners](#).

**Sept. 18-19: Albuquerque, N. Mex.:** “Positive Links,” [The New Mexico Conference on The Link](#), will hold its biennial conference featuring many national and regional speakers on a variety of Link-related topics. For the first time since the conference started in 2003 it will be a two-day event to allow more time for training and networking.

**Sept. 21-22 – Regina, Sask., Canada:** Randy Lockwood will be the keynote speaker at the Saskatchewan SPCA’s [2017 Link Conference](#).

**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  
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#### 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

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