



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



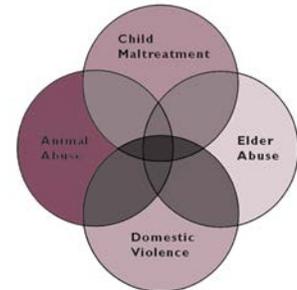
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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Special SOLar Eclipse Issue

THE LINK AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Veterinary Forensics Program Gets Shout-Out



The veterinary forensics program at Midwestern University in Glendale, Ariz. received a nice burst of publicity when [Fox 10 TV](#) in Phoenix featured the Diagnostic Pathology Center in a newscast about how the groundbreaking center is helping to bring animal abusers to justice.

“At its core, veterinary forensics is a veterinarian addressing animal abuse, acting as an advocate for the animal,” said Dr.

Nancy Bradley, Clinical Assistant Professor in Shelter Medicine. “Somebody has to be that advocate for the animals. If an animal truly has been abused, it needs to be addressed, it needs to be investigated, and it needs to be treated like any other crime.”

Building on the long-established reputation of using forensics to help investigators to solve crimes, veterinary forensics and veterinary forensic pathology can not only help determine how animals died but also uncover evidence that can lead law enforcement to the person who committed the crime.

“We can get bad guys off the street with this,” she told the station. “Plus, we can stop them from hurting these animals.”

Students in the veterinary college are involved in the necropsies and other investigative procedures. The students love the work and get very excited about it.

“After hearing that we had a potential perpetrator get arrested, that felt great,” said fourth-year student Greg Gstrein. “I almost did one of those fist pumps in the air, and just felt wonderful for that day knowing my work - my group's work - actually did something for this animal.”



Nancy Bradley

THE LINK AND... CHILD MALTREATMENT

Child Protection Agency Supports Enhanced Animal Cruelty Provisions

In the [July LINK-Letter](#), we reported that the Link between animal abuse and human violence was repeatedly cited as a rationale for a major overhaul of Pennsylvania's animal cruelty penalty and enforcement statutes. It subsequently came to our attention that [Pennsylvania's Center for Children's Justice](#) submitted a key letter of support just days before the measure was approved. We thought we'd share excerpts of this powerful supporting statement with you.

HB 1238, dubbed "Libre's Law" in honor of a rescued neglected puppy, made significant overhauls to the state's anti-cruelty statutes and increased the penalties for the most egregious offenses of abusing an animal. It is scheduled to take effect on Aug. 27.

"It might seem odd that Pennsylvania's leading statewide independent nonprofit advocating for abused children is weighing in on a bill that is entirely about the safety and well-being of animals," wrote Cathleen Palm, founder of the Center for Children's Justice, in a June 12 letter to members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. "In reality there is nothing odd about it.

"House Bill 1238 deserves support because the research is considerable about the significant correlation between the abuse of animals and the abuse of children."

Palm cited reports from the National Sheriffs Association, the new inclusion of animal cruelty crimes in the FBI's National Incident Based Reporting System, and a recent case where Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro took action against individuals involved in a "horrendous case" of child sexual abuse, child rape and child pornography in which two defendants were also involved in bestiality and animal cruelty ([See the June 2017 LINK-Letter](#)). Palm also cited two more recent cases in Pennsylvania where two children and their dog were discovered shot in a burning home as part of a murder-suicide, and where another child was left to die alongside her two cats and her beaten mother also in a home set ablaze.

In 2016, the Center, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and Humane PA collaborated to train members of the Pennsylvania judiciary about the Link between animal abuse and abuse against humans. The training highlighted how often perpetrators use a child's love of a cherished pet to groom the child or win the silence of the victimized child. "We were also unfortunately able to share real-life reminders that too often abuse against an animal preceded or was intertwined with lethal violence against a child," Palm wrote.

Palm's letter noted that Libre's Law "will provide much needed protections for Pennsylvania's animals. Equally compelling, enactment ensures that Pennsylvania's law enforcement officials will gain a potent tool to prevent violence against children."



THE LINK AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE

AVMA Program Considers Strategies for Addressing Domestic Violence

Building upon their recent article in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* ([See the February 2017 LINK-Letter](#)), Molly Allison and her colleagues from the University of Kansas Medical Center and the Rose Brooks domestic violence shelter in Kansas City presented a program on The Link at the 2017 AVMA conference.



Molly Allison

Discussing “Strategies Veterinary Practices Can Use to Address the Problem of Intimate Partner Violence,” they gave an overview of the psychological and emotional manipulations of power and control involved in domestic violence. “Protecting their pets from abuse is a major concern for women experiencing IPV and can lead to delayed help-seeking,” they said. “Pets often act as surrogates for human support and provide an enormous sense of emotional comfort for survivors.”

They encouraged veterinary professionals to recognize the physical and emotional isolation, guilt and shame often felt by IPV survivors, with or without the co-occurrence of pet abuse, and to implement strategies that address these factors and lead abused women to seek help for themselves and their pets much sooner than they might otherwise.

They suggested that veterinary clinics can: provide educational materials on the Link between animal abuse and IPV, such as research findings; offer strategies for emergency plans of action that include the pets; learn how to identify the signs of animal abuse; and provide contact information for local pet-friendly domestic violence shelters.

Women in abusive situations may experience conflicts about confiding in their veterinarians about IPV, fearing that they may be adversely judged, that their pets may be taken away from them, or that the veterinarian would not be able to provide any assistance. Similarly, practitioners may be conflicted about identifying and addressing animal abuse, fear losing clients or breaching confidentiality, fear endangering themselves or the survivor, or are unsure as to a proper response.

“Although there is less training available to veterinarians on identifying and addressing human abuse, veterinarians could focus on implementing relationship-centered care as a way to combat negative feelings some women experiencing IPV may associate with confiding in veterinarians,” they said. Relationship-centered care includes showing a willingness to listen to clients as they tell their stories, expressing sympathy and support, providing clear information, and engaging in shared decision-making with the survivor.

“Effective communication between veterinarian and client using the relationship-centered care model could be instrumental to positive health outcomes by motivating women to follow recommendations that could keep them and their pets safe,” they said.

They encouraged veterinarians to reach out to community domestic violence agencies to help clients develop safety plans for them and their pets. Outreach can include inviting representatives from these agencies to provide training to staff, and establishing a memorandum of understanding with these agencies for low-cost or pro bono veterinary care or pet boarding services.

They shared the experiences of the Rose Brooks Center’s PAWS (Pet and Women’s Safety) Assessment Program that trains veterinary clinic staffs on the nature and signs of domestic violence, common methods of animal abuse that coincide with IPV, and strategies on how to screen and respond to suspected IPV.

These strategies include changing the discussion to emphasize that discussing violence is not a taboo topic, but rather the violence itself is taboo. They presented three questions that staff members can ask to help refer a client to local violence prevention agencies.

“Even if the client denies your offer to connect them with resources, you are still providing a gateway to help!” they said.

Veterinary Social Work Spotlights in Pittsburgh Clinic

The Link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence was referenced in a feature article in the Pittsburgh, Pa., [Post-Gazette](#) on the emerging specialty area of veterinary social work. The July 3rd article described the work of Lori Harbert, a social worker at the Pittsburgh Veterinary Specialty and Emergency Clinic, on an emotionally challenging day when she had to tell a client that her beloved 17-year-old “soul dog” has cancer and cannot be saved. Harbert consoles individual clients and also conducts a monthly Pet Loss and Grief Support Group, helping to resolve clients’ feelings of grief and guilt.



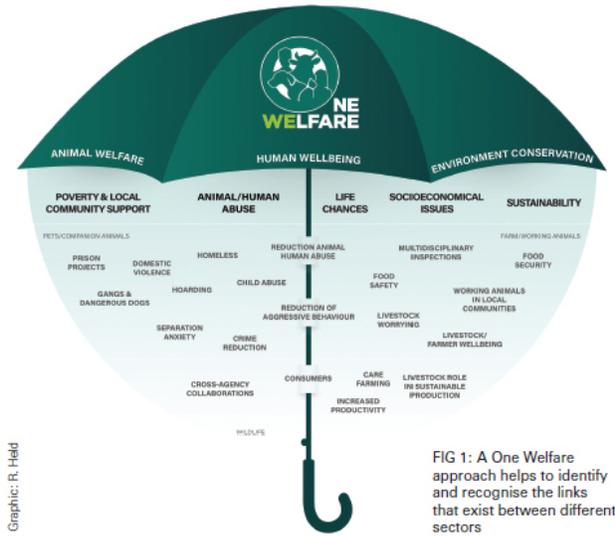
Harbert also provides compassion fatigue support for the staff at the clinic, one of the region’s largest practices that sees several hundred cases and performs five to 12 euthanasias a day. The American Veterinary Medical Association and Centers for Disease Control are addressing disturbing statistics indicating that veterinarians have a suicide rate four times higher than the general public and twice as high as dentists and physicians. One in six veterinarians struggles with thoughts of suicide.

[Veterinary Social Work](#) originated at the University of Tennessee’s Schools of Veterinary Medicine and Social Work in 2002. Practitioners focus on four primary areas: grief and bereavement; animal-assisted interventions; compassion fatigue and conflict management; and the Link between human and animal violence.

Veterinary Social Work Position Opens

A [full-time position](#) for a veterinary social worker has opened up in Toronto, Ont., to provide emotional support to clients, consultation services to veterinary staff, and support services for hospital employees. The position, which starts at \$58,000, requires a M.S.W. degree and two years’ experience preferably in a medical, hospice or mental health setting. Experience with grief and bereavement counseling and a passionate love for animals are preferred. Candidates should forward their resumes to the [Hunt human resources agency](#) or call 416-860-0016.

British Cross-Disciplinary Program Includes The Link



The animal/human abuse Link is a core component of One Welfare

Building on the success of the One Health movement in the U.S which addresses commonalities between veterinary and human medicine, researchers in the U.K. have launched a complementary British program called [One Welfare](#) that includes a strong Link component.

One Welfare recognizes the interconnections between animal welfare, human wellbeing and the environment. It fosters interdisciplinary collaboration to improve human and animal welfare. One Welfare also promotes key global objectives such as supporting food security, sustainability, reducing human suffering and improving productivity within the farming sector through a better understanding of the value of high welfare standards.

One Welfare extends the approach of (and partially overlaps) the One Health theme used for human and animal health. A One Welfare approach promotes the direct and indirect links of animal welfare to human welfare and environmentally friendly animal-keeping systems.

There are nine parts to the conceptual framework of the One Welfare model, the first being the reduction in human and animal abuse. This section covers all aspects of the Link between animal abuse and family and social violence. It supports reduction in the incidence of crime and violence, particularly focusing on child and elder abuse and domestic violence.

Other components include improving animal welfare and socioeconomic indicators, such as poverty and community support for animal welfare issues; improved animal and farmer welfare and food safety, security and sustainability; animal-assisted interventions that are mutually beneficial to humans and animals; improved biodiversity, conservation and environmental concerns; and more efficient multidisciplinary approaches.

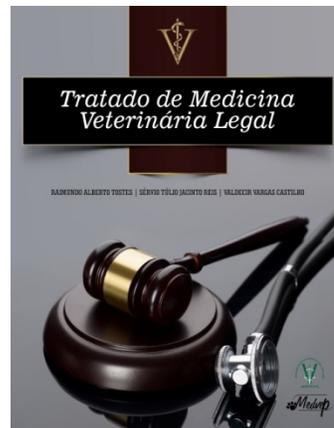
Vets' Roles with Pets and Human Suicides Explored

Relatively little research highlights has explored how the human-animal bond may affect suicide ideation. This article reviews cases where individuals killed themselves after having killed their pets and, occasionally, other persons or family members, as well as persons for whom worries about what would happen to their pets served to prevent them from committing suicide. The authors argue that the definitions of homicide-suicide or filicide-suicide should be broadened to include animal victims killed at the same time as humans. They encourage further research into the importance of postmortem examinations to better characterize the incidents, and into what role the veterinary profession can play in identifying owners and patients potentially at risk of extended suicide.

-- Oxley, J.A., Montrose, V.T., & Feldman, M.D. (2016). *Pets and human suicide. Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, 249(7), 740-741.*

Brazilian Veterinary Forensics Textbook Published

Brazil's Medvep, Sindivep-PR, and the Brazilian Association of Legal Veterinary Medicine – ABMVL have announced the publication of what is believed to be the first book in Brazil – if not the entire Portuguese-speaking world – about The Link and veterinary forensics. *Tratado de Medicina Veterinária Legal [Treatise of Legal Veterinary Medicine]* made its debut at a launching ceremony on July 25 at the IV Medvep Congress of Veterinary Specialties and II International Congress of Legal Veterinary Medicine in Pinhais, Paraná.



[The book](#) was edited by Raimundo Alberto Tostes, Sérgio Túlio Jacinto Reis and Valdecir Vargas Castilho. National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow contributed a chapter, “Mistreatment of animals in the context of other family violence.”

THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE

Animal Maltreatment Found to Be a Risk Marker of More Frequent and Severe Intimate Partner Violence

Although there is a growing body of literature documenting the co-occurrence of animal abuse and intimate partner violence (IPV), only a few studies have examined the relationship between animal maltreatment, types of IPV, and abuse severity. The results of those studies have been inconclusive and in some cases even contradictory. The current study contributes new findings to that specific segment of the literature and sheds some light on the inconsistent findings in previous studies. Data were gathered from 86 abused women receiving services from domestic violence shelters across Canada. The study provides evidence to support the conclusion that women who report that their partner mistreated their pets are themselves at significantly greater risk of more frequent and severe forms of IPV, specifically psychological, physical, and sexual abuse. The findings point to the urgency of better understanding and mitigating the unique barriers to leaving an abusive relationship faced by women with companion animals.

- Barrett, B.J., Fitzgerald, A., Stevenson, R., & Cheung, C.H. (2017). Animal Maltreatment as a Risk Marker of More Frequent and Severe Forms of Intimate Partner Violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. [Published online July 14, 2017.](#)

One Welfare Addresses Links between Animal and Human Welfare and the Environment

The concept of One Welfare recognizes the interconnections between animal welfare, human wellbeing and the environment. Integrating this concept in existing projects could provide a low-cost platform for fostering interdisciplinary collaboration to improve human and animal welfare. It reduce human suffering (including the abuse of vulnerable people) through a better understanding of the value of high welfare standards. The introduction of this concept within the research community would have the added benefit of helping to identify research outputs with added value and mutual benefit between animal welfare, human wellbeing and/or the environment.

- Pinillos, R. G., Appleby, M., Manteca, X., Scott-Park, F., Smith, C., & Velarde, A. (2016). One Welfare—a platform for improving human and animal welfare. *The Veterinary Record*, 179(16), 412-413.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Illinois Considers Pets' Welfare in Divorce Proceedings



As *The LINK-Letter* was going to press, Link advocates in Illinois were carefully following the progress of a pioneering bill that would allow courts to award custody of animals in divorce settlements in the animals' best interests. **SB1261** would amend the Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act to allow the parties to a dissolution proceeding to file a joint petition for simplified dissolution if they have, among other conditions, executed a written agreement allocating ownership and responsibility for any companion animals that they own.

Sen. Linda Holmes and Rep. Stephanie Kifowit

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Linda Holmes (D-42) and Rep. Stephanie A. Kifowit (D-84), passed the Senate 56-0 and the House 109-2 and was sent to Gov. Bruce Rauner on June 29. Under Illinois law, Rauner has 60 days to either sign the bill into law or veto it; if he does nothing it becomes law. As of press time, he had yet to take any action on the bill.

The bill was modeled after similar groundbreaking legislation enacted last year in Alaska that now allows courts to award custody of pets in the animals' best interests, similar to long-standing provisions in child custody cases (*See the November 2016 LINK-Letter*). Similar measures were introduced this year in Hawai'i and Rhode Island but died in committees.

The measure would allow the parties to petition or move for the allocation of sole or joint ownership of and responsibility for any of their companion animals. In issuing such an order, the court would have to take into consideration the well-being of the domestic animal.

National, Local Groups Appeal for Passage of PAWS Act

The urgent need for the U.S. Congress to pass the PAWS (Pet and Women Safety) Act, H.R. 909/S.322, takes on additional poignancy when we learn of situations such as the abandonment of "Chewy" in the Las Vegas airport (*see following story*) and in the testimony of domestic violence survivors and shelter staff who daily deal with these family crises. Numerous national human and animal welfare organizations, including the National Link Coalition, the ASPCA, the Humane Society of the United States, the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, the Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T) Program, the National District Attorneys Association, Fraternal Order of Police, and the National Sheriffs Association are supporting the PAWS Act. The measure would make federal funds available to help shelters build animal-housing facilities to keep families whole and enable more women, children and pets to escape abuse. It would also add veterinary services and pet care costs to victims' losses for purposes of restitution in domestic violence and stalking offenses and allow pet protection orders to be extended across state lines.

Rebecca Peter, Supportive Housing Program Manager, Family Services of Tulare County, Visalia, Calif., shared with us the following case studies and statistics at her shelter, adding, "This funding would make a difference between life and death to some beloved pets" :

“He told the children that because of what mommy tried to do they all had to be punished. He broke the dog’s neck in front of everyone...”

“I work in a shelter in Visalia, Calif., that is not able to accommodate pets at this time. It is very important to us to try and remedy that but at this time our goal remains to be able to help victims of abuse to find a safe place for not only themselves but for their pets as well. We have many victims calling the shelter seeking help for themselves and their pets to get out of a dangerous environment at home. When they call and have pets, we try to help them safety-plan for their animals as well as for themselves. If we are not able to help them find a safe place, most commonly they will not enter the shelter and leave their animals at home because they have either experienced the animal being abused by the aggressor or they have been threatened that he will harm or kill the animal if they leave.

“One family we worked with came to us because the mother was packing up her children and dog when her abuser came home and found them before they could leave. He sat the whole family down in the living room with the family dog on his lap. He told the children that because of what mommy tried to do they all had to be punished. He broke the dog’s neck in front of everyone, and told them all that if she tried to do that again, he would hurt them all. The mother and children were able to leave the home but not before it was too late for the psychological abuse to the mother and children, and the murder of the beloved dog.

“A different mother called the shelter seeking help for herself and two children. When shelter staff showed up at the meeting location, the family was waiting for her with a pregnant dog. The mother would not come into shelter without her dog because he had already said if she left he would kill the dog and all the puppies. Because we are not able to house animals at this time, we could not bring her and the kids to shelter. She refused to surrender her dog to the animal shelter for safekeeping because she would not be able to get her out again. She chose to stay on the street rather than leave the animal that had protected her from her abuser.

“A single woman entered the shelter; she had 3 dogs who were being taken care of by a neighbor while she was seeking safety with us. She came in and was hiding from her abuser, and was working on a restraining order to keep him away. Her plan was to return home once it was safe and she had the RO. Her abuser was harassing her by phone; he would call and threaten her that if she did not go home he would hurt the dogs. She was worried every day that he would find out where the dogs were. After being in the shelter only four days, she returned home because her neighbor called and told her that her abuser had found and taken her dogs. At our last contact with her she only had 1 dog left; he had killed 2 of them.”

**Family Services of Tulare County Shelter
Animal Survey for April 2015-March 2016**

How many pets did callers report having? 104

What kind of pet does the caller have?

- Dog: 80
- Cat: 21
- Turtle: 3
- Rabbit: 2
- Bird: 3
- Roster: 2
- Service dog: 1

What does the caller plan to do with animal?

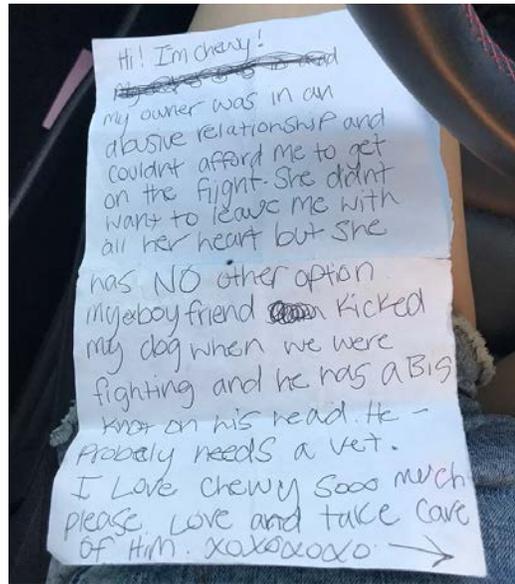
- Leave animal with abuser: 46
- Leave with a family member, friend: 25
- Leave with a neighbor: 4
- Surrender pet: 18
- Refused to enter shelter due to pet: 6
- Unsure what they will do: 7

Woman Fleeing Abuse Abandons Puppy in Airport

A woman fleeing an abusive relationship abandoned her 3-month-old puppy in the Las Vegas, Nev. airport with a heartbreaking, handwritten note describing her tale of domestic violence and her rush to escape her abuser.

The note reads: “Hi! I’m Chewy! My owner was in an abusive relationship and couldn’t afford me to get on the flight. She didn’t want to leave me with all her heart but she has NO other option. My ex-boyfriend kicked my dog when we were fighting and he has a big knot on his head. He probably needs a vet. I love Chewy sooo much – please love and take care of him.”

[KSNV-TV](#) reported that someone found the Chihuahua pup and turned him over to a local dog rescue, where he was said to be doing OK. “This one really got to me. You could tell by the way the note was written that the woman was in dire stress and she didn’t want to give him up and she couldn’t take him with her,” said Darlene Blair, of the rescue group. “I know it’s hard when you’re in that situation to trust someone but there are good people out there – and if you’re in that situation and you need help to take your dog with you try not to be too afraid to ask for help,” said Blair.



“Chewy” was said to be doing OK

Apparently unbeknownst to the woman, Las Vegas has one of the largest pet-friendly domestic violence shelters in the U.S. – [Noah’s Animal House](#) on the grounds of the Shade Tree shelter for women and children. The facility has helped more than 1,000 pets over the past 10 years and has plans to expand into Reno. “The animal is equally a member of the family as anyone else and it’s vital that when you’re leaving a domestic violence situation that your pet can come with you,” said Lori Nelson of Noah’s Animal House.

Meanwhile, airport officials cautioned pet owners that the airport is no place to leave an animal since you don’t know when or who might pick it up.

RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK

Link Training Coming to Imams in Israel

The [Animals & Society Institute](#) has announced that Lisa Lunghofer, Director of Human-Animal Relationships Programs, will be working with [Concern for Helping Animals in Israel \(CHAI\)](#) over the coming months to create a training on the relationship between animal cruelty and other types of violence and antisocial behavior. The training is scheduled to be delivered to over 100 imams at Israel’s College of Sharia Law. The training is the first in a 40-hour series on human-animal relationships designed to engage imams on animal welfare issues in Israel. The training is also believed to be one of the first Link trainings globally specifically addressing the Muslim community.



ANIMAL ABUSE AND... ELDER ABUSE

Roundtable Identifies Challenges and Strategies for Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing in Later Life

While the emergency shelter and transitional housing challenges facing survivors of domestic violence are enormously complex, even more obstacles confront the elder survivors of abuse who find themselves in dangerous situations and need a temporary place to live or new permanent housing for themselves and their animals. Many shelter and transitional housing programs are not equipped to respond to the special needs of this population, where an estimated 10% of older adults are abused each year.

To better understand and address the needs of older adults in crises, the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL) convened a Roundtable in 2016 on Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing for Victims of Abuse in Later Life. The Roundtable was jointly hosted by the U.S. Department of Justice, through the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program (FVPSA).

The Roundtable identified numerous challenges which limit many older survivors from benefitting from emergency shelters and services. These include victims whose caregiving responsibilities for pets and farm animals, grandchildren, elderly parents or spouses prevent them from considering leaving their homes, especially if emergency shelters lack the expertise or resources to help older victims to care for these loved ones or animals.

Other barriers include attitudinal roadblocks, such as older adults who do not seek services because they do not see themselves as victims or who experience guilt or shame, especially if their abuser is a child or grandchild. Older victims may choose not to seek help out of fear of not being believed, or

The Roundtable proposed a “RESPECT” framework of seven strategies that victim service providers can use to enhance programming and policies along seven key themes:

- **Responsive, Victim-Defined Advocacy** that respects the values, life experience, and culture of an older survivor.
- **Elder-Informed** -- engaging older adults from diverse backgrounds in designing programs and policies to create options informed by their lived experience.
- **Services.** Safety Planning and Outreach that focus creatively on safety planning and breaking isolation and that consider the realities of aging bodies and generational values.
- **Policy changes** that encourage emergency shelter and transitional housing programs to create new or enhance existing policies to address violence and harm across the lifespan.
- **Equity and Access**, making services more accessible by considering the physical environment of the facility, addressing visual, hearing, and intellectual or cognitive disabilities, and making accommodations to account for language, cultural and generational differences
- **Collaboration** with other stakeholders, including professionals in health care, the criminal justice system, the aging services network, and mental health fields, to address systemic barriers that create obstacles to victim safety and offender accountability.
- **Training and Awareness** for domestic violence programs to build the capacity of their staff to work with older adults through education, beginning with program managers providing information on aging and the dynamics of abuse in later life.

because they mistakenly think domestic violence shelters are only for younger women, or because they are worried that their decision-making rights will be taken away because of ageist ideas about victimization and cognitive capacity.

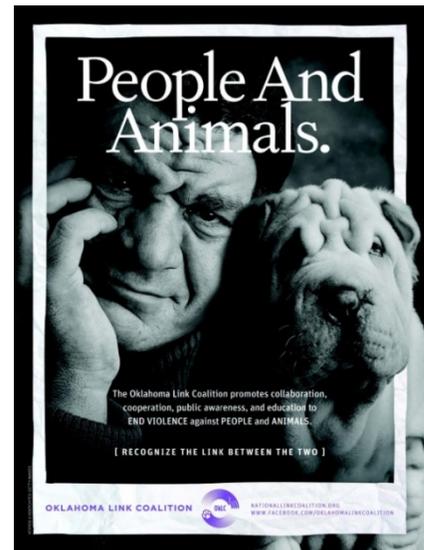


Some barriers were described as systemic, such as shelters requiring older adults to share communal living spaces with chaotic younger families or to perform chores for which they are physically unable. Older victims with limited English proficiency, physical limitations and accessibility issues may also find the facilities, services, or other aspects of the shelter unwelcoming. Persons with dementia or who require personal attendants may be told they are ineligible for services. Older victims from Alaska Native villages and American Indian communities face additional obstacles.

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

The Oklahoma Link Coalition sponsored a full-page advertisement in the inaugural issue of the [Oklahoma Pet Gazette](#), a magazine reaching 41,000 pet owners across the state with handy tips about pet care and responsibility. The 16-page Spring 2017 issue featured informative articles on pet allergies, pet obesity, the most common pet names, safe items for pets to chew on, and how to protect yourself from being attacked by a dog.

The Coalition poster features a man and a shar-pei (who look somewhat alike) with a headline reading “People and Animals: Recognize the Link Between the Two.” The ad reads, “The Oklahoma Link Coalition promotes collaboration, cooperation, public awareness, and education to END VIOLENCE against PEOPLE and ANIMALS.”



THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS FOR THE LINK

Texas Group Pairs Survivors with Service and Protection Dogs

The National Link Coalition has recently learned about an unusual organization in the Houston, Texas area that helps stabilize the lives of domestic violence survivors by providing them with service dogs that have had protection training. The [Freedom From Fear Project](#), a 501c3 nonprofit, works with women’s and animal shelters in the Houston region to help domestic violence survivors to feel safe and resume a happy, healthy life.

Tammy Enlow tells *The LINK-Letter* that the project’s goal is to pair up dogs with domestic violence survivors, to give them not only an animal they can love and count on but a trained service animal that will be their Emotional Support Animals. As registered service animals, these dogs can go anywhere with their owners with no worries of discrimination.



“We pay all costs for training and the animal goes with the woman at no charge to her. It gives her the ability to take the animal with her anywhere without having to deal with any grief,” she says.

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Bills We're Watching... and Victories We're Celebrating

The National Link Coalition is encouraged by the increase in the number of violence-prevention bills being introduced 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



H.R. 909 and S.322 – the Pet And Women Safety (PAWS) Act – was re-introduced and now has 230 bi-partisan co-sponsors in the House and 17 in the Senate. The PAWS Act would prohibit threats or acts of violence against a victim's pet in interstate stalking and interstate violation of protection orders. It would allocate \$3 million annually through 2021 in grants for shelter and housing assistance for victims with pets, support services to help victims secure safe housing that allows pets, and for pet-related services. Grants could also be used for training on The Link and for identifying best practices. Abusers would be required to make restitution to the victim for costs incurred for veterinary services. **H.R. 909** is in the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations. **S.322** is in the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.



Hawai'i HB 155 would have allowed either party to order the other to restrain from transferring, encumbering or disposing of pets during divorce, separation or annulment, particularly if one party poses a threat of physical harm to the animal. Courts could have ordered a party to pay for pet support, and consider the animals' well-being and whether future ownership should be individual or joint. The measure was approved by the House Agriculture Committee and was referred to the Judiciary Committee, **but no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned on May 4.**



Illinois SB 1261 would amend the Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act to allow parties filing for divorce to file a joint petition for simplified dissolution if they have executed a written agreement allocating ownership and responsibility for their companion animals. The bill would also allow the parties to petition for sole or joint ownership, contingent upon the court's consideration of what would be in the animals' best interests. The bill passed both houses overwhelmingly and was sent to the Governor.



Indiana SB 323 allows 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 was signed into law on April 21** by Gov. Eric Holcomb and becomes effective on July 1.



Michigan HB 4026 would define "causing or attempting to cause physical harm" to a family member's animal as an act of domestic violence in addition to any animal cruelty charges that might pertain. It would allow domestic violence shelters that accept animals to receive state funding and 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 currently defines harming an animal to harass a spouse or partner as domestic violence. **SB62** would have increased 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 was in the

Judiciary Committee but **no action was taken before the time limit for legislative action expired.**



Ohio HB1 would expand the ability of courts to issue protection-from-abuse orders that include the animals of domestic violence survivors to individuals seeking protection orders in cases of dating violence. It would allow a court order of protection to require that a respondent not remove, damage, hide, harm, or dispose of any companion animal owned or possessed by the petitioner alleging dating violence. It also would allow a court order to authorize the petitioner, alleging dating violence, to remove a companion animal owned by that petitioner from the possession of the respondent. The bill has passed the House and is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



Texas SB 339 and **HB 142** would have created a new offense of illegal sexual contact called “indecent assault” and allowed victims to obtain protective orders. Violations of these protective orders would have included harming, threatening, or interfering with the care, custody or control of a pet, companion animal or assistance animal belonging to the protected party. **SB 339** was in the Senate Criminal Justice Committee, and **HB 142** was reported out favorably by the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee and was sent to Calendars, but **no action was taken on either bill when the Legislature adjourned.**



Rhode Island H5556 would have required courts to consider the best interest of the animal in awarding possession of a domestic animal in a divorce or separation proceeding. **The House Judiciary Committee recommended that the bill be held for further study.**



Wyoming HB193 would have allowed courts to grant sole possession of any household pets to the petitioner in a protection order, and to order the respondent not have any contact with any household pet or abduct, remove, conceal, or dispose of the animal. **The bill died when the legislature adjourned.**

Psychological Evaluation of Offenders



Mississippi HB 575 would have defined 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 have mandated psychological evaluations for offenders. The measure would have mandated 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 died in committee on Jan. 31.**



New Jersey A2367 and **S529**, “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 have created a new category of “extreme cruelty to animals” and would have required persons convicted of this offense to undergo psychological counseling. **The bill was in the House Consumer & Public Affairs Committee when the regular Legislature session ended.**

Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment



California AB411 would allow child witnesses in any serious or violent felony cases to have a therapy or facility dog present during court testimony. Procedures would be established requiring the party seeking to have the dog present to attest to the training and credentials of the dog and its handler and facts necessitating the need for the dog. The court could reject the request if it finds the dog's presence would cause undue prejudice to the defendant or would be unduly disruptive to the court proceeding. The bill passed the House by a vote of 74-0 and is in the Senate Committee on Public Safety.



Idaho SB 1089 amends Idaho's procedures for witnesses in criminal proceedings to allow facility dogs to remain at the witness stand with a child during testimony. The measure was **signed into law** by Gov. Butch Otter on March 27 and took effect July 1.



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 and **A5048** criminalize knowingly causing a minor to attend a place where exhibition of animal fighting is being conducted. **S1432** passed the Senate and both bills are in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



New York S2470 and companion bill **A2140**, and **S728** and companion bill **A3845**, would increase penalties for aggravated animal cruelty committed in the presence of a child. **S2470** is in the Senate Agriculture Committee; **A2140** is in the Assembly Codes Committee. **S728** passed the Senate and joined and **A3845** in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



Texas HB 289 would have made it a violation to harm or threaten a pet or assistance animal belonging to a child under a protection-from-abuse order. The bill was in the House Human Services Committee, but **no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned**.

Animal Hoarding



New Jersey A3638 would establish animal hoarding as an animal cruelty offense and require mental health evaluation for all animal cruelty offenders. 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.



Rhode Island S390 would have defined animal hoarding and added it to the list of conduct that is considered cruelty to animals. **The Senate Judiciary Committee recommended the bill be held for further study.**

Animal Sexual Abuse

 **Kentucky HB 143** would have made 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 have been barred from owning dogs or cats for 5 years for a first offense, and lifetime for subsequent convictions. **The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.**

 **Kentucky HB 480** would have created a new offense of sexual assault against an animal and allowed a peace officer to seize an animal. Accepted animal husbandry and veterinary medical practices would have been exempted. **The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.**

 **Massachusetts S.805** 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.” The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary; a hearing was scheduled for July 18.

 **Missouri HB 431** would have allowed persons convicted of having sex with an animal to petition to have their names removed from the state sex offenders registry. **The bill had passed the House Judiciary Committee and the Rules & Legislative Oversight Committee when the Legislature adjourned.**



 **Nevada AB 391** adds a new section to Nevada’s Revised Statutes, Chapter 201 (“Crimes Against Public Decency and Good Morals”) that now defines bestiality as a gross misdemeanor that can be upgraded to a Category D felony if the animal dies or suffers serious bodily injury as a result, or if the offender has a prior conviction for animal cruelty. Offenders will be required to permanently forfeit any animals in the home and can not work with or volunteer where animals are present. Courts can authorize offenders to undergo psychological evaluation and counseling and to pay costs for the care and medical expenses of the animals. The measure will also cover anyone who causes, aids, promotes or observes bestiality. Accepted animal husbandry, veterinary and conformation judging practices are excluded. The bill passed both the Assembly and the Senate unanimously and **was signed into law on May 23** by Gov. Brian Sandoval. Its provisions take effect Oct. 1, 2017.



 **Texas SB 1232** creates a new section 21.09 of the Penal Code, making it a felony to commit bestiality, obtain an animal for this purpose, or organize, promote, conduct or observe bestiality. The crime is considered a state jail felony unless it is committed in the presence of a child, results in serious bodily injury or death of the animal, or the offender has a prior conviction, in which case it is a 2nd-degree felony. Generally accepted veterinary and animal husbandry practices are exempted. Upon conviction, the court may order the defendant to relinquish custody of any animals and to participate in a psychological treatment or other appropriate program. The measure passed the Senate 31-0 on May 25 and the House 141-0, and **was signed into law** by Gov. Greg Abbott on June 12. It takes effect Sept. 1, 2017.



 **Vermont H.62** adds a new category of sexual conduct to the various conditions defined as cruelty to animals. The measure amends 13 V.S.A. Chapter 8 to define sexual conduct as any act between a person and animal that involves contact or insertion between the mouth, sex organ or anus of a person and an animal without a bona fide veterinary or animal husbandry purpose. The

definition extends to anyone possessing, selling, transferring, purchasing or obtaining an animal for sexual conduct; or organizing, promoting, aiding, abetting or participating as an observer; or permitting sexual conduct on his or her premises or advertising it. The bill was signed into law on June 7 by Gov. Phil Scott and took effect July 1.



West Virginia HB 2664 would have added bestiality to the code of crimes against chastity, morality and decency. Individuals who engage in, abet, observe, permit, advertise, or promote bestiality, or induce a child to commit bestiality, would have been guilty of a misdemeanor, or a felony upon previous convictions or serious bodily injury or death to the animal. Courts would have been able to order offenders to surrender all their animals, prohibit ownership of animals for five or 15 years, and undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation or counseling. The bill was in the House Judiciary Committee but **no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned.**

Animal Abuse and Elder Abuse



Washington HB 1153 addresses 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. 1st-degree animal cruelty, including sexual contact with an animal, is listed as a crime which prosecutors may cite as reasons for filing charges. The measure was approved by both the House and Senate and **was signed into law on May 10** by Gov. Jay Inslee.

“CASA for Animals”



New Jersey A 2041 and its companion **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, either permanently or for a specified period of time. **A 2041** passed the Assembly. Both bills are in the Senate Economic Growth Committee.



Rhode Island H5061 would have required courts to order the appointment of an animal care advocate wherever the custody or well-being of an animal is at issue. **The House Judiciary Committee recommended that the bill be held for further study.**

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 3rd strike with additional years of imprisonment under the Three Strikes Law. The bill is in the Committee on Public Safety.



Indiana SB 306 would have increased the penalty for attending an animal fighting contest from a Class A misdemeanor to a Level 6 felony. The bill was in the Committee on Corrections and Criminal Law but **no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned.**



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



Massachusetts S.1159 would add the crimes of animal cruelty and fighting as specifically enumerated offenses which would allow the prosecution to ask for pre-trial detention on the grounds of the defendant’s dangerousness. The bill would also mandate *Cross-Training*. The bill is in the Committee on Municipal and Regional Government.



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, requested 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 passed the House by a vote of 67-0 and was referred to the Senate Rules Committee, **but no action had been taken when the regular Legislative session ended.**



New York S1680 and companion bill **A3038** would expand the definition of aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to animals during the commission of a felony. **S1680** passed the Senate on Jan. 30 and was referred to the Assembly Agriculture Committee; **A3038** is in the Codes 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 Agriculture Committee.



Oregon HB 2026 would have appropriated 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 bill was in the House Judiciary Committee with subsequent referral to the Ways and Means Committee when the Legislature adjourned.**



Rhode Island H5728 would have imposed further penalties for deliberate or unintentional harming of animals during the commission of any crime. Any sentence imposed would run consecutively to any sentence imposed for the underlying offense. **The House Judiciary Committee recommended the bill be held for further study.**



Texas HB 1357 would have defined 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 made technical corrections to assist prosecutors in animal cruelty cases. The bill was approved unanimously by the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee on April 21 and had been sent to Calendars, but **no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned.**

Cross-Reporting

 **Iowa S.F. 129** would have required 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 have been 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 have been required to, order psychological or psychiatric evaluation or treatment. The bill would have created seven new criminal offenses describing animal abuse, neglect, torture, abandonment, and endangerment. The bill was in the Senate Agriculture Committee but **no action had been taken when the Legislature adjourned.**

 **Maine LD 157** would have required 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 passed the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee but died in the Senate.**



 Gov. Larry Hogan **signed into law Maryland HB 1463** on May 4. It requires a veterinarian who believes that an animal that she or he has treated has been subjected to cruelty or fighting to report the case to law enforcement or county animal control in a timely manner. Existing law only encouraged reporting and did not include animal fighting among the provisions. Practitioners will continue to have immunity from civil and criminal liability when reporting. The bill passed the House by a vote of 118-15 and was approved unanimously 47-0 in the Senate. It will take effect Oct. 1.

 **Massachusetts S.295** would add domestic violence workers, animal control officers, and humane officers to the list of mandated reporters of suspected child sexual abuse. The bill is in the Education Committee; a hearing was scheduled for July 18.

 **Massachusetts S.1159** would require employees or contractors of the Department of Children & Families, Department of Elder Affairs investigators, and Disabled Persons Protection Commission investigators to report suspected animal abuse. The bill would add animal control officers as mandatory reporters of child abuse, elder abuse and abuse against disabled persons. The bill would also affect *Animal Abuse and Other Crimes*. The bill is in the Committee on Municipal and Regional Government.

 Three companion measures address cross-reporting in **Michigan. HB 4441** would amend the Child Protection Law to add animal control officers to the list of professions mandated to report suspected child abuse or child neglect. **HB 4442** would amend the Michigan Penal Code to require Child Protective Services employees to report suspected animal abuse or neglect to an animal control or law enforcement officer in the jurisdiction where the animal was found, with anonymity, the presumption of having acted in good faith, and immunity from civil or criminal liability. Failure to report, or making a false report, would be punishable offenses. **HB 4443** would amend the Code of Criminal Procedure to make the intentional false reporting of animal abuse a felony. The bills are in the House Judiciary Committee.

 **Minnesota HF 787** and companion bill **SF1167** would have given immunity from civil liability to veterinarians, who are mandated to report suspected animal cruelty, abuse and neglect to peace officers, humane agents or animal control officers. **The measures died in committee when the Legislature adjourned.**

 **New York S621** and companion bill **A4904** 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 bills, sponsored by Sen. Phil Boyle and Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal, are in the respective Higher Education Committees.

 **Pennsylvania SB 176** would add animal control and humane society police officers to the list of individuals mandated to report possible child abuse, and social services employees to report possible cases of animal cruelty. The bill is in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



 **Pennsylvania HB 1238** ("Libre's Law") used Link premises to overhaul the state's anti-cruelty statutes with enhanced penalties, and grants immunity from civil and criminal liability for veterinarians, technicians and assistants who report suspected animal abuse.

 **Rhode Island H5392** would have required all child protection and domestic violence caseworkers to report suspected animal abuse to animal control and humane agencies, and that animal control and humane officers be mandated to report suspected child abuse and domestic violence to child protection and domestic violence agencies. **The House Judiciary Committee recommended the bill be held for further study.**

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS **You Can't Make This Stuff Up!!!**

Hoarders Charged with Felony Animal and Child Abuse

A married couple in Soddy-Daisy, Tenn., have been charged with child abuse and animal cruelty after animal control, humane and police investigators reportedly found three children locked in rooms strewn with trash and feces and 28 extremely thin animals – 10 of which were dead and stored in a freezer. The [Chattanooga Times Free Press](#) said that Dustin Tallent, 24, and Staci Tallent, 31, each face 15 counts of aggravated cruelty to animals and three counts of aggravated child abuse



Dustin and Staci Tallent



after Hamilton County Animal Control Officer Jason Nelson visited their home and made one disturbing discovery after another. "The entire residence was covered in household trash, urine and feces. Most areas were approximately 3 ft. in height," he wrote in a criminal affidavit. Four living dogs, three cats, eight turtles, one rabbit, a lizard, and a python were seized, as were the six birds, three dogs and a rabbit stashed in the freezer. Child Protective Services took the children – 2-year-old twin boys and a third boy aged 5 – into custody and a hospital. The Tallents reportedly told detectives they placed the 10 dead animals in the freezer because they could not afford their veterinary bills and did not have a shovel to dispose of them when they died.

At left: the view inside the Tallents' home

“Vengeful, Grandiose Monster” Gets 22 Years for Arson Spree That Killed Four Dogs

A convicted arsonist whose spree of crime and vengeance against his girlfriend resulted in the deaths of four dogs will spend at least 22 years in prison after a Rockingham County, N.H. Superior Court found him guilty of 28 crimes. Gregory Bruno, 29, (See the [May 2017](#) and [June 2016 LINK-Letters](#)), of Raymond, N.H., could spend as much as 60 years in prison plus an additional 15 years of parole for setting a series of fires after he split up with his girlfriend, Alison Anzalone, according to [WMUR-TV](#). Bruno began harassing Anzalone in January 2015, setting a fire at her home that killed her family’s three dogs, plus three other fires in which a fourth dog was killed. Bruno was convicted of felony and misdemeanor charges of arson, burglary, animal cruelty, criminal threatening, false public alarm, and soliciting. Bruno boasted of killing the dogs in a series of text messages sent to Anzalone and her family. A detective testified that Bruno, as a juvenile, had admitted to setting fires and making false 911 calls. After another ex-girlfriend testified about how she had broken up with Bruno, a prosecutor called Bruno a “vengeful, grandiose monster.”



Gregory Bruno



Teresa Clark

Woman Charged with Animal Cruelty and Attempted Murder in Encouraging Her Friend’s Suicide

Teresa Clark, 36, of Providence, Utah, was arrested on suspicion of two counts of attempted aggravated murder and two counts of animal cruelty after authorities said she encouraged a friend to commit suicide and killed the friend’s two dogs. Clark reportedly called 911 to report the female friend’s attempted suicide in a Logan hotel room; the victim was found unconscious and survived, but her two dogs were found dead in the hotel room. Subsequent evidence suggested that Clark provided the means and may have encouraged the woman to commit suicide, according to the [Gephardt Daily](#). Police said the second attempted murder charge resulted from Clark suggesting that her friend try suicide after her first attempt was unsuccessful.



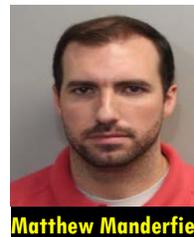
Tyrike Richardson

Video of Cat Torturing Nets Man Charges of Animal Cruelty and Child Endangerment

NYPD officers on Staten Island arrested Tyrike Richardson, 21 and charged him with aggravated cruelty and torturing of an animal, plus endangering the welfare of a child and possession of stolen materials, after they found a neighbor’s black-and-white cat named “Chester” beaten, tortured, starved, and dumped in a garbage bin. Gang Squad Det. Matthew Edelman told [SILive.com](#) that he was monitoring social media when he came across a disturbing 32-minute Facebook video of what appeared to be a man torturing the cat. An ASPCA spokesman said Chester was recovering at an area veterinary hospital from extensive traumatic injuries. “This is what the NYPD does. We protect the innocent,” said Assistant Chief Edward Delatorre, commander of the borough. District Attorney Michael McMahon called the allegations “disturbing and cruel” and promised to prosecute the case vigorously. Media reports said Richardson has a history of multiple arrests dating back to when he was 14, including having sex with an underage girl.

Man Charged with Suspected Animal Sexual Abuse Following Breakup with Girlfriend

Matthew Manderfield, who was said to have been “extremely verbally abusive” in a relationship that had just broken up, was arrested on charges of felony cruelty to animals when a veterinarian reported to Tallahassee, Fla. Animal Control injuries to the woman’s dog that were consistent with animal sexual abuse. The veterinarian advised investigators that the dog’s trauma seemed to be non-accidental and that animal sexual abuse could not be ruled out, according to [WTXL-TV](#). The dog’s tail, which had been dislocated from its spine, had to be amputated. The woman said she had left her dog with Manderfield while she relocated following their breakup.



Animal Abuser Charged with Child Abuse Said to Prey on the Young and Defenseless

A Louisiana man who pled guilty in 2007 to animal cruelty for torturing a dog is facing up to 40 years in prison in one of the most severe cases of child abuse ever seen in the New Orleans area. Cristian DeGregory, 36, and his girlfriend Heather Simpson, 39, were arrested by Orleans Parish sheriff’s deputies in conjunction with the brutal beating of her 5-year-old son. The [New Orleans Times-Picayune](#) reported that prosecutors said DeGregory’s criminal past – in which he punched a dog belonging to a different girlfriend in Rochester, N.Y., so hard he broke the animal’s jaw – was evidence of a history of predatory behavior upon the young and defenseless. The son, now seven and living out-of-state with relatives, has partial paralysis and impaired cognitive development. He endured life-threatening head and abdominal trauma, brain bleeds, bites and burns, lacerations, fractures, and several missing teeth and fingernails, plus evidence of malnutrition and infestation of lice. Simpson has already pled guilty to charges of cruelty to a juvenile.



Drugs Tip Leads to Animal Cruelty Charges

Sheriff’s deputies in Ferriday, La., responding to a complaint about drug activity, arrested Session Bosley, Jr., 37, and charged him with five counts of animal cruelty, five counts of drugs offenses, two weapons offenses, and resisting arrest. The [Associated Press](#) reported that when Concordia Parish Sheriff’s Office deputies arrived they spotted Bosley selling drugs outside a residence; when authorities entered the home they found several pit bulls, weapons, and drugs including cocaine and ecstasy. One dog reportedly had scissor wounds on an ear and another dog had an untreated broken leg. The dogs were being treated at a veterinarian’s clinic.

Dad Charged with Child & Animal Abuse for Leaving Both in a Hot Car



Police in Spartanburg, S.C. arrested Justin Wayne Hatcher, 36, of Monroe, N.C., on charges of child endangerment and animal cruelty for allegedly leaving both his infant daughter and his dog in a locked car in 94° heat. [WSPA-TV](#) reported that Hatcher told police he was not worried because he thought the dog would protect the child. Security footage showed Hatcher going into a Planet Fitness gym where he said he was just going to use the restroom, however staff said he asked about a membership and took a tour of the facility. The baby was treated at a hospital and placed in emergency protective custody; animal services took possession of the dog.

Convicted Drug Offender Charged with Animal Cruelty

An Enid, Okla. man with a history of felony drug-related convictions was charged with four new felony counts of animal cruelty and drug and weapons possession for allegedly shooting a neighbor's dog. Police responding to a report of a dog being shot arrested Vincent Williams, 58, after finding a shotgun wad, six firearms, three pellet guns, hundreds of rounds of ammunition, 1.1 pounds of marijuana, and drug paraphernalia, according to the [Enid News](#). According to court filings, Williams had five felony-level drug convictions in 1994 and is prohibited from owning firearms. If convicted, he faces multiple years in prison and extensive fines.



Vincent Williams

Boyfriend Charged with Stabbing Girlfriend's Dog -- Because It Always Sided with Her During Arguments

A man accused of stabbing his girlfriend's dog to death because he claimed it always took her side whenever they had an argument was charged with animal cruelty. Mike Lado, 26, of Lehigh Acres, Fla. was arrested by detectives in Lee County after they allegedly found a trail of blood from the kitchen to the back of the residence. [WFTX-TV](#) reported that a large butcher knife was believed to be the weapon used to kill "Blue," a two-year-old boxer-Labrador mix.



Mike Lado

Police Seek Man Accused of Breaking Neighbor's Puppy's Neck Over Wi-Fi Dispute

Officials in Des Moines, Iowa were offering a \$2,500 reward for the arrest of a man suspected of breaking the neck of his neighbor's girlfriend's dog in a dispute over their wi-fi network. [KCCI-TV](#) reported that police were looking for Christopher Vogel, 25, who apparently got into an argument with a neighbor in their apartment complex. Police said Vogel killed the 12-week-old corgi puppy and then ran off. "The dog had nothing to do with the argument, wasn't aggressive towards him," Des Moines police Sgt. Ryan Doty said. "I think that he did it just out of spite. It's sickening that somebody would take their anger about a completely unrelated topic out on a defenseless animal." "It just boggles my mind that anybody would even be able to do this type of thing," said Tom Colvin, Executive Director of the Animal Rescue League of Iowa.



Christopher Vogel

Houston Prosecutors Charge Repeated Offender with Animal Cruelty



Dwain Ray Riley

A Houston, Texas man with a history of family violence and other crimes has been charged by Harris County prosecutors with animal cruelty for allegedly wrapping a dog's head in duct tape, tying the dog to the wheel of a van and beating the dog with a crowbar. The [Houston Press](#) reported that Dwain Ray Riley, 58, faces up to two years in state jail if convicted. Harris County Assistant District Attorney Jessica Milligan, a *LINK-Letter* subscriber who heads the office's animal cruelty unit, said that the injuries to "Mud" were "horrific." Riley, a native of Dallas, has a history of felony and misdemeanor convictions in Dallas County for assault of a family member, theft, burglary, and marijuana possession.

Child, 28 Animals Rescued from Filthy Pennsylvania Home

When a family in Palmyra, Penna. called a local pet rescue to help them with their pets after their house was foreclosed upon, they were not prepared for the multidisciplinary response that ensued. The [Lebanon Daily News](#) reported that officials from PawsitivelyPom Rescue found 27 Pomeranians, an African grey parrot, and a six-year-old boy living in filthy conditions with a stench of garbage, feces and urine that could be smelled through the closed door. Police officers and Children & Youth Services were called in. The dogs were turned over to the rescue agency and the child was placed in CYS custody. It was not clear from news accounts whether charges were filed.

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

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Aug. 10-11 – Rochester, Mich.: Maya Gupta will give the keynote address at [the 2nd Annual Animal Assisted Interventions Conference](#) at Oakland University's Center for Human-Animal Interventions.

Aug. 23 – Oakland, Calif.: The [Alameda County District Attorney](#)'s Animal Cruelty Task Force will meet at the East Bay SPCA.

Aug. 24 (online): Allie Phillips will present on "Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T)[™]: An Innovative Global Initiative for Domestic Violence Shelters" as part of the Institute for Human-Animal Connection's Interconnected Webinar Series. [Registration](#) is free for *LINK-Letter* readers: use Promo Code COSHELTER.

Sept. 7 – Thompsonville, Mich.: Allie Phillips will present on Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)[™] at the [Kiwanis Michigan District Convention](#) Women's Celebration Luncheon.

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](#).

Sept. 13 (online): Diane Balkin will present a webinar on Testimony and Legal Issues as part of the Veterinary Information Network's [lecture series](#), Advanced Topics in Veterinary Forensic Science.

Sept. 17-21 – Cairns, Qld., Australia: Ingrid Reilly will present on The Link between animal abuse and domestic violence at the [International Women & Law Enforcement Conference](#).

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. Speakers will include Shana Aldahl, Phil Arkow, Frank Ascione, Diane Balkin, Tammy Fiebelkorn, Robyn Gojkovich, Patricia Norris, Nuria Querol, Norajean Salazar, Helga Schimkat, Andi Taylor, and Tamara Ward. 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 (online): Allie Phillips and the presenter is Genevieve Frederick will present “Pets of Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness” as part of the Institute for Human-Animal Connection’s Interconnected Webinar Series. [Registration](#) is free for *LINK-Letter* readers: use Promo Code COSHELTER.

Sept. 20-22: Columbus, Ohio: Barbara Boat will present on “Knowing a Child’s Experiences with Animals Can Inform the Advocacy Process” at the [Ohio CASA/GAL 2017 Celebrate Kids! Conference](#).

Sept. 21-22 – Regina, Sask., Canada: Randy Lockwood and Erin Wasson are among the speakers at the Saskatchewan SPCA’s [2017 Link Conference](#).

Sept. 27 – Oakland, Calif.: The [Alameda County Animal Cruelty Taskforce](#) will hold a strategic planning session.

Sept. 28 – Copenhagen, Denmark: Emily Patterson-Kane will present on “The Link: Correlations Between Animal Abuse and Other Behaviors,” “Predisposed to Cruelty,” “Creating Communities That are Safe to Animals,” and a panel discussion on “One Health and Animal Abuse” at the World Small Animal Veterinary Association [Congress](#) and FECAVA Eurocongress.

Sept. 28-29 – Black Hawk, Colo.: Dan DeSousa will train on the FBI’s Animal Cruelty Reporting Process, and Phil Tedeschi will present on the Animal Abuse Risk Assessment Tool, at [the Colorado Animal Welfare Conference](#).

Oct. 14 – Redmond, Ore.: Phil Arkow will present on The Link at the [Pet Evacuation Team’s](#) Animal Welfare Conference.

Oct. 14 – Portland, Ore.: Allie Phillips and Diane Balkin will be on a panel regarding “Criminal Cruelty Cases: Integrating Animal Law into the Mainstream” at the [25th Annual Animal Law Conference](#).

Oct. 19 – Virginia Beach, Va.: Nancy Blaney, Michelle Welch and Glenna Tinney will discuss “Increasing Collaboration Among Animal Welfare and Domestic Violence Agencies” at the National Animal Care & Control Association/Virginia Animal Control Association [Training Conference](#). Also on the agenda: “NIBRS: The Critical Role of Animal Control and Humane Law Enforcement in Reporting Animal Cruelty to the FBI,” presented by Dan DeSousa and Mary Lou Randour.

Oct. 24 – Battle Creek, Mich.: Allie Phillips will present on “Working Effectively with Your Prosecutor’s Office” at the [Great Lakes Animal Welfare Conference](#).

Oct. 26 – Bartlett, N.H.: Phil Arkow and Jerilee Zezula will present on “The Cruelty Connection” at the [New Hampshire Attorney General’s Annual Conference](#).

Nov. 3 – Phoenix, Md.: Link topics will be featured prominently at the [Animal Abuse Leadership Summit](#), sponsored by the Baltimore County State’s Attorney’s Office’s Animal Abuse Unit and the Maryland State’s Attorneys’ Association.

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](#).

Nov. 7 – Oklahoma City, Okla.: [The Oklahoma Link Coalition](#) will hold its Intersection Conference. Call-in capability will also be available.

Nov. 15-17 – Portland, Ore.: The [7th National Animal Cruelty Conference](#), sponsored by the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and the Animal Legal Defense Fund, will be held.

Nov. 24 – Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Allie Phillips will present on Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T)TM at the [International Fund for Animal Welfare](#) convention.

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

July 3-8, 2018 – Vancouver, B.C., Canada: Phil Arkow will present on The Link, Clinical and Diagnostic Indicators of Animal Abuse, and Addressing Practice Management Concerns in Responding to Suspected Abuse at the [Canadian Veterinary Medical Association](#) Convention.

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.



ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



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

Members of the National Link Coalition Steering Committee

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Chair, Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project,
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