



NATIONAL LINK COALITION

Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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A monthly report of news from THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



www.NationalLinkCoalition.org

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ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Alaska Legislation Allows Courts to Consider Pet Well-Being in Marriage Dissolutions and Pet Protective Orders

The State of Alaska has enacted the most comprehensive bill in the U.S., if not the world, addressing animal abuse committed to intimidate a spouse or partner in domestic violence settings. Gov. Bill Walker signed **HB 147** into law on Oct. 27 in a ceremony that was widely awaited by the domestic violence, animal protection and Link communities ([See the May 2016 LINK-Letter](#)).

The measure, which takes effect Jan. 17, 2017, includes the following groundbreaking provisions:

- The amended statutes AS 25.24.160(a), AS 25.24.210(e), AS 25.24.220(d), AS 25.24.220(g), and AS 25.24.230(a) now allow Alaska courts to consider the well-being of animals when determining custody or joint ownership by a couple as part of a divorce proceeding. Such a provision has long been established in child custody cases but this believed to be the first time that the concept has been extended to pets as well.
- Courts may now also amend divorce or marriage dissolution agreements relating to child custody and support, visitation, division of property and retirement benefits, and spousal maintenance to include ownership of an animal, taking into consideration the well-being of the animal.



Advocates (both human and canine) were on hand on Oct. 19 when Alaska Gov. Bill Walker signed into law the historic HB 147. The new law will allow courts to consider animals' well-being when awarding custody in divorce cases, include pet care costs in divorce decrees, add pets to protection-from-abuse orders, and define animal abuse as an act of domestic violence.

- AS 18.66.100(c) now allows domestic violence protective orders to grant petitioners possession of a pet, regardless of the ownership of the pet. In addition, this provision must now be printed on the form providing notice to a victim of domestic violence. Alaska joins 30 other states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico with Pet Protection Order provisions.
- Petitioners can now also ask the court to issue a protective order that requires the abuser to pay support not only for the victim or minor children, but also for pets in the petitioner’s care.
- Under new terms in AS 18.66.990(3), Alaska now joins eight other states where an act of animal cruelty to a pet within a domestic violence context is also defined as domestic violence and can be prosecuted accordingly. Such provisions already exist in Arizona, Colorado, Indiana, Maine, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Tennessee. In addition, Louisiana and Arkansas are believed to have provisions whereby a history of animal abuse can be defined as emotional abuse and presented in domestic violence prosecutions as an enhancement to penalties (**See the [February 2016 LINK-Letter](#)**).

The amended statute AS 18.65.590 now defines a pet as “a vertebrate living creature maintained for companionship or pleasure.” It does not include dogs owned primarily for mushing or pulling contests or practices or animals used primarily in rodeos or stock contests.

Last Chance for Federal Pet Protection Orders and Pet Safehousing?

With the election finally(!) behind us, it’s time for America to resume its regularly scheduled programming, which includes a lame-duck Congress that may be incited to break the gridlock which has paralyzed legislation for so long. One critical measure that has been gaining momentum – but no formal action – is the Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act, which would:



Reps. Katherine Clark & Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and Sens. Kelly Ayotte & Gary Peters

- expand federal domestic violence provisions to include protections for pets
- establish a federal grant program for domestic violence shelters to build pet-keeping facilities
- express the sense of Congress that states should encourage the inclusion of protections against violent or threatening acts against pets of persons seeking domestic violence protection orders.

The PAWS Act takes two forms: the House version was introduced by Reps. Katherine Clark (D-Mass.) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) as [H.R. 1258](#). It has 208 bi-partisan co-sponsors (168 Democrats, 40 Republicans) from 40 states and has been languishing in the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations since March 2015. [S. 1559](#), was introduced in the Senate by Sens. Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.) and Gary Peters (D-Mich.). It has 31 co-sponsors (24 Democrats, 6 Republicans, 1 Independent) from 21 states and has been stalled in the Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee since June 2015.

With such overwhelming and “bi-petisan” support, that these measures have not advanced is a sad testimony to Congressional understanding of domestic violence, animal abuse, and the Link. This lame-duck session may be our last, best hope to enact these bills. We encourage our readers to contact their Senators and Representatives accordingly.

\$60,000 in Grants Aid Three Pet-Friendly Shelters

Bayer – the multinational pharmaceutical company with interests in human and animal health – has launched an extensive public awareness and legislative campaign to make more domestic violence shelters pet-friendly and is contributing \$60,000 to three of the largest such shelters in the U.S.



Bayer contributed \$50,000 in 2012 to help the [Rose Brooks Center](#) in Kansas City, Mo. add Paws Place, a safe space where survivors of domestic abuse can spend time with their pets and heal together (See [the July 2012 LINK-Letter](#)). Each year since then, Bayer has provided extensive funding for pet care costs and facility maintenance.

This year, Bayer is expanding its support and is also donating \$20,000 each to the Urban Resource Institute's People and Animals Living Safely ([URIPALS](#)) program in New York City (See [the June 2013 LINK-Letter](#)) and [Noah's Animal House](#) in Las Vegas, Nev. Both agencies have facilities to heal the human and pet survivors of domestic violence.



Bayer has also produced a [two-minute video](#) depicting the plight of abused women who must choose between their own safety and the care of their pets who are often targeted for revenge. The video, "PAWS – Share the Story" is also a call for members of the public to contact their U.S. Senators and Representatives to support the Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act (H.R. 1258/S.1559). A form letter is included on the video website that can be sent to Congress.

"We recognize the great need to support domestic violence shelters that care for both survivors and their beloved pets," said Lauren Dorsch, Senior Manager of Communications, Bayer Animal Health. "Survivors of domestic violence should not have to choose between their safety and a loved one, and these shelters make it possible for them to heal in a safe place, without saying goodbye to their pets."



The Urban Resource Institute supports more than 1,400 clients each year with bilingual therapeutic, counseling and educational services. Noah's Animal House, a full-service boarding facility at the Shade Tree Shelter, has cared for over 1,000 pets since opening in 2007.

\$200,000 Grant to Fund Pet-Friendly Shelter in Florida

The newest pet-friendly domestic violence shelter will be coming to Broward County, Fla., where Women in Distress has announced plans to build an on-site pet shelter at its campus in Deerfield. The [Sun-Sentinel](#) reported that a \$200,000 grant from the Bank of America will enable the facility to be open in 18 months to help survivors and their pets to move on with their lives. The grant will also enable the Humane Society of Broward County to provide free food and veterinary care for the estimated 12-20 pets residing at the campus.



"There's a high correlation between spousal abuse, child abuse and pet abuse," said Mary Riedel, President and CEO of Women in Distress. "This removes another barrier to keeping children and families safe."

Feds Seek Input on Safe Housing Needs

The U.S. Department of Justice has put out a call for comments as part of a national needs assessment to determine the training and technical assistance needs of organizations providing safe housing for domestic violence victims, the homeless, and their families. The needs assessment, believed to be the first of its kind, has a deadline of January 9, 2017 for submissions.

The announcement follows in its entirety:

DOJ—Office on Violence Against Women

60-Day Notice:

Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposed eCollection eComments Requested; New Collection: Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium Safe Housing Needs Assessment, 81 Fed. Reg. 78,635 (Nov. 8, 2016), available at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-11-08/pdf/2016-26920.pdf>.

- Comment deadline: January 9, 2017.
- Information collection request
- The Safe Housing Needs Assessment will be used to determine the training and technical assistance needs of organizations providing safe housing for domestic violence victims and their families. The Safe Housing Needs Assessment will gather input from community service providers, coalitions and continuums of care. This assessment is the first of its kind aimed at simultaneously reaching the domestic and sexual violence field, as well as the homeless and housing field. The assessment seeks to gather information on topics ranging from the extent to which both fields coordinate to provide safety and access to services for domestic and sexual violence survivors within the homeless system, to ways in which programs are implementing innovative models to promote long-term housing stability for survivors and their families. Additionally, this assessment seeks to identify specific barriers preventing collaboration across these fields, as well as promising practices. The results will help the Consortium provide organizations and communities with the tools, strategies and support necessary to improve coordination between domestic violence/sexual assault service providers and homeless and housing service providers, so that survivors and their children can ultimately avoid homelessness and live free from abuse.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... CHILD MALTREATMENT

New Hampshire Workers Receive Link Training

Over 130 personnel from the New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families and invited guests participated in a series of five day-long Link trainings in October, introducing them to how animal abuse and the presence of potentially dangerous animals affect caseworkers and their clients. The trainings were held in five locations in the Granite State – Claremont, Campton, Durham, Nashua, and Concord – to make it easier for staff to attend. The workshops were sponsored by NH DCYF, Child & Family Services of New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Federation of Humane Organizations, and the Humane Society of the U.S. From left, Kristyn Bond, Heidi Young, Jerilee Zezula, Phil Arkow, Lindsay Hamrick, and Jim Panzer take a break from the intense schedule to celebrate the programs' success.



THE LINK AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



Uniform Code of Military Justice Amended to Include Animal Abuse and Bestiality

Increased rates of domestic violence and sexual assault among military personnel over the past few years have prompted a vigorous response at American military bases in the U.S. and overseas. Victim services units have been initiated and extensive training programs have been introduced which have included workshops and webinars about The Link between domestic violence and animal abuse.

But military officials have been severely hindered by a critical gap in the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the overarching legal system of criminal jurisprudence affecting service personnel. Since its inception in 1951, the UCMJ has made no mention of cruelty to animals as an actionable offense.

That oversight was corrected on Sept. 16, 2016, when President Obama signed Executive Order No. 13740 that amends the procedure for military courts-martial to include the first-ever animal cruelty and bestiality provisions. Any crime against an animal at any base in the world can now be charged as a crime of animal abuse under the UCMJ. The amendments also address numerous other sections of the UCMJ regarding provisions for prosecuting child abuse, child sexual assault, rape, and sexual assault.

As reported in the [Federal Register](#) of Sept. 22, Article 125 of the UCMJ Manual for Courts-Martial was amended to prohibit forcible sodomy and bestiality, the latter being defined as “unnatural carnal copulation with an animal” and punishable by a dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for five years.

Article 134 has been amended to prohibit the knowing, reckless or negligent wrongful abuse, neglect or abandonment of an animal or “public animal” that causes serious injury or death to the animal in such a manner as to prejudice the “good order and discipline in the armed forces or was of a nature to bring discredit upon the armed forces.” The offense excludes legal hunting, trapping or fishing; reasonable and recognized acts of training, handling or disciplining of an animal; normal and accepted farm and veterinary practices; research or testing conducted in accordance with approved military protocols; protection of persons or property from an unconfined animal; and authorized military operations and training.

Modeling provisions in many state laws, the UCMJ amendment defines abuse as “intentionally and unjustifiably” overdriving, overloading, overworking, tormenting, or beating an animal; depriving it of necessary sustenance; housing it in a manner that results in chronic or repeated serious physical harm; carrying or confining it in or upon any vehicle in a cruel or reckless manner; or otherwise mistreating an animal.

Neglect is defined as allowing another person to abuse an animal; or intentionally, knowingly, recklessly, or negligently failing to provide it with proper food, drink or protection from the weather consistent with the needs of the species or breed. Abandonment is defined as intentionally, knowingly, recklessly, or negligently leaving an animal at a location without minimum care.

Animals are defined as pets and “animals of the type that are raised by individuals for resale to others,” such as common livestock. Reptiles, insects, arthropods, or pest animals are specifically excluded. “Public animals” are those owned or used by the U.S. or local governments, such as drug detection dogs.

Maximum punishments are a bad-conduct discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and confinement for one year if the victim was an animal and two years if it was a public animal.

Sheriffs Learn to Avoid Fatal Canine Encounters

John Thompson – Deputy Executive Director of the National Sheriffs Association and a member of the National Link Coalition’s Steering Committee – was featured in a [news article](#) from Pennsylvania’s *Chadds Ford Online* describing a new training program by which all Chester County sheriff’s deputies will receive training on how to avoid fatal encounters with dogs.

The four-hour training is being instituted by Chester County Sheriff Carolyn “Bunny” Welsh, who also serves as Sergeant-at-Arms of the National Sheriffs Association. Welsh cited disturbing statistics from the ASPCA and the Department of Justice’s Community Oriented Policing Services that 10,000 dogs are killed annually by police officers who do not know how to respond to a charging or barking dog.

By making the “Law Enforcement and Dog Encounters” training mandatory, Welsh and Thompson hope to make the Chester County program a national model.

Thompson, a 40-year veteran of law enforcement, learned of The Link several years ago when his daughter showed him a paper she was writing on the topic for a college course. He likened law enforcement’s growing interest in animal cases similar to the process by which police came to treat victims of domestic violence with empathy and respect.



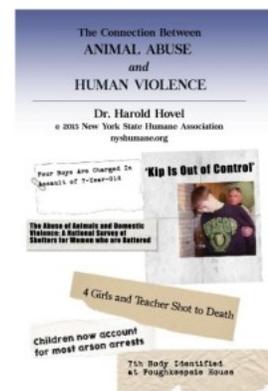
John Thompson and “Mr. Po”

THE LINK IN THE LITERATURE

NY Humane Association Report Reviews The Link

Noting that animal cruelty is strongly linked with other crimes, and that people would benefit if investigation and prosecution of animal abuse were taken more seriously, the [New York State Humane Association](#) has published a 40-page report on The Link. It includes: why animal abuse is worth serious consideration; historical opinions on The Link; juvenile crime issues including bullying and school violence; and implications for child maltreatment, domestic violence and elder abuse. “It doesn’t take much of a leap of imagination that parents brutalizing children wouldn’t hesitate to do the same to the household pets. In fact, abuse of the family pet is a major way that brutal parents control the child (or the spouse) to enact silence (about the abuse), create desired behavior, and create a household atmosphere of fear,” writes Dr. Harold Hovel. More comprehensive prevention, intervention and interdiction will save the lives of people and animals by breaking the cycles of violence.

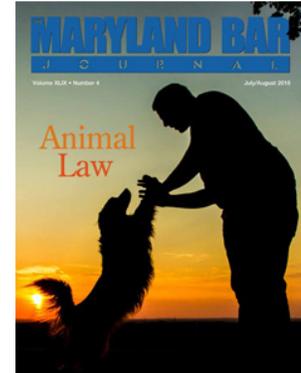
-- Hovel, H. (2015). *The Connection Between Animal Abuse and Human Violence*. Kingston, NY: New York State Humane Association.



THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS FOR THE ABUSED

Bar Association Considers Challenges to Therapy Animals

The Maryland Bar Association has tackled the often-contentious issues that arise over access provisions and legal definitions of animals utilized in various therapeutic programs. A series of articles in the [July issue of the Maryland Bar Journal](#) described several new forms of animal-human partnerships and the growing awareness of both the positive and negative aspects of the human-animal bond. The articles reviewed available options for accommodating the civil rights of owners of service and emotional support animals while respecting the interests of those who disdain animals.



Well-established legal provisions in all 50 states guarantee service animals that assist the visually impaired, hard-of-hearing and physically-disabled rights of access to transportation and accommodations. Many national and local animal-assisted therapy programs have long evaluated animals and their handlers to establish controls that ensure these animals are well-behaved. But in recent years newer forms of therapy animals have emerged, including those that comfort victims in children’s advocacy centers and courtrooms and others that are alleged to provide their owners with “emotional support.”

Emotional support animals are not covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act but are described in the Fair Housing Act and the Air Carrier Act. These laws allow emotional support animals to travel in airline cabins without being charged hefty baggage fees for being shipped as cargo, and allow tenants to evade rental policies that would otherwise exclude them. In response, a robust industry has sprung up of online therapists who, for a fee, will certify these otherwise unregulated animals sight-unseen as being necessary for the person’s emotional support.

The lack of controls governing these animals has led to challenging legal issues. Can Uber drivers refuse service because they fear their private vehicles will get dirty? How should airline passengers respond when unregulated and untrained dogs eliminate in the cabin? Do comfort dogs in courtrooms prejudice juries or risk triggering allergic reactions?

Such issues have raised skepticism about the value of service animals in general and threaten to undermine the credibility of legitimate programs that carefully evaluate the skills and temperament of therapy animals and their handlers.

Three articles in the *Journal* discuss the growing case law affecting such concerns and suggest that, in the absence of more regulatory clarity, alternative dispute resolutions, mediation and public dialogue can facilitate meaningful conversations to help resolve conflicts.

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

THE LINK AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE

One Health Lectures Describe “The Human Side of Veterinary Medicine... and the Animal Side of Social Work”

The human side of veterinary medicine and the animal side of social work were the focus of three workshops presented by National Link Coalition Coordinator Phil Arkow in Saskatoon, Sask., Canada. He presented the John Gunion Rutherford Memorial Lecture to faculty and students at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, and later that evening spoke to the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association. The following day a multidisciplinary audience attended a Link training offered by the University of Regina Faculty of Social Work. The programs drew over 150 attendees and addressed legislative efforts in the province to require veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse, as well as increased cross-disciplinary communications. The events were part of International One Health Day events taking place around the world and were covered by local radio station [CJWW](#).

The Veterinary Social Work program at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine’s Medical Center provides large- and small-animal clients with emotional support, grief counseling and referrals. The program also offers extensive resource information about crisis support, child abuse reporting, counseling, and shelter opportunities for the homeless and domestic violence survivors in the Saskatoon region.

Veterinary Social Work

As part of the treatment team at the WCVM Veterinary Medical Centre, the Veterinary Social Work Program attends to human needs in the veterinary setting.

The following organizations may be able to provide some support.

CRISIS SUPPORT

Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Services, 24-hour crisis line
306-933-6200

Family Stress Line, 24-hour crisis line
1-800-667-4442

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

Ministry of Social Services (MSS), child protection reporting
306-933-5961 (daytime)

Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Services, child protection reporting
306-933-6200 (24 hours)

COUNSELLING

Saskatchewan Health Region Mental Health and Addiction Services
306-455-7777

Catholic Family Services, non-denominational (holding fee scale)
306-244-7773

Family Service Saskatoon (holding fee scale)
306-244-0127

We understand that when they are hurting you are hurting, too.

We know how important your animal is to you.

For many, animals are beloved family members, friends, and companions. When their animals are sick or injured, owners experience a variety of emotions and challenges.

As part of the treatment team at the WCVM Veterinary Medical Centre, the Veterinary Social Work Program is here to support you through this difficult time.

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN University of Regina UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN University of Regina

BUILDING AWARENESS ABOUT THE LINK

Scientific American to Feature Veterinary Forensics

The January, 2017 issue of *Scientific American* will feature an extensive article about “Animal CSI,” detailing how advances in veterinary forensic science are helping prosecutors to convict people who abuse animals. Written by Jason Byrd and Natasha Whitling, the article’s resource list includes the National Link Coalition. The article describes cases in New York and Georgia where veterinary forensics improved the investigation of animal crime scenes leading to more vigorous prosecution of animal cruelty offenders. It describes work in New York City where the ASPCA and NYPD are building a database of whether domestic violence or child abuse had also been found in animal cruelty cases. Numerous Link authorities, including Randy Lockwood, Diane Balkin, Michelle Welch, Rob Riesman, Rachel Touroo, and Nancy Bradley Siemens, are quoted. Byrd is associate director of the William R. Maples Center for Forensic Medicine and director of education at the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Veterinary Forensic Science Program at the University of Florida. Whitling is senior manager in communications at the ASPCA.



-- Byrd, J. & Whitling, N. (2017, January). *Animal CSI*. *Scientific American*, 32-39.

Link Research Cited in British Cruelty Proposal



Anna Turley, MP

European research into the links between animal abuse and domestic violence was scheduled to be included in a Parliamentary debate in the U.K. on November 8 as a rationale for a measure that would toughen sentencing on animal cruelty perpetrators.

Anna Turley, MP for Redcar, was expected to use a study by Teesside University researchers Malcolm Plant and Paul van Schaik in a debate in favor of her Private Members Bill, Anna's Animal Cruelty (Sentencing) Bill. The Teesside University research team is calling for changes in attitudes towards animal cruelty in order to quell the progression to violence against humans.

The academic study, "It's a Dog's Life," looked at Eastern European communities, particularly those where animal abuse is endemic and socially acceptable. A number of communities examined had a large population of stray and neglected animals regularly facing violent attacks. This has created a vicious cycle of "endorsed aggression" in which witnesses of this unchallenged abuse adopt it as the norm.

"An important factor in animal abuse is empathy. We found that adolescents who possessed less empathy were more likely to abuse animals," said van Schaik.

"Young people in Eastern Europe who had experienced domestic violence enacted aggression towards animals and went on to commit violence against individuals and society," said Plant. "Management of stray street animals in some Eastern European communities had diminished their social status and encouraged and exacerbated aggression against them, with children witnessing this unaddressed violence accepting it as normative behavior, creating a cycle of abuse." (See the July/August 2016 LINK-Letter)

The research found that violence breeds violence, with individuals who have been exposed to domestic abuse having also committed cruelty against animals. In rural areas where violence against animals is seen as more socially acceptable, adolescent males were more likely to abuse animals and had higher exposure to domestic violence. These adolescents either showed displaced aggression against the stray animals or progressed to commit violence against family members.

The Teesside University study acknowledges that while links between domestic violence as the catalyst to animal abuse are more challenging to address, cultural change is needed in societies which are accepting of animal abuse.

Link Spotlighted in Florida Animal Abuser Registry



**Hillsborough
County Florida**

The National Link Coalition is listed as an educational resource on the new Hillsborough County, Fla., [animal abuser registry](#), which became effective on Nov. 1. Other resources include an ASPCA fact sheet on how to report suspected animal cruelty, relevant Florida statutes, and a link to the Hillsborough County Pet

Resource Center which investigates cruelty complaints. The site also allows viewers to search records of the Clerk of the Circuit Courts, and procedures for convicted abusers to register.

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS

Spain Learns About the FBI Animal Abuse Reporting Process



**Observatorio de
Violencia Hacia los
ANIMALES**

Our Spanish Link affiliate, [Observatorio de Violencia Hacia los Animales](#), is working with the University of Barcelona Law School and the Spanish Association of Chiefs of Police (UNIJEPOL) to build a comprehensive questionnaire that can be used to evaluate animal

cruelty cases. Observatorio coordinator Nuria Querol tells *The LINK-Letter* that they are also working with UNIJEPOL to issue the First Law Enforcement Awards in Animal Protection. “We want to engage police departments to be proactive in animal protection and hopefully this public acknowledgement will help,” she reports. Meanwhile, news about the FBI’s new program to include four types of animal abuse within the NIBRS reporting system used by 18,000 American law enforcement agencies (*see the [March 2016 LINK-Letter](#)*) has been received with great enthusiasm by Spanish police agencies, with the topic being raised at several law enforcement and veterinary conferences.

South Florida Coalition Holds Fundraiser

The [South Florida Link Coalition](#) held a happy hour fundraiser on Nov. 3 to raise money to provide shelter and care for the pets of domestic violence survivors trying to leave abusive relationships. By focusing on the obvious but often ignored relationship between animal cruelty and community, domestic and sexual violence, the Coalition is receiving hotline calls daily, offering training, and providing much-needed pet medications, supplies and relocation services for the animal victims of domestic violence.



Coordinator Amber Ahern tells *The LINK-Letter* that the Coalition is also conducting humane education programs for kindergarten and 1st grade students at a local elementary school, and recently conducted three trainings in Indian River and St. Lucie Counties for law enforcement, DCF, fire rescue, domestic violence, and educators. Members participated in the annual Countdown to Zero event hosted by the Peggy Adams Animal Rescue League and Palm Beach County Animal Care & Control and gained over 50 new Link foster parents and volunteers.

The 24-hour Link hotline is receiving five calls a week. “Our hotline has been one of our most important additions to our Coalition and it has got us working more like an agency than a coalition,” says Ahern. “Many of these callers are professionals who are linked with our organization and who are seeking help for their clients; some of them are victims who are seeking shelter and/or information about resources for themselves and their pets who are in danger. This hotline has been instrumental in creating a strong partnership with some of our local first responders.”



Australian Conference Explores International Domestic Violence Links

The 2nd Annual conference of [Lucy's Project](#) (*See the [October 2015 LINK-Letter](#)*) was held in November in Sydney, Australia, bringing an international cadre of Link authorities “Down Under” to address the Links between animal abuse and domestic violence. The organization was formed in June, 2013, by Anna Ludvik whose child, Lucy, had died in utero. From left, Lydia Tong, Allie Phillips, Frank Ascione, Freda Scott-Park, and Anna Ludvik gathered following a presentation.

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

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

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



H.R. 1258 – the Pet And Women Safety (PAWS) Act – was re-introduced with a new number and over 200 bi-partisan co-sponsors. The bill would expand existing federal domestic violence protections to include pets of domestic violence victims. It would prohibit crossing state lines to harm a domestic partner’s pet, and establish a federal grant program to provide assistance and housing to victims’ pets in need of emergency shelter. The bill has been assigned to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations. A companion measure in the Senate – **S. 1559** – with 31 co-sponsors has been referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.



Alaska HB 147 was signed into law on Oct. 27. The law, which takes effect on Jan. 17, 2017, will allow victims to petition the court for a protective order that the abuser may not remove, harm or dispose of any animals in the household, and to grant her exclusive care and custody of them. Peace officers investigating domestic violence cases must inform victims of this provision. The law also declares pets to be marital property and gives courts authority to decide individual or joint custody when people divorce, with consideration of what would be best for the animal. It also defines an act of animal abuse in this context as domestic violence.



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



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



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



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



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

Animal Abuse in the Presence of a Child



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



Michigan H5670 would make it a misdemeanor, punishable by a \$500 fine and 100 hours of community service, to inflict cruel treatment on a companion animal in the presence of a child. The bill was approved with amendments by the Criminal Justice committee on Sept. 20 and referred for a second reading.



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



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

Animal-Assisted Therapeutic Interventions for Abuse Victims



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

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



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



California SB 1200 initially would have required the standards for the selection and training of law enforcement and probation officers to include a requirement for training on domestic violence and the nexus between animal cruelty and violence against persons. The bill was amended to only require law enforcement agencies to include arrests for animal cruelty in their annual reports to the Governor. The amended bill was signed into law on Aug. 29.



Michigan HB 4353 would allow animal shelters to consider an individual's criminal history when determining whether or not to allow that individual to adopt an animal. Convicted animal abusers could not adopt for at least 5 years following conviction. The bill is passed the Judiciary Committee and is in the Committee of the Whole.



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



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

"CASA for Animals"



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



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



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

Interventions for Animal Abuse Offenders



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



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

Cross Reporting



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



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



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



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



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



Pennsylvania HB 760 would have protected veterinarians, certified veterinary technicians and assistants from civil liability if they report suspected cases of animal abuse in good faith to law enforcement authorities. The bill passed the House on Sept. 29 and was in the Senate Judiciary Committee when the General Assembly adjourned.



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

Animal Sexual Assault



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



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



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



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



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

Animal Hoarding



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

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Pilfered Pastry Lands Alleged Animal and Child Abuser in Jail

A man with a lengthy criminal record was booked on felony animal cruelty, shop-lifting, and 21 other charges for allegedly eating a doughnut in a Hobbs, N.M. store and not paying for it. Police arrested Gregory Mendoza, 35, after a store employee reported Mendoza had eaten the doughnut. The [Hobbs News-Sun](#) reported that police found six different arrest warrants against Mendoza from Hobbs, Eddy County and San Miguel County and 11 pending charges from Las Vegas and Carlsbad, N.M., including a cruelty charge for carrying a pit bull that appeared to be in obvious signs of distress in the bed of his truck. Records indicate Mendoza also has prior felony convictions for child abuse and possession of a handgun. Mendoza was booked into Hobbs City Jail on multiple other charges including fleeing a law enforcement officer, motor vehicle offenses, and failure to appear.



Gregory Mendoza



Todd Christopher Kohlhepp

Accused South Carolina Killer Had Childhood Histories of Sexual Assault, Child Abuse and Animal Abuse

The South Carolina registered sex offender accused of chaining a woman in a storage container and who has confessed to seven homicides had a violent history as a youth which included several incidents of animal abuse. The [Washington Post](#) and the [Arizona Republic](#) reported that court records from Arizona showed that when Todd Christopher Kohlhepp was 15 years old he went to a neighbor’s house, held a .22-caliber handgun to a 14-year-old girl’s head and demanded that she follow him. Once back at his home, Kohlhepp duct-taped the girl’s mouth, restrained her hands and raped her — then told her he would kill her and her younger siblings if she called police.

Psychiatric and court records also detailed a litany of other alleged violent acts from Kohlhepp’s childhood. He destroyed his bedroom with a hammer, hit other classmates, was caught “Cloroxing” a goldfish, shot a dog with a BB gun and was dismissed from the Boy Scouts because he was too disruptive. Reports indicated that Kohlhepp’s violent and troubled childhood included physical child abuse at the hands of his father. He was considered dangerous and had anger management issues, and served 14 years in prison in Arizona for kidnapping the girl.

Spartanburg County sheriff’s deputies made shocking discoveries on Kohlhepp’s wooded property in rural Woodruff, S.C., where they found a kidnapped woman who had been “chained like a dog” for two months and the body of her boyfriend buried in a shallow grave. Kohlhepp, a real estate agent, subsequently confessed to the unsolved 2003 killings of four people in a motorcycle shop in Chesnee, S.C., and led authorities to two other bodies buried on his property.

Youths’ Flash Mob Rioters Attack College Students and Police Horse

A rioting, roving band of some 150 youths – including some as young as 8 and 10 years old – who bragged about playing the “knockout game” in a series of flash mob attacks on the Temple University campus – beat and robbed college students and punched a police horse twice in the face. Police in Philadelphia, Pa. arrested four teens on various assault and robbery charges and detained some 50 people in the attacks which occurred on the nights of Oct. 20-22. At least one Temple student was hospitalized as a result of the attacks, the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) reported. A 16-year-old was charged with assaulting a police service animal.

Women Gets Six Months for Assaulting Boyfriend’s Dog



“Benny” the pug

A Fairfield, Calif. woman who was captured on surveillance video throwing a dog to the street after an argument with her boyfriend was sentenced to 180 days in jail and three years probation. Solano County Superior Court Judge John Ellis imposed the sentence on Oct. 26 against Brandi Chin, 31, who had pleaded no-contest to the charge last September. Prosecutors argued Chin had also choked and hit the dog, according to the [Suisun City Patch](#). The dog, a pug named “Benny,” was taken to Solano County Humane Services. Ellis also ordered her to find a new home for the dog she currently owns.



Welshman Who Threatened to Set Fire to Dog before Raping Woman Gets 12 Years

Dean Edwards

A Welsh court has imposed a 12-year prison sentence on a man who threatened to set fire to a woman’s pet dog before hitting her head against a wall and raping her. Dean Edwards, 39, of Cardiff, was found guilty by a jury who also heard how he covered the victim’s mouth with his hand during the brutal attack that occurred last April 3, [The Mirror](#) reported. Cardiff Crown Court Judge Michael Fitton told Edwards, “Your history makes it plain to me that you do present a risk of violence and now sexual violence to women.” Edwards has more than 20 previous convictions including robbery, battery and stabbing, and must now register as a sex offender.

Dog and Cat Discord, Elder Abuse and Domestic Violence Said to Precede Shootings of Two Police Officers



Scott Michael Greene

The suspect in the shooting deaths of two Iowa police officers is reported to have a history of elder abuse and domestic violence, including physical assault and financial exploitation of his mother and warning her that he would no longer take care of her cat. Police in Des Moines arrested Scott Michael Greene, 46, using the handcuffs that had belonged to two patrolmen he is alleged to have killed in ambush-style attacks using a high-powered rifle. One day prior to the Nov. 2 murders, a court ruled that Greene had committed elder abuse against Patricia Greene, his 66-year-old mother, following a dispute over a service dog belonging to his daughter. Police officials have offered no information as to what might have motivated Greene to shoot the two officers, although the [Des Moines Register](#) indicated he had a long history of mental illness issues and financial problems.

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.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

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

Nov. 16 – Stamford, Conn.: Phil Arkow will train on the Link between domestic violence and animal abuse during Grand Rounds at [Stamford Hospital](#).

Nov. 16 – London, U.K.: [The Links Group](#) will hold its AGM at Dogs Trust, from 11 am to 3 pm, including a working lunch.

Nov. 16 – Pittsfield, Mass.: The [HAVEN Link Coalition](#) will meet at the Berkshire Humane Society.

Nov. 17 – New Orleans, La.: Jenny Edwards and Kathryn Seigfried-Spellar will co-present on “Variance in Adjudicated Cases of Bestiality in the U.S.” at the American Society of Criminology’s [annual meeting](#).

Nov. 21 – Lansing, Mich.: Rachel Touroo will present on Veterinary Forensics at the MVMA’s [Michigan Animal Welfare Conference](#).

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

Dec. 6 – Newark, N.J.: Phil Arkow will train the [NJ Department of Child Protection and Permanency](#) on “Animal Abuse and Dangerous Animals as Risk Factors for Child Abuse and Other Family Violence”.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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.

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

Lesley Ashworth

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Consultant, Ohio Domestic Violence Network
Former Director, Domestic Violence/Stalking Program,
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