

League Links 2.0

A quarterly newsletter from the
League for Animal Welfare



In March, The Enquirer ran a five-part series by Laura A. Bischoff titled “Vicious: Dog attacks maim, disfigure and kill every year. How Ohio law fails victims” – a recounting of several dog attacks in Ohio, and the state laws that apply.

The story trades heavily in lurid details from real-life attacks; but alarmingly lightly on data that gives these tragedies context. It offers reactionary, ineffective legal solutions; and no insights into who is at risk, and why. It is emotionally evocative, but intellectually misleading.

The story comes at an inexplicable – but, unfortunately, especially dangerous – time for dogs and their people. Dog attacks are not on the rise – they remain relatively static over time. But dog ownership is on the decline – leaving thousands more dogs stranded in shelters at risk of euthanasia; and a growing number of people unable to access the love and companionship of these pets. To incite a fear of dogs, and introduce new hurdles to ownership, at a time when there is already a dearth of homes for the dogs in need, weighs heavily on the sheltering system at the worst time.

A Safe Pet

Dog attacks, while inarguably tragic, are rare. You’re more likely to die by bee sting than be attacked by a dog; and FAR more likely to die by gun, choking, sunstroke, or even in a catastrophic storm. The risk is so low, the National Safety Council, which tracks preventable injuries and deaths, uses dog attacks (along with plane crashes and lightning strikes) as an example of something we needlessly worry about: “fear is natural and healthy ... [but] it can also cause us to worry about the wrong things ... if we overestimate our risk”.

Bischoff’s story does just that. With lines like “[dog attacks are] a symptom of a larger problem, one that threatens the safety and health of thousands of Ohians every year,” Bischoff makes the danger seem imminent, ubiquitous. The little data she does provide appears to bolster her argument – she identifies 17,000 reported dog bites in Ohio each year and claims that the number of bites is likely twice as high when accounting for unreported ones.

Vicious?

*Poorly Timed Sensationalism Collides With
A Harrowing Dog Crisis*

Kitten Season Strikes Again

WHAT TO DO IF YOU BECOME THE UNWITTING GUARDIAN OF WEE BABY KITTIES

Barely out of May, and the League staff is already weeks into this response to callers who found baby kittens: “so ... what’s your capacity to hang onto them and care for them for a few weeks?” Kitten season is in full swing!

Cats are seasonal breeders, so litters of kittens start showing up as the days get longer and warmer. Kittens will start trickling into area shelters come March, until that trickle becomes a deluge by May. What can you do if you’ve found kittens outside, but no shelter has space to take them in?

First, make sure the kittens need your help! As with any other wild animals, mom cats won’t always be found with their babies. If the kittens seem healthy; look chubby; and aren’t crying, that means they have a great momma around that’s taking good care of them. If they’re still nursing (under 6 weeks old), leave them where they are. Unweaned baby kittens have a far better chance of survival with mom than they do in the hands of a bottle-feeding human!

If the kittens are sick, injured, or orphaned, you will likely have to step in. It’s easier than you think! All you need is a can of KMR (available at any local pet store, or likely at your local shelter); a kitten bottle or syringe with a tiny nipple; and a heart of gold. The littlest kittens will eat every 2-3 hours (for the first 2 weeks of life); and then every to 4-8 hours by 3+ weeks old. Stimulate them to go potty by rubbing the urogenital area with a warm cloth after each feeding. Kittens learn to eat on their own between 4-6 weeks - bottle-feeding will fly by!

If kittens are sick (covered in fleas; lethargic; eyes or nose plugged), then it’s time to call in the big guns. Your local shelter or veterinarian can help. Until they can see you, wipe crusty eyes/noses softly with a warm, damp cloth; comb fleas off with a fine-toothed flea comb dipped in warm water and Dawn dish soap; and perk up a fading kitten with Karo syrup on the gums with a Q-tip.

You’re well on your way to saving some of the most vulnerable lives out there! When contacting shelters for assistance, let them know that you can foster until they have space. And make sure to get momma cat spayed so that this cycle won’t rinse and repeat (cats have 2-3 litters every year, after all!). None of us can do it all on our own; but with a little help, we can do a whole lot, together.



Mousey was found outside with a bad eye infection at just two weeks old.

Kitten Resources

When to get involved (and when not to):

- [www.lfaw.org/media/our-programs/Found%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.lfaw.org/media/our-programs/Found%20(1).pdf)
- <https://www.kittenlady.org/casa>

Supplies you need:

- www.kittenlady.org/supplies

How much, and when, to feed:

- www.kittenlady.org/bottlefeeding

Other great resources for stray cats and kittens:

- Alley Cat Allies (alleycat.org)
- Kitten Lady (kittenlady.org)
- ASPCA (www.asPCA.org/helping-people-pets/i-found-kittens-what-do-i-do)



Anita came in with her mom, but wasn’t able to nurse.



The 5 ‘W’ kittens were found with their mom, who had died.



Creamsicle is a tame stray cat, so we were able to keep her kittens with her!

COMMUNITY MATTERS

TQL Becomes Lead Sponsor of Life-saving Gala

Total Quality Logistics (TQL) does more than just move worldwide freight; they bring change to the communities that they work in. And this year, that means supporting the League for Animal Welfare as the Lead Sponsor for Whiskey & Whiskers, our most important lifesaving gala.

“We proudly support organizations that our employees are actively involved with, as well as those that make a difference in the communities where we live and work,” explained TQL representative Angela Holman. By focusing on non-profits that matter to their employees, TQL opens their corporate support to a wide range of charitable causes, “reflecting the diversity and passion of TQLers everywhere.”

That passion for animal welfare is notable in their Executive Sales Director at TQL Global, Jake Stanton - who began a two-year term as the League’s Board President in January. “My wife [Courtney, also a League volunteer] and I have been dedicated to rescuing pitbulls for the entire 10 years we’ve been together,” Stanton explained. In 2021, the day after losing one of their own dogs suddenly, Jake happened to see the League’s RV pass by. He took it as a sign that it was time to get more actively involved in animal rescue. “From that point on, my wife and I started coming regularly to walk dogs and volunteer at events whenever we could. It’s been one of the most fulfilling things we’ve done.”

Jake and Courtney have put in hundreds of hours between them, walking dogs at the League; volunteering at adoption events; even petting a cat, here and there! Jake joined the Board of Directors in 2023, and immediately put his professional acumen to work. “Jake has always come to the table with an attitude of ‘what do we need to do the work? How can we help this organization grow to do what the community and the animals need us to do?’” said Executive Director Devon Smith. “Jake gets it - he always brings the energy of ‘we can do this - let’s work together to figure out how.’”

In 2025, that “how” has not only involved a Lead Sponsorship for Whiskey & Whiskers, but also scores of TQL employees volunteering onsite.

“With so many TQL’ers having furry friends of their own, it’s especially meaningful to back nonprofits that are working hard to improve the lives of



The League’s Board President, Jake Stanton.

animals right here in Clermont County,” echoed Holman. In 2025, TQL volunteers have already logged more than 200 hours working with animals at the League.

Stanton is looking forward to Whiskey & Whiskers, an evening that celebrates the compassion and support of an entire community that comes together at the League. “I think it really shows how much we appreciate all the people that help make the League possible. Every year the event gets larger and larger, which means the impact we’re making as an organization is growing as well,” Stanton said.

Join TQL in bringing change to your community: tickets go on sale this week for Whiskey & Whiskers, held on September 27 at the Manor House!



TQL teams have been volunteering at the League for years, putting their compassion into action!

WHISKEY & WHISKERS

Join us for our biggest fundraiser of the year, featuring dinner, a live and silent auction, games, and more!

September 27, 2025 7-10pm

Tickets available June 5:
www.lfaw.org/events/whiskey-and-whiskers/

What Bischoff doesn't say: she's using the *highest* number of bites recorded by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) over the last 10+ years (the average, more representative number is 15,500 dog bites - it only climbed as high as 17,000 once in the last 10 years); bites actually *are* well-recorded, as every shelter, law, and medical professional reports animal bites to the Department of Health (the claim that the number of bites is double that number is trying to unnaturally inflate the risk by lumping in minor incidents); and, perhaps most importantly, more than 99% of the total *reported* dog bites require no (81%) or very little (18.9%) medical attention (even the number of *reported* bites, then, overrepresents risk, as being a “reported” bite does *not* indicate that the bite caused damage). When you piece all of that together? The “thousands of Ohians” whose “safety and health [are threatened]” by dogs is more like: roughly 100 people who experience a serious injury from a dog bite. By conflating *any* dog bite with very serious or fatal dog attacks, Bischoff does both dogs and journalism a disservice.

Moreover, Bischoff omits the fact that dog bites are not increasing in Ohio. The ODH's statistics show that dog bites have stayed within a relatively static range over the last 10 years – seemingly impervious to increases in dog ownership, changes in breed-specific legislation, and even the stressors of Covid. While they spiked in 2019, they dropped to their lowest in 2021; and were at the decade's average in 2024. Given this important context, it's hard to parse why this risk is suddenly so present as to require a 5-part series, warning us of a “danger” we've been living with as long as we've lived with dogs.

Millions of us live with dogs; one hundredth of one percent of us have experienced a serious dog bite.

And indeed, millions of us live with dogs; and only one hundredth of one percent of us have experienced a serious dog bite. There are an estimated 89 million beloved pet dogs in the US, living safely with 65 million families. Bischoff leaves all of this important data - which reveals what a safe family pet dogs are and have always been - entirely and self-servingly out of her story.

A Dwindling Population

A safe pet, a beloved pet – but dogs are a pet whose numbers seem to be on the decline.

Data from the American Pet Product Association (APPA) show that dog ownership trended consistently upward from the late 1990s until its peak in 2020; but then declined after Covid. 2028 forecasts portend similarly diminished numbers.

That trend has left more dogs in shelters with fewer families coming to rescue them: Shelter Animals Count's 2024 year-end report shows that euthanasia has increased for shelter dogs, from 7% in 2019 to 9% in 2024 (260,000 dogs). This number had been consistently and steadily declining before Covid, but has started, tragically and frustratingly, to increase again.

We don't yet know the cause for this decline in dog acquisition – economic hardship; post-Covid social expectations; simply a natural cycle. But we do know that a decline in dog ownership matters not only to the dogs, but also to people. Pet ownership leads to an improvement in human health outcomes. Pets provide companionship, love, meaning, responsibility - all of which “contributes to overall American health and wellbeing. Conservative estimates demonstrate that owning a pet saves the American healthcare system billions of dollars annually,” including for mental health costs for children, seniors, and veterans, according to the 2022 APPA pet survey.

Bischoff's article stokes fear and affects the public's perception of dogs, all in a moment when dog ownership and its benefits to both dogs and people were already becoming inaccessible. This is certainly not a recipe for recovery for America's most vulnerable dogs. Does it even protect victims?



Shelter workers are trained to recognize dog body language - the only way dogs can communicate with us, and a critical way to avoid incidents.





Safeguards for the Few Without Imperiling the Many

Even if rare, any dog attack is tragic; and precautions to mitigate them are welcome. But effective safeguards must target the problem, without entangling or imperiling faultless dogs and owners.

Bischoff argues that the key problem is legal loopholes leaving vicious dogs on the street to repeatedly attack; the solution is increasing legal penalties for owners and their dogs. She oft repeats the sensationalist line that dogs get “one free kill” (conveniently leaving out that no dog involved in a fatal incident in Ohio has ever been released back to the community). Of the 16 dog attacks Bischoff references over a 10-year period in Ohio, only one of the dogs would have been subject to these recommended legislative solutions, which are only triggered after an initial, serious incident. The article’s proposed reactive laws may placate, but they do not keep victims safe.

Most alarmingly, several proposals in the article would negatively affect all dog owners, not just the .01% who may pose a risk. Bids to define all dogs over 25lbs as “potentially dangerous;” to require robust (read: expensive) insurance coverage for all dogs; to

increase fines for non-injurious penalties (like running loose) all represent financial barriers that could prevent loving owners from keeping or adopting faultless dogs. That means fewer homes for dogs; and cutting off the benefits of dog ownership to people based on economic status. The problem of dangerous dogs doesn’t have a quick legislative fix - and certainly not one that, as Bischoff seems to champion, rests entirely on an appeal to emotion with no effort to understand root causes.

Identifying the Problem to Find Proactive Safeguards

Reactive, punitive measures address an issue too late for the victims; sweeping legislative requirements for all dog owners catch too many of the wrong dogs in its net. True safeguards require an understanding of the underlying issue.

Within Bischoff’s reporting, we already have clues about what that may involve: attacks that involve dogs escaping from a long-broken door held shut by a towel; a dog that got into the owner’s cocaine. In other reporting of the serious attacks Bischoff references, we know these primarily involved dogs in economically-struggling neighborhoods. Robust reporting on the socioeconomic status of the owners of dogs who attack is non-existent, unfortunately. But anecdotal evidence from reports of attacks make clear that a common denominator in dog attacks – moreso than a history of dog aggression, the shaky foundation on which Bischoff’s solutions rely – is poverty. Families without secure fences or doors, backyards, access to dog training, consistent child-care. Owners who have not sterilized their pets (one study shows that 85% of dogs involved in fatal attacks are unneutered). Families with histories of upheaval that disrupt everyone’s (including the pets’) mental well-being and stability.

Bischoff’s article never connects aggression in dogs to poverty or destabilization in the homes – in fact, she even dismisses the link when she says that “tangential issues” like dog-tethering “bogged down” legislation to increase penalties for dangerous dogs. But poverty (and its visible manifestation) is not tangential – it is central. And meaningful safeguards to protect Ohioans must meet it head on. Solving poverty may not be on the agenda; but a conscientious effort to connect low-income dog owners with animal professionals and their resources is where risk mitigation actually starts.

What might it look like, to protect the people most vulnerable - the dogs, the owners, and the neighborhoods that at-risk dogs live in? It may be less flashy than emotionally-charged punishments meted out by the state, but: marketing and educational efforts, especially aimed at families with small kids in low-income areas, on how to safely interact with dogs; concerted efforts to bring free spay/neuter services to low-income neighborhoods; connecting at-risk dogs (e.g. dogs with a history of running loose) with non-profits who provide human-animal support services (which include resources for things like secure fencing); messaging to high-risk populations (utility workers, runners, mail carriers; etc) on tools to protect them while in the field (air horns; Pet Corrector spray; etc). Proactive safeguards that identify at-risk families before an attack occurs can forestall tragedy in a way that punitive, post-attack penalties never will.

Dogs aren’t the problem; violent owners aren’t the problem. The problem is inaccess to resources that promote safety. The best answer for our communities isn’t to punish dogs or owners, or to unnecessarily terrify us all about the most common pet in our homes. The answer is to make the right connections, provide the right resources, before tragedy ever occurs.

Sensationalism may sell - but it certainly never provided an effective solution to a social problem.

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Nestle-Purina's Clermont Division Volunteers at the League

The League welcomed 80 associates from Nestle-Purina's Williamsburg factory on May 22-23 for their annual Purina Cares Day. From spreading ten tons of gravel on our walking trails, to scrubbing litter boxes, there was nothing this crew wasn't willing to do to make the lives of shelter animals a little brighter.

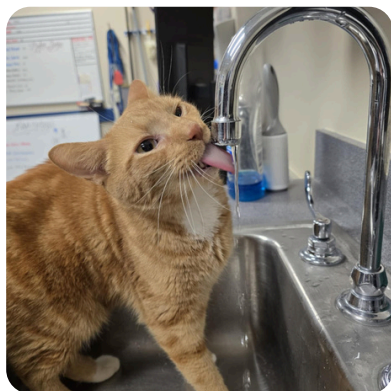
The Purina team followed up their day of toil by holding an adoption event at the League, sponsoring adoptions for the animals that found their families that day; and helping new families meet available pets. Thanks to the crew, 7 dogs and cats found their new homes at the event (with one or two going home with Purina employees and their family members, too!).

Purina Cares Day focuses on giving back to the communities they work in. "We are honored to support the League for Animal Welfare and give back to the community our associates call home," said Michael Ferritto, manager at the Williamsburg factory. The shelter provides



essential resources and services to Clermont County, and Purina's involvement strengthens our community by supporting its daily operations." We're grateful to have this team of dedicated, compassionate animal-lovers in our backyard - people and pets are, as Purina notes, better together. 🐾

ADOPT ME



Chief - 2.5 years old, male

Chief is a ball of fun and full of love - and he loves all cats just as much as he loves all people. Chief came to us from an overcrowded shelter in southern Kentucky. When he arrived, he was a bit wobbly, with back legs that weren't working quite right. He's stumped all the vets who have seen him, including a neurologist - so this boy is just going to stay wobbly! It doesn't bother him - Chief still gets around just fine; snuggles other kitties like a champ; purrs like it's his job; and will be the first to greet you when you enter his room. He just needs a family to overlook the wobbles, and love him forever!



Archibald - 1.5 years old, male

Archibald is the life of the party. If he catches your eye when he's sitting in his kennel, that tail will start wagging - slowly at first, but it picks up if he can tell you really mean HIM! We know he'll bring this same grateful, goofy, energy to a new family. Archibald is a lot of fun, a lot of love, and a lot of energy - so he needs a home ready to meet all of that with the same vibe! Archibald may be a bit *too* much for doggies who are anxious or dominant, or for kitties - but he will be just right for a family who appreciates silliness, happiness, a waggy tail, and a smile that would light up even the darkest of hearts!

View all the cats and dogs available for adoption at LFAW.org/adoption-center