

## **On the Positive Side: There's a lot to love about pit bulls**

**By Neil S. Grayson For the Sun-News**

**Posted: 06/20/2009 10:20:35 PM MDT**

I once was a vocal supporter of Breed Specific Legislation (BSL). I went so far as to state that all pit bulls should just be "put down." Do away with the whole breed. This was after seeing and hearing so many news reports of vicious pit bull attacks.

When my son bought a female pit bull I went ballistic and told him to never bring her over to my house. Well, long story short, he moved into an apartment that did not allow pets. I was furious, but, as a father, I eventually allowed the dog to stay with me and my wife, just until he could find another option.

That was four years ago and now Ariel is a part of me and my family. She is smart, energetic, well behaved, well socialized and a credit to the breed. She is, with no doubt, the smartest and sweetest dog I have ever known or owned. We take her to "Doggy Dude Ranch and Cat Farm" here in Las Cruces, where she plays with 20 to 30 dogs all day. Contact the owner or workers and ask about Ariel. I'm sure they will have a smile on their face as they talk about her.

If you are going to pass a bill for "dangerous dogs" and only single out pit bull terriers and rottweilers, why not go all the way and add chow-chows, dalmatians, huskys, and German shepherds? These dogs are dangerous, too, and more likely to bite a human. As a matter of course all dogs are dangerous. Given the proper circumstances, all dogs will bite.

If you truly want to stop "dangerous dogs" from harming your constituents, then write a bill that targets dog owners as a whole. The problem with targeting certain breeds is this makes you look like a bigot. You stereotype the breed as a whole because of a few bad people who abuse their pets and turn them into dangerous animals. A toy poodle can be turned into a fighting dog with simple training.

Better still, you can educate yourself about this wonderful breed. Teddy Roosevelt owned one and he was one sharp man. Helen Keller owned one and she was more defenseless than most. America used the pit bull to represent our country on WWII posters. Remember the dog in the "Young Rascals" movies? Pit bull. They were once the "poster child" of America and they can be again with responsible ownership.

Try reading some of the positive things about them. You'll find there is a lot to love about this breed. Ban the deed, not the breed!

Neil S. Grayson is a local resident and animal advocate.