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## Owner specific legislation is what's needed

**Arlene Lambert, Special to the Sun**

Published: Tuesday, May 13, 2008

I have owned dogs all my life and I currently own two pit bulls -- both rescued from irresponsible owners.

I am also a mauling victim, having survived a vicious attack by a German shepherd when I was six -- more than 155 stitches and six hours of facial surgery, and I have the scars to prove it. So I see both sides of the debate on pit bulls.

I am also a mother and yes, my son is actively involved in the lives of my two house-pit bulls. So here is my opinion on a few things:

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Responsible ownership of any breed -- big and small-- is imperative.

This doesn't just mean having them on a leash -- it means knowing what triggers, upsets, frightens or excites your dog and controlling it's environment to ensure the safety of all.

Breed specific legislation scares me.

The people who want vicious dogs will just move to another breed and it takes far too long for the ineffective legislation to keep up. Instead, I prefer to have owner specific legislation -- in other words, if you want to own any pet you need to qualify for ownership (maybe show proof of seminars or courses taken.)

And if your animal should ever cause harm to another living being, harsh penalties should be imposed -- eventually resulting in a ban from ever owning another animal, and/or criminal charges.

"Blame the hand that leads, not the breed."

Arlene Lambert lives in Coquitlam.

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