

To Pitbull or Not To Pitbull

by Cheryl Wicks, Sammie's Friends Animal Shelter

Many of you know what a great dog the American Pitbull Terrier can be. It is unfortunate that they have gotten such a bad reputation. Pitbulls often live and play successfully with other dog and are great companions to their people. Some are friends with cats. The great majority love people. One of our local vets says his favorite patients are Pitbulls and Labrador Retrievers because when he sees one of them he is quite sure he won't get bitten and with any other breed he's never sure.

On the one hand, people believe Pitbulls are bred to be fighting machines, and on the other hand, there are people who think it is all in the way they are raised. If a Pitbull has been bred to fight it has a propensity in that direction. As with the herding dogs; like to herd and hunting dogs like to hunt. Most Pitbulls are not bred to fight and are often mistreated because they won't fight.

In their early history they were called the little nanny because they are so good with kids. As an example, Petey of the "Little Rascals" was a Pitbull. Their raising definitely makes a difference. An analogy would be having a spirited child. If properly nurtured and directed this child may excel at sports. If not, he may be beating up the neighborhood kids. It is a combination of nature/nurture. Being a responsible parent is important. It is also important to be a responsible guardian to your pets.

It is estimated that close to a million Pitbulls are euthanized every year in shelters. Most of these pitbulls have done nothing wrong. Pitbulls are not at the top of the list for dog bites. Most dog bites of any breed are from unspayed/unneutered

animals.

To put the "scary Pitbull" in context consider the following:

1 out of every 37 people in the U. S. is a convicted felon.

There are a half million registered sex offenders, many whose whereabouts are unknown...

50 people every DAY are murdered (humans are certainly a dangerous animal).

25, 000 people die each year because of drunk drivers.

Each year, 17,000 people fall to their death.

3,000 deaths a year are caused by accidental drowning.

3,000 women a year die of spousal abuse.

2,000 children are killed every year by their parents, through abuse and neglect.

(A child is 800 times more likely to be killed by their adult caretaker than by a pitbull.

On average there are 32 deaths per year caused by dog attacks.

There are 74.5 million dogs in the United States.

It is at least a hundred thousand times more likely that a "Pitbull" will be killed by a HUMAN, than the other way around.

If you want to know more about pitbulls and their suitability for your family check out the following websites www.badrap.org,

or www.pbrc.net. As well I am available for questions:

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