

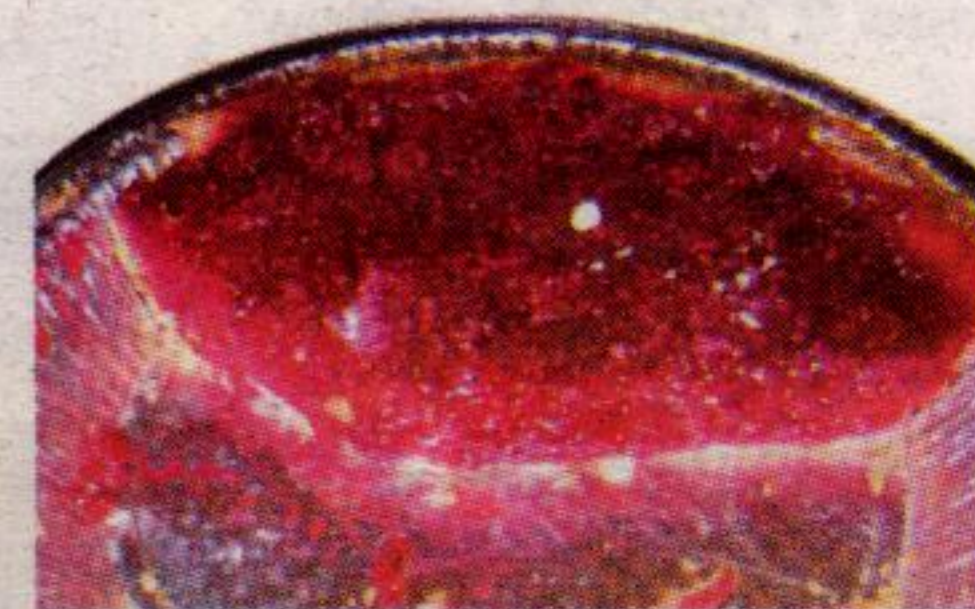


HEALTH
Aphasia Centre
holds first
silent auction
Page 23

SPORTS
Centennial teams
place first, third
at Ontario tourney
Page SL 1



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Page 22



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Proposed ban on pit bulls denounced

*Province is being short-sighted
targeting dogs, not bad owners,
say local dog owners*

The provincial government's proposed ban on pit bulls is not addressing the real issue—bad owners, says a Georgetown man who has a five-year-old Staffordshire terrier.

Barry Simpson of Georgetown whose dog Brindle will be among the breeds included in the proposed ban says, "I think the government is just taking the easy way out again."

"And they're not really solving any problem. They're not tackling the real issue, which is bad owners," said Simpson.

Under the proposed ban, pit bulls are defined as a pit bull terrier, Staffordshire bull terrier, American pit bull terrier or dogs having the appearance and physical characteristics similar to those breeds.

Under the proposed regulations those who own pit bulls once the law is proclaimed can keep them, but the dogs must be leashed and muzzled in public and spayed or neutered.

The owner of any dog that bites, attacks or is a menace to public safety could face a \$10,000 fine and a six-month jail term once the law is passed

Simpson is upset he's going to have to muzzle his dog, who he said is very gentle, and "a fantastic addition to the family."

"I don't think I should have to. She's never had an incident in her life," he said.

He said in actuality his dog has been attacked by other breeds of dogs when they've been out walking.

Acton vet Stephen Hess of Acton Veterinary Clinic shares Simpson's view of the ban.

"I think that the legislation is short-sighted because it's targeting a breed of dog rather than the real culprit, the person who is an irresponsible dog owner," said Hess.



Sue Kingshott spends some quiet time with her Staffordshire bull terrier Toby. The Georgetown woman is opposed to a proposed provincial ban on "pit bulls" which would include her dog even though she insists her pooch does not fall under the designation. Photo by Ted Brown

He said those owners train and create a dog that may be dangerous and if the pit bull is banned, they will turn to another breed of dog, such as the Rotweiler, putting other dogs at risk for banning.

Hess said in his practice he has dealt with hundreds of pit bulls over the years and never been bitten by one, however, he has been bitten by other breeds of dogs.

"Generally the pit bull is very social with people," said Hess. "The majority of pit bulls are just family pets."

That's exactly what Sue Kingshott's Staffordshire bull terrier Toby is. He is another dog that will be banned if the law is proclaimed.

She said Toby loves dogs and people, and any chance he gets he rolls over to have his belly rubbed.

She said he "would never attack another dog."

Kingshott said the dog's breed has been recognized since 1935 and stresses it is not a pit bull.

"His face might look similar but that's not the basis to ban one," said Kingshott who has written to

See HUMANE, pg. 3

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