

FAX 3/478-9873

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420 N. Bonnie Brae Street
Los Angeles, CA 90026-4925

New Times Letters
1950 Sawtelle Blvd., Ste. 200
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Dear Editor:

If the risks we took in revealing our identities and activities in South Central L.A. and Mark Ebner's tenacity and passion in writing "*Pit Bullies*" (Nov. 7) are not to have been vain, we feel it is vital to reemphasize the enormity and the complexity of this problem to the caring people who have responded. This must not end with merely dropping a few more dollars into the "humane pot." It is not a simplistic issue of rescuing dogs. If that worked, we would not have a problem, because millions of dollars are donated annually to humane organizations worldwide. While the groups you mentioned are among the most reputable and dedicated, none of them is devoted to, nor even actively involved in, stopping dog-fighting. This is an economic issue—it is BIG (non-taxpaying) business—and it is a political issue. More and more it is the diversion of the rich and powerful—sports figures, doctors, lawyers, computer whizzes—craving greater levels of excitement and violence.

We need the power of voters, the voices of influential citizens, the cooperation of major corporations whose employees (because of these dogs) cannot enter properties to perform their duties. So that it remains in the spotlight and in the minds and hearts of the public, we need the continual exposure of these atrocities by the mainstream media—newspapers, magazines, TV reporters and talkshow hosts. We need the voices of innocent, law-abiding individuals who have been attacked by loose dogs deliberately bred for viciousness, and the tears of those who have seen their pets torn to pieces before their eyes and their children pulled down and mauled in the streets.

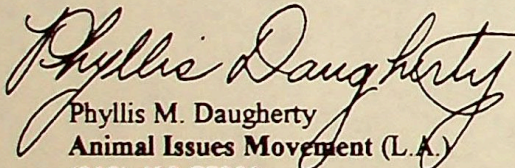
This "industry" is tied into drugs, gangs and constant danger and death. It cares about no one. It is not racially exclusive. Although the article was focused primarily on a section of South L.A., parts of the Antelope Valley, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, the streets of Pacoima, North Hollywood, San Pedro-Wilmington, Highland Park and East L.A. are rife with the "blood sport." Row after row of city and county shelter runs are filled with an unending stream of bloody, scarred, mutilated animals who lost.

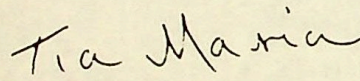
Those of us who actually work in these "armpit," gang-infested areas, cooperate constantly with Animal Control and the police because—let's face it, they are the law. We have to risk trespassing, physical assault, and being sued to get to the animals who need help most. We, too, curse them for not doing more, but that is just "shooting the messenger." The inadequacy of our Animal Control and Police departments to deal with this activity is a reflection of the apathy of the citizens and the abdication of responsibility by our elected officials. This has been brought to the public's attention before. As your Ventura reader said—no one cared! *Sports Illustrated* did a comprehensive front cover expose in 1987 ("Pit Bull—Friend or Killer.") In 1991, the "Pit Bull Dilemma" described over 1,000 incidents of attacks on humans and the horrors and pervasiveness of dogfighting, including excerpts from *Sporting Dog Journal*. Again, no one cared. But try to make arrests or stop these poor animals from being adopted indiscriminately from shelters and the civil liberties groups scream "prejudice;" and, worse yet, the "humaniacs" self-righteously bring charges against "breed specificity." Well, we had better start being "breed specific," because they are not fighting toy poodles!!

It is also important to be honest about the rehabilitation of these dogs after they are rescued. Most--not all--are unsalvageable because of the extent of their injuries and psychological damage and the fact that they are "game bred." This is a special process (including "in-breeding") to create an abnormal and deviant personality with a single goal--to kill or fight to death. Regardless of what we would like to believe, most of these creatures cannot safely be placed in homes with children and other pets, and even training experts cannot rehabilitate them. Those who tout the "no-kill" shelter theory don't want it revealed that those facilities/organizations primarily "pick and choose" the animals they will accept (just call a few and try to give them your unwanted, misbehaving animal!) So they basically select the adoptable animals and let the municipal shelters be the bad guys and do the euthanizing.

We have an action plan that will work. We need the players and the power to put it in place. We have already started by placing a call to the RECYCLER, which is the major pipeline for the breeding and sale of fighting dogs--not the L.A. Times--and which carried ads for over 600 available pit bull puppies the week of Mark's article. They must be asked why they run ads for adult dogs that are "good fighters," two-week-old pit pups that are "game bred," and even wolves raised in captivity. We hope they will have the social conscience to cease enabling these illegal activities. If not, your readers can join us in the peaceful protest that is already scheduled.

We need you, **New Times**, and your readers to help us demand our elected representatives put money into tough animal control and police officer teams, willing to risk their lives busting the dog fighters (street/hobbyist/and the professional rings.) This can become largely self-supporting, rather than a drain on taxpayers, because it includes imposing monetary liability for neglect/cruelty, and forfeiture of assets for felony animal-fighting. Ironically city councils have no difficulty imposing a \$1,000 fine for the whine of a leaf blower, but there is no direct fine for the screams or cries of a tortured or beaten animal.


Phyllis M. Daugherty
Animal Issues Movement (L.A.)
(213) 413-7729*


Tia Maria
Pit Bull Rescue Center
(818) 382-4777*

*You may print these numbers.

(P.S. - Dog food is badly needed for the Rescue Center!)