

A Lesson In Foxhunting - Linda D. Witouski

We would think that we would learn from history, but most unfortunately, history doesn't seem to be a popular subject amongst the dog fancy.

From the above article - written in 2002 :

I know you are probably finding all of this Legislative hoopla hard to believe, and some of you probably think that the AKC should be fighting this battle for you, but it is impossible for them to be on top of every state. If you think that poor legislation denying you your right to breed, own or show dogs doesn't have a chance in the U.S., think of the Scots and their beloved Foxhunting.

How long have the people in Scotland, and neighboring countries been foxhunting? It is now banned in Scotland and barely on life support in all other areas. Why, you ask - what happened...how could they do that? The animal rightists continually pushed and forced the debate until their thoughts and beliefs were THE issue....and the Foxhound Fanciers were not ready for it. They were not prepared and they thought the A/R's would just give up and go away. They laughed about it ... they thought that somebody else was taking care of the problem ... didn't think it was important....so, they jumped on their horses and went - foxhunting.....!! Why, who would ever even imagine that the foxhound sport that has been around since dirt could be attacked by a bunch of 'fanatics' and win ? But, win they did ! At the end of the days hunt on the day of the ban, when the Foxhunters returned, they were arrested, dogs were confiscated and all of Scotland was quiet.

Anybody want to take bets on how long it will be before the first ban of a dog/cat show takes place and people begin to lose their property rights - their animals and dogs ? No bets? How about betting on how long it takes before the U.S. is overrun with poor animal legislation? Everybody needs to sit up and pay attention ! It's coming and when it does, it will come hard and fast !

The showing fancy have always thought of themselves as better than the average dog, and though they may well be for a variety of reasons - commercial facilities have a right to exist, too. These people have been fighting poor legislation for many years and it's time the showing/owning fancy get with the program before it's too late. People need to set aside their feelings about others and concentrate on saving their rights - our rights - working together. Those that make disrespectful comments about others, joke & laugh about legislative issues, point fingers at their "fellow puppy mills" should take heed of the lesson to be learned in Foxhunting. I would be willing to bet that very few bother to check legislative issues in their town or state. I assure you, this agenda against our rights will move from state to state, for those who would see us dogless will be relentless in their quest. What will you do when it comes to your town? What would you give to be able to regain the freedom of choice you will have lost?

Fast forward to the present. 2008

It's alarming that many still don't find it important enough to assist in legislative issues. We are surrounded. The rightists "wave" is the same now as it was in 2002. If you take note of the legislation being passed around the country, the outlying states, or coastal areas, are being coerced into stricter laws. California, Texas, New Mexico, Florida, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Wisconsin. The states currently being besieged with bad legislation creates a net that surrounds the remainder of the U.S., and causes an "inward" push, into the traditional heartland of our country. Once outlying coastal states are acquired, they will continue to push until there is no where to run.

Those that have been working legislation for many years have created a phalanx and have become very good at combating poor legislation, but, just like the Spartans at Thermopylae, the opposition is in the millions and sooner or later our phalanx will fail. It should be the opposite since we are the ones that care about animals and the sport, or so many claim. People don't

realize that the rightists movement has nothing to do with the welfare of the animals - genuine animal welfare is being sacrificed for a political victory over animal owners. As in the Foxhunting lesson - a movement's means create its ends ...

Every club, organization and animal owner needs to now rise up and take their place in the phalanx. We need to be visiting schools and promoting OUR word rather than allowing AR public education programs to infiltrate school systems. We need to encourage young people who have a love for animals to join us by taking them under our wings. We need to offer assistance to those who have been injured by some dog in Small Town, USA. We need public service announcements to advertise clubs & responsible ownership - offer free classes to parents and children. Most importantly, we need to know our politicians by creating voting alliances in every state and let those politicians know that we are watching them. We need to make our presence and what we stand for known by introducing ourselves to local governments, even if it means assisting with some other issue that is non animal related - something that is near and dear to a politician that you helped them with will go far when you need it. (It wouldn't hurt to run for a position, either !) There are probably a million ideas that clubs, officers, members and owners could come up with if they would only take the time to sit down, discuss, and then DO it.

That is, unless, of course, you are all out Foxhunting.