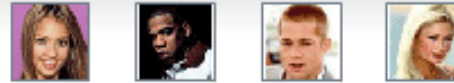


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May 5, 2008, 11:23 a.m.

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Snakes as Pets Pose Little Threat to Public

(Created: Monday, May 5, 2008 10:25 AM EDT)

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Editor: I would like to educate County Board members regarding outlawing venomous snakes in the name of public safety ["Prohibition on Venomous Snakes Is Fast-Tracked Toward Approval," May 1].

If enacted, this ban would be based on pure emotion and hysteria, instead of science and facts. Furthermore, by not grandfathering the current owners and forcing them to get rid of their animals within 30 days, the county might get sued for taking property, since animals are property under U.S. Constitution.

How would County Board members feel if they were forced to get rid of their beloved pets, of any species, within 30 days?

It is ridiculous to worry about captive, caged venomous snakes, when Virginia is home to wild venomous snakes: the cottonmouth, water moccasin and timber/canebrake rattlesnake, among them.

Quick! What movies are opening this weekend?

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Wild venomous snakes in the U.S. kill, on average, 12 people each year; captive venomous snakes kill 0.7 people per year (19 killed in the last 13 years, all of them owners/handlers/keepers, NOT the general public).

It never ceases to surprise me how people fear exotic animals, and react to their fear of the unknown with hysteria, instead of educating themselves.

In the U.S., only one person dies per year as a result of attacks by captive big cats, 1.5 people by captive reptiles, 0.13 by captive bear and 0 by captive non-human primate. In comparison, 45,000 people die each year in traffic accidents, 47 by lightning and 1,600 by falling down stairs.

You have a better chance of winning the lottery jackpot (1 in 13,983,816, all six winning numbers selected) or even the elusive Mega Millions Lottery jackpot (1 in 175,711,536), than being killed by a captive reptile (1 in 198,412,189).

We have more detailed information and statistics on our Web site at www.rexano.org.

Zuzana Kukol

President

REXANO (Responsible Exotic Animal Ownership)

Reader Comments

The following are comments from the readers. In no way do they represent the view of Sun Gazette Newspapers. Total Comments: 4 comment(s)

Zuzana Kukol wrote on [May 5, 2008 2:03 PM](#):

" It needs correction 9, not 19 killed in 13 years by captive venomous snakes in the USA. It is my mistake, do not blame the news for this one, I was typing too fast and didn't catch the typo in time when submitting my letter. The ratio 0.7 person killed per year is correct.

Z
"

Al Coritz wrote on [May 5, 2008 1:28 PM](#):

" Indeed these sort of actions are an act of hysteria. I actually think law makers like to pick easy marks like responsible animals owners because it looks like they are actually doing something, when in fact they are just driving people with these animals underground. Making everyone less safe actually just like the gun laws do "



WEllsaid wrote on [May 5, 2008 1:24 PM](#):

" But who will protect us from ourselves? "

Eileen wrote on [May 5, 2008 1:18 PM](#):

" Great article. Strongly Agree. Exotic pets can be as domesticated as dogs when cared for by responsible owners. The threat to public safety is almost non-existent. Thank you for educating others. "

Post A Comment

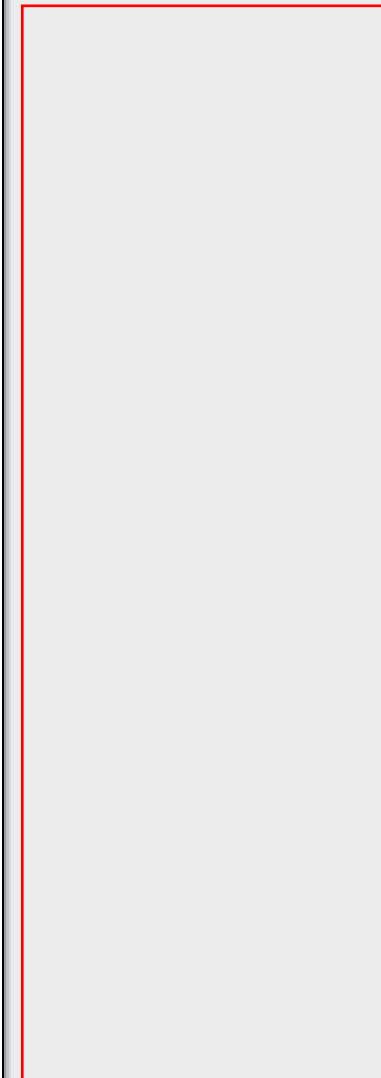
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