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DANGEROUS DOGS SUBJECT OF NEW AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION BOOK

Animal Law Committee explores controversial issues involved in public debate

CHICAGO, July 9, 2009 – In the expanding field of animal law comes the topic of “dangerous” dogs. As communities and governments struggle to address public safety issues in the wake of dog attacks, they are often looking at legislation to define which dogs are “dangerous” based solely on their breed. In this topical and timely book, the ABA Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section’s Animal Law Committee faces the issues head on in this public and contentious debate examining all sides of the issue and possible solutions. Is breed discrimination immoral, unjust, and ineffective? What solutions are there, if any? How can society address the growing perception that some dogs are, by definition, dangerous?

The book provides progressive approaches to better address the concerns that have arisen with reckless owners and their dogs, and provides strategies for prosecuting and defending dangerous dog cases. This new book, *A Lawyer’s Guide to Dangerous Dog Issues*, is a valuable resource for governments, as well as legal and private associations, on handling this emerging field of law. This one-of-its-kind, cutting-edge book is an up-to-date informative guide for lawyers and policymakers who are struggling with the issues surrounding the concept of dangerous dogs.

Edited by Joan Schaffner, a nationally-respected expert on animal law and associate professor of law at George Washington University Law School, and director and a co-founder of the GW Animal Law Program, the book covers the major aspects of “dangerous dog” cases. Schaffner is a noted speaker and author, based in Washington, D.C. Contributing authors, who have been active in the TIPS Animal Law Committee and are national experts on animal law, include Ledy Van Kavage of Best Friends Animal Society; Michelle Welch, assistant attorney general, State of Virginia; David Furlow, Houston; Marcy LaHart, West Palm Beach, Fla.; Prof. Bernard Rollin, Colorado State University; and Prof. Larry Cunningham, St. John’s University School of Law, New York.

In seven chapters, these animal law experts consider key topics including: an overview of ordinances targeting reckless owners; the concept of canine profiling; the constitutionality of breed-specific legislation; enforcing and defending dangerous dog laws; and information on

dangerous dog registries and hearings. Readers will discover techniques such as use of witnesses, including victims, animal control officers, physicians and animal behaviorists, and will find a primer on homeowners' insurance and dog ownership. The book also delves into breed discrimination by homeowner associations and zoning boards.

Founded in 2004, the TIPS Animal Law Committee has taken the lead in focusing national attention on a variety of issues and has been active in numerous ABA working groups focusing on animals and related issues.

The ABA Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section unites plaintiffs' and defense attorneys, insurance professionals, and corporate counsel to advance the civil justice system. TIPS is a national source of expertise in tort trial and insurance practice and brings lawyers together to share information and speak out on issues of importance. The section, with more than 32,000 members, has 34 general committees that focus on substantive and procedural matters in areas across the broad spectrum of civil law and practice. For more information about the section visit the TIPS Web site, www.abanet.org/tips. The Animal Law Committee's Web site can be found at www.abanet.org/tips/animal.

With more than 400,000 members, the American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law.

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