Twice that afternoon I secretly telephoned the pet store, only to find out that "Buddy" had remained captive. Monday, 9:00 a.m., the Nashville Humane Association informed me that no law exists that governs the length of time a dog can be caged. There is no law that requires any mandatory "free time," so that the animals could exercise or a regulation regarding the size of the dog vs. the size of the cage.

By 10 a.m., despite adult reasoning, I headed across town to buy Buddy his freedom. There, a sensitive young caretaker informed me, in confidence, that she used to get in trouble for letting the dog out of the cage in the mornings and had to stop when her job became jeopardized. She wept with joy when I told her that I was buying him.

"You're going home!" she cried.

Home he is. Although the pet store is gone from our lives, it is not easily forgotten. I thought of it when I had to coax him out onto the unfamiliar turf we call grass; and I thought of it when I watched him put his head under water trying to get a drink from his dog bowl.

No, I will never forget the pet store until laws are enacted which protect animals. So a plea to all who care: contact your representative and become the voice for those who lack speech and defense.

Why Buddy Had to Be Rescued

Unfortunately, we are all too aware of the frustrations described by Camille Moffitt in her essay. No state has laws governing the length of time an animal may be kept in a pet shop; only a handful have laws we feel are progressive in the standards they set for pet-shop operation. We have found it an uphill battle to pass such protective measures; without them, local humane societies face an almost impossible task to protect the Buddys of the world. We suggest, as does Camille Moffitt, that HSUS members work to enact state and local laws that impose strict requirements on pet shops, covering adequate cage size and construction and the amount of mandatory exercise, food, water, and veterinary care the animals receive. Failing that, if members come upon a situation like Buddy's, they should first express concern to shop management and then complain to mall management, if appropriate, or write a letter to the editor of the local paper. Organize friends to call and inquire politely about the condition of the animal in the shop and express their concern. Pet industry officials think the general public doesn't share our standards for pet care—Camille Moffitt proves that they are wrong.

—Ann Church, HSUS state legislative coordinator