



Puppy Survivors

Thank you for your informative magazine. I learned so much and gained confidence that my dog and I are doing OK from “Life Outside the Cage” (November/December 2010).

I adopted Wiggles from Petmatchmaker.org after my 14-year-old cocker died. Wiggles was a 1 1/2-year-old black cocker from a puppy mill in Tennessee. Two families had each had him for two-week trials and returned him. He was in a foster home in Pennsylvania when I adopted him.

It was not an easy transition for poor Wiggles. He was not housetrained and was very afraid of cars, bikes, noises, and almost everything about daily life, especially men. After eight months, he still does not play with toys or balls but hides them under my bed. As his foster mom said, “Wiggles is clueless about the world.”

However, with much patience and love and a little support from our 9-year-old Brittany, Wiggles has adapted well and is becoming a wonderful, happy companion. He still gets frightened and is wary of unfamiliar people and all men, but we’re making good progress.

I want to add that, although I admitted in my application to adopt that I was 76, I was still accepted to be his owner. I am so grateful that Wiggles has come into my life and I think that he is too.

— NANCY HARPER, STRASBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

Vote with Your Wallet

After reading “Forging a Revolution for Farm Animals” (January/February 2011), I was wondering if you have a list of companies that only purchase animals/chickens who are raised in this way.

— TERESA WILLIAMS, DOTHAN, ALABAMA

EDITORS’ NOTE: Thank you for caring about farm animals! The Global Animal Partnership—a coalition of farmers, scientists, retailers, and animal advocates—has launched a 5-Step Animal Welfare Rating Standards label at Whole Foods Markets across the nation. This system recognizes and rewards producers for their welfare practices, promotes continuous improvement, and informs consumers about the production systems they choose to support. In the coming years, GAP plans to roll out the program to other retailers. For more information, visit globalanimalpartnership.org. To learn about other labels—what they mean and what they don’t mean—visit humanesociety.org/labels.

Hello, (Indoor) Kitty

I appreciate “Peaceable Backyard Kingdom” (January/February 2011), Karen Lange’s article reminding cat owners that cats belong inside. My county has a leash law for cats, and the fines for having an outdoor cat can be significant. But enforcement is practically nonexistent.

Seven years ago, a feral cat gave birth in an old boat in my backyard. The mom was chased off by my Siberian husky, and I brought the three newborns inside. These lovely, all-white kittens grew up to be the most loving cats I have ever owned. One passed away of cancer this January—a terribly sad day for us. One of the others is deaf, as is common in white cats. I hate to think what her fate would have been if my dog hadn’t alerted me to the location of the litter.

My cats are indoor cats with one exception: a completely enclosed wire cat run that I built. The run extends from my kids’ bedroom window and has several levels, with boards for the cats to jump on and sun themselves. The bottom of the run is buried wire with a thick layer of sand that is periodically cleaned out. This allows the cats to use the run as a litter box but prevents anything from digging in or out. The kitties love to sit in the sun and watch the birds. I have never had a problem with feral cats approaching the run, and it has held up well in the weather all these years. Flea prevention, however, is necessary for cats who can access an outdoor run such as this.



In the winter I simply shut the bedroom window to keep the cold air from seeping in around the cat door. The run wasn’t at all difficult to make and was constructed with rabbit wire and two-by-fours. It has a removable end for cleaning out the sand.

Readers who feel their cats must have access to the fresh air and birdsong might consider this as a compromise that protects their cats as well as local wildlife.

— REBECCA JOHNS, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

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Send your feedback, and please include your contact information. Letters may be edited for clarity and space.



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