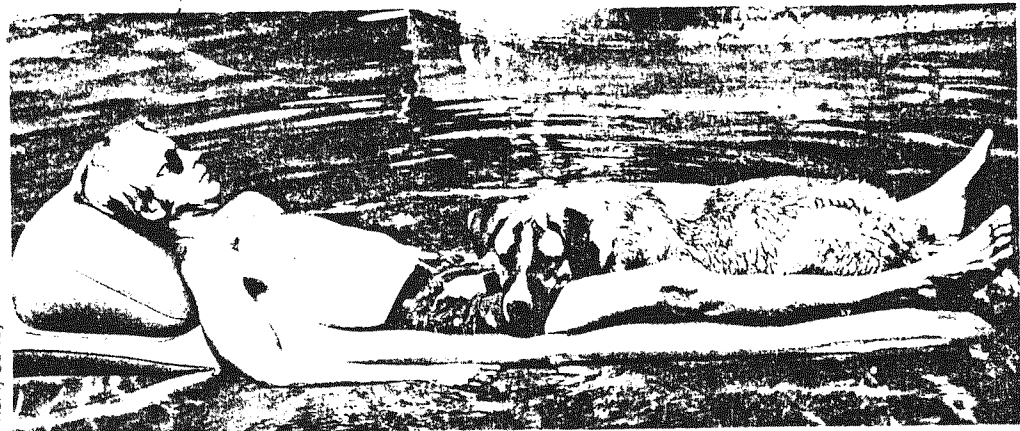




Our pets need affection and companionship. Without it, they suffer.



they had in 1947; although there were a few dogs that were 13 or 14 years old. Now, I have seen a lot of cruelty personally, and I have euthanized a lot of animals personally. But I have never been as sick as I was when I came out of that building. To think that animals live like that continuously for 12 or 13 years!

They now take the dogs out for four hours a day, certainly better than one. They hired a lady to give the animals some individual attention. It still is not right. And we are still fighting it.

It isn't just the bankers and trustees that get involved in keeping pets alive at all costs, under the misguided idea they are being kind. Unfortunately, there are many private shelters who brag that they "never put an animal to sleep," not realizing the cruelty which is the inevitable result of loneliness, permanent caging, and old age.

So when we talk about animals' needs, let's remember that companionship is one of the most important factors in an animal's life. Where does your dog and cat like to be? They like to be where you are. They like to be, if they can get there, on your bed. If they can't quite make that scene, they like being under the bed. They like to be as close to you as they can.

I know it is difficult to put animals to sleep. I've put 70,000 dogs and cats to sleep; and I'm aware of the trauma.

But I tell you one thing: I don't worry about one of those animals that was put to sleep. And I worry a great deal about dogs and cats that have to spend their lives shut in small cages or runs, or left chained to the back porch day-in and day-out, without affection or companionship. Being dead is not a cruelty to animals. Being half alive is.

We have the responsibility to release these animals from suffering. We have the responsibility to make sure this release is as painless and comfortable as possible, even when it means studying the morbid topic of euthanasia methods. We also have the responsibility to work towards a time when all pets will have responsible, caring owners and euthanasia is no longer needed.

Education is one of the most effective tools we have to prevent cruelty to animals. I don't think there is a better tool to accomplish this. In the past ten years, there has been a growing awareness of the problem of unwanted animals. I think The HSUS can take a lot of credit for bringing this out to the public. We have never hidden the facts. We have never swept the fact under the carpet that animals have to be killed.

In fact, some of the criticism in the outside world is that "I don't want to know that." Well, if you don't know it, you can't do anything about it. And

if you are not aware the problem exists, you can't solve it. The first thing you must do in your community is make your community aware of this problem, because when we have only responsible pet owners, who are educated about what it is to own a pet, our shelters and pounds will no longer be needed to receive, hold, and euthanize unwanted and homeless animals. That, my friends, is an end goal for each one of us. ■

