

Dog Rescue Center Samui

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Dear Animal Lovers

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On 1st April 2007 - Dog Rescue Center Samui (DRCS) was eight years old. Happy Birthday to us! Thank you so very much for giving us the `tools` and support to set up DRCS. The cats and dogs will always be thankful for your help (as a volunteer or for your donation from far away). The females no longer have to give birth several times a year and the Island is no longer full of sick and dying puppies and kittens. Eight years ago, DRCS brought the first vet to the Island and since then it's been possible for every street dog and cat on Koh Samui to get a free treatment. We also provide free treatment for animals with an owner. The Thais have also accepted this offer and come and make use of our services. It has become rare that a dog, after an accident or a fight, has to lie on the street without treatment. We have many 'animal friends' on the Island and they and a lot of Thais will inform us if a dog or cat is sick. We then send a helper with the car or motorbike with sidecar to pick up the animal and bring it to the vet. For our newly joined animal friends who might not always be able to follow my stories, it might be worth reading our last newsletter. You can find it on www.samuidog.info under 'Info and News'.



The DRCS-team: our Thai staff and volunteers



The helpers are playing "Odd man out": (as every year). Everybody has to go around the chairs as long as the music is playing. Every time the music stops every one has to sit down on a chair...



The point is: There is always one chair less than the number of players. The winner is who sits on the last remaining chair and gets a price.

I have great news for you: all my Christmas wishes for DRCS, which I mentioned in the Christmas Newsletter, have come true! I got a phone call from Diny (Stichting Buitenlandse Asielen) at Christmas. She told me that she would give us the money for our badly needed car. Isn't that an amazing Christmas present? A big thank you to Diny and her animal protection organisation in The Netherlands. We've been supported by this organisation since the set up of DRCS. Well, that was an amazing Christmas present!

When Werner and I returned to Samui at the beginning of January, our President, Khun Therasud Chaichalremwong (Sud), immediately ordered the car for us. It was purchased in Sud's name as 'farangs' (all non-Asians are called 'farangs') have only very restricted rights in Thailand. From past experience, I can tell you that it is definitely easier when a Thai person is the owner of a car (or house, or restaurant, etc). Farangs are usually seen as rich and can therefore afford to pay more for anything. This is a widely held belief in the Thai community – especially when it comes to bar girls! Farangs usually don't speak much Thai and are not able to read police reports, etc, so fighting for their rights after accidents is often difficult. The tourist police show little interest in bodywork damage and accident reports are translated into poor English but read out in Thai only. The papers are signed by witnesses and, if you don't feel like spending your day at the police station, most farangs settle for no proper English translation and simply sign a bit of paper in Thai which they don't really understand.



The new car with Janine and Brigitte



Our old car is now parked outside the gate and is being renewed step by step. It's still useful for emergencies and we can pick up food from the hotels with it during the monsoon season. I believe this could work very well, as we now have four helpers with driving licences.

Our second surprise in January was from Sud: he found some builders to construct our badly needed single boxes at our house in Chaweng. After 10 days, they completed five big boxes which were filled almost immediately with deserving cases. I don't know where we used to shelter all those sick and injured dogs before; I only know that many cages were demolished by the dogs trying to escape even though we were helping them. Whenever we bring in a new dog, the resident pack always feels the need to welcome them with a barking concert.

We had to create a new logo because; with so many cats; the name 'Dog Rescue Center Samui' alone is not fair to the cats. We now have T-shirts with the new title 'Dog and Cat Rescue Center Samui' printed on them. You can see these on our web page www.samuidog.org ('Info and News') and order them.

Unfortunately there are not only good news: **CHICKEN BURGLERS**

A few days ago, Wit, our manager, got a phone call from our neighbour across the street of the shelter. Once again our dogs had shamelessly attacked their chickens. This was the third time but this time it was really serious. Seven fighting cocks gave up their lives that night. Diagonally opposite this area is a chicken battery. Why do the dogs always pick the (expensive) fighting cocks and not the (100 Baht each) ordinary chickens? The neighbour presented us with three big dead cocks and said that four injured ones had run away after the attack. The neighbour wanted 70,000 Baht (1,600 Euro) compensation. I almost dropped dead! After Wit's clever negotiations, we 'only' had to pay 30,000 Baht. The first time this sort of thing happened, 10 cocks were affected and the owners wanted 30,000 Baht but we ended up paying 15,000 Baht. The second time, there were about seven cocks, but four turned out to be pigeons! I was really surprised that these weren't ultra-precious carrier pigeons! That time the owners asked for 30,000 Baht for the three cocks as, or so they explained, one cock alone costs 30,000 Baht. I had the pleasure of asking for certificates of pedigree and ownership, etc, and we managed to reduce the cost to 15,000 Baht. The first two incidents happened about a year ago. This time we got a written agreement from the owner of the fighting cocks that he will ask for no more compensation in the event of another of these incidents as nobody can identify the suspect. However, this piece of paper will not help me much if our neighbour starts poisoning the dogs or sets fire to the shelter after our dogs went hunting.

It's very important to keep the peace with the neighbours, especially if they are Thais. Perhaps it was a street dog that killed the cocks, even though I believe it was probably one of ours. Often the helpers are not careful enough and leave the gate open when they go for lunch. Once the dogs are out of the gate, it's difficult to get them back in as they tend to play the Try-And-Catch-Me Game. The only solution I can think of are stricter punishments for the helpers to prevent the dogs going on their sojourns to kill a cock (in defiance of our security systems). After these little strolls, the dogs tend to come back home. Actually, there shouldn't really be any dogs on the forecourt outside the house but, because there is space, a few old and poorly dogs have been kept here over time. Also, there are always a few 'teenagers' around which are too old for the puppy house and too young for the rigors of Ban Taling Ngam. We also have injured dogs here which we can't lock up in a single box forever. All in all, we have a good colourful mix.

As regards our Thai helpers, we've had another few painful losses to deal with. This coming and going is neverending.

EGG (formerly our man in Lamai) left us out of the blue. The last thing I heard from him was a phone call from the hospital. He explained me that he had to take care of 'his' woman. A day later 'his' woman called me and wondered if I had seen Egg of late! The other helpers told me that he's had troubles with his girlfriends many times. On one such incident he lost the fight: his girlfriend stabbed him in the back. I don't expect to see him or my mobile phone ever again. He's returned the motorbike but the phone, unfortunately, he forgot to give back. Egg did a good job in Lamai and Silvana is still prepared to come up with the funds to continue this work. Therefore it's

important to find a new helper for Project Lamai. I'm sure this will happen soon as we have been employing new helpers and, when they have been trained, one of them can become our new man in Lamai. The work in Lamai includes catching dogs and cats for sterilization and castration, treating sick and injured dogs, vaccinating them and advertising our work. Egg caught a lot of dogs and cats (the award is 1 Euro per animal) and he became quite well known in the area. We will see how his successor will manage the task.

SAKDA has been ill for two months. None of the helpers knows exactly what's wrong with him. He quickly called me once to tell me that he had been ill for two days. Since then I haven't heard anything. I can't reach him over the phone as he's lost it (rather, he's lost MY mobile phone). I have no choice but to supply the helpers with a phone as I need to be able to reach them when they work outside the shelter. You wouldn't believe how often the Thais lose their phones. The only thing they can then say is `Hai` (lost forever). Anyway, a few days ago I sent someone to pick up our motorbike from Sakda. Sakda worked for us for almost seven years and, even after such a long time, his Thai behaviour has not seemed to change and he hasn't kept me informed.

WIÄNG kept forgetting the simplest things. Even though, on several occasions, I spent a lot of time with him cleaning out single boxes and the compound, he still wasn't able to complete the simplest of tasks. One day, he upset me so much that I fired him. After two weeks I got a phone call from our President, Sud. He asked me what horrible things Wiäng had done. OK. I took Wiäng back and he tried to give his best. Shortly afterwards, he took two weeks off due to illness. I haven't heard from him in over a month and guess that he will not return, particularly because he was seen wearing a security outfit so I'm happy for us that he's found a new job.

IAT was with us for about six weeks and lives close to Ban Taling Ngam. His duties included the cleaning of the single boxes and nearby compounds. The other helpers arrive at the big shelter around 11 am and return to Chaweng at 5 pm (25km away), so IAT got three hours more to do the work the other helpers can easily do in the time they're there. At first, I got the impression that he was doing a pretty good job until I had a proper look under the 4-meter high Bougainvillea bushes. That's when I found a pile of muck, about 20 cm thick (there are about 35 dogs in this compound). Several helpers had been busy cleaning up this particular area and cut down the bushes. After the big cut there were only a few bare branches left so there was no dead leaves, etc, to make compost (to be added to the dog shit he put there). IAT's explanation of his laziness was that he was making manure! I told him that he was more than welcome to take the shit home for his personal manure manufacturing. Soon after that he quit. I guess it was too much hassle for him to do the job properly.

BOM was very polite and made a big effort in the cat room. I believe that, after a few lessons from me, he would have been able to look after the cages in the cat house, tend the cat's private garden (do we spoil our cats or what?) and cook the food for the cats, dogs in single boxes and the puppies (rice with chicken). That doesn't sound so hard but it seems to be. I even wrote down the instructions in Thai and it didn't help. Some of the helpers cannot understand the routine and cannot do it, even when shown. After a short time, BOM's family needed him at home so off he went. His Mum needed help with the family's fishing boats. Family is very important for the Thais, that's why we always have to expect them to leave at no or little notice to take care of their relatives who usually live quite far away from Koh Samui.

SAWAI was a great helper and actually planned to return to the DRCS after he helped his family with the coffee harvest for about two months. I never heard from him again. Not surprisingly, I cannot reach him over the phone. The Thais keep changing their phone numbers, always in search of that 'lucky' number. It must be pretty difficult to find an old friend again as it's as good as impossible to find out where someone is staying.

JACK first started off in the cat room but he was totally overwhelmed so I could only use him for the cleaning of the single boxes or at my house doing the laundry, etc. He worked extremely slowly. How can you be so slow at only 20 years old? Mr Valium quit after four weeks!

BÄNG started a few days after Jack and was immediately put to work in the cat room. He understood what to do and felt comfortable doing it. In the open kitchen area, where the food is prepared, the radio screams out all day long. Bäng created an interesting antenna with the help of a pot lid and seems innovative in other ways. Almost every morning he shows up late but smiling because of his very sunny nature. Several times he has told me that he is not very strong and I believe it. He's only about 160 cm tall and very thin but needs to be strong to carry the cats in their cages in and out of the cat room for disinfection and cleaning.



If he really wants to work with us, he will have to become strong enough to lift the cages on his own. Until then, the doctor's assistant will help him. All young men in Thailand, if they are fit enough, must join the military for a couple of years. Bäng has been called up so must return to his village. If he is not fit enough for the military, he wants to come back and work for us.



PUI: We've never had a worker like Pui before. On his second day, he took the nail clippers out of the vet's hands and cut the dog's claws himself. Maybe he thought the vet had hesitated too long. Right away, Pui understood how to give the cats their medicine which is not as easy as it sounds. About twenty of our cats require medicine every morning and evening. There is a card with a picture of every single animal, but you wouldn't believe the mess it can sometimes be when all 50 cats in the house want their breakfast NOW! I never stop admiring Ow and his ability to recognise the correct cat among all the others in the crowd.

After a couple of days Pui was able to give injections, clean wounds and provide treatment without a problem. After his third day, I told him he would get an extra 1,000 Baht (22 Euro) each month. The helpers get between 6,000 and 9,000 Baht a month plus an extra 1,000 Baht if they do their work well. If not, I reduce the 1,000 Baht accordingly (an excellent incentive). It doesn't matter what kind of work I ask Pui to do, he always carries it out wholeheartedly which, at times, leaves me speechless. He's got a driving licence and so seems to be the perfect man for Project Lamai. It makes more sense to go looking for dogs with a motorbike with sidecar, but the car could be used for the transport back. As soon as we manage to employ enough helpers, Pui can start his new task in Lamai. Before that, he will undertake some training with our vet. He can learn how to give infusions and first aid after poisoning. Dr Sid can easily teach him all those things before restarting Project Lamai. I am sure this won't take long.

At the moment only seven helpers work for the DRCS: Ow, Bang, Somkiät, Em, Rid, Pui and Dam (she's our cleaning lady). Then there is our manager Wit (nothing would work without him) and Dr Sid. He is still doing a fabulous job and I'm very pleased that he hasn't run away yet. You can find the operation statistics on our homepage under `What we do`. One helper (Ow) and the cleaning lady (Dam) I need at the house in Chaweng. Two helpers look after the single boxes at the shelter (Bäng and Somkiät), one for the 10 big outside compounds (Rid), one for the cathouse (Pui) and one who helps the doctor (Em). That makes seven. If everyone turns up, there are just enough people to do the essential work.

Wit has to get his head around all the emergency and accident cases. Even though Wit always says `No problem` I can't always see it working out. There are always dogs to pick up and take to the vet. If the animals don't get picked up, we are not able to help them as it is often difficult to transport a big dog on a motorbike. I would need one helper for these kinds of things plus there is always repairing work to do at the shelter so I need another helper for that (usually Somkiät's work). If one or two helpers don't come, and that does happen a lot, we immediately face a lot of problems getting the daily work done. So we have to hire another four helpers.

Recently some new helpers have started and the situation seems to get better. Of course it will take time to find out who can fulfil the `high expectations`. I'm sure I will be able to tell you about those experiences in the next newsletter.

Even though there is continuous building work, Koh Samui still attracts tourists and we will hopefully keep having a lot of volunteers from all over the World. At this point I would like to thank our volunteers who've been with the DRCS for a long time and, since the building of the puppy house, it's the volunteers who have mostly undertaken the work of the young ones. Janine from Switzerland and Linda from Scotland show the new volunteers what there is to do and what to be careful of. The litters of puppies have to be kept separately to prevent cross-infection. Don't think that this is an easy task. Unfortunately not even the puppies with a mother are sure to survive. Almost in all the cases, the mother is in a terrible state: thin, mangy and often very weak and sick herself. Almost all of them require medicine. The loss of puppies has been reduced since we got the puppy house but still a few of them have not survived as they often arrive without a mother and in a very poor state. They are then often too sick to get the vaccine and easily catch viruses or they have already arrived with distemper or parvovirus (`bloody diarrhoea`). We fight for every puppy's life. We rearranged the accommodation in the main block (the doctor's old living quarters) into an isolation room. The sick puppies are kept there in single cages and get infusions and medicine. As most Thais are Buddhists, Dr Sid rarely puts animals to sleep. Unfortunately because of that attitude, some animals have to suffer much longer than they would in the western World. On the other hand, some animals have actually improved even though it seemed completely hopeless. Unfortunately, these are the minority of cases.



It is very important to isolate the sick puppies. At the moment we're using the former living room of our doctor as an isolation room. The blue cages (see on the picture page 8) are terrible to use for the sick puppies with bloody diarrhoea. The state of that room is often horrifying. We can't

continue like that. Minutes after we put the puppy back in a clean cage, everything is dirty again. There is only one solution: We have to get a lot of small tiled single boxes built (90x 90x 90cm). There is enough space behind the puppy house for the planned single boxes. I believe that once we manage to keep the young puppies clean, the chance of surviving will be much higher. It probably won't be easy, but I'm going to look for a master builder.

HELP US WITH THE BUILDING OF THE SINGLE BOXES FOR THE ILL PUPPIES WITH YOUR DONATION!



LISA with our youngest fellow. We'll be waiting for you in Chaweng. Why don't you ALL come and visit us. We love cuddles and sweeties.

My very special thanks to all the long-term volunteers: Janine from Switzerland, Linda from Scotland, Katharina from Denmark, Zita from Belgium, Glen and Kelly from Canada, Anni from Germany, Allison from Scotland and Dany from the DIVEPOINT on Koh Samui!



There are also the animal friends of a special kind I'd like to thank – these are the ones who happily give up their already too short holidays to help out. Nocturnal dog feeding is on their agenda. Once the shops have closed, the dogs are easier to find and there are always construction sites which our animal friends systematically check. Opposite Chaweng Regent, we managed to catch eight female dogs for sterilisation during a night-catching action. During sightseeing trips our animal friends always check for injured and mangy dogs and, even on the beach, there's not much chilling out time. Instead, female dogs are spotted and captured 'gently' for sterilisation. Vaccination and mange treatments as well as advertising our work to tourists and Thais are also on the programme. When they then go home, they escort dogs back with them to their new homes in Europe or North America. My special thanks go to Daniela and Marcus from Werne, and Suzanne and Dana from Munich for their tireless and dedicated help in all matters DRCS.



Night action with animal friends: In only two hours we managed to catch eight females for spaying.



Isn't there one cage missing?

Thank you very much again to all the sponsors and helpers from all over the world. Because of your help, EVERY dog and cat can be helped for free on Kohl Samui. Stray animals which have not found a place to survive on their own on Kohl Samui can be brought into the shelter. Because of your donations, we can neuter at least six animals every day. We offer free medical treatment for ALL cats and dogs (with or without an owner, that doesn't matter) including a pick-up service. Over the last four years, around 250 dogs and almost 130 cats that couldn't make it on their own on Koh Samui have found a home in our shelter. Many of them are looking for sponsors to make sure that their bowls are never empty. Have a look on the homepage ('How to Help', 'Cats and Dogs to Sponsor'). Sponsoring a dog or a cat is only 15 Euro a month. Even if you do not want to sponsor an animal, it is lovely to look at our many dogs and cats and read their stories! Many dogs have been rehomed from our shelter. Take a look at the pictures of these happy dogs on our home page (www.samuidog.org 'What we do' and 'Dog Transport'). You must have a look!

As the shelter in Ban Taling Ngam is very big and surrounded by a wall measuring some 800 metres, you can still 'buy' pieces of wall for 25 Euro per metre (www.samuidog.org 'What do we do'). When you come to Samui and want to bring something, bring old towels, index cards (A5 size), powdered kitten/puppy milk, cat de-worming paste, de-worming tablets for dogs (multi-wormer), flea collars and flea/tick shampoo (for the dogs not the volunteers!). We can always use these things.

Don't forget the dogs and cats on Kohl Samui.
They still need your help.

Every small donation helps us take one step forward

Our monthly costs amount to 7,000 Euro. If you are on Kohl Samui, you are cordially invited to stop by. You are welcome to come and look at our (financial) books. The dogs, cats and I always love visitors!

Best wishes

Brigitte

Banking details for sponsors:
please see
www.samuidog.org - HOW TO HELP

