

Dog Rescue Center Samui

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Dear animal friends,

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this time it is particularly hard for me to start the long overdue mailing. In the past months a lot of things happened, but on the 2nd of August something really awful happened. Our 64-year-old helper Poehm had a lethal accident with his bike on his way to work. He was run over by a car coming up from behind him. He was not wearing a helmet and hit the road with his head first. The driver simply drove off. For all I know he is in prison right now. But that doesn't bring Poehm back to life.

In Thailand the cremation festival begins almost immediately and lasts for at least five days. The corpse is kept in a sarcophagus at the temple. The sarcophagus is decorated with flowers and electric lights. We were at the temple every day in order to participate in the celebrations, because after all we spent a lot of time with Poehm and of course it was also expected. Poehm was well liked and well known and every day more people came to say good-bye to him. It took some time for the news to get around. Every day people came to eat together and to say a last farewell. There were a lot of different Thai dishes, cookies but also coffee and cacao. Some Thais also spent the night at the temple site, because they had come from Bangkok or other far-away places. Poehm had been married five times and had seven children. On the third day a large TV set and stereo equipment was set up. Many volunteers were busy distributing food, cleaning the dishes again and preparing new dishes. They all handed the widow an envelope with some money in order to participate in the expenses of the ceremony. The food often is a donation also. For four days, there was a service every evening, in Balinese language. I had already been wondering if I had lost my Thai. On the fifth day the service took place already in the afternoon and the corpse was then cremated. Of course everybody shared a meal before. For the children there were some market stalls, because for them it is more difficult not to be sad and cry. Personally I believe that is a very normal reaction, if you lost somebody you care for. It seems children do not have enough knowledge about Buddhism to find consoling in their religion and to be able to deal with personal losses easier. I do not know enough about Buddhism to be able to judge, but it seems that a religious Buddhist copes with loss quite well. Every day more and more people participated in the service and said farewell to Poehm. But nobody seemed sad or cried. Very strange. Must be part of the religious culture. Well, we are very sad, since we will really miss him. A few days before he died we visited the piece of land where the animal home will be built together with Poehm. He wanted to live there permanently and only visit his last wife and his two children on Sundays. He was really looking forward to staying there. Well, at least he has seen the land once again and maybe took a nice memory with him to his future live.

On the 3rd of May it really came true. The DRCS' president Khun Theerasud Chaichalremwong has bought the land for the DRCS. Purchase price 785 000 Baht (almost 20 000 Euro). Silvana from Switzerland donated the money for the land. Sud has bought the land in his name in order to facilitate matters. We now have 4.5 Rai (7200 m²) in the Southern part of the island near the elephant gate of the Hotel Meridien. Sud had to go to the authorities five times in order to terminate the purchase of the land.

Four times signatures of the people owning adjoining land were missing. In Thailand all neighbours have to sign a contract and accept the borders of the piece of land in question. The owner really did not know himself anymore where his property really started and which palm tree was supposed to mark the end of it. Therefore Sud and the former owner had to survey the land again. Since the land is not right next to the street we also had to buy another 100 m (6 m wide) as a passage. That complicated the purchase further since also here all neighbours had to agree and everything had to be surveyed here also. It took almost five months in order to get the final contract. The money had to be handed over in cash of course. By now we already have electricity (expenses 22 000 Baht - 550 Euro). Normally a deep well would have been drilled two weeks ago, but now the drilling machine is broken and nobody knows when it will be fixed. The well has to be 50 to 70 m deep. Unfortunately drilling the well is quite expensive, but we only have to pay, if water is found. They will drill two times. We have received an excellent offer for the construction of the well. It will only cost 120 000 Baht (3000 Euro). Normally the price is twice as high. Koh Samui is suffering badly from water shortage since weeks and prices and demand increase. But also the good price doesn't help if the drilling company only has two drills and one of these two is broken. Unfortunately we cannot start building the wall before we have any water because we need it to prepare concrete and mortar. Since nobody knows when the drilling machine will be fixed we have purchased a 3000-litre water tank and can then finally commence building the wall. It will be approx. 600 m long, 1,70 m high and has to be anchored in the ground 30 cm deep. It is useless to put up fences only, since dogs have pretty strong teeth and a fence will be no obstruction for them. I hope there will be enough money left to build the house. Once the wall and the dog huts are finished. In the beginning I thought that we would only build a wall around the places where the dogs live but in Thailand the boarder of a property has to be clearly marked, if not there will be endless fights. A fence for the remaining property would not have been a lot cheaper and in the tropical climate would rot quickly anyway. Due to the extremely long wall, which is a must, unfortunately the construction of the animal home will be far more expensive than expected. The property is really big! 7200m²! 1 m wall will cost us 25 Euro. Who wants to donate 1 m wall? We are going to have the names of the donators painted onto the wall with oil paint. Also in Thai: the letters are really pretty! I hope that I will be able to paint a lot of names from many countries onto the wall. If you are on Koh Samui you can also paint your name of whatever you feel like onto the wall. If you want to make an anonymous donations we will just add a heart.

**Help the dogs to construct a wall for their home,
donate 1 m wall for 25 Euro!**

If you transfer 25 Euro to one of our collection accounts, just add "wall" to your name. Even if money is scarce that doesn't help the wall has to be constructed. We cannot accept any more dogs on our premises (Situation August 2002: approx. 100 dogs on 300 m²). I hope that we will still be able to continue with our castration program. Dr. Somsak gets about 25 to 30 Euro per castration. Normally Dr. Somsak carries out two castrations on female dogs a day for the DRCS. This is the only possibility where the DRCS could save some money, since the emergency treatment has to be continued. In any case Dr. Somsak receives about 100 000 Baht (about 2500 Euro) every month for medical services and for drugs we purchase from him.

A lot of dogs have found godparents by now and of course there will be always enough money to feed them. Why don't you have a look at our homepage www.samuidog.org. There are still about 30 dogs, looking for a godparent! Until August 2002 74 dogs found a godparent. For 15 Euro a month a dog can be taken care of nicely and in case of need receive medical treatment. Since by now we have seven cats living in our bungalow. All of them staying for good and I have been wondering if I shouldn't offer godparentships

for these also. Some of you would surely prefer to become a godparent for a cat. To be honest, I prefer cats myself. They are so clean! Cats are so different from dogs. They are cute and cuddly also, but they still lead an independent life. So, if you want to have a look at the cast: I will add them to our homepage next week, together with the dogs looking for a godparent. On Koh Samui the dog problem is much bigger than the cat problem. By now I am responsible for more than 100 dogs, which could not be taken back to the places where they had been found in the last three years. It is good to know that there are still humans that do not forget their holidays straight away. You know: out of sight - out of mind. Many many thanks to all the godparents! The money covers the basic needs of the dogs staying on our remises. As usual I am thinking positive and hope that you will not forget the dogs and cats on Koh Samui. They need your support more than ever.

**To become a godparent for a dog or cat
will only cost you 15 Euro a month!**

We have asked for a construction plan to be prepared for a 60 m² house (4 m x 15 m). The house is to have a 2 x 4 m large bathroom with shower, a room to store the dry food and equipment (4 x 4 m) a surgery (3 x 4 m) and an outdoor kitchen. A further room was scheduled for Poehm (4 x 4 m). His sudden death is pretty hard for the DRCS also, since Poehm wanted to stay there and keep an eye on everything. I hope to find another older Thai living in the Southern part of the island and able to construct various things. He must not only be scared of dogs, but also like dogs. He should feed them, keep everything clean and he has to notice, if a dog is sick. If a dog is sick, it has to be taken back to the house. I have had an offer for a new helper already. But now we will first of all build the wall and then a house. I still have some time to find a suitable helper. It will surely be very complicated to find a substitute for Poehm. He simply could do anything: tile a floor, build huts for the dogs, install water pipes, fit in pumps etc. He was gifted that way and could make something useful out of scrap.

Once the construction schedule for the house is finished we will take it to the authorities for approval. There it will also be registered under Sud's name. The construction of a building has to be registered with the authorities, otherwise, later on, you will not get a proper address with house number and you are really not allowed to build anything. Later on nobody is interested in the least what is constructed there. We will then set up a contract with Sud, in which it is stated that property and house belong to the DRCS. Normally that is not possible, since to do so we should find a corporation. Foreigners can only buy up to one Rai of property (1 Rai is 1600m²). I do not know the exact conditions, but anyway, we are talking about 4,5 Rai and these definitely cannot be purchased by foreigners alone. We trust Sud and his family also without a contract, but will have a contract set up in any case once the construction work for the house is being. Khun Ying's brother - she owns the Montien House (highly recommended for dog friends on Chaweng Beach) - is a lawyer and has already set up the contract for our house. He will surely be a great help in setting up the contract.

Due to health reasons my husband and myself were in Germany for the 9th of June until the 12th of July. This time Olivia had our mobile and also stayed in our house. However, it was not easy for her to catch some sleep. The dogs love to bark or howl (very noisy indeed) all at the same time and you have to get used to it, which is not easy and takes sometime. Quite often only one dog is barking and "chatting" with another dog further away, with the other dogs always answering. Olivia told the helpers what to do and informed animal friends visiting our house almost daily on the work carried out by the DRCS and on the dog problem on Koh Samui. So many dogs close together are not often to be seen and all are quite cute and just want to get cuddled! That is a lot of fun for not so small children also! There are many possibilities to help the DRCS. Many animal friends helped washing the dogs in order to prevent parasites. You do not need

money in order to help the DRCS. The helpers on their own are quite often not able to wash the dogs regularly and to weave the collars for the rabies injection tags. Many helping hands are always required! Even if you do nothing but play with the dogs you are helping us already. The dogs just love it.

Without the financial support by many tourists it would be impossible to offer all stray dogs free of charge first aid by Dr. Somsak and to have at least two bitches castrated by him every single day. 90% of the donations are made by tourists, spending their holidays on the island or later, once they are back home. Without the active support by many animal friends it would be simply impossible to help so many dogs and without all the donations made it would be impossible also to think about constructing an animal home. Many thanks once again to Silvana from Switzerland for donating the property! Without her help this project would prove impossible.

The support by hotels and shops here on Koh Samui is still very low. For many hotels it still seems to be a lot easier to poison the dogs than trying to solve the problem in a more humane way. However, I hope that sooner or later it will be noticed in which hotels dogs are poisoned again and again and people loving animals will refuse to stay there. The hotels and bungalow resorts in which dogs are poisoned are always the same ones! I am positive that many animal friends will continue to help us changing Koh Samui into a paradise for dogs also. Many tourists would not come to Koh Samui anymore if the dog problem would only be solved by large poisoning actions carried out by the government. Unfortunately the government also just lately killed some dogs. In Bophut, on the Laem Din Market and in Lamai. I had somebody call the government in Bangkok in order to enquire why the Thai population is not informed about these activities before. That was the case in former years. That way the Thai people can save their own dogs, which are all out on the street also. As usual nothing was known in Bangkok and in Suratthani and on Koh Samui we did not get any proper information from the government either. It seems that the poisoning activities have stopped for the time being, because no further poisoned dogs were taken to Dr. Somsak. Tourists of course learned about the poisoning activities and were very angry indeed. Dr. Somsak could save some of the dogs taken to him in due time.

The helpers are doing a good job and particularly Don, our new helper who has been with us for six months is just perfect. Thanks to Don we are now getting the rabies injections free of charge from the government in Bangkok. We have already received 800 ampoules. Some of these were simply sent to Koh Phangan. To receive the ampoules was very bureaucratic indeed and would have been impossible without knowing Thai in word and writing. Do have a look at the homepage of the PAC (Phangan Animal Care) www.pacthailand.org. Shevaun, a vet from Ireland has set up a very good organisation on Koh Phangan the neighbouring island with our help. In the beginning we had put her disposal all our instruments, the sterilisator and a lot of drugs. She works hard and castrates as many female dogs as possible. Her personal record was ten dogs on one day! That really is a super accomplishment! Without her there still would not be a vet on Koh Phangan. She does not stay on the island all the time but a trained vet nurse is staying there continuously since a year. Only four years ago there was no vet on Koh Samui! That isn't long ago and today all animal friends are just shocked if Dr. Somsak goes on holidays for six weeks without leaving somebody taking care of his job.

Since Don has a drivers licence we allow him to use our car. That is most handy, because that way it is easier for us to help the dogs in Nathon (about 30 km away). We had to accept four badly injured dogs from that area. All of them males not yet castrated. The dogs will not be able to return because they have to stay some weeks until the large wounds have healed. The integration into the big pack is very difficult and fights quite often occur.

Dr. Somsak was on holidays for six weeks and we had to deal ourselves with injured dogs. But the helpers are expertise in the treatment of large maggot infested wounds. I

have good contacts to several vets and in complicated cases can always obtain information on the treatment possibilities. Shevaun is staying on Koh Phangan since the beginning of August and I could just ask her. Koh Samui unfortunately has one vet only and if he is on holidays we have to help as good as we can. In case of any heavy accidents we are however, helpless. I have also learnt a lot about drugs and soothing pain is my speciality. During Dr. Somsak's holidays - in the 4th week to be exact - we had a dog with a broken leg with the bones sticking out and it needed surgery badly. Susanne from Austria is an experienced vet and offered two of her days on Koh Samui to the DRCS carrying out surgery. Under "jungle circumstances". In the dog house, nothing sterilised, not decent equipment for an amputation, but with a very good antibiotic from Germany and a lot of alcohol – for the disinfection, not for drinking. Susanne did a really great job. Many, many thanks to her! Now my request to all vets, surgeons or other animal friends working in the medical field: we urgently need surgical instruments of all sorts, suitable for castration, hooks etc. I do not know all the proper names, but you will surely know what I am talking about. We also need coats, sheets and normal old towels. Surely quite often matters we could use here are thrown away. If somebody has something for the DRCS, just send it to my German address. (B. Gomm, Otto-Suhr-Allee 106, 10585 Berlin) I will then take it along in January. Thus you have plenty of time to have a look at things hidden in drawers, unused for ages that could be most useful here. The DRCS has given ALL instruments to PAC on Koh Phangan in order to enable Shevaun to get started. That really was worth the trouble! Now of course I cannot ask her to hand everything back to me. This had been agreed upon, when we would need the things here. But it so nice to hear again and again about the miracles she has been performing for the animals on Koh Phangan in such a short time. I simply cannot ask her to hand the sterilisator back to me...

I have received some offers from vets coming to Koh Samui early next year. They offered to work free of charge for the DRCS for some days in order to carry out castrations. Therefore I must have another sterilisator. I will ask the WSPA for help. We are members and they check every year, if we are doing a good job and if the money donated are spent on the animals. Since we will have to purchase many things I am of course hoping that they will help. The WSPA is never spending money on running expenses but always for the purchase of new goods. A lot of things will have to be bought!

When we came back from a two months stay in Germany in January to Koh Samui Walter has handed back the mobile and informed us that he will never touch it again. The many calls stressed him too much. Walter and Carmen will stop helping the DRCS in August, since in a few matters we do not share the same opinion. In the past they collected the donations made by the hotels in Lamai. They have done a lot for the DRCS and I am most grateful to them.

When we are flying back "home" at the beginning of December until middle of January Angela Goldmann from Germany will stay at our house and also take care of the mobile. Angela has been translating the mailings into English for a long time by now and she also answers any English mails for me. She speaks German, English and French fluently and a little bit of all sorts of languages. She is busy improving her Thai and I am sure that she will get along with the helpers just fine and deal with all the arising problems. The helpers already know her and they will be surprised to see, how her Thai has improved. Angela wants to give Don English lessons. He is already looking forward to it. Olivia will of course continue helping the DRCS. She comes to our house every day at 09:00 h and helps me coping with the daily office work. Or we go together with the helpers to a temple or a beach in order to inject dogs or to help them in some other way. The collection round is more fun together with Olivia than it is with Werner, but it also takes longer. I hope that Olivia will keep enjoying helping the dogs and cats for a long time to come.

I am sending this mailing to everybody with an e-mail account via samuidog@web.de. You can easily forward it to your friends. Olivia has divided all addresses in groups and there should not be any problems, but I am sure it will take hours to cope with all the failure reports. I had already tried to send collective messages via Hotmail. It took three days. I am still not really used to web.de but there was not enough storage room on Hotmail and I had to look for another provider.

If you want, you can send your mail to samuidog@web.de. If you want to send any shots of your pets or yourself (why not for a change!) please do use samuidog@web.de. There is unlimited storage room and Hotmail is easily blocked by shots with a high solution. If you have become a godparent and did not receive this letter via e-mail, kindly let me know your e-mail account - then I can send a shot via mail. Do take a look at www.samuidog.org. There are many new shots and we have modified the texts also.

Once again many thanks to all whose helping us continuously to make Koh Samui a paradise for cats and dogs also. I cannot state the names of all the people we are grateful to here, but I would to particularly thank Ethicon, supplying us with stitching material since the founding of the DRCS: Many, many thanks to Mrs. Wormuth from Ethicon.

I am answering every mail and every letter. In case you do not receive a reply you can assume that your mail never reached me. Many e-mails I should have received got lost. The e-mail system is almost as hopeless as the mail. Since all translations into English are sent to Angela and her replies also get lost, I have unfortunately to assume that many mails from other people just disappear also. If you have not received an answer after about four weeks, please get in touch with me again.

Once again, I would like to thank all animal friends for their continuous help. Do believe me if somebody would have told me three years ago that we would have 100 dogs in our garden I would have laughed out loud. Without a vet my husband and myself surely would not have been able to stay on Koh Samui forever. The misery was unbearable to watch for anybody caring for animals in former years. Without the foundation of the DRCS on the first of April 1999, which only was possible with your help, there still wouldn't be a vet on Koh Samui.

**Help the dogs in building the wall for their new home,
donate 1 m wall for 25 Euro !**

Since individual transfers to Thailand are quite expensive I collect donations on my private account in Germany. By now we have animal friends in Switzerland, Austria, the UK, the US, Australia, Sweden and the Netherlands collecting the money for the DRCS and transferring it all together.

Many kind regards

Brigitte

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