

Dog Rescue Center Samui

Brigitte Gomm
112 / 35 Moo 6 Bophut
Samui 84320 Suratthani
Thailand

Phone 00 66 77 413 490
Mobile 00 66 1 893 94 43

E-Mail: info@samuidog.org
Website: www.samuidog.org



Dear Animal Lovers

August 2005

Already four months have passed and a lot of things have happened at the Dog Rescue Center Samui (DRCS). First of all, we have a new logo (as you can see above) which depicts both a dog and a cat. Over 80 cats are now living with us which is a good reason for them to deserve a place in our logo. As you know, I love cats in particular and so I am also delighted to tell you that the cat house is not a mere vision anymore – more news later on in this newsletter.

Staff and Volunteers

Dr Tom has been with us for four months now, and is settling down on Samui and at DRCS. He seems to have problems delegating work so spends a lot of time wound-cleaning or dispensing medicine which could be done by the Thai staff; Dr Tom should be doing other things that the helpers cannot. Our last vet, Dr Jo, never had difficulties delegating work and carrying out six castrations daily. However, Dr Tom is making great progress and is also carrying out six castrations per day.

We've installed a new telephone line to give Dr Tom access and therefore knowledge via the internet. Dr Tom is always very eager to learn new things and keep up to date. As Thailand can be rather behind with current veterinary practices, I hope he will not only surf Thai sites. At Dr Tom's request, we have also purchased dental equipment so the stray dogs and cats on Koh Samui now have the cleanest teeth in the land. With every castration comes free dental treatment! Can life get any better for our animals?

Keo, one of our workers, left us in true Thai style which means I was the last one to know he was not coming back. When he left, he still owed me (personally) some 60 Euro but this is not a difficult problem to solve – I 'agreed' with the other Thai staff some time ago that if someone leaves owing me money, the debt would be divided among the remaining workers. The staff were not, as you can imagine, at all happy with this arrangement!

It was not a problem to find a new worker, as there are many people on the island wanting to work at DRCS. Our Thai staff always seem to have friends or relatives at hand and, as a result, we now have Wiaeng. Wiaeng is 55 years old, a good handyman, likes cats and dogs, and can drive a car. For the next week or so, I will keep an eye on him and, if he fits in, he'll go to Suratthani to renew the driving licence. However, I'll only do that if he is suitable as I will be the one financing the trip. The cost of the trip is

too expensive for a Thai person on 'normal' wages but I need another driver so I have no choice but to fund the trip.

As regards our voluntary workers, I am happy to say that they are still coming. Some of them stay a few days or even weeks with us, others only for one day. Many of them imagine a nice walk with a well trained dog so get a little surprised coming into DRCS as they are welcomed by some 10 dogs jumping up on them. This can be too much for some of our volunteers but there have been plenty in the past months who have helped greatly. Thank you very much for this!

One of our best volunteers, Tina from Denmark, has had to return to her home country and this was a great loss to DRCS. Tina was a great helper and good friend for a very long time and we miss her very much.

As well as the volunteers, our Thai staff fight constantly against the tick problem. Rid, who works exclusively at the big shelter in Ban Taling Ngam, is our front-line tick soldier. The single boxes could be 'cured' by cementing the small gaps in the walls but the big shelters are still full of the little beasts. Even though the dogs are powdered with anti-tick powder, and get a monthly injection of Ivomec, some ticks manage to resist this. [Ivomec is used to combat mange mites, heartworm, fleas and all manner of parasites.] Wit, our manager, advised me to buy a flame-thrower which is normally used to remove the bristles of slaughtered pigs but is great at burning the ticks in the walls. Rid has become very excited about fulfilling this new duty!



Tsunami help

As I reported in my last newsletter, I could not spend the money assigned to Phuket as Margot Park of the Soi Dog Foundation there was not willing to provide details on how she would use the money; after I asked her some searching questions, she told me and my helpers to leave. So, I had to investigate ways of spending this money on Tsunami-affect areas. Subsequently, I met with Maggi, a Swiss woman who lives for parts of the year on Koh Payam, and suggested spending the money on the dogs on Koh Payam. I wanted to give it to Maggi before her return to the island in September. Everything had been discussed on Koh Samui and Maggi was very pleased with this idea. Her financial means are restricted - that's why she is currently working in Switzerland raising money for the dogs. Soon after Maggi had gone back to Switzerland, I received a message from Mogens Hansen from Denmark. He planned to carry out castrations in Thailand in October with a team of 50 vets and vet nurses. Koh Samui was on his schedule for one

week but, since I have a vet and the procedure would have resulted in logistical problems, I recommended instead sending his team to Koh Payam.

Mogens Hansen approved my idea so I asked Maggi to explain her request in writing to the doctors. This resulted in a completely incomprehensible letter in English language reading as follows:

dear Sheridan i hoerd about this group and for shure it would bee a good luck and help for me. thank you for thinking about me. there is nothing on the island no for operations. i have to organize everithing. i think i bee bac in september. if there is one ore two person from this group to come at this time to help me. i like to start with kasrtrations in november. i think with two people i need two month building and shop and bring everithing to the island. sorry, my englisch wrigthning is bad. i wish you good luck and thank you very mutch maggi albiez

Because my knowledge of written English is also somewhat limited, I always have a native English speaker, to proof my correspondence. Maybe Maggi should have done that too! At this point I would like to mention Allison to whom I am deeply indebted. Allison has been taking care of the English e-mails and correspondence for two years. During the week, she works in Suratthani as an English teacher and looks forward to the peace and quiet of 270 dogs and 80 cats on Saturdays when she comes to DRCS.

It was not only me who couldn't understand Maggi's letter: the vet team also had problems and subsequently assumed that help on Koh Payam would only be needed for one day. When I was informed of this, I asked Maggi how this confusion was brought about and beseeched her to write to Mogens once more. I hoped the vet team would work on Koh Payam for a longer period of time. As a result, Maggi rejected working together with me on the grounds that she could do very well without begging. She explained further that my way of handling things was unacceptable. The translation of the e-mail she sent me is as follows:

Dear Brigitte: Thank you very much for your e-mail. I would like to thank you for everything but your way of handling the matter has brought me to think we should give up our joint project. I wish you all the best. With best regards Maggi

Janine (from Switzerland and a long-time helper) spoke to Maggi on my behalf offering to dispense medicine, food or whatever but that receipts for all expenditure would have to be provided. Janine added that Maggi would not have to deal directly with me. This offer was also unacceptable to Maggi and she rejected the money and any further co-operation with DRCS.

I am really sorry for not being able to help the cats and dogs on Koh Payam but I'm confident the project will go ahead and that Maggi has found new sponsors elsewhere.

I informed Diny Brummelmann of the Dutch Foundation (which had provided the original grant) about this state of affairs and she replied saying I should forget about the Tsunami and placed the money at the disposal of DRCS. I didn't need to be told this twice so I gave the instruction to build a new cat house some two days later - experience has shown, it takes 3-4 months in Thailand to start any action and I did not want to lose time. I'm glad that the Tsunami is over for me and I'm even happier for the cats.

Don and Julia (two animal lives on Koh Samui)



I'm Don and I made friends very easily at DRCS. Julia must have thought that I was her Mum. As I was too weak to eat when I first got at DRCS, I was put on an IV drip. Julia always stayed by my side and held my paw through the bad times.

The catering is great here! Brigitte promised me I would soon have a fur coat. I didn't believe her but she was right in the end.



I know Don is not my Mum but we are good friends. It's funny how dogs change. I almost didn't recognise Don when he came back from the big shelter.

Don't I look sexy! Look at me with all this fur. It's me, Don. I have been at DRCS for almost a year and grew this lovely fur coat while I was here. When it's very hot, I long for bygone hairless times!

Building operations

Every cloud has a silver lining and as we can't help the dogs on Koh Payam directly, we can help the cats on Koh Samui. The number of cats has been constantly increasing and we now have around 40 living in a room measuring 3 x 4 m. Another 40 cats live with me in my house and around half of them are too small for the big shelter. When they get bigger I will have to say goodbye as they move to the big shelter. I'd love to keep them at my house but I'm always getting 'presents' of new motherless kittens and these little darlings need my special help.

The cats have an outside enclosure which is great while the sun shines as they play out there but, when it rains, they need shelter and move into the room which is far too small. In this room there are 20 cages for sick and post-operative cats but the fit cats also have to live there. With these cramped conditions, even the most peace-loving cats can become fractious.

Our new building means that the little tigers can look forward to a house with 2 rooms and a terrace, measuring 40 m² which will also be linked to the original outside enclosure. There will also be enough space to run about as an escape-proof fence will surround the house and its garden. Wide window sills have been fitted on which the cats can observe the action outside. The former cat room will be turned into a sick ward for ill and post-operative cats.



This is our kitchen in Chaweng. Here we only cook for cats. Julie (being our doggie TV star) could not resist having her picture taken.



Every day, the furniture is moved around but still the cats sleep through it. I'm sure life wouldn't be boring for them if they would only wake up to find out!

Our dogs were also to have more space: fences were erected so they could run free while their cages were being cleaned. That was the master plan! Ha! As we created these areas, immediately they filled up with a large influx of stray dogs which would have had nowhere else to go. That was tough luck for the dogs in the single boxes but the new dogs love it! Of course, our long-term 'guests' are allowed to run around in the in those areas during the day! Some of the dogs think that living outside the main compound is a far better game so I've had huts constructed and these have met with the dogs' approval. As most of our helpers come from poor families, they learned in childhood how to build huts and houses so it is not a problem to have some of them carry out small construction work. So, if I have such work to be done, ie build a small fence or hut, my Thai staff can do this no problem.

I'm still having problems with my record cards – as soon as the dogs see them, they eat them! Either that or the cards disappear inexplicably. As a result, the new system is that every dog entering the shelter gets a leather collar on which is written 'Please feed me' and the pick-up point. This means that the stray dogs being returned to the street or beach will go back to the areas from which they came.

The next project in planning is a quarantine ward for the puppies. The puppy problem will never stop and the little ones keep coming and coming. Because puppies catch all kinds of diseases very easily, they have to be isolated from the other dogs. To this end I want to have more boxes for the big dogs built in the front area of the shelter. The puppies will then be able to grow up in the back area, undisturbed by germs and viruses. I have been thinking long and hard about the construction of a puppy house but came to the conclusion that the Thai staff are not capable of meeting the necessary rules of hygiene. Therefore, it seems more reasonable to move the puppies to the back where they will have enough space to run about and no contact with other dogs.

**Please help building the new quarantine ward for puppies
with your generous donations!!**

Another building operation in the past few months was the consolidation of Compounds 5, 6 and 7. Before joining the three, 7 to 12 dogs lived together in each compound and this led to constant fights. Fights lessen as the number of dogs in a compound increases so tearing down the walls was the next logical step. How easily these walls came down - it took 30 minutes and then all the dogs were jumping around together. We also added in the dogs from Compound 9 and now they are all one big happy family. The dogs which still cannot get along with the others are been moved to other compounds. The helpers have been told to watch out for the 'trouble' dogs and, once a baddie is spotted, he/she is moved to another compound. We shift and shift until the dogs live peacefully together.



Sandra and Dr Tom in one of the latest compounds. Egg, Sandra and Allison feeding the dogs.

Dog transport

On 1 October 2004, entry regulations to Europe for dogs and cats changed but to the disadvantage of the animals being sent from here. I worried a great deal if we could continue to save dogs from Samui and send them to Europe. The new regulations state that the dog (or cat) has to be vaccinated against rabies and that its blood tested for rabies antibodies four weeks later. This test must be carried out on one of the specified

labs in Europe. Transportation of the serum is only possible by FedEx and costs 80 Euro. Serum testing costs another 42 Euro. After this test, the animal must stay in Thailand for another three months. As this process usually takes longer than the new owner is on the island, the animal must stay with us and then be shipped to Europe. The handling in Bangkok costs another 80 Euro. Fortunately, animal lovers are not worried by this enormous cost and still want to take their animals home to Europe. The first dogs on the schedule have already completed their four-month sentences at the shelter and are now happy and healthy in their new homes in Europe.



Dog transport Thai style ...



... and dog transport anywhere else!

Problems with technology

Unfortunately technology on Koh Samui is not perfect! Power fluctuations and failures affect my work on the computer. These things happen and I cannot use the computer for a whole week. Not long ago two animal lovers visited us and had wanted to bring medicine, etc, for the dogs. Before their departure from Europe they had sent two e-mails which never reached me! It can take two or three weeks until I answer an e-mail but I answer every single one so, if you have not received a response from me after three weeks, assume that your message didn't get through and e-mail me again. Besides the electricity failures, my computer crashes and results in the loss of data or I'm infected with yet another virus (despite anti-virus programmes). On the good side, I have a new companion to help me in the fight against machine: Sandra, a volunteer from Germany, is now my regular helper for computer work.

Christmas presents for animal lovers

Our new logo is not only for stickers and signs but for the new set of t-shirts. The new t-shirts, however, will take a while to be produced as this is Thailand! Just in time for Christmas, I will offer the yellow, black and white t-shirts (in all Euro sizes and with our new logo and sleeveless style) on our homepage (www.samuidog.org). I don't know how much it will cost to post a t-shirt to Europe/North America (including a small donation) but I will find this out within the next month or so.





You can still buy parts of the wall! 1 metre of wall is 25 Euro. We are busy writing your names on the wall. Please contact me for further information or look at our homepage www.samuidog.org (WHAT WE DO).

Thank you very much again to all the sponsors and helpers from all over the world. Through your help every dog and cat can be helped for free on Koh Samui. Stray animals which have not found a place to survive on their own on Koh Samui, can be brought into the shelter. Every day we neuter at least six animals because of your donations. Isn't it great what we all have created here on Koh Samui? Are you aware of any other organisation like DRCS in Thailand?

When you come to Samui and want to bring something: old towels, white, green and pink lined index cards (A5 size), powdered kitten/puppy milk, cat de-worming paste, de-worming tablets for dogs, 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 Koh Samui!
They still need your help!
Every small donation helps us one step forward.**

Our monthly costs amount to 4,500 Euro. If you are on Koh Samui, stop by and look at our books. You are cordially invited to do so. The dogs and cats always love visitors, and so do we!

Best wishes

Brigitte

Further information for sponsors you'll find on page "How to help" of our homepage

