

Dog Rescue Center Samui

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Dear Animal Lovers

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Holiday season - a time of peace and reflection. Wouldn't that be nice! Here on Koh Samui we are far away from peace and reflection but that is quite normal. Thais do not celebrate Christmas and, as we do not have any real seasons, one day can be like the next. That's why it's great to look out at my flower garden in December and know that it will be just as beautiful tomorrow. December is supposed to be the rainy season so I don't mind visiting my home in Germany then. My husband and I will fly to Germany on 20 December 2004 to celebrate Christmas with my parents.



Allison from Scotland will live in our house in Chaweng from 24 December to 2 January and take care of everything. She has been helping DRCS for almost two years now, and she is absolutely great. Over the same period last year, she lived in our house and mastered everything very well. The Thai helpers know her well enough not to play 'MAI KAU DSCHAI' (I do not understand) with her. Allison works as an English teacher in Surat Thani and she will 'sacrifice' her holidays to have fun with our 7 dogs and 20 cats in the house - how many cats fit in one bed? About 35 dogs romp about our yard and will ensure that she doesn't get a good night's sleep. Allison comes to Samui every Saturday to take care of our English correspondence and helps me tremendously with the office work. I do not know what I would do without her.



From 2 to 13 January, **Janine** from Switzerland takes over from Allison. Since September, Janine has helped us out every Monday, Friday, and Saturday. She has become very well acquainted with the work and I am sure she will cope full-time with the situation. There is only one small problem: she is vegetarian and does not want to touch meat or fish. I do not know if the cats will appreciate that as they usually get freshly cooked fish in the evening. However, every afternoon now, one of the helpers has been detailed to feed the cats and Janine will only have to make sure that he does not forget. Janine speaks good English and, when Thais call, she only has to say two sentences in Thai language and hand the phone to a helper. Wit, our manager, will do his best to help her.

Besides Allison and Janine, we have two other volunteers who have been helping at DRCS for a long time: **Tina** from Denmark, and **Andreas** from Germany. I want to emphasize again that only the vet, Wit and Thai helpers receive salary. My husband, myself and all the volunteers work on an

honorary basis and receive no money from DRCS! Thank you very much Allison, Tina, Janine, and Andreas.

Of course, many animal lovers spend their holidays on the island and have helped at DRCS. The list of names is endless and, as I do not want to forget anybody, I will not mention anyone by name. You have all been a valuable help and without you we definitely could not move on. In our little organisation, we need the help of each and everyone. Thanks also for the donations in kind from many of you which has reduced our outgoings somewhat. The cats and puppies always need vast numbers of towels as, during the rainy season, nothing dries and if we do not have enough towels, the animals have only old newspapers on which to sit. Please continue to collect old towels and bring them to Samui on your next visit.

We had very bad weather for a few days in October. There was torrential rain and the water was flowing in streams at the animal shelter and swept away a lot of sand resulting in some deep channels. The big animal shelter at Bahn Taling Ngam is around 150 metres long and 50 metres wide and the difference in elevation is about 5 metres. During a tropical rainstorm (1-2 hours), we get approximately 20 litres (that is only 2 cm!) to 30 litres water per square metre. We have 7,000 square metres of land and fight with 150,000 litres and more. In order to stop the flood, we have built several small walls and installed a drainage system. The system is constantly under improvement and eventually we hope to win the fight against the flooding.



Andreas from Germany, who is living with his girlfriend Sandra in Lamai, has been volunteering at DRCS for more than a year and has suggested many good improvements. He has helped me a lot with the organization of the animal shelter and we are working together to solve the water problem. We will install mountings for the feeding bowls in the single kennels and, in that way, the food and water cannot be spilled anymore and the dogs cannot get it dirty. Furthermore, Andreas has installed a sturdy donation box. It's next to the entrance of the surgery room and nobody can miss it. Prior to this the many Thais and 'farangs' (foreigners) who came in their cars had their dogs treated by Dr Jo in the vehicle. As a result, these owners do not know that DRCS survives only by donations as they hadn't seen the sign inside the operation room. Now everybody can see it, and we've got a lot more donations already.

A dog can stay with us for one day for 20 Baht (40 cents) including food and possible medical treatment. This is indeed a small fee for stray dogs and cats - even a poor Thai can afford that for free medical treatment for his dog or cat.

In the **cat room** and adjoining outdoor enclosure, about 40 cats are romping around. Some of them just hang out here and nobody knows where they came from. Some people never come back to collect their cats or tell us that they don't want the cat back. Also, some cats we cannot return them as that place is too dangerous (could be poisoned or killed by dogs).



In October, the fence of the outdoor enclosure was unfortunately electrified! We never found out what caused it, eg heavy rainfall or whatever. When someone touched the fence, he got an electric shock, the intensity depending on what the person was standing in. Wit wanted to show to me one time that everything was okay. He was wearing shoes and standing on dry soil. I was barefoot, stood in a puddle and, on top of that, had wet fingers. You can imagine that I did not repeat that test! Wit couldn't understand as he had touched the fence several times without problems. The electrician came three times and each time could not even get a spark out of the fence! We dug up all the cables but couldn't find anything. Finally Wit said it might be caused by the lighting in the surgery room. Might be? That was four weeks ago and everything has been OK but I still touch the fence with much caution. The cats never got a shock even when they touched the fence. Maybe they were not wet enough?

The cat room has really filled up now and space is getting tight (we only have the one room). Even the cats being brought in for castration/sterilization have to be accommodated in that room. One sick cat brought in a virus and two other cats died of it. We realize that we have to separate the cats coming in for operations from the sick ones (and the ones living with us permanently) but space is tight. The cats stay with us one week after the operation. Then the sutures are removed and they can 'go home'. I hope that at Christmas and over the next year we will be able to save enough money to get a new little cat house. In one room, the cats for operation will be accommodated and in the second one, the sick ones will live.

Please help build the cat house with your donation!

I hope dog lovers like cats as well and will help us build a house for them. We also need an extra section for the sick dogs and puppies but that is far more expensive and we cannot afford it at the moment.

Unfortunately a lot of puppies are dying of viral infections. Most of the puppies are being admitted in very bad conditions: they have mange and are full of worms. They are very thin, have wounds and sometimes they are only two or three weeks old. It is very hard to get them through this phase and, even with personal care by the volunteers, it is impossible sometimes.

At the tick frontier we have won a great victory! We tried a lot of things (Frontline and Stronghold are great but unfortunately too expensive) until we found out that a shot of Ivomec once a month destroys all of them. Ivomec is normally used for mange treatment and de-worming. As we capture the dogs for their monthly shot, we also powder them with flea and tick powder. The dogs love this extra stroking and have lots of fun playing the game 'Come and get me if you can' with the helpers. It seems that Dr Jo and the helpers have the same fun because I have rarely seen Thais running around like that - at least not at work. Every now and then a dog is overlooked and after a short while he looks like a hedgehog again - full of ticks. Those little bastards lurk everywhere (ticks not dogs!).



One of our main volunteers, **Tina** from Denmark, has been diligently helping out three days a week in Bahn Taling Ngam since the beginning of this year. Unfortunately she has to leave at the end of December. She will be greatly missed by me, the dogs and the cats. It is very important for me to have a 'farang' on the property as it motivates the helpers a lot. Apart from that, it is good to have someone to show visitors round the shelter. Tina explains our work to animal lovers and leads them around. She also looks after the new volunteers and tells them what to do. She likes to clean under the bamboo beds as the helpers seem to have big problems seeing the dirt there. The Thai helpers do their work but they do not care about visitors. Only Wit, our manager, speaks English and, when he's not there, the visitors are often left alone at the shelter.

Wit is doing a great job and I do not know what I'd do without him. As he is the major dog catcher, most of his time is spent on the road catching dogs and cats for neutering, and this means that he cannot be at the shelter all of the time. Every day at least six dogs and cats have to be captured and so six have to be released as well. I have put up a lot of information on the kitchen wall at the big shelter and hope that it helps the animal lovers who visit our shelter. Hopefully, it also lets the volunteers know what to do (I cannot be at

the shelter all day every day). We keep the sick animals and the ones who need constant care at our house and we do have a lot of visitors there too who want to get information about the DRCS. It is very important to inform interested animal lovers about our work since the DRCS is financed solely by donations.

Werner was really sick in October and had to go to Bangkok for an operation. He is still not completely well and can only help a little bit. Since he is the computer expert in our house, I had some more major problems with my 'favourite toy' when he was away. When lightning hit during a thunderstorm, there was a cloud of smoke and the monitor turned pitch black. Fortunately the damage was not that bad but I'm afraid I lost data again. Now I am saving important files to the e-mail server because it does not make sense to keep on burning CD after CD and I think on the server it is safe. Anyhow, it is easier for me to send an e-mail than to burn a CD. I do not want to annoy you with more of my computer problems but if you do not hear from me after two weeks, please write again. I will e-mail this letter to everybody who has given me an e-mail address. Then you can forward it to interested friends. If you do not receive this newsletter by e-mail, **please let me have your correct e-mail address** as it is easier for me to get in touch with you that way.

Dr Jo has been with DRCS since **15 July 2003**. From then until **30 November 2004**, he carried out **2,031 operations in total: 1,082 female dogs, 382 male dogs, 391 female cats and 134 male cats**. As well as that, he has performed some **42 other types** of operations and has taken care of all the dogs in the shelter. About 35 dogs get medicine every day and a lot of dogs with wounds have to be taken care of daily. Dr Jo neuters at least 6 dogs or cats every single day. To date, we have always succeeded in 'delivering' him enough animals. If it becomes impossible to meet that quota, we will start our catching action by night. In the evening, the dogs meet on the streets and hopefully will be caught easily. The first of those nightly sessions will take place in Lamai. Silvana from Switzerland, who paid for the land at Bahn Taling Ngam and is still supporting us with a lot of donations, always stays in Lamai during her holidays. She is very saddened when she keeps on seeing unfixed dogs on the streets in the evening. At Chaweng Beach there is not that much to do anymore. The last problem area in Chaweng (two bungalow resorts) was finally sorted out when we were allowed to spay all the female dogs. Until then, the owners of the dogs did not allow us to do so because they thought puppies were so cute. As puppies become big dogs really fast and stop being so cute, they ended up in the temple!

To guarantee a smooth work flow, we need eight helpers (plus the manager and vet). In the past few months, on only three days have all eight helpers showed up. I decided, therefore, to hire another helper.



It is no problem to find new helpers because 6,000 Baht a month is a good salary for a Thai who does not speak English. On Koh Samui the only unskilled jobs available are mostly in the tourist industry and those jobs require at least some English. Employing new people at the shelter does not increase our total salary outgoings as, our helpers are not paid if they are absent. Our current team comprises **Dr Jo, Wit (Manager), Rid, Sakda, Don, Somkiät, Ow, Dilek, Egg, Kio and Em**. **Kio** and **Em** are new. **Kio** is 25 years old and is from Nakhorn. He has been here for three weeks now and I have a good feeling about him. He works diligently (at least when I am around). **Em** is only 17. I hired him because of his loving behaviour towards the animals. He is learning right now from Dr Jo and, after two or three months, like the other helpers, will be able to prepare without supervision the animals for operation (washing, shaving and tying them down), clean their ears and tattoo them, cut their nails, give medication, treat all kinds of wounds, transfusions and shots, and a whole lot more.

Bin had a very special connection with the animals as well and he too started with us when he was only 17. He quit because the work was too hard. After six weeks he decided to come back but forgot to tell me about that! Why should he? He just showed up one morning and started to work. When I looked out of the window he was just taking care of a dog's wound. I asked him if he would like to come back more often and he said 'yes'. He worked for another four weeks but then decided he did not like it any longer and stopped showing

up. I had given him an advance in his salary before he left so told everybody that they will not get any salary advances any more if Bin did not return to work. After that Bin showed up for another week and then again for another two days. Almost all of the helpers are constantly in need of money and want salary advances and, so far, I have never had problems with the repayments: when Srong quit the others split up his debt and paid it back. I get told the most incredible stories to get a salary advance, mostly involving a sick family member, flooded house or a wedding coming up. Often the helpers do not even have 50 Baht (1 Euro) in their pockets to pay for the gas for the bike. Try to imagine living on 200 Baht (4 Euro) a day. Even considering the much lower cost of living in Thailand, this is unimaginable for 'farangs'. I have a lot of sympathy for the problems of the helpers and give them the advances. I have introduced a penalty whereby a helper is fined 100 Baht if he doesn't come into work and doesn't let me know – I am now better informed about absenteeism (average salary is 200 Baht (4 Euro) a day so 100 Baht is a lot of money). However, I still don't know how many helpers will turn up from one day to the next (or never again). In a new attempt to motivate and interest the helpers in their work, I have now introduced another scheme in which each helper can earn up to 1,000 Baht (around 20 Euro) more a month if his work is carried out faultlessly. I have been living in Thailand for almost six years now and I know that by being strict I won't do much good: if I am too strict I will be left by myself with the animals. I cannot buy the helpers' love for animals with money but maybe I can buy more interest.

The animals are very fortunate that volunteers come in almost every day to help with their care. They remove ticks, wash the dogs, pet them, and bring in injured or sick animals to Dr Jo. Also, a lot more Thais and 'farangs' are bringing their dogs and cats to get the shots or have them treated. Since we do not necessarily need the vet for, for example, the treatment of mange, wounds or vaccinations, we can still treat a lot of animals beyond the official hours of Dr Jo. Dr Jo works at our house in Chaweng every Monday, Wednesday and Friday and he can carry out almost all procedures there as we have all the necessary medication here as well.

The construction at the big shelter proceeded very well over the year. Khun Goya of Tongsai Bay Resort donated ten double kennels which are now fully occupied by dogs and I cannot imagine what it would be like to have anything less than the current number of kennels. The kennels are always full and I am sure we could use some more. Khun Goya also arranged for the local television company to produce a film about us. This was shown over and over again and I think almost everyone on the island must have seen it because people keep asking me about it. I am one of the few people not to have seen this programme as I do not have cable TV.

I think we will never be done with the construction. Currently, volunteers Paul from England and Hans from Denmark are working hard to run a fence line around a lot of about 100 square metres which will allow the dogs with large wounds to have hour-long strolls. Those dogs are usually in their single kennels for a long time and, during the day, we have been letting them wander around the main compound. However, because most of these dogs are big males (having got into fights which precipitated their admittance), they can still be aggressive and fights can start if too many of them are roaming around the one compound at the same time.

In my last newsletter I told you that Nembutal, the anaesthetic for dogs, has been taken off the market in Thailand because it was too dangerous. The cost for a sterilization would have been eight times higher using a different anaesthetic. **Lisa from Canada** donated the money for the anaesthesia equipment so that the costs are now down to what they were with Nembutal. Thank you very much Lisa! I have some more good news for you. An organization for animal protection was founded in Sweden which will try to support three organizations in Asia (South Korea, Philippines and DRCS). I have taken a look at the other two organizations on their homepage and I am truly glad that we cannot take such horrible pictures in Koh Samui. Take a look at this homepage: www.animalprotection.se. The Swedish organization wants to produce Christmas cards and a monthly calendar with pictures of the dogs from Koh Samui. I have sent them a lot of pictures and I am sure they will make a beautiful calendar. I hope a lot of cards and calendars are sold because we will receive a share from the income. In the January issue of 'Ein Herz für Tiere' (published around 15 December), there will be a short story about ET. ET is a female dog who has been living in our house for quite some time. You can read up about her in our homepage under dog sponsorships.

I had planned to have all dogs archived by the end of the year. All dogs should be on the homepage so that all of you can show your adopted animal to your friends. Due to my husband's illness, I had to take care of everything by myself and did not make much progress. I hope for your understanding. In Enclosure 4, many brown dogs are happily jumping around without a name. I did not have the time to compare all dogs in this enclosure with the file cards and therefore find out which ones were not registered. There are still many dogs and cats looking for sponsors and I try to put them on to the homepage, slowly but surely (www.samuidog.org [HOW TO HELP]).

**Help the dogs and cats on Koh Samui and sponsor a dog or cat!
A sponsorship costs 15 Euro per month.**

The regulations for dog transport changed on 1 October 2004 and right now it is not possible to ship dogs to Europe. Up until 1 October, all a dog needed was a rabies shot, given at least 30 days before, and an export licence. Now, each animal needs a blood test 30 days after the rabies shot. This blood can only be tested at one on a list of specified laboratories in Europe and so far I have not found a shipping agent which will transport blood. Blood cannot be shipped on a regular plane because it is in the 'high risk goods' category. However, we can ship serum but, for the production of blood serum, a centrifuge is needed and, for the transport, special cold boxes are necessary. I am sure we will be able to get these. After this blood test (which takes three weeks), the dog or cat has to stay in Thailand for another three months until the animal is good to travel. I am afraid that after five months the beloved dog from the beach will be long forgotten so many more dogs that before will have to fight for daily survival on Samui. Marcus and Eva who have rescued many dogs from Thailand are trying hard to find out about the exact rules and regulations but the official documents are very difficult to understand and endless questions are still unanswered.

Hotel managers are still calling telling me that the dogs are biting guests in their hotels and that we should help to catch the dogs and remove them '... wherever [we] like.' So far I have not have a chance to talk to a guest who has been bitten. The guests who are bitten always seem to have fled the island immediately. It is quite strange that they always get bitten on the last day of their holidays and never call DRCS. If a dog is dangerous and bites without reason, I am more than willing to take it to our shelter. I think many hotel managers would like DRCS not to exist as then the government would take care of the problem with mass poisonings and they would not have to justify all the dead dogs at the beach. Many managers still do not comprehend that new dogs would immediately move into the hotel area when the good food locations become vacant. Every three to four months there are dog poisonings at Chaweng Noi Beach. Nobody knows who has been poisoning the dogs at this beach for so many years. The hotel managers consider themselves completely blameless. So many dogs from there have been neutered, wormed and vaccinated by us and then we receive phone calls from tourists telling us that there are dead or half-dead dogs at the beach. I feel sorry for the children who find their canine playmate from yesterday half-dead at the beach. Often we can save poisoned animals when they are found in time. These dogs, of course, are not taken back to the beach but stay with us at the shelter.

There are many hotels in Chaweng and at other beaches on the island where dogs live in stable packs and they have never bitten any tourist and they do not get poisoned. If you are looking for an animal-friendly hotel on Samui, write to the hotel and ask if there are dogs in the hotel grounds or on the beach. If there aren't, you can assume that animals are poisoned or chased away. The chasing away is not an easy task since the bungalow resorts are not fenced at the seaside and the dogs can get back on to the grounds. The dogs are often taken into the bungalows by animal-friendly tourists and when the holidays are over, an unwanted dog stays at the empty bungalow. If the dog is lucky, the next guests are animal lovers as well. That is how he makes his way into the resort. One day a guest complains and the dog has to leave. If the hotels receive a lot of questions about their animal friendliness, the managers might think it over one day and leave a small neutered, well looked after pack of dogs. If the animals are fed by the staff before breakfast and dinner, I doubt these dogs would bother any guest. But this is my wishful thinking, and yours probably too. **Write to the hotels!** That is the only way we can achieve something. Animal lovers are also paying guests! I am more than happy to send you a complete list of all the e-mail contacts of the hotels on the island.



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 medically treated 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 can neuter at least six animals through your donations. Isn't it great what we all have created here on Koh Samui? Are you aware of any other organization like DRCS in Thailand?

**Do not 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 are always looking forward to visitors, and so do we!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
Best wishes

Brigitte

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

