

Since spring I had planned to fly to the Dominican Republic in fall but I didn't get around to pack until the evening before the flight. It took quite some time to take the cart for paralyzed Freckles apart and label all different parts but finally everything was stored with my luggage, suture and medicaments inbetween bathing suits and cut offs.

After some delays due to the weather I was finally on my way to Puerto Plata. Filling in the entry form before landing I realized that my address in Germany was no longer the one that my passport showed - and I had no idea where I was going to stay in the Dominican Republic. A little uneasy and with a lot of imagination I filled in the form. Upon arrival I was greeted courteously and passed customs without any problems. Later I was told how wise it had been not to mention the medical supplies...

It was late in the evening and the parking was illuminated by floodlight. I recognized Judy right away: Slender, with short, blond, curly hair, glasses - and bursting with energy. I had a hard time to keep up with her flow of words on the way to Sosúa.



Assembling Freckle's cart at three o'clock in the morning

Finally we arrived at the Villa Samia, the property of Bruce and Carry, where I was going to stay during the next two weeks, in an own appartement, with swimmingpool, beach, 4 dogs and 2 horses - it couldn't have been better!



My house, my pool.....



3 of the 4 dogs at Villa Samia

Judy picked me up the next morning at nine o'clock to show me the kennels and the clinic - at least that's what I had thought. When we got there, there were already 5 bitches and three volunteers waiting for me. After a short introduction to the clinic facilities I began with the spaying of the first bitch. She was in heat and

quite fat and the next hour was going to be one of the longest of my life....
Fortunately the other four - typical slender Dominican dogs - were a lot easier to operate.



At work



Tying up...sewing...finished!

What comes to my mind immediately when I remember those two weeks in the Dominican Republic (now, six weeks later, on a dreary, gray and foggy Decemberevening in Hamburg)?

The Caribbean sun of course, the warmth, the colours, the easiness of life, the cordiality of the local people that seems to help dealing with the poverty surrounding them.

Of course the lunches in the community of A.A.A.S. volunteers - chicken, rice and beans, everyday delicious again.....



The friendly stray dogs, everyone of them beautiful, independent, joyful, respectful and trusting, simply admirable..None of them showed ever any signs of aggression.

Judy and all the others fighting every day for the benefit of the strays and willing to sacrifice a lot....

The overwhelming hospitality of Bruce and Carry who always seemed to think that I would starve if they didn't bring extra food along...

The first time in fifteen years on horseback - on a horse that didn't cause any sore muscles ! Spleeny, the little bitch that tore out the suture completely,



ran around for two days with her spleen hanging out and was just fine after being sewn up again....

A rainy evening in Cabarete...., an afternoon in the All-inclusive hotel with Dee and Kelly, the two Canadian vet techs....., Tanya and her husband who never had had much to do with dogs before and who are now the proud owners of 18 former strays.... (Tanya's PR work has become invaluable to the A.A.A.S.)

Judy's unshakeable faith in the healing powers of Dexamethason.....

All those many dogs which I would have loved to adopt and take with me to Germany.....

Carry before we went for a ride

The fresh coconuts appearing miraculously on my table on the porch every morning.

The four dogs greeting me enthusiastically at all times....

The boxes with puppies left at Judy's doorsteps... .



Judy has succeeded in making live better for the animals and people of Sosúa. Most of the dogs are vaccinated, receive regularly parasite control and are spayed and neutered. The people have learnt to take responsibility for their animals and to care for them. They have realized that a healthy neutered dog population prevents strange strays with maybe infectious diseases from entering the community... Sosúa is of course still an exception to the rule. I want to thank everybody at the A.A.S. and all volunteers for the possibility to make this experience. It strengthened my faith in my profession and I'm looking forward to coming back.