



Featured Tortoise



5

Membership Renewal

Online or
by Mail



7

**NO
MORE
MEGADIET?**
What's new
with the
food program?



2



SPAY/NEUTER CLINIC RESULTS

Submitted by Dr. Dianne McLain, Tortoise Group member

As we members all are aware, preventing backyard breeding is a major goal of Tortoise Group. The best method is to separate males and females. However, sometimes that may not be a choice and the next area of prevention is spaying or neutering.

At the Tortoise Group meeting on April 18, the members present were honored to hear Dr. Sharon Gorman speak on the current status of spaying and neutering of the Mojave Desert Tortoise. Dr. Gorman is the owner of Creature Comforts Animal Hospital and is experienced in the evaluation and treatment of tortoises. She is a consultant to Tortoise Group through the US



Fish and Wildlife Service. Dr. Gorman attended the first-ever sterilization clinic put on in Las Vegas last summer.

A male tortoise is neutered by a phallectomy, removal of the penis. The penis is used only for breeding and not for elimination of waste. However, removal of the penis does not remove the hormonal need to breed, so a male will continue to mount the female without fertilizing her eggs. **continued on page 5**



Scott Emerson,
CEO of American
Red Cross, Nevada
presents Kathy Utiger
with Governor's Award

Volunteers Can Earn Nevada Volunteer Recognition & Presidential Service Awards

Three Tortoise Group members were presented with Governor's Awards this year and Tortoise Group is now also a Certifying Organization for the Presidential Service Award see **page 4** to find out how to register for Presidential Recognition.

Tortoise Group educates and advocates for the protection and well-being of the desert tortoise

A non-profit, 501 (c)(3) organization since 1982

TORTOISE GROUP

PO Box 33866
Las Vegas, NV 89133-3866

www.tortoisegroup.org

hotline: 702.739.7113

Megadiet RF IS ZooMed Grassland?

The same great tortoise food our darling pets have been enjoying as Megadiet RF will now be sold at meetings, online, and by our satellite sellers in a better container.

Our partnership with ZooMed means your purchase of Grassland Tortoise Food through Tortoise Group will benefit tortoises in need and help promote excellence in desert tortoise dietary options for that ideal super slow growth we're all hoping to see.



Tortoises love this food served as a juicy mash and it's very healthy for them.

Buying food for your tortoise at meetings, through Tortoise Group's website or through satellite sellers is a great way to provide for your tortoise while knowing you're helping desert tortoises and Tortoise Group.

We're looking forward to this exciting transition!

Tortoise Food Satellite Sellers

Please call sellers for appointment. All are 702-area code unless otherwise noted.

Check [map online](#) for seller locations

33% discount to TG members

Nellis & Owens	Georgi – 459-1274
Ann & Camino al Norte	Don – 374-2466
Durango & Grand Teton	Cathy – 339-5012
Craig & Cimarron	Annie – 306-5096
Decatur & Gowan	Toni – 277-6179
Smoke Ranch & Michael Way	Julie – 245-4671
215 & Far Hills	Kathy & Pauline – 804-0472
Rainbow & Charleston	Jamie – 232-6289
Charleston & Casino Center	
Trilla at Ace Locksmiths	– 528-2237
215 & W Tropicana	Athena – 682-0307
215 & S. Decatur	Carolyn – 534-7888 x824
	378-6514 cell
Russell & Pecos	Sherri – 339-9821
SW of I-15 & Blue Diamond	Shirl – 338-5231
Russell & Nellis	Cindy – 530-9052
215 & 95 at Van Wagenen	Peggy – 281-3048
Boulder City	Carol – 293-6494
Pahrump	Sheri – (775) 727-5557
Kingman, AZ	Toni – (928) 757-8317
Sparks	Kym – (775) 762-3418
S. Reno	Tonya – (775) 853-8218
Carson City	Robin – (775) 220-0523
Gardnerville	Tricia – (775) 450-2259

You can also shop at our [online store](#)

No computer? Call Susan at (702) 458-8382

Business Locations

(Member price not available—tax added to price)

Boca Park Animal Hospital	NEW	675-7000
Charleston & Rampart		
Creature Comforts Animal Hospital		658-7339
Ann Rd and US95		
Lone Mountain Animal Hospital		645-3116
Rainbow & US95		
Aloha Animal Hospital		567-5222
S Torrey Pines & Warm Springs		
Moon Sun Landscapes		645-2032
Russell & Boulder Hwy		

Northern Nevada News

BY KATHY UTIGER
TORTOISE GROUP

In late April, Janina Little and Kathy Utiger drove four tortoises from Las Vegas to their new homes in Dayton, Reno, Carson City, and Sparks, Nevada. More eager tortoise adopters are readying their habitats for the next group of tortoises to travel northward in mid June.

A group of volunteers gathered to form the Northern Nevada Chapter of Tortoise Group. Around a delicious potluck at the home of Patti and Steve Cwiak (and Tucker), they discussed strategies for letting the public know about tortoise adoption. At the May meeting, they will elect officers and become the first chapter to join Tortoise Group. Congratulations!

On that last weekend in April, Tortoise Group invited the public to adoption and care workshops in Carson City and Sparks, along with setting up a booth at Reno Earth Day, that was attended by 20,000 people! In Reno people were thrilled to learn they could adopt a tortoise.

Please support
Tortoise Group
by continuing to
purchase healthy
tortoise food at
meetings, through
satellite sellers, &
tortoisegroup.org



Your purchase supports desert tortoise advocacy only when made from an official Tortoise Group vendor.



Patti Cwiak of Tortoise Group, Northern Nevada Chapter, shows captivated onlookers about desert tortoises. Franklin, as you can see, enjoys having his picture taken.

Nevada Governor's Volunteer Service Award



This year Kathy Utiger, Don Knisley, and Marv Stevens were honored with Governor's Volunteer Service Awards. We thank them for for their exceptional efforts and commitment to Tortoise Group.

The criteria for nominations for the Governor's Volunteer Recognition Certificate include one or more of the following:

- * An individual has performed over 200 hours of service in a calendar year, representing exceptional service that surpassed expectations; and/or
- * An individual has provided a skilled or pro bono service that increased the capacity or stability of the organization by \$10,000 or more; and/or
- * An individual has demonstrated reliability and commitment in continual direct volunteer service for a period of two or more years; and/or
- * An individual has taken on a significant leadership role resulting in a new or enhanced program, an innovative way of meeting organizational needs, or has addressed a need that was not previously met.



President's Volunteer Service Award

Tortoise Group has recently been approved as an official certifying organization for the President's Volunteer Service Award.

presidentalserviceawards.gov

If you've already trained to serve as a Tortoise Group volunteer (required for this) and would like to work toward this special award, please register directly with the PVSA program at presidentalserviceawards.gov to track your hours and service.

You'll need to use the Record of Service Key (ROS) that is associated with Tortoise Group in order for us to verify your hours. Contact dominiquewalton@tortoisegroup.org for Tortoise Group's ROS key.

HOURS BY AWARD	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
Kids (5-10)	26 – 49	50 – 74	75 +
Teens (11-15)	50 – 74	75 – 99	100 +
Young Adults (16-25)	100 – 174	175 – 249	250 +
Adults (26 and older)	100 – 249	250 – 499	500+
Families and Groups*	200 – 499	500 – 999	1,000+
President's Lifetime Achievement Award: Individuals who have completed 4,000 or more hours in their lifetime			
<small>* Two or more people, with each member contributing at least 25 hours toward the total</small>			

Spay/Neuter from page 1

Spaying of the female tortoise is a more complicated procedure than neutering the male. However, a method has been developed to remove the female's ovaries through the leg area, rather than the shell. This was the method tested last year on many females at the sterilization clinic. In addition to removing the ability to produce eggs and, therefore, more unwanted babies, the removal of the ovaries also eliminates the potential of egg binding in the female, which is a life-threatening condition. Spaying must be timed carefully with egg production. Dr. Gorman advised having an x-ray taken of the female prior to surgery to be sure there are no large eggs in the abdomen and so that, if there are any bladder stones forming, they can be removed during the surgery.



Each tortoise must be evaluated on its suitability for surgery based on many factors. Tortoise surgery must be scheduled so that there is plenty of healing time before fall brumation. Blood tests are also advised and need to be done somewhat ahead of time as they must be sent out to a specialized blood laboratory. Dr. Gorman offers these services at her clinic, Creature Comforts Animal Hospital. Dr. Gorman also offers one free examination of a pet tortoise for Tortoise Group members. Please call her office for an appointment or for answers to your questions. (702) 658-7339.

Featured Tortoise



Guelph was re-homed by Tortoise Group May 1, 2014. This year he celebrated his first burrowversary in his flowering backyard habitat in Henderson. He loves eating tiny spray roses, watching neighborhood feral cats, and entertaining his mom by shooting water out of his nose after a soak. **Share your tortoise!** Send photos and info to dominiquewalton@tortoisegroup.org



NEW MORAL THINKING SUGGESTED: VICTORY FOR REPTILES!

by Norma Engberg
Tortoise Group

In a Press Release dated March 26, 2015, the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics announced distribution of an eighty-eight page report, "Normalizing the Unthinkable," which discusses why animal experimentation is morally wrong:

"The issue of the complexity of animal awareness, especially animal sentience (the capacity to experience pain and pleasure), cannot be ignored. Unlike our forebears, we now know, as reasonably as we can know as humans, that animals (notably, mammals, birds, and reptiles) experience not only pain, but also shock, fear, foreboding, trauma, anxiety, stress, distress, anticipation and terror."

We human beings are now being "challenged by new moral thinking which holds that sentient beings are not just things, objects, machines, or tools, but have value in themselves and deserve respect."

This is the first time that this world-renowned Oxford-based group of ethicists has included reptiles in its concern.

Recognizing that our tortoises are not just "ambulatory rocks," that they are sentient, we want to be sure that we are maximizing their pleasure and minimizing their pain.

Housed in an area smaller than the territory which they would ordinarily wander, provided with easily accessible food and shelter, protected from predators and decision making, life can get pretty boring. These sentient beings crave mental and physical stimulation, and it is up to us, as their custodians, to provide it.

This project can be fun for us, too. We can provide random leaves or oversized morsels and enjoy watching the tortoise tear into them. We can collect rocks to build a pile which the tortoise will enjoy climbing. We can make videos of our tortoise's adventures to amaze family and friends!

I am currently caring for two juveniles: Aggie who is 5 1/8" straight length and Annie who is 4 5/8" straight length. Because I live in a part of Nevada where temperatures can drop below 65 degrees any night of the year, I house my twosome indoors. Here are some of the ways I entertain them:

(1) Random Leaves: I purchase little boxes of rooted wheat grass from the local grocery, then snip off several pinches to scatter by the rocks where the tortoises are basking under their sun bulb.



(2) Oversized Morsels: I purchase a cactus pad from the local grocery, scrape off the spines, then cut off a long narrow slice which I divide into "sticks" about an inch in length, deliberately sized to require the tortoises to wrestle with them to swallow them.



(3) Rock Pile: The right group of three rocks: one flat, the other two, more vertical must be proportional to the size of the tortoises. Aggie rests on the flat rock and Annie balances on top of the two more vertical rocks. In selecting rocks for tortoise use, I am careful not to pick crumbly ones, for I do not want the tortoises to bite off and swallow any small pieces.



Tortoise Group Launches the **GOLDEN TORTOISE SOCIETY**

Planned gifts can include:

-  Retirement Plan
-  Life Income Gift
-  Appreciated Stocks/Securities
-  Life Insurance
-  Will or Trust
-  Remainder and Lead Trusts

Planned giving may allow you to:

Make a larger charitable gift than you thought was possible

Create a stable flow of personal income

Plan for the financial needs of your tortoise and other pets

Provide inheritances for your heirs at a reduced tax cost



Please consider a charitable bequest to Tortoise Group, to assist with its important work. When making a bequest to Tortoise Group in your will or trust, please refer to it as follows: "Tortoise Group, a Nevada non-profit corporation, to be used for its general charitable purposes."

Please contact us at info@tortoisegroup.org for a free consultation with an estate planner

Tortoise Group Membership Form

memberships & contributions may be tax deductible

Please Print Neatly

Full Name

Home Phone

Address

Cell Phone

City

State

Zip Code

E-Mail

Check one newsletter option

☐ Send my newsletter by email

☐ Send my newsletter in hard copy

Choose amount for your 1-year membership contribution

☐ \$25

☐ \$50

☐ \$75

☐ \$100

☐ \$250

☐ \$500 life membership

Please Make Checks out to Tortoise Group.

Mail to: Tortoise Group, PO Box 530478, Henderson NV 89053-0478

Tortoise Group
PO Box 33866
Las Vegas, NV 89133
(702) 739-7113

Board of Directors:

Chair: Kathy Utiger

kathyutiger@tortoisegroup.org

Vice-President: Dominique Walton

Secretary: Laura Deitsch

Treasurer: Kirstin Haas

Members: Norma Engberg, Jessica
Green, Trilla Newton

Adoption Coordinator:

Janina Little

janinalittle@tortoisegroup.org

Tortoise Group Newsletter is
published four times a year in
March, May, July and September

**Upcoming
Las Vegas
General Meetings**

May 16

June 20

July 18

August 15

September 19

October 17

*guest speakers
to be announced*

**Las Vegas General Meetings
are held 1-3 pm
Las Vegas Library
(across from Cashman Center)
833 Las Vegas Blvd North
Las Vegas NV 89101**

**FREE DESERT TORTOISE
MICROCHIPPING AND
HEALTH ASSESSMENT CLINIC**

May 30, 10 am - 2 pm

Veterans' Memorial

Leisure Center

101 Pavilion Center Drive

Las Vegas 89144

(down the street from

Costco) Clinic access from

the parking lot

**Tortoises will receive
FREE SERVICES**

including:

**Health assessment, Microchip,
External tag, Registration**

**Please bring your tortoise in a
covered box or carrier. Look
for the tortoise signs.**

Sponsored by

**US Fish & Wildlife Service &
Tortoise Group**

**The cost of LIFE MEMBERSHIP increases
from \$500 to \$750 on January 1, 2016
GET YOURS NOW!**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Tortoise Group
PO BOX 530478
HENDERSON NV 89053-0478

