



Getting Ready for Winter!

Tortoise Group is committed to being and staying green by publishing only electronic versions of the newsletter.

All newsletters, including past editions, can be found at

TortoiseGroup.Org

You can also register to receive email updates on our website or by emailing help@tortoisegroup.org

Thank you for helping us keep our planet healthy!

[Kobbe Shaw](#), Executive Director

THANK YOU to the many volunteer contributors for this edition of Tortoise Group News.

Tortoise Group depends on the efforts of amazing volunteers to help improve the lives of pet tortoises and protect the wild population. There are many opportunities to share your talents with TG. To get started, complete an [interest form](#) from our website or email us at info@tortoisegroup.org



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

Tortoise Group is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization since 1982.

TORT-A-PALOOZA

What happens when Tortoise Group offers FREE adoptions for an entire weekend???



Jugger, Chloe, and Rocky found their forever homes this month!

With hundreds of tortoises still looking for their forever homes, Tortoise Group set a goal to facilitate at least 100 adoptions this season (March 2016 – September 2016). This goal did not include all of the adoptions that often happen because of excellent networking on social media. Even though we may assist with yard consultations and helping to provide valuable information, we only counted the adoptions that we facilitated from one custodian to another.

Knowing how important it was to get these tortoises into their new homes before brumation starts, Tortoise Group launched a multi-media campaign to promote adoptions. You may have seen TG on the news, heard TG on the radio, and saw TG postings all over social media (Facebook & Twitter).

The result was over 150 inquiries and putting the icing on the cake to finalize our final adoptions of the year! With the last few weeks before brumation, we even have a few more families finishing up their habitats in order to give their newest family members a comfy-cozy winter time nap!



Thank You Health Check Volunteers!

It takes a team of staff and volunteers to pull off one of our health check events. With stations for health checks, weighing and measuring, external shell tags, and microchipping, each tortoise that comes through our doors gets first-class treatment! No matter how big or how small, our team of tortoise partners (thank you US Fish & Wildlife) and tortoise experts (thank you Sarah, Kat & Janina) spend time talking with each custodian to explain proper nutrition and signs and symptoms of illness to look for in their hard-topped family member! If you haven't brought your tortoise to a health check in the last year, remember to do so in 2017 to ensure the health of your pet. While tortoises may look fine to us, these experts are trained to notice the slight variations they see in the tortoises and can alert you of issues to watch.



Thank you Microchipping Volunteers (and prep team!)

Georgi Shalhoob – Lindsey van Bree – Diana van Bree –
Shelly Holt – Shannon Habig – Bob Furtek – Rose Marie Pickell –
Felicia Chen – Sandi Porter – Ryan Porter – Bruce Moore –
Nadine McAfee – Monika Libson – Holly James –
Sherry Hanneman – Judy Weinerman – Burt Weinerman –
Dianne McLain – Michael Steinberg – Cathy Erdmann –
Dave Erdmann – Janina Little – Kat Lee – Jeanette Pizarro –
Erica Pizarro – Nifer Wilkening – Flo Gardipee

Remember to soften your tortoise food with warm water until it is a juicy mash. Do not feed them dry pellets. Form it into a wedge for easy biting! Yuummmmy!!!



Tortoise Food Satellite Sellers

Is your tortoise hungry? Please contact sellers directly to pick up Tortoise Food. TG Members receive a discount and a percentage of each sale benefits Tortoise Group. Thank you for caring for your tortoise and supporting the efforts of Tortoise Group.

Nellis & Owens.....Georgi (702)459-1274
Durango & Grand Teton.....Cathy (702)339-5012
Craig & Cimmaron.....Annie (702)306-5096
Decatur & Gowan.....Toni (702)277-6179
Rainbow & Charleston.....Jamie (702)232-6289
Charleston & Casino Center....Trilla (702)528-2237
2-15 & W Tropicana.....Athena (702)682-0307
2-15 & S Decatur.....Carolyn (702)378-6514
2-15 & Windmill.....Diana (801)510-3526
Russell & Pecos.....Sherri (702)339-9821
Lake Mead & Van Wagenen..Peggy (702)281-3048
Boulder City.....Carol (702)293-6494
Sparks.....Kym (775)762-3418
S. Reno.....Tonya (775)813-0050
Gardnerville.....Tricia (775)450-2259

**You can also shop at our online store
24/7 - tortoisegroup.org**

No computer? Call Brenda (702) 497-0837

Business Locations

(Member pricing not available – tax added to price)

Boca Park Animal Hospital

Charleston & Rampart.....(702)675-7000

Creature Comforts Animal Hospital

Ann Rd & US-95.....(702)658-7339

Lone Mountain Animal Hospital

Rainbow & US-95.....(702)645-3116

Aloha Animal Hospital

S Torrey Pines & Warm Springs.....(702)567-5222

THANK YOU

2016



Burrow Volunteers

Tortoise Group loves our volunteers!

We appreciate all the hours that have been spent this year helping us build burrows, educate the public at community expos, and spread the word about the proper care of our beloved desert tortoise. If you'd like to become a volunteer for the 2017 season, please complete a volunteer application at TortoiseGroup.org and watch for the next volunteer Master Training in Spring 2017. We hope to see you there!

Featured Tortoise of the Month

STICKY



Meet Sticky! She is a 12 year old desert tortoise that has been with the Fennewald Family for about a year and a half. Her name comes from her diva walk, as she picks up her rear feet as though they are stuck to the ground. Who knew a tortoise could have a strut!?

She also likes to get her beauty rest. She came home in May, walked straight into her burrow, and didn't emerge until July! This is her "normal," and she comes out when she is darn good and ready, or wants something delicious to eat or when the lawn mower disturbs her dreams.

She loves eating the grass, grape leaves, and other plants in the yard, but her favorite treats are kale, thin slices of sweet potato, green bell peppers, and spaghetti squash growing in the garden. Even though she isn't supposed to eat too much fruit, she LOVES ripe blueberries. She eats them like a savage beast and gets them all over her face following her family around for more.

She has been a fun addition to her family, and has surprised them with loads of personality. While they still get nervous when they don't see her for long periods of time, she always emerges eventually to say hi and get a treat.

Congratulations, Sticky, on finding your forever home!

Lost and Found

This season we've had a tremendous amount of postings on our website for lost tortoises and found tortoises. Please check tortoisegroup.org to help these tortoises find their way home.



Speedy was lost near the corner of Washington and Rainbow

An external shell tag with your phone number on it can let someone know that your tortoise needs help. [Lost Tortoise Prevention Kits](#) are available on our website and all tortoises who visit our microchip clinics in 2017 will get one for free.

You can also learn how to mark your tortoise safely with our [Tortoise Info Care Sheets](#).

Golden Tortoise Society Members can be assured their beloved desert tortoise pet will be cared for and adopted to a loving home following the custodian's death if no person is designated or able to provide their care.

Contact info@tortoisegroup.org for a free consultation with a local estate planning attorney.

Thank you
Tortoise Group Partners



THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR HEALTH CHECK UPS

Dino is a desert tortoise who joined our family in 1984. Our vet estimates her age at 52. She comes and goes throughout the year when she wants. She freely roams our backyard and eats a lot of Bermuda grass. We supplement with dandelion and collard greens.

This spring she seemed to have less energy than usual and gradually stopped eating. June 1st a trip to the vet for labs was inconclusive. June 6th an X-ray showed 3 abnormally shaped, infertile eggs; the diagnosis was "egg bound." Our vet was concerned that her bilateral inguinal hernias were making it difficult for her to expel the eggs, and the eggs needed surgical removal. The danger with retained eggs is that the shells get very thin, and if they break the tortoise can die from "yolk sepsis."

For four days I searched the internet, called local sources and followed referrals around CA trying to find a veterinarian who would operate on a tortoise. I even reached out to the Tortoise Group in Nevada. Fortunately I found Dr. Tom Greek in Yorba Linda who had experience with Dino's condition. He was not able to see her until June 21st. He also X-rayed her and, although she had passed 2 eggs in the interim, he could see the remaining egg and a golf-ball sized urolith (bladder stone.) By this time she had only eaten 2 small leaves of romaine and two tiny strawberries in a month. We never feed Dino lettuce or strawberries, that was only a last ditch attempt to get her to eat anything at that point.

On June 23rd, Dr. Tom performed a cystotomy, a tortoise spay and c-section. He called after the surgery to explain that he had surprisingly found a large amount of bladder stones, some fist-sized. I later read that tortoises get the biggest bladder stones of any animal, and it's more of a problem for domestic than wild tortoises. To access the surgical site he had removed a section of the plastron. He replaced it with the removed piece covered by fiberglass and epoxy. The bone will eventually grow back together. He kept her in a special 85 degree "warm room" for 6 days post op, and administered pain meds and antibiotics, and gave her two tube feedings.

Since coming back home her activity has returned to near normal. She's eating her former diet well. Fortunately she has time to recover before hibernation. She lost about 5 pounds, going from nearly 13 pounds to nearly 8. I soak her for 10 minutes daily before her meal in the evening. I now realize she probably wasn't getting enough water before. It's important to make sure your tortoise has plenty of access to water and gets regular soaks.

Our thanks to all the people who helped with referrals, and gave moral support, including Brenda Herbstman, of Tortoise Group. Your newsletter is very well done. I love the adoption section.

~Teresa Hendricks, Bakersfield, CA



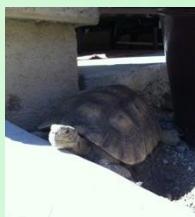
SPRING 2017 – Tortoise Group Burrow Contest

It'll soon be time to show off your burrows, habitats and water features! Our tortoise habitats seem to thrive – just before the tortoises wake up from brumation in the spring and start munching on all the plants and flowers! From February 1 - 20, 2017, send your pictures of backyard burrows, water features, and habitats to info@tortoisegroup.org. We'll be looking for the most creative displays. Our grand prize winner will get a year's worth of tortoise chow and several other winners will get fun consolation prizes. We'll feature some of the best photos in Nevada's Big Give in March 2017.



Love the Tortoise Group! So knowledgeable and helpful!! I live in Riverside, CA and have a desert tortoise we adopted in 2000 when she was approximately 20 years old...found the TG online and so wish I lived closer for these wonderful events they have!!

I've not found anything local that is similar? I have sent in a question or two and they respond with thoughtful answers...have learned so much! Rock on...you guys are great!! ~Linda S.



Dear Lilly,

I pace at the sliding glass door every night trying to get my parents' attention so they will let me sleep inside on their cozy bed. But they never let me in. Don't they love me?

From,

Heartbroken in Henderson

Dear Heartbroken,

I understand your dilemma. I have spent many hours patiently awaiting for my human to open the door, toss me some kale, or just scratch my shell. Here's my advice to you...eat. Eat everything in sight. Leave bare patches in the grass. Chow down all flowers and plants to a nub. Also, try to climb the glass door very early in the morning and let your nails screech down all the way down, making a noise similar to nails on a chalkboard. It will get their attention quickly. The human should realize they are slacking and make necessary changes. If not, I suggest using the doggy door. It works for the four-footed furry kind, so why shouldn't it work for us as well? Good luck with retraining your human.

Love, Lilly

WHAT TO EXPECT EACH SEASON FROM YOUR DESERT TORTOISE

As you anxiously wait to see your tortoise emerge from brumation, check your yard for debris and hazards. Plant some new flowers or desert plants. Remember to weigh your tortoise when they emerge and mark down the date of emergence. When they are awake and active, offer water for a soak. Let them tell you when they are ready to eat. After you notice they have started browsing on their own, it's time to offer tortoise chow!

You're probably noticing that your tortoise comes out earlier in the morning or later in the evening. Sometimes, your tortoise may even sleep in. It takes a lot of energy to stay cool, so your tortoise may not be as active. It's time to weigh and measure your tortoise and remember to give them weekly soaks to stay hydrated. Check your gate barriers to make sure your tortoise is safe.

As the weather cools, your tortoise may not be as interested in food. Continue to soak your tortoise. Check nurseries for plant sales. This is a great time to get some new plants established – when your tortoise won't be eating them up! Make sure your burrow is snug and safe. A snug burrow will keep your tortoise insulated all winter long. Males may be active during this time, so make sure your yard is secure and safe.

Northern Nevada tortoises will be snuggled in their containers in garages while Southern Nevada tortoises should be in their outdoors habitat. Periodically check for debris that could be swept into the burrow opening from gusty winds. Don't block the burrow opening. If it's raining, tortoises may come out of brumation for a quick drink. The ideal winter temperature for brumation is 30-50 degrees Fahrenheit, so allow your tortoise to chill out during the winter season.



WHAT'S HAPPENING???

Summary of Annual Board Meeting 9/17/16

Treasurer Marjorie Kirschner reported on the financial health of Tortoise Group. She reported that salaries of staff and administrative costs are the bulk of the expenses. Income is from memberships, adoptions, donations and merchandise sales.

Board Chair Laura Deitsch presented a change to the bylaws that allowed the Board to vote via email. This was approved unanimously by the membership.

Membership also voted to retain the Board officers with a suggestion of Dianne McLain as Vice Chair.

The Board is currently having discussions about their visions and priorities for 2017 to be determined at the next Board meeting.

Hello Fellow Tortoise Enthusiasts!

A few things you might like to know: We are beginning an exciting partnership with the Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association with the Mojave Max program. Throughout the winter, Tortoise Group will assist the Mojave Max program by going into grade schools and high schools in the Las Vegas Valley and talking about our favorite animal.

We will continue our monthly TG Happy Hour, 3rd Wednesday of each month at 5:30 pm. Just check our website or Facebook posts for details.

I'd like to personally thank the wonderful tortoise custodians that care for our tortoises and continue to show the better side of humanity. Hundreds of tortoises are left and abandoned in Clark County each year, and I'm proud to say that Tortoise Group helped find homes for over 140 tortoises in 2016! Thank you for making Tortoise Group a success, but more importantly, thank you for taking the time to care for these wonderful animals.

I'm happy to wrap up this season with such good news, and I'm very excited for 2017.

Thank you!

Kobbe Shaw

Executive Director



The clinic was so much fun. My granddaughters and I learned so much about our Tucker and caring for him.

~ Joy M.

HOPE TO SEE YOU AT OUR TG MONTHLY HAPPY HOUR

3rd Wednesday of each month.

Visit TortoiseGroup.org/events/ for locations.

Volunteer Master Training

Our next volunteer training will be in Spring 2017. We will have many opportunities for you to share your knowledge of tortoises with the community. Stay tuned for more info.

Complete a volunteer registration form at tortoisegroup.org if you have not volunteered with us before.

WEBSITE AND MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We are in the process of updating our website and ensuring that your membership information is current. Using our website this past year has proven to be quite the challenge for many of you. Please accept our apologies and know that we are working diligently to correct this.

If you haven't logged on to our website before, it's going to ask you for your password. You may not have picked one yet. Simply click on the link "Lost your password?" and enter your email to reset your password. Didn't get an email after a few minutes? Send a quick email to help@tortoisegroup.org requesting a password reset (you can even put "password reset" in the subject line and just put your first and last name in the email and we'll know what to do!) We'll manually reset your password and send it to you in an email.

Please continue to let us know issues that come up when using the website and we'll be sure to address each and every one of them. This website is for you. Our goal is to have tortoise information easily available at your fingertips. Thank you for your patience.



I WANT TO SUPPORT TORTOISE GROUP PLEASE RENEW MY MEMBERSHIP!

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Email _____

**Thank you for all
your support!**

Please return completed form to
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Henderson, NV 89053-0478

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☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$750 Life
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