



Sheldon, the tortoise, decided to emerge from his burrow February 10, after a nice warm spell. Sheldon lives with Trista Hermann and her family. Here is her son, Michael Hermann Jr, who was so excited he forgot to change his shoes and wore them to school. Proof that it's really exciting when a tortoise emerges from its long winter nap. Of course, not all tortoises are out, and those in northern Nevada are still wondering with the fluctuating temperatures!

Shelter project begins

Thanks to Tortoise Group supporters, a project to create a shelter to temporarily house up to 20 tortoises has started in Las Vegas.

In fall 2014, a generous homeowner gave Tortoise Group access to a portion of his property to create a shelter to alleviate the problem of having nowhere for homeless tortoises to go. On December 2, we launched an online campaign to raise \$12,000 to pay for the items needed to make the dream a reality. Funds were needed to create the irrigation system, pens, water dishes, and habitat for the tortoises.

And with the generous donations that came in from far and wide, the target was reached in January. Volunteers have already come forward to show willingness to help with the many phases of the project, from construction right through to feeding tortoises and maintenance.

The project has already benefitted from the volunteer work or landscape architect Richard McCreedy, Project Manager of WLB Group, Inc., Brian Esposito, VP of business development, SoilTech, and Billy Haas, from Amazing Creations Inc.

The shelter is expected to be up and running in March, 2015.



While it may not be a spectacular image, flags and paint and stakes out at the site of the new shelter mean only one thing - we've started on the project!

TORTOISE GROUP

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

PO Box 33866
Las Vegas, NV 89133-3866

www.tortoisegroup.org

hotline: 702.739.7113

Times are changing

As this is the first newsletter of 2015, may I be the last person to wish you Happy New Year!

Perhaps, as with other cultures, the year starts at a different time for desert tortoise lovers, the time of year when our friends emerge from their long winter nap and take a look around to make sure all their favorite plants are still where they used to be.

With an unseasonably warm winter, we heard of a few tortoises emerging from their burrows in February, and we always get a few calls whenever there is rain as tortoises follow their instincts to come out and investigate the puddles and pools.

This unusual weather might be something we need to get used to. Dr. Ben Cook, from NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, suggests in *Science Advances* journal that mega-droughts lasting decades in the southwest may become the norm. Co-author Toby Holt, from Cornell University, told reporters that after 2050 the entire region is going to get drier. There is, he states, an 80% chance of a 35-year-long drought by the end of the century.

But he also goes on to state that we have the capacity to change these models, by addressing climate change and by adjusting to having less water available.

This will certainly affect this region, and it remains to be seen what these potential changes will mean for wild desert tortoises, as well as the other species living in the desert ecosystem. For now, it might mean that tortoises start to emerge from their burrows and be ready to start chomping on plants earlier than usual. And it could have implications for tortoises in northern Nevada brumating in garages. It might also mean a quick trip to buy some annuals!



Jim Cornall
Executive Director
Tortoise Group

MegaDiet RF 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)

<i>Creature Comforts Animal Hospital</i>	658-7339
Ann Rd and US95	
<i>Lone Mountain Animal Hospital</i>	645-3116
Rainbow & US95	
<i>Aloha Animal Hospital</i>	567-5222
S Torrey Pines & Warm Springs	
<i>Moon Sun Landscapes</i>	645-2032
Russell & Boulder Hwy	

Spring Behavior tips

By KATHY UTIGER
TORTOISE GROUP

What should I do when my tortoise first comes out of brumation?

Just watch it and enjoy! Your tortoise usually wants to bask for a few days or weeks before it warms up enough to do much. Then it should start roaming and browsing.

Should I soak it right away?

When your tortoise is coming out every day and seems up and alert, soak it in a slightly warm, shallow pan of water. It may soak for as long as 30 minutes after the long, dry winter! Let it really wake up before you do anything for it.

When do I feed my tortoise?

Browsing is the key. When your tortoise is warmed up and browsing, that's the time to offer food.

What if he seems sick or is blowing bubbles?

Take him to the vet right away. If you live in Nevada, consult the [list of vets on our website](#).

What if my tortoise hasn't come out and I'm worried?

Do you suspect burrow collapse from the rain? If so, your tortoise could become trapped when the mud turns hard. If it is past time for your tortoise to emerge and you are worried, check your burrow.

- Look around the yard to be sure your little one hasn't emerged and is resting in a sunny corner
- Use a flashlight at night or reflect

sunlight with a mirror during the day to assess the situation in the burrow

- Slide a long pole or PVC pipe slowly into the burrow, listening for tortoise movement or an intake of breath

- Tape your phone to a long pole and video the burrow (and hopefully the tortoise)

- Call the Tortoise Group Hotline at (702) 729-7113 to have us come out with the snooper, a video camera on a long line. The line won't reach around corners, so its use is limited.

Should I weed the yard?

We may have a nice crop of weeds this year that will make for tasty browsing. Do remove the wild mustard, but leave the filaree. Your tortoise will let you know which ones she likes.

Registration: Unless you adopted your tortoise from Tortoise Group, you must register it on our website to make it legally yours. Please take a moment to do that at <http://www.tortoisegroup.org/adoption.php>

Marking: Please guard against the heartache of losing your little one



Here is Tenna Howard's baby, Bubbles, sunbathing for a few hours each day. She is about five years old, and her back legs only have partial movement due to an injury before she was adopted. More tortoises will soon be emerging from brumation. Not all emerge at the same time, and their behavior is different to summer and fall.

by marking the shell safely and permanently. You can buy a Lost Tortoise Prevention Kit through our website, or use the direction on our care sheet <http://www.tortoisegroup.org/infosheets/infosheet05.php>

Northern Nevada:

Once the outside temperatures rise to 60°F, usually around April, tortoises can go outside, taking care to bring them inside if nighttime temperatures drop. For concerns about brumating tortoises in cooler climates, contact Bobbeye Bowes at (775) 240-2855.

Volunteers – the heart of Tortoise Group

What a busy year it was!

It's amazing to think of the changes in 2014, and the projects we took on. With a small staff, volunteers are at the center of all of the operations of Tortoise Group, and we have a very large and willing group of people with a lot of different abilities to tackle such diverse things as the sterilization clinic, answering the hotline, digging burrows and informing the public at events.

We truly value all the contributions of our volunteers, and look forward to a great 2015.

We will be recognizing volunteers March 21 at our first TG meeting of the year.

Helping with Executive Director relocation

Gretchen Hau
Don Knisley
Curtis Obi
Antonio Manriquez
Kathy Utiger
Pauline Antonakos

Reptile Expo

Dominique Walton
Larry Acedillo
Laura Deitsch
Diane Lee
Marilyn Krentzin
Tyler Stewart

Storage

Tiffany Van Tuyl
Stephen Stocking
Jim Moore
Russ Beck

Burrow/Habitat Building

Marv Stevens
Bob Furtek
Mike Jones
Leigh Ellis
Antonio Manriquez
Mike Jones
Brenda Herbstman
Morgan Frazee

Adoption

Leigh Ellis
Antonio Manriquez
Sherry Watts
Jeni Lindman
Morgan Frazee
Nadine McAfee
Marv Stevens
Antonio Manriquez
Mike Jones
Carol Smith

FMWCC

Bobbi Papadopulo
Kathy Utiger

Veterinary

Christine Kolmstetter
Liz Cornall
Dr Christopher Smith
Kim and Bob Noble

Hatchling Foster Care

Jeff Watson
Audrey & Merrill Larsh
Sharleine Morrison
Marv Stevens
Rich Ruocco

Video

Scott Mees

Hotline staff

Sherri Graves
Morgan Frazee
Carolyn Wilson
Kathy Utiger
Brenda Herbstman

Admin

Kathy Gillespie
Eric Larsen
Scott Mees
Nick Utiger
Susan Stater
Dianne McLain
Don Knisley
Marjorie Kirschner



Melissa Ashworth assisting at the sterilization clinic

MDRF Bagging - Spring

Leah & Husband
Judy & Burt Weinerman
Peggy Morris
Nancy Thompson-Jones
Tom
Tiffany White
Sherri Graves

Pet Expo

Bobbi Papadopulo
Dianne McLain
Marilyn Krentzin
Linda Martin
Peggy Morris
Larry Acedillo
Bob Furtek
Kim Noble
Marv Stevens
Morgan Frazee
Athena Fenimore

Office

Advertising
Nadine McAfee
Gretchen Hau

Plants

Aleta MacFarlan
Kathy Utiger
Trilla Newton

Events and participants

Board

Kathy Utiger
Dominique Walton
Laura Deitsch
Trilla Newton
Kirstin Haas
Angela LaFrance
Jim Moore
Norma Engberg
Jessica Green

Science Expo

Bobbi Papadopulo
Marilyn Krentzin
Kim Noble
Diane Lee
Kathy Utiger
Brenda Herbstman
Peggy Morris

Meetings

Audrey & Merrill Larsh
Susan Stater
Bobbi Papadopulo
Powell and Pam Patrick
Bob Furtek
Steve Stocking
Diana Petri
Debbie Daughtee
Laura Deitsch
Nancy Thompson-Jones
Sue Cho Lyo
Susann Stoecklin
Larry Acedillo
Marv Stevens
Diane Lee
Brenda Herbstman
Scott Mees
Dominique Walton
Earl Miller
Kathy Utiger

Get Outdoors Nevada Day

Dominique Walton
Linda Lundgren
Dianne McLain
Brian and Sandy Morgan
Marilyn Krentzin

MegaDiet Sellers

Georgi Shalhoob
Don Knisley
Annie Ellmers
Toni Downen
Julie Otten
Kathy Utiger
Pauline Antonakos
Jamie Lee
Trilla Newton
Athena Fenimore
Michelle St Claire
Sherri Graves
Cindy Ash
Peggy Morris
Carm Pratt
Carol Smith
Sheri Duval
Toni Rashelof
Carolyn Wilson
Cathy Sheehy
Shirl Moody

MDRF Staff

Marv Stevens
Sherri Graves
Susan Stater
Kathy Utiger

Office Painting

Marv Stevens
Debbie Forbush
Dianne McLain
Bob Sturgeon
Rick Brattain
Sue Lyo

People Offering Storage

Ali Baker
Lynn Fein
Marilyn Krentzin
Terry Sackett

Sterilization Clinic

Diana Orgill
Dianne and Michael McLain
Ursula Lambertson
Bonita Alvarez
Lyn Meers
Mary Lee

Fundraising

Michael Dimengo
Dominique Walton
Larry Acedillo
Kathy Utiger
Linda Lundgren
Earl Miller
Laura Deitsch

MDRF Bagging

Kathy Utiger
Marv Stevens
Sandy & Brian Morgan
Sherry Hanneman
Curtis Obi
Therese Campbell

Northern Nevada

Patty Cwiak
Bobbeye Bowes
Cheryl Darnell
Ed Kleiner
Dr. Janet Maker
Kym McDonough
Andrea Green
Victor Hernandez
Tonya Clements
Heather Jackson
Crystal Swedowski
Steve & Kelly Pietz
Robin Ross
Tricia Smithen
Chris Smithen
Chill Yee
Karen Beckerbauer
Hilary Erickson
Julianne Dewitt Smith
Kerry Christy & Tyler Clark
Breanna and Justin Roach
Eileen Cohen

Kate Martin
Jennifer Brunner
Melissa Ashworth
Judy Anderson
Marv Stevens
Georgi Shalhoob
Mike Jones

MDRF Bagging - August

Billy Haas
Wayne O'S
Ralph Hemington
Michelle Gack
Cricket Arens
JC Arens
Joy Sierra
Don Robinson
Sharon Goldman
Bev Vincent
Tommy Mees
John Christopherson
Gary Wilson
Judy and
Burt Weinerman
Donny Robinson
Janice Robinson
Abby Culpepper
Marjorie Kirschner
Bob Furtek
Annie Ellmers
Marilyn Krentzen
Sue Lyo
Therese Campbell
Gerogi Shalhoob
Judy Anderson
Carol Smith
Peggy Morris
Don Knisley
Marv Stevens
Shirl Moody
Susann Stoecklin
Scott Mees
Linda Lundgren
Nancy Thompson-Jones
Kirstin Haas
Sherry Hanneman
Curtis Obi
Carolyn Wilson
Cathy Sheehy
Aleta MacFarlan
Jennifer Brunner
Brian & Sandy Morgan
Trilla Newton
Sherri Graves

Morgan Frazee
Toni Downen
Scott Mees
Kathy Utiger
Linda Lundgren
Sherry Hanneman

Volunteer of the Year: Marv Stevens

Marv Stevens is a Tortoise Group volunteer who constantly goes above and beyond with his assistance. For example, at the sterilization clinic, Marv assisted with every task from health assessments right the way through to post-op care. He's helped with painting, burrows, MegaDiet RF bagging and distribution, transportation and much more.

How long have you been volunteering with Tortoise Group?

About five years, give or take. It was a long running joke about how I would show up to help at the meetings and I still didn't have a tortoise! I found the adoption booklet at the vet's office when we took one of our dogs in and I was hooked just from reading the booklet.

But at the time we had just moved here, were renting a house, and had to get things settled. I didn't want to put in everything for a tortoise just to have to move, so we waited until we bought a house. I ended up volunteering for almost four years before I ever got a tort of my own.

You volunteer for other organizations too, which ones?

I volunteer with Friends of NV Wilderness, NV Naturalists, Department of Forestry, US Fish and Wildlife, and NV Fish and Wildlife.

Why do you volunteer?

The short answer is to try and leave the world a better place. I absolutely can not stand to see trash blowing around, especially out in the wild tortoise habitat areas.

What's your history with tortoises, and can you tell us about the hatchling habitat you created for Tortoise Group?

Before we ended up moving to Vegas I had wanted to get a Russian tortoise, but we never did. For some reason I am just absolutely fascinated by tortoises, but I can't pin down any specific reason as to why I am.

I created the hatchling habitat to give unwanted hatchlings a place to be quarantined for 90 days, to give them a chance of being able to be released into the wild. One of the biggest problems I see with the fate of the desert tortoise is that most of the money being generated

to save wild ones is being spent to help deal with the exploding pet population. This was one way I could directly help with that problem.

The habitat measures 20' long by 4' wide and a

foot tall, it has lids with chicken wire attached to keep any predators out of the habitat. The habitat is outdoors next to my tortoise George's yard. Inside the habitat are three burrows, a wet end with edible plants, a water dish, and a couple of shady places to hang out.

I have 12 hatchlings in there, all of them hatched last year and all are around 45 millimeters long. Seven of the 12 have already been out having a look around, after spending their first winter in brumation. This is my second batch of babies. The first batch was determined to be clear of upper respiratory tract disease and were released into the wild by US Fish & Wildlife Service.

You spent a lot of time helping out at the sterilization clinic, what did you enjoy about that?

I enjoyed being able to help out with such a wonderful idea. I think the sterilization of pet tortoises is going to help tremendously with the backyard breeding problem. I actually kinda enjoyed all the craziness of being the tortoise wrangler/director. Although I was glad when it was over too, it was a lot of hard work.

What do you love about tortoises?

It's like getting a new pet every spring when they wake up. Absence makes the heart grow fonder, so there is a great joy upon seeing your tortoise peek their head out of the burrow for the first time each spring.



Volunteer of the Year: Don Knisley

Don Knisley works on the website and extensive database for Tortoise Group. Whenever there's a problem with a page, or a new system needs developing, Don gets the call, and puts in countless hours coming up with solutions to keep Tortoise Group running smoothly!

What was your introduction to Tortoise Group?

I first encountered the Tortoise Group during a visit they were making to the Springs Preserve in 2011. My then 14 year old daughter fell in love with the desert tortoise she saw there and the rest was history!

Do you, or have you, volunteered for other organizations too, and if so, which ones?

Tortoise Group is my primary non-profit. However, I'm employed by another non-profit in the valley. Nevada Donor Network bears responsibility for the procurement of organs and tissue throughout the state. I've also been a board member for my community's HOA.

Why do you volunteer?

Simply because I'm needed!

You spend lots of time helping with databases and finding solutions to computer issues, what do you enjoy about that?

I enjoy the unique challenges presented by Tortoise Group and balancing the opposing needs of the group to accommodate less tech-savvy users while leveraging the most modern programming techniques possible within given budget and time constraints.



When did you start volunteering?

I became a Satellite Seller in September 2011 and the DBA/Webmaster in May 2012.

Tortoise Group Membership Form		
Memberships and contributions are tax deductible		
1. Please print the complete address		
Name	Home Phone	
Address	Cell Phone	
City	State	Zip Code
E-mail		
2. Check One Newsletter Option		3. Check amount for your 1-year membership
<input type="checkbox"/> Send my newsletter by e-mail		() \$25 () \$40 () \$70 () \$100 () \$250 () Life \$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Send my newsletter in hard copy		Special Contribution: _____
Mail to:		
Tortoise Group		
1001 Adobe Flat		
Henderson, NV 89011		

Make checks payable to Tortoise Group. Mail with form to:
Tortoise Group, 1001 Adobe Flat, Henderson, NV 89011

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

Editor/Executive Director:

Jim Cornall

jimcornall@tortoisegroup.org

Adoption Coordinator:

Janina Little

janinalittle@tortoisegroup.org

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

Other events

**Spring Plant Sale & Green
Living Expo**

Springs Preserve

March 21 & 22

8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Admission to the sale is free.

**Las Vegas Spring Wash
Green-Up**

Saturday, March 14

Noon to 3 p.m.

GREENFest 2015

Saturday, April 25

10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Downtown Summerlin

**The cost of Life
Membership increases
from \$500 to \$750 Jan 1,
2016. Get yours now!**

Calendar of Events

Meeting dates:

March 21, April 18, May 16,

June 20, July 18, August 15,

September 19, October 17

Guest speakers to be announced

General Meetings run from 1–3 p.m.

Las Vegas Library (across from Cashman
Center)

833 Las Vegas Boulevard North

Las Vegas, NV 89101

**We will also be at Reno Earth Day,
Sunday April 26**

and

**Elko Home & Business Expo,
Saturday & Sunday May 9 & 10**

Any additional events will be announced by email



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Tortoise Group
1001 Adobe Flat
Henderson, NV 89011

