

THE FORKED TONGUE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Editor's Den

By Grady Calhoun

The November *Forked Tongue* features an article by Al Winstel on Breeding Ball Pythons and an article describing an experiment on egg rolling by Marc Frevola.

The October meeting will be held at Northern Kentucky University at 7:30 Wednesday, October 2nd. We meet in room 424 of the Natural Science Building. This is a change over previous meetings. We will be scheduled here for the remainder of the year.

Calendar of Events

- 11/6 Monthly Meeting featuring Dean Alessandrini with video of a recent Florida road cruising adventure.
- 11/29 Annual Museum Show
- 11/30 Annual Museum Show
- 12/4 Annual holiday meeting at Ryan's Steakhouse featuring Greg Lipps speaking on herps of Belize.

Announcements

Our annual show at the Museum center will be held on Friday and Saturday following Thanksgiving. We will be needing a lot of help and animals to pull this off. This has historically been our single biggest money maker each year. We will have a sign up sheet for people and animals at the November meeting. Please plan to attend and donate you animals!

We will be holding the annual holiday meeting at Ryan's Steak House in Florence, Kentucky. **It will start at 7:00 pm.** We did this last year and it turned out to be very nice. The cost is \$7.99 for adults and 45 cents/year of age for children up to 12. This includes an all-you-can-eat buffet with steak and just about everything else you can imagine. Drinks and tips are

extra. We will have a private room and program.

Appointments

The not-so-new slate of officers officially takes over after the October meeting. The president is required to appoint advisors and chairs of active committees. Ray Whitson has agreed to continue as the society's advisor. Matt Fille and Chris Bauer have agreed to be co-chairs of the education conservation committee.

October Highlights

The October Meeting featured Kristen Wiley of the Kentucky Reptile Zoo. Kristen, Jim Harrison and members of a National Geographic film crew took a trip to the western United States to collect Mojave Rattlesnakes. The venom will be used for anti-serum. Some populations of these rattlesnakes have some neurotoxin in their venom while other populations do not. National Geographic is making a show called "Snake Wranglers." It is likely that footage of this trip will be included in the final product. Some of the critters observed during this trip include: speckled rattlesnakes, western diamondback rattlesnakes, sidewinders, night snakes, longnose snakes, California king snakes, spotted leaf nose snake, wind scorpions, gopher snakes, grand canyon rattlesnakes, and black-tailed rattlesnake. One the local attractions in downtown Tuscon is a pedestrian bridge built to look like a diamondback rattlesnake!

Thanks go out to Kristen and the Kentucky Reptile Zoo for being a consistent source of excellent presentations!

Attention Photographers

We are compiling photos for a GCHS calendar. Please submit any photos of Herps or GCHS activities to Peggy Fille at the November meeting or send them to her at 564 Brantner Lane, Cincinnati, OH 45244. Although she would prefer actual photos, .jpeg or .gif files are acceptable. Photos will be returned and photographers will get credit for their work.

The November Meeting is Wednesday, November 6th at 7:30 at NKU

GCHS 25th Anniversary Shirts Available!

We have three options for GCHS 25th Anniversary Shirts:

The first is a Forest Green T-shirt with a John Bellman original Tuatara water color on the back and the GCHS logo on the front breast. These are heavyweight poly-cotton blend shirts.

The second is a black sport shirt with collar featuring the GCHS 25th Anniversary Logo embroidered on the front in gold. There is no animal picture on this shirt.

The third is a long sleeve heavy twill shirt. It will be light brown (mocha) with the GCHS 25th Anniversary Logo embroidered on the front in forest green. There is no animal picture on this shirt

These make great Christmas Gifts and must be pre-ordered. Details are included on newsletter insert.

Breeding Ball Pythons (after 18 years)

By Al Winstel

In 1984, I acquired a pair of ball pythons (*Python regius*). At the time, breeding of ball pythons was pretty unusual. Nevertheless, I spent several years throwing them together, raising on them in December (supposedly the most effective approach at the time), and eventually gave up and sold the animals. Both were wild caught and mature when obtained.

About 3 years ago, I purchased a number (7) of captive bred and/or hatched ball pythons with an emphasis on animals with a banded or spider type pattern (the latter is also sometimes called "melted" and has greatly reduced black blotches down the back with a lot of yellow in the ground color and a black line down each side of the venter). These animals were raised on thawed mice, mostly individually, although last fall, I began keeping several of mixed sexes together to save room. I had at least 4 or 5 animals together. The cage was about 3' X 2' X 1' high. During December, I dropped the room heater settings from 85 day and 80 night to 85/75 for 2 wks., 85/70 for 1-2 wks., and 80/70 for 1-2 nights. I was afraid to drop the day temperatures too low for fear of respiratory problems. During Jan. I attempted to spray the animals quickly with a mister every day, but I'm sure I skipped many days. Copulation was observed once, probably during Dec., but I didn't note date or animals. One female laid 3 eggs on 4/1/02 (a fairly typical female with some banding effect posteriorly) and another laid 3 eggs on 4/6/02. The second female

was my most spidery banded one, but when the eggs hatched (6/5/02 for first female and 6/12/02 for second), all the young were pretty similar with some banding, but not a lot.

Based on last year's experience, I plan this year to gradually drop the night temp during Dec. and mist in Jan., but I am trying to keep specific pairs together. Hopefully this will work out, although I know in some species, multiple males tend to encourage copulation.

Egg Rolling in *Elaphe* Eggs

By: Marc Frevola

Ever since I started breeding snakes, I was always told by those much wiser than I that if my eggs rolled over, the snakes inside would surely die. The reason for this disaster sounded practical enough. It was either the young embryos would be crushed beneath the weight of the fluid in the egg, or eventually the young would somehow suffocate beneath this mass. Being the cautious young breeder that I was, I always followed this advice, carefully placing Xs on the top of each egg and making sure that each egg stayed in its original position. As the years went by and I occasionally turned over an egg here and there by accident, I noticed that this either may not be entirely true, or I had some pretty resilient snakes because they never seemed to show any negative effects. Recently, I acquired a gravid black rat snake (*Elaphe obsoleta obsoleta*) on a white bag run, and decide to put this train of thought to the test. I kept her for a week and she laid six good looking eggs. I let her rest a few days, fed her, and released her back into the wild.

The eggs were laid in a nest box of moist towels on July 15. I carefully removed all six eggs and placed a small "X" on the top of each so I would know which side was laid face up and numbered each one. I then placed them in a ventilated plastic shoe box with a moist towel underneath and over them and let them sit for one week. On July 23, I turned eggs numbers one and two 180 degrees so the "X" was now face down. Eggs three and four I turned 90 degrees, so the "X" was on the side. Eggs five and six I left alone as a control. I let them sit this way for approximately two weeks. On August 1, I turned eggs three and four another ninety degrees so the "X" was now face down like eggs one and two. On August 14, I turned eggs one and two another 180 degrees, so now the "X" was facing upright again after spending a month upside down. On September 26, after 73 days incubating at

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room temperature (76F- 80F), all six eggs hatched and all young have been feeding on frozen thawed pinks after their first shed. They all appear outwardly healthy and have good appetites. If the results of this experiment prove true for all snakes, then in conclusion, it would seem that egg rolling by itself has no bearing on neonate mortality.

Classified Advertizing Policy

GCHS Members may run a free classified ad of 7 lines or less at no charge for an unlimited time; however, the ad will be canceled after one month unless the editor is informed to continue it. Please include scientific names for the animals with your ad as well as your phone number and area code. Ads of up to 7 lines for non-member are \$2 per issue; ad charges for items more than 7 lines long are as follows:

Business card size	\$3 per issue
1/4 page	\$6 per issue
1/2 page	\$10 per issue
Full page	\$20 per issue

The GCHS is not liable for the quality of the merchandise advertized. The Society also reserves the right to refuse any ad considered inappropriate.

Requirements for Submitting Articles to the Forked Tongue

1. Articles can be submitted via 3.5" floppy disk or hard copy to Editor, GCHS 11470 Gatch Hill Road, Aurora, IN 4700.
2. Articles may be e-mailed to Grady Calhoun at gcalhoun@seidata.com.
3. Black and white photographs can be included with articles. Photo submissions should include your name, phone number, and description of photo on the back. Photos can be returned.
4. All time dependent submissions must be in the editors possession no later than the meeting previous to the desired publication date.

Classifieds

Available: Venomous snake video available: This video has extractions from king cobras, gaboon vipers, and several others, plus graphic snakebite slides. Kentucky Reptile Zoo is a non-profit educational exhibit and venom extraction laboratory. \$10.00 donation plus \$5.00 postage and handling will bring this video to you! Please note everything is filmed as it happens and is not professionally edited. Send a check or money order to Kentucky Reptile Zoo, 200 L&E Railroad, Slade, Kentucky 40376. Visit our website at www.geocities.com/kentuckyreptilezoo for more information, or call 606-663-9160.

For Sale: Herp books, 2 by Bartlett & Bartlett: Monitors, Tegus, and Related Lizards; Geckos. Both are Barron's soft cover @\$3.00 ea. plus postage if mailed. One by Sprackland: Savannah & Grassland Monitors, AVS soft cover @\$4.00 plus postage if mailed. All in almost new shape (I bought two copies at different times, pretty smart, huh?) Located in N. Hamilton County. Al Winstel 513-729-2563

For Sale: 40 gallon tank and accessories. Accessories include 2 lights, 2 power head under gravel filters, 1 side filter, 2 heaters and large decorative rock. Paid almost \$600 about 6 months ago, asking \$375, or best offer. Call Erin at (513) 481-0018

For Sale: Captive bred Bearded Dragons approximately 1 month old. All are eating well. \$20 each. Call Justin or Grady Calhoun at (513) 564-6041 or (812) 926-1206.

For Sale: Amazon tree boas (*Corallus hortulanus*) born 10/13. Various garden phases from gray to tan with light to moderate pattern. \$40.00 ea. Will probably have some eating by mid November. Al Winstel 513-563-

4513. Local sales or could bring to GCHS mtg.

For Sale: Feeder rabbits and rats. Call Rod Surber at (812) 637-0305 or e-mail me at Indianarockshop@aol.com.

For Sale: Aquariums-all shapes and sizes (5-90 gallons). Boa Constrictor(s) may be available, prices negotiable. Call Chris at (513) 451-1203.

Discount: A 10% discount is offered to all card-carrying members of the GCHS at All Creatures Animal Hospital where I examine and treat many different reptiles.

Dr. Dan Meakin, All Creatures Animal Hospital, 1894 Ohio Pike, Amelia, OH 45102 513-797-7387

Discount: A 10% discount is offered to all card carrying members of the GCHS at Dr. Dahlhausen's Veterinary Clinic, 5989 Meijer Dr., Suite 2, Milford, Ohio 513-576-0131

(Number to left of decimal indicates males; number to right of decimal indicates females; number to right of second decimal indicates number of unknown sex. For example, 3.2.1=3 males, 2 females, and 1 unsexed specimen)

Currently Held Positions

President	Grady Calhoun	(812) 926-1206	Vice President	Dean Alessandrini	(513) 347-0099
		(513) 564-6041			
Treasurer	Peggy Fille	(513) 528-4452	Editor	Grady Calhoun	(812) 926-1206
					(513) 564-6041
Sargent-at-Arms	Bruce Fille	(513) 528-4452			
			Education Conservation Committee Co-Chairman		
Advisor	Ray Whitson	(859) 342-8842		Matt Fille	(513) 528-4452
				Chris Bauer	(513) 451-1203
Secretary	vacant				

About the GCHS

The Greater Cincinnati Herpetological Society holds monthly meetings which typically consist of a short business section, a refreshment intermission, and a program related to herpetology. Both members and nonmembers are invited to attend. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in reptiles and amphibians. New members may sign up by mail or at the monthly meetings. Members receive monthly issues of *The Forked Tongue* and free classified advertising. Annual dues should be directed to the secretary at the society's mailing address, according to the rates below:

Student	\$10.00	Corresponding	\$10.00
Individual	\$12.00	Sustaining	\$25.00
Family	\$18.00	Institutional	\$30.00
		Contributing	\$50.00

Why Be a Member?

- Receive monthly issues of *The Forked Tongue*
- Meet individuals knowledgeable about herpetoculture
- Have access to captive-bred herps and feeder animals
- Participate in society-sponsored field trips, and outings.
- Receive a 10 percent discount on herp-related items and services when you show a valid membership card at the following establishments:

Delhi Pet Center	(513) 451-4015
Kentucky Reptile Zoo	(606) 663-9160
Harrison Pet Center	(513) 367-1115
All Creatures Animal Hospital	(513) 797-7387
Dr. Dahlhausen's Veterinary Clinic	(513) 576-0131

**P.O. Box 14783
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