



Groundhog Day: The History and the Holiday

by Erin Horner

Each year, thousands of people gather in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, to celebrate Groundhog Day and the weather prediction that Phil will bring. Phil's very first prediction was published on February 2, 1886, in the Punxsutawney Spirit newspaper. On that day a newspaper reporter stated that Phil had not seen his shadow, which meant that spring was right around the corner. For the next eighty years, members of the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club held a secret ceremony each February 2nd, during which Phil predicted the weather. Afterwards, they'd report Phil's findings to the Spirit so that the information could be shared with local readers.

Finally in 1966, members of the Groundhog Club decided to make Phil's weather predicting a public affair. Since 1887, the ceremony has been held at Gobbler's Knob, a hill in Punxsutawney. In 1966, the Club invited the public to join them and watch as Phil looked for his shadow. Now the celebration includes music, dancing, fireworks, and lots of fun! Groundhog Day begins early in the morning at Gobbler's Knob. At three o'clock, city leaders unlock the fence in the gate that surrounds the hillside.

Even with snow on the ground and a chill in the air, thousands of people begin to flood the area looking for a good spot to sit for the festivities. They won't be sitting for long. Soon, the area comes alive with lights, music, and lots of dancing. With the celebration already underway, bright fireworks light up the morning sky at six-thirty. Then at seven o'clock, the members of the Inner Circle of the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club take the stage. Within moments the handler will pull Phil from his fake stump and hold him up high for the crowd to see. Finally, it will be time for Phil to look for his shadow. The Groundhog Club president will lean in and listen for Phil's prediction. Then he'll share it with the waiting crowd. It is quite a spectacle! Then the celebration continues. Interestingly, if Phil predicts that winter is almost over, the crowd will cheer. If he predicts that we will have six more weeks of cold and snow, the crowd will still cheer! Why do they cheer either way? Perhaps they know that Phil's predictions are only right forty percent of the time. Maybe they simply want to have a great time, regardless of what Phil has to say!

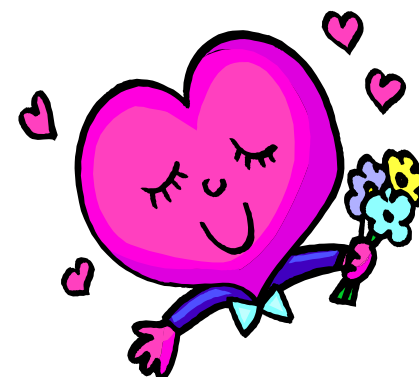
Of course, one groundhog has not survived to see all of these celebrations. Every few years one Phil grows old and dies and is replaced by a new Phil. There have been many Punxsutawney Phils over the years. Believe it or not, Phil isn't the only weather predicting animal in the world. Wiarton Willie used to live in Wiarton, Ontario, Canada. He was an albino groundhog. He had no pigment in his skin, eyes, or hair. This means that his fur was white. For many years, Willie predicted the spring weather in eastern Canada. In 1999, however, something terrible happened! When the Canadians in charge of the celebration went to wake him from his hibernation, they could not. He was dead!



Strawberry Parfait

**Angel food cake
Strawberries
Whipped topping**

**Put sliced cake in a cup.
Wash and cut strawberries, then put them in the cup
with the cake. Stir in a small amount of sugar if
desired. Then add the whipped cream on the top.**



Happy Valentine's Day!

The third Monday in February is the annual observance of Presidents' Day. Presidents' Day is a holiday honoring past presidents of the United States.

**On Monday February 20th the Center will
be closed for In-service day.**

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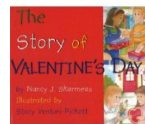


To: Miss Maria's Koalas

The Book Nook:

The Story of Valentine's Day

by: Nancy Skarmeas



"Long ago, in the city of Rome, there lived a man named Valentine. He was kind and all the children loved him..." The story briefly tells about the king who wanted everyone to be in his army and not have families. Valentine tried to help the young men and women and got thrown in jail by the king. People were sad to see him in jail so they sent him cards. The story says that Valentine sent a card back and signed it "From Your Valentine." The story goes on to explain that "On Valentine's Day we show our love for our friends and family with gifts and cards... we remember that all God's children should love one another."

I Want to Be President

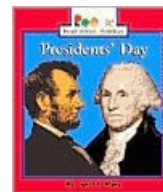
by: Michaela Muntean



"Colorful and familiar muppet characters help introduce aspects of an interesting occupation. Here, Betty Lou wants to be President. As a non-WASP, I would have preferred a less "all-American" muppet aspiring to be President, but at least it is a she, and not really worth mentioning when taken in context with the other I WANT TO BE... books about being a doctor, firefighter, police officer, pilot, and cowboy".

Presidents' Day

by: David F. Marx



"This rookie read-about Holidays book introduces children to President's Day, a Holiday that celebrates the birthdays of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Colorful photos and simple text encourage kids to read on their own as they learn about the heroic actions of these two United States Presidents".



ImagINation Learning Center

Editor: Miss Maria

Class: Kindergarten Koalas

Koala Kingdom

February 2012

Happy Birthday Seth!



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What to Expect in Kindergarten this Month...

Lessons:

President's Day
Addition and Subtraction
High Frequency Words
Rhyming words
Sentence Parts

Activities:

Valentine Party Tuesday, February 14th
Center Closed - In-service day, February 20th