

## VILLA NEWS

“HELP **PHIL** THE VILLA” by Renee Shea, Marketing Director



I have always presumed that Punxsutawney Phil, (the famous groundhog who decides whether or not we will suffer through a second winter every year based on whether or not he can see his shadow at dawn every February 2nd), was a random rodent who was chosen annually from a band of groundhogs simply by convenience.

I was wrong. Punxsutawney Phil is a specific groundhog who has held this job for over 120 years. You see, Phil is no ordinary groundhog. Weighing 20 lbs. and measuring 22 inches long, Phil is almost twice as big as the average groundhog.

Also, Phil is probably the only groundhog in history who was named after a king. He was named for King Philip who was actually King Metacomet, a Native American leader who declared war on the colonists soon after they stole his rightful land, re-naming it New England and him Philip.

Like his namesake, Punxsutawney Phil is an especially political animal of influence. For instance, during Prohibition, Phil insisted that alcohol consumption be made legal again or he would inflict 60 more weeks of winter on the U.S. He won.

During the Iran crisis in 1981, Phil wore a yellow ribbon in order to express his support for the American hostages. In 1968 Phil traveled to the White House to have an audience with President Ronald Reagan. In 1995 he appeared on Oprah expressing several views on politics and sports; and by 2001 his weather predictions were broadcast live on the Jumbo Tron in Times Square.

Like all groundhogs, Phil is a politically correct vegetarian who eats plenty of fruits, veggies and greens instead of noshing on his fellow animals. He gets most of his fluids from dewy leaves, but drinks a special “elixir of life” to give him his special weather-predicting powers (which may be why he had to get Prohibition overturned). Not even Phil’s inner circle (handlers, dignitaries, press secretary) knows the elixir’s recipe. What they do know is Phil is always 100% correct in his predictions.

By the way, did you know residents of our neighboring city of Florissant often eat pancakes on Groundhog’s Day? It is a centuries old tradition brought to the valley of flowers by the French settlers. They believed it would keep them from developing the dreaded “seven year itch.”

I’m no groundhog, but I predict this: you can be \$1,000 richer in 2009 by getting a friend to move into the Villa. There is no shadow of a doubt that Patty O’Leary is *itching* to write that check for you. So give your buddies a call. Spring is only six weeks away.

