

Groundhog Day

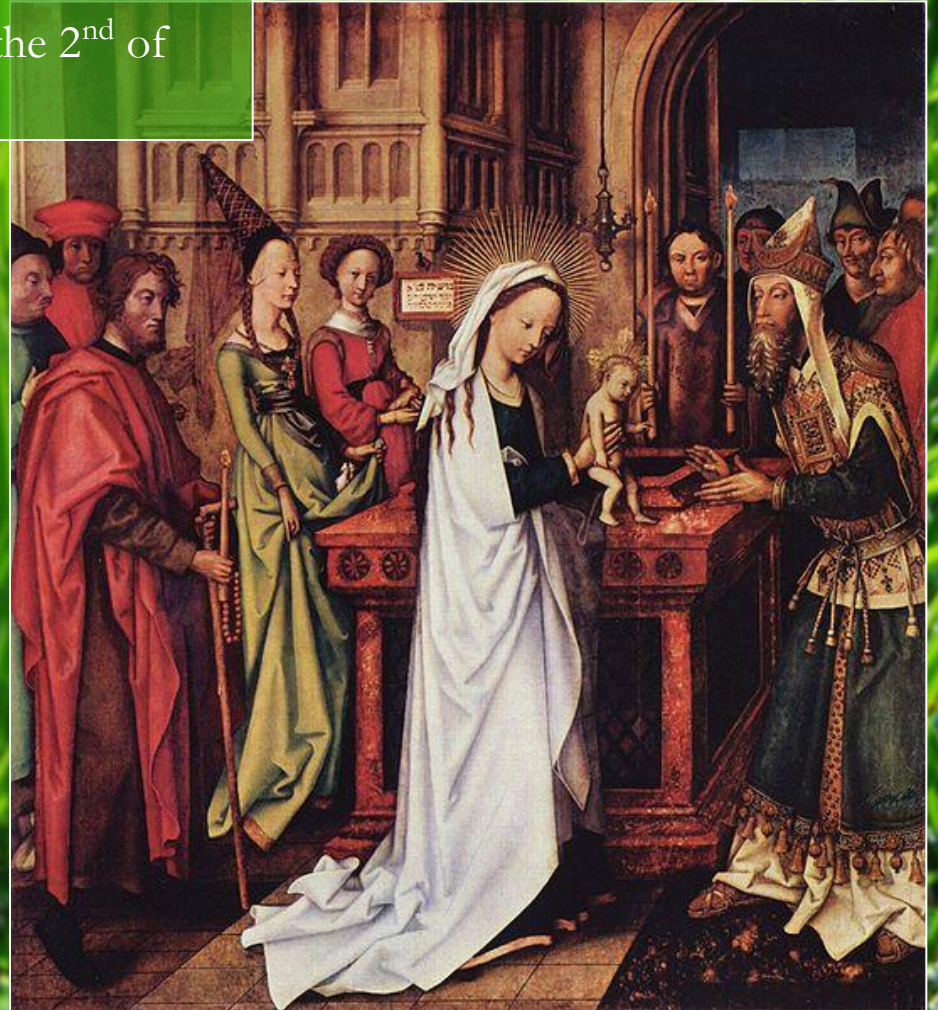
Groundhog Day is a holiday celebrated in United States and Canada on February 2.



The groundhog, also known as a woodchuck (*Marmota monax*), is a member of the squirrel family. Groundhogs in the wild eat succulent green plants, such as dandelion, clover, and grasses.



One of the versions of the original of this celebration is that the legend of Groundhog Day is based on an old Scottish couplet: "If Candlemas Day is bright and clear, there'll be two winters in the year." Candlemas Day is one of the names of the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple and it is celebrated on the 2nd of February.





There is another opinion. Groundhog Day, celebrated on February 2, has its roots in an ancient Celtic celebration called Imbolg. The date is one of the four cross-quarter days of the year, the midpoints between the spring and fall equinoxes and the summer and winter solstice.

If a groundhog emerges from its burrow on this day and fails to see its shadow because the weather is cloudy, winter will soon end. If on the other hand, it is sunny and the groundhog sees its shadow, the groundhog will supposedly retreat into its burrow, and winter will continue for 6 more weeks.

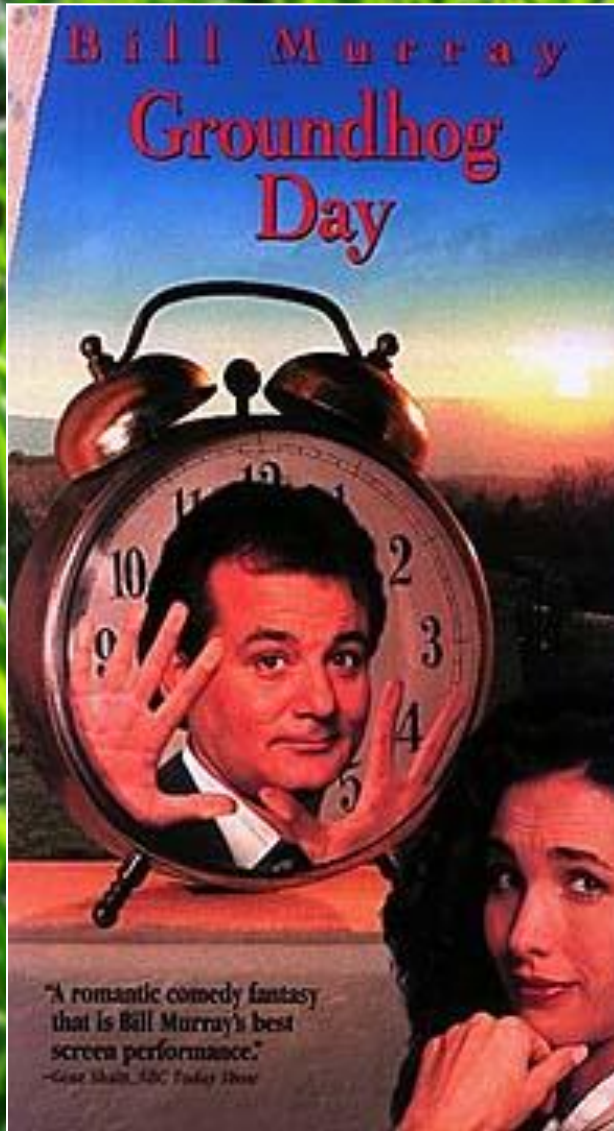


Modern customs of the holiday involve celebrations where early morning festivals are held to watch the groundhog emerging from its burrow. In southeastern Pennsylvania, Groundhog Lodges celebrate the holiday with *fersommlinge*, social events in which food is served, speeches are made, and one or more plays are performed for entertainment.



The Pennsylvania German dialect is the only language spoken at the event, and those who speak English pay a penalty, usually in the form of a nickel, dime or quarter, per word spoken, put into a bowl in the center of the table.





Groundhog Day received worldwide attention as a result of the 1993 film of the same name, *Groundhog Day*. The main character (played by Bill Murray) is forced to relive the day over and over again until he can learn to give up his selfishness and become a better person. After this film the phrase "Groundhog Day" has come to represent going through a phenomenon over and over until one spiritually transcends it.