**GROUNDHOG DAY**

**(GROUNDHOG DAY MEANING, HISTORY, AND FOLKLORE: Will the groundhog see his shadow this year? What is the meaning of Groundhog Day -- and why do we celebrate weather predictions from a plump marmot?)**

**When is Groundhog Day 2019? Groundhog Day always falls on February 2.**

**This traditionally marks the midpoint between the winter solstice and the spring equinox.**

**Connection to the Weather**

**Around this time, farmers needed to determine when to plant their crops, so they tried to forecast whether there would be an early spring or a lingering winter.**

**Sunshine on Candlemas (February 2) was said to indicate the return of winter. Similarly, "when the wind's in the east on Candlemas Day, there it will stick till the 2nd of May."**

**It was not held as a good omen if the day itself was bright and sunny, for that betokened snow and frost to continue to the hiring of the laborers 6 weeks later on Lady Day. If it was cloudy and dark, warmth and rain would thaw out the fields and have them ready for planting.**

**Our Groundhog Day is a remote survivor of that belief. According to legend, if a groundhog sees its shadow on this day, there will be 6 more weeks of winter; if it doesn't, then spring is right around the corner.**

**For centuries, farmers in France and England looked to a bear; in Germany, they kept their eye on the badger. In the 1800s, German immigrants to Pennsylvania brought the tradition with them. Finding no badgers there, they adopted the groundhog to fit the lore. Pennsylvania's Punxsutawney Phil has announced spring's arrival since 1887. Other goundhogs also have carried on the tradition, including Ontario's Wiarton Willie.**

**Though we recognize that animal behavior isn't the only way to judge planting dates, the tradition continues, often with a wink and a smile.**

**SO, WILL THE GROUNDHOG SEE HIS SHADOW?**

**It depends on whether February 2 is sunny or cloudy!**

***(The Old Farmer's 2019 Almanac)***