

“THE GROUNDHOGESE”

October 2017

The Official Newsletter of The Punxsutawney Groundhog Club

www.groundhog.org

Coming to
Punxsutawney?
Share your
pictures of
your visit
with us!

Submit your
favorite
memory
about
Groundhog
Day!



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PHIL'S HANDLERS



The Official Handlers of Punxsutawney Phil. That is quite a job title! Throughout the years Phil will, from time to time, gets a new handler. The job of being his handler is quite demanding and requires a lot of time but it is also super fun. On February 3rd 2017, Ron Ploucha stepped down from handling Phil so he could spend more time with his grandchildren. This left John Griffiths as the only handler of Phil. With Phil's busy schedule and care routine, it is important to have a second handler to assist. So, the search was on amongst the Inner Circle to see who the new handler would be. Low and behold, a volunteer emerged.

Who is this semi-mysterious bearded handler of Phil? On Groundhog Day, you can find him taking care of the grounds and plowing at Gobbler's Knob. Well, it's the Rainmaker- AJ Dereume. He official was given the title of Handler on February 3rd 2017. Over the last few months John has taken him under his wing, showed him the ropes. With the Rainmakers busy schedule getting to know Phil, he was able to take a moment and answer a few questions!

How do you feel about taking on the responsibility of caring for Punxsy Phil?

The Rainmaker: *It's a big responsibility but I enjoy caring for animals.*

What are you looking forward to the most?

The Rainmaker: *Taking on a new responsibility in the Club and getting to meet the many phaitful phollowers that I may have missed while being exiled to Siberia... I mean Gobblers Knob... for the days surrounding Groundhog Day over the last 7 years!*

“Groundhogese”

Phil's Handlers Continued....

Favorite Groundhog Day memory?

The Rainmaker: *Probably my first year on the Knob as a member of the Inner Circle. It was a crazy year weather-wise so I was really thrown to the wolves with my former job of prepping the knob for Groundhog Day. I had great help but we had our hands full with an ice storm that laid 3 inches of solid ice on the Knob the morning of Groundhog Day Eve. I remember standing on the stage during the fireworks ceremony and finally being able to just take a deep breath and take it all in. It's pretty awe inspiring to look out across the crowd of Phil's fans from that prospective. My whole family was there and that was special too. The last time we were all there together was probably my Dad's last year on the knob.*

Why did you want to be Phil's Handler?

The Rainmaker: *So you're telling me there's this groundhog in Punxsutawney who predicts the weather and is at least 133 years old and I get to be his new best friend... What was the question again? Seriously, though I have always wanted to be Phil's Handler! I love animals and I'm a people person so it's a pretty good fit. I always admired all the past handlers. Jim Means, Bud, Deeley, Ben, Griff, Ron... when the opportunity to follow in their footsteps presented itself I didn't hesitate.*

What words of advice did John or Ron give you?

The Rainmaker: *To laugh at all of Punxsutawney Phil's jokes and always carry an extra piece of kale in my pocket.*

Tell us about being a 3rd Generation Groundhog Club Member.

The Rainmaker: *My grandfather, August J. Dereume (Aug) was a member of the Inner Circle until he died in 1985. My dad, August J. Dereume, Jr. (Jack) was asked to join the club at some point thereafter and was the first to be named Rainmaker. He passed away in 1999.*

My first Groundhog Day memories are of waking up early and riding up to the Knob with my dad to the to see my grandpa. There weren't a lot of people up there then and the area for the crowd was much smaller. I always remember there being this platform in a tree for the Punxsy radio stations to do their broadcast.

We would leave the knob, have breakfast at the Country Club and he'd drop me off just in time for school.

The Rainmaker, a member of the Inner Circle since 2010, is now preparing for his first Groundhog Day as Handler. Join us on February 2nd to see Phil's Prognostication!



The Elixir of Life Ceremony during the 119th Annual Groundhog Picnic & Phil Phest!



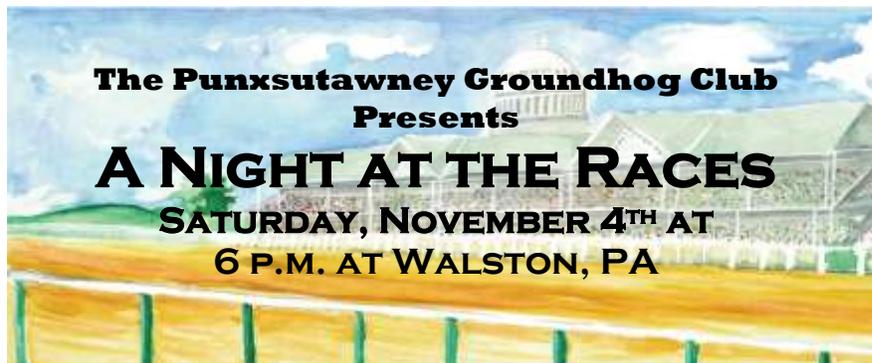
The Groundhog Cookbook

The Groundhog Cookbook project is currently under way! Thank you to all of those that contributed recipes to the book. It is quite an eclectic collection mixed with the history of Groundhog Day & Phil.

Are you interested in seeing what the Inner Circle selected as their favorite recipes? Soon you will be able to do just that!

We announce the release date soon! Just as a reminder:

All contributors to the cookbook will receive a discount if they choose to purchase it! Three lucky contributors will be selected at random to receive a copy of the cookbook and some other great groundhog goodies!



6 Races

SPONSOR & NAME A HORSE: \$25

SPONSOR & NAME A RACE: \$100

\$2 Minimum Bets

Owners of Winning Horses are guaranteed prize winnings!

Free Admission and Appetizers

A cash bar will be available.

Date Sponsorship information is due by: 10/ 20/ 2017
To Sponsor a horse, contact the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club
Or any Inner Circle Member

Please make checks payable to:

The Punxsutawney
Groundhog Club, Inc.
200 W. Mahoning St.
Suite 1, Punxsutawney
PA 15767

S.G.O.C. # 96 2017



If you didn't hear the trumpets sounding the open melody of a horse race when you read the event name, stop and reread it.

The Groundhog Club is planning a 'Night at the Races'. Join us for a lot of fun! The announcer will be none other than.....

The Thunder Conductor! We all know he knows how to get a crowd excited on Groundhog Day, see what he can do at 'the races'!

