

The Some Times Newsletter

Six More Weeks Of Winter? Some True Facts About Groundhogs

In honor of Groundhog Day on Feb. 2nd, here are a few fun facts about groundhogs gleaned from the official site of the Punxsutawney groundhog club, groundhog.org, which celebrates the world's most famous groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil:

- * The average groundhog is 20 inches long and normally weighs from 12 to 15 pounds. (Punxsutawney Phil weighs about 20 pounds and is 22 inches long.)
- * Groundhogs are covered with coarse grayish hairs (fur) tipped with brown or sometimes dull red. They have short ears, a short tail, short legs, and are surprisingly quick. Their jaws are exceptionally strong.
- * A groundhog's diet consists of lots of greens, fruits, and vegetables and very little water. Most of their liquids come from dew on leaves.
- * A groundhog can whistle when it is alarmed. Groundhogs also whistle in the spring when they begin courting.
- * Insects do not bother groundhogs and germs pretty much leave them alone. They are resistant to the plagues that periodically wipe out large numbers of wild animals. One reason for this is their cleanliness.
- * Groundhogs are one of the few animals that really hibernate. Hibernation is not just a deep sleep. It is actually a deep coma, where the body temperature drops to a few degrees above freezing, the heart barely beats, the blood scarcely flows, and breathing nearly stops.
- * Young groundhogs are usually born in mid-April or May, and by July they are able to go out on their own. The size of the litter is four to nine. A baby groundhog is called a kit or a cub.
- * A groundhog's life span is normally six to eight years. Phil receives a drink of a magical punch every summer during the annual Groundhog Picnic, which is said to give him seven more years of life.



"The trouble with weather forecasting is that it's right too often for us to ignore it and wrong too often for us to rely on it —Patrick Young

Fun, Weird & Normal Car Habits

Whatever kind of driver you are, sometimes you just want to get out of town and see something different for a change. A small road trip, even if your destination is only an hour away, can still feel like a mini-vacay.

Whatever the circumstances, couples seem to spend a whole lot of time in their cars and here's what could happen:

- ▲ The Drive Away Gag - Isn't it hilarious when you're about to get in the car and your partner drives forward a little, and each time you try to get in again, they drive out of your reach. Yeah, not that hilarious, actually more annoying than anything, and yet some people think it's car-comedy-gold.
- ▲ Music Power Struggles - Your partner claims that the driver is the one who should be in control of what tunes you're going to listen to in the car, but you think your taste in music is far superior to theirs, and that you should be permanently in charge. Anytime you're not fully focused on your music pick, your partner is going to switch to their own playlist making it less of an awesome road trip, and more of a way to drive you insane.
- ▲ Epic Duets - You sing when you're alone, or when you're with your partner and the two of you bust out some epic duets. The car can be a great place for a little spontaneous karaoke.
- ▲ Dancing In Your Vehicle - It's always a good idea when you are sitting for long periods of time, to stretch a little. Right? Dancing is a great way to loosen your body up. Also, if you hear some cool beats coming from your sound system and you want to do a quick dance for two in your car, why not? Don't worry about what others might think. Live a little and bust the moves.
- ▲ Best Auto Air Instruments - Where is there a better place to practice your awesome air guitar or air drum than in your own mobile sound studio. The acoustics might be better, but at least in your car with your significant other, you've got a captive audience.



When you spend a lot of time in your vehicle, the journey is as fun as you want to make it. The point is to enjoy the ride no matter where or what it leads to.



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Fees & Taxes Drive Up Cell Bill

Thinking about signing a new cell phone contract? Does the rate seem reasonable? Be wary, you might end up paying more than you bargained for. Why? Because cell phone contracts' advertised monthly bill rates are often figured without including taxes and fees, so you might end up paying a lot more than the \$59.99 per month you agreed to. All told, taxes and fees can add about 20 percent to the monthly payment you will have to make. Make sure you ask specifically how much the monthly bill will be with fees, taxes and surcharges included before you sign up for anything. Most cell phone companies also have a fee for breaking a contract that can run



Try These Tips To Save Time

Need to run a tighter ship so you can have a little more leisure time? These days that's a pretty common problem and goal. People work more hours and are spread pretty thin. But don't despair.

- ✓ Use a daily planner. Electronic or paper, it doesn't matter. Choose one that gives you at least one page per day, and then make sure you always keep it with you. Jot down your commitments as you go.
- ✓ Get rid of your to-do list. Why? To-do lists often end up being frustrating and futile, something you never quite get to. Instead, take your to-do list before you toss it out and transfer the items to a particular time and day in your daily planner. You'll be amazed at how much your stress level goes down and how much you accomplish when you do this.
- ✓ Set aside a block of time to return phone calls and answer e-mails. Choosing early morning to do this is often best since the other person will have the rest of the day to respond. Of course, urgent messages and phone calls should be returned in a timely manner.
- ✓ When talking on the phone or in face-to-face conversations, give the other person your full attention. Don't page through your e-mail in-box or fill out your daily planner when you're talking to someone. Make sure that your communication is clear and focused, which will reduce the need for clarification and other time-wasters in the future. Don't multitask when you deal with people.

It never pays off.

February Events

| | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| February 1 | Feed The Birds Day |
| February 2 | Groundhog Day |
| February 5 | Eat Ice Cream for Breakfast Day |
| February 7 | Send A Card To A Friend Day |
| February 12 | Abraham Lincoln's Birthday |
| February 14 | Valentine's Day |
| February 21 | George Washington's Birthday |
| February 21 | President's Day |
| February 24 | National Tortilla Chip Day |

Happy Valentine's Day: Some Fun Facts

Sixty-two percent of Americans celebrate Valentine's Day. How do they observe it? Take a look at these statistics:

- **Chocolate.** Americans buy 58 million pounds of chocolate during the week of Valentine's Day, spending \$448 million.
- **Cards.** We buy about 150 million "Will you be my Valentine?" cards each year.
- **Gifts.** Men spend an average of \$150 on cards and gifts; women spend an average of \$74.
- **Flowers.** Twenty-three percent of us buy flowers or plants as Valentine's Day gifts: 61 percent of these buyers are men, and 39 percent are women. The top choice? A mixed bouquet, followed by red roses.
- **Champagne.** Americans buy 174,000 gallons of sparkling wine through Valentine's week, worth about \$8.6 million.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How often should I rotate my tires?

Your tires should be rotated every other oil change, or every 6000 miles on most vehicles. Neglecting to rotate tires is a major cause of premature tire wear.

Q. **Is it necessary to replace my timing belt at the recommended interval?**

YES! The failure of a timing belt in many cars can result in major engine damage. The cost of repairing the engine damage from a broken timing belt is much higher than the cost of replacing the timing belt.

Q. **What does it mean if my "check engine" or "service engine soon" light comes on?**

There are many sensors and computerized components that manage your vehicle's engine performance and emissions. When one of these fails, the "check engine" light is illuminated. Although your car may seem to run fine, the light indicates that something internally is NOT working properly, it is important to have the issue addressed to prevent bigger problems which occur if ignored.

Q. **What should I do if my car starts to overheat?**

This is a very serious problem – if your car overheats for too long, you can damage your engine. As soon as possible, find a safe place to pull off the road and shut the engine off! Do not attempt to check the fluid level in the radiator; the hot fluid can cause severe burns. The best thing to do is have your car towed to STAR Automotive 541-476-9646.

Q. **When should I get my oil changed?**

You should get your oil changed every 3000 miles OR as recommended in your vehicle's owner's manual. This could vary from vehicle to vehicle, location to location AND based on driving conditions.

If you're not sure what is best for YOU and/or YOUR vehicle give us a call at 541-476-9646. Or go to www.stargp.com. We're here to help.



Jolene's Corner

Valentine's Day or Saint Valentine's Day is a holiday celebrated on February 14 by many people throughout the world. In the English-speaking countries, it is the traditional day on which lovers express their love for each other by sending Valentine's cards, presenting flowers, or offering confectionery. The holiday is named after two among the numerous Early Christian martyrs named Valentine. The day became associated with romantic love in the circle of Geoffrey Chaucer in the High Middle Ages, when the tradition of courtly love flourished. The day is most closely associated with the mutual exchange of love notes in the form of "valentines". Modern Valentine symbols include the heart-shaped outline, doves, and the figure of the winged Cupid. Since the 19th century, handwritten notes have largely given way to mass-produced greeting cards. [1] The sending of Valentines was a fashion in nineteenth-century Great Britain, and, in 1847, Esther Howland developed a successful business in her Worcester, Massachusetts home with hand-made Valentine cards based on British models. The popularity of Valentine cards in 19th century America, where many Valentine cards are now general greeting cards rather than declarations of love, was a harbinger of the future commercialization of holidays in the United States.

I think of Valentine's Day as a day of creating something special for the one you love. I like to try a new recipe that I've never done before. It can be risky, so if it turns out really really bad, then I go to my back up plan. Tomato soup and Grilled cheese sandwiches. I know that this will work for Jim. This Valentine's Day I am going to try this recipe.

I hope everyone has a great Valentine's Day.

Chicken in Champagne and Mushroom Sauce

1/4 cup all purpose flour
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1/4 tsp. black pepper
 2 tbsp. olive oil
 4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
 1 tbsp. butter
 3 cups sliced mushrooms
 1 cup champagne (or other sparkling white wine)
 1 cup whipping cream

Servings: 4

Cooking Instructions

In a small bowl, combine the flour, salt and pepper. Dredge the chicken breasts in this mixture, one at a time, and arrange them on a plate.

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the chicken breasts and cook quickly until lightly browned on both sides, turning once -- 1 to 2 minutes per side. (You may have to do this in two batches.) The chicken should be browned but not cooked through. Remove to a plate.

Add the butter to the skillet, then dump in the mushrooms. Cook, stirring frequently, until the mushrooms have released their liquid and it has evaporated. Pour in the champagne, stir around to dissolve any crusty bits from bottom of the pan, then stir in the whipping cream. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and let the sauce simmer for about 5 minutes. Return the chicken breasts to the skillet, nestling them into the mushroom sauce, lower the heat to medium and cook, uncovered, until the chicken is cooked through and the sauce is thickened -- 6 to 8 minutes.

Serve immediately with crusty bread or steamed rice to soak up the velvety sauce.

The First Valentine Day Card

One of the most popular ways to express love and affection is through the exchange of cards. Valentine's Day cards can be traced back to the 15th century, when the earliest known Valentine's Day letter was written by Charles, Duke of Orleans in circa 1415, to his wife while he was imprisoned in the tower of London. Here is that very poem to his wife:

My Very Gentle Valentine

My very gentle Valentine, Alas, for me you were born too soon,
 As I was born too late for you!
 May God forgive my jailer who has kept me from you this entire year.
 I am sick without your love, my dear, My very gentle Valentine.



Thanks for the kind words!

I made an appointment and I was early, but they didn't seem bothered by that. I got checked in and went to get breakfast. They called me within the hour to tell me they had diagnosed the problem. They gave me an estimate and time frame. I would recommend them to anyone I know. Timely and friendly.

Leah

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February 2026



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Lost Keys

Several days ago as I left a meeting at a hotel, I desperately gave myself a personal TSA pat down, I was looking for my car keys. They were not in my pockets. A quick search in the meeting room revealed nothing. Suddenly I realized I must have left them in the car. Frantically, I headed for the parking lot.

My husband has scolded me many times for leaving the keys in the ignition. My theory is the ignition is the best place not to lose them. His theory is that the car will be stolen. As I burst through the door, I came to a terrifying conclusion: His theory was right. The parking lot was empty. I immediately called the police. I gave them my location, confessed that I had left my keys in the car, and that it had been stolen.

Then I made the most difficult call of all, "Honey" I stammered; I always call him honey in times like these. "I left my key in the care and it has been stolen." There was a period of silence. I thought the call had been dropped, but then I heard his voice.

"Are you kiddin' me", he barked, "I dropped you off!"

Now it was my time to be silent. Embarrassed, I said, "Well, come and get me."

He retorted, "I will, as soon as I convince this policeman that I have not stolen your car".

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