

Chucking Wood

It's the age-old question: How much wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

Well, since today is Groundhog Day (groundhog is another name for woodchuck; in the Appalachian Mountains, the animal is also known as a "whistle pig"), I decided to provide an answer. A woodchuck, if he could, would chuck about 700 pounds.

Let it be pointed out that woodchucks, or groundhogs, are not adept at moving timber. But a wildlife biologist once measured the inside volume of a typical groundhog's burrow and estimated that -- if wood filled the hole instead of dirt -- the industrious animal would have chucked about 700 pounds' worth.

So now you know.

As for more information you are eagerly waiting to learn: Yes, Punxsutawney Phil did see his shadow in Pennsylvania this morning. And you know what that means -- six more weeks of winter. Any cousin of Phil's in Cleveland this morning could not have seen his shadow. In fact, he probably didn't even come out of his burrow because of the rain. I guess that means we in Southeast Tennessee are in for an early spring. That's the side we'll take anyhow.

--Beecher Hunter