



Groundhog Day in Brevard

Pisgah Pete predicts six more weeks of winter

By Lauren M. Fowler
Arts & Life Editor

The verdict is in: Pisgah Pete predicts six more weeks of winter.

He also predicted that the Philadelphia Eagles would win the Super Bowl and proceeded to pee on the New England Patriots—but maybe, as his caretaker mentioned, that’s “just the North Carolinian in him showing.”

In Brevard, Groundhog Day is celebrated a little differently than in the rest of the country.

Here it’s known as White Squirrel Day, where our local Pisgah Pete, a rescued white squirrel, predicts the weather for the upcoming weeks. This year’s celebration took place downtown at Blue Ridge Bakery Thursday morning.

Mayor Jimmy Harris was in attendance and is a major believer in Pete’s prediction abilities.

“He’s in competition with Punxsutawney Phil who is only accurate 39 percent of the time,” Harris said. “Pisgah Pete is much more accurate.”

Top hat-sporting WSQL radio host Don Debiase supported the mayor, saying, “I predict that 10 years from now, no one will know about Punxsutawney Phil.”

Wildlife rehabilitator and Pete’s caretaker Jennifer Burgin commented on Pete’s prediction techniques, saying, “Pete loves the Farmer’s Almanac, he checks NOAA frequently, and just looks outside, which is the best way to tell. He’s continued burying food and he’s gotten kind of fat, which shows that he believes food sources

will remain scarce for the next few weeks.”

The event, which is in its fourth year, aims to raise money to rehabilitate squirrels in Brevard. Local rehabilitators like Burgin often care for injured and rescued squirrels using personal funds. Squirrels like Pete, who was hit by a car resulting in a broken jaw and some brain damage, cannot be released back into the wild and must be cared for for the duration of their lives.

Donations to help local squirrels like Pete can be made to the “Brevard White Squirrel Fund” through the Heart of Brevard.

While the accuracy of Pete’s weather prediction is still yet to be seen, freezing rain over the weekend and predicted low temperatures for the upcoming weeks appear to be in his favor.



Photo by Lauren M. Fowler



Photo by WLOS

Left: While the crowd gathered, Pete revealed his prediction for six more weeks of winter by going over to the sign and laying down by it. Right: Pete’s an Eagles fan, predicting a win for the team in Sunday’s Super Bowl.