

son in shibboleths and other nonsense

Patron of Friday is the Nordic goddess Frigga, that overweight, cigar-smoking be-curlered amazon known as the deity to housewives and married love. She is usually equipped—similar to Neptune with his trident—with a mop and pail. Many housewives have been known to refer to a busy Friday as a “bad Friggan day.”

The superstitious also were sure to avoid the end of the week as a wash day. Washing on Friday meant not leaving the rest of the week for proper drying, ironing and airing before Sunday and was supposed to be an indication one was a bad housewife:

“Wash on Friday, wash in need;
Wash on Saturday, a slut
indeed.”

Early Christians regarded Fridays as half fasts (giving you the consolation of feeling you're not the only one acting half-assed today.)

Other Friday-related superstitions included at least one fertility rite. According to the demands of the rite the mother-to-be went alone to the harvest fields on a Friday night. There she plaited a garter made of as many wheaten straws as there were hoped-for sons and oat-straws for the desired daughters.

The ceremony would be completed with the lass sitting alone in a moonlit field muttering a secret oath to herself and trying to don the scatchy apparel. (The book never commented on the likelihood of success with the act.)

Superstition has surrounded the number 13 for ages. Witch covens were supposed to include 13. The Romans viewed 13 as a symbol of death, destruction and misfortune.

One might wonder, however, if Friday the 13th should have any extraordinary reputation for death, destruction, etc. when one recalls the usual Friday night phenomena observed at campus pubs such as Jones House and local taverns (to exclude the York County Jail.)

The only persons who would seem to have a justified case of triskaidekaphobia—the fear of 13—however, would appear to be those in the business community. One source indicated an estimated \$275,000,000 in commerce is lost annually in the United States due to people who refuse to venture out on the “unlucky day.” Some of this is made up, perhaps, on the estimated \$130,000,000 spent each year in the U.S. on superstitious devices.

Superstition certainly has its darker side, however. Six members of a sect from Zurich, Switzerland, were found guilty in 1969 of “beating the devil out of a girl.” No doubt the charge was sect-ual assault.



At least one ancient fertility rite was connected with Fridays. One may doubt the effectiveness of the garter but somehow the rite might still prove successful.

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