

Friday the 13th: a Bruns lesson in s

By DAVE SIMMS

Today will be lucky for some of us.

When things are going ass backwards as usual we'll be able to blame it on the superstition that bad luck prevails during Friday the 13th.

Superstition, according to experts, has usually developed in areas where ignorance abounds and people are living "in a wilderness of doubt" characterized by bewilderment and uncertainty.



This forsaken creature's picture was included with the article. Whether it was meant to portray the Nordic goddess of housewives and married love, named Frigga, is not known. Perhaps it is merely one of the more unfortunate victims of this unlucky day.

Since that pretty accurately describes the University of New Brunswick and St. Thomas University around this time of year, THE BRUNSWICKAN as a public service has decided to educate its readers on Friday the 13th and superstitions in general.

The word superstition originally meant "a standing still in apprehension or awe." That's one reason why students have been said to react superstitiously to the fare served by Saga Foods Ltd. at the Student Union Building.

Most shibboleths popular in North America had Nordic roots and were altered through history according to the edicts of whatever religion was popular at the time.

Perhaps the oldest and most common superstitions are centered around peoples' sensitivity to abuse of their proper names or being the victims of name-calling. Thus the basis for an ancient Scottish blurb:

"Gin ye ca' me imp or elf,
I rede ye look weel tae yerself;
Gin ye ca' me fairy,
I'll wark ye muckle tarrie."

Come to think of it, superstitions have their function. We would hesitate to insinuate someone was queer if they threatened to tarrie our muckle.

The belief about Friday the 13th has a murky history. Most experts assume it has religious background; it is tied in with the day of Christ's cricifixion being Friday and 13 disciples being present at the Last Supper.

Some hold it is unlucky even to go outdoors today. It is also bad luck to take a new job, cut one's nails, visit the sick, travel (especially by sea), be born or be married on Friday the 13th. Many of the experts with whom we spoke said they wouldn't want to die today, either.



Photo by Steve Patriquen

Superstitions develop where ignorance abounds; in a 'wilderness of doubt.'