

# Halloween: 'A night

By Kim Matthews

The anticipation of Halloween night excites many students ("five more days 'til Hallowe'en"; even I'm excited!), on the UNB campus. It is recognized by various pubs, costume parties, and the traditional "Sacrifice of the Great Pumpkin".

The eve of the Feast of All Saints, as Halloween is originally called in the 18th century, is a combination of pagan or Druidic practise, classic beliefs, and religious superstitions.

*In Scotland, great bonfires were built to keep away evil spirits, who had occupied the bodies of animals, by the god of evil or the god of the dead, on this night. People gathered around the fire and related their experiences with queer noises, strange flutterings, trembling shadows, and mystic practises. This is how ghosts, goblins and witches are connected with the occasion. The black cat, too, has her place among the superstitions. The Druids held cats sacred and thought they had once been human beings who were changed as a punishment for evil deed.*

How did Trick or Treating get into the occasion? Some Irish Peasants, in the 17th century, went about asking in the name of Saint Columba that fatted calves and black sheep be prepared for the feast. In Irish traditions, Columba takes the place of the Saman, the old Lord of the dead of Druid Times. Columba was the Irish priest who was sent to convert the Picts and founded a monastery on Iona Isle, on the coast of Scotland. So Saman came to be confused with him.

The Irish people also account for Jack-O'Lanterns. They tell a story about a man who was so mean that he was not allowed in Heaven. But because of his practical joking he was not allowed in Hades, and therefore walked the earth 'til Judgement Day.

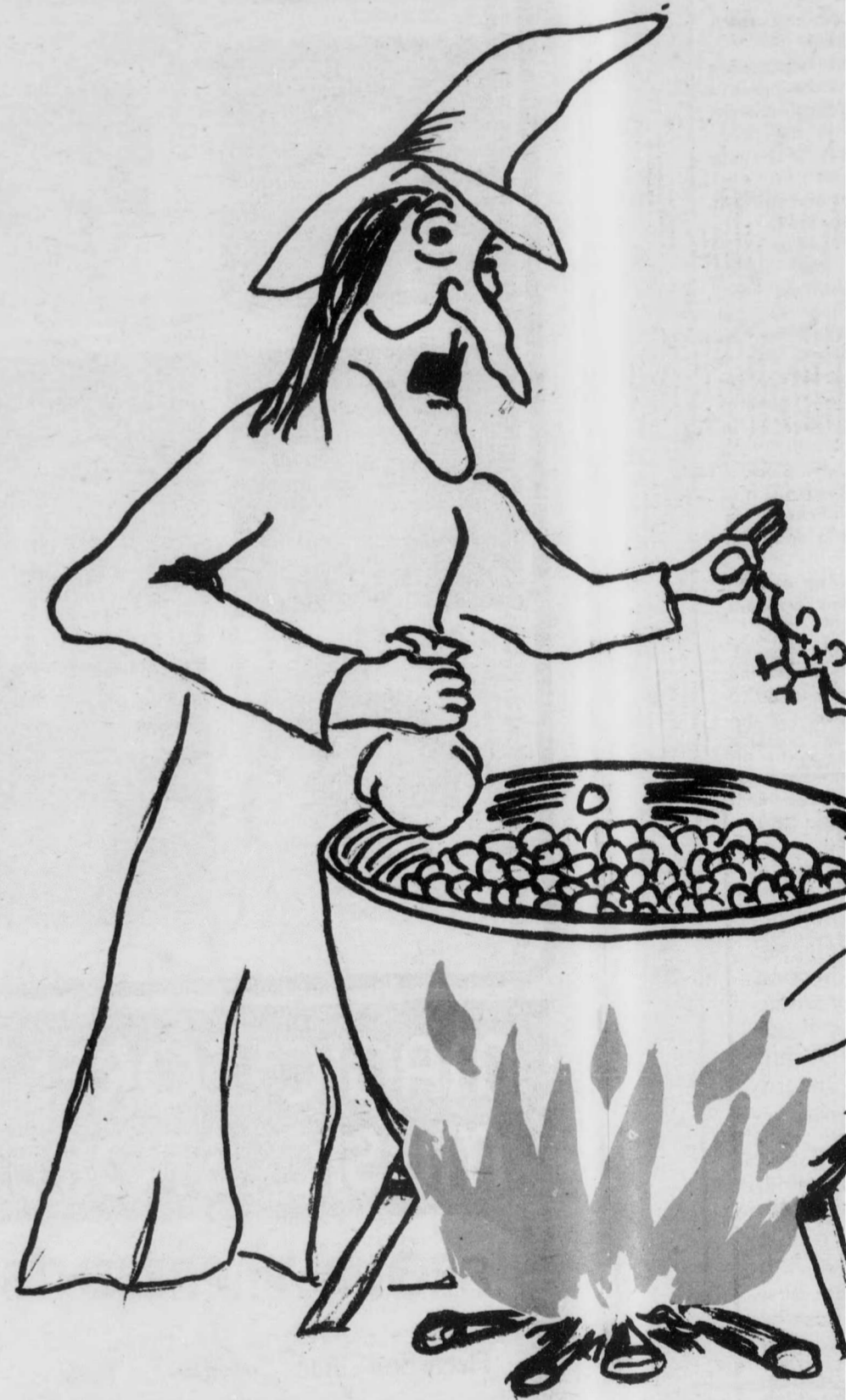
In Wales, Halloween night was known as the weird, Three Spirit Night; while in the north of England it was called Nutcrack Night, when fortunes were told by roasting nuts.

The poet, Robert Burns, wrote much about the customs of his country, but the reference to Halloween seems more numerous than any others. [Annie H. Foster and Anne Grieson]

Halloween's historical background, does not stop there, especially as far as UNB Men's Residence, HARRISON HOUSE, is concerned. The tradition of the "Sacrifice of the Great Pumpkin", now in its 6th year, has roots that stem from a series of events. These events, As told to me by Beachball, a student from Harrison House, are as Follows, ... Back in 1973, a couple of guys from Harrison residence had been doing a little drinking when they decided they would go raid the pumkin patch from a local farm. Bringing home a large pumpkin, the guys, even in their intoxicated conditions, gave thanks in prayers to God for the pumpkin, a super summer having ended and requesting God's blessing on the coming winter. (Some other Latin incantations are included). With this, they chucked the pumpkin off the roof as their sacrificial offering.

Since that first sacrifice, the tradition has been restored and the ceremony has become somewhat massive and formal. The Men of Harrison Residence, usually about 150 guys, dress in white sheets, and carry candles as a sign of reverence. The chanting procession starts from their residence to the Lady Dunn parking lot where the candels are lit. Their final destination is the Library, where the four bearer's of the 'Great Pumpkin' and the Bishop or Royal Guard, who is Tom Thorten this year, go to the roof-top, of the building. The rest of the procession Form a circle and await as The Royal Guard repeats the prayers of offering; following this, the 'Great Pumpkin' is smashed to the gound with all the candels placed upon the "sacrifice".

The highlight of the tradition is Harrison's pumpkin punch. Beachball described it as a "steaming brew of secret ingredients" enjoyed by all those who consume it.



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