

# Some Superstitions About Hallowe'en

By Chris Urquhart

Hallowe'en is over but we can still enjoy some "stories" about different superstitions! Here are ten with explanations which may or may not be true!

**Friday 13th:** The Friday 13th superstition is a modern amalgamation of two older superstitions. Friday is considered an unlucky day because Christ was crucified on a Friday. It's also believed it was on Friday that Eve tempted Adam to eat the forbidden fruit. Judas Iscariot, Christ's betrayer, was the 13th member of Christ's close circle. There is a long standing superstition

from the Last Supper that having thirteen people seated at a table results in the death of one of the diners. It's interesting to note in Spanish-speaking countries, instead of Friday, Tuesday the 13th is considered a day of bad luck. There is no statistical evidence that 13 is unlucky.

**Itchy palms and Financial gains/losses:** According to popular belief, an itch in the right palm indicates a financial windfall, whereas an itch in the left indicates a financial strain. If both palms itch, this is a sign of a lucky and fruitful day ahead. This bad luck can be countered by rubbing your

palm on a wooden object which is considered lucky or by scratching the itch away.

**Don't walk under a ladder:** Before gallows were invented, murderers were hung from the top of a ladder. It was thought that their ghosts would remain at the bottom of the ladder making them unpopular.

**Breaking a mirror brings 7 years of bad luck:** The superstition goes back to ancient Roman times, when it was thought the reflection of a person in the mirror was actually his or her soul. Breaking a mirror would damage the soul or trap it inside. To counteract the spell the mirror pieces would have to be buried under moonlight.

**Horseshoes are lucky:** The horseshoe is the most commonly encountered lucky charm, hung to protect and attract good fortune. In some cultures, horseshoes are placed down but in others they are placed up so the luck doesn't run out. The superstition is believed to date back to a blacksmith named Dunstan who placed horseshoes on a man who he believed to be the devil. Seeing the devil was in great pain he made the devil promise never to enter a place that had a horseshoe hung over the door. So the story says, Dunstan eventually became the Archbishop of Canterbury in 959 AD.

Don't open an umbrella in-

# Masstown Community News

By Chris Urquhart

With winter upon us, please remember to keep feeding the birds. Birds help to keep those nasty bugs away all summer long so let's keep them alive to do that for us come summer again! With all the cold and snow, put out suet for the birds. If possible, a heated water source, either a bird bath or some other form of heated water helps the birds a lot! As to birds, we have our male cardinal back again, along with all those other birds - blue jays, chick-a-dees, juncos, gold finches, purple finches, mourning doves, nut

hatches, wood peckers and many more. I so enjoy seeing the birds at our feeders and in our yard. Remember, some birds prefer to eat off the ground.

The Cobequid Men's Club, originally the DGM Men's Club, will hold their breakfast meeting on Saturday December 1st, 8 am, at the Double C Restaurant in Lower Debert. All men welcome.

Masstown UCW will hold their Christmas Party meeting on Tuesday December 4th at the home of Wanda Wallace. Supper will be served at 6 pm. Our UCW ladies wish you and

yours a very Merry Christmas! Remember, with the weather being what it can be during the winter months, that our Masstown Community Park has a hand pumped well with tested water - it was A+! So, if the power is out for a long length of time, you can come to the Park and get water for drinking and flushing your toilet!

Visiting this month was Marion Farrugia of Bolton Ontario who came for a short visit to her cousin Chris Urquhart and family.

Be careful in the snow, don't fall on the ice or hurt yourself shoveling!

Cats have finely honed reflexes that allow them to narrowly avoid death when falling from high places. It seemed appropriate to assign them the lucky number of nine.

**Toss spilled salt over shoulder to keep you safe:** In the middle ages, salt was a precious commodity and used for medicinal purposes. Spilling salt was considered an evil omen since Judas Iscariot spilled salt at the last supper. Since it was believed that evil spirits would approach from behind and the left, tossing salt in that direction struck them in the eye, forcing them to turn away.

Sneezing God bless you: God bless you is attributed to Pope

Gregory the Great who said it to people who sneezed during the bubonic plague. The first symptom was severe chronic sneezing and this was often followed quickly by death. Pope Gregory urged the healthy to pray for the sick and this was his way of doing so. It was believed that when someone sneezed the soul escaped the body and the heart momentarily stopped. Saying 'God bless you' was a way of welcoming the person back to life.

These are a few fun facts about some old superstitions! So, the next time you find yourself saying something like 'God bless you' or looking to see what palm itches, you will know why!



## PAGE BRIEFS

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**A test of the public emergency alerting system** is scheduled to take place today, Nov. 28 at 1:55 p.m. This is the second test this year of the Alert Ready system which includes cellphones. The Alert Ready system allows emergency management officials to send out public alerts in times of emergency. Participants in the national system include private and public broadcasters, cellphone service providers and government organizations. Not everyone received the alert on their mobile devices during the test in May for a variety of reasons, including device compatibility, settings and connection to a network. Nova Scotians who do not receive the alert Nov. 28 are encouraged to follow up with their service provider. Information about cellphone compatibility is available at <http://www.alertready.ca>





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