

SerpentStar

A newsletter for members of
The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids
in the Southern Hemisphere.



Artwork by Michala Lee

Samhain 2014

G'day people!

Samhuin is upon us again, the time when the veil between the worlds becomes thin allowing us brief contact with the blessed dead. This is the time to honour ancestors whose spirit still inspires us, heroes and legendary figures of the past and people you have known who have now passed into the worlds beyond. But they're not our only Samhuin visitors—this is a time when extradimensional beings might break through that same veil: ghosts, fairies and strange, wild gods undreamt of in our daily lives. Whether you honour them in full-scale, ceremony, robed and hooded and blinged to the teeth with magic, or just light a simple candle with an offering of flowers or mead or whatever, may the many blessings of this season fill our lives, both sides of the veil, and spill out into the world around us.

Much kudos goes to all contributors, who have made this issue a beauty, with poems and prose, artwork and photography, all brimming with inspiration and the joy of Samhuin.

Under the mallees

Wyverne



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Cape Myrtle
K.McK 2013

Trees

Tina Merrybard

Picnicking under the Peppermint trees

By the old carousel

At the zoo

Their spicy smell and

Willowy leaves all around us

My Grandparents

My Parents

My sister and I

In our little velvet dresses and white stockings.

Horses on the carousel to ride afterwards

That's why I remember.

Curled, nesting, imagining I was a wild beast

Or a little dog

Deep inside the pile of lopped branches

From the Cape Lilac

That stood in our back yard

Every year cropped to a bare trunk

but every year flourishing anew

A slim tunnel from the edge of the pile

Over and under branches and into my nest

Hiding deep in the soft, green, sweet-smelling heart

I was a fey child.

Tapping, tapping in the night,

Leaves like impatient fingers

The Umbrella tree that grew in my Grandparent's
front yard

That dropped its fruit on car and lawn

And patter-pattered me gently to sleep each night

Making shadows on the ground

That moved and swayed

When the sea breeze came to call

A safe, gentle house

A protecting, nourishing tree to guard it.



Mulberry trees

I have loved a few

Small child climbing in the branches

Face and hands and clothes purple with juice

Primal hunter gatherer

Enjoying the berries even more for that

Than for their sweet taste

A tree that feeds so many

Feeding the birds to their fullest

Till their very droppings on the leaves turn indigo

Light green leaves with lines of beauty

Feeding the silkworms at school

Feeding us jam and pie

And still I love to pick and eat them

Stained like a child



Plantation of tall pine trees

Pinus Radiata

Humble timber tree

Much maligned for using too much
water

Stealing too much nutrient

When uprooted to this unsuitable
land

But the Black Cockatoos love them

And I love them

Teenaged, sister and I ride

Down the long, ranked laneways of straight pines

Whisper of muffled hoof-beats on needles

Rough-barked trunks all you can see in any direction

Easy to get lost

Fun to get lost

Fun to gallop down those laneways

Especially on cool, misty days

With only the roos bounding away

To remind us we are not in

Some medieval forest in Europe.

The bright red of the Coral trees

As they flower to tell us spring is coming

Great leaves, like hearts, falling in autumn

Green the colour of lushness



Bark like the skin of an elephant
Growing beside the stable where my good roan horse
Would wait for me to bring him his bedtime carrot
Growing both sides of the streets
That I love best to drive down
Hardy and cheerful
Can grow anew from a whole branch
Just stuck into the ground
A survivor
A teacher.

Jarrah trees
My greatest tree loves
Sister and I, older now, riding again
A long ride to new places
Into a hidden valley of ancient Jarrah Kings
Silence, only hoofbeats
Tall grey trunks of great size all about
Grey-green canopies far above us

Awesome already
But then a raucous call and a clatter
And a long-tailed peacock male
Blue and metallic bright
Flies from high in a great Jarrah tree
And on into the forest
Right before our disbelieving eyes

A mythical beast, out of place
Hard to believe we are seeing him at all
Hard to believe he can fly with that tail
But he does
And we are stunned by the magic of that moment
And our luck in being there
Among the tall Jarrah Kings and Queens
At just the right time.



In the Wake of A Dreaming

~ Damh the Bard's Final Concert in Australia ~

by

Michala Lee

~ Mystique Mish ~

The Magical, Musical Caravan winded it's way from the first concert by the magnificent Spiral Dance and their sensational guest, Damh the Bard, in Sydney down the many kilometres of open road to its Melbourne concert.

Needless to say, this roaming troupe of Minstrels have captured the hearts, souls and imagination of all who attended their performances and left the audience wanting more.

From Victoria, they took on a splendid adventurous journey down and along the Great Ocean road to the three day spiritual gathering of the Beltane camp in the Adelaide Hills. Due to personal



and financial constraints I was unable to attend this marvellous event. By all reports it was an up-lifting Gathering of the South Australian pagan community.



I must admit I felt a little devastated when informed by the organisers of the event that the opening Friday night concert was only for those who attended the weekend event.

The previous year of 2012, both my ex-partner and I were unable to attend the English Ale to catch up with our good friends, Damh the Bard and his lovely partner Cerri Lee. This caused a great deal of heartache for our little girl Madelaine who had adopted the couple as her "God" parents, so I volunteered to look after our son Liam for the day so both Dragonfly and Maddy could catch up for coffee in Hahndorf with the pair before they flew out.

It was during this meet-up that I had Maddy and Dragonfly introduce Damh to D.D.Rock, a little stuffed duck that I had my good friend transport to America to start his Magical Journey around the world - <http://thecosmiccauldron.net.au/DDRock/>

Yet there was still the yearning of seeing my friends again and so when I was informed that a Special concert had been arranged at the Singing Gallery in McLaren Vale, I leapt at the chance to not only see my good friends again but feel the Magical Music of the Bard from Albion.

I was also, overwhelmed that our family had been allocated table No. 1 and that my dear friend acknowledged from the stage that both Dragonfly and I were instrumental in bringing both himself and his good wife to South Australia for the first time. Damh also mentioned, and rightly so, that in November 2009 he played his first concert here in the Singing Gallery, his last in Australia before heading home.

On that special night I felt humbled and stopped to pause and remember the event that Dragonfly and I had created which lured this great man to our shore and it has been far too long that I have failed to mention those who helped us make the Druid's Dreaming happen; to make Magic Happen.

It is in the context of this article, that I wish to set things right and acknowledge all those who had helped make the Druids Dreaming possible. It was with the Significant financial support from Ziggy Smith and my recently departed American friend Robert Victor Moroni, Financial and administrative support from Mystic Grove and the backup and support by positive people like Jamie McPherson, Caroline and Allan Peek and Mike and Kym Kuipers as well as the Eternal Flame Coven (Vic).

As I sat there listening to the Maestro perform, his songs took me back to the first time I heard him perform live at that 2009 event and I felt a re-connection to all who were there, all who performed and all who helped.

The spark was rekindled.

On this night at the Singing Gallery he performed both old and new songs. In his second set after a break he performed a song which had had me and my ex-partner feeling overwhelmed with parental pride as our daughter Madelaine took to the dance floor and danced an Irish reel to the song "Hail

An Tow" that she had choreographed herself. It was her gift to a man she has adopted and loved since she was four.

On this his last trip to Australia, Damh performed a song which he performed at all his gigs in 2013. A song he started to compose when he left our shores in 2009. It is a magical song and tribute which is dedicated to all us Australian fans and kindred called "The Dreaming" from his new album "Antlered Crown and Standing Stone" This is an album that everyone should purchase and can be obtained from "<http://www.paganmusic.co.uk/>

There is a massive difference between attending a regular music concert to that of a Pagan concert. At a regular concert, you pay for your ticket, sit down and listen to the music or stand and dance along to the music and then after the concert you leave. There is seldom any chance of interacting with the performer or performers.

A Pagan Concert is much more like a Gathering and a meeting of Kindred Spirits and even those there who may not know you or even like you are civil and seemingly accepting of who you are and the greatest joy is you do get to interact with those who have lifted your spirit through their magnificent music inspired by their deities.



This was not the first time that the Bard from Albion and the pride of pagan folk music here in Australia, Spiral Dance, had banded together to present shows which had energy pumping, feet tapping and hearts soaring and nor, we hope, will it be their last.

** Additional photos supplied by Mike Adamson with gratitude*

Cailleach spans the universe,

spans the vast oblivion,

walking her old and knowing ways.

Among the ebbs and flows she dances,

rising with the mist,

the veil of Samhain has come.

She swims through the land as though it were mere
waters,

her presence dark;

she nourishes the deep roots of old trees with her
winding rhythms of speech and careful listening.

Those with vision beyond the appearance,
gain her Mystery.

She glistens gently in the moonlight on the lip of the
lake, remembering her maidenhood.

She rests by the cauldron of Stars on the midnight
horizon, recalling her motherhood.

See the spirals of her journey,

Trees

in the
Darling
Ranges,
WA.



A Karri Hazel Bush, on the dirt tracks in forest,



Photo essay
by

Pearl
White

Antlers Canning Mills Road, Perth WA



Balgah and zucalypts.



Canning Mills Road



Zamia in seed.

See the creature in this tree?



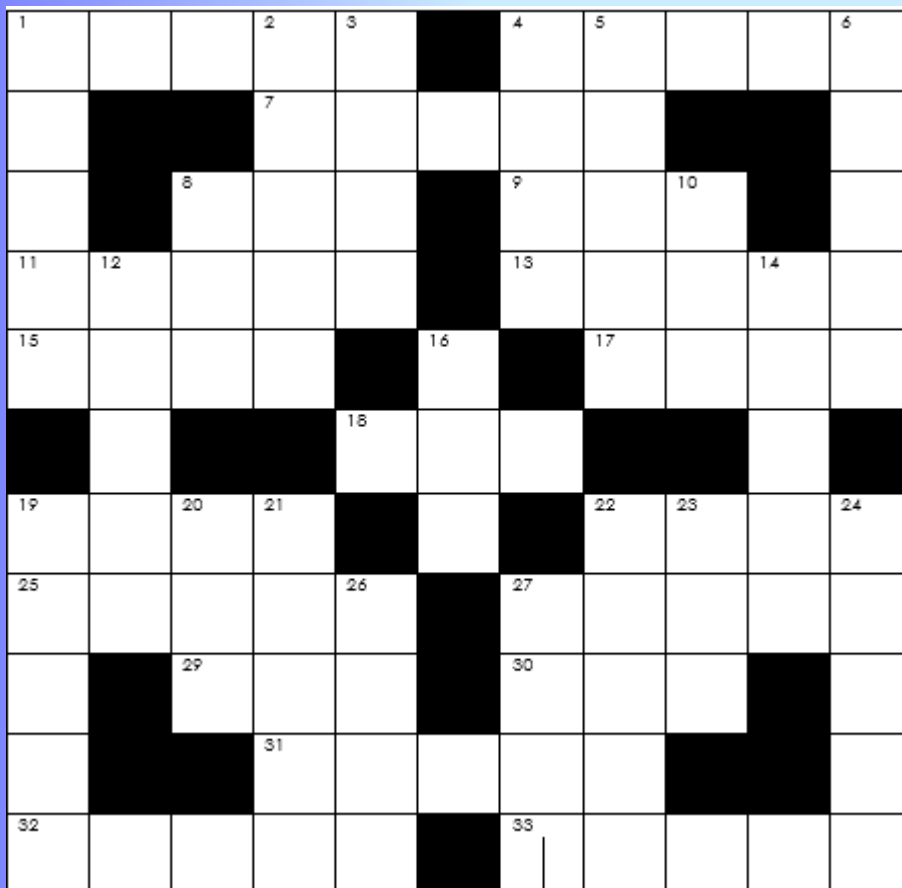
Down into the valley.



...and an oak tree in my suburb.



CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

- 1 Prophet.
4. Magician.
7. Wireless.
8. Atmosphere
9. Big bird.
11. Bardic ceremony.
13. Sample.
15. Require.
17. Close by.
18. Ogham tree.
19. Medicinal plant.
22. Footwear.
25. Startle.
27. Swarm.
29. Low.
30. Conceded.
31. Vegetable.
32. Celtic opera.
33. Mythical magicians.

Down

- 1 Musical instrument.
2. Three things needed...
3. Deserve.
5. Citizen of Rome.
6. Gift.
8. Man's name (abbr.)
10. Employ.
12. Even.
14. Drum.
16. Write.
19. Sheltered place.
20. Sheep.
21. Genista.
22. Oscillate
23. Possessed.
24. One of Merlyn's names.
26. Isle of Man
27. Scare away.

Samhuin Eve 2014 –

from Marigold Fairweather

Darling Birch whispers sweet summer stories to her sisters in the North....

Whilst they clothe themselves in softest pale greens, excitedly preparing to dance with sunbeams and sway in the caress of a warm breeze, the Southern Birch sheds her golden summer veil, to stand naked, and starkly silver, waiting to dance slowly by frosty moonlight...

So is the mirror, of north and south, of old and new ... of perfect balance...

Beltaine's sap rises with the climbing sun, in the home of her kin, and Samhuin's reflection calls hers to fall to earth in the Southern darkness.

Soon she'll be sleeping, long and deep, gathering power... but tonight, the veil is thin between all our worlds... a gentle susurrus flows beyond distance, and place and time.... between species and sprits... animal, vegetable, and mineral....

As we dance together by firelight, by candle light, by moonlight, joining the great dance, that turns a sacred wheel... of life, and death and re-birth... may we dance with dignity in wild abandon, may we dance it with love, with joy and honour... may we dance peace into being all over the Earth...



The Elder Statesman of Australian Pagan Music

by Michala Lee-Price –
Mystique Mish

Many years ago I was sitting in a bar talking to a musician friend of mine discussing different genres and I asked him what he

knew about Australian Pagan Musicians/ Musicians who are Pagan, and not just their spiritual belief but their music being of a Pagan theme.

He hesitated for a while, scratched his head and mentioned a few bands or musicians notably Wendy Rule and Spiral Dance as he had put that they had been around for “yonks”. I asked what do you know about David Pendragon and he looked at me blankly and shook his head. Even the lovely Wendy when posed with the same question at one of her concerts shook her head and told me that she had heard of him but never really heard his music or played with him in concert.

So who is this Mysterious Minstrel and Musical Maestro?

Who is David Pendragon? A man I consider the Elder Statesman of Australian Pagan Music. (For a full but brief Biography on David Pendragon go to

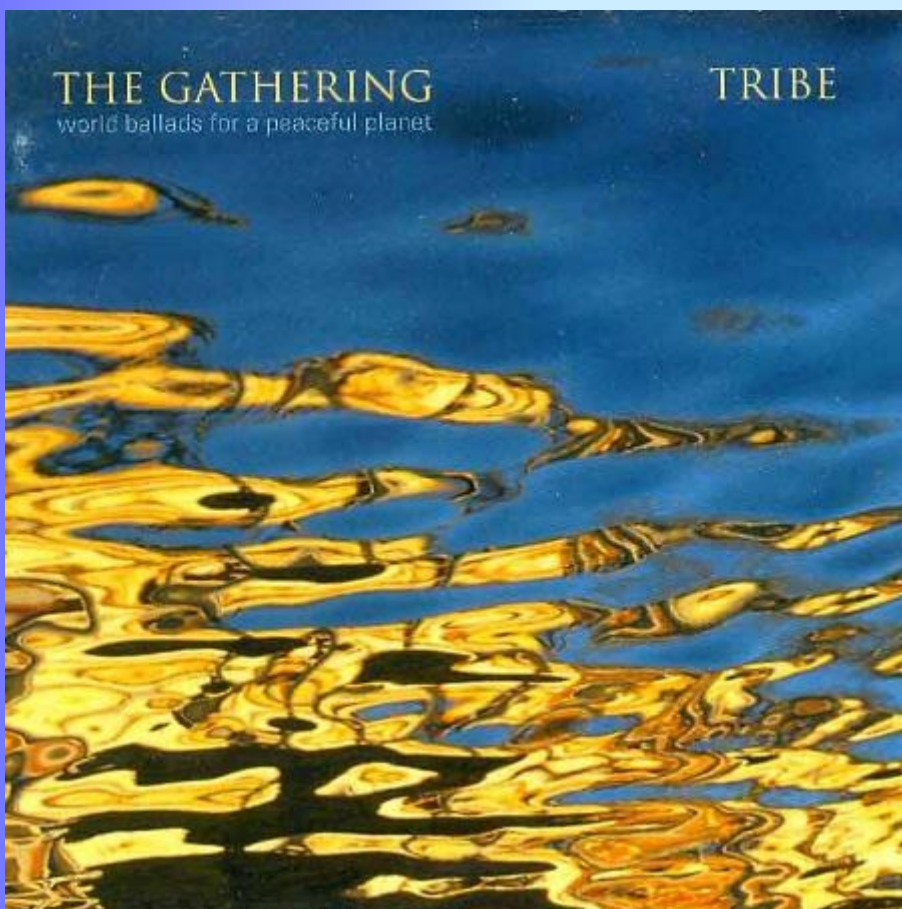
<http://thecosmiccauldron.net.au/david.html>)

In the early seventies in Kings Cross (my own old stomping grounds and Bohemian life-style period) living the hippy life as a street person, David was able to earn a meagre living play-

ing in hippy coffee shops and street performances. It was at this time that he became seriously interested in the occult, Tarot and magic. He met some very knowledgeable folk in Kings Cross and began to explore the Other Worlds.

After many years in the 'commercial' music world as a sound engineer and producer of other folks music David decided in 1999 to write and record his own songs with a group of talented players who became known as 'Tribe'. His first album contained the Pagan classics 'Spiral Dance' and 'The Gathering' both penned at and about Pagan Gatherings he attended in the 80's. His song 'Nature of Love' was performed by Tribe member Natalia Christianna and became well know in public radio circles.

The album was another turning point in David's musical life as he met many musicians online from countries all over the Planet. The



next project was for him to bring a group of 32 together in their own home studios to record their individual tracks that would then be sent to him to mix and create the album 'The Message Stick' with its feature 'pagan' tracks being Calling the Spirit with David's vocal and Tracy Lundgrens haunting 'Drawing Down the Moon'. (I will be review-



ing Tracy Lundgren in a future article)

He also began to work with digital HD cameras and 2009 saw him enter into the land of documentary making. A three year project

later, the documentary about Mike Foster and the band Avalanche was released a couple of months after Mike died. It recorded the musical life of a magnificent musician that the world hardly noticed. At last a band who deserved to be heard gained their moment in the sun. These days David is planning new video projects including a documentary on Pagan music. He recently was seen involving himself in 'save the Great Barrier Reef and Tasmanian Forest' events and it is rumoured that a new album may be in the wind.

Links to David's works:

Avalanche Documentary <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTjXxykXqOM>

Music from The Gathering and The Message Stick : http://www.projectoverseer.biz/davidpendragon_and_tribe_world_ensemble/

Tribe World Ensemble Live: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-biVFY4q2XQ>

Nature of Love: Written and recorded by David Pendragon <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0hr94zmvww>

- photographs supplied
- courtesy of David Pendragon

JUNCTION BUTTE WOLVES

By Lady Cu

Pete and I returned to Yellowstone National Park in 2013, mainly in the hope of seeing wolves again, even though our beloved Lamar's have been decimated and fractured by hunters. I must say for both of us entering the Lamar Valley after an absence of 2 years was very emotional, this amazingly beautiful valley opens out offering a big welcome. I never thought I would feel such affinity for a place outside of Australia but this place makes my soul sing, we are intrinsically intertwined.



Sunrise, Slough Creek, Lamar Valley

We arrive in Yellowstone late in the day which means all the campsites are taken so we head out to Silver Gate and spend the night in a small cabin that's part of a complex managed by our

friend Doug who allowed me to use some of his photos in a previous tale. Doug is in the Park most days and is an inspirational wolf advocate. Catching up with Doug was bitter sweet as he had just learnt that another of the Lamar's had been shot by a hunter and the fate of her two pups unknown. (We later heard they had been shot as well).

Up at dawn the next day to get into the park and get a spot at the Slough Creek Campground, we got a nice spot with views of the creek and good shade. By 8am we had sighted a Grey Wolf from the Junction Butte Pack, this wolf was playing with what looked like a dead Raven, it was throwing it in the air, catching it pouncing on it, a wolf having a fine time. Later in the morning we saw another 4 Greys from the J.B.P. at the time this pack had 11 functioning wolves, some drift in and out. These 4 played a bit then walked in a line into a grove of aspen trees.



Bison in Lamar Valley

On our second day we had no wolf sightings but did an early morning walk to Trout Lake with some beautiful bird viewing. At this stage, 3 wolves from the Lamar Pack with a new Male and possibly 2 pups where in the Lamar somewhere but had not been sighted for some time, although disappointing not to see them knowing they were alive was a bonus. At the time of writing this neither of the pups, the adult female or the black male yearling have been sighted for months, they may still reappear but!! At present in the Lamar is a Black female who is 06 and 775's daughter and the Big Grey Male.

We hit another jackpot today



Bull Moose, a hugely magnificent creature.

Day 3 is a luxury day we are on a guided tour just the two of us with a Science Graduate who is sooo passionate about Yellowstone, Wolves, Wild places. We were up at 4 am and saw a red fox near our campground on the way to the meeting place. Today I spotted the first wolf of the day, an adult grey, over the morning we see all the wolves in the J.B.P. except one, including the 4 pups. There are two black wolves in this pack one with lighter colouring, the other jet black with a particularly long tail. This male is a yearling and favourite uncle of the pups, they all go to him and he plays and teases them with bones and pieces of hide. A fine game of tug-a-war is had. All the wolves then head into the aspen grove all with full bellies from a kill made overnight. While in this spot near Slough Creek we also see Bald Eagles, Ravens and Magpies.

We move on down The Lamar and see 3 Coyotes and Sandhill Cranes, near the end of the valley we view Mountain Goats, and on the return trip we see Mountain Blue Birds and Osprey.



Adult Osprey with Chicks, Lamar Canyon

We return to camp late in the afternoon, it seems a good time to hang out some washing to dry; someone calls out "Bear". A Black Bear is walking towards us we hop in the car as he strolls through our camp site, stops at a tree to eat some berries and continues on his way. Meanwhile a rainstorm has passed through, washing soaking wet. We've had a pretty awesome day.

Black Bear, Slough Creek

Day 4 we are up at dawn again and early on see the black male yearling with a grey wolf, later a grey collared wolf with a collar. The black male does a test charge of a bison, nothing serious the black and grey begin a game of chasey, then back to the aspen grove to rest in the heat of the day. Later in the day a badger was furiously digging and a coyote near the river.

Day 5, the J.B.P. are out and about again, 2 blacks, 3 pups, 2 adult greys and 869 the lame adult grey, the black male is howling. This is my hearts song. They vanish for a bit behind a rise before 2 blacks and a grey with a bright white face reappear heading uphill then back into a gully, with one howling again. The 2 blacks reappear with what looks like scraps of hide in their mouths and play for a bit, the black male playing with the pups. This is to be our last morning of wolf watching as it is time to hit the road again. We don't leave the park proper for another day as we take a drive out the Beartooth HWY, a truly spectacular drive.

Beartooth HWY

Prior to arriving in YNP we went to Glacier National Park which is spectacular and on leaving YNP we went to Crater National Park before spending time with friends in Oregon. We met Kate and Ger on a hillside in Lamar Valley on our previous visit and kept in contact, discovering we had many common interests. They live near the coast in a beautiful spot on 10 acres. Amongst our shared interests are wildlife, wild places, books, reading, writing, a love of art and bones. Kate and Ger welcomed us into their home, shared some of their favourite places with us and those things closest to their hearts, it was a joy and privilege.

Cascade Head, Oregon

I know there are a lot of pictures but if this can inspire just one person to travel to our wild places and really listen to what these places have to say. If just one of you signs a petition to save an animal or a piece of forest, goes on a protest march or talks to your neighbour about your passion for forests then something has been achieved. I know I'm blessed to be able to travel to such places, to be able to camp out in a tent, watch the sunrise and set, moon rise and set. To hear the howl of the wolf, a bear munching on berries, a fox crunching beetles, moose pushing through the undergrowth, seemingly insignificant sounds, but sounds no price can be attached to. The double blessing is the people that we connect with on our travels, to personally know that all over our planet are people like me (and you) who are passionate about saving the earth, wild places and all wild creatures. It's no good just saving the cute cuddly herbivores; we need a full range of biodiversity if we are to save anything of what we currently hold in our palms. We need to hold carefully but firmly to these treasures or surely they will be lost.



A gift, of beautiful glass art by Kate Saunders of Lewis Creek Glassworks, Oregon U.S.A.

Lady Cu' Feb 2014

Crossword Puzzle

1	O	V	A	2	T	3	E		4	D	5	R	U	I	6	D
R				7	R	A	D	I	O							O
G			8	A	I	R		9	E	M	10	U				W
11	A	12	L	B	A	N		13	T	A	S	14	T			E
15	N	E	E	D			16	P		17	N	E	A			R
		V				18	Y	E	W				B			
19	H	E	20	R	21	B		N		22	S	23	H	O	24	E
25	A	L	A	R	M			27	S	W	A	R	M			
V			29	M	O	O		30	H	I	D					R
E					31	O	N	I	O	N						Y
32	N	O	R	M	A			33	O	G	R	E	S			

Answers

Happy



2014

Samhain!