



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HAPPY CELTIC NEW YEAR!

NEWPORT, OR - “Samhain” (sow-inn) is a term for “summer’s end” as translated from the Irish, Scottish and Manx Gaelic language dating from medieval times. It was at the beginning of winter that the Celts, who were mainly a pastoral people at the time, led their herds of cattle back from pasture and thus November was an important time to take stock of their reserves in preparation for winter. It also marked an ideal time for tribal gatherings resulting in festivities in celebration of the end of their season for trade and warfare.

On the eve of October 31st, in some parts of Scotland, a community bonfire was laid with a ring of stones with a stone to represent each person in the village. Each family then lit its hearth from the communal bonfire, thus bonding the families of the village together. Similar festivals were held in other Celtic nations such as *Brythonic Calan Gaeaf* (in Wales), *Kalan Gwav* (in Cornwall) and *Kalan Goañv* (in Brittany) and in many places, it is still the custom to host a festival feast with a place set for the souls of departed kinfolk and to share oral histories in celebration of their lives.

The word “*Halloween*” was first used in the 16th century and represents a Scottish variant of the fuller *All-Hallows'-Even* ('evening') and the subsequent wearing of costumes was done in parts of Ireland, the Isle of Mann, the Scottish Highlands and islands, and in Wales. In Ireland, people went house to house before nightfall collecting for the festivities, and sometimes wore costumes while doing so. Through the giving of food, the household could expect good fortune in return. This practice was also recorded in Scotland in 1895 where masqueraders in disguise carrying lanterns made out of scooped out turnips (the precursor to pumpkins), who visited homes to be rewarded with cakes, fruit and money in celebration of the Celtic New Year.

The Celtic Heritage Alliance invites you to celebrate with its “Harvest by the Sea” concert on November 3, 2012 at the First Presbyterian Church at 227 NE 12th Street, Newport featuring members of the Portland, OR based quartet “*Stringed Migration.*” To purchase advanced tickets online, please visit www.newportcelticfestival.com.

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