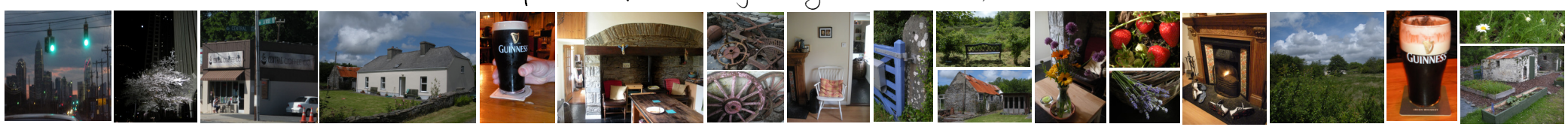
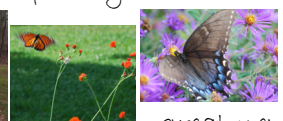
2011 The O'Shea letter... A Sense of Place (it is not just your location) Part IV It all starts with... 2011



Another year already? Wow! 2012 is upon us & we look back to how it all started, our mantra that is. In 2008 we boldly said **'It is not your location that makes you special- it is who you are, what you are up to, and how you share'**, in 2009 **'acknowledge things that are most important to you (at a given time), allowing the time to do these things with care, responsibility & purpose'**, & 2010 we added **'luck, progress & patience'.** What? There is more? Yes there is! As all great adventures do, **'It all starts with...'** (answers on a postcard please). For us, 2011 was filled with starts & finishes, ups & downs, a jumble of a year but all of it important, interesting & adding to the adventure. Building up that mantra too! So, with your best pair of reading glasses, a festive drink or healthy treat, please sit back (comfortably) & w/ good lighting. Enjoy! AND let us know how it all started for you!

It all starts with...**HEALTH**. The reason we are in Charlotte, NC. Kim's spinal issues improved alot & her diary documents all the shifting & total body challenges (for the book!). Two years dedicated chiropractor visits (Mon, Wed, Fri- you know where to find Kim), amazing strides made, craniosacral work complements, Iridology (eye ball) a good analytical tool & dreams of architecture (the body) augur well too. Yeah!! For 2012? That 3x week is 3 times a year (or less). For others we know, there have been falls & mishaps, surgeries & recovery, and sadly, both friends & family lost loved ones (and beloved pets too). We send our heartfelt sympathies, strength & continued healing.

It all starts with...**FRIENDS & FAMILY.** It is all for the kindness and support of family & friends that we are able to manage the challenges of living away from home & balance a life that straddles the Atlantic (we are most grateful). For family in NC, We quietly celebrated birthdays, shared some lunches & lots of philosophising. We wish for more fun times, clean Mom's truck (1987 Dodge for sale), Kitty Bean is now & finds her way. Friends in the USA- there are several old & College pals Ronette & Dana visited & a car break-in (sorry Dad). Happy

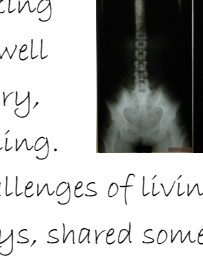


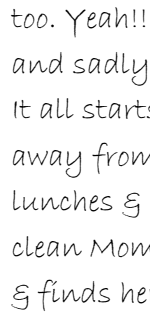
while we are here. Chad helped fully blind & feels great new friends too!

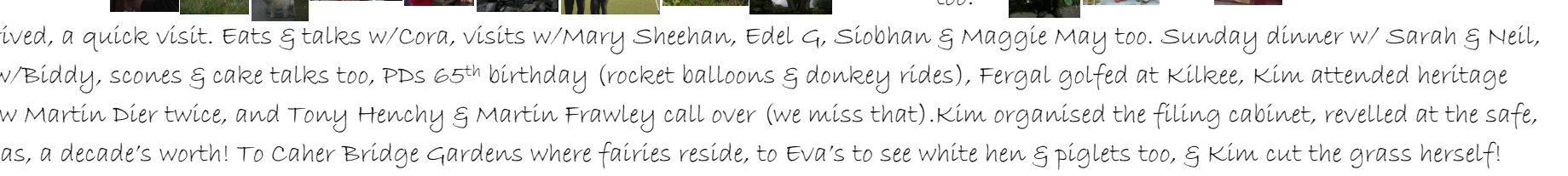
New Year! We bought a PT Cruiser, a week later POW! CRUNCH! Fergal backed it into Mom's Camero (thanks Dad for banging out dents & Mom for not being angry). Carrie spent time w/us sharing the art world, talks over pints, & bravely said 'yes' to anything Kim suggested- Japanese festival, Bastille Day, Ireland rugby matches etc. The new friends, woohoo! Visits to the Murphy household (an Irishman resides there), a theatre playbill included: Billy Eliot, La Traviata, Momix, Celtic Crossroads, Avenue Q, Blue Man Group, Next to Normal, Psychadelic Furs & TomTom Club, Anthony Bordain, Million Dollar Quartet. Fantastic! The chats w/ Rick & Anna before & after the shows, we cherish most. Stars! Cirque de Soleil's Alegria was joyous (hello Hugo!). Tea chats w/Fergus (another Irishman) reminded us of home. Babies were born (not ours). Fergal's work at Connolly's ended, works at The Belfast Mill & continues to share in the lives of many regulars too. My oh My, how a pub brings people together!

It all starts with...**INTERESTS.** For Fergal, that means sports. He certified as a Soccer Referee (thanks Staci!), adding high school soccer certification in 2012 & has refereed alot (LOVES IT!). Kim's Mom continues as a league bowler 2x week- since 1981-wow! and Kim, well, she washes the car & yearns for more exercise. Fergal continues to golf, enjoying his time w/lads & quiet practice time, he played while Home in Ireland too. Fergal was spotted on TV, at a PGA event, saving himself & Bart from Phil Mickelson's stray ball. FORE!! Kim joined Delhom Service League, attending lectures on the history of ceramics. Kim also attended Bee School (Mecklenburg Beekeepers) & may return for practical study in 2012. Practical pottery classes beckon too!

It all starts with...**HOME.** A trip home to County Clare, Ireland began w/sleeping, mowing grass, cleaning, sorting & settling in. Fergal stayed 5 weeks bookended w/ two weddings. Amazing celebrations of love! In London, Alex & Evan's nuptials, a whole weekend visiting w/relatives. Brunch at Maureen's, fantastic! Staying in the Windmill Cottage, so delightful! (thanks Claire, Jerry & Eva too) A quick trek to County Cork, Fergal almost missed his part (oops!) but got there in time for Willie Lee & Bernadette's ceremony. The reception, so elegant & fun too (thanks Lee family!). Kim stayed 9 weeks total and WOW! did alot too!! Chores aside & house projects completed, we saw many friends, shared coffee, good eats, music, Guinness, beach walks, & many months news. We met Keith & Aisling's Aiobhann(thanks!) and so many dear friends, relatives & Fergal's Dad Pat was in stellar form. Fergal refereed GAA matches (he misses it), we even hosted USA visitors. Stephen (aka Bart) arrived, melded into our everyday life, lots of golf was played (Kilrush, & Dromoland w/uncle Mick & Lahinch w/Eamon & Doonbeg w/Martin), the Burren Slow Food Festival(hello Janis et al), a Loop Head tour Doolin ceili and John Spillane



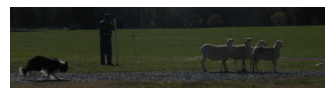




so very beautiful! too.

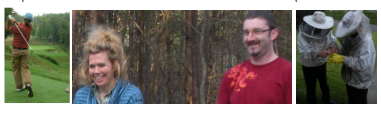
Tori & Bryan arrived, a quick visit. Eats & talks w/Cora, visits w/Mary Sheehan, Edel G, Siobhan & Maggie May too. Sunday dinner w/ Sarah & Neil, treks in the bog w/Biddy, scones & cake talks too, PDs 65th birthday (rocket balloons & donkey rides), Fergal golfed at Kilkee, Kim attended heritage talks& walks, saw Martin Dier twice, and Tony Henchy & Martin Frawley call over (we miss that).Kim organised the filing cabinet, revelled at the safe, tidy place for ideas, a decade's worth! To Caher Bridge Gardens where fairies reside, to Eva's to see white hen & piglets too, & Kim cut the grass herself! Another Loop Head tour w/fish&chips (thanks Mary!), walks in Kilkee & lunches w/friends at home too. In Ireland too, friends & family lost loved ones, we were glad to provide support while home, please know we continue to keep you in our thoughts & wish for continued healing for those w/health issues.

It all starts with...**HISTORY & HERITAGE**. It is a big part of our everyday life in Ireland. In Charlotte too! We try to get out & about to museums, galleries, heritage sites, historical reenactments (lots of that here) & we are learning about the Scots-Irish (Ulster Scots, Fergal says), Native American heritage, Plantation life & the slaves, & how Settlers came to Appalachia. The city of Charlotte grew from 'cotton fields to skyscrapers', military history spans civil war battles to WWI soldiers training at Camp Greene. Tales of bootleggers & moonshiners led to NASCAR & its Hall of Fame. We ate (lots of!)spanakopita at the Greek Festival, went to Murray Mills for harvest day, searched for butterflies & bees at Daniel Stowe Gardens, & Sheepdog Trials at Rural Hills brought fond memories of Buster & Jo (and less tears). One sheepdog had only three legs! (see photo) In late October, Hart's Square, opens for one day to support one man's pursuit for the preservation of two centuries of rural heritage. There are log cabins, churches, barns, outhouses, drying sheds, brick kilns etc. Over 200 volunteers, in period dress, spend the day sharing crafts, skills, music & everyday life AND each building (75 total) is full of artefacts, photos & everyday wares too. Highlight of the year! Ghost tales told at Latta Plantation proved that buildings & land have more stories to tell. A ghost hunt at Rosedale house w/Rita was full of snap happy people, trying to film ghostly figures *flash!*Flash! unsettling to those of us living. *FLASH! James K. Polk House w/Murphys & Latta's Candlelight Christmas w/Rita (no *flash!), we appreciated rural life, simple celebrations & a living history.



It all starts with...**FOOD.** It is harder to eat well in the USA. Check those labels & beware of processed, chemical laden, additive filled 'food'. Food is a huge part of what we are- You are what you eat! (point at yourself w/gusto) Anna shared some family recipes (& real cake too!) w/Kim, for a sweet treat we made the BEST chocolate pudding cake (recipe requests ok) & Fergal made an apple pie, then moved to savoury versions. And food...it all starts w/food!

Really, it all starts with...**People (that is us & YOU!). Sharing in life's adventures & fun, w/great health & real food too!**



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