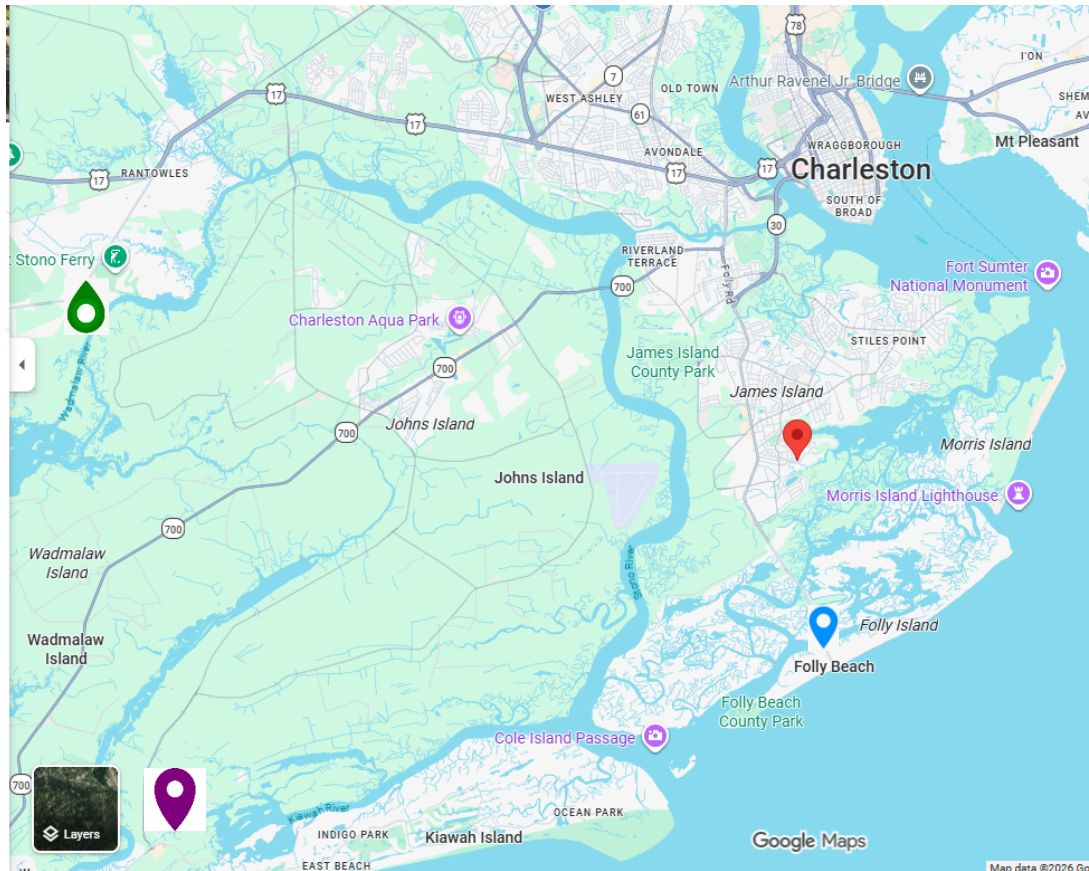


Fraser Charleston 2005 – Griffin-Fraser Wedding Travelogue

April 6 – April 14, 2005

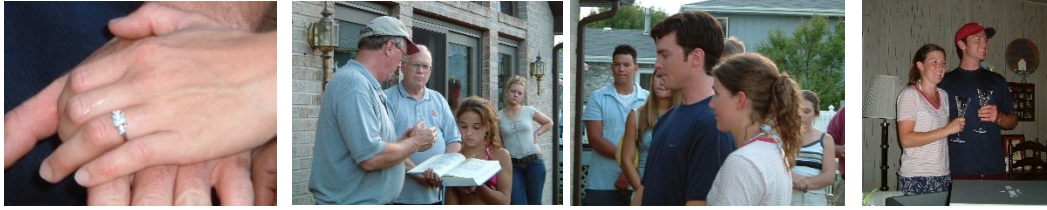


Overview Comments

I wrote this travelogue in June 2026, 21 years after our journey to Charleston, SC and 3 years after I caught the bug to create travelogues of our trips. Christopher was helping me build the deaconrogerfraser.com website, and as I was searching for content, I came across 428 photos of the engagement, rehearsal dinner, after parties, wedding, Charleston, and departing to hike the Appalachian Trail! While I was viewing the photos, the memories came flooding back!

The marriage story for Sarah and Matt started just north of Breckinridge, CO. As you first make your way into Breckinridge, it's impossible to miss Breck's massive Five Peaks cutting into the skyline. Part of the Rocky Mountain's Tenmile Range, Breck is comprised of Peaks 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, all over 10,000 feet high! The northern-most peak in the Ten Mile Range starts with Peak 1 in Frisco and spans south through the ski resort to the southern-most peak, Quandary, which is one of Colorado's famous 14ers. In winter, Breck's Five Peaks are home to more than 180 trails for skiing and riding, plus a whole bunch of take-your-breath-away-above-tree-line terrain in the high alpine that offer views for days.

While on a hike in the early summer of 2023 in the rarefied air at 12,938 feet, Matt knelt on Tenmile peak (a.k.a Peak 2, north of Breckinridge) and proposed to Sarah. She said yes! **EPIC!**



In August 2003 during a family vacation to Chicago we had a surprise engagement blessing and gifts of crystal wine glasses for Sarah and Matt.

📍 Two years later, the story continued as we gathered at Sarah and Matt’s house, 125 Sea Cotton Cir, Charleston, SC 29412 for their wedding celebration week!

📍 We rented an “AirB&B” in Folly Beach, SC in order for us to be close to most of the activities during the week. The house was on East Arctic Ave. overlooking the water east of the Folly Beach Pier. Lynne stayed with Pat and me.

Folly Beach has a rich history spanning from early colonial settlement and pirate hideouts to Civil War encampments and the rise of surfing and tourism. Folly Beach, originally known as Coffin Island, was first recorded in 1696 when the land was granted by the British Crown, likely named after the Coffin family of Charleston or shipwrecked coffins washed ashore. The island’s dense vegetation and remote location made it a natural hideout for pirates operating along the South Carolina coast. Its strategic position near shipping lanes also led to numerous shipwrecks, including the brig Amelia, contributing to local lore.

The name “Folly,” derived from Old English meaning “dense foliage,” reflected the island’s lush, jungle-like environment. In 1696, William Rivers established a plantation on Folly Island, which continued under various owners into the 19th century. The plantation produced vegetables for Charleston markets, harvested palmetto logs, and used oyster shells to make lime for construction. Life on the island was isolated, with no roads or bridges connecting it to the mainland, and residents relied on the natural resources and the sea for sustenance.

Little is known about her pre-Civil War days. Early maps show that Folly was once called “Coffin Land,” possibly because ships would often leave plague or cholera victims on barrier islands before approaching a large port. By 1861, however, the island housed a massive tent city of Union soldiers planning the siege of Charleston. Nearby Morris Island saw heavy fighting, including the ill-fated attack by the 54th Massachusetts Regiment. After the war, Folly fell from the limelight. Travel to the island was difficult, with only one meandering dirt road cleared. A popular and fittingly Folly-ish phrase of the day was “Be independent, make your own rut.”

The island flourished in the post-WWI glee of the Roaring Twenties. The Folly Beach Corporation began developing the island, advertising that it was “45 minutes from Broad Street,” though in reality it could take up to two hours. In 1920, they sold 214 lots, with a front beach lot going for \$2,000. Buses began service to the island, and the steamer Attaquin made a two-hour trip to Folly down the Stono, costing one dollar round-trip. Folly Beach was all the things her sister islands were not: available, affordable, and relatively accessible. With the Atlantic Boardwalk that included the Folly Pier and

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Pavilion and a seasonal amusement ride area, Folly was the place for fun, and more than 200,000 people visited her in 1925.

While hard economic times, the toll of a toll road, and a 1940 hurricane put a temporary damper on Folly's growth, after World War II she began booming again. Even during her heydays in the '20s and later in the '50s and '60s, she has happily been the down-home beach. Comfortable in her own skin, Folly's got nothing to prove.



Day 1 Wednesday April 6 Folly Beach

Charleston High: 79°F, Low: 52°F, Sunrise: 7:01AM, Sunset: 7:43PM

- Checked into our airbnb and settled in.
- Went to SNOB for dinner with Matt, Sarah and her parents, Nancy and Dana Griffin.
 - Slightly North of Broad, 192 E Bay St, Charleston, SC 29401, is a Lowcountry bistro that brings together an abundance of local ingredients and thoughtful, expert presentation with a friendly, contagious energy. Here the dining room is a natural extension of the kitchen, a place where culinary skill, a clever, considered wine program, warm service, and conversations meld together. Our local farmers, fishermen and producers are as integral to the food we make.

Day 2 Thursday April 7 Folly Beach

Folly Beach High: 79°F, Low: 63°F, Sunrise: 6:49AM, Sunset: 7:44PM

- Breakfast and/or lunch was probably at the Lost Dog Café at their former Center Street location (now at 106 W Huron Ave, Folly Beach, SC 29439.) <https://lostdogfollybeach.com/>



As the owners posted on their website: *“When opening Lost Dog Cafe’ in 2002, we knew we wanted a laid-back beach cafe. We would serve breakfast all day featuring huge breakfast burritos, bagel sandwiches and some good coffee. We wanted a place where the staff was friendly and the locals and tourists could eat, meet and mingle, a gathering place.*

But first some things needed to be accomplished...like major work on the building, menu planning, and of course, what to call this new endeavor. We were discussing our options one evening while walking with our two four-legged advisors, Patch and Hocus.

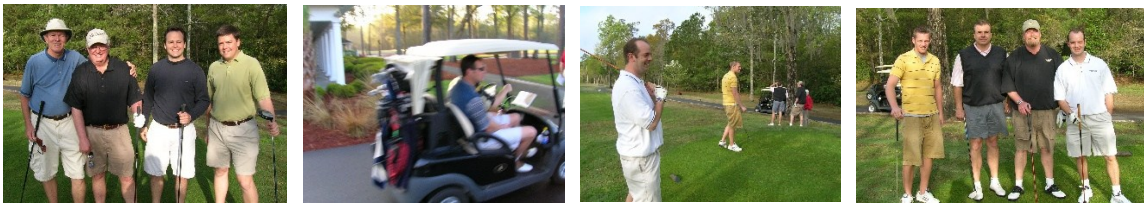
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When Hocus, aptly named for disappearing stints, took off at full speed leaving us in her wake, brought the futile naming of the restaurant to a halt. Only to find the answer we were looking for was right there... “Lost Dog Cafe.” Hocus soon returned, and as she was bounding towards us, we knew we had found our logo and mascot.

We enjoyed four years on Center Street meeting the folks of Folly, learning the secret to grits and starting our own dog wall of fame. Then it seemed like it happened overnight, we had out grown our location. We sought out a new home for “the dog” and bought the old laundry mat on West Huron.

At first glance it looked like an old grey cement battleship. But if you looked beyond that you saw the beautiful Community Gardens, the much-needed space and a new home for the Lost Dog Cafe. After a year of construction and many negotiations, we are happy to continue to offer Folly a great place to eat, meet and mingle.

We hope you agree, please come by and give us a bark.”



- The guys played golf at the Links at Stono Ferry in Hollywood, SC, an 18-hole, par-72 course with multiple tee options: The championship tees are 6,814 yards; middle tees: 6,095 yards; forward tees: 4,966 yards. I remember the grass was wet...carts were sliding in the hills.



Day 3 Friday April 8 Folly Beach

Folly Beach High: 76°F, Low:58°F, Sunrise: 6:58AM, Sunset: 7:44PM

- Sarah and Matt hosted the rehearsal dinner for everyone at the Folly Beach Pelican Watch Pavilion.

Perched above the shoreline at Folly Beach County Park, Pelican Watch Pavilion offered a one-of-a-kind oceanfront setting for the pre-wedding festivities. As one of the few public beachfront facilities in Charleston County, its two-level pavilion overlooking the sweeping Atlantic Ocean at the beloved “Edge of America,” created a naturally stunning backdrop for their rehearsal dinner. With elevated boardwalk access to the beach, open-air design, and space to comfortably host up to 200 guests, Pelican Watch blended relaxed coastal charm with flexibility. This venue delivered a truly iconic Lowcountry experience.

- The rehearsal dinner was catered by JB's Smokeshack formerly on Johns Island, SC. (opened 2002 – closed 2018).

I decided to write their obituary from a hilarious testimony online:



JB's Smokeshack was the epitome of great barbecue, there are no two ways about it. It embodied all of the characteristics to look for when selecting a quality barbecue joint:

- ✓ *Sweet Tea. Homemade, Paula Deen sweet, and ice cold.*
- ✓ *Baked beans with meat in them. Seriously, PUT SOME MEAT IN DEM BEANS!*
- ✓ *Pulled pork that tasted delicious before you even put sauce on it. If your meat doesn't taste like anything before you put the sauce on it, YOU'RE DOING IT WRONG.*
- ✓ *And on the subject of sauce, being a southern, I preferred my barbecue sauce to be mustard based. But I'm not opposed to vinegar or tomato-based sauces. I just like to have the mustard base sauce as an option in case the other sauces suck.*
- ✓ *Their restaurant buffet...OMG... so that I was able to shove as much meat into my face as humanly possible... and then some more!*
- ✓ *Their sacraments were "butter, sugar, and butter" ...it was pretty great, so to each his own. You can't argue with Paula, y'all.*
- ✓ *Their restaurant buffet was what I imagined heaven looks like! They had a meat station where they alternated the offerings of brisket, ham, chicken, etc., which they carved for you right there.*
 - *They also had some salad on their buffet, which I'm pretty sure they put there just to taunt us. It stared at us judgmentally as we loaded up our plates with meat and beans and macaroni and meat like "Hey fatty." You know you should just be eating salad. You know you're going to hate yourself later," But I could never actually hear what it was saying to me over the sound of my own chewing.*
 - *I usually made three trips to the buffet, loading up on meat and beans, and then collapsed on the table, praying for death....*
 - *You really should try the "pluff mud pudding," which reminded me of the dirt pudding I used to eat when I was in kindergarten. You know, chocolate pudding, crushed up oreos (to look like dirt) and gummy worms. It was awesome! Ben got the banana pudding but was unimpressed (but once again, CANADIAN!). Man, it felt like kindergarten all over again!*
 - *So basically it was awesome! I would recommend fasting for three days or so before visiting, so that you can truly appreciate the meat cornucopia that is JB's Smokeshack. They were also really great people who truly took pride in their food, so how could you go wrong with that?*
 - *The word "shack" was not an exaggeration.*
 - *Bottom line: We got the meat. And the beans. And everything else. WE DIDN'T. STOP. EATING!*

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- As the bevy of photos testify, oh boy, the multiple raucous after-dinner-wedding-eve-festivities for many didn't end until the wee hours of the morning! Seemed like a good idea at the time 😊

Day 4 Saturday April 9 Folly Beach

Folly Beach High: 69°F, Low: 60°F, Sunrise: 6:57AM, Sunset: 7:45PM



- The wedding and reception were at a Lowcountry plantation, on Johns Island off the Betsy Kerrson Parkway, near the entrance to Kiawah Island, on the Stono River.

For the life of us, we can't remember the name of the now defunct plantation.



The marriage ceremony was in the late afternoon, overlooking the Stono River, just as some uninvited guests arrived: Mosquitoes and gnats! They couldn't be ignored as they tried to disrupt the wedding...but the humans with bug spray persevered! As the dusk of evening set in...just as suddenly as they arrived...they disappeared!



- The reception was in the plantation rear garden near the Stono River.

As I recall, Sarah and Matt's original caterer suddenly backed out a few days before the event. Through a local contact, they quickly secured another caterer to step in. There were plenty of libations to fuel the festivities...and the food and cake were excellent!

I said a few words at the reception to congratulate Sarah and Matt:

The last time I was at my son's wedding saying something, I was up-staged by a priest. He said something about remembering 3 things...I don't know, ask Christopher about it. I am sure he remembers.

Anyway, this time I thought I probably should just go right with the priest. Low and behold, I learned about Monsignor Robert Kelly, the late pastor of the Catholic Church right here on Folly Beach, Our Lady of Good Counsel. Msgr. Kelly had a vision of what your job is in marriage, Matt and Sarah. It was a very simple concept...It didn't have to do with owning a house, having nice cars, great vacations or a rich portfolio. Nor did it have to do with sticking to a budget or having lots of children. It wasn't even strictly about being happy or in love. Msgr. Kelly said your job in marriage is to get each other into heaven.

Plain and simple advice...nothing you do on this earth matters unless it leads both of you to heaven. And if that is not enough, it also is all of our jobs to lead our children, family and friends there as well. Simple advice, but deep and meaningful as well.

God wants us to share the good things in life, but He loves you so much that He gave you each other to pull and push each other toward Him...and to help each other stay there, forever.

Ask yourselves in the years to come if what you are doing is getting you to heaven. If the answer is not clearly yes, you may want to re-think what you are doing.

May God bless you on a long and love-filled marriage, and on your journey to heaven.

Love, Dad Fraser



The bouquet was thrown and the after-reception-parties picked up where the wedding-eve-festivities left off...but maybe not so late into the night and morning.



Day 5 Sunday April 10 Folly Beach – Charleston

Folly Beach High: 80°F, Low: 49°F, Sunrise: 6:56AM, Sunset: 7:46PM

- Sunday was a day of healing and visiting with family and friends for those who didn't leave today.
 - A bunch of us went on a nighttime "ghost tour of Charleston" combining suspenseful storytelling with historical and paranormal accounts. It revealed terrifying ghost encounters, folklore, and Charleston's hidden history in spooky old mansions and creepy graveyards.
-



Day 6 Monday April 11 Folly Beach – Charleston

Folly Beach High: 76°F, Low: 45°F, Sunrise: 6:54AM, Sunset: 7:47PM

- Time to checkout out of the Airbnb and say goodbyes at a luncheon hosted at Sarah and Matt's house.
 - Back to reality for most of the guests.
 - Pat and I stayed one more night to help close the Charleston house.
-

Day 7 Tuesday April 12 Charleston – Alpharetta

Charleston High: 74°F, Low: 54°F, Sunrise: 6:53AM, Sunset: 7:47PM

- Returned home to Seven Oaks in Alpharetta with Sarah and Matt.
 - On Thursday they would be off on their honeymoon hiking the Appalachian Trail!

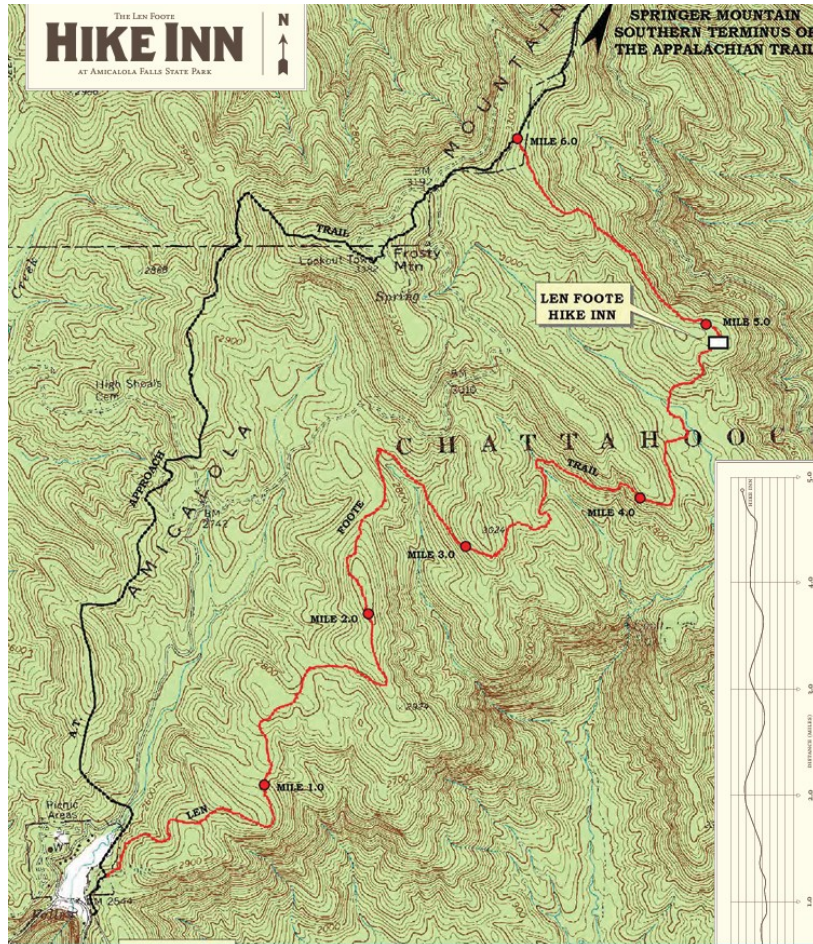


- Spent the afternoon packing food for the hike.
- Toasted the journey with Black-and-Tans.



Day 8 Wednesday April 13 Alpharetta – Dawsonville

Dawsonville, GA High: 55°F, Low: 35°F, Sunrise: 7:05AM, Sunset: 8:07PM



- After breakfast we drove to the Amicalola Falls State Park to check into the Hike Inn and Sarah and Matt did their back-pack weigh-in for the Appalachian Trail: Sarah 35lbs, Matt 50+lbs.
 - Amicalola Falls State Park is one of the Seven Natural Wonders of Georgia. Its Northeast of Dawsonville, Georgia, on the cusp of the North Georgia Mountains sits Amicalola Falls State Park & Lodge. A nature lover's wonderland, it's only 8 miles from the Appalachian Trail and within the Chattahoochee National Forest.



The park is named after its most treasured feature, Amicalola Falls – a magnificent 729-foot waterfall that's the third-highest cascading waterfall east of the Mississippi River. In the thick of the spectacular terrain, stands Amicalola Falls Lodge – a beacon of comfort, rejuvenation, and Georgia mountain adventures.

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- We hiked to the Len Foote Hike Inn, 280 Amicalola Falls State Park Rd, Dawsonville, GA.
 - A hike in the woods & a backcountry inn come together to say *“hi, you belong here.”* The 5-mile trek from Amicalola Falls through the foothills of North Georgia is just the beginning of a unique experience. A friendly face, a welcoming smile, a warm meal and a soft bed all greet you at trail’s end.

Everyone comes to the Hike Inn for different reasons but no matter the reason, the result is the same. People come here as guests. They usually leave as fans, friends and — in a sense — part of our family. What makes the Hike Inn unique is not any one experience, but its ability to make everyone feel like they’re a part of something special.

At the heart of a Hike Inn getaway is our ability to offer people many of the comforts of home in a rustic and beautiful setting. A soft bed. A warm shower. And a hot meal. Hike Inn guests enjoy two hot meals a day in our Dining Hall — breakfast and dinner, both served family style.

The guest rooms are comfortable, but not luxurious. Our 20 guest rooms offer bunk beds, furnished linens, blankets, pillows and towels, and ample lighting...and, fans for when it’s warm outside — heaters for when it’s not.

The bathhouse may be our most cherished amenity at the Inn with separate facilities for women and men. Hot showers with soap and shampoo. Plenty of sinks, mirrors and blow dryers for freshening up. And ample odorless, conservation-minded composting toilets.

From the earliest architect’s sketches to today, everything about the Hike Inn is designed to ensure that we’re good stewards of Mother Nature’s precious resources. The inn was constructed on stilts to lessen our footprint on the mountaintop, and we use recycled barrels to collect rainwater to irrigate our native plants and trees.

Being a non-profit, we also have to be good stewards when it comes to finding ways to lower our operating costs. Solar panels lower our electricity usage and the hot water at the bathhouse comes from a solar-thermal system to lower our fuel costs as well as the inn’s carbon footprint. Odor-free composting toilets help save more than 200,000 gallons of valuable drinking water every year.

One of our most popular stops on our nightly tour of the Hike Inn is our worm beds, and vermiculture is one of our most valuable teaching tools. Instead of sending our organic waste to a landfill, the staff recycles it back into the soil using red wiggler worms — who can eat half their body weight a day in organic material! The beds compost everything from kitchen scraps to office paper, producing hundreds of pounds of valuable organic fertilizer each year.



Day 9 Thursday April 14 Dawsonville – Alpharetta

Dawsonville High: 69°F, Low: 40°F, Sunrise: 7:04AM, Sunset: 8:08PM

- After breakfast at the Hike Inn, we hiked a mile to the trail for Sarah and Matt to head north 3 miles to Springer Mountain to begin hiking the Appalachian Trail. **EPIC!**

We bid goodbye to Birdie and Muskrat! Until September!

- The Appalachian Trail (A.T.) stretches over 2,190 miles along the crest of the Appalachian Mountains, passing through 14 states: Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

It traverses eight national forests, six national park units, and numerous state parks, forests, and game lands. The trail features a mix of forests, wilderness areas, pastoral lands, and small towns, providing hikers with scenic, cultural, and natural experiences...
...like time with the BEARS!

- Pat and I hiked south to Amicalola Falls Park and took our car home to Seven Oaks in Alpharetta.