

Post



Scott Farnsworth

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Back to college! - April 22, 2024

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SUMMARY

Late breakfast at Savannah institution Clary's. Drove to Congaree National Park and enjoyed the 2.5 mile Boardwalk Hike. On to Columbia, South Carolina for overnight. - Karen

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DETAIL

When we wake all traces of yesterday's rain are gone. It looks like it's going to be a nice day, but that's neither here nor there as we're scheduled to hightail it out of Savannah. We're hHeaded up to Columbia, South Carolina today (and then on to Asheville, North Carolina tomorrow.)

We pack and clean. I do some retirement financial stuff, including going to Fed Ex where I don't talk to anyone but am able to print out some PDF's and make some copies. The future is great and mostly doesn't involve dealing with pesky humans. In the meantime Karen exercises (such a good doobie). We pack, do dishes, and shuttle all our stuff to the car. We have to make two trips now that we have our cooler and a box (that we picked up at Costco) into which we've somehow expanded. We're saddened to confirm we have no way to hide our luggage, so we take out my black raincoat, drape it over our stuff, close up the car and look in to see how hidden everything appears. It'll do. Hopefully here everyone's honest.

We head for one last meal in Savannah, breakfast at Clary's. We've been on a number of tours here and somehow they all work in to their talk how popular and good Clary's is. We're here to see if that's true. There are a dozen or so people milling about, waiting for their names to be called. I'm convinced this is going to take forever and am already figuring out where else we might go.

Karen gets our name on the list and the host says it shouldn't be long. Sure enough, in about ten minutes we're seated and have picked a breakfast item to share, one that includes Karen's favorite: corned beef hash. Our waitress appears, tells us her name, takes our drink order (water), and informs us they're out of corned beef hash. We scramble to pick a runner-up choice to split for breakfast. It was still delicious, as was the fruit and all. As we eat we marvel at the stained glass, one a sign with the company name, and the other the famous birdbath girl, from the famous cemetery here. (Also on the cover of *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, aka The Book.

On the road we go over the very tall bridge we sailed under yesterday and instantly we're in South Carolina. The drive is uneventful. The land is flat and the miles pass quickly. We stop at a Starbuck's for a coffee to help ensure I stay awake. We are headed to Columbia, but by way of a national park: Congaree. Everywhere we're driving through seems rural, some more that others. Just outside of Congaree there are modest houses with well kept yards. This is a relatively new National Park, so it makes sense humans have encroached this close.

Turning into the road to the park suddenly everything changes, alas not for the better. It's all burnt out. The trees are fine, though the lower parts of the trunks are a tad singed. There's a sign that advises us to watch for fox squirrels. You don't have to ask me twice, as I love both, but I resign myself to believe that's actually just one type of animal, not two.

The burnt underbrush finally does give way and we get to the park parking lot. It can hold fifty, or seventy-five cars. Not your biggest national park. There are maybe forty cars. In the ranger's station Karen opens up her National Park Passport and proudly adds a stamp for Congaree. The number of items on our bucket list decreases by one.

At the formal ticket booth entrance we proudly flash our permanent Senior's National Park pass, but the lady says the park is still free, as it's always been. She give us a one page guide. It has twenty 'items of interest' that we'll see, if we keep an eye out. We'll be walking on a boardwalk, over the marshy mud. There are numbers that tell us when to read each of the twenty things. It really is beautiful and fun, for a swamp. We see a great white egret hunting slowly, an alligator just hanging out, a Paw Paw tree (no fruit), Loblolly pines, bald cypress, water tupelo, palmetto palms, and an old moonshiner's still rusting away in the muck. It was a wonderful visit, lots to see and hear. Very few visitors.

Driving on we're in Columbia in no time and to our hotel, The Graduate. The hotel is a part of a chain we'd not heard of. It's here since the university (the other USC) is here. In our room the headboard features the school mascot, the gamecocks. There's art on the walls featuring the school cry (Oot-Oot!!). I bet the opposing team shakes in their boots when they hear that! The towels in the bathroom are in locker baskets. The "do not disturb" sign is a school pennant that says "We're studying!", and on and on. It's all very fun.

For dinner we hike 20 minutes in the evening chill to a small, well reviewed French restaurant, Hampton Street Vineyard. It goes by the name of HSV which unfortunately sounded like an STD to us. The food was quite good and we enjoyed ourselves. On our walk home we encountered quite a few homeless people finding shelter in the deep doorways of fancy buildings. At one point a pedestrian yelled from across the wide street that he'd give us \$30 on Friday if we gave him \$20 today. We declined his kind offer.

Back in our cheery collegiate room we relax from our exhausting day sitting in the car and before long we give into sleepy time.

Photos



Lots of pretty flowers in Savannah. On the main drag were gardenia bushes which smelled so pretty.



At breakfast this amazing, big stained glass representation of one of Savannah's most famous statues watched us eat.



Congaree National Park. Glad we came. Amazing.



Most of the trees were bald cypress, which are OK having wet feet. Their knees also showed, for some reason.



We thought this Great Egret was actually pretty great.



"Way down yonder in the paw-paw patch." Had never seen a Paw-paw tree, to our knowledge, but now we have.



Alligator, you stay over there... we'll stay over here, OK?



So pretty.



On to our hotel, er, college. Our room key.

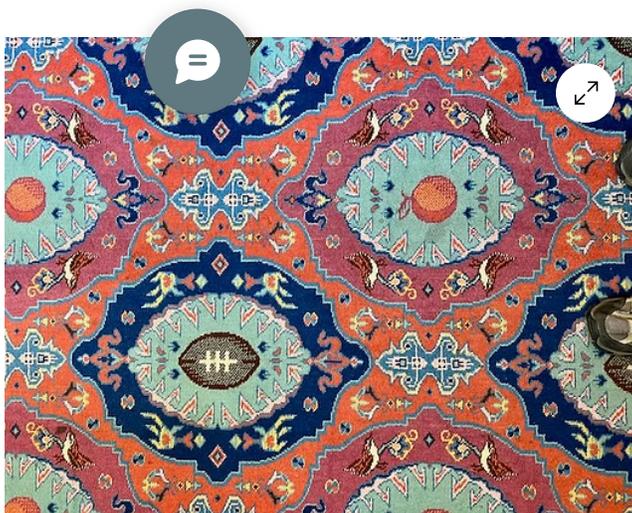


FARNSNIENTE 

that mascot name, en?



No one to take our picture. We'll do it.



In the hallway, Oriental carpet. Innocent enough, or is it? See the football, the South Carolina state fruit (the peach), the game cock? The South Carolina state bird (the Carolina Wren). Lord knows what I'm missing.



Time for bed. Time to put out the 'do not disturb' pennant.

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