

Packed Weekend

Every year the first September weekend in America is the Labor Day Holiday, with Monday being used to celebrate our various kinds of labor. It tends to mark the end of Summer fun. Depending on location, school resumes the following week if not already started in August. This year we spent the weekend with new Chinese friends.

The request came on Tuesday, 27 August, from Yi Huang who wanted to visit us. I had met Yi at the Los Angeles airport on 23 June during the hour that we waited for the check-in for our flight to China and then as we waited for boarding. We briefly saw each other twice again before and after our flight to America on 4 August. When we accepted the request Yi asked to bring her teacher friend HongJuan Zhan. They are in their second year of teaching the Chinese language by immersion to American children in a public school in Bountiful, Utah. Yi teaches kindergarten and Juan teaches first grade. Yi is originally from Guiyang, where Gail and I visited in September 2004. Juan is from Wuhan, and I have yet to go there.

The weekend also included two new Chinese students at Colorado School of Mines (CSM). Yuqi Hu, from Nanjing, is studying petroleum engineering and has been assigned to us by the Friendship Family program. Yuqi joined us for the mountain exploration trip on Saturday, 31 August. I met Yiwei Fan during the furniture give-away activities, and on Monday, 2 September, I helped him move his furniture to a different apartment, using my large van for two trips.

Yi and Juan arrived at the Denver airport, flying from Salt Lake City, Friday, just after 6:30 PM. We then went to Golden for a meeting of Chinese students. We arrived at 7:30 PM and Yi and Juan were able to eat a dinner from the left over pot-luck foods. Then we joined the last half of the singing (in the Chinese language) where there were about 33 people present. (Wives with children were in other rooms.) The group then broke up into study groups until 9:30 PM.

On Saturday we picked up Yuqi at her CSM dormitory. We drove through the scenic Clear Creek Canyon to Idaho Springs. Then we took the fast Interstate-70 (I-70) highway to the Loveland Pass exit. We photographed the snow-free Loveland ski center before climbing the narrower road to the high ground of Loveland Pass. The first photo shows Yi by the sign (11990 ft, 3.65 km). The clearing in the



bottom of the valley is for I-70. We then climbed up a nearby hill for good views and to look at the remaining flowers and a small animal called a pica. The next photo shows the road that we drove up to this pass. The cars of hikers (and ours) are at the right.



At a short distance beyond the pass we stopped at a quiet alpine pond.



The flowers at the left are “fireweed”, which is one of the first to recover after a forest fire. Here it is just taking advantage of the challenging growing conditions, with a small spruce behind. I have enlarged the view of the girls: Yuqi, Yi, Juan, from left to right. Gail is in the full view.



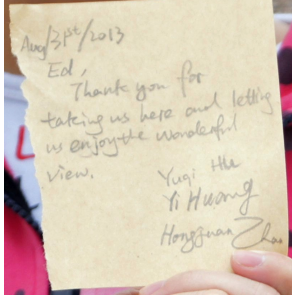
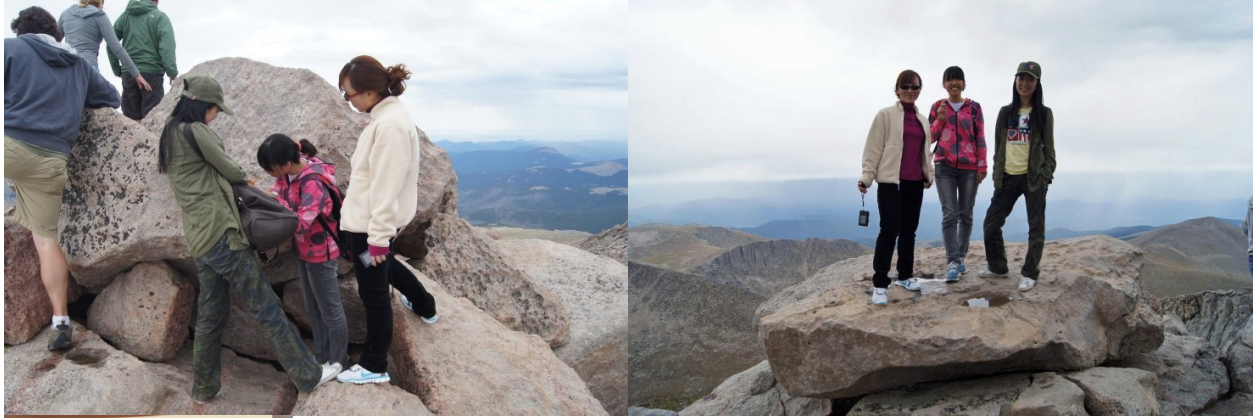
From there we passed two more ski centers, Arapahoe Basin (shown in photo) and Keystone. The route was then through Dillon to I-70, through the Eisenhower Tunnel, and back to Idaho Springs. We then drove up to Echo Lake for lunch at its Lodge restaurant. Each of us had a delicious pie after our main meals.



Then we took the long narrow road to the top of Mount Evans. This is the highest paved road in America, reaching 14130 ft (4.3 km) high.



The world's highest astronomy observatory is also on this mountain. Our car is the white van in the center of the parking area, around which the other cars were turning. Yuqi was the bravest of the girls, getting very close to the cliff edge. The road curves far below beside the lake in the center of the picture and along the mountainside in the far upper right corner of the view. Echo Lake is at the tiny bright dot at the edge of the dark green patch in the rear.



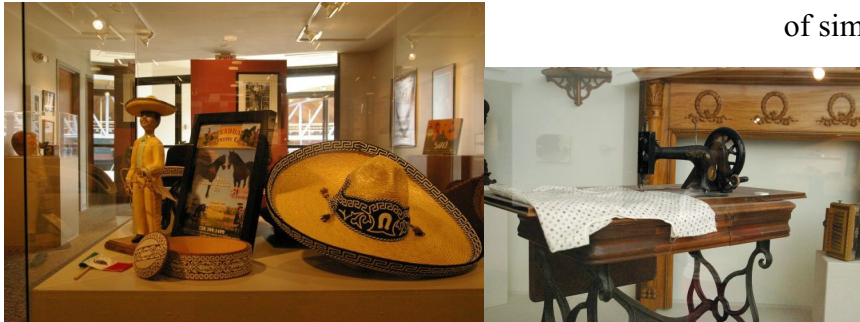
The girls placed a note in the special tube in which hikers document their presence on top of this high mountain. Then they needed a photo as well. There was an approaching cloud, with its base below our elevation and a good shaft of precipitation. As we started driving down the mountain we were soon in thick cloud, with snow pellets (graupel) and rain falling on us. The temperature became 5 C (41 F). It did not rain in the lowlands, and the temperature at our home was 26 C (79 F).



After a supper Yuqi needed to go back to CSM. Gail and the others watched a DVD movie with the Chinese language option. (I had shown to my Tianjin class a 5-minute extra on the DVD that told about how the 1979 original scenes were merged with new imagery and story line for a different viewpoint of the same historical events.)



On Sunday morning Yi and Juan joined Gail and myself at our church. In the early afternoon we viewed the playground equipment at the preschool where Gail taught for 14 years. That was relevant for Yi and Juan who are teaching children of similar ages.



Then we went to the Arvada Center art galleries. Yi had been dreaming of putting together an exhibit of Chinese minority face photos and cultural artifacts and was wondering where it

could be displayed. So we viewed the beginnings of a Mexican display setup for ideas. She got contact information of the man in charge of such exhibits at the Arvada Center. Yi was also interested in the exhibit of pioneer days artifacts and equipment.

We viewed our former Arvada home where we had lived for 17 years and then dropped in on our younger daughter and her family for a short time. Next we went to the Colorado Railroad Museum near Golden to see old train equipment.



We drove around the CSM campus and returned home for dinner. Then we went back to the Arvada Center for an evening concert by a group called BeauSoleil (“good sun”) that played Cajun style music from southern Louisiana. Yi and Juan were very appreciative of what they had learned and seen this trip.



Ed Holroyd
2 September 2013