

For Friday night, December 15, Terry, Trudy, and Teah Thomson organized the annual Christmas party for international students at Colorado School of Mines, Golden, Colorado. We met at their First Baptist Church and then drove into the mountain foothills to a very large log home. The owners and their relatives and friends were there to greet us and enjoy the conversations, dinner, and games.



Bringing food and supplies into the home

We learned that the home used to be owned by the Young Women's Christian Association as a lodge for women only. Its floor area is greater than 6000 square feet (560 square meters). We used only the entryway and the two large adjacent rooms. The present owners had to reseal the cracks between the logs to keep the wind and cold air out. As a result of inflation, they had to repair the roof after this year's hail damage for about the same cost number as what they paid for the entire home many decades ago.



Food boxes, unopened

The rooms were decorated with many animal hunting trophies, some of which are in these and other photos.



ducks

duck and mountain goat



wild cat

The children had fun making a list of all of the mounted animals around the rooms.



ceiling of main room, decorated tree



fireplace, real logs burning

The fireplace is mostly for show. The home is actually heated by a network of hot water pipes under the floors.



introductory conversations

Our group consisted of the three Thomsons and myself, a family of 4 from Peru, a family of 4 from Japan, a man from Brazil, a man from Saudi Arabia, and about 7 from China.



We selected from numerous dishes of food brought by the Thomsons..

First we had a game of conversation starters to get to know some of each other. We were to identify ourselves, our country and some of our likes. Each of us had a different question to ask of other people. Three people were secretly designated to identify the first, second, or third person spoken to, to which were given prizes later.

After getting our dinners we scattered to several parts of the rooms for eating and further conversations.



After dinner the home owners talked about the history of their home. Eventually Terry explained the real meaning of Christmas: The Creator of the Universe temporarily became a human being, born of a virgin woman. That birth is celebrated as Christmas, though the actual year of the birth is not accurately known other than within a couple of years. The birth was likely at a different season. December 25 was arbitrarily chosen in the early fourth century. But the importance does not stop there in the birth of a baby. That person grew up as Jesus. After about three years of teaching ministry and miracles, Jesus was arrested as planned, tried, condemned to a cruel death on the cross, and died to pay the penalty we all owe to God for our disobedience to God. It is in the Springtime, near the

gathered for explanations of the home and season

Jewish Passover time, that we celebrate Jesus coming back to life again a few days later to prove his status as being God himself, that the penalty has been paid for all who will put their trust in him.

Teah had three games for us. For the first game she had the room divide into clusters according to the alphabetic position of the second letter in our first name. Each group then had a scavenger hunt for items on a list. Those items had to have been brought to the home by themselves; nothing in the home would qualify. My team found the most items and we got candy rewards.



our scavenger hunt team

a cup-stacking team

a box-opening team

New teams were formed for the second game. We were given a stack of about ten red plastic glasses with one blue one. Each person was to remove each top glass and place it on the bottom of the stack. Once the blue glass arrived at the top of the stack it was placed on the bottom. The next person in the team then did the multiple restackings. The team that completed the exercise first won the next candy prizes.

For the third game there were three teams. A decoratively wrapped box was placed in the center of each team. Each person rolled two dice. If the total on the two dice equaled 8, then that person had to wear a hat, a scarf, and one glove. That person then had to select a partner who would also wear their own set of garments. Then those two persons had to open the box using only their gloved hands. Meanwhile other team members kept rolling the dice. If anyone else got a total of 8, then the first partners had to stop work on the box and give the garments to two new team members who would then resume opening the box. But there were about five more boxes within the outer box. Only the last box, a very small one, had candy balls for everyone on the team. This time it did not matter which team finished first. The goal was just to finish opening the boxes while handicapped by the rules.



desserts of pies, cookies, and nuts

Then we had desserts. Finally we went back to Golden and to our homes. It was a very enjoyable evening of fellowship.

Dr. Ed Holroyd
19 December 2017



most of our group and most of our hosts