

## Estes Park Trip

My usual Friday evening fellowship meeting with Chinese friends was cancelled because the building was being used for other purposes. Qian and her mother, Natalie, had been planning to attend. So we had a quick change of plans. Qian and Natalie came to our home for a third dinnertime visit. They brought materials for making dumplings and Gail and I supplied veggies.

After dinner we went together to a musical being performed by the Home School, Etc., group of high school students. They had a duplicate set of performers. Two of my former astronomy students were in the performance that night and one of my former students was in the other cast of performers. The musical was a telling of the story of Esther, written in the Bible. She was an orphaned Jewish girl who won a beauty contest to become a replacement queen for the Persian Empire of about 2500 years ago. As queen she kept her ethnic background a secret. However, when the prime minister, Haman, wrote an unchangeable law to exterminate all Jews on a future date (like Hitler's attempt), Esther was able to reveal the plot and save her people. The Jewish feast of Purim celebrates that victory today. The quality of the musical was excellent and enjoyable, as expected from previous performances in past years by these home school students. For Natalie I provided a bilingual copy of the entire story of Esther so that she could understand it better in Chinese.

After dinner we also discussed the rest of the weekend. Qian wanted to take her mother to Estes Park to show her the Colorado Rocky Mountains. So I volunteered to be the driver and guide for Saturday, February 18. Our trip was from 8 AM to 4:30 PM. The round trip extent was 278 kilometers.

Our route went through the village of Lyons at the base of the mountains. A few years ago I was a volunteer there to help clean up homes after severe flash flood damage, described in (<http://www.edholroyd.info/TripReports/2013Colorado-Utah/LyonsFlood.pdf>) and the first page of (<http://www.edholroyd.info/TripReports/2013Colorado-Utah/BigRocks.pdf>). But cleanup over the years has been excellent and it was difficult to see much flood damage on Saturday's trip.



The weather was excellent. This is our view of Long's Peak, one of the tallest mountains in Colorado. (14,259 feet, 4.346 kilometers above sea level)

We passed this picturesque church, operated as a retreat and meditation location in a beautiful setting.



Our first stop was at the Covenant Heights camp, operated by a church denomination. I have done volunteer work there on many occasions. We went inside these buildings. The dining hall (with very good food) is at the left. The chapel is at the right. A large group of people from Colorado Springs were enjoying the camp that weekend. We hiked around the frozen pond and beside some of the homes of the camp workers.



Upon arrival in the village of Estes Park, we drove by the church where our older daughter, Michelle, was married in May 2005. Then we went through the business district and out to the west side of the village.



View from west side of Estes Park



Mule deer herd at base of trees



Mule deer enlargement



Inside Rocky Mountain National Park



Qian and Natalie on unplowed road



Qian and Ed on unplowed road

We drove up the highway until we reached the road closure, beyond which the snow had not been removed. We then walked beyond along the snow-covered road for about a kilometer before returning.



These are views of the valley below as we walked on the snow-covered road. We then drove back down to the west side of Estes Park where we found this herd of elk.



2005 view from YMCA camp



Our next stop was at the YMCA of the Rockies camp where we had lunch outside



the dining hall. Our view of the mountains during lunch was similar to that in this old photo. We visited a camp building where there was an exhibit of animal skins and a stuffed Great Horned Owl. Visitors were encouraged to touch them all. We got maps there to identify some trails and then we hiked on one of them. As we exited the camp we saw some fire department people practicing rescue procedures for people who fall through ice into cold water. The "victims" wore wet suits to keep them warm in the water and ice.



Dr. Ed Holroyd  
20 February 2017



Great Horned Owl on nest