



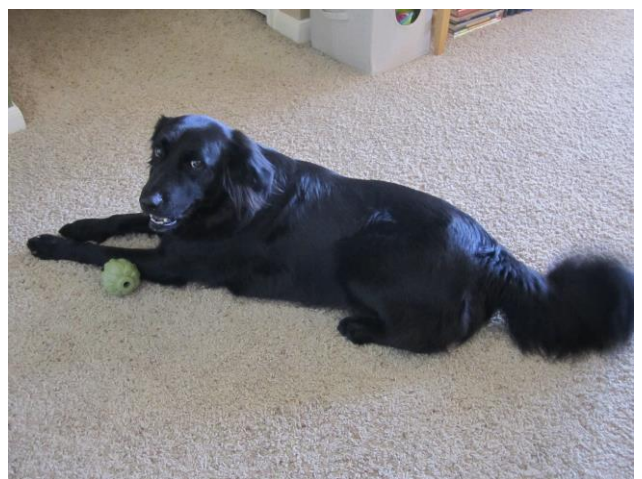
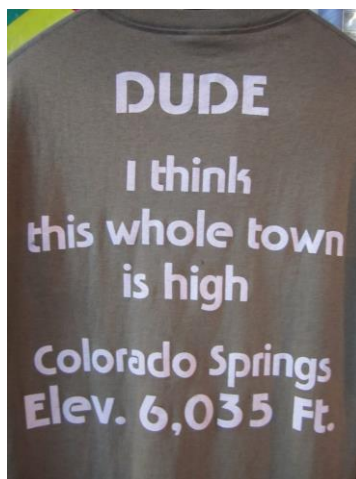
## Colorado Springs Trip Notes September 6-10, 2013

The first purpose of the trip was to see Dave and Dana, running and hiking friends from New Jersey who had recently moved to Colorado Springs. My second goal was to see if I could get to the top of Pike's Peak on my own two legs. All goals accomplished but the second one with a bit of an assist by Dave and Dana. As usual, it was a good trip but what trip isn't good?

### ***Long term good friends***

We go back a long ways and maybe practically from the start of my running career and then easing into more of a hiking career. Dave as an Ironman has been my medical expert and advisor for years. Dana as a younger, fit, and smart friend has always been available to keep me moving and serve as family. They have run me in to the finish line at Hartford Marathon plus more, Dana would play Indian (a speed game) when we ran, they had been available to hike whenever I found myself in NJ, and they've always supported my crazy endeavors to include being willing to say so when my endeavors are too crazy.

It's nice to know a young couple with their head on so well. I appreciate that they find both good-and-bad, that they avoid cells, texts and TVs, read the newspapers for world events, that they don't need headlines to prove themselves nor new cars and material junk, and that they include me in their very wide circle of loyal friends and family. I'm equally tickled to see their love of their dog C.C. who they acquired from an animal shelter. C.C. must have thought he died and went to heaven living with this couple.



In Old Colorado City for our first dinner out at an Italian pizza place that catered also to dogs. Everyone paid attention to C.C. See that elevation? It would be the start of a many-days-long headache for me due to the elevation. You'd have thought that I had a bit of help by having been in Glacier but I did after all come from sea level and then hiked the first day to 14,100 feet.

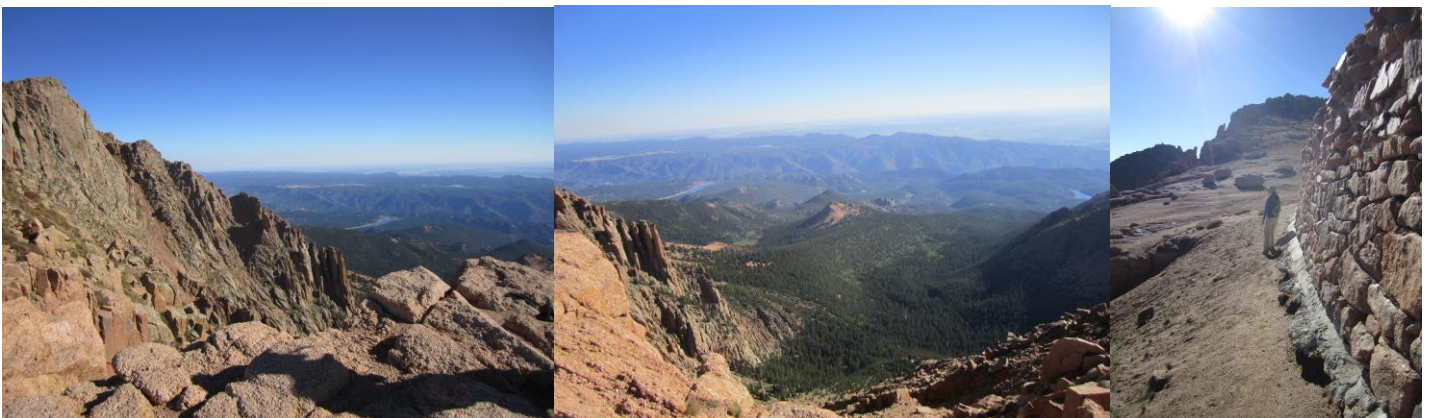
We ate at <http://pizzeriarustica.com/index.html> but considered <http://www.tapateria.com/>. I believe that Tom and I missed Old Colorado City before. There was an Art Walk that evening and we had a tourist walk plus a visit to the Pet Shop where I thought C.C. ought to have a doggy backpack. They didn't and Dave continues to carry C.C.'s water and food. Honest. See what I mean about that dog died and went to heaven? It's really very precious.

### ***How to get to the top of Pike's Peak?***

I'd thought there was only a slim chance that I could do it and I was going to try on my own, as much so as not to embarrass myself. But Dave offered the solution and it was to drive me part the way up and then head me upwards for the last leg of the journey, with Dana leading the way. The 14,100 feet of altitude was about all I could do and I don't believe I've ever even felt as inebriated as I did on the last climb through the boulders. Dizzy and watching the cliff edge all the while and only taking one step at a time, I was never able to take a picture. This wasn't the longer route that the marathoners took but rather the shorter and steeper route.



Dave took these pictures with his cell phone from the road and his bicycle. I never took a single photo while on the boulder field because I felt a need to hold on at all times. These pictures were while we were on the flats. In the second picture, those little dots are Dana and me.



Dana didn't seem worried at all whereas I thought that I might slide off down the scree and cliff to never-never-land. That's Dana leading the way in the last picture, as she led the way the whole trip.



Lots of little yellow-bellied marmots on the way up and they announce their presence with a high pitched squeak. That's Dana standing on rock edge waiting for me to tip toe along the ridge holding onto the boulders and trying to think that I'd had a long good life and that I may as well keep going. Yes, that's the trail you see in the middle picture. I was light-headed to the extreme and carefully picking each and every footstep. Yet I was aware enough to know there was beauty everywhere and it was no surprise to learn that Pike's Peak had incentivized the writer to pen "America the Beautiful" from there. It was once in contention against "Star Spangled Banner" as our national anthem.



They were likely proud of having gotten me to the top. Dave first ascended via bicycle then rode back to get the car. And me. It is hot even at 14,100 feet!



Like on Mt Washington, cars and brakes get hot so they check the brake temperature at points. I was hot too as this was a heat wave for Colorado and most of the Midwest.

### ***Walk down?***

I would never have wanted to negotiate those boulders again so going down the same direction was not an option. But my legs felt fine and had Dave thought I might have made it by nightfall, I would have tried to walk down via the marathon route. He was hesitant and the trail was full of a 12-mile race/hike up and the trail was still full.

From Dave, here is a good overview of the Craggs Trailhead to Pike's Peak via Devil's Playground. It includes description and photographs.

<http://www.14ers.com/routemain.php?route=pike1&peak=Pikes+Peak>

## Little foot/Big foot



At the reservoir was an interpretative center where we were filled with information about the area. The 'marmot crossing' was a fun sign for sale at the gift shop but the 'big foot crossing' suggested that some folks took it very seriously.

Pike's Peak would be in our view most of the hiking days, from one direction or another. Marmots were too but not so Big Foot. Yet I continued to keep my eyes peeled for Big Foot as others claimed to have seen him and some DNA found within hair on a tree revealed there to be a mystery.

## Manitou Springs

This little town at the foot of one entrance to Pike's Peak had just flooded and on television we'd all seen cars floating down the roaring river which was really the highway and it was only 3-4 weeks before. The stream was calm now, and the springs around the town continued to flow properly but red earth and sandbags continued to decorate the streets and buildings. The fires might have caused more flooding than normal.





We stopped at a lovely old hotel with an outdoor veranda where Tom and I had stopped for a drink before too. It would only be a couple more days until rains came and I'd see Manitou Springs on the news again; one of the pictures was a huge black gushing geyser of 8-10' of black gook exploding up and out of a manhole cover that was just outside the hotel where we had enjoyed the outdoor veranda.



### ***Wonderland***

A longer but easier hike was our 10-mile hike up high and around a reservoir at about 9000' elevation near Woodland Park.

We would later have lunch at a lovely little café lakeside in Green Mountain Falls and now Dave says: "No wonder I was getting nervous when it started to rain."

### ***Paint Mines Interpretive Park***

Located in the northeast section of the County near Calhan with approximately 750 acres the mines have evidence of human life as far back as 9,000 years ago. The colorful clays were used by American Indians. The park features fantastic geological formations including spires and hoodoos that were formed through erosive action that created incised gullies and exposed layers of selenite clay and jasper. The park includes a restroom facility, four miles of trails, interpretive signage, and many natural wonders.

### **The gun laws**

It was in Colorado that some of the shootings caused new laws to be passed which made for more stringent gun control. Those Democratic legislatures would be under a recall vote the day I left and surprisingly they were voted out. There was indication in the local press that it wasn't just the gun control but as much that the voters didn't want so much government control.

Yet the morning before I left, at 5:40am whereas I was having breakfast at 6am, one of the hotels on my block was featured in the news. A kook was roaming the lobby with a couple guns to include an AK-47 which later was found to be stolen. From Dana: I think this was at your hotel this morning. Did you see or hear anything?

<http://www.kktv.com/home/headlines/Man-with-Gun-Arrested-in-Hotel-Lobby-222814561.html>

### **Weather**

I complained about the 90 degree plus heat. Then I complained when I got home that it had followed me. But the next day I realized how lucky I was and that I shouldn't have been complaining because the rains started when I left and the rains continued and as everyone knows Boulder and surrounding communities suffered disasters. No complaints about the weather! Last time we visited Boulder the big fires began the following day. I hope they'll let me visit Colorado again.

Speaking of fires, it was easy to see the huge amount of acreage that had burned recently and also when driving the hills to see the houses that were nearly destroyed. All that was within the last couple months. It reminds me that most all places have their good and their bad features and I've yet to find a place that was perfect. Colorado has certainly always seemed perfect but even a bit of gray floats by there too. For now I'll continue to like a lot about New Jersey.

### **Some notes from Dave and Dana in preparation for our hikes:**

*Dave & I did a hike from Devil's Playground (I think 12,900 feet) to the top of Pike's Peak (14,110) & back on Saturday. I thought it was moderately difficult. The last section of the trail involves scampering up rocks/boulders. I think the thing that made it more challenging was the altitude, so I felt like I needed to concentrate when I was climbing the rocky part. The trail is well marked so that helps a lot. I think this would be a good hike for us to do on Saturday. It cuts off the lower part of the trail (from the Crags to Devil's Playground), which Dave said is pretty difficult. I'm afraid if we hiked from Crags to the top of Pikes Peak on Saturday, that I wouldn't want to hike at all on Sunday (my legs were pretty sore yesterday after we did the Saturday hike).*

*Also, I don't know if Dave mentioned this, but the last couple of times he's hiked at altitude, he's ended up getting migraines. I told him if he didn't want to come with us, that was fine, but he said he would be our support vehicle (drop us off at Devil's Playground & pick us up at the summit). We've got a list of other hikes that we can do on Sunday & Monday.*

*Later and from Dave: C.C. & I did the Devil's Playground trail today. The trail starts at 10,000 feet & we climbed to 13,000 feet over 4 miles. It took us 2:15 & we were moving pretty fast. The trail is steep but you climb faster than if you were on the Barr Trail. The D.P. trailhead starts 3500 feet higher than the Barr Trail. However, Barr Trail is about 10 minutes from our house & Devil's Playground trail is about 50 minutes from our house. Either way the altitude is no joke...it was strenuous. (From Dana: This is Dave's way of saying he got a migraine & came home & puked). Although I also did a hard bike ride yesterday.*

*My advice if you want to hike Pikes Peak is to leave early. The heat wears you down, so it's better if you can avoid it as much as possible. When you get back to NJ, I'll call you & we can talk about it more. By the way, we have a pair of trekking poles, so you don't need to bring those.*

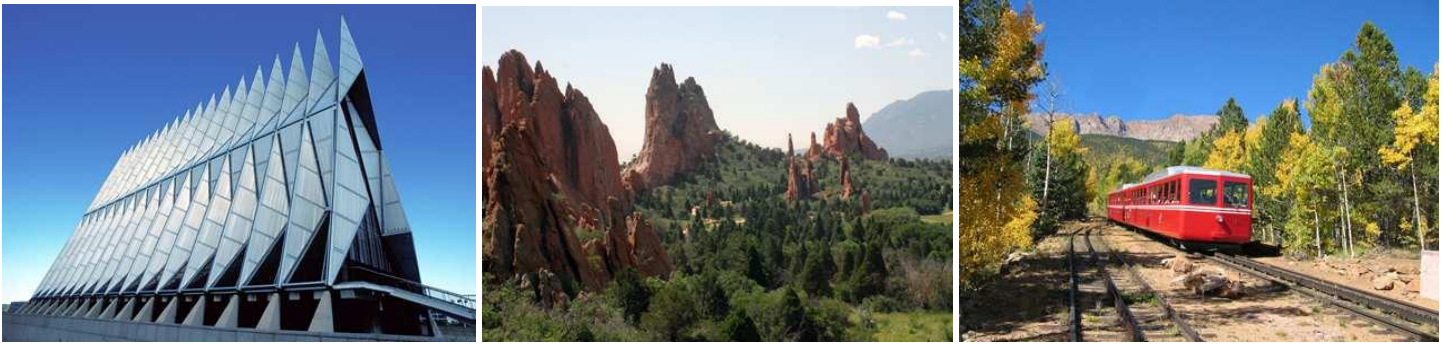
*Earlier: There are two trails that are the most common to get to the top of Pikes Peak. One is Barr Trail, which is the one that the marathon uses (which is going on this weekend). You can hike that one up & then take the Cog Rail down. Someone in my running club was just telling me on Thursday that you can either reserve a space on the Cog Rail for \$35 or you can take your chances & see if there is a spot when you get up there & it is \$22 cash.*

*The other route is the Devil's Playground trail. It's a harder trail, but shorter. Dave & C.C. are off doing a section of that trail today. Dave should have more info about it once he's back. Our neighbors did that trail about a month ago & it took about 8 hours to hike up & down.*

*Just before on 8/12: Yes, we're fine; floods were down in Manitou Springs. We had been there on Thursday so fortunately the kids got to see it before the mud & muck. The kids were pretty worried when the flash flood warnings happened, but we kept reassuring them that since we were on a hill (and on the second floor of an apartment building) that there was nothing to worry about. Good news is that 90% of the businesses in Manitou Springs were unaffected & they have managed to clean up & re-open Route 24 already. It's scary how fast those flash floods can happen though.*



## Colorado Springs Tourist



Maybe the most common things to do: Tour the Air Force Academy and especially the chapel; drive and/or hike Garden of the Gods; go to the top of Pike's Peak by foot or cog wheel.

And this from my past marathon report and our tourist portion of Colorado Springs:

### ***Chasing butterflies aka Fluttering around the springs.***

The day before the marathon, and despite a full 92 degree major heat wave, I went walking for four hours straight searching butterflies. It's a public art project to raise money for school art programs. Something more culturally correct than painting cows (Chicago), crocodiles (Palm Beach), horses (Louisville) or pigs (Cincinnati). My jaunt took me a few blocks in one direction from the hotel and about a mile and a half to the Colorado College in the other. In between I found there were many more art sculptures. The names and sponsors were oftentimes amusing.

My butterfly collection has background scenery which will give you a view of downtown Colorado Springs too. I can see why people want to live in these Colorado towns.



Retro Flower Butterfly, Precious (the artist used her butterfly to show how precious the gift of life and that the gift is able to pass something of beauty onto others), Gaston Julia Butterfly, and Geometric Wings. All these are in the Palmer Plaza in front of the Antler Hilton Hotel on Cascade Avenue.



Birdwing (where you see five species of birds represented), Lepidoptera Chemica, Building a Better Butterfly and an unidentified one that I can only presume is an ode to Jason Pollock, are at the Pikes Peak Center.



Still at the Pikes Peak Performing Arts Center, add The World is a Rainbow Butterfly, Ode to the Garden of Hope, as well as Humpty Dumpty who sat on a wall.



Fractal Butterfly and Appearances (the black and white face) was at the Fine Arts Center along with the dancers.

Now remember – there may be a lot of butterflies, but this isn't all of them, and the butterflies are presented with Colorado Springs buildings as background to give you a flair of the town.



Steampunk Magic Butterfly had a timepiece and shared space with Planet Butterfly (shown twice) at the CC Cornerstone Building, an art piece in itself.



Dippin' Dots and Conflict of the Roses were at the El Paso Club (that's their county name), with Dragon-Fly and Urban Flight closer to town on Tejon Street.



Doing Yoga with the Rotary Club in front of the Pioneer Museum gave good competition to the giant red paper clips sculpture across the street, as did the bronze figures of kids and daddy picking pumpkins in the planters with real pumpkins growing all around. All in front of the Pioneers Museum.



The Pioneer Museum along with sculpture on the grounds.

***Moving on to more sculpture***

I'd show you more butterflies but I'm reminded how I got carried away with chasing cows when we had the Parade of Cows in NYC and maybe that's why grandson Joseph refuses to travel with me any longer. He said I wore him out.

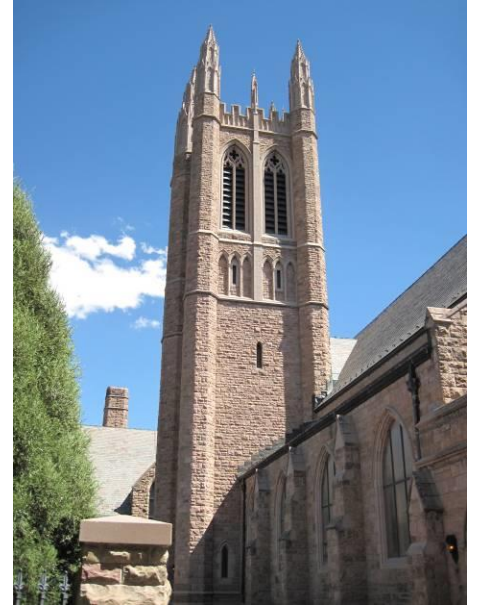


The open door triple size, a little bronze girl outside the public library and some miscellaneous art sculpture on my way to the college grounds.



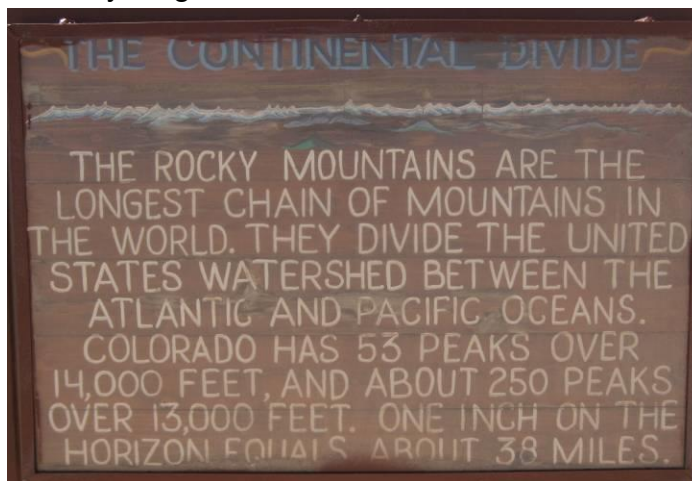
This guy is triple-sized and is the logo for the Pikes Peak or Bust race. While the double eagle on the street corner is representative of the natural look and feel of Colorado. Why the triple-sized dancers are on an automatic twirler I don't know but the effect is mesmerizing.

## More buildings of inspiration



The Arts Center with its metal tree where Arlo Guthrie was playing; what I thought was a castle but turned out to be an apartment complex; a private dwelling on the way to the college; one of the college buildings made partly out of metals; a corner of what someone thought was art and I thought was weeds formed into cubbyholes; and one nice church though there were many worthy of pictures.

**Tourist sites out of town – Pikes Peak** is of course part of the Rocky Mountain National Park chain. We had just come from Rocky Mountain just up from Boulder. This is on the Continental Divide. Some people marathon up to Pikes Peak no matter that its 14,000 plus feet with about 8,000 feet of elevation climb. It takes a very long time and I don't think I could do it though I wouldn't mind trying.



Once upon a time our feet took us up to the top of Mt Washington (as much because I insisted the car should not) but we are older now (and wiser, Tom would say) and we drove the 18+ miles up. It just is impossible to take a picture and get any idea of the magnitude of the mountain or the views. But

here's a try. Pikes Peak is the most visited peak in our country. I felt like they were all there the same day we were.



### **Garden of the Gods**

From the website: *By the 1870's, the railroads had forged their way west. In 1871, General William Jackson Palmer founded Colorado Springs while extending the lines of his Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. In 1879, General Palmer repeatedly urged his friend, Charles Elliott Perkins, the head of the Burlington Railroad, to establish a home in the Garden of the Gods and to build his railroad from Chicago to Colorado Springs. Although the Burlington never reached Colorado Springs directly, Perkins did purchase two-hundred and forty acres in the Garden of the Gods for a summer home in 1879. He later added to the property but never built on it, preferring to leave his wonderland in its natural state for the enjoyment of the public. Perkins died in 1907 before he made arrangements for the land to become a public park, although it had been open to the public for years. In 1909, Perkins' children, knowing their father's feeling for the Garden of the Gods, conveyed his four-hundred eighty acres to the City of Colorado Springs. It would be known forever as the Garden of the Gods "where it shall remain free to the public, where no intoxicating liquors shall be manufactured, sold, or dispensed, where no building or structure shall be erected except those necessary to properly care for, protect, and maintain the area as a public park."*

*How we got our name...*

*It was August of 1859 when two surveyors started out from Denver City to begin a town site, soon to be called Colorado City. While exploring nearby locations, they came upon a beautiful area of sandstone formations. M. S. Beach, who related this incident, suggested that it would be a "capital place for a beer garden" when the country grew up. His companion, Rufus Cable, a "young and poetic man", exclaimed, "Beer Garden! Why it is a fit place for the Gods to assemble. We will call it the Garden of the Gods." It has been so called ever since.*

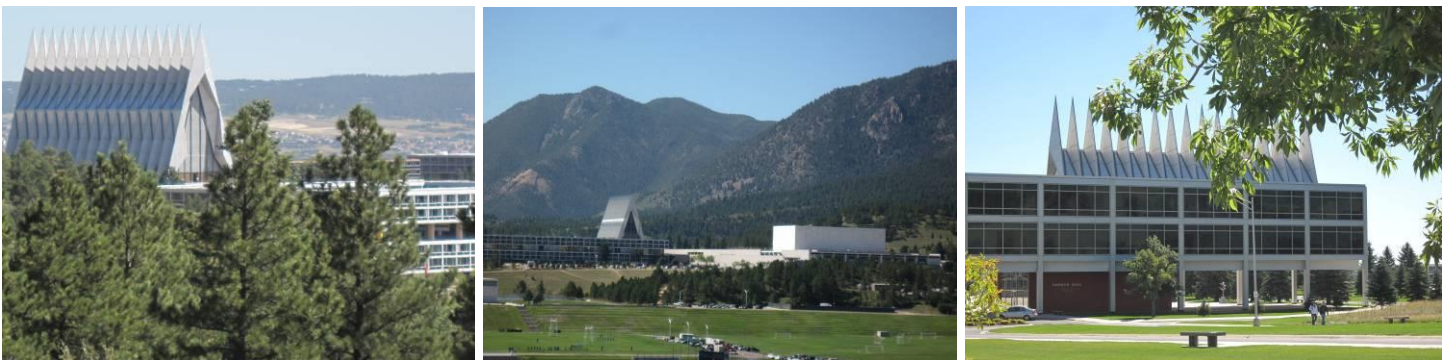
There's a lovely visitors center with film, displays and maps for a self-driving tour which we did. Our hiking was limited but I thought it worthy of a day or two. Adjoining the Gardens is a Trading Post and a 'ranch' not open currently. We chose to do a short hike out to a picnic area and sat under the trees and with boulders in view. Later we drive out to Balanced Rock.





**U.S. Air Force Academy**

This site has been tops on our list but it was not exactly to be. There was a big game, parent's weekend, plus all the festivals of Colorado Springs so parking was non-existent despite our attempt. The grounds are huge and the marathon course ran through them.



The chapel is said to be "massed like a phalanx of fighter jets shooting up into the sky" and is an architectural wonder. Here are some pictures from the web:



**Cave of the Winds**

Again, from the web: *Cave of the Winds, literally makes your jaw drop in wonder and astonishment. These Colorado Caves feature geology and adventure rolled into one—a true, unique Geo|Venture! Located in scenic hills above historic Manitou Springs, this Colorado Attraction is one of America's most important show caves and a "must-see" for all Colorado Attractions. Visitors have shared in the stunning beauty of Cave of the Winds for over a century. Early legends of the Jicarilla Apaches, who migrated through the Pikes Peak region around 1000 AD, tell of a cave in this area where the*



*Great Spirit of the Wind resided. In the late 1800s, the modern era of Cave of the Winds began when two young brothers, George and John Pickett, stumbled onto these Colorado natural wonders. Just out for a day's exploration with a church group, the boys never expected to stumble upon what would become one of America's greatest show caves and premier attractions of Colorado! Through the years, visitors have ventured to these Colorado Caves by foot, horse, carriage, car, and RV.*

Set in a huge canyon, high on a cliff, the visitor's center was interesting in itself. A tour guide led us through the numero caves. The cave is a setting for a 2006 episode of the animated television series South Park, entitled "ManBearPig".





***Itinerary***

**Fri Sep 6**

8:50am Depart Newark EWR via UA#1643

11:08am Arrive Denver DEN

Rental Car Thrifty

Hotel Fairfield Inn Colorado Springs Air Force Academy

7085 Commerce Center Drive, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80919 Tele 719-533-1903

Approximately 1 ½ hour or 80 miles from Denver Airport;

Hotel to Dave and Dana's home is approximately 10 minutes or 6 miles.

**Sat Sep 7**

Hike to Pike's Peak if weather permits

**Tue Sep 10**

12:30pm Depart Colorado Springs for 1 ½ to 2 hour drive

3:55pm Depart Denver DEN via UA#469

9:31pm Arrive Newark