



## Salida Colorado Hiking Trip Notes August 8 – 18, 2014

This area has been home to my favorite hiking leaders, Steve and Nola, for some years. Thus the hikes were especially irresistible as I knew they were well thought-out and chosen. Is it no wonder that the trip sold out quickly? In fact, I liked the area so much that I have signed up for a return visit in March 2015 for the “Run thru Time” marathon and half marathon in the hills of Salida.

### ***Headlines***

- Lots of elevation meaning lots of deep breathing. Five steps up, stop to breathe. Repeat.
- Hotels were a treat in both cases: Mt Princeton Spa and Springs Resort then the historic Palace Hotel.
- Salida is high on list for many folks and their retirement.
- Many high passes and 14ers.
- Crossed the Continental Divide and was on the Colorado Trail.
- Met up with NJ friends Dave and Dana who moved to Colorado Springs



### ***Dead!***

My computer gave out about this time and wasn't repaired until two trips later, and thus, Colorado that deserves a big report will be brief instead. Something like how well I was able to breathe while high up in these mountains!

### ***A little color in Salida***



Big buildings and little buildings and nice old historical touches in between.





Bronze ponies, big flags, bikes as wind socks and a bike carved out of wood but with a real chain.



Store after store in the old style, and oddly a large number of re-sale stores. Recycling is alive and well. This momma and her two daughters were talking to and naming the butterflies and the butterflies were landing on their hands; whereas the two little Bambi didn't seem to have a mother anywhere in sight.



Creative decoration: a fence of old bicycles along a residential street; a park bench of tractor seats and carved stones; a wall full of real canoes.





The old Manhattan Hotel was next to our Palace Hotel, and the water view was out my hotel window, as was the mountain with an “S” on it was at the end of our street, just over the river.



The river was full of kayakers, canoes, pedal boats and fronted with restaurants. The license plate is to remind me that one might have been able to find all 50-states represented in the town and surrounding mountains. I talked to some kids who had come for the huge water festival and stayed.



Bicycle racks were creative and here is one made of an old radiator. But do we need wind chimes out of beer cans? Up high on the “S” mountain at the end of our street is still a 1902 gravestone for the town’s puppy. His owner died, the town took over caring for him, then cemented his life as a mascot.

### ***The End of Salida for now***

With this picture, I should apologize but instead I'll point out that they come in all shapes and sizes and no matter your shape, if you want to wear a bikini, be careful: you might be someone's entertainment.

### ***From notes home:***

#### ***At Mt Princeton Spa***

It is such a treat to be in the land that is well-known by Steven Nola, my favorite hiking leaders. We are at the Mount Princeton resort and spa which features the mineral waters and a very rushing creek along with a lot of pools and a 14,000 footer by the side.



I am somewhat suffering coming from sea level up to 9000 feet but I think the highest we are going to hike is about 12,000 feet. Thank heavens as I can hardly walk over to the spa without breathing hard.

I had a full day in Denver and took a bus tour through the general tourist sites. There is nothing that I remembered from our Downtown Denver trip in the early 90s or on later trips I did to visit the financial side of Denver.

Denver is sprawling and Denver is growing. Colorado has the most 14ers of anywhere. Denver has Boulder, and Denver has Colorado Springs, so what more could you want.

Here is a short video showing down by the pools and at the creek bed there is a lot more.



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### ***From Mt Princeton to Salida***

It might be beautiful here in Colorado but it sure does have thin air when you're trying to hike at 10 and 12,000 feet. Five steps then stop to breathe before another five steps and loss of breath again. I



would say that it is mostly worth it and I look forward to the rest of the week which will even include an add-on couple of days with Dave and Dana, hiking friends from New Jersey now living in Colorado Springs. They kindly offered to drive to Salida at the end of my hiking trip. I will be doubly challenge to keep up with them but they have always been kind by pressing me onward.

Coming into the little historical town of Salida turns out to be even better than I had expected. There are mountains surrounding it and it has a big River running by the side. All of which can be seen from my room in the middle of town. My room is in the old historical Palace Hotel which has since been modernized enough to make it very comfortable but not so much to take away the lovely old feel. Can you imagine, but they even serve us breakfast in the room!

It was an easy decision today to take off from hiking so that I could enjoy the walking tour of the historical sites in Salida. If I were looking for a place to live in retirement this could be high on the list.

I also admit that the group dynamics of a hiking trip leave me in need of a day to myself. We have a very congenial group made all the more pleasant by my favorite hiking leaders but there's always the dynamic of someone being late which irks me to no end. You might say that, well, as I've gotten older I've gotten more cranky whereas I would say as I have gotten older I have been more clear as to what I do and don't like. And will and will not tolerate. But make no mistake, this is an excellent hiking group as usual.

Salida is the hometown of my hiking leaders and I have heard of it for so long it was particularly good to see it and also to be invited into their home. Here is a short video of yesterday's hiking destination.



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I have been a little bit out of touch in part due to limited service while in Mount Princeton so if I owe you a response please know that I will catch up eventually. I also had to leave my computer at the computer hospital so responses are limited to my iPhone.

**After the hike:** This is up at Monarch Pass which would be the closest ski area to Salida.



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We hiked here on Thursday and it was so lovely that Dave and Dana along with Nola and I decided to do it today. Saturday.

The weather was considerably better at the first of the hike today and like on Thursday only at the last of the clouds roll in. Today not only did the clouds roll in but the big surprise, despite the heat, was all the pea size hail that came down. On my poncho it sounded like rain on the tin roof. There was enough hail that we found little bits of it left under the trees where the sun wasn't shining.

This is a wonderful hike and as Nola says, I will go there anytime I can. And speaking of coming anytime we can, I will return in March for the marathon and half marathon run on some of the trails I hiked and some new ones.

Since the marathon starts and ends at the hotel I have so enjoyed, I've booked my reservations already. If you are interested look up the marathon called run through time scheduled for March 14. The hotel is the old historic hotel called the palace hotel that has been renovated recently.

I really like this little town.

***Now this really is The End*** because I'm off for a day around Lake Tahoe before a Lassen Volcanic National Park week long hike, then back to Reno for the start of another week's hike to the High Sierras and Yosemite East, followed by Milan with Tom for a few days, then a hike through the Lakes of Italy. All that before the October, which will take me to London for ten days for the Royal Parks marathon, Chicago for five days for ice skating trials, New York City to spectate the NYC marathon and a few days touring, then another biggy to Buenos Aires, Mendoza and Patagonia for November, Atlanta for a marathon and a mini reunion with an adopted family, and wow, another biggy when Marie arrives for our Christmas and New Year's trip to Barcelona. 2015 is filling up too. May the body and legs just keep going and I'll be supremely happy.

## ***Itinerary***

### **Fri Aug 8**

9:19pm Depart Newark EWR via UA305

11:52pm Arrive Denver DEN

Hotel La Quinta Denver Airport – 1<sup>st</sup> of 2 nights in King One room  
6801 Tower Road, Denver, CO 80249-6327 Tele 303 371 0888

Shuttle Call for free shuttle - runs each ½ hour

### **Sat Aug 9**

12:30pm Denver city tour by Gray Line with pick up at hotel

Hotel La Quinta Denver Airport – 2<sup>nd</sup> night – as above

**Summary** and pictures from [www.ParksPlusHiking.com](http://www.ParksPlusHiking.com) - Since the idea for Parks Plus first blossomed we knew we would want to share the wonders of our home in Salida, Colorado, and the mountains that surround it. With “This is Our Colorado” Hike, that dream is fulfilled as we’ll hike in the stunning (and challenging) Sawatch Mountains, including a signature hike along the continental divide. To soothe our bodies along the way we’ll stay (and soak) at fabulous Mt. Princeton Hot Springs Resort. We’ll also spend time in the heart of vibrant and picturesque Salida at the historic Palace Hotel. We love our home and think you will too!

### **Sun Aug 10 – Day 1**

9:00am Pick up from hotel lobby and start of hike

Midland trail - Distance: 5 mi - Difficulty: 3

Lodging: Mt. Princeton Hot Springs Resort - 1<sup>st</sup> of 2 nights  
15870 County Road 162, Nathrop, CO 81236 Tele: (719) 395-2447  
<http://www.mtprinceton.com/>  
Wi Fi only in the lobby; coffee pot and mini refrig in all rooms

After departing Denver, we will make our way south and west across Kenosha and Red Hill Pass to historic Fairplay, where we’ll pick up sandwiches. Following a picnic lunch in the crisp Rocky Mountain air, we’ll stretch our legs on a portion of the Midland trail, a former railroad grade and now popular outdoor recreation destination. Luxury awaits us as we then proceed to our hot springs haven.

### **Mon Aug 11 - Day 2**

Colorado/Browns Creek trails - Distance: 10 mi - Difficulty: 5

Lodging: Mt. Princeton Hot Springs Resort – 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2 nights

After breakfast, we hit the trail in earnest, climbing the famed Colorado Trail to views of 14,196' Mt. Princeton. Following an equally challenging descent, we make our way past the foot of 14,245' Mt. Antero to a lovely waterfall along Browns Creek. Numerous soaking options and perhaps even a massage greet our return to Mt. Princeton followed by dinner and the spectacular star-filled sky—if you can stay awake that long.

### **Tue Aug 12 - Day 3**

Ptarmigan Lake/Ptarmigan pass - Distance: 8 mi - Difficulty: 4

Lodging: Palace Hotel in Salida – 1<sup>st</sup> of 3 nights with PPH then added 2 on own – Suite 302  
204 North F Street, Salida, Colorado 81201 Tele 719 207 4175  
[www.salidapalacehotel.com](http://www.salidapalacehotel.com) – suites have “well stocked kitchenette” and WiFi

The Palace Hotel is Salida, Colorado's premier historic boutique hotel established in 1909. Uncompromised elegance and “Old West” charm create a bastion of comfort and class deep in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. Here, vintage chic meets the modern amenities, in fifteen genuinely considered suites. Located in Historic Downtown Salida alongside the banks of the Arkansas River, the newly renovated Palace Hotel offers boutique caliber lodging within footsteps of shopping, dining, hiking, biking, and fly-fishing.

Having acclimated to the altitude, we head up towards 12,000' Cottonwood Pass, stopping just short of the summit for our hike to Ptarmigan Lake. The lake makes a great lunch and turnaround point; views of 14,199' Mt. Yale will wow us at our sub-alpine destination. Not quite enough? Motivated hikers may wish to continue on (and up!) to Ptarmigan Pass before returning to the trailhead. However far you hike, we're headed home to Salida for the night.

### **Wed Aug 13 - Day 4**

Rainbow trail - Distance: 8 mi - Difficulty: 4

Lodging: Palace Hotel – 2<sup>nd</sup> of 3 nights

The theme of our tour is probably clear to you now as our first stop of the day is a climb along the Rainbow trail, another renowned trail in the area. We'll take in another impressive view of Salida and the adjacent “S” on Tenderfoot Mountain, return to the trailhead, then van shuttle directly to yet another soak (and views of the majestic Sangre de Cristo range) at Joyful Journeys Hot Springs.

### **Thu Aug 14 - Day 5**

Monarch Crest trail - Distance: 14 mi - Difficulty: 5

Lodging: Palace Hotel – 3<sup>rd</sup> of 3 nights

Several times over the course of our season, our travels take us near or even across the continental divide. Today, however, we hike along the divide on the famed Monarch Crest trail. From the crest, we'll scan the trail's edge for tiny alpine wildflowers and expand our view outward to include several “fourteeners” in the nearby Sawatch Range and down towards Monarch Pass at 11,312'.



### **Fri Aug 15 - Day 6**

Arkansas River trails - Distance: 6 mi - Difficulty: 2

For our final day in the Salida area we stay even closer to home as we hike part of the local Salida Mountain Trail System directly above town, specifically the North Backbone, Lil' Rattler, and Frontside trail. Although this is one of Steve and Nola's favorite running routes, we promise to stay with the group lest we miss our final lunch together prior to our return to Denver.

Hotel: Palace Hotel – remain for 2 additional nights on own  
Reservations for #302 continuation in file  
Reservations for Dave and Dana in pet friendly room for 2 nights – conf in file

### **Sat and Sun Aug 16-17**

Hike Salida area with Dave and Dana

Return Sunday evening to their home in Colorado Springs

Hotel Colorado Springs Marriott – 1 night only  
5580 Tech Center Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80919 Tele 719 260 1800  
Conf #80138395

### **Mon Aug 18**

9:30am Shuttle arriving airport at 11:25am  
<http://www.coloradoshuttle.com> Tele: 719-687-3456 or 877-587-3456

1:36pm Depart Denver DEN via UA#446

7:20pm Arrive Newark EWR

### **Participants:**

Larry Austin

Kathy Donato – in Durango Wed thru Sat with friends

Peggy Lewis

Ray and Virginia Cannata

Samuel Feldman and daughter Audrey

**Note:** Depart to Reno for Lassen Volcano hike on Friday