

In battle of opposites, Springs beats Boulder

My wife and I drove up to Boulder last weekend. We'd only realized the week before that our 20th anniversary was coming up, and the kids would be visiting relatives. It'd be a crime not to go somewhere, at least a misdemeanor. More than that, we'd lived in Colorado for more than a decade and never visited our polar opposite to the north. By Colorado law, that was a felony.

Are Colorado Springs and Boulder really opposites? We all know the stereotypes. Colorado Springs is arch-conservative, Boulder is ultra-liberal. The Springs is uptight, Boulder lets it all hang out. The Springs is Wal-Mart, Boulder is Alicia Dragonfire's Candle Emporium and Hemp Boutique.

I'm happy to report that, like many stereotypes, this one is absolutely true.

My wife and I did have a lovely time. We stayed at a charming B&B, walked around the Pearl Street Mall, enjoyed an outdoor Shakespeare performance and had a splendid French meal. I'm sure we'll be back.

Nonetheless, having spent a total of 48 hours in the People's Republic of Boulder, I can state with absolute confidence that Colorado Springs is better. Here are the top 10 reasons why:

10) No school in Colorado Springs would ever hire Ward Churchill.

9) Our college students are better behaved. A mere block from our B&B, my wife and I walked past a second-hand furniture store that proudly advertised a "HUGE DRUNKEN KEG PARTY FURNITURE SALE" with "COUCHES TO BURN" — a truly inspiring message to Colorado taxpayers everywhere.

8) Normal people can actually afford to live in Colorado Springs. Since I do the cooking and grocery shopping for the family, I paid a visit to Boulder's weekly organic farmer's market. A teeny bunch of parsley for \$2? A melon for \$6? Who are they kidding?

7) We're much more low-key about ourselves. Boulder stores sell cups and T-shirts that say "Keep Boulder Weird." People in the Springs are far too modest and self-effacing to wear anything that says "Keep Colorado Springs Normal."



OPINION
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Contributing columnist

6) From what I can tell, Boulder has no understanding of, and no appreciation for, the members of the military who protect it.

5) Colorado Springs isn't actively trying to keep people from living here. Sure, we have our share of anti-growth activists, but most of us recognize that we were all new in town at some point in our lives, and that growth is opportunity. Boulder's main purpose in life is to preserve the status quo for people who live there. If the town had a motto, it'd be "We've got what you can't have."

4) Colorado Springs is more politically diverse. We've got Democrats and Republicans. Boulder politics range from pretty liberal to nut-case loony liberal. Being conservative in Boulder means you supported McGovern in '72.

3) Colorado Springs is more economically diverse. We've got a large nonprofit sector, strong high-tech, military bases, and a vibrant service economy. Boulder has CU.

2) Colorado Springs is more physically diverse. Everyone in Boulder looks like a cross between mountain biking rock climbers and mountain climbing rock bikers. Colorado Springs has plenty of hardcore fitness types (after all, we have the Olympic Training Center), but we've also got our share of couch potatoes. As far as I can tell, Boulder doesn't have fat people. I think they're banned by the city council.

1) Last but not least, Boulder merely pretends to be civilized. My wife and I had Saturday night reservations at a very nice French restaurant. When she called to ask about appropriate attire, she was told "Ma'am, this is Boulder."

Couldn't have said it better myself.

(Note to readers: My previous column on stem cell research did not reflect the position of the Independence Institute. None of my columns necessarily reflect the institute's position, focusing as it does strictly on public policy issues in Colorado. Copies of my writing that the institute endorses can be found on its Web site, www.i2i.org.)

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