Most of the out-of-state tourists have left the park, the days are cooler, and a major happening awaits those fortunate enough to head to Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) in the fall — The Elk Rut!

**HISTORY**

Elk are native to the RMNP area, but during the latter part of the 1800s hunting eliminated elk in the area. By 1900, the only predator to elk, the wolf, had also disappeared. Shortly after that, in 1913 and 1914, elk were reintroduced to the area and the herds have flourished ever since. During the winter, there are approximately 600 - 800 elk within the park.

**MATING SEASON**

During the late summer and early fall, the elk come down from the high country to the meadows of RMNP for the breeding season. Within the herds, males (bulls weighing up to 1,500 pounds) compete for the right to breed with the females. Much of this competition centers on bugling. This is the signal of mating season. As you listen to the sound of one or more bulls bugling, you will hear the sound echo through the meadows. It's an amazing experience and a sound like no other!

The Elk Rut is derived from the Latin word meaning roar. The call is meant to intimidate other males in the area. The prime bulls are 8 or 9 years old and are noticeable by their take-charge attitude. Often times other bulls stand on the sidelines watching the herd, but leave frustrated by the command the lone bull has over his herd.

**VIEWING ELK**

During these late summer and early fall days, elk congregate on the east side of RMNP (the Estes Park side) in Horseshoe Park, Upper Beaver Meadows, and Moraine Park. Elk can be spotted along the edges of clearings in the early morning and early evening which is also the time when most of the bugling occurs and is also the best time for photography.

Remember these are wild animals so do keep your distance. Bring binoculars or a telephoto lens to view these animals from a safe distance.

**ESTES PARK ELK FEST**

Each year the town of Estes Park hosts a weekend of activities that coincides with the annual elk rut. This year, the Elk Fest will take place on September 28 and 29 in Estes Park. Activities include bugling competitions, educational areas, seminars, live music, raptors, and guided elk viewing tours. There is no admission fee to attend Elk Fest.

**WEB PICS**

To see more pictures from the Elk Fest, visit the International Wildlife Film Festival's website:

http://iwhf.org/

There are a variety of lodging options in Estes Park. For lodging options visit: www.visitestespark.com

For camping information visit: www.nps.gov/romo/planyourvisit/camping.htm

To contact PPLD’s Homeschool Committee, please email gsohns@ppld.org.
All of the following books share a great feature: Each has a note from the author about the book. Author’s notes can make a story book become a real event, a truth more authentic than reading fiction.

Desmond and the Very Mean Wolf
by Archbishop Desmond Tutu

A story told in both historical fiction, and a completely a book that demonstrates the power of forgiveness, Archbishop Desmond Tutu tells us at the end of the book just what parts of this book are true.

Building Our House
by Jonathan and JoAnn

Fabulous picture book covering many of the stages that come when you build your very own house, the author is gracious and shares at the end just what parts really happened in his family.

A Story About How Slaves Learned in Secret
by Lesa Cline-Ransome

We take for granted the freedoms we have; to go where we want, to learn what we want, and of course we will all learn to read. This historical picture book tells about pit holes that slaves used to learn reading while learning to read.

Light in the Darkness:
Part personal story, part historical
Ages 4 - 10

Building Our House
Part personal story, part historical
Ages 4 - 10

Secrets

Your family probably uses a variety of library resources for research, lesson planning, and pursuing interests. Books, databases, and librarian-chosen websites offer special access to information. Have you considered using magazines to enrich your homeschooling experience? PPLD’s community libraries subscribe to a wide variety of periodicals. Each location chooses their own magazine titles for their patrons. Some are strictly for entertainment, but others are goldmines of information. In the Children’s area, Zoobooks is a wonderful magazine for those kids fascinated by animals and each monthly issue covers a different animal (or animal group). Kids Discover highlights a different history-related topic each month. Odyssey is a science magazine with fascinating articles. Teens and adults have a selection of magazines to choose from. A few are Scientific American, Air and Space (from The Smithsonian), Military History, Scientific American Graphic, and Make: Technology on Your Time (for anyone who enjoys hands-on electronics!). For those families dealing with special needs, there’s ADDitude: Living Well with Attention Deficit and Living Well: The Magazine for People with Allergies & Food Sensitivities.

The Granddaughter
by Sharon Dennis Wyeth

Family stories are often the basis for an author taking up a pen and writing a book. We are all fortunate when this occurs. This is the story of the handing down of a special necklace, from one generation to another.

Grumbles from the Forest:
Fairy-Tale Voices with a Twist
by Jane Yolen and Robin Kel Dietz

Unlike the other books on this short list, this book begins with a note from the authors that explains the writing process based on fairy tales but taking a different perspective, like that of Cinderella. A Shrek the Third Pea under the mattress. Be inspired! Write your own poems. Ages 5 - 12: Poetry/Fairy Tales

Pikes Peak Library District

Would you like to be a Featured Family? Contact Gal at gashons@ppld.org.

Home School Connections • Fall 2013

FEATURED HOMESCHOOL FAMILY
The Lewis Family (Part I)

Our PPLD Homeschool Connections Fall Featured Family article takes a different look this quarter.

Have you ever wondered what it will be like to look back at your home educating experience and how your children grew? Greg and Tina Lewis will describe their journey which began in 1986 with the birth of their oldest son.

We began our journey into homeschooling the day we brought our oldest child home from the hospital. We knew life and the things we as his parents would do would be part of his education. Everything we did and the children we brought into our home would be part of his education.

Our entire mindset as the children were growing was how blessed we were to have them and what an immense responsibility we had to nurture and help them to reach their potential. We wanted the children to learn to instill character, initiative, and determination within their hearts. Every day we provided committing, supportive, loving, and challenging environments to help our children grow.

The PPLD library system provided an important asset to our home school with the amount of materials we were able to check out cost free. With this in mind, I did use solid book curriculum coupled with true life experiences. Along with Greg, our oldest son participated in Boy Scouts from six years old to the culmination of Eagle Scout standing. The girls explored 4-H, often winning awards in Art, Sewing, and Goats shows. Further, they danced ballet in two local studios.

We built a home and several barns with our children. Our home school consisted of organized study each day with real homework assignments. Our oldest son worked hard to graduate high school from a local Christian school, earned an associate degree in Arizona, then attended college in Arkansas. At age 20, our youngest son served in the U.S. Marine, spent a deployment in Iraq, came home to finish a Bachelor’s Degree and open a small business in Colorado Springs.

We are the parents of two children who are pursuing lives of service and dedication to others. Our son worked six years in the church, and a part-time job in a local hotel. Our daughter has traveled a great deal and is recently married.

Our PPLD homeschooled children attended high school and graduated from Pine Creek after we gave her the foundation in Reading, English, and Math, and the freedom to excel at her own pace. We worked with our children to help them to grow in their own talents and abilities. We offered our children the opportunity and often comments how having our children attend public school was the best thing we did. We offer our children strong foundations in skills, and a strong work ethic will help her succeed in Art, English, Theater, and Music. She is currently a Sophomore/Junior at Oklahoma Christian University as a Music Major.

Our youngest son has been homeschooled while utilizing the incredible Collegiate School and College Pathways option at The Classical Academy. This opportunity has proven a major part of the success for our youngest son. I taught most of his courses until he was able to take five core program courses at Collegiate Pathways. He is now a part-time college student at Pikes Peak Community College.

The core of our personal world and family view included homeschooling our children by creating a home atmosphere that reinforced our strong American patriotism, and responsibility.

Our two oldest daughters graduated fully from homeschool and attended college. One married, has two daughters, and is now a part-time college student at Pikes Peak Community College. The other is currently married and a college graduate in the field of Nursing.

The third daughter graduated from High Country Enterprise School in Colorado and The Classical Academy and Part-Time Classical Academy North. She was an avid dancer and theater performer. She is a college graduate in the field of Nursing as well as a registered nurse, chef, runner, Bible class teacher, and amazing person!

Our fifth child attended high school and graduated from Pine Creek after we gave her the foundation in Reading, English, and Math, and the freedom to excel at her own pace. We worked with our children to help them to grow in their own talents and abilities. We offered our children the opportunity and often comments how having our children attend public school was the best thing we did. We offer our children strong foundations in skills, and a strong work ethic will help her succeed in Art, English, Theater, and Music. She is currently a Sophomore/Junior at Oklahoma Christian University as a Music Major.

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