



Courtesy photo

Emmy Levy Crandall, an Aspen resident (and Australian Terrier) who has been hiking for seven of her seven and a half years, successfully summited four of the state's peaks over 14,000 feet recently, raising over \$10,000 for local canine charities.



Courtesy photo

Rick and Diana Peckham, Rick Crandall (holding Emme) and Laura Welch sit on top of their first peak of the day, Mt. Democrat. The climb up to the 14,148-foot peak involved lots of loose scree.



Courtesy photo

Peak No. 2 was Mt. Cameron, at 14,050 feet.



Courtesy photo

Emme enjoys the views from the third peak of the day, Mt. Lincoln at 14,286 feet.

Small dog meets four tall peaks

Editor's note: On Saturday, Aug. 30, we introduced you to Emme Levy Crandall, an Australian Terrier who was going to climb four of the state's peaks over 14,000 feet as a fundraiser for the Animal Aspen Shelter and the Canine Health Foundation. Emme's mission was accomplished just before Labor Day weekend, and her human dad, Rick Crandall, wrote this article about the experience, and sent us plenty of photos.

Rick Crandall

Emme Levy Crandall climbed four fourteeners in one day, garnering over \$10,000 in donations, of which half will go to the Aspen Animal Shelter for the Spay Neuter Program and half will benefit the Canine Health Foundation to study diseases in dogs. Her posse was Rick Crandall of Aspen, Laura Welch of Aspen and Kansas City and Rick and Dianna Peckham, also of Aspen.

The adventure started by traveling from Aspen to Fairplay the previous day to start out early the next morning. Fairplay is a jewel in Colorado — located in South Park at an elevation of 9,953 ft, population 610. It was once larger than nearby Breckenridge, and a key part of the charm of Fairplay is the historic part of town consisting of relocated historic buildings that recreate the early days of the Colorado gold rush.

We arrived in town and checked into the Hand Hotel, a bed and breakfast which itself is teeming in the feeling of the Old West. Each room is decorated with a personality reminiscent of the people who settled in the Fairplay area. But the best part of the hotel was its proprietor, Dale Fitting. His grasp of the history of the area mixes with a great sense of humor — and, after we returned to Aspen the next day I realized I'd left my wallet in the restaurant. In a heartening dose of small town ethics, Dale walked over to the restaurant, retrieved my wallet and Fed Ex'ed it to me the next day.

We ate at Millonzi's, an Italian style restaurant which served up surprisingly good dinners, our favorite being the chicken marsala with tasty pasta.

The next morning we were up at 5:30 a.m., making sandwiches by 6 a.m. then off to the trailhead by 6:30 a.m.

A short drive to Alma and a 6-mile dirt

road took us to the trailhead at Kite Lake. The good news was no rain, no lightning and no hail — the bad news was the hike started at 7 a.m. in below freezing temperatures with high winds at upper elevations. We were well equipped with layered clothing, gloves and hats.

This hike was all about Emme, our Australian Terrier who chose hiking over dog showing early in her life. For the past seven years Emme has been racking up vertical all over the popular trails surrounding Aspen. Emme has done fourteeners before (last year she did Yale Peak in the Collegiates) but this was to be four of them in one day.

First up was Mt. Democrat (but no sign of Obama), a 14,148-foot peak that is a slog through lots of loose scree. As we went up the first 1,000 feet in the cold, our highest priority was to get to the slowly lowering sun line to warm up. Once we did we then focused on our first peak and summited by mid-morning.

From there the next objective, Mt. Cameron, had us descending about 700 feet before ascending to its peak at 14,050 feet.

Then on to the most interesting of the four, Mt. Lincoln with its corkscrew path up a false peak and on to the real peak at 14,286 feet. Here the wind was ferocious and Emme took on a whole new look with horizontal hair and claws fully extended to keep from flying into space.

The final peak was Mt. Bross at 14,172 feet. On the way we passed a sign that said that part of the route was closed, but we went anyway as we'd met others who'd come from that direction so we thought it would be OK. Mt. Bross has two false peaks before the real summit which was a painful tease at the end of our day, but finally we were there. After a short celebration and a few cell phone calls we began our descent.

That's when we figured out why Bross might have been closed — the descent was a steep downward ridge walk with lots of loose scree, probably added to by the record snowmelt after last winter. Don't try this adventure with sore knees, hips or ankles.

By mid-afternoon we were in our car headed back to Aspen having had a great adventure and surely establishing Emme as a very improbable but successful four-teener and fundraiser.



Courtesy photo

The final peak! The group sits atop Mt. Bross at 14,172 feet.