



In a 1997 interview, Waldo Wegner (left) talked about a civil engineering professor who challenged him and what it was like to watch young basketball players shoot free throws in a close game. Read these stories and more at www.ccee.iastate.edu.

Student News

Exchange Students Enjoy Iowa State & Ames

It's not a bird. It's not a plane (nor a crane). It's four civil engineering exchange students from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland rumbling down Ames' Lincoln Way in their '77 Chevy Impala, dubbed "The Beast."

Students **William Hall**, **Johan Hjertson**, **Laura Scott**, and **Mark Smith** arrived at Iowa State University last August to take part in a yearlong exchange program. Ever since, they've been working hard in the classroom, experiencing various extracurricular activities, and exploring the United States.

Three of the students pooled their money together to buy a \$600 Chevy soon after they arrived. "It's no Rolls Royce, but the '77 Impala has clocked nearly 10,000 miles since September and is still going strong," boasts Smith, originally from Crewe, England.

The group has traveled to about 20 states in "The Beast," including Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Ohio, New York, Texas, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. "It would be nice to put 'The Beast' into a museum after all of its service, but I think its true fate is much less deserving," says Smith.

The adventure on the road, the opportunity to experience a new culture, as well as Iowa State's reputable programs, are just a few of the reasons the students chose to study here.

"Iowa and the Midwest is a part of America that not many people in England know much about," says Smith. "As far as I was concerned, it was the heart of America and something that needed to be explored. The exchange gave me this opportunity."

The students say they've enjoyed the friendly atmosphere and people at Iowa State, tailgating at football games, the abundance of extracurricular activities and intramural sports, the beautiful campus, and even the nightlife in Ames.

"I always have fun when I go out," says Hjertson from Malmö, Sweden. "The girls are very pretty, but I want everyone to know that my accent doesn't help that much."

Smith says that the people at Iowa State are fantastic. "They are the most welcoming, hospitable, and genuine individuals I have ever encountered," he says.

The students also have enjoyed being challenged in their classes. Hjertson says many people tried to tell him that school in America was easy, but he's learned that isn't true. "I learned how to study hard when we averaged 50 to 60 study hours a week," he says. "The semesters are a lot shorter in

Edinburgh, which is good, but you don't learn as much."

Smith says the students' knowledge of the course content was murky on arrival. "As a result, we just got straight into Steel Design, Concrete Design, Hydrology and Advanced Structures II in our first semester—a feat virtually unheard of among civil engineers," he says. "The work was challenging to say the least, but to emerge successful at Christmas was quite rewarding."

The most memorable academic experience for Laura Scott, a Scotland native, was taking an extremely difficult course load, and passing all her classes. "It's not possible to skip a class here—you really have to keep up with the work," she says.

Although the semester has just ended, the four students say they're not ready to go home quite yet. Scott and Hjertson plan to do more traveling before heading home. Smith left for home May 5 to begin work for his sponsor in England, and Hall plans to return home later in May. Nearly all of them say they'll consider returning to the United States one day to work.

"I'm sad to leave Iowa, the friends I've made, and the university, but I have many memories to carry with me and I'm sure that I will return one day," says Smith.

Hjertson adds, "I would like to thank everyone in the CCEE department and everyone in Ames for making this year great!"

As for "The Beast," at press time Hjertson says the group is still looking for buyers. "We'll sell it really cheap."



Four exchange students from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland pose with their '77 Chevy Impala, "The Beast."