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Rotary exchange student visits Canada for one year

Mark Stone has never seen this much snow in his whole life.

Stone, 17, is the Iroquois Falls Rotary Club exchange student from Nowra, Australia. He will be returning to his homeland on January 14 after spending exactly one year in Canada. During the past year, Stone's host families have included Jean-Marc and Janine Dumas, Henry and Norma Morris and Peter and Diane Hetherington.

Snow and cold weather aren't the only differences that Stone has noticed between the Canadian and Australian lifestyles. For one thing, Stone has had to get used to a complete reversal of seasons. Right now, Stone's family is in the midst of enjoying a hot summer. The summer season in Australia lasts from December to February. Summer temperatures in Australia are much hotter than Canadian with average temperatures ranging from 30 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit plus humidity. The winter in Australia runs from June to September. Consequently, the school year in Australia is very different from the one in Canada. The Australian academic year begins in February and runs until December.

The grade ten student has noticed many additional differences between the two scholastic systems. The school year in Australia is run on a

full year rather than a semester system. There is also a much higher concentration on principal courses such as math, English and science. Marking is based on essays and exams. At the end of grade twelve, students must write a comprehensive exam. The marks from this exam determine whether or not the students can go to university. Every student who goes to a public school in Australia must wear a school uniform. This year, Stone took French, auto shop, drafting and English at Iroquois Falls Secondary School. One of his favorite subjects this year is auto shop.

"We don't have practical subjects like that at home," Stone said.

Over the last year, Stone has developed an interest in snowmobiling, hunting and hockey. At home, his favorite sports include football, rugby, cricket and tennis. Other popular Australian sports include windsurfing, waterskiing, surfing, camping, canoeing and sailing.

Over the past year, Stone has learned a great deal about the local area from many of the senior citizens in Iroquois Falls. In the process, he has discovered many similarities between the histories of Iroquois Falls and Nowra. Like Iroquois Falls, Nowra suffered from many

bush fires during its early years. Nowra's principal industries at the present time include dairy farming and tourism. Located approximately 100 miles southwest of Sydney, on the southern coast, Nowra acts as the principal tourist centre for many of the surrounding beach areas consequently, Nowra offers a very active nightlife for the younger generation. Dances, pubs and movies are very popular with teens who live in this area.

Crocodile Dundee is one of the most popular movies in Australia, according to Stone. This movie was filmed and produced in Australia and has become very successful in North America. Australia produces many of its own movies however the majority of movies are imported from North America.

If Stone were to make a movie about Canada, it would be about snow, trapping and hockey. Stone's pre-conceptions of Canada were pretty accurate, however, he was not at all prepared for how cold it would be. All in all, he is very pleased with his experiences over the past year.

"I don't think that you can say if things are better or worse (in Canada or Australia), just different....It was pretty much what I expected but I didn't know what the cold would be like because we don't have it...It was great, a great experience," Stone said.



Left to Right
Wilbur Lang
Gordon Mac Cartney
Calvin Lang
early 130's