

# Oxford awaiting Rhodes scholar from Nebraska

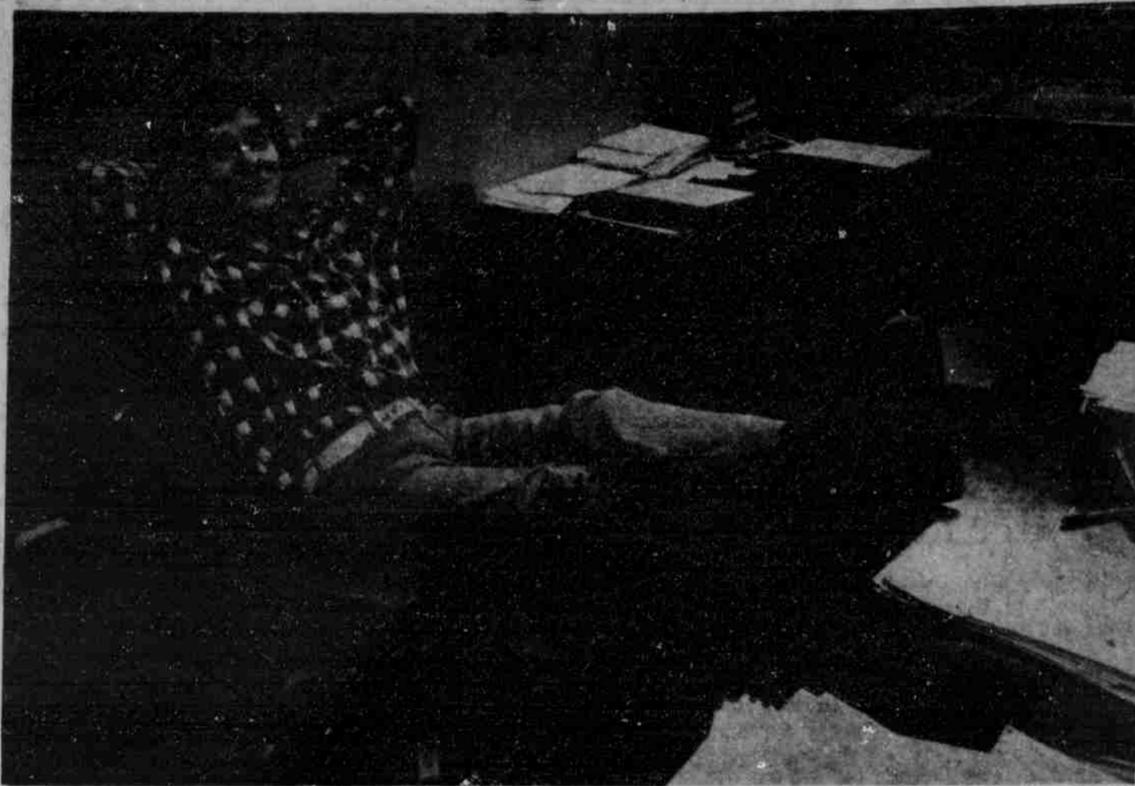


Photo by Steve Boerner

Jim Steckelburg, UNL's Rhodes Scholar, relaxes in the basement of Ferguson Hall. He said he couldn't believe he was selected to attend Oxford University in England.

By Larry Lutz

After his selection last fall as one of Nebraska's two Rhodes Scholarship candidates, Jim Steckelburg, 21, said he could not believe it.

But he had little time for disbelief. Two days later he was in Rochester, Minn., being interviewed for regional finalist with 11 others from six states.

And after what Steckelburg described as "two long, long days of interviews," the names of the four regional winners were read, including his.

"I wasn't sure it was right until everyone else left the room," he said. "There were just three other people and myself up there, so I thought it must be true."

There are eight regions in the nation, each with four regional scholarships, and the 32 winners receive scholarships to Oxford University in England for a minimum of two years. They have an option of renewing for a third year, which Steckelburg said he would do.

He said the scholarship is worth about \$17,000 a year plus travel money.

Currently a research assistant in UNL's Computer Science Dept., Steckelburg said he will use the scholarship to receive his Ph.D. in mathematics. He was graduated from UNL in December with a dual major in math and computer science.

"When I enrolled (fall 1972), I thought math was interesting, but my other major was physical science," said the Fremont native. "When I was a sophomore, I took a computer course just for fun."

"The next semester, I took another one and it just snowballed from there."

The program at Oxford allows a great deal of travel time as well as the intensive study, he said. Each student works with a tutor on a one-to-one basis, with no lectures or class meetings, he said. Steckelburg said these sessions meet daily for 8 to 10 weeks, with an 8 to 10 week break between each.

During the vacation period, Steckelburg said that he plans to travel throughout Europe and hopes to return to Turkey, where he earlier visited as an exchange student with the American Field Service.

"When I do complete my work there I hope to do some research and pursue some of my own ideas," he said.

Steckelburg currently is the president of Pi Mu Epsilon, math honorary society, and a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

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