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“Look at all of that Iowa,” a dear friend said to me, measuring the state with his thumb and pointer finger on his Google Map app. “You could come with me.”

As you all know, I got my start with the NCSE Science Booster Clubs and NCSE itself in Iowa City, Iowa, and I am pretty sure that the state will always have a soft spot in my heart.

So when my friend put out the call for a road trip buddy, I couldn't help but note that the route to his new job in California was pretty well aligned with the sites of several of NCSE Science Booster Clubs. Thus a professional road trip was born!

On day one, we departed Washington D.C. just before 5 a.m., the only way to beat traffic. After fourteen hours of driving and a pause at the world's largest truck stop in beautiful Walcott, Iowa, we made it to Iowa City, just in time to eat dinner and fall asleep.

The next morning I hosted a meeting with the biology graduate students, who are our most dedicated group of volunteers. It was great to be able to hear about their experiences in the field talking about climate change and evolution, which were filled with so many positive experiences but also included a bit of a run-in with a local elected official. (Stay tuned for a guest blog post on this topic.)

After our meeting, we hopped in the car and made our way to Des Moines, where I finally was able to meet our very own Brian Pinney in person. He had just participated in an event where he and his group of volunteers saw literally a thousand children in three hours and taught them all about selection and genetic drift.

My friend and I then piled back into the Mazda, just in time for NCSE's weekly staff meeting. (A testament to how amazing modern technology really is: I was able to participate in this meeting via Google Hangouts). As we headed towards Omaha, it was my intention to meet with our club leaders there. Unfortunately, they were facing some pretty serious grant deadlines and couldn't make a meeting. But they have their first event on the calendar in two weeks. I couldn't be more excited for them.

It has been a wonderful few days of being able to connect with all of the people who make our work possible. I left these meetings with much excitement about all of our upcoming events (and some neat ideas for club activities). But the party has to end sometime, and I have to head back home so that I can be with my volunteers at the DC State Fair.

As I was typing this, sitting in the Denver airport, the girl sitting next to me noticed my sweatshirt and perked up.

"Hey!" she said, "Go Hawks! I just graduated from the University of Iowa. Did you go there, too?"

Yes; yes, I did.

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