

# OSU/NASA Education Projects: Aerospace Education Services Program (AESP) Archive

Oklahoma State University-Stillwater, Oklahoma

## Spacemobile Remembrances by Harold Bacon. Written 2001.

Spacemobile Remembrances  
by Harold Bacon

I joined the Spacemobile program in June of 1963. That was the year that the number of lecturers was doubled and we underwent an extensive training program in Washington D.C. as well as a number of NASA centers that summer. I feel that our group was the best trained lecturers ever to begin the program.

Following my "internship" in Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina, I reported to Mike Donahue at NASA's Western Operations Office (WOO) in Santa Monica, California. I spent three or four weeks in additional training in the office and at various contractors in the Los Angeles area while awaiting the return of "my" Spacemobile from Hawaii. My first tour on the lecture circuit was to San Diego with Jack Bannister and George Lewis. We were making a presentation in an elementary school there on November 22, 1963, when the principal interrupted the program and told us we would have to leave because President Kennedy had just been shot in Dallas.

After about six months at WOO, I transferred to Ames Research Center and spent the remainder of my Spacemobile career (Until June 1969) working for Garth Hull and traveling the states of California (northern), Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Alaska. Our territory might not have been the most heavily populated in the U.S. but it was by far the largest area. We wore out more Spacemobiles than any other region. Donovan Fandre, George Lewis, Warren Bartanen, Jim Boyle, Bill Horvath, and Rod Hisken, were the other spacemobilers assigned to Ames while I was there.

Early in my tenure, even though we were assigned to a certain NASA center, we were still scheduled and controlled from Washington. This was an exciting time because one day you might be in California and then you would get a phone call to be in Michigan the next day. We did so much traveling around the country by air that each lecturer had his (all male back then) own Airline Travel Card.

Some of my fondest remembrances are:

1. Spending the entire month of August each year at the Pacific Science Center in Seattle (the perfect training ground for new lecturers).
2. The change over from only making auditorium presentations to visiting science and math classes after the auditorium presentation.
3. The tremendous acceptance and support of the NASA personnel at Ames.
4. Meeting many of the first astronauts as they visited Ames, and at Spacemobile conferences. This included watching Neil Armstrong fly the X-14A at Ames as he practiced vertical take-offs and landings.

5. The beginning of the summer workshop programs at colleges and universities, and the strong ties that developed between us and FAA and CAP.
6. Taking the first Spacemobile to Alaska.
7. Having two lecturers attached to each Spacemobile, and the lasting friendships that came from this.
8. The many Spacemobile conferences (except the Langley Fiasco) which took us to many of the NASA centers. (Remember the one we held in Los Angeles when a group of us flew to San Diego, rented cars, and took Herman Weinstein across the border to Tijuana?)

It was an exciting time – we were in at the beginning of mankind’s greatest adventure, and I wouldn’t trade my experiences for anything.