

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

Oklahoma State University-Stillwater, Oklahoma

## Millennial AESP by Donald Scott. Written 2001.

Millennial AESP

A Personal Reminiscence by Donald M. Scott

Ah, It's been a great 7 of 40 years....

Working with Tom, Minot, Dinah, John, Brian, Sharon, Mary Valleau, Don James and Garth Hull - and scientist/friends like Chris McKay, Mike Sims, Dee O'Hara, and all of you - has been a peak experience.

1. Sometimes the memories bring a smile.... Example:

When the Ames crew was sent to attend the GLOBE workshop in 100+ degree summer heat, I bought a straw Ranger hat to protect the dome of wisdom. The next morning, heading for the first session, I put on my hat - and saw that Tom and Minot also had their straw hats. Minot's was a planter's hat, Tom's a blues brothers' porkpie hat. All straw, each in character.

2. Sometimes, memories are of great unexpected moments:

One such - actually a group of events - grew out of the chance to work with Rick Sternbach and Mike Okuda of STAR TREK. The Orange County Space Society had connected us, so I invited Rick, Mike, and Larry and Cherie of OCSS to talk at an AESP dinner in Pasadena. No one was more surprised than I to hear Mike Okuda tell us of his inspiration by legendary spacemobiler Ben Casados.

The letter Mike wrote to Ken Wiggins, Ben, and all of us is one of the great indicators of the value of student work. He wrote:

*...I remember very clearly that day in 1965 at Aliiolani Elementary School in Honolulu, Hawaii, when my teacher, Mrs. Mita, said that something called a "spacemobile" would be coming to our school. Mr. Ben Casados gave a talk and demonstration that stayed with me through school and led me to my present career, working as (Scenic Art Supervisor and Technical Consultant) in the art department of the Star Trek television shows and movies. For that spark of inspiration, I am eternally grateful to you and your colleagues. it is clear to me that you and the members of the Spacemobile program are heroes, no less than any of the astronauts. The greatest spin-off of our space program has been its vital role in inspiring generations of young scientists, engineers, teachers, artisans, and pilots.*

3. There are many student memories. For example:

-- Chris, a first-grader in Escondido, who had never written a complete sentence before, writing an entire page under

inspiration from our program.

--Diego Rodriguez telling a reporter, "I have decided to become an astronaut. And when Diego Rodriguez makes up his mind to do something, he does it."

--Sarah, space-loving senior in rural Utah - who had turned her theatre's lighting control booth into Mission Control - doing a spontaneous little dance of celebration when I put her in the Space suit.

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Always with AESP, expect the unexpected:

At Sacred Heart High in Waikiki, all-girls, I went through the assembly quite aware of the demanding eye they gave me, this old guy.

Then told them my secret - I began teaching in a Catholic 'Girls' High School. That this was my first teaching in a Catholic Girls High since then. That I believed the students of both schools were a joy to work with, and I was glad to be able to do it again.

One of the teachers stood up. "Yes, Mr. Scott, how well I remember. And how good to see you again."

It was Claire McCaffery, leader of the first class I ever taught. Still the best group of students I ever knew.

So a few nights later, Tom and I had dinner with Claire-now-Griffin and her husband, and laughed over those old times.

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Perhaps AESP's greatest gift was this: Completion of a circle of life.

As a child, I attended first through fifth grades in two small rural Ohio schools in the Muskingum River Valley. This was country touched by Lewis on his way to meet Clark for their Expedition, country which gave us John Glenn.

Schooling was excellent. Miss Mary, First Grade Teacher, was the model for every good teacher ever acclaimed in art or politics.

There was also the Library. The Kate Love Simpson Library, in McConnelsville, had books on space. In those days, that meant science fiction books. But I believed those visions of Heinlein, Asimov, and Poul Anderson. The Librarians, sly and wise as they always are, encouraged the belief.

So one day, I went to school and told my teachers, "We're going to travel to the stars! And visit Mars! and meet other intelligent life forms! The books say so!" They patted me on the head and said, "Donnie, you're such an imaginative child."

Thus it began.

Where it led was this: In January of 2001, as we waited for the next section of the International Space Station to ride the Shuttle into orbit, AESP sent me back to those schools. Jim Fitzgerald and Ralph Winrich, distinguished colleagues from NASA-Glenn, joined me.

The three of us wandered paths of my childhood. "You grew up in a Norman Rockwell painting," Ralph said, and he was right.

Then Jim and I taught the children of the Space Age at the schools in Stockport and McConnelsville. After, we visited with Bruce and Kay Dye. Kay is now Librarian at the Kate Love Simpson Library, and as sly and wise as the first I ever met.

Before we went to the school, I visited Miss Mary in the hospital. She is 93, and not well, but still strong and determined. We shared an almost mystical truth, that I had started with her, and now Jim and I were back for her, to teach other students in the classroom where she taught me. Much of what we said and did shall remain private, but I am certain you may imagine some of it.

Miss Mary once said, when asked the secret of teaching, "I always took them as I found them. Then I took them as far as I could."

Miss Mary took me as far as she could. That brought me back to her, and to Windsor Elementary School in Stockport, Ohio. Now the circle is complete.

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Other memories, which warm like good single malt or cafe mocha or Sattui shared with friends....

The First Friday - TGIF's, Cupertino with Minot, John, Tom.

Sitting in the Outpost with Astronaut Shep Shepard and Cosmonaut Solly, and Ron and Dennis and Brian and ....too many beers....talking about space travel.

Standing in line at 1:00 am at the KSC gift shop, all the others members of the Russian Space Agency here to see a Shuttle launch ("We saw a launch at Baikonur yesterday!" said one).

Sharing a bus ride to Shuttle launch site with new AESPers, one of whom, Katrina, would become a fast friend...

Meeting with the entire Congressional delegation from Montana to talk about Space Education.

Teaching kids in Alzada, Montana, where they combined 6 schools in order to have 29 students.

Touring Onizuka Space Center with Director Linda Tashima.

Of another dance, in a Stillwater winter, as Octavia and Pam celebrated life.

Watching teacher Bob Curry discover a Hadrosaurus skull at his Montana dig.

Driving down innumerable roads (Oh, the roads!) - through flooded desert streams, Montana blizzards, mountain-lioned sagebrush, the sweetly flowered spring of the California coast. Finding rest, nourishment, friends of the road everywhere - Las Vegas, Philadelphia, Washington, Hollywood, Scottsdale, San Francisco, Waikiki. Deer Lodge, Red Lodge, Trona, Two Dot, Panaca, Pintura, Browse, Beaver, Makoshika, McConnelville, Moenave, Moenkopi, Second Mesa, Winnemucca.

Talking with McMurtry.

CONTACT.

The Red Iguana, Farr's Ice Cream Parlor, The Far Western Tavern, Bernardo's Ice Cream Parlor, Buster's, The Howard House, Musso and Frank's, the Italian Garden Ristorante, Mario's, The Beanery.

Tom and Lily's, Pete and Dinah's, Minot and Sydney's, Mexican with Mary. Tables with the comfort of friends.

(Whose turn to buy the Margaritas, Les?)

La Quinta, Best Western, the Rodeway in Boise, the Ilima, the Country Inn, the County Inn, Ameritel. No more chains - Mission Inn, the Sacajawea, the Josephine, the Coleman-Fee (and Minot got the best room, as it should be.), Bowlings' Place. Waikiki Beach (remember those Mai Tai's, Tom?), Moss Beach (Steve in a Ranger's hat); Casa Bandini (Minot, Garth, Sydney, and someone named Margarita); The Feast On the Roof Overlooking The Capitol; Patrick and I at the President's Lounge in the Mission Inn; seafood feasts in Pismo with Sharon, at Candler's with the group, with Tom at Sam Choy's where the valet was Story Musgrave's son.

And Applebee's.

Yes, It's been a great 7 of 40 years.

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Dag Hammerskold once wrote, "Never judge the height of a mountain until you reach its summit. Then you will see how low it is."

So what to do in the next 40 years?

The Lewis and Clark Project, for one thing.

Lewis and Clark also explored within the Jeffersonian Vision. They accomplished a scientific exploration of the highest value, but they also had moments of great fulfillment of that vision. On the Pacific coast, deciding what to do, they held an election among the Corps of Discovery in which all members - including York and Sakagawea - voted. After the return to St. Louis, Clark - following Jefferson's vision of a good education for all children - educated Sakagawea's children.

The Expedition was also a model of scientific exploration and the wise use of technology in order to understand geography. We can learn from them how to do Exploration right, and how to do it within the context of American, Jeffersonian, values.

So as the new Millennium, and the Next Forty Years, begin, AESP begins the development of a new project which will help students and teachers learn the similarities between explorations of the Corps of Discovery, and NASA's Exploration of Mars. This, done in support of students, teachers, and parents, and through them the American Public school; thus we do our best work, and work best within the ideals and values of people like Thomas Jefferson.

The members of the new Corps of Discovery -- Chris-who-now-writes, Diego Rodriguez, Mike Okuda, Sarah, the children of Stockport, Montana kids studying Lewis and Clark -- and all the other students we teach -- will help us continue our work for the next 40 years, and beyond. To Mars.

Beyond, to the stars.

J. Michael Straczynski writes:

... Ask ten different scientists about the environment, population control, genetics and you'll get ten different answers, but there's one thing every scientist on the planet agrees on.

Whether it happens in a hundred years or a thousand years or a million years, eventually our Sun will grow cold and go out. When that happens, it won't just take us. It'll take Marilyn Monroe and Lao-Tzu, Einstein, Morobuto, Buddy Holly, Aristophanes .. and all of this .. all of this was for nothing, unless we go to the stars. ...

Babylon 5  
J. Michael Straczynski

That is what our work is, for the last 40 years and the next 400: To get those children to the stars, through our support of the American Public schools, whatever the difficulties. . . Make no mistake about it, either - whether this program goes west or not, these things will be done.

And we'll have a little Spacemobiler fun along the way.

Thanks for a wonderful time, colleagues. See you at Applebee's.

Ad Astra Per Educare.