

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

Oklahoma State University-Stillwater, Oklahoma

## The Small World of Spacemobile by Suzanne Kinnison. Written 2001.

The Small World of Spacemobile  
By Suzanne Kinnison

I am here because of a brochure, and the town of Dunsmuir, California.

I received a NASA Educational Workshop brochure at the Challenger Learning Center Conference in Denver in 1996. On the outside chance that they would choose a teacher from a small, private school in New Mexico, I filled out the paperwork, and mailed it in on the very last day.

I attended NEWMAST at JPL in 1997. There I received a brochure on the AESP program. I decided that my small, private school needed to make a name for itself, so we invited Norm Poff to do a NASA AESP Teacher Workshop at the school. During a lull in the conversation, we visited about what a cool job it was, to have a space suit and moon rock, and take them to classrooms. We kept in touch, and right after my husband moved to the DC area to take his new job, Norm contacted me, saying that Goddard had an AESP position open.

The rest is history; a short personal history of miles traveled, teachers met, and students inspired: all with my own space suit and moon rocks to share.

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On my very first day on the contract (which was a travel day through the St. Louis Airport in a snow storm-- but that's another story!) I came face to face with the smallness of our planet:

While visiting with my new colleagues at Mexico Joe's in Stillwater, a man at the table mentioned that he had trained for his cross-country bicycle trip in the town of Dunsmuir, California. That's the little town in which I grew up. It has about 2300 people, and still doesn't have a stop light. No one just casually mentions Dunsmuir. I asked him when he lived there, where he taught, and found out that he was Mr. Jim Fitzgerald, a teaching colleague of my mother's -- and the only reason he had not become my teacher was a switch of the faculty, to even out the genders at the 5th and 6th grade level. My mom and Mr. Fitzgerald traded classes the year I moved from 5th to 6th grade, meaning I had my mom as my history teacher for 2 years, and I was never one of Mr. Fitzgerald's students.

Needless to say, Jim and I were stunned to meet again after nearly 25 years, much to the delight of the rest of the group.

I guess it says something about Dunsmuir Elementary School!

