

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

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## Inns and Outs by Stewart Tinsman. Written 2001.

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By Stewart Tinsman

I was the fifth Spacemobile hire coming to work in Washington, DC in July 1961. Cox, Bartram, Krebs, and Callow were already on the road. Big John Nesbit from Massachusetts joined me and before the end of July we were delivering lectures in the Northeast and then toured the country. John Sims and Everett Collin were in charge under Jim Bernardo...two finer men you could not meet than John and Ev. The Spacemobile program would never have been possible without John's foresight and his faith in all the Spacemobilers, and Ev's operational know how. A word about John — In my book and most of us, I believe, realized what a leader John was—he inspired, encouraged creative thinking, seldom said no, just said, "try it!" He inspired loyalty and perfection; he was fun to be with—a most successful mentor! And true friend!

After 3 1/2 months on the road through 13 states from Rhode Island to Texas, to California to Idaho, I took a leave of absence to travel around the world and Miles Doherty took my place with Big John. There were many highlights and laughs during those months—but as we learned later, a 16-year old boy attended our lecture in Hot Springs, Arkansas— it was Bill Clinton! He maintained that that introduction to space science and travel made him aware and supportive of NASA's Programs.

Those were heady days—space was new —everyone was interested—college professors, students, elementary and secondary students and teachers, the general public couldn't get enough of the original program and lecture. Standing ovations were the rule. This Spacemobile program made space real—not just abstract reports in the newspapers—for everyone who attended and worked with us. By the time I returned to the program in September 1962 we must have had 40 Spacemobilers! In October John Sims asked me to head up the "International Spacemobile Program" using the experience I had gained in my round the world trip working with ministries in education in developing countries. The first experience was rough. Joe Anctil had been sent to Paris to set up Spacemobile lectures in the Palais de la Decouverti. He hired some French actors to do the program in French. Although the mannerisms of the actors might have made American audiences wonder, the French loved the program—a packed house at every lecture (There were no question periods!!) The successes and mistakes of that program helped us to make the international program a success—Ellwood Johnson, Herman Oberle, Myles Doherty, John Nesbit, Ernie Gibson and I worked 12 to 14 hours a day launching and running the training of lecturers and working with NASA's legal office and John Sims to set up trips to the countries NASA selected. The purpose of the program was not only to build friendships for the United States—by lecturing around the countries, but in most cases to build acceptance for the NASA tracking stations in India, Nigeria, Brazil, Argentina, etc. — Myles Doherty, Ellwood Johnson, Guy Johnson, John Twitty, and others served NASA well overseas in 1963-64.

One unfortunate incident occurred, Jim Bernardo was against the international program and John Sims tried to help him see the advantage to NASA. Jim had never been overseas, so I was told. John convinced him to visit a program in Yugoslavia (why that country, I will never know—still communist under Tito.) When Jim got off the plane the Yugoslav secret police

took him for someone else and put him in custody, for hours of interrogating him. When he finally convinced the authorities, with the help of the American Consulate, to release him, he got on the next plane home! Needless to say, that episode did not help John Sims or the international program.

During 1963-64 Ellwood Johnson and I took an apartment in Southwest Washington. We were soon joined by John Nesbitt, Myles Doherty, Herman Oberle, Guy Johnson, Frank Zucarelli, Al Hulstrunk and others as they came and went through Washington. The apartment was nicknamed "Nomad's Inn." Long conversations into the wee hours of the night, sharing idea and improving upon the lectures—not to mention the every afternoon happy hours for spacemobilers and apartment residents alike!!! In early 1964 NASA decided to regionalize the Spacemobile Program and later that year as tracking station contracts were signed, the international program ended. Many Spacemobilers, Elva Bailey, Dick Crone, Jack Callow, Garth Evans, Mike Donahoe and most others were assigned to Space Flight Centers where the programs were enhanced and became true educational programs working in schools throughout the regions.

Those first years were exhilarating, exciting, meaningful—a true comradery grew among the "old timers." To this day, 40 years later, those friendships still thrive. Led by the inspiration of John Sims, I don't know of a group that was more dedicated to a cause—helping the schools, colleges, and general public to better understand space science and exploration, to tell the NASA Story—for peaceful purposes—for all mankind! It was an honor to be a small part of that program and have loved every minute of it then and the get-togethers since!

There are many many stories to tell—I'd love to hear the current Spacemobilers tell of their programs and fun times— and we older Spacemobilers would love to share the fun and experiences of the first three to four years!