

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

Oklahoma State University-Stillwater, Oklahoma

The Spacemobile Family by Ann Callow (for Jack Callow). Written 2001.

The Spacemobile Family
By Ann Callow (for Jack Callow)

I am Ann Callow and am writing for my husband Jack (John R) Callow because he is legally blind and not able to write or type. So I hope you will forgive me if I do not write this as if he were dictating it.

Jack was Studio Teacher for the Greater Washington ETV Association in Washington, DC teaching students in area schools via TV. His program was called Time for Science. He invited a representative from the education office to be on the program, and he in turn urged Jack to become a Spacemobile Lecturer. At the time there was a Spacemobile at the museum in Pennsylvania and I believe there were two men assigned there. Bill Day and Jack were the first two traveling Spacemobilers. Jack started in May 1961. Their first assignment was in Oklahoma. They traveled in the west and the tour ended in August. Bill Day decided to leave the program and return to his home Wyoming. Educational Services was the Contractor for the Spacemobile program, Herman Weinstein was administrator.

(Here is the anecdote.) Since it was the end of the tour Jack was allowed to take his break there and our 18 month old son and I were allowed to meet him in Denver and return with him in the Spacemobile. There was space behind the seats to lay a blanket on the floor and David played and took naps there. We visited the Days before we left and they took us to what was said to be a very famous steak house. It was in the middle of nowhere! The trip back was a sightseeing jaunt for me. Clearly the vehicle wasn't powerful enough for hilly roads. The huge semi-tractor trailers used to pass us on hills because we were going so slowly. That is one of the major changes that were made in the years to come – larger vehicles with more power. (I believe David and I were the first and last of family members to travel with a lecturer.)

Clearly there is much more information out there to transmit to classroom science teachers. Teachers in general must still be intimidated by science and could benefit from workshops. TV seems to be doing more to teach children about science, but I don't notice that children are responding.

TV presentations were a part of the job and an opportunity to reach the members of the community where they were. Among the presentations were those in Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Roanoke, Virginia; West Virginia; Chicago, Illinois; Madison and Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Cincinnati, Ohio. They were presented through educational and commercial outlets, mostly on prime time. While this part of the job may sound exciting, Spacemobilers often spoke of themselves as "truck drivers." They might arrive at a destination and find no one to help them unload the heavy equipment after driving miles to get there.

Their job was important that because it opened a window to the Space Program many children and their teachers would never have heard about for years to come. Jack continued to work at NASA Goddard Space Center from 1967 until 1972. Jack continued his love of science and astronomy by teaching in middle school, Manatee Community College, and serving for a few years as Planetarium Director at Bishop Museum and Planetarium in Bradenton, Florida. He worked with outside

groups at rocket shoots. Now his son has taught his son to fly and love rockets too. We only have to walk out in our front yard on a clear night to see the space station shining above. With its new wings it looks like a silver bird. The space program continues to supply information and scientific discoveries that help the universe as a whole.

There are many pleasant memories of the men and their families we met. Rich Crone, Ellwood Johnson, Elva Bailey, and Jack Bannister, are special. We miss Richard Rice to no end. Lloyd Aronsen. Lynn Bondurant, Bob Bush, Myles Doherty, Ernie Gibson, Bernie McColgan, Frank Lucarelli, John Nesbit, Bob Perry, and Stu Tinsman are remembered fondly and we hope some of them will make the conference.

We wanted very much to come but decided it would be too difficult a trip for us. But Jack will be thinking of you.