

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

Oklahoma State University-Stillwater, Oklahoma

## Murphy's Law of Travel by Les Gold. Written 2001.

Murphy's Law of Travel  
By Les Gold

I started working with Spacemobile because I was laid off as a teacher in New York City. I had taught High School Earth Science, General Science, Biology, Oceanography, and Physics. 30,000 teachers were laid off that year. I contacted the State Education Department in Albany N.Y. about other teaching positions in the state. They later contacted me to let me know about an opening with NASA for an "Aerospace Education Specialist", at first I said that I was only a science teacher that I couldn't even fake being an aerospace education specialist but it was my only lead so I figured I might as well check it out.

A few weeks later I received a call from Dick Crone, at Goddard, to come down in two days, on Friday for an interview, they would train me. So I headed out on Thursday and on the way my car broke down. It was a chevy Nova (in spanish that means no go). I had blown the engine on the New Jersey Turnpike and of course there were no state troopers patrolling that day, although I did obtain a great sun tan. After 5:00 p.m. I finally flagged down a state trooper who called AAA for me. I was finally towed into a gas station and the mechanic attempted to start the car, but only water came out of the engine. The mechanic proceeded to tell me that it should be gasoline not water in the engine. I told him I understood what should be happening, but then he said "At least you have your choice for tonight". I asked him what he meant, he said there were two motels across from the gas station so I had my choice as to where I would sleep that night.

I told him I had to get to D.C. by morning and he laughed. He said there was no way I would make D.C. by morning. But after a little thought an idea came that would eventually motivate the making of the movie "Plains, Trains and Automobiles". I would take a taxi from the gas station to Trenton. Catch a train that would take me to Philadelphia, that night Amtrak was only 4 hours late so it gave me time reserve a rent a car in D.C. and to catch the train into D.C. I finally arrived at 2:15 a.m. But now to find a hotel.

A police officer outside the train station suggested that I try the hotel Commodore, the big building outside of the terminal. I looked up, there are no big buildings in D.C. (not when you come from New York City) The hotel was only 6 stories, my apartment building back home was taller than that but they were booked up. So were several other hotels until I finally found one, i took the room. The next morning I woke up, shaved, showered, and other things and picked up the rent a car and checked into a more reasonably priced hotel.

I made it to the space flight center on time for the interview. Dick Crone met me in the lobby and brought me to the office and started the usual small talk that relaxes someone before an interview like "Would you care for a cup of Coffee" which I said "YES" to. and he asked "And by the way how was your trip down here?" I proceeded to tell him but in a very optimistic way. He immediately called Elva Bailey and said "Bailey you got to hear this story" Elva Bailey then had me recite this story to several other people he found and called into his office. And now you know the rest of the story.

