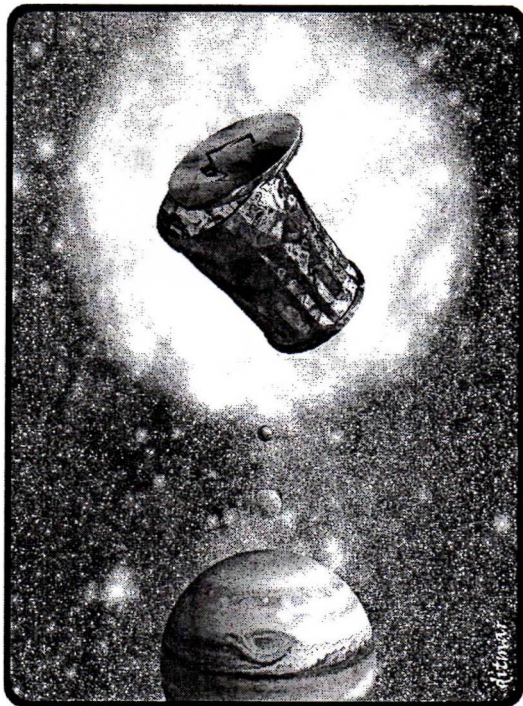


Out of the Bin



'Space Bin' Artwork by Ditmar

Issue #16 September 2003

A Newsletter from MERV BINNS
(edited and produced by Helena Binns)
PO Box 315, Carnegie 3163, Victoria, Australia

Phone: (03)9502 8818 e-mail: mervbinns@optusnet.com.au

Dear Readers,

We have a phone message machine. It is getting a little bit dated but it works well. When the phone rings my recorded answer sometimes comes on rather quickly. Consequently some callers think that we are not there to answer and they unfortunately do not give us any time to get to the phone from another room and answer it. Even if you do not wish to leave a message we would appreciate it if you did at least hang on for a few minutes and give us time to get to it if we are at home. We leave it switched on all the time as we may be outside or otherwise not in earshot. If we do not answer please do leave a message saying that you have called. Knowing we have missed calls is most frustrating, as that is what we have the answering machine for.

Waiting for photos and lack of finance delayed the most recent issues of *Out of the Bin* and also our other projected publications such as my memoirs, but we will get there.

MY CAR



Merv with the old Ford Fairmont station wagon

In 1976 my father and I bought a Ford Fairmont station wagon, a 1975 V8 that had only done 1500 km. It served us and me in particular, very well in everyday use and in holiday trips and especially in my garden work, which contributed to its final dilapidated condition. But as I have said in previous missives I have been still driving it but it has steadily been deteriorating with rusty bodywork and more recently mechanical problems. The cost of replacing it was beyond me.



Merv fits the new car and trailer between the gateposts (only just!)

However miracles do happen and an old friend has helped me to get a 1999 Holden Commodore white wagon and it is simply heaven driving it, or it was until I scraped it against the front gatepost as I was backing it in. Partly because I had only had it a short time, problems developed with the insurance and it was a worse job than it looked at first. However that has been sorted out after hanging on the phone on and off for almost two hours and on "hold" most of that time. As I said the old Ford has served me very well and I felt very sad to see it being towed away by the wreckers. Over the years I have been a very lucky man with opportunities to survive comfortably, but once again I have managed to screw up. Things will happen I guess and you just have to make the most of situations that you find yourself in. But despite it all, I have in many ways been a very lucky man and managed to get over problems with the help of friends and just sheer luck. "What Me Worry?" to quote MAD magazine's Alfred E. Neuman but I always have - it runs in the family - though I shouldn't. All the problems that arise seem to, often miraculously, work themselves out in due course

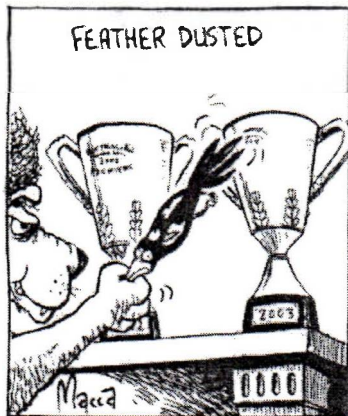
FOOTBALL



Merv on AFL Grand Final Day 2003, wearing a hand-painted Collingwood tie that he has had for about 40 years. (Photo by Ditmar)

For as long as I can remember I have been a supporter of the Collingwood Australian Rules football team. My parents lived and worked in the Melbourne inner suburb of Collingwood in their early years and I used to visit relatives with my mother for many years that were avid Magpie supporters of course. They won the Premiership about ten times before I was born or when I was too young to appreciate it, but they had a long run of failures up until their win in 1953. I used to go to matches during the 1950s and 1960s. But my last match was a Grand Final, which they lost, in the early 1970s. After that my business, Space Age Books was taking up all of my time and I have never been to a match again. But I have always taken a lot of interest in the Magpies, listened to the radio descriptions and watched the games on the TV and I was very pleased to see them win one more Premiership for my father in 1990 before he passed on a few years later. It was very frustrating to see them lose so many finals matches during the 1960s and 1970s by small margins in most cases and they lost the final again last year against Brisbane, who are now coached by the man who took Collingwood to winning the Grand Final in 1990. They won a place in the Grand Final again this year and again against the Brisbane Lions, who incidentally were the Melbourne suburb's Fitzroy team, which relocated to Brisbane a few years ago. But they blew it again and to my utter dismay were thoroughly beaten by the Lions.

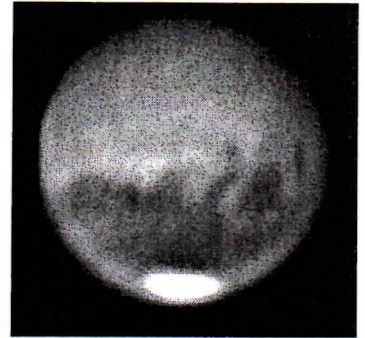
We watched the semi-final and the Grand Final with Dick Jenssen on his large screen digital TV and it was great to see the first big win in the Semi against Port Adelaide, but not so good for the final with Collingwood losing, again! Ah well, "back to the drawing board!" (training track) until next year.



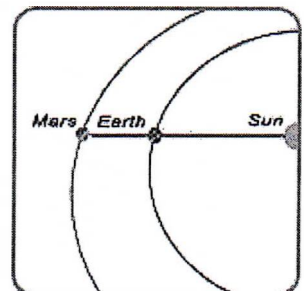
Cartoon by 'Macca' from the Melbourne 'Age' newspaper

MARS ATTACKS

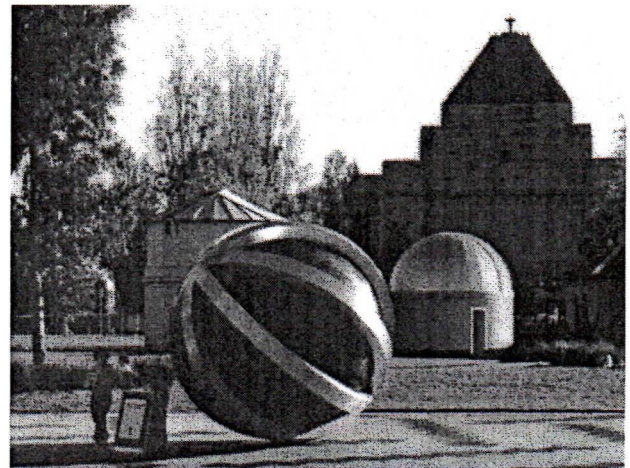
I am quite sure that pretty well everybody on this planet was looking up into the sky on August 27th and thereabouts, when our neighboring world, the red planet MARS came as close as it ever gets to us. In fact, it hasn't been quite this close for the last 60,000 years, though there have been numerous 'oppositions' as Earth travels around the sun in its yearly orbit and catches up with the red planet every 780 days as Mars moves more slowly along its more distant orbit. (An opposition is when the Sun, the Earth and Mars are in a straight line, with Mars showing us its facing surface fully illuminated by sunlight like the full Moon.) On this occasion the two planets are particularly close because the orbit of Mars, like those of all the other planets, is not a perfect circle, and the Earth just happens to have caught up to it when it is at its closest to the Sun and therefore to the Earth as well.



MARS photo taken August 16th 2003 by Vic and Jen Winter, Charles Douglas Observatory, Mo. USA



Opposition Geometry



The telescope houses of the Old Melbourne Observatory against the backdrop of the Shrine of Remembrance

(Photo by Helena)

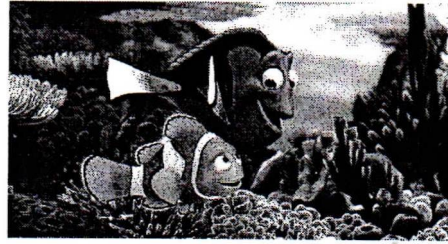
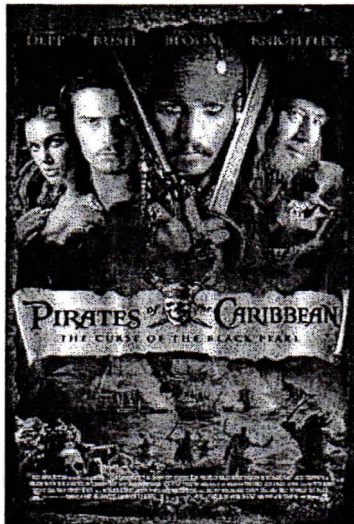
Crowds of people got out with their telescopes or took advantage of invitations from people or organizations with telescopes to join them. Helena, a past member of the Astronomical Society of Victoria, managed to get us an invitation to attend the Melbourne Observatory near the Botanical Gardens and yes, we did see the red planet in all its glory through the telescopes (the 12-inch reflector and the 8-inch refractor) on a cold but clear night, the 22nd of August. Though it was not as spectacular a sight as in NASA photos and those taken by very large telescopes, we were able to see the disc of the planet with its distinctively orange colour, the diminishing South Polar Cap (tilted toward us in the Martian southern hemisphere's summer) and a large dark blue-grey surface feature, similar to the photo above, but with the planet looking a lot smaller and brighter, and the features fuzzier due to the seeing conditions that night.

MOVIES WE HAVE SEEN

In August we received an invitation, via fan friends in the Melbourne SF Club, to *CYPHER*, which was screened at the NOVA Theatre in Carlton. The movie we found interesting but nothing remarkable. It starred Jeremy Northam who I do not recall seeing before and Lucy (Charlie's Angel) Liu. You might call it SF but it is more into the category of techno-thriller. A plot that you may expect to come across on *Outer Limits* perhaps, with a guy being brainwashed by electronic means into believing he is someone else and being sent out on rather insignificant commercial spying missions. An attempt to include some humor was half-hearted and the surprise ending was not much of a surprise as we twigged to it well before the end. A night's light entertainment but I am glad that we did not have to pay for it. After the movie we visited a rather interesting nearby restaurant, 'Brunetti', which had on display the most incredible range of cakes and pastries. We controlled ourselves and only consumed some great coffee and a fruit torte. Aside from the cramped seating conditions we would recommend Brunetti most highly.

I have always liked watching police procedural type thriller movies, but I never set out to see *NARC*. I just wanted to go to a movie on the day and although there were a few others on that I would have preferred to see, they were not scheduled at times I could watch them. (Helena, having some idea of what it was going to be like, refused to see it.) *NARC* stars Ray Liotta as the older experienced cop and Jason Patric as the younger man who has been on suspension. The younger man is given the job of solving the murder of another cop on the pretext that it will get him in the good books again, but he is being used by the higher-ups and he is not really expected to get anywhere with the investigation. As you may expect though he does and it all comes together in a well contrived, unexpected and very ironic way. It is set in a very tough environment and in a very grotty neighborhood which gives this movie a lot of realism and probably too nasty for most moviegoers but very good for the type of movie it is. Split-screen filming added to the tension and excitement, but it was used very sparingly.

We both got to see *PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: The Curse of the Black Pearl*, starring John Depp, Orlando Bloom and Geoffrey Rush among others. As a kid, pirate stories and movies always fascinated me and a large format, full colour comic book called *Middy Malone* that I was given as a ten-year-old or thereabouts, certainly encouraged my interest. In due course I enjoyed movies such as Erroll Flynn's *CAPTAIN BLOOD* and Tyrone Power's *THE BLACK SWAN*, not to forget a few years later Burt Lancaster's *THE CRIMSON PIRATE* and various other minor pirate and sailing ship movies, such as the *Mutiny on the Bounty* incarnations, over the years. I must have seafarers amongst my previous lives, as I loved other tales about the big sailing ships in the Nelson era and the war between Britain and the French of the early 19th century. I believe Russell Crowe's next film to be released is set in that era. *The Curse of the Black Pearl* is a great fantasy romp that while making fun of all the pirate movies ever made, still comes over as a very enjoyable adventure and I wholeheartedly recommend it.



The "must see" movie breaking box office records is *FINDING NEMO* which is a Disney animated movie using the Pixar technique, as did *Toy Story*. The animation and the colour are absolutely incredible and it is a cute little tale that "kids" of all ages can enjoy. As seems to be the plan these days, the voices of the characters are those of high profile actors (most of them Australian). See it even if you normally have no interest in animated movies, just to see what the state of the art is today.

They say that sequels are never as good as the originals. I do not always agree with that, particularly when you need to look at the whole sequence to fully appreciate the tale, as you have to do with *TERMINATOR 3: Rise of the Machines*. It stars would-be governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger. As far as Special effects go, the second *Terminator* movie was great and for that reason alone you could say that it was better than the first but definitely a good double. However with number three they were laboring to carry on the story and bring it to what seemed to be a logical if, if a bit weak, conclusion. The SFX were as you may expect even more spectacular than the second movie but the plot left a lot to be desired. Another attempt is made to stop the young hero from reaching his goal as the leader of the opposition to the robots, having to deal with a new Terminator robot in human female form and even more powerful than the second one. But in fact as fate would have it he does actually attain that position with the help of old Arnie again and a lady who was destined to share his destiny with him, as the movie ends. So is that the end of the *Terminator* movies or can we expect them to carry on and show the remnants of humanity battle it out with the machines? Time will tell, but I have a feeling that this really is the end. (Since I wrote that, newly elected California governor Schwarzenegger is now being referred to as "The Governator"! And he has sworn off further movies for the duration of his term in office.)

The second movie starring Angelina Jolie as Lara Croft, *TOMB RAIDER II* was a little disappointing and quite simply not as good as the first one. The action seemed to be a combination of *James Bond* and *Indiana Jones* adventures and did not have the originality of *Tomb Raider 1*. However it undeniably does have its moments, with many spectacular jaunts and scenes and is certainly worth a look.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Despite my being "retired" I am still a quite busy boy. I still do some gardening work three, sometimes four mornings a week as well as looking after the large garden around the house we rent and I do a lot of cooking. So in the evenings I feel too tired to do much but watch the box, falling asleep in the middle of shows quite often now. I do very little reading and letters and fanzines get stacked up to look through and mention in *Out of the Bin* when a rainy Sunday comes along or I simply say I have to get an issue done, like now. I now have the time to at least acknowledge the letters and zines we have received from friends, so here I go.

Following the passing of John Foyster and the memorial we reported recently, fanzine producer extraordinaire Bruce Gillespie sent us *WAKE UP YOU LOT!* which is a tribute to John. On the cover it features an irreverent photo of John taken by me at the *Monoclave* convention.

It covers the memorial get together held in St Kilda in May, articles by Bruce and Dick Jenssen relating how knowing John Foyster changed their lives, plus some short bits of John's featuring as Bruce puts it some of his "greatest hits/knockout punches". John's partner **Yvonne Rousseau** produced the full text of the obituaries given at the Linden Gallery, StKilda on May 11th. All round John's friends have endeavored to pay tribute to him with our publications and our American friend **Michael W. Waite's** Number 14 issue of his zine **TRIAL AND AIR** also pays tribute to JMF. Michael has reprinted sections of John's zine **SATURA** from July 1964, including the front cover on his front cover. A remembrance by Dick Jenssen and the one by Bruce Gillespie are enhanced by a great range of photographs of John and friends over the years, beautifully reproduced by Michael. This is a fanzine for the times! The best looking fanzine I have ever seen, with Michael taking full advantage of what can be done with publishing on your computer. As to be expected, being an American zine, a large part of the issue is devoted to the American fan who passed away in February this year, **Harry Warner Jr.** Marvelous cover illustrations from pro-zines mentioned adorn the pages of reprints of Harry's writings and more. **Dick Jenssen's** twelve-page contribution to *Trial and Air*, **THE WORD AND THE IMAGE**, relates his personal relationship to SF. He tells us how he became interested in it and how the visual image of comic strips which introduced him to SF, as it did myself, the movies and the writing are all a part of the SF he appreciates. Fully illustrated with comic and magazine covers in full colour, plus books and movie posters. He also sent Michael a photo of Helena and me at our fifth wedding anniversary party, which Michael has beautifully reproduced, in glorious full colour. Michael also manages to reproduce the covers of the zines he has received from friends. There is no doubt that it is about time **TRIAL AND AIR** was nominated for a Hugo. It is a gem!

Bruce Gillespie's THE GREAT COSMIC DONUT OF LIFE # 37 includes a larger version of a talk he gave to the Spaced Out SF Club, detailing his personal introduction to science fiction, plus Dick Jenssen's article again, *The Word and the Image*, plus lots of book reviews. Bruce caught up with a few old movies in 2002. I notice in his favorite films seen for the first time last year. I do not always agree with Bruce's likes of films and in fact we often totally disagree as with Gene Hackman's *The Conversation*, which I disliked intensely but all the movies he lists that I know I agree with him as being first class movies, including *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. The ones I do not know though, about six out of twenty, might be another kettle of fish. Thanks Bruce for sending me your reprinted version of Don Ashby's story of the infamous "slan shack" *The Magic Pudding Club*, with Chris Johnson's, as always, glorious illustrations. I would dearly like to reprint a selection of Chris' artwork some time that he did for me, Space Age, ASFN, Aussiecon One and others.

Bill Wright's INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP June 2003, displaying the inevitable Ditmar cover illustration, includes his very comprehensive trip report to Swancon last Easter. Then more funny and unusual reports on a wide range of things ranging from protecting frogs in Europe to collecting for the Royal Children's Hospital, which I am sure he handled very well, as people who know Bill, know that he can be very persuasive. A unique zine like no other that I know. Bill recently visited Thailand with some friends and sent us a post card. Thanks Bill. No doubt we will see a comprehensive report in IRS in due course.

Chris Nelson's MUMBLINGS FROM MUNCHKINLAND. *The only West Australian Fanzine produced in Fiji*, #21, has a very fancy embossed cover with at least one very questionable symbol on it. Ok Chris, I know the swastika has other much older origins. In this issue he reports on his family trip to Fiji, plus Joe and Gay Haldeman's report on their stay in Samoa. A brief little zine but quite interesting for sure.

Thanks to **Edwina Harvey** for sending us **THE AUSTRALIAN SF BULLSHEET** now up to 19 issues since taking over from Marc Ortlieb. Details on fannish events and all are very much appreciated.

Geoff Allshorn sent us a copy of the Spaced Out SF Club's magazine **DIVERSE UNIVERSE** Number 17 with articles about women in SF, interviews with authors, book and film reviews and all in all an interesting and wide coverage. One small thing I noticed was a reference to Marc Ortlieb's publication "Australian SF News", which was ceasing to be published. Now people, that is doubly incorrect in that ASFN is my publication which is joined with **THYME** published by Alan Stewart. Marc's zine was *The Australian SF Bullsheet*, which you see above is now being edited by Edwina Harvey and is still being published.

Thank you to **John Hertz** for continuing to send us **VANAMONDE**, up to #515 to hand and for his letter of July 9th. John includes comments from fans all over and I was pleased to note that the late Bob Smith was one of his correspondents. It is nice to see comments by famous fans and I even know some of them personally, but not having seen the original APA-L contributions, which John is commenting on makes it hard to appreciate all the comments.

Two letters commenting on **OUT OF THE BIN** from **Tim Marion** in May were very much appreciated. We share interest in SF&F movies and TV and he comments on **STAR TREK** in that the entire franchise is in trouble. Not surprising after *Enterprise*. I did not think the last movie *Nemesis* was all that bad though, despite it being a box office disaster. The *Official Star Trek Facts File* magazine that we have been getting for some years now has finally ceased publication after 304 Issues and they did do a bit on *Enterprise*. By the way Tim or other USA friends, is there anything new in SF on TV or in view? We are finally catching up with *Farscape* on the cable after free to air channel 9 ditched it and never screened all the episodes and withdrew as a producer, which of course led to its demise. Other SF&F things appear on cable along with reruns of all the things we know and love seeing again, but most are hardly worth watching and we give them a miss.

Our old friend **Noel Kerr** commented on *OoB* in a letter in July and sent me some copies of articles he has done on jazz, wine tastings and other personal memoirs. Noel is very interested in old movie theatres and has written articles about many of the old theatres around Melbourne. He also bemoans the lack of response from readers. Our situation is quite different to the APAs such as APA-L as I am sure John Hertz will agree. Noel and his wife Irene lost one of their spaniel dogs, Toby, recently after he succumbed to a long illness. I have lost a number of dog pets during my life, some old like Toby and one very young and one cat and it really cuts you up, so no more. I do get a bit of pleasure from other peoples pets such as garden customers and our friends John and Truda Straede's menagerie of cats and dogs. Old Toby always made a fuss of me when I visited Noel and Irene and I do sympathise with them over their loss. Thanks for the old newspaper cuttings, Noel. I will add them to my Space Age file.

Rose Mitchell sent updated details on next year's National Australian SF Convention, **CONFLUX**, which is being held in Canberra, April 23-16 2004. The Guests are Greg Benford, Sean McMullen, Harry Turtledove and Karen Herkes. For further details contact the con on www.conflux.org.au or PO Box 903, Belconnen, ACT 2616. Unless we come into a lot of money we cannot attend, but we are looking forward to the next Melbourne con, **CONTINUUM II** next year.

And as that hip, smart-talking rabbit Bugs Bunny always says, "That's all Folks!" But we hope to have at least one more issue out before Christmas.

Merv and Helena