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**I-CAR**

## BRIEFLY

### Letter to editor not from Ben

The Te Awamutu Courier apologises to Ben Farrow for publishing a letter in his name.

It has since come to our attention that he was not the author and had not given permission for the letter to be submitted in his name.

### Free veg

At your community garden (114 Downes Street), silverbeet, swiss chard, spinach and weeds are now plentiful and available for you to help Mahuika House and help yourself.

June Bright will be there each day this week watering, weeding and harvesting from 4pm if anyone would like to help or would like some of the produce.

### Wintec Expo for women

Wintec is holding 'Women Back to Work' expo this Friday from 1 — 4pm at the Burchell Pavilion.

The expo is geared towards supporting women to make the next step towards going back to work or study.

### Get active

New to Te Awamutu or want to know about local opportunities for exercise and sport?

Check out the Sport Waikato noticeboard at the Events Centre, read the column in the Te Awamutu Courier each week, visit the Information Centre, view website [www.sportwaikato.org.nz](http://www.sportwaikato.org.nz), email:

[waipadc@sportwaikato.org.nz](mailto:waipadc@sportwaikato.org.nz), phone 870 5437 or drop by the office above Te Awamutu Information Centre.

Some of the great regular opportunities include walking groups, exercise classes and Aquafit classes.

# The final frontier

## Centre explores all aspects of space

BY DEAN TAYLOR

*Space, the final frontier.* In the same year those immortal words first hit television screens one Dave Owen was born.

In the following years young Dave became a *Star Trek* fan and a life-long passion for everything to do with space travel, astronomy and science fiction was born.

Nearly 50 years later Mr Owen has combined all his passions into the Te Awamutu Space Centre.

He was running the Centre from his home, but his dream was to turn his passion into a proper business.

The new Te Awamutu Space Centre is now in the Kihikihi Presbyterian Church Hall on the corner of Lyon and Whitmore Streets.

Mr Owen says he didn't want to die wondering so, with the support of his family, the commitment was made to focus on the new venture.

At present Mr Owen is still finalising all the installations, but has also opened the doors and welcomes visitors during the school holiday period to see what it will be about.

He says a donation for entry would be appreciated.

His parents Stephanie and Bruce Owen, wife Ange Holt and their children Jess and Floyd all pitched in to tidy, clean and prepare the building and help shift in equipment and displays.

To understand what will be on display, and what interactive activities there are, we have to go back to the beginning.

Young Dave was only 3 years old when man walked on the moon, but once he was old enough to discover *Star Trek*, and other popular space-based TV shows such as *Space 1999*, *Battlestar Galactica* and *Dr Who*, along with movies such as the *Star Wars* trilogy, he was hooked.

In those pre-internet days getting information was difficult.

Schools weren't teaching much and library books were behind the times.

He does recall some of the American comics of the time having *Space Facts* — but to get himself started he wrote to the US Embassy in Wellington and asked if they had any information about space.

They did — he received a pack full of information and photos, mostly about NASA's Apollo missions. It was gold.

Dave was hooked, and he continued to learn as much as he would and collect information.



SPACE DAVE (Dave Owen) at his 'mission control' from where he can control all of his simulations and presentations related to space travel and astronomy.

■ Continued Page 3

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# Frontier Rd closed for culvert upgrade

Frontier Road is closed this week so that Waipa District Council can carry out replacement of a culvert.

The centre section of the current culvert is made of brick and in the late 1970s both ends of the culvert were extended to allow the road to be widened.

These sections are now failing, so Council will be replacing the old culvert with a new concrete version.

The new culvert will be larger to assist in heavy rainfall and will sit alongside the old culvert (which will be abandoned on completion of the works).

The old culvert is located 7 metres below the road and about 1250m west of Burns Road (adjacent to 298 Frontier Road).

This means the project has some engineering challenges as it is so deep and in difficult soil conditions.

It also goes under one of the major water mains supplying water to Te Awamutu which means very careful work is required.

Experienced contractors, Schick Construction and Cartage from Hamilton, have been awarded the tender to replace the culvert.

Due to the depth of the culvert and the size of the trench that is needed to undertake the works, Frontier Road will be closed from 8am today until 5pm on Saturday, January 31.

A detour will be signposted via Burns Road and Hawthorne Road.



**CONTRACTORS starting preparation work last week for replacing the old culvert on Frontier Road.**

# New Space Centre opens

**From Page 1**  
He says people are usually interested in astronomy or space travel — but he was, and still is, interested in both.

The advent of computing, and especially the internet, was made for Mr Owen.

He has built his other businesses and community involvement around the internet.

He also used it to feed his passion for astronomy and did online courses through recognised teaching institutions so he could keep learning.

The hobby went on the backburner for a few years while family and career took over — but it never went away.

When the family moved back to Te Awamutu in 2000 Mr Owen got serious again — doing more online courses and joining the Hamilton Astronomical Society.

He was president for a period and worked tirelessly to promote their work and improve the facilities and equipment.

In 2004 the decision was made to have a Space Centre.

Mr Owen says the Te Awamutu Space Centre and Hamilton Observatory complement each other.

“For the best view of the night sky in the Waikato, I recommend the observatory,” says Mr Owen.

“For the best displays of space travel artefacts and material, interactive activities and views of

the solar system and beyond, I recommend my Space Centre.”

One exception is daytime viewing of the sun, as Mr Owen has a particularly good solar telescope.

**“For the best displays of space travel artefacts and material, interactive activities and views of the solar system and beyond, I recommend my Space Centre.”**

DAVE OWEN  
Te Awamutu Space Centre

What sets the Space Centre apart is the collection of artefacts and memorabilia, and the technological presentations — some specially developed by Mr Owen.

The Centre has seven sections: Chronological history of space flight and exploration; The future of space flight and exploration; Our place in the Universe; Astronomy Wall of Fame; Telescope design and use; Shop/souvenirs; Seminar Centre.

Artefacts include clothing, helmets, sleeping bags etc that have been used in space missions, plus lots of reports from newspapers etc. at the time of major missions.

There is a live feed of the view of Earth from the International Space

Station.

Computers run continuous data, some is open source material that is readily available, but some is unique.

Mr Owen has used his programming skills to write programmes that take data and present it in a more graphic and understandable manner.

Mr Owen is especially proud of his Solar System Explorer, a programme he developed which anyone can operate to view any element of our solar system as if they were flying their own spacecraft — but at unheard of speeds.

And everything is completely relative to actual time and distance.

The large screen and ‘mission control’ system in the Seminar Centre can be used for a myriad of presentations and displays Mr Owen has collected.

He also uses it for question and answer sessions — as well as verbally answering questions, he has the collection available at his fingertips to enhance his answers.

The big screen is also used for live viewing of significant events, such as launches, landings etc.

Mr Owen is also open to more ideas about what people would like to see at the Te Awamutu Space Centre.

■ Visit the Centre, email info@spacecentre.nz or phone 870 1966.

## Missed the Boat for Variation 6?

From 1 January 2015, **ALL** farms using more than 15m<sup>3</sup> of water per day for milk cooling and dairy shed wash down require a resource consent.

Failure to have a consent could result in prosecution!  
For advice and assistance on where you stand call the Rural Law experts.

**Sue Garmonsway**  
Senior Associate, Gallie Miles  
Ph 07 872 0560  
Email sue@gallie.co.nz



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