

'Spaceship' lands to promote TA's Centre

BY DEAN TAYLOR

In this issue we welcome the return of the monthly 'Space Dave' column from Te Awamutu Space Centre owner Dave Owen — and there is a lot to talk about.

The first column looks at the line-up of five planets visible to the naked eye, and next month Space Dave will explain the exciting process of proving (or not) the existence of another planet in our solar system.

There have been changes at the Space Centre as well, the most notable the 'spaceship' sitting outside the main entrance.

Mr Owen says he was approached in December by Growing Spectrum owner Peter Fraser and asked if he wanted the spaceship — and he couldn't refuse.

Mr Fraser turned up with a team of helpers and installed the stainless steel ship.

Mr Owen says it has made a huge difference to the centre as it is such a visual attraction.

"More people are drawn to the centre, and lots more are just stopping for photos, but that is fine as it is all raising the profile."

Mr Fraser says he and his wife Carol were keen to help Mr Owen's business succeed.

The Te Awamutu Space Centre is the only privately owned facility of its type in New Zealand, making it a unique attribute for the district.

The Frasers could see it was a challenge to make a go of the business, but also believed it was good for the village if it was a success.

They happened to be part owners of the 'spaceship' — which was sitting in storage — and made the offer of a long-term donation to the centre.

The ship was built in 2005 for an exhibition at the Ellerslie Flower Show by InPlant and featuring a number of contributors.

The exhibit was designed by Val Glenn, who is from the Waikato, and was inspired by the story of *The War of the Worlds*.

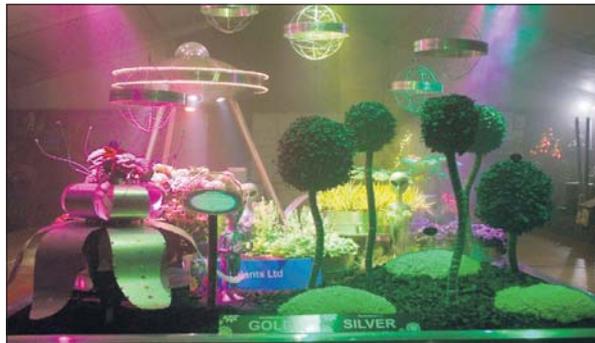
The bulk of the plants were grown by Waikato nurseries and were chosen because they were unusual and not seen before by the public — the story going that they had just landed in pods from outer space in the spaceship.

The exhibit won a Gold Award and the Judges Supreme Award for Horticultural Exhibit.

■ Te Awamutu Space Centre is located at 5 Whitmore Street, Kihikihi. Check www.spacecentre.nz for opening hours, events and resources.



TC280116DT01
TE AWAMUTU Space Centre owner Dave (Space Dave) Owen with the spaceship that has been donated to help promote the facility.



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AWARD winning InPlant 2005 Ellerslie Flower Show exhibition featuring a bespoke stainless steel 'spaceship'.

Searching for life on Mars

The late David Bowie asked the question — is there life on Mars?

Next week Professor Malcolm Walter will speak about The Search for Life on Mars at the Te Awamutu Space Centre.

He is a Professor of Astrobiology at the University of New South Wales and has worked for 35 years on the geological evidence of early life on Earth, including the earliest convincing evidence of life.

Since 1989 he has been funded by NASA in their exobiology and astrobiology programmes, focusing on microbial life in high temperature ecosystems, and the search for life on Mars.

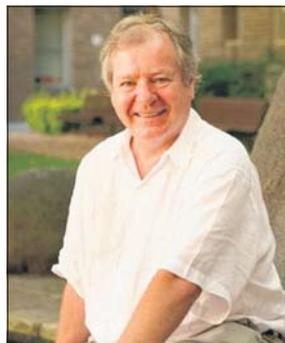
Professor Walter is a member of the Executive Council of NASA's Astrobiology Institute and has published more than 100 articles and several books including *The*

Search for Life on Mars in 1999. In 2004 he was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science.

Space Centre owner Dave Owen says Professor Walter is touring a number of venues in New Zealand, but cannot confirm his timetable for next week until final plans are made in coming days.

He will be in Te Awamutu either Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday and will talk for 30 minutes, on the search for life on Mars and how work in Australia and New Zealand contributes to this work, and will then take questions

■ If you are interested in attending phone 870-1966 or email info@spacecentre.nz to reserve a seat and receive updates.



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PROFESSOR Malcolm Walter — Is there life on Mars?

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LJ Hooker Te Awamutu is delighted to welcome Gary Derbyshire to the Residential Sales Team!

Having taken a break from the industry to pursue a long held passion in the passenger service and travel sectors, Gary has returned to continue his service to local real estate, which he first began in 1993. He is also looking forward to re-establishing contacts with those families he previously assisted and became friends with over many years.

Gary brings his own brand of communication, professionalism and enthusiasm to the industry and firmly believes that Te Awamutu, in the Waipa District, is the best place to live, work, enjoy leisure and retire to!

He invites you to give him a call for current market information or just a quiet chat.



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