

B-r-r-inging in the New Year

Advances in science often come at a great cost. New Zealand scientists researching seasonal changes in Antarctica are making tremendous personal sacrifices in the name of science. Well, not exactly science. Risking exposure to sub-zero temperatures, they're posing nude for an annual calendar.

The shots for this year's calendar were taken during October 2000, when temperatures were minus 30 to minus 35 degrees Celsius (minus 22 to minus 31 degrees Fahrenheit) on the frozen southern continent. One page of the calendar features a naked man lying on a block of ice, and another shows him reading a book—with a can of beer strategically placed to maintain some modesty.

This calendar, of which

only about 200 were initially distributed to the researchers' friends and families, is not the first of its kind. A Yorkshire branch of Britain's Women's Institute unveiled their middle-aged bodies in a calendar last year, selling 90,000 copies and raising \$642,000 for leukemia research. Others who have raised money through such calendars include a Melbourne rugby league club and a group of high-profile Canadian women raising money to stop logging on beautiful Saltspring Island near Vancouver.

Inspired by these others, Simon Gibson, Antarctic researcher and calendar photographer of the New Zealanders, said he may increase the calendar's distribution for 2002.

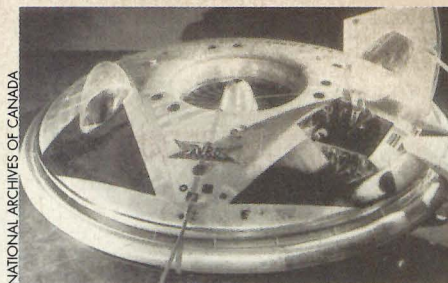
Bachelor pad, the final frontier

Knowing what you want in life is half the battle. Tony Alleyne, an avid fan of the television series *Star Trek*, has realized one of his life's goals at the age of 48. Alleyne, an ex-disc jockey, has spent more than \$17,155 to convert his one-bedroom apartment into a replica of the starship *Enterprise*. The apartment, complete with command console, windows shaped like portholes and a three-dimensional

ceiling with an "infinity" mirror at the centre, is undoubtedly one of the most unusual in its neighbourhood in Hinckley, England.

"My mother would say it's not very cozy—but I do make people a cup of tea when they come visit," Alleyne told Reuters news wire service. He also said he used magazines and information from NASA to research the design of his one-of-a-kind apartment.

Close encounters of the weird kind



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was designed as a 15.24-metre-diameter craft that would be powered by a cluster of six jet engines. It would be able to hover and move in any direction. However, after some near disasters were averted during

If Avrocar sounds like an odd name for a top-secret government project, it's probably a fitting handle for a would-be flying saucer designed as the ultimate cold war weapon. According to a recent *Wired* News press release, the details of a now-defunct joint Canadian-U.S. flying saucer program is discussed in a new book written by historian Bill Zuk of Winnipeg. Zuk explains the story of the failed experimental program that cost the U.S. government millions, and delivered nothing, in *Avrocar: Canada's Flying Saucer*.

Apparently, in 1952, John Frost, a chief designer with Ontario's A.V. Roe Company, began work on a saucer with a team of designers, engineers and technicians, and funding from NASA, the CIA, and the U.S. Air Force and Army.

At one point, in the early stages of the project, the saucer

test of the giant prototype, a 5.48-metre version powered by three jet engines was designed. The smaller version was called the Avrocar.

Despite massive U.S. funding, the Avrocar never achieved liftoff of more than 1.5 metres, and today just two of the Avrocar prototypes exist.

Zuk, who would love to see an Avrocar back in Canada, will probably have to take solace in the fact that his book is bringing the Avrocar to the public. In Birmingham, England, a group calling itself Avrocar has just released its first recording, and a French model company is offering Avrocar kits.

For more information on the Avrocar, visit Avro-Land, a site dedicated to the people and aircraft of Avro Canada and Orenda Engines Limited, at www.avroland.ca.



PHOTODISC

Iron-clad science?

This summer, U.S. school-teachers are gathering to demonstrate the practical side of science in a contest called the Iron Science Teacher. The competition, held at Exploratorium, a hands-on science museum in San Francisco, encourages teachers to develop experiments using inexpensive, everyday items.

Like the popular Japanese cooking show *Iron Chef*, which airs on the Food Network, each teacher must use a mystery ingredient (revealed to the scientists in advance) in each experiment. The contest is sponsored by the Exploratorium Teacher Institute and the National

Science Foundation.

The audience—fellow teachers and visitors to the museum—votes with applause on its favourite experiment. The teachers don't win anything except the thrill of being named an Iron Science Teacher. The contest is Webcast on select Fridays at noon PDT during the summer and runs during the school year as well. To view past Iron Science Teacher competitions, visit Exploratorium's Web site at www.exploratorium.edu.

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