

I'm trying something new this time, I'm using Open Office. Also, I'd wanted to write about the Get Smart Movie, but the only comment I can think of saying was:

“Missed it by *that* much”

Originally written in September & October, 2008 with additions up to Jan, 2009.

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Get Smart, like Abba have cult status here in Australia and I had quite a bit of trepidation when I first saw a movie poster promoting the movie's release. I was pleased that the makers of the Get Smart movie had actually studied some of the workings of the original series, but there were a number of scenes that were just begging for some of the snappy one liners that made the series unique.

When Max and 99 were on the roof top and Max lays into the tall villain with some punches, the scene was crying out for Max to put his arm around the thug and say, “I hope I wasn't out of line with the crack about...” **Larabee** was portrayed as a bully which again wasn't keeping true to the original, but some of the slickness of the movie was none the less well done.

Steve Carell himself either hadn't seen much of the original series, or chose not to emulate Don Adams sense of comic timing. But there were some very subtle nods to the original, have a look at the name of the airline Max and 99 fly, it **Yarmy Air**, (**Yarmy** being Don Adams' real life Family name) while amongst Max's post it notes there are references to other characters such as the notation “Craw not the craw” Siegfried was played a little too nasty and like the Rocky and Bull Winkle Movie, the overt Nazi parallels were removed. (Uniforms, accents and the like)

Nice Weather we're having here, the Jacaranda trees are in bloom, for about a month some usually drab trees shed their leaves and explode in a uniquely coloured flower (closely resembling lilac) blooms. Both Brisbane and Ipswich to the west claim the Jacaranda tree as their signature tree and every few years going on a planting spree to outdo each other in the colourful display.

This is one of my favourite photos taken a couple of years ago; in the background is the Story Bridge. I like the photo as it has some contrasting colours (and yes, I did take the photo with the street sign in mind). I'm also playing with the Open Office settings and also have used The Gimp picture editor for the first time (first time successfully that should read) 8^D ((I'm being reminded that saving this file as a Microsoft Word file loses some settings, so far so good.))

Along with the Jacaranda's (imported from South America some 150 years ago I'm led to believe) at this time of year there are the **Illawarra flame tree**¹ and the African Tulip trees which are vibrant red and yellow respectively. There's also a native tree that flowers at this time of year with a golden brown flower, but I don't know its name. Meanwhile in New Zealand at Christmas time the **pōhutukawa** trees flower², they are a bottle brush tree and the red strands with golden tips make the trees look like Christmas trees and are fantastic.



1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brachychiton_acerifolius

2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metrosideros_excelsa

I've misplaced my previous Lasfapa's (under a building pile of magazines and train notices) one person (apologies for forgetting your name) wrote about the word cold. Here we would say "feel the warmth of the fire" and "feel the rains cold." That's not to say your use of *coldth* isn't right, we were taught that cold is a word that doesn't expand in the same way warm would - just one of the many subtle differences between the English speakers of the world.

I'm not sure who'll win the US presidential election; I think it'll go one of two ways; Senator McCain will scrape in reminiscent of George W Bush's first win, or Senator Obama will romp in with an unprecedented win. Either way it'll be an historic win with either the first Female VP, or First African American to become President. I don't profess to understand the subtleties of Republican Vs Democrat (Tories Vs Labour I can understand better) but I will say that George W Bush has stuffed up a number of choices and taken the country into uncharted waters. I liked Clinton for his foreign policies, George Bush I feel simply rode on the tail-coats of Ronald Regan while both had strong arms, but seemed to have capable foreign policies none the less.

I will say this also, that I've actually heard of both McCain and Obama in recent years, but had never heard of past contenders like Dole, Kerry, um, ...

With the share market dropping the way it has, I'm concerned that Marty's finances are taking a hit. I haven't traded in shares in a decade or so, but I have in the last week bought some 25,000 shares in Centro shopping centres whose shares are teetering at 8¢ a share down from \$8.20 a share this time last year. (Cost \$2,000 + \$75.00 (+ \$7.50 GST = \$82.50) fees). I'm planning to sell 5,000 shares @ 40¢ per share to recover what I spent (whenever that may be) and even if the shares 'only' rise to \$1 per share, then I will make \$25,000. I figure it's worth a shot. I've had a scour of the stock pages to find a similar share plummet without success. The stock broker thinks its madness, but, I'm working and it's a long term thing where the stocks plummeted *before* this global meltdown. *2017 Update: (Sadly, these shares were written off)*

My land is on the internet, have a look at http://propertynow.com.au/index.php?option=com_emreality&Itemid=146&action=listingview&listingID=1099 Two of the three real-estate agents are listing it also, one has a photo of their for sale sign in front of a tree while the other has a one paragraph blurb. I've resigned myself to it not selling any time soon. (It has been on the market for two years now).

An update to this is I have now signed an exclusive listing with Go Gecko in Gympie who wax lyrical that they will be able to sell the property where others have failed. I was a little hesitant to sign an exclusive listing, but the other three have had to listing for some two – two and a half years now without much in the way of interest, so "here we go again"... *2017 Update: (I have taken the land off the market)*

My dual boot Windows 98 / Windows XP computer is slowly getting old to the point that some programs in Win 98 won't start while some drivers in Win XP have disappeared leaving me with an iPod who's songs were toasted due to the drivers having been corrupted and me not realising until the update of songs just didn't work one day. I've had suggested to me that I should do a fresh install of both, which I'm getting close to doing. I purchased **Windows Vista Ultimate 64 bit English** at a knock down rate but won't build a new computer system until my finances aren't dangerously stretched as they are at the moment.³

I've come to the conclusion that I've had to change everything I do (with the exception of work itself – and even then I now work at an out depot) to give myself a better sense of worth. I no longer dance regency, Playford or Morris, the latter being the various sides folding on their own. The Regency/Playford is my being fed up with the lack of structure since Chris Greenhill's death. Yes, I know that the group is meant to be a social group, but where it interferes with the learning of and dancing well, then it makes the dancing less and less enjoyable. I'm still dancing Scottish Country Dance as an occasional visitor to a couple of groups,

3Feel free to tell me how good Linux and Apple are.

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PO Box 1138 Milton BC Brisbane Qld Australia 4064

LoC: andrew.ivamy@sdqdesigns.com

[@Timelord2067](#)

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which I prefer at the moment as I can simply turn up on a 'practice' night, dance and be under no obligations (and with SCD, they're sticklers for getting the dance right).

I'm pleased my Fan GoH speech was well received here & pleased also that I walk with other Fan GoH's ☺ Friends from Auckland NZ were at this years World Con and have told me next years World Con is going to be in Melbourne Australia. I may go, I haven't heard anything (I hadn't in 1985 when it was here last) I'm also thinking about a World Con & some Regency dancing in California in a couple of years time. Not sure when (every-thing's coming back to my selling my block of land). In the mean time, I'll be paying off the cards and loans and seeing how the finances go.



--Originally written in Late October, 2008-- **The 4th season of Doctor Who** has just finished here, I'm not sure that I liked how the series was wound up, quite a lot of story lines were concluded so there's not going to be any clear follow-on into the next season even though there were some big hints at future story-lines (Professor River Song especially). I know that David Tennant wants to take two years off to play Hamlet on stage; I just hope the producers manage to keep the momentum going upon his return. I was most impressed with Catherine Tate's acting. She's a well known comedian in the UK at the moment & her serious acting in the 4th series was exemplary.

--Minor Update Jan 2009 - David Tennant's replacement has been announced. They're defiantly going for the drongo look these days... At any rate, the sneak peek of David Tennant's Doctor during the regeneration sequence at the end of the 1st series had me cringing, however, after watching the first episode of the second season, I was most impressed. I'm still not sure how lore of old (the trial of a time lord Mk 2 & the Valyard turning out to be the 12th Doctor alluding to happenings around the time of his 9th (Tennant's) incarnation), Means we'll just have to wait and see.

I do hope we get to see both more of the inside of the Tardis

--Originally written in November 2008-- **Spare a thought for Uncle Tony.**

"Sorry to hear your Father died!" someone at work said to me as they past by. I was puzzled by this and was told that the person had seen my Fathers name in the newspapers funeral column a couple of weeks earlier. I had seen my father only a couple of days previous, so scoffed at this bizarre exchange. Naturally I phoned my father and asked his if he'd died recently? My father assured me that he hadn't, so I put it down to some weird malice. Another week or so went by and another train crew member called out as he walked past that he was sorry to hear about my fathers death. This time, I pressed the person for information and was given a vague description of "A Ivamy" being listed a couple of weeks earlier in the paper's death notices.

I began to have a sinking feeling that it wasn't my father, rather his brother Tony – Anthony Ivamy who had died. After phoning my father again just to ensure he wasn't deader than the last time I phoned him to see if he'd died, I set about finding the last few weeks' papers (which had been sitting in the boot of my car awaiting disposal). After only scouring a couple of papers, I found a listing for the funeral of one Anthony Ivamy who had died in September 2008. His funeral was listed as November 4th, 2008 and I was reading the

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October listing on November 11th, a whole week late. I phoned my father back and gave him the news that it was quite likely that his brother was already dead and buried. I passed on the details from the paper and Dad was able to confirm the next day that yes, his brother was the Anthony Ivamy listed in the paper.

The following day, Nov 13th, Dad came around and we went to the My Gravatt Cemetery and after obtaining the plot location, went to see where Uncle Tony lay. In a small world moment, Uncle Tony is buried barely 20 metres away from Leigh Fitzgerald who I had spent 7 years going to school with.

But why weren't we informed? Well, jumping through the story a little, Tony had been in care for many years with mental issues. Tony had fought in the Malaya conflict, you probably haven't heard of it, not many people have. It occurred between the Korean and the Vietnam War's. Tony came back what you could call shell shocked. With a kick in the behind, and (like Vietnam vets after him) a spit in the face Tony was sent out into the wide world to progressively degenerate – eventually becoming a derro (a derelict – some one who sleeps on park benches, lives in squalor and smells very VERY badly).

After being bashed at Brisbane's Central Railway Station and then being run over by a car outside my fathers home, Tony's mental state determinate and he wasn't exactly locked up, rather placed in care. Unfortunately, but being placed in care, when my father tried to make contact, successive pen pushers would inform my Dad that he would have to write a letter to Tony (which these bureaucrats' would pass on to Tony) and *if* Tony wanted to be contacted, he would reply to Dads letter and contact would be arranged.

But how can Tony reply when he is mentally incapable? The answer would always be “I'm sorry, we can't discuss Toys condition without his permission.” So Tony died a painful and lonely death after a 3 year medical condition which his death certificate only vaguely alludes to. But he wasn't penniless it would seem.

After conferring with the administrators of the Cemetery we were able to find out that the Public Trustee's of Queensland were the administrators of Tony's estate and had also been the decision makers for Tony's life as well. I don't know what the proper term is, but the public trustee can be deemed to be the Next of Kin for someone with out a family, or who cannot make decisions for themselves. (There was a recent case of a person being taken off of life support as a result of a decision made by the Public Trustee Administrator). Where Tony's last years were spent, where he died, how and were he was buried were decided by a Public Trustee.

When we (Dad & I) went into the city, we were reluctantly seen by a Public Trustee (no, not by the one who'd made the decisions, that would be too obvious). The woman who did agree to see us without an appointment had Tony's file. All three reams of it if my estimate of the amount of paper is about right. Yes, Tony had money, which was enough to pay for his funeral and headstone. No, they wouldn't go into specifics beyond that. Dad outlined his frustrations at being excluded from decision making and we were given the feeble “We didn't know Tony had Next of Kin here until I pointed out that my own Will had been prepared by the Public Trustee of Queensland some 14 months prior.

Dad and I next went to the Births Deaths and Marriages office and obtained two certified copies of Tony's Death Certificate. My Father was upset that there was a chronic lack of information and so we filled out a form to have amended details added to Tony's Death Certificate (like whom his parents were, where he was born (Malta) and such.

We returned in the afternoon of November 13th and laid some flowers at the head of Uncle Tony's grave. My father is writing to the Australian War Graves Commission to obtain permission for Tony's service details to be added to the headstone plaque.

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--Originally written in December 2008 – With amendments in January, 2009-- The Railway Community in Queensland was rocked by first the Diesel Tilt Train double fatality and now by the collision which caused the derailment of the Sunlander in Northern Queensland, both collisions occurring at Level Crossings where truck drivers have ignored stop/give way signs, lights, bells train horns and the like.



The photo at left shows the lead locomotive on it's side, the two drivers covered by blue tarpaulins. One driver died instantly, while the second died after emergency services arrived. The interim report from the Australian Transportation Safety Bureau has confirmed the drivers were driving below the maximum speed had sounded the warning klaxon headlight on etc, had effectively done everything correctly. Queensland Rail was also quick to confirm that the level crossing lights were flashing correctly at the time of the accident which contradicts truck drivers' assertions to talk back radio that the lights had failed before the collision.

The photo below shows the lead loco on its side (facing back the way it had come from) with the second loco and six carriages of the South Bound Sunlander derailed. Both photos have been sourced from the news.com.au website. Have a look at the other photos of the accident to get a better idea of the collisions.

The day after this collision, a bus driver with passengers drove through a stop sign at a level crossing barely 30 kilometres from this accident to beat an approaching train.

While I was staying with Brian in Christchurch New Zealand, a train there also collided with a truck south of Christchurch. Brian and I had originally intended to travel past that spot on the day of the accident and had changed our plans to travel past the following day. I have photos of the accident some of which I've shared previously.

Ironically, every photo used by the various news media organisations of the truck driver responsible for the Sunlander Derailment shows the truck driver holding a can of alcohol in his hand. Every photo.

I found it distasteful that truck drivers across the nation would phone radio talk shows and defend the drivers as only doing their jobs⁴, yet we all know the basic rule is motor vehicles must give way to trains. Trains have right of way. Fact.



Image Right: Direction of travel, top to bottom

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Brother can you spare \$72 Million Dollars?

I'd briefly touched on the financial woes of the world previously and how if I had spare change I'd be buying up some of the now undervalued stocks on offer. One stock that caught my eye was BrisConnections who are in the process of constructing one of the road tunnels (Bowen Hills to Toombul). They haven't started digging and won't start to get revenue for some three to four years. Their shares are now 1/10th of one cent. In the past few months, a woman in Melbourne has received special mention from various media commentators who cover the share markets, she'd acquired some 13 Million shares (at 1/10th of one cent each) for \$13,000 and then bought a further \$20,000 shares (20 Million shares) to take her total share holding to some 36,000,000 shares or 8.75% of the whole company.

Now it would be alright if all she had to do was sit on the shares for about 5 years) until the road was opened and the toll money started rolling in, however the shares are stapled, not once but twice. In April 2009 and about a year after that, she and every other stock holder is required to cough up \$1 *per share* that they own. So this cleaner from Melbourne has been politely asked more than once if she realises her obligation? Eventually she disposed of the poisoned shares. Even after the first \$1 instalment is made, the shares are estimated to be only worth 33¢ *per share*. My Centro share purchase is a spare of the moment whim, but you've gotta feel for this woman especially given she had to sell her shares at a loss...

2017 Update: (Sadly, these shares were written off)

4 *Talking Back the Night* relayed on 92.7 Mix FM here on the Sunshine Coast north of Brisbane.

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