

# Social Group Report 1999

Over the last 12 months the social group has enjoyed a number of activities. A few of these have been small, intimate gatherings, while a couple of events have attracted up to 30 people. In December of last year we visited the beautiful, old, Astor Theatre in St Kilda, which was the perfect venue to view the movie classic *Lawrence of Arabia*. During the month of June we revisited the Astor for a double movie feature: *The Mask of Zorro* and *Cruel Intentions*, and then capped the night off with a coffee, milkshake or pizza, in a nearby restaurant in Chapel Street.

IMAX Cinemas are located all around the world and provide a new visual experience in cinema viewing by screening specially filmed documentaries designed to be viewed on a huge screen. The IMAX experience creates the illusion that one is almost on location. In September, we visited Melbourne's IMAX cinema for the screening of *Blue Planet*. This was an exceptional documentary about our Earth, most of which was filmed from space. For example, footage of one of the space shuttle missions showed astronauts filming the earth. The title of the documentary reflected Earth's rich, blue appearance (from space) which was absolutely beautiful on the large, IMAX screen.

Dine-outs included The Sandy *Bistro* in Sandringham, *Montezuma's* in Richmond, *The Iris Buffet* in Glen Iris and *The Foodstar Buffet* in Knoxfield. At *Montezuma's*, a Mexican restaurant, our large group of over 20 people dined in an intimate private room. *The Sandy*, overlooking Sandringham Beach, was memorable in that Joe, who arrived last, received his meal first. A check with management revealed that "politics in the kitchen" was delaying our meals so we satisfied our hunger vicariously as Joe heartily ate his meal while we waited for ours. Management was very apologetic about the delay and we all received complimentary desserts and coffee after our main meals.

DarkZone, in Box Hill, was the location for our "interactive games night", in July. Each player arms him/herself with a laser before entering a dark maze to fight with other combatants. We always make it clear that you do not have to play but can come along to socialise after the game. One of the socially anxious members of our group who always attends but does not play was gently persuaded to play a game. Once inside, we couldn't believe his transformation into "G.I. Joe" and half an hour after the conclusion of our first game, he was trying to convince the group to play a second game, which we did.

Other activities included a picnic at Studley Park Boathouse in Kew and a visit to the Rialto Towers Observation Deck in Collins Street, Melbourne. Rialto Towers allowed us an amazing down-look view of the city, the surrounding suburbs and the mountain ranges in the far distance. We also enjoyed a meal in the restaurant, which was included in our entry fee. Thank you to all who attended our functions, for their company, humour and friendship. We look forward to sharing a variety of activities and enjoying one another's company in the new season.

**John Geros & Jessica Bernales**