

Moai Sightings

WE HAVE A RASH OF *MOAI* sightings to report. These range from small to large and from the weird to the improbable. Two back-to-back were *moai* found in a nursery in Ontario, Canada, by Marilyn Garrett Stearns. Is this a garden ornament? Book ends? Clearly, some sort of mystery object.



DAVID FOULKES OF GREAT BRITAIN sent us a photograph of a very sour looking *moai* from Chester Zoo, UK, located in a feature called "Lost Islands". Inside the building (behind the statue) there is nothing related to Rapa Nui but, as David notes, "...this is the only way I will ever be in the *Journal*, [so] I am hoping it will be printed. Looking forward to the next issue; keep up the excellent work" Gee, David, how can we ignore that plea?



THE MOST EPHEMERAL of the *moai* entries comes from Stillwater, Minnesota, where Charlie Tolman discovered a statue in the front yard of a friend. This *moai*-snowman prompted some philosophical questions: "Why do they always face the swamp? Where do they go every spring? What do the Chevrolet-orange eyes signify? Why do their dimensions match those of 33 gallon trash containers? And, why do local domestic animals make territorial claims on them?"



MORE *MOAI* ARE APPEARING IN ADS and as logos for companies, including a view of four *moai* on clothing tags for Arizona Jean Company's "Vintage Seersucker" shirts. A full page advertisement from the *Wall Street Journal* features a trademarked *moai* design and the name of the firm uses "*moai*". Can our beloved statues be copyrighted? A beauty salon called Headhunters (in California) has images of *moai* all over their advertisements.

THE GRANDEST *MOAI* SIGHTING of all comes from our British correspondent, Paul Bahn, who tells us that the Great Court at the British Museum has a new glass roof, the storage areas of the old British Library are cleared out, and the wonderful huge 18th century inner court is restored. The 19th century circular reading room is in the middle. Some dozen sculptures are on show in the court, including Hoa Hakananaia, the famed basalt statue taken from the island in 1868 (see page 109, this issue). The statue sits on a high plinth allowing one to walk around it. The carvings on the back are barely visible due to lack of lighting but this problem likely will be rectified. The Queen will officially open the restored museum on 6 December 2000.

What's New in the Pacific

A MEETING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC in August discussed the problems of sustainable fisheries and marine conservation. Throughout the Pacific, as well as in the rest of the world, the populations of fish are declining, along with the number of coral reefs. It was pointed out that indigenous Pacific Island communities have a wealth of knowledge about their own coastal resources, but lack access to recent biological findings, which could assist them to improve local management. Over-fishing is a key threat and the reason most frequently cited for harvest decline. The Pacific is in a global marine crisis, showing signs of collapse due to increasing fisheries, over-exploitation and habitat degradation.

The University of the South Pacific Bulletin, 33(26), 2000.

A RECENT LECTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC by Tania Rangihueua, lecturer in Maori Studies (Victoria University of Wellington), highlighted many of the problems facing the Maori people of New Zealand. Low income, unemployment, and marginalization of the Maori community in the areas of health and education were cited.

On the positive side, many Maori are getting organized politically, and hope to set up their own radio and television station, and to encourage indigenous language use. Today only 15% of the population are fluent Maori speakers.

The University of the South Pacific Bulletin, 33(32), 2000.

CHRISTMAS ISLAND. Britain will begin the clean up of radiation contaminated areas on Christmas Island, Republic of Kiribati. The island is contaminated by fallout from six 1958 British atomic and hydrogen bomb tests. While the UK has accepted some responsibility for the environmental clean up, it refused liability for health impacts on people.

Pacific News Bulletin, No. 15(10), 2000

TUVALU, A MEMBER OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM, became the 189th member of the United Nations in September. It is a full member of the Commonwealth. Tonga, Kiribati and Nauru joined the UN in 1999.

Pacific News Bulletin, No. 15(10), 2000

Viña del Mar, Chile

THE DIRECTORS OF THE FONCK MUSEUM (Museo Sociedad de Arqueología e Historia Natural) in Viña del Mar, announced that they are having financial difficulties, and are unable to find the US \$875 needed each month to properly maintain their collections. The Museum collection includes, besides numerous artifacts from Easter Island, insects, mammals, ornamental pieces, and collections from various indigenous groups in Chile. Maintenance includes climate control: humidity, ventilation, and illumination. The funding situation will oblige the museum to seek private assistance since the municipal subsidy is only enough to pay the salaries of the staff, according to museum administrator, Germán Sangüesa. Money collected at the door for entrance fees covers only half the expenses. Never before has the Fonck had to resort to fund raising. The campaign will begin in January.

The Fonck Museum holds perhaps the finest collection of Rapa Nui artifacts in Chile, arguably better than the collection in the Padre Sebastián Englert Museum on Easter Island. It also houses the Biblioteca Rapanui which has replaced the Mulloy Library, the latter now being installed on Easter Island. Readers of the *Rapa Nui Journal* who wish to make donations to help out this fine but struggling museum, may send donations to the Easter Island Foundation by check or Visa/MasterCard with a covering note specifying that the donation is for the Fonck Museum. Remember: a modest donation to the Fonck does a world more good than a sizeable donation to a large American museum. Your help will be sincerely appreciated.

THE CHILEAN AIR FORCE will hold ceremonies on Easter Island, Quintero and La Serena, Chile, to honor the 50th anniversary of the historic flight of the Manutara, the Catalina 405 Seaplane that made the first flight to Easter Island in 1951. The flight lasted 20 hours and 4 minutes and was piloted by Roberto Parraque Singer.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, November 30, 2000

Juan Fernandez Islands

TREASURE HUNTERS ARE BACK! Bernard Keiser again is searching for buried treasure at a cave known as "Alexander Selkirk". He has a new six-month permit from the Consejo Nacional de Monumentos and the Armada de Chile to continue his search, begun in 1998, for treasure left behind by pirates of yore.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 26 October, 2000

FINANCED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF HOLLAND, the Universidad de Viña del Mar, CONAF, and the Jardín Botánico hope to reintroduce extinct flora formerly found on the Juan Fernández Islands. The flora includes some unique species that were lost due to action of animals and humans. This five-year project intends to propagate the plants and reintroduce them. The director of the botanical garden in Viña del Mar noted that of the 94 species endemic to Robinson Crusoe, more than sixty percent can be found in the botanical gardens.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 28 October, 2000

What's New in Hangaroa

A NEW PUBLICATION titled *Nuestros Pueblos* was initiated in Chile on 21 September. This indigenous newspaper is published in Valparaíso, in Spanish, Rapanui, Aymara and Mapudungún. Its purpose is to inform indigenous peoples of Chile about government benefits. It is a small tabloid, about 8-12 pages, free of charge, and edited by Conadi, (Corporation National of Indigenous Development). The monthly circulation is expected to be 20,000 copies, and it will first be distributed in zones where there are indigenous populations. Fifteen hundred copies are to be sent to the Rapanui. Conadi estimates (according to the 1992 census) that the current indigenous population of Chile is 1.3 million, less than 10% of the national total. The distribution: Mapuche (81.39%), Aymara (14.15%), Atacameño (1.57%), Rapanui (1.22%), Coya (0.86%), Quechua (0.54%), Yagane (0.15%) and Kawashkare (0.02%).

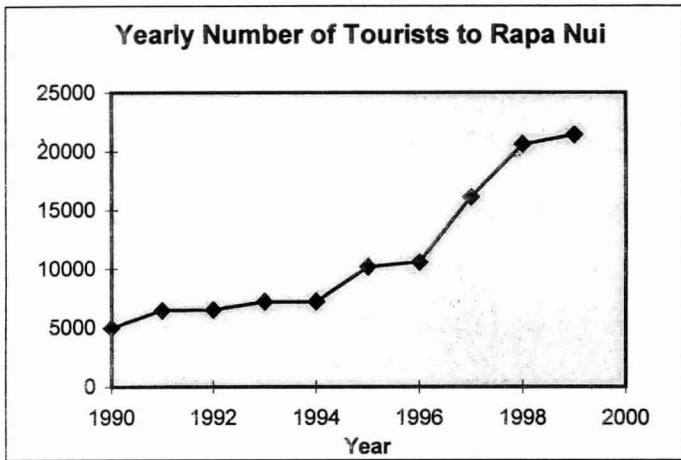
El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 26 October, 2000

MAYOR PETERO EDMUNDS made the front page of *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* with a headline quote, "We Want the Island to Pass into the Hands of the Islanders". The article states that Edmunds wishes to have autonomy, and he declares the rights of the islanders over the land, and the administration of that land. Edmunds stated, "I don't want another flag nor to be another country, but to have recourse to decide over these matters". Later he said that he had invited President Lagos to come to the island on the "Day of the Chilenos" and was angry because he got no reply, and when he telephoned the *Intendenta* of the V Region, Josefina Bilbao, "...they couldn't locate her." The article describes the "...neglect of President Lagos and the dejected islanders."

The next day, in the same paper, a reply was featured: "Strong Response to Words of the Island Mayor". In this article, the *Intendenta* called the position of Petero Edmunds "infantile", saying the mayor went beyond the limit in his declarations, and suggested that there were "electoral reasons" [Chile had its regional elections on Oct 29th]. She added that the island has always had the wish for autonomy, and she stated that, from a certain point of view, one could understand why. And she went on to say that they are now preparing next year's budget, and she lamented that there isn't as much money to go around as she would like. The island's new Governor, Enrique Pakarati Ika, also played down the opinion of the mayor, saying, "I do not share his opinions at all. He tends to magnify things, and one shouldn't pay much attention to him. Also we are in an election period." The Regional Councilor who represents the island, Jose Letelier, said that he supports the mayor's remarks totally, but then said that in some things, he has reason. "As Island representative, I have likewise suffered the lack of interest that my colleagues manifest. However, the island has the autonomy that it needs, and the municipality is autonomous by definition. Another matter is that the mayor does not know how to use that autonomy."

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 26 and 27 October, 2000

TOURISM ON RAPA NUI. The latest figures from Sernatur (thanks to Francisco Edmunds) show a clear increase in tourism over the years (see chart). Since 1990 when the island had 4,961 tourists (502 were from the Chilean mainland), the numbers have gone up to 21,434 in 1999 (6,248 were from the Chilean mainland). So far this year (January to September), there have been 12,544 tourists. January traditionally has the



highest number of tourists, with October, November, December and February coming in with slightly fewer visitors. June is always the slowest month for tourism.

The breakdown by country is of interest. In 1990, 1063 tourists were from North America, 784 were from South America; 2471 from Europe; 358 from Asia; and 282 from Oceania. In 1999, 2460 tourists came from North America; 7352 from South America; 8517 from Europe; 1513 from Asia; and 1588 from Oceania. It seems clear that, with such an increase in visitors, something must be done to safeguard the fragile archaeological sites. If the numbers of tourists continue to increase, the sites are bound to suffer from heavy foot traffic. Already some sites, such as Orongo, are severely impacted.

THE RACE FOR MAYOR was in full swing in October, and the village was plastered with signs on all available surfaces advertising for various candidates. Fifteen persons were vying for the position. The signs varied in degrees of sophistication from hand lettered signs to professionally made photographic posters. Some were cloth banners (bed sheets) on poles. There was a debate on local TV but it was pre-planned, with "canned" speeches, no real debate [sounds like the US elections]. The candidates gave various *umu* parties for the entire village, with cocktails, free food, and speeches. These were very well attended, regardless of one's affiliation. As the election date drew nearer, parades or rallies made an appearance. These were typical of Chilean mainland election parades: vehicles of all sorts were loaded up with cheering people, flags, balloons, etc., and with horns and music blaring they drove around, caravan-like through the village streets. The next day, another similar parade/rally was given for a different candidate. These appeared to have the same people and vehicles, but the names of candidates had changed. One parade differed: it consisted of islanders on horseback, wearing body paint and feathers, and



There were so many candidates for mayor that it was hard to keep them all sorted out. Banners with slogans advertised the contestants.

carrying the Rapanui separatist flag.

And the winner: Petero Edmunds was reelected as Mayor with 50% of the total vote. Congratulations to *el Alcalde!*

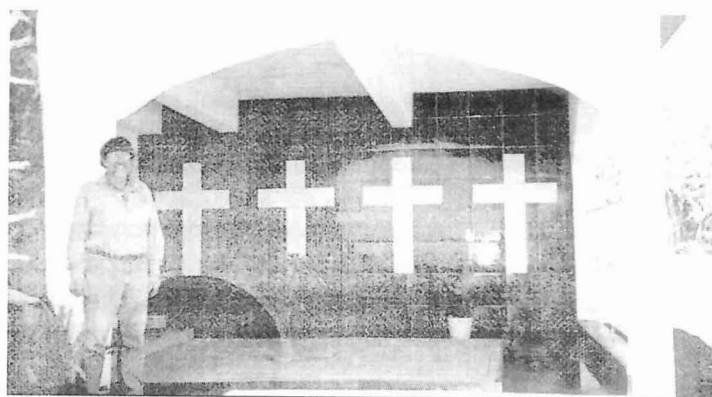
A CAMPAIGN IS ON to rid the island of a type of mosquito that is new to Rapa Nui. *Aedes aegypti*, a mosquito that can transmit illnesses such as yellow fever and dengue fever, seems to have arrived by airplane, probably from Tahiti. This mosquito, a type distinct from the local variety, was identified by the head of the Valparaíso Health Service, Dra. Paulina Tapia. A campaign to educate islanders (in both Rapanui and Spanish) is underway by the Servicio de Salud Valparaíso-San Antonio (SSVSA) and massive fumigation is planned. Although no mosquito-borne illnesses have been reported from the island, instruction is on-going about how to eliminate places where the mosquito might breed. This mosquito flies during the day, not the typical behavior. The Rapanui are focused on the elimination of this pest as it may affect tourism, although no cancellations have been noted. It may be that the news has not gotten out as no one has asked about the problem, according to the receptionist at the Hotel Hangaroa.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 26 October, 8 November, 2000

FOUR UNDERSEA EARTHQUAKES were recorded at a location 500 miles south of Easter Island in October. These had a magnitude of around 5. Small quakes are common along the Southern East Pacific Rise that constantly creeps closer to the continent of South America. According to the USGS National Earthquake Information Center, they were:

10/25, at 05:26:38, Latitude 34.63S/109.54W, Intensity: 5.7.
 10/25, at 05:32:23; Latitude 34.58S/110.51W, Intensity: 4.9
 10/25, at 19:00:17; Latitude 34.67S/109.37W, Intensity: 5.7
 10/26, at 14:08:37; Latitude 34.67S/109.27W, Intensity: 5.5

A NEW SHRINE HAS BEEN BUILT on the south side of the church, and the grout between the stone of the church façade are now painted a stark white, giving the façade a giraffe-like quality. The new shrine replaced the former fenced-in area that contained the burials of Father Sebastián Englert and Eugene Eyraud. The area now has a roofed shelter built around it and large crosses on the back wall. Another burial has been added: that of Angata, the woman who fomented the first revolution on the island (see Katherine Routledge's book, *The Mystery of Easter Island*, 1919:140-149). While no one was certain which burial was hers, they dug around the cemetery and found some bones that were presumed to be those of Angata, who died in 1914. Angata was a crippled prophetess who dreamed that all the livestock on the island belonged to the islanders and thus they had free access to them. Raids on the company cattle and sheep fol-



The new shrine next to the church now houses the remains of Father Sebastián Englert, Eugene Eyraud and Angata.

lowed, with threats and counter threats. The revolution ended when the Chilean ship, *Banquedano*, arrived. The head of the sheep company, Percy Edmunds, expected the rebellious islanders to be punished, but the Captain of the *Banquedano* released everyone, saying that the natives had behaved very well not to murder Mr Edmunds.

THE SEBASTIAN ENGLERT MUSEUM property has a new security fence surrounding it, and a coffee house is being constructed near the main museum. The William Mulloy Library will be soon ready for use. Plans are drawn and as soon as supplies arrive from the mainland, construction will begin to remodel the space intended for the library. The books are already on the island, and are being catalogued in anticipation of the completion of the construction.



A coffee house is under construction near the entrance to the Sebastián Englert Museum.

THE ISLAND'S PAVED ROADS CONTINUE to contribute to automobile accidents. Two accidents claimed lives in recent weeks, both blamed on speeding vehicles. One was a young boy who ran into the road and was hit by a speeding car.



Vinapu 2 has disappeared under bushes that are spreading over the island. The red scoria statue is in left middle of picture.

THE SITE OF VINAPU 2 is grown over with a rampant form of "rattlepod" plants. Large bushes obscure nearly the entire site. The *pukao* are covered, only the top portion of the *ahu* is visible, and the top of the standing red scoria statue can barely be seen. The plant, called 'cho-cho' by the locals (actually two species of *Crotalaria*), is toxic to animals, causing liver damage and a painful death. Twenty percent of privately owned horses have died of this syndrome since 1984. The plant, imported by CONAF many years ago, was brought in to control erosion and as a fire retardant. However, it has taken over entire hillsides and is spreading. Instead of controlling erosion, these plants contribute to the problem by attracting hungry animals, and they cause damage to the fragile areas around archaeological sites. It will take money, time, and effort to improve the situation, plus the need to convince islanders to change the grazing patterns of their animals, now allowed to roam at will.

A NEW HOTEL IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION, near the oceanfront. It is rather V shaped with the building sheltering the pool and patio from the wind. There are individual cabins on the street side plus 30 rooms. The name is Taha Tai, and it is associated with the Kia Koe tourist agency. As for the old Hangaroa hotel, it will not be upgraded after all. The old section, badly in need of repairs or replacement, will continue as is, because the Chil-

ean chain that owns the Hangaroa Hotel has abandoned plans for remodeling. The new and expensive cottages that were built on the seaward side of the Hangaroa had thatch over their tin roofs to give a tropical feel to the structures. However, the howling winds of winter blew most of it off, so the roofs now look like they have a skin disease.

OUR LAST ISSUE MENTIONED the problem of too many dogs running loose in the village, and the method for eliminating many of them. We have learned that there now is a veterinarian at the local island hospital who will spay female dogs. However, islanders have to BRING their animals IN. This apparently is too much trouble for most.

THE CORNER PARK AT TE PITO TE HENUA and Atamu Tekena (formerly called Policarpo Toro) now has two statues, the new one said to represent Atamu Tekena [a Rapanui king], carved of stone by a local artist. The other statue, a bust of Policarpo Toro, is bronze. Paving in front of the monument has attracted skateboarders who have a hard time finding suitable surfaces for skateboarding. The park has new light standards, so there are no more dark corners for kids to hang out. The monument was completely reoriented so that the backside of the monument is in clear view from the street. Formerly it sat diagonally across the back corner, forming a screened area.



The newly refurbished monument at the park in the village has a statue of Atamu Tekena, an ancient Rapanui king, and Captain Policarpo Toro who was instrumental in the annexation of the island by Chile.

THREE LARGE WHITE 'GREENHOUSES' have been built above Ahu Akivi. This is a government project to grow flowers for export. However, the buildings are in clear view above the *ahu* and impact the ambience of the site. The approach to Akivi used to be a stunning sight, with the statues isolated in the landscape.

HANGAROA VILLAGE NOW has a new hardware store, on the road to the airport; we were told it is a project of the mayor, Petero Edmunds. And a computer store will soon open in village. The Sernatur tourist office is scheduled to be upgraded and repaired, and new tall floodlights are at the soccer field. But most prominent are the Coca Cola signs all over the village. The company provided free signs for various establishments, with their own logo showing clearly; also free plastic chairs, umbrellas, and awnings, all displaying the red and white Coca Cola logo. Another colorful addition to the village: some of the houses have

new paint jobs and so we now see homes painted in dark violet, sunny yellow-ochre, and so on. Even the disco Toroko has a newly painted façade that includes various island designs.



Hangaroa's new hardware store, located on the road to the airport.



Coca Cola signs have sprouted everywhere in the village: on signs, plastic chairs and umbrellas. The large wooden shark? over the entry advertises a restaurant.



The disco Toroko has a new paint job including island designs painted on its exterior. It continues to be a source of annoyance to all who live nearby as it blasts away until 6 a.m.

A NEW HIGH SCHOOL IS TO BE BUILT at the site of the leper sanatorium, north of the village. A grand plan has been accepted, and we were told that the school will cost US \$8 million. There are approximately 250 high school students. Some islanders commented that, given the cost of construction, it would be cheaper to send the students to Oxford or Harvard. The ambitious plan for the high school is in contrast to the current school where students lack books, science lab equipment, maps and other items. There is little argument that a new school is needed, but after the cost of construction, where will the funding come

from to buy supplies and equip the classrooms? And there remains the question of how students will be transported to and from the village. There is no funding for school buses, or drivers. Moving the school out of the village means that utilities, water, etc., must also be extended north of town, and roads must be paved. Thus it is likely that the estimated cost of the school is far below what the actual expenses will be.



In an effort to provide water for irrigation at the new *parcelas* that were given out to islanders, 15 catchment basins have been constructed. These are scooped out areas on hillsides and are lined with black plastic. Each cost US \$40,000. The dark depression in left center foreground is where the catchment is located.

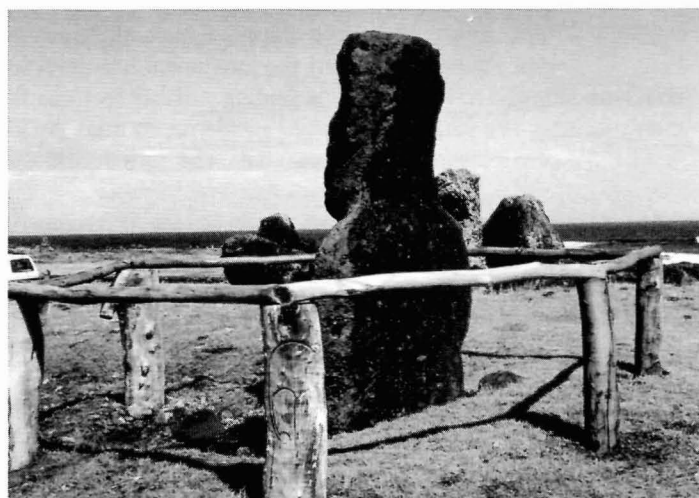
THE SOUNDS OF RAPA NUI. An Island group called *Te Ahi* ("The Fire") is currently on the Chilean mainland, recording a demo tape with folklore themes. Members are Ito Haumoana (guitar), Pou Vae Tea (drums), Alex Haumoana (ukelele) and Uri Haumoana (guitar). None of the group ever studied music but play by ear, "...just like children who start young to play music, sing and dance" said Alex. The music they listen to on the island is reggae and country, brought to the island by tourists from the USA, France and Tahiti. They added that they "are not interested in 'Rock Latino' because it is boring, and the groups in Chile are so-so. The best is Uncle Bob Marley", expressed Pou Vae Tea. The group is the favorite to win the contest "Record Your CD," organized by the University of Valparaíso.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 9 November 2000

FUNDING DEFICIT ON EASTER ISLAND. A solution to the island's financial problems was proposed by Senator Juan Hamilton. His initiative will benefit the Municipality of the island by assigning to that community funding to compensate for the smaller amounts already being sent to the island. The size of the compensation will be determined by the Regulations of the Common Municipal Funds and will not be less than 1.1 times the amount budgeted beforehand. The petition was made by the senator of the V Region who emphasized that this will "...do justice to the Municipality of Easter Island whose budget is not enough to cover its high costs because of the expense of sending supplies by sea and by air." Up until now, these additional costs were covered in different ways by the Ministry of the Interior when the Municipality found itself without funds. Hamilton said that this would provide a base for the Municipality to cover the ordinary necessities and will permit them to plan for the future.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 16 November 2000

THE DEATH OF NOTED AUTHOR, musicologist and lover of Easter Island, Dr Ramon Campbell, was announced in Chile. Campbell was born in Santiago and received his M.D. from the University of Chile. He secretly took night courses in piano and composition, and later on, in 1961, a well-known collector of Chilean folk music loaned him some recordings made on Rapa Nui and he became fascinated with the music. Campbell spent many years on Easter Island as Rapa Nui's resident physician (1964-1966) and was the head of the island's hospital (1974-1977). On the island he lived in a "casita de bamboo" and in his spare time explored the island and collected legends, myths and songs. He was the author of *La Herencia Musical de Rapanui* (1970); *El Misterioso Mundo de Rapanui* (1974) and a reprint of the latter in 1978, titled *La Cultura de la Isla de Pascua: Mito y Realidad* (Editorial Andres Bello). He was 86 years old



At a site just inland from Vaihu some young islanders raised up an ancient *moai* on their own, without any archaeological study. They threaten to continue putting them up around the island.

THE SKY IS FALLING. At the end of next February, the Russian space station, Mir, will fall from the skies into the Pacific. It is expected to come down around 2000 kilometers from the east coast of Australia but, according to newspapers in Chile, there is a possibility that the remains of Mir will land at Easter Island, or even the coast of Chile. The distance from Australia to Rapa Nui is approximately 10,000 kilometers. In 1991 fragments of Salyut 7 fell on Argentina, and in 1979, Skylab disintegrated over Australia. However, Chilean Air Force authorities stated that "the risks of a catastrophe are very small..."

El Mercurio, 17 November 2000

THE INLAND AREAS OF THE ISLAND, south of Vaitea and north of Vaihu now have unpaved roads dividing them into square parcels. The parcels are enclosed with barbed wire fences, and land clearing is underway so the land can be planted. The clearing is being done with bulldozers so that rocks are piled up on the edges. Any archaeological sites that were here have likely been destroyed.

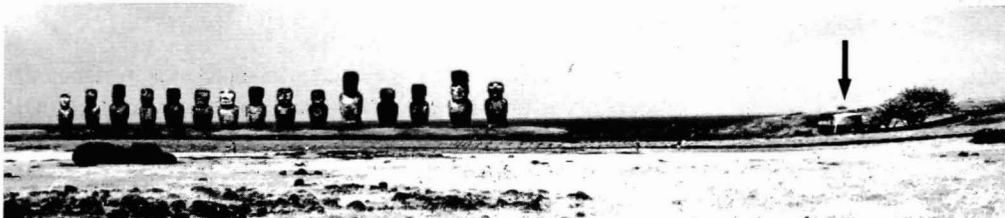
THE MATAVERI AIRPORT has been upgraded with a more modern ticket counter, making the check-in more in line with what one sees at other airports. There is easier access to the departure lounge, where there is a new and very large statue carved from a tree (see below). Other carvings by local islanders are displayed in the departure area. A covered ramada-like structure is under construction outside the airport entrance. It will accommodate those selling shell necklaces and other curios to arriving or departing tourists. This will move those selling items from their current location, on the sidewalk just outside the airport, where they now block traffic. Best of all is the baggage carousel and now there are even carts for luggage. Just like uptown.

We were told that a new airport terminal and control tower will be built at the other (east) end of the runway, but just what this will be for, and whether or not the old one will be dismantled is still in question. At least three versions are being told around the village: 1) the old one will be torn down; or, 2) the old one will be used by another airline (Which one? Who knows?); or, 3) one will be used by the Chilean Air Force, or maybe for private charter flights. Someone insisted there were to be three terminals. So take your pick from these delicious rumors. Something is happening and we hope to have some hard facts, one of these days. At least the strange plan to build the control tower in the shape of a *moai* has been abandoned due to objections by local islanders.



MAINTENANCE OF AHU and other archaeological sites seems to be a low priority these days. Many sites are covered with vegetation, with weeds growing on the *ahu* ramps, and Ahu Nau Nau at 'Anakena has sand encroaching rapidly on the back of the *ahu*. If not removed, it will soon cover the archaeological debris now located behind the sea wall.

The walls built at Tongariki and Papa Vaka to protect the petroglyph sites from cattle and horses are broken down, and not repaired. But the worst cases involve houses built on, or in



The ambience at Ahu Tongariki has changed; now there is a two-story house directly behind the west wing of the *ahu* (arrow). It is not possible to see the *ahu* without this new eyesore clearly in view.

close proximity to the ancient *ahu*. At Tongariki, a new two-story house looms over the south wing of the *ahu*, in clear view. Despite the fact that the land is in the National Park, this eyesore was built by an islander with money given to him by a rich Dutchman who has come to live on the island. The building plans were created by the man from Holland, with the help of a poet and an artist (imported for the occasion). The structure is rather boat-shaped.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Many problems face Rapa Nui today. Some of these are caused from the outside, but many others are created here, on the island itself. The giveaway of land in recent years, while admirable, has resulted in the building of *paepae* [shacks] on archaeological sites, including those most visited by tourists. Visitors who come from all the far points in the world to see the archaeological treasures of this island do not come to see untidy shacks, barbed wire fences, and herds of animals wandering around the sites. These things destroy the ambience of the sites.

Islanders who live in the areas near archaeological sites should be aware of the importance of camouflage. Houses and roofs can be painted to blend in with the area, and shrubs and trees can be planted to hide the buildings from view. Not all offenders are Rapanui. A new government installation that includes three large white greenhouses looms clearly above Ahu Akivi. This project is a government plan to grow flowers, but the buildings could be disguised by plantings.

According to Chilean law, building restrictions should be reviewed every five years, but there appears not to be any restrictions on Rapa Nui regarding what, or how, something can be built on the island. So with a lack of plans to manage the island, small shacks spring up and some of these are directly on archaeological sites. This can be seen near the Museo Sebastian Englert where a *paepae* is built directly on the *ahu* platform. This is not only unsightly, it is denigrating to our ancestors, and disrespectful of the sacredness of the ancient shrine.

Other examples of the lack of planning can be seen throughout the village where abandoned half-finished shells of buildings can be seen on nearly every street. Government funds are available to repair and upgrade houses (up to US \$7000). Repairs are subject to inspection and thus few islanders avail themselves of this option.

Another problem concerns livestock. There are more horses and cattle than the island can support. There is not enough grassland nor water. And yet, there are no controls on the size of herds. Several archaeological sites have *pirca* [stone walls] erected to keep animals out. But these are not well maintained so that livestock are seen on the *ahu*, on the petroglyphs, and rubbing against statues