

FROM THE EDITORS

IN THIS ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL, we are exhibiting a new format as well as many other new features that we hope will provide a better and more accessible *Rapa Nui Journal*. The size has been expanded so that we can now publish longer submissions complete in one issue.

Authors may submit manuscripts for consideration as articles, reports, comments or essays. The editors will evaluate manuscripts in consultation with peer referees, as appropriate. At the same time, we intend to continue with many of the familiar features to which RNJ readers have become accustomed. We welcome input and invite feedback and comments.

We have a very small staff and, as always, we welcome volunteers who are interested in doing a lot of hard work for no financial reimbursement.

In the fall of 2000 the EIF moved into a new office, located in the small village of Baywood (but we have the same mailing address as before); we have acquired new editors for the Journal as well as for our other publications.

Our major event of the past year was the Pacific 2000 Conference, held last August on Hawai'i Island. It was a great success. Not only did it bring together scholars from around the world, the papers presented were excellent. Dr Peter Bellwood was our keynote speaker and we are grateful to him for traveling so far and for providing a great start for the conference. As an indication of the popularity of the conference, the most-asked question was "Where is the next one going to be?" (See comments by Stevenson, below).

In this issue we are delighted to include a report from the field: Grant McCall's 'take' on the island after being away for some fifteen years. It is surely a shock to anyone who has been away for so long to see so many vehicles, paved roads, and other changes that range from supermarkets to computer stores. Those of us who worked on the island in the 1980s clearly recall the problems involved in finding a vehicle to rent, and particularly one that was in running condition and had tires. How times do change!

This issue also brings a provocative article by Paul Wallin and Helene Martinssen-Wallin about fishhooks and sacrifice. This talented couple has been working on research projects in various parts of Polynesia for many years and we are pleased to present their paper.

A different aspect emerges in the contribution by Riet Delsing, who provides an anthropological look at the concept of Polynesian sailing. Riet was among the few who were fortunate to be on Easter Island to welcome the arrival of the *Hōkūle'a*.

Ferren MacIntyre tackles the thorny problem of climatic change. His research is presented in two parts. Part I (this issue) sets the groundwork for understanding what follows in Part II (in our next issue). The question of how much the Polynesians have been affected by climatic change has often been addressed, but seldom with such intensity. Was the downfall of the Ra-

panui culture due to climate or did they destroy their island themselves? Was it a 'little Ice Age', or did they bring it on themselves by clearing the forest and overpopulating the island? This question brings out the beast in many Polynesian scholars. Now, in MacIntyre's articles, we can make an informed decision for ourselves.

Veterinarian Jon Arzt contributes an article dealing with ecological problems on Easter Island: too many animals, too little space, a dearth of adequate feed for the animals, and a poisonous plant that causes sickness and a painful death for horses and cattle. It is not only the animals that suffer; livestock on the island does considerable damage to the archaeological sites of the island. Jon is in the process of raising funds to initiate programs that will help deal with the problems he describes.

Finally, we present a true 'gem' from the days of seafaring: a shipwrecked crew that was lucky enough to reach Rapa Nui in 1913 after their ship was lost at sea. This is a truly astonishing saga of the Pacific, and also provides a glimpse of what life was like on the island in those days.

All of us at the EIF thank you for your loyal support of *Rapa Nui Journal* and hope you will continue to enjoy our publication.

Georgia Lee

A REPORT FROM RAPA NUI BY GRANT MCCALL

EVERYONE KEEPS ASKING ME: what do you think of the Island?

It has been 15 years (1985-6) since I was last on Rapanui to live and research and there have been changes a plenty. I usually reply just as well, since why else would I return but to study those changes? My first social anthropological research was as a Ph. D. student at the Australian National University, when I arrived on 1 April 1972 to study a culture that no longer existed but had been invented over the previous century. The title of my thesis was to be: "Banana Grove Suburbia", which I rather like still. It would show how a very reduced (110 in 1877) population, mixed with Tahitian and Chilean influences had managed to invent a new culture from those memory ashes



Three ships: A sailing ship and a yacht share Cook's Bay with a luxury ocean liner that brought over a thousand passengers to the island. Photo: G. McCall