UNITED STATES

Antoinette Padgett and Luis Tepano Pont found black and brown candles in the shape of moai statues for sale at Urban Outfitters. These 8 inch items cost $15 each and are manufactured by Greenwich Village Candles, PO Box 2693, Orleans MA 02653.

The latest issue of Wine Spectator Magazine features a full-color spread of computer-imaged moai at Rano Raraku, advertising Chilean wines; the caption reads “Two things you should know about Chile . . . .”

Alan Drake noted the cover of Asimov’s Science Fiction Magazine (for May) which has a painting of three moai. The cover story? “Lemuria Will Rise”.

ANTIGUA, WEST INDIES

Another alert Rapanuiphile, Dorothy Feltham, spotted posters along the roadsides and on sides of buildings in Antigua that show our beloved moai wearing sun glasses and a pirate-type bandana—as seen through a Smirnoff bottle. What next?

WHAT’S NEW IN POLYNESIA

SUVA, FIJI

A project of the climate research group at University of the South Pacific has won a technology award in Japan. The project was on vulnerability and response strategy in regard to climate change and sea-level rise. The work was funded by the Environment Agency of the Government of Japan and coordinated by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

Bulletin of the University of the South Pacific, Vol. 31(2) 1998

FRENCH POLYNESIA

Although the nuclear tests at Mororua and Fangataufa were said to be “innocuous” by French authorities, it now appears that radioactive fallout reached the highest levels as those found around the Chernobyl, Russia, disaster in 1986. Now-sealed defense documents from the S Mor (radiological safety service) recommended evacuating residents of Reao, Tureia, Pukarua and Mangareva prior to the first atmospheric test on 2 July, 1966. However, the record states that “… the hypothesis of an evacuation was excluded for political and psychological reasons.”

It gets worse. No decontamination measures were taken despite high levels of contamination of the food resources on Mangareva. Record levels of radioactive rainfall on Mangareva followed the second test, on 24 September but, before the explosion, no safety measures were taken aside from assembling the population close to shelters. The Defense Ministry declined to comment.


RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS

Five villages have agreed to participate in a two-year ban on fishing in order to attempt a “restock” of dwindling ocean resources. On the western side of the island, Puaikura district will enforce its ban for six months only. These are attempts by the government to combat the problems that have resulted from over-harvesting fish.

MARSHALL ISLANDS

The Marshalls are seeing a revival of traditional canoe building with assistance from the Outrigger Marshall Islands Resort in Majuro, host of this year’s second annual Outrigger Marshall Islands Cup. The races will feature traditional one-person (korkor) sailing canoes. These differ from Polynesian canoes in that the hulls are not symmetrical. Thus, the sailor can change direction by moving the sail from one end of the canoe to the other.


WHAT’S NEW IN HANGA ROA

TAXI SERVICE

Taxis appear to be a booming business on the island. There now are 21 taxicabs. All of them are independent, and they charge a fare of $500 (Chilean pesos) for any trip within Hanga Roa and between $6,000 and $10,000 to ‘Anakena. However, for tourists, the rate goes WAY up! During Tapati Festival, they charged tourists $15,000 Chilean pesos (approximately US $40.) for a ride to Rano Raraku.

TAPATI

News about this year’s Tapati festival continues to trickle in. It was the first year that a competition including tourists was put on the program. This was considered “a night of humor,” as tourists attempted Rapanui dances, tried speaking Rapanui, or tried to explain their body designs, painted for the occasion—to the great amusement of locals.

The carnival-like parade with floats (farandula) that always is a spectacular event and occurs toward the end of Tapati, was described as fantastic. This year, many non-Rapanui joined in the parade, suitably dressed (actually undressed) for the occasion. One observer was surprised to note so many tourists as well as local (but non-Rapanui) participants who wore body paint and hamis, and little else. Many women went topless. It reminded some of the carnival at Rio—where anything goes. This year’s carnival parade began on Policarpo Toro, just beside the airport and ended at the Caleta instead of the middle of the village as it has in the past.

Problems in the organization of the festival began with the
sound system. A “light and sound” company was contracted from the mainland but they must have thought the festival was a rock concert, judging from the blasting volume that nearly deafened everyone, drowning out the words of songs, and leaving on-lookers with ringing ears. Louder is not better.

A few competitions were canceled due to bad weather, including the spear fishing competition. Other events, including Part 1 of the Folklore Festival, were postponed because of rain. During the Haka Pei (banana trunk tobogganening), two participants ended up in the hospital with injuries. Hard feelings between the families of the queen contestants were evident. In other words, it was the normal island festival.

We were told that organizers are thinking about changing the competition and, instead of a queen contest, establish a suicidal tangata manu competition (birdman contest)—surely a jest.

**NOVA on Rapa Nui**

A PBS project on the island began on April 17th. The finished product will be “Secrets of Easter Island”. The p.r. from NOVA reads: “Online Adventures Travels to Easter Island to Explore Ancient and Vibrant Civilization that Created Legendary Moai Statues. NOVA/PBS Online Adventures travels to Easter Island with a Web site dedicated to exploring one of civilization’s greatest enigmas. Secrets of Easter Island will take the Internet audience on a series of adventures, along the way attempting to unlock some of the islands well-kept and most enigmatic secrets.”

“For nearly three centuries, explorers and archaeologists, from Captain Cook to Thor Heyerdahl, have been fascinated by the secrets of Easter Island. How did the original Easter Islanders arrive on the most remote inhabited island on earth? How did they move and erect the giant Moai statues? What happened to the ancient and vibrant civilization that created these legendary statues?”

“Archaeologist Jo Anne Van Tilburg has spent the last 15 years studying the mysterious statues of Easter Island. Working with robotics expert Zvi Shiller at UCLA, Van Tilburg has used computers to simulate her theories on how the statues were transported and erected and has found what may be the answer to the riddle that stumped Heyerdahl and others; how were the Easter Islanders able to move these giant figures, some weighing as much as 80 tons—across miles of rough terrain? Van Tilburg believes the solution is to lie the statue on its back atop a simple wooden sledge, then drag it along on log rollers. But will it work in the field? Visitors to the Web site will be able to watch and see.”

“Beginning in mid-April, Van Tilburg, several other experts, and a team of about 75 local Easter Islanders will have three weeks to put her theory to the test. Using only the types of tools available to the original Easter Islanders, the crew will attempt to transport a 15-ton, 14-foot high replica of a statue to its Ahu platform, set up on a false platform. No cement statue was moved from Rano Raraku to Tongariki, the pukao tied to the statue head, and set up on a false platform. The cement statue was moved from Rano Raraku to Tongariki, the pukao tied to the statue head, and set up on a false platform. No mention has been made of how these items will be disposed of after the project ends.

This was produced for the same Nova series that illustrated how the stone blocks from Stonehenge were moved (very similarly—the Stonehenge program aired during the Easter Island filming, and they used the same techniques). The purple prose of the on-screen text was a bit much. On May 5th, the dispatch stated that “. . . rain falling from eves [sic] to green orchid leaves . . .” and references to “wet tropical air” leave one to wonder if the writer hadn’t strayed to Tahiti by mistake. Misspelled words such as “pukau” and “maoi” were distracting and unfortunate.

**The Supply Ship Saga**

The supply link between Rapa Nui and mainland Chile has always been a cargo ship that traveled from Valparaíso, bringing in everything from soda pop to tires, cement to sugar. Originally it came once a year but consumer demands have increased, so now several times a year a ship arrives with cargo. It anchors off Hanga Roa and must be off-loaded by small boats that carry the cargo to shore. If seas are high, there are delays, and accidents have happened causing loss of the cargo and sometimes of the entire ship (RNJ 10(4):118). Now that LanChile flies to the island several times a week, air cargo is an alternate for smaller items and perishables—but an expensive one.

The supply ship is an eagerly awaited event. For those building a house, it brings window glass (but often arriving in small pieces!) and building supplies. For stores, it carries alcoholic drinks and staple food items; for fuel, it brings tanks of propane. It conveys appliances and furniture, medical supplies, and automobiles. So many automobiles have been brought to the island that now the roads are choked with cars and accidents caused by fast-driving islanders have increased dramatically.

On 12 February it was announced in *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* that the supply ship *Araki* was leaving for Easter Island the next day, with 650 tons of cargo. The announcement added that it was the first ship since before Christmas and was loaded mainly with vehicles, food, fuel and construction materials.

On the 19th of February, *El Mercurio de Valparaíso* announced the *Araki* was scheduled to sail the following day, with 1200 tons of cargo. A representative of the ship’s owner, Transporte Maritimos Miramar, added that the postponement was a result of a series of problems with the ballast and fuel tanks, which had not met with approval from the local Marine authority. The cargo consists of construction materials such as wood,
cement, and iron, and accessories such as doors and window frames for some 32 houses on the island. Included in the article was a big color photo showing heavy lumber being loaded onto a rusty hull with the name Araki clearly visible. From its appearance, we wouldn’t sail across Walden Pond in this tub.

On 25 February, the notice appeared that Araki was leaving for Easter Island on the next day. The above delays were cited, blaming problems with the ship, last minute cargo arrivals, and finally the late arrival of fuel to fill the ship’s tanks.

By 20 April, the Araki was not only safely back from the island, but was reloading for another trip. The next voyage, bringing almost 1000 tons of merchandise, will supply the island until September when another trip will be made. The present cargo includes 25 more vehicles, material to construct 30 new houses in Hanga Roa, and various items for the maintenance of the Mataveri airport, and 200 eucalyptus poles for the extension of the electric power on the island that SASIPA is undertaking.

Taking supplies to the island appears to be a lucrative endeavor; an islander, Orlando Paoa, recently purchased a retired naval ship, Piloto Pardo to transport cargo and passengers to Juan Fernandez Islands and Easter Island. Paoa also is the owner of the Hotel Hotua Matua. Although the price was not given, Paoa confirmed that the sale has been completed and the ship is entirely his. It is now being reconditioned and should be ready next month to begin service. The ship was constructed in Holland in 1959 and was retired from service last January. It has the capacity to carry 30 tourists. It would go first to Juan Fernandez, then on to Easter Island, and back to Valparaiso where it would be readied to begin the trip again. Paoa did not state if he is thinking of asking a subsidy for taking cargo to the islands such as the owners of the Araki have.

El Mercurio de Valparaiso, 24 April 1998

THE SUPPLY SHIP SAGA AND THE PORT PROBLEM

Along with the cargo problems, the head of Transportes Marítimos Miramar, Patricio Vidal Walton, said that the Dirección de Obras Portuarias, DOP, should reconsider the project of a larger port because the Araki would not be able to use the one proposed for La Pérouse bay, due to the small size of this projected port. He noted that the design for the new port would admit ships up to 1,000 tons gross; the Araki is 1,178 tons gross. He added that the demand for cargo is on the increase and in the future they will have to use a larger ship to keep shipping costs down. The head of DOP, Mario Muñoz E., said that if the Community of Easter Island approves the port project, construction would start early next year with completion by year’s end.

THE PORT PROBLEM

However, not all are in favor of a port at La Pérouse. It is not the appropriate place for such construction, according to National Park (CONAF) administrator José Miguel Ramírez, and the president of the Consejo de Ancianos #1, Alberto Hotus. Both oppose the project as planned by the DOP. Hotus and Ramírez stated that the proposed site of a pier is in an area untouched by modern civilization—there are no buildings or paved roads, or any amenities. But the area is surrounded by priceless archaeological sites—monuments that would be destroyed by the construction of a pier.

According to Ramírez, there are no valid reasons to build at La Pérouse bay since it would directly influence the most important economic activity of the island: tourism. He stated that “The construction of a pier in La Pérouse would mean the arrival of trucks, heavy machinery, and rubble which would destroy the sites and the ambiance of twelve archaeological sites near the project, among these are the great platforms of Ahu Ra’ai, and Ahu Heki’i. He said that no study has been made concerning the impact of construction on the ambiance, even though the bay is located inside the limits of the Rapa Nui National Park which was declared by the United Nations as a Reserve of the Biosphere and the Patrimony of Humanity.

Even when the studies are approved by the corresponding organizations, there exists other criteria that question the validity of the pier: the way the landscape will look; the archaeological sites; and the life style of the islanders. As an alternative, he suggested building a pier in the bay near Hangarao village. This would avoid a negative impact on the park and would not affect any archaeological sites.

Building a pier in La Pérouse Bay would not solve the problem of a port on Easter Island, José Miguel Ramírez stated, and the cost would be significantly more than if it were placed at Papa Haoa (near Hanga Roa). And he added “... to that sum one would have to add the incalculable cost of the damage to the cultural patrimony and to the tourism of the island.” As an example, he pointed out that the monumental platform Ahi Ra’ai is located only meters from the bay. The monument would leave little space for the movement of port equipment because it is surrounded by dozens of lesser archaeological structures. In front of this platform is a group of petroglyph panels that are protected by a stone wall so that animals do not destroy them. This wall is the only intervention of man in the area. “If there existed a consistent policy in this territory, with a unity of cultural and ambient management, all development work—for example a pier—would be done in the coast adjacent to the urban area where the costs would be less and damage to priceless sites less apt to happen.

Alberto Hotus also categorically rejected the idea of a port near monuments or inside the National Park because it would directly affect tourism, the principal source of funds for the islanders. “The community is not in accord with the selected place for the pier and we are categorically opposed to its construction in La Pérouse bay,” stated Hotus, and he added that the government should not impose its criteria over the opinion of Congress or the islanders, not even with technical arguments. When asked about the possibility of constructing the pier whether or not the community approved the site selected by DOP, the island leader explained that the development of Easter Island is intimately connected with tourism and not with other economic activities, and “... we prefer that nothing be constructed rather than have it in La Pérouse bay.”

As an alternative, he suggested extending the present pier located in Hanga Piko. That would satisfy all the important needs of the island and, as the area has already been severely impacted by past construction, further damage would not be a consideration.

The Governor of the island, Jacobo Hey, was more cautious in his comments about a pier at La Pérouse bay, but agreed that the proposed pier is not large enough. But he added that the criteria of approval for the project should be strictly technical.
"If the specialists convince me that that place is the best, then I will agree with them," he said. Contrary to Ramírez and Hotus, the Governor stated that a pier is "fundamental" for tourist development because tourists who arrive on big cruise ships could disembark more easily.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso; 1 March 1998

[What is wrong with this picture? What is given as a rationale for building the port at La Pérouse is that the huge cruise ships that come in to the island (perhaps three a year) have trouble unloading passengers if the surf is up. But these "tourists" spend only a few hours on the island, have neither time or opportunity to buy souvenirs, and leave little cash behind. But they do trample down the archaeological sites. Even though they are divided into smaller groups of several bus loads at a time, five to eight hundred people are herded through the sites in the span of a few hours. This is not the kind of tourism that benefits the island. To destroy the sites at La Pérouse bay so that passengers on the rarely-arriving cruise ships can get ashore is more than short-sided. It is lunacy. The Editor.]

Already the Chilean government has decided to spend US$180,000 to study the environmental impact of the port. The decision will be a political one.

Concerned readers who would like to express an opinion regarding the proposed port at La Pérouse bay and who wish to let Chile know that the world is watching may write to the following persons:

- Ambassador John Bichl, Chilean Embassy, 1732 Mississipi Ave. N.W.; Washington DC, 20036. Fax- 202-887-5579;
- Mr Ricardo Lagos, Ministro de Obras Publicas, Morande 59, Santiago, Chile.
- Send copies to Gobernador Jacobo Hey; Alcalde Pedro Edmunds, and José Miguel Ramírez, CONAF; all addressed to Correo, Isla de Pascua, Chile.

JOSE MIGUEL RAMíREZ

On the subject of the proposed port at La Pérouse, the (translated) text of a letter prepared by CONAF director José Miguel Ramírez and dated 25 February 1998, is included here:

—The sector chosen by the Dirección de Obras Portuarias in which to construct an alternate port is found the in territory of the Parque Nacional Rapa Nui, and under the protection, administration and control of CONAF.

—The Parque Nacional Rapa Nui was placed on the list of World Heritage List by UNESCO in December, 1995, for the exceptional quality and quantity of archaeological remains that it contains. Since that time, it is the only Chilean site on the list. This special agreement refers to all organizations of the State in all its laws of protection and conservation.

—It is a paradox that after international and national regulations to protect the land and the Rapanui culture, the islanders have no land for their own cattle. Thus livestock runs freely, causing progressive deterioration of their archaeological patrimony and, the same time, their economic basis through tourism, the islands only industry.

—Under a consistent policy of land management and protection of patrimony, all development should be done on the coast near the urban area, already developed, and where the costs of operations would be less. In this view, the only alternatives should be the improvement of the existing port at Hanga Piko or construction of a port at Papa Haoa, at a cost of more than US 50 million. An alternate port for occasional use during those times when access to Hanga Piko is difficult, in La Pérouse, 20 km distant from Hanga Roa does not resolve the fundamental problem of the lack of a port, and it is not technically appropriate for the type of boats that comprise the fleet of the island. Most serious is the negative impact that this installation and its inevitable structures will have on the archaeological heritage and the ambience of the island—for these are beyond price.

—The administration of the Park and the Consejo de Ancianos No.1 have expressed in the Chilean press their opposition to the project, defending the natural and cultural heritage of the island. The Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales, as well as the Executive Director of CONAF have expressed formal criticism of the "reference terms" prepared by the Dirección de Obras Portuarias for the Study of Environmental Impact of the port, without response. According to law, this study, by a private consulting agency, should be sent to CONAMA (Comisión Nacional de Medioambiente) for analysis and criticism by all involved, including the local community. As in other cases (Ralco dam on the Bio Bio River, Trillium project in Tierra del Fuego), it doesn't necessarily mean to stop the project but provides money to mitigate negative impact.

—Since the project was announced in June of 1995, we have made our doubts and apprehensions known. To build a port of doubtful efficiency at the cost of US 4 million should be summarized as an incalculable cost of the damage to the cultural heritage and to tourism on the island, and to the world's image of Chile.

THE MERCADO IN HANGAROA

Word is that the old and decrepit mercado is due for an overhaul. Located on Calle Tu'u Koihu, near the island's church, the mercado is constructed of corrugated metal and has been on the verge of collapsing for years. A new and modern Artisan Market is to replace it. The cost of this will be US$370,000 with funds provided by the National Fund of Regional Development; it will benefit local artists.

At this time, the mercado is used by islanders to display...
and sell their wood carvings. It was originally built to house a produce market, but islanders preferred to sell their garden produce and freshly-caught fish on the main street, Calle Policarpo Toro, where they set up impromptu tables twice a week. A few years ago a new open-air market was built on the corner of Policarpo Toro and Calle Tu’u Maheke; this has replaced the old street market.

Money also has been allocated for repairs to the Cultural Center “Tongariki” in the village, and for student scholarships.

Road paving continues; the latest word is that the dirt road leading from town out to the Sebastian Engler Museum (an extension of Calle Policarpo Toro) will be the next one to be paved, along with the paving of Calle Simón Paoa (the road that runs inland from the Church to the hospital). This year the coastal road from Hanga Roa to the quarry and continuing on to Anakena will be paved at a cost of $8.9 million dollars, to be financed by the Ministry of Public Works. Currently, an engineering study is underway, but an environmental impact study is still lacking.

If road paving continues, the old days of driving along the island’s roads enveloped in a huge cloud of red dust will be but a memory.

**THE HÖKELE’A**

The long-awaited voyage of the Hökèle’a from Hawai’i to Easter Island has been postponed for at least a year. The Hökèle’a has been refurbished by hundreds of volunteers, making it seaworthy for navigational training and long distance sailing. The Polynesian Voyaging Society has decided that more time is needed to prepare for the long voyage to Rapa Nui. The provisional dates are now 1999-2000.

**SOAP OPERAS AND RAPA NUI**

The Chilean soap opera, “Iorana, Bienvenido al Amor”, which has been filming on Easter Island and recently began showing on Chilean TV, has its star playing the part of an archaeologist who goes to Rapa Nui and there meets a guy—well, you can figure out the thrust of THIS story. The TV star, Claudia di Girolamo, claims she had been ‘counseled’ by that famous archaeologist Patricia Vargas. The male lead is, apparently, a handsome but ne’er-do-well “maukli” (a Rapanui term indicating an outsider, usually someone from the continent, living on the island).

“Iorana” won the ratings race: it outscored two other teleseries that were running concurrently on other channels. Its rating peaked when one of the headstrong, bikini-ed sweet young things (read “bimbo”) ran into the water at ‘Anakena and, with back to the camera, took off the top of said bikini.

Much of the action takes places indoors (in a Santiago studio), and many of the island areas that should be kept clean are kept clean. The film company, TV Nacional, has to use its stable of contracted actors, and so we are treated to silly scenes of continental Chileans, white of skin and paunch of belly, doing sad imitations of Polynesian dances.

**GERMANS RESCUED**

Two Germans were rescued by personnel of the maritime government (governación maritima) in Hanga Roa after their yacht “Tao” suffered structural damage during bad weather in the vicinity of Easter Island. This rescue occurred around 6 p.m. when the motor of German boat developed problems and the anchor became stuck on the sea bottom. They were rescued by the launch “Tokerau” which towed the yacht into the dock in Hanga Piko in spite of the adverse conditions. The Germans had arrived at Easter Island on February 4th having come from Tonga.

**ISLAND POLITICS AND THE LAW, CONTINUED**

In mid-March, the Supreme Court of Chile studied a petition of the Minister of the Interior to remove the island’s judge, Ricardo Soto Gonzalez. According to the document, Soto did not act with efficiency or diligence during the investigation of the Consejo de Ancianos #2 as is required by the Law of Security of the State. The Court of Appeals in Valparaiso annulled the charges against the islanders.

A week later, the Island’s judge, Ricardo Soto, stated that a complete account of his actions on the island will be submitted to the Supreme Court and that he will defend himself against the charges. Soto accused the Minister of the Interior of applying improper pressure and the petition to remove him to the continent constitutes an interference in the work of the judges.

The Minister of the Interior argued that Judge Soto had lived many years on the island and thus it was not possible for him to have a clear perspective of the events in that territory.

Soto, who was qualified as “outstanding” in the most recent evaluation process made by the tribunals of justice, said that the petition against him “... is open pressure on my work as a judge since the causes for which I am being questioned are ongoing. Without altering what has occurred, it constitutes an open intrusion in the independence of Judicial Power, as demanded by the Constitution.” He added that the Rapanui people have “distinct characteristics” which demand an understanding of social anthropology, Rapanui customs, traditions, language, and so on.

He recalled that the Ley Pascua (a Law for the island, Number 16.441, dictated March 1, 1966) took this reality into consideration in both letter and spirit: Article 7 establishes that persons functioning as judges should belong by preference to the same ethnic group; and in Article 11 a special norm is determined for the administration of justice in civil cases, and in non-
contentious cases of jurisdiction, the judge should take into consideration the special aspects of these cases.

Soto said that the norms applied on Easter Island have permitted justice on the island to be unique in Chile for being so rapid. According to statistics, the average time to complete criminal cases is 7.3 months.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 19 March 1998

El Mercurio continued to report on Judge Soto. Under headlines that read “The Law More Than 3,000 km From The Continent,” the “particulars of justice” on the island are described. Since 1966 the Ley Pascua has benefited those born on Easter Island and who commit crimes against private property and morality. This law is different from that which regulates the rest of Chile.

The procedures followed by Soto differ from those on the continent: they are oral and based on direct contact between the parties and the tribunal. They normally end with an accord between conflicting parties, the Judge resolving conflicts directly via conciliation and mediation. While this is one of the many peculiarities of the administration of justice on the island, it is not the only one. Another one is that justice is administered rapidly without the usual summons, notifications, arguments, repetitions, duplications, incidents and personal inspections by the tribunal, as happens on the continent.

El Mercurio points out that Soto is not a “normal” magistrate: he has no competence in civil, criminal nor labor matters. As Soto himself points out, “I am the only judge in Chile of ordinary competence who knows the objectives of the local police.”

Another detail: The island prison—if you can call it that—is located in an interior patio of the office of the superintendent, very near to the compound where the carabineros live. Until several months ago, the prison had no bars.

What Judge Soto does is to apply the Ley Pascua. It establishes that causes can be substantiated with the only procedures being to notify the parties, to hear those interested, and to practice the assiduity necessary for understanding the facts.

Soto says, “The law permits me to practice ‘friendly’. No one can say that this is illegal except those who do not know the Ley Pascua.” “... the Code of Civil Procedure allows the court on Easter Island to be the only one in Chile that has the right in penal matters; it authorizes the judge to consider that, in his conscience, the culture of the people carries weight in the circumstances in which the crime occurred,” explained Nelson Zúñiga, lawyer for the Corporation of Judicial Assistance on the island.

“The judges on the continent have to calibrate the means of proof in accord with certain dispositions. One knows, for example, that the queen of proofs is the confession. On the contrary I am only obliged to weigh those means of accord in conscience, but that does not mean I comprehend them arbitrarily,” advised Soto.

In the opinion of Zúñiga, this norm is closely related to the Rapanui culture because “… it is difficult on the continent to determine, for example, when the crime of rape has occurred; here it is much more delicate.” Another facet in the Ley Pascua is the lowering of penalties for crimes against property and morality. Article 13 establishes that for those illegal acts, committed by islanders on the island, “… the penalty imposed will be inferior by one grade. Thus, for a crime that requires imprisonment from 3 years and a day to five years, if it is committed by an islander, then automatically the sentence is reduced to between 541 days to 3 years and a day.” Soto explained that this is because at the time the law was enacted 32 years ago, the concept of private property for the islanders was different. “They had, and still have, a concept of ownership that is different from ours, more social in the sense that they feel authorized to take things without asking permission.”

With respect to the crime of rape, there is also a reduction. The Penal Code fixes imprisonment from 3 years and a day to 15 years, but for a Rapanui it ranges from 541 days to 3 years and a day. “The concept of a sexual crime is different here. There existed the custom that the parents delivered in matr­mony a girl when she was very young. That formal arrangement was respected and the only way of breaking it was that if another man raped her. These are ancestral customs,” said the judge.

[The ‘custom’ cited by Soto is unknown to the editors. That rape is considered by the Judge to be “different” on the island will come as a surprise to those who have suffered such an attack.]

Furthermore, in those cases in which prison is involved, the magistrate can allow up to two-thirds of the sentence to be completed outside of prison in those instances where the convicted person has no previous criminal record.

If the attacks against property and morality are committed by an islander on the continent, he will not have these benefits. And inversely, a continental who commits a crime on the island is judged according to the laws of the continent. This includes the case where the son or daughter of Islander parents born on the continent but who resides on the island cannot appeal to the Ley Pascua because it only applies to natives born on the island.

Reductions of sentences, judicial benefits, and freedom from jail are not always seen as suitable by the island community. According to statistics of the carabineros on Easter Island, the most significant crimes committed during 1997 include 31 for theft, 28 for intra-family violence, seven cases of rustling, and eight vehicle accidents with non-serious injuries. Furthermore, last year 256 were detained, of which 137 were by judicial order, mainly for not paying their food bills or for disobedience to a citation of the tribunal. Fifteen persons were arrested for robbery, twelve for intra-family violence, 34 for driving without a license, and 58 for drunkenness.

Major Patricio Reyes, in charge of the carabineros, considers these within the social parameters of any community of 2,900 inhabitants to which one must add an insignificant floating population. Moreover, he explained that it was necessary to consider that not all those detained had previous records. In any case, neither the judicial authorities nor the police believe that delinquency is a serious problem on the island. “Here there does not exist the type of crime as in Santiago where someone is kidnapped or a victim is killed during a robbery.”

On 9 May, it was announced that the Supreme Court rejected the petition for removal, stating that the Easter Island court functions well and no anomalies were detected.

MEDICAL MISSION TO THE ISLAND

On April 28th members of the third medical operation of MEDICAL MISSION TO THE ISLAND
the Chilean Air Force arrived to the island to lend assistance to
the inhabitants in various areas of surgery: abdominal, infant,
plastic, gynecology, ophthalmology, and breast, urinary and
dermatological problems. Islanders registered previously in the
Hanga Roa hospital and who received preliminary examinations
will be treated. In this medical mission there were 56 profession­
als who stayed six days on the island.

STILL MORE ISLAND POLITICS

In a Letter to El Mercurio, a reader named Michael Krosta
complained that neither the Consejo de Ancianos #1 nor # 2 are
legal and that all decisions must be made by the democratically-
elected mayor and the city council. He noted that the president
of the Consejo # 1, Alberto Hotus, was also the vice president of
SASIPA which is in charge of 14,000 hectares (about 28,000
acres) planted with eucalyptus to provide firewood for an elec­
trical plant. He added that SASIPA mis-manages its thousands
of cattle which are nothing but skin and bones. The cost of
electricity on the island is the highest in Chile. He asks, how can
CONAF take care of the archaeological monuments when they
scarcely pay the salaries of the personnel? The 10,000
tourists who come each year find the sites in bad condition. And
the detention of the six islanders (in February) was more than
justified because they charged fees for archaeological investiga­
tions and movie productions.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 16 February 1998

Ten days later, another letter appeared in the paper, this
one from Naval Captain Hugo Alsina. It commented on the
letter of Krosta by saying that some of his statements were not in
accord with reality. This Captain lived two years on the island
and developed a program on the local radio station, Vai Kava.
His ideas: form a state committee to deliver land to families on
the basis of need; build a real port, not just a steel pier. And the
island also needs a lighthouse and a good hotel. But he notes that
neither CONAF nor the Consejo No.1 want the pier on the north
coast. His conclusion: the island lacks “positive leadership” and
it might be good to form a junta of “good men” both of Rapanui
stock and from the continent. He agrees that the president of the
Consejo # 1 should not also be the Vice President of SASIPA,
nor should the president of SASIPA be mayor or be connected
with Town Hall.

The Ley Pascua—the Easter Island Law—gives the natives
many benefits and guarantees not extended to the contemporals on
the island: they are the only ones that can own land, they are
exempt from all types of taxes, they get free education with
good scholarships for university study, the penalties for misde­
meanors are considerably reduced, and many properties are
strongly subsidized such as housing, fishing boats, etc.

Alsina notes: “If only the contemporals could have half the
benefits that the islanders enjoy . . . . The island for all its
enchantment deserves better luck.” He adds that, in his opinion,
Rapa Nui is a mini-paradise with kind and attentive people who
live a life that is pleasurable and tranquil and only perturbed by
the unrest on the island. Aside from the “unrest” on the island, the writer was
embarrassed because a French tourist received inferior service at
Hotel Hotu Matua, considering the price paid: US $ 500 for four
days. He complained about the lack of attention, lack of notice
of when the excursions departed, as well as the dining hours,
nothing was translated into French, and the “half-day excursions”
lasted only two hours. As for LanChile, they did not
honor their announced air fares. Spoerer said that he had investi­
gated all these charges and LanChile agreed to make adjust­
ments. About the hotel, he said that Sernatur can not certify in
every moment that which is offered but not rendered, adding
that this is the first time that anyone has complained about that
particular establishment.

At this moment, LanChile has 4 flights to the island each
week: Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday. The current
airfare (as stated in Chilean newspapers) is US $513.

SCUBA ON RAPA NUI

An article describing the best places in Chile to scuba dive
stated that Rapa Nui “… has excellent visibility—about 40
meters (131 feet)—and its banks of coral are famous. The
temperature is constant at 18 degrees C (64 F). The ocean floor
is not contaminated, and there are sunken ships which have been
transformed into true marine habitats. The down side: Easter
Island is not a good place to learn this sport. Because the water
temperature is not warm, the coral reefs and most marine life are
not found near the coast: one has to scuba dive in the open
seas. The safest places include Motu Nui, Motu Tau Tara, the bay
of Hanga Roa, and Mataveri Bay. The great majority of species
seen here are endemic to the island. Some examples are angel
gold and butterfly fish. A company on Rapa Nui called “Orca”
offers submarine expeditions.

El Mercurio de Santiago, 19 April 1998

NEW PROJECTS SET FOR THE ISLAND

Public works on Rapa Nui that will cost more than US
$1.56 million have been approved and the money provided.
There are also priority projects amounting to more than $9.4
million dollars. This was announced by Governor Jacobo Hey
who said that the main project will be the enlargement of the
Mataveri airport at a cost of US $710,000 to be financed by
the Ministry of Public Works.

Hey also stated that the Civil Aeronautical Office is
working with Air Force personnel of the island to form a Rescue
and Fire Extinguishing Unit, and “to improve the present condi­
tions for defense and security of the national sovereignty.”

Other projects underway are the construction of 30 basic
houses at a cost of US$490,000 and financed by SERVIU, the
Service of Living and Urbanism, of the 5th District (that district
also includes Valparaiso, Viña and Easter Island).

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Also pending is a resolution to the question of where they will construct the new deep water pier on the Island. And soon construction of a new prison will begin; this project will cost more than US$255,000. Finally, this year a recreational center for older adults will be built at a cost of US$220,000.

In regard to the airport enlargement, the funds will go for improvements to the runway and the airport terminal, and the installation of a baggage conveyor belt as well as other things to make the airport more efficient.

[Editor’s Note: In a bit of a look backward, and in regard to such modern esoterica as a baggage conveyor belt, we remember what the airport terminal was like in 1981. At that time, it consisted of a Quonset hut left over from years past, mostly open to the breezes. Some wood railings funneled people into a line and the airline “desk” was a large plank. But the baggage collection was what sticks most clearly in the mind. One went over to a shoulder-high fence and pointed at one’s bag(s). A hefty guy picked up the bag and tossed it over the top of the fence. Well, that was OK provided it was a small bag or the recipient was a large person. If the bag’s owner happened to be a small person and the bag a large heavy one, the recipient found herself/himself flattened like a pancake. Those were exciting days.]

TOURIST CONGRESS ON EASTER ISLAND

The eleventh National Congress of the Federation of Chambers of Tourism of Chile, will take place on Rapa Nui, announced Arturo Castillo Chacón, president. The dates are from 8 and 15 of August of this year. This meeting should be important for the main topic “Opening the Island to the Open Skies,” a motion that previous congresses have put forth without producing any results. The fundamental point is that Rapa Nui is situated in mid-ocean at that point where many international flights cross the Pacific.

Also, they will discuss the construction of a port on the island which has generated controversy with the native population for its proximity to sacred places. The principal Chilean authorities of Economy and Tourism, plus numerous foreign tourist agents from the USA, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay have been invited to attend.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 20 April 1998

And speaking of tourists, during the recent visit of President Clinton to Chile, efforts were made for him to make a quick trip to Rapa Nui. However, his tight schedule precluded making the five hour flight each way. So near, yet so far.

Dear Editor:

In regard to Sergei Rjabchikov and the word, “pumakari,” there can’t be puma everywhere! According to Fuentes (1960:829), the word pumakari is the “geog. name of a fissure in the land.” Thomas S. Barthel (1962), in his famous Easter Island place-name study, does not list the name. Recently, Sergey V. Rjabchikov (1997), in a Russian paper dealing with “the interpretation of Easter Island myths,” has come up with an extra-Polynesian etymology: Quechua puma “puma” and Quechua kari “gold” (and associating the name with the god Makemake).

The statement that “God resides in the details” has been attributed to many people; Mr Rjabchikov now has to be added