Middle East. Leaving from Callao, Peru, in a 73-foot catamaran with dragon-shaped prows, two masts and five sails, he landed in Hawai'i in February after six weeks at sea. Savoy says the boat duplicates those of ancient Chinese trading ships he believes sailed the Pacific before the time of Columbus. The ship's design is a combination of Hawaiian, Polynesian, Chinese and Japanese concepts "and is the kind that would have been used in the Pacific basin by various cultures thousands of years ago."

Savoy will stay in Hawai'i to fix the boat and raise money for the next leg of the trip: Japan, China, Southeast Asia, India, Africa, Egypt, and the Mediterranean. His final leg will cross the Atlantic to Mexico and Central America.

**SUVA, FIJI**

The Pacific drug, kava, is becoming of interest to scientists in Europe for its economic value and use as a pharmaceutical product. It is used as a relaxant in the United States, and a research team at the University of the South Pacific (Suva) has found that kava has cancer-inhibiting properties. But local kava growers in the Pacific receive little benefit from growing kava; middlemen are the main beneficiaries. And now kava plantations have been set up in Australia, Hawai'i and Central America. To counteract this threat, strategies are being developed to provide a high quality product and to set up facilities to process the kava so that its value would be increased.

*University of the South Pacific Bulletin, Vol. 3(11) 1998*

**TONGA**

The Government of Tonga has imposed a ban on beche-de-mer exports for the next ten years. This seafood delicacy is popular in Asia and over-harvesting has led to its decline in much of the Pacific.

*Tok Blong Pasifik, Vol. 51 (3-4) 1997*

**KWAJALEIN**

 Kwajalein Atoll sits in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and is part of the US Army's space support to the US Space and Strategic Defense Command, NASA, and the Department of Defense. To earn extra cash, the island base is now marketing its skills and services to the world and is open for business. Want to test an intercontinental ballistic missile, missile intercepto, or satellite? They offer beachfront test facilities, package deals, and targets. Sorry, you'll have to leave off the nuclear warhead.


**CHRISTMAS ISLAND (KIRIBATI)**

A satellite launch proposal is being proposed from international waters, just outside Christmas Island. This US/Russian/Ukraine/Norwegian joint venture is planning to use Russian rockets fired from a modified North Sea oil rig. The rocket will make it to space; the rest will crash back into the ocean. Each launch will produce 36 tons of carbon monoxide in the lower troposphere on the way up, and a kerosene slick on the ocean, several kilometers wide as some 4.5 tons of kerosene fall unburned on the way down. The launch presentation to the Kiribati government said the fuels are "environmentally friendly." However, when questioned it was amended to "friendlier." The rational is that there are not a lot of higher forms of life in mid-ocean, but questions arose as to possible impact on whales, other marine mammals, fish and birds.

**NEW ZEALAND**

According to new research from New Zealand's Victoria University, the ancestors of Polynesians came from Taiwan. *The Dominion*, Wellington's daily newspaper, reports that research by the school of biological sciences reader Geoffrey Chambers confirms earlier genetic studies that show Polynesians (and the Maori in particular) had less genetic diversity than many other ethnic groups. His report concludes that ancestors of the Polynesians came from mainland Asia before island-hopping across the Pacific. Beginning at Taiwan, the route went through the Philippines and Indonesia, east through the upper part of Papua-New Guinea, northeast to Fiji, east to Samoa and finally to the islands of Easter Polynesia.

Dr Chambers stated that there is an exact living record of these voyages of colonization preserved in the DNA of their modern-day descendants who still live along the route. DNA traces indicate that at some point Polynesians may have traveled as far as South America and returned.

**OBITUARY**

**FRANCE**

**ENGLAND**

Rapamune is the name of a drug made from a fungal growth found in the soil on Easter Island that helps kidney transplant patients to resist rejection by up to 60%, according to Sir Roy Caine, Nobel prize winner in the field of transplants and the lead investigator for the clinical trials in England. Trials have been confined to kidney patients but researchers hope they will also be successful in other transplants. The side effects associated with the usual treatments do not occur with Rapamune. Expected to be available for general use in about two years, the
drug is derived from a streptomycine fungal growth that evolved over millions of years on Easter Island. Now that a culture can be replicated in a laboratory, it can be produced produced anywhere.


BRAZIL
A SKULL FOUND IN SOUTHEASTERN BRAZIL and dubbed “Luzia” is being touted as the oldest ever found in the New World—dated to 11,500 years ago. An anthropologist from Sao Paulo, Walter Neves, claims the skull has characteristics similar to people of the South Pacific. When Luzia’s skull was analyzed it closely resembled the Easter Island sample. The conclusion was that for some reason the Luzia paleoindian skull was very similar to the Easter Islanders/South Pacific, but it was not postulated that Luzia arrived to South America from the South Pacific, as was reported in the San Francisco Examiner for May 23, 1998. (It appears that some comments were misquoted or taken out of context). Anthropologist Vince Stefan, University of New Mexico, will be conducting investigations to see whether the same ancestral population of central Asian people may have been the source for both the paleoindians of the Americas and the Lapita people who are theorized to be the ancestors of the Polynesians. Robert Suggs calls these people Paleo-Caucasoid. [Our thanks to Vince for clarifying a rather confused news report!]

CONTINENTAL CHILE
NEWS FROM THE FONCK MUSEUM, VIÑA DEL MAR
The objections of the Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales were disregarded, and the lovely but aging structure that now houses the Fonck Museum will be torn down and replaced by a modern building. The Fonck Museum has long been noted for its collection of Rapanui artifacts, and as the temporary location for the Biblioteca Mulloy (under the direction of Ana Betty Haoa Rapahango). According to the mayor of Viña del Mar, the Fonck structure is in poor condition from earthquake damage, and is now battling termites and an attic full of pigeons. The Rapa Nui moai that stands in front of the Fonck will be moved inside the new building.

El Mercurio de Valparaiso 8 June 1998

WHAT’S NEW IN HANGA ROA

Editor’s Note: For such a small piece of real estate, Rapa Nui engenders a lot of noticias in the Chilean press. The following batch of news releases has come across our desk since the March issue. Things are perking on the island. Whether they will prove to be good or bad—or even happen—is unknown. It is discouraging to note that another scheme to erect a lighthouse on the island is again in the news. And there is a push to clarify the problems of land ownership, and another to have an autonomous ‘region’ for the island, separate from that of Valparaiso. Stay tuned! RNJ will try to keep abreast of all these changes, charges and countercharges, infighting, plots and counter-plots. As they say, The Plot Thickens!

NEW LIGHTHOUSE PROPOSED FOR RAPA NUI
JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE to go out again, the Chilean Navy is again proposing to put up a new lighthouse, this time on the summit of Maunga O’Tu’u, at approximately 250 meters above sea level. In 1991, a proposal to erect a “monumental lighthouse” at Vai a Tare, near the sacred site of Orongo, was defeated by protests from Rapanui islanders who marched in protest (see RNJ 6(3):66-67; and 5(4):76-77).

Despite the fact that the island already has seven coastal beacons around the island, it is stated that this new project is in response to “worried island fishermen.” The project is expected to benefit 30 local fishermen. [It would be cheaper and just as effective to buy those “worried fishermen” Global Positioning Systems!]

The island used to be famous for its statues.

The new lighthouse will consist of an 8 meter (26 foot, or about 2.5 story) tower on the summit of Maunga O’Tu’u. It is situated at the V formed by a fork in the roads leading to Anakena and to Ahu Akivi, and about a mile inland from both roads. It is almost exactly due south of Maunga Terevaka. It will have its own generator, solar panels, and a Racon apparatus to give its position when a navigation radar is pointed at it. Its design, it is said, will not constitute a “discordant element” with the surroundings. The plan has been approved by the Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales and the island’s Provincial Government which has asked for an area 10 by 10 meters on the summit of said mountain.

TEN DAYS LATER, the following appeared in El Mercurio de Santiago: “Because of eventual environmental damage, Islanders are opposed to the lighthouse and the pier.” The article quoted the directors of the Consejo de Ancianos #2 as being categorically opposed to the construction of a lighthouse. The Consejo directors, among them Ruth Pakomio, Matias Riroroko and Antonio Tepano, declared that “... lighthouses have never solved the problems of fishermen stranded at night; because if they are stranded, it is because they ran out of gasoline.”

The Consejo de Ancianos #2 assured that the lighthouses now located at Vaihu, Hotu Iti, Hanga Roa Otai, Hanga Otai, Hanga Piko and at La Pérouse are more than sufficient. Antonio Tepano stated that “This will no longer be known as Easter Island, but the Island of the Lighthouses.” In his opinion “... the proposed lighthouse will be useful only for all the outsider fishing industries that come here to drag their nets on the bottom of our ocean. Off the continent, drag netting has affected all the ecosystems of the coast, leaving the local fishermen with nothing for their nets.”