UNITED STATES
The press is suddenly filled with various advertisements that use images of *moai* to tout their products. An ad in the *Explorers Journal* is particularly notable in that it advertises a classy watch by Breitling, dubbed the “Mata-Rangi Expedition” model, commemorating “the voyage of the largest reed vessel built by modern man.” The watch has a logo showing a drawing of the Mata Rangi on its face. However, the ad neglects to mention that the ill-fated Mata Rangi sunk ignominiously shortly after being launched from ‘Anakena beach, its crew (and stowaways) being rescued by the *Stray Dog*, a passing sailboat (we are not making this up). For background on the Mata Rangi and its short unhappy life, see RNJ 10(3):63, 11(1):43, 11(2):96, and 11(3):138.

The other advertisements are for Crowne Plaza Hotels and Kinko’s. The Crowne Plaza ad features a shot of Ahu Akivi’s statues, apparently symbolizing members of a stoned Board of Directors. Kinko’s is a computer generated set of four *moai* from Rano Raraku, pushing Kinko’s expertise in creating exciting images for presentations.

A random visit to a Cayucos (California) garage sale by our publications assistant, Antoinette Padgett, resulted in a rare find: several truly ugly *moai* representations in the form of vases, salt shakers and, in one case, a candle holder. The liver-lipped candle holder is particularly noteworthy as it has green glass marble eyes that light up when a candle is placed inside.

CANADA
David Stanley of Pacific guidebook fame, sent us his picture in front of Toronto’s upscale (and pricey) travel clothing manufacturer, Tilley’s Endurables. The *moai* is a symbol for the company. David, ever the rebel, is wearing Levi’s, not Tilley’s. Watch for the announcement of David’s three updated handbooks: South Pacific, Tahiti-Polynesia, and Fiji Islands—new editions for all three coming out in 1999, published by Moon Travel Handbooks.

LAHAINA, MAUI
AMID POLYNESIAN CHANTS, the Mayor of Hanga Roa, Petero Edmunds Paoa was welcomed to Lahaina. Edmunds was there to establish “sister-island” ties. Maui leaders hope the association will encourage the growing renaissance of native cultures. Edmunds said he hopes to learn methods of disposal of trash and sewage as used on Maui, and reforestation methods which may benefit Rapa Nui. In return, he has offered to share his people’s knowledge of Polynesian culture, which has remained fairly intact. Leaders of the two islands exchanged gifts before the signing of the sister-island agreement. Councilman Sol Kaho’ohalahala led the renewal of the relationship and said there is evidence of a relationship in the oral and spiritual traditions of both islands.

HONOLULU, HAWAI’I
IT HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED that the *Hokule’a* will visit Easter Island next year. Polynesian Voyaging Society President Myron Thompson said it will be the most ambitious journey of the *Hokule’a*. They plan to leave Hawai’i in June of 1999, arrive to Rapa Nui in October, and return in December. The voyage will be chronicled by *National Geographic*.

Thirty students from Kamehameha schools in Hawai’i visited Easter Island. One of the student projects was to help restore the ecosystem. As part of a cultural exchange, the students planted sandalwood and koa saplings. As a result of the Easter Island-Hawaiian interchange, professional exchanges are being discussed between Hawai’i’s Department of Land and Natural Resources and Rapa Nui’s National Park officials.

The students took two computers to the island in order to connect Hanga Roa’s school with the internet. All this activity is connected to the voyage of the *Hokule’a*; the *Hokule’a*’s escort ship will carry the phone line system and satellite. That way there will be a three-way system of communication to track the *Hokule’a*.

ALSO IN HONOLULU is yet another adventurer attempting to prove the diffusionist theory of ancient races. Gene Savoy is off on a seven-year voyage around the world in a replica of an ancient sailing vessel, trying to prove that pre-Columbian Peru had contact with civilizations as far away as Japan and the
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 plied 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

DR. ATHOLL ANDERSON and crew have been excavating in caves on Fiji. They found prehistoric remains including a land crocodile two meters or more long, a megapode (giant bird), giant iguanas and large frogs. Anderson suspects the most recent finds would have been deposited within the past 5000 years. The first human settlement in Fiji was around 3,000 BC. We hope to have a full report on this excavation in a future issue of RNJ.

University of the South Pacific Bulletin, Vol. 3(18) 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 interceptor, 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 planing 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

We have received sad news of the death of André Valenta, founder of the Cercle d’Etudes sur L’Île de Pâques et la Polynésie (C.E.I.P.P.). Valenta, who was born in Tunisia on 12 May 1924, died on 4 July 1998. He lived most of his life in Evry, Essonnes, France. Valenta founded the Institut International de L’Île de Pâques in 1979; this was enlarged geographically the following year to include other parts of Polynesia, thus becoming the Cercle d’Etudes sur L’Île de Pâques et la Polynésie. Valenta remained president until 1993 when Dr Raymond Duranton took over that position.

A dedicated subscription will be opened to honor the memory of André Valenta. For further information, contact C.E.I.P.P. c/o Délégation de la Polynésie Française à Paris, 28 boulevard Saint-Germain, 75005 Paris, France.

WHAT’S NEW ELSEWHERE

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