What's New in Polynesia

PITCAIRN ISLAND

An Australian electronics retailer may be the savior of Pitcairn. The island’s communications officer, Tom Christian, claimed that there are only 30 islanders left on the island, and only eight of them are working men. He voiced the concern that soon they may have to abandon the island due to a shortage of manpower. Their new hope may be an airstrip on the rugged island. Although Pitcairn is Britain’s last colony, there is no interest in London for building an airstrip. Enter Dick Smith, who owns a chain of electronic stores in Australia and New Zealand. Smith wants to build a grass airstrip of some 500 meters long, provide a small plane and train an islander to be a pilot. Then tourists could be flown in from Mangareva, the nearest airstrip.

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POLYNESIAN LITERARY COMPETITION

The Institute of Polynesian Languages and Literatures and the journal Rongorongo Studies are pleased to announce that the winner of the Polynesian Literary Competition for 1998, whose theme area was the Marquesas Islands, is Pierre Kohumoetini of Hakahau, ‘Ua Pou, with his poem “Peto ‘Enama” (“Dogs of the Marquesas”). Pierre Kohumoetini, who is still a student, has been awarded a Certificate of Award and a cash prize of NZ $250. The winning poem, with accompanying French translation, has been published in the journal Rongorongo Studies 8 (1998): 43-4. The adjudicators for the 1998 Competition were M. Benjamin Teikitutoua and the teaching staff at the Centre Scolaire on ‘Ua Pou. Permanent moderators were Dr H. G. A. Hughes of Denbigh, Wales, and Dr Steven Roger Fischer of Auckland, New Zealand.

What's New in Hanga Roa

ISLANDERS SEEK VAITEA FARM LAND

The National Parks of Chile on the island has received money to provide protection at Vinapu to keep out cattle; and, at Tahai, to build a new entrance, parking, and toilet facilities. The new entrance to the site will be on the north side, approaching from the Museum. There will be a replica hare poenga constructed for use by artisans as a place to sell their carvings, and manavai will be built for growing native plants, including ma-hute.

The project to create an ethno-botanic garden at Vaitea was cancelled after strong criticism was published in El Mercurio by Alcalde Petero Edmunds. The project began with the donation of four huge Chilean palm trees by a Palm tree foundation that also brought in 400 little palms. The garden was to be at Vaitea, in the center of the island. Islanders protested because it comprised a portion of the best farmland on the island.

As for the give-away of land at Vaitea, as announced in RNJ 12(3), the program was cancelled due to action of the Consejo de Ancianos # 2, which has become more powerful in recent times because they now represent more people. President-Frei was supposed to travel to the island to present the land, but