**Rapanui Islander**

Luis Tepano Pont, who now lives in California, was startled to find a *moai* replica in a local garden store in Morro Bay. This fairly large and heavy cement statue has a depression on the topknot so it can double as a birdbath. It was manufactured in Canada.

**Eugene, Oregon Has Its Tiki Bar, called KoKoMo’s Island Grill.**

Their 3-legged Monkey drink comes in a coconut mug, the Volcano comes in a Hula Girl bowl, their Kokomo Smoothie comes in a clam shell. A giant volcano is by the front door and a four foot *tiki* sits outside the door, while several *moai* populate the room. Rapanuiophile Marilyn Garrett Stearns sent us this photo. Reviewers on the Tiki Bar website gave the establishment 1½ Tikis (out of a possible five). See at http://home.earthlink.net/~tikibars/tiki/kokomo.html

**The Long-Distance Prize goes to Dr Ted Kurze of Newport Beach who spotted a *moai* in Dakar, Africa!** It was amongst a huge collection of local carvings for sale to tourists, including miniature tribal drums, carved tools, painted masks, fake spears, and so on. They were all laid out dock-side for the passenger on the Queen Elizabeth II. And there, cheek by jowl with voodoo dolls, was a wood *moai*. Strange company indeed.

**A team of scientists from the University of the South Pacific at Suva, and the Fiji Museum, recently found more traces of Lapita pottery in a group of islands in northeast Fiji.** The 12-member team, headed by Patrick Nunn (USP) found Lapita pottery in 12 locations on the islands of Qamea, Lauca, Matagi, and the Yanuca group.

**Kava Exporters in Fiji and Vanuatu called for medical trials to determine if kava consumption is life threatening.** Concerns were raised by German and Swiss authorities, claiming that kava-based products may be linked to liver problems. France has now joined Germany in suspending sale of kava-based products. Experts called by the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture claimed that there is no evidence that *yaqona* drinking damages the human liver. The kava pills that are sold overseas contain the same amount of kava lactones as one cup of liquid kava and Fijians and others in the Pacific islands drink many cupfuls a day without any side effects. The ban would dramatically slash exports of kava from both Fiji and Vanuatu.

**Pacific News Bulletin 17(1), 2002**
Niue
THE PEACE CORPS IS ENDING ITS NIUE OPERATION. Volunteers have been working on Niue for the last six years, providing assistance to small businesses, youth development, and fisheries. Reasons given are that the Corps finds it difficult to support services for the volunteers on this remote island, and Niue does not fall into the “country in need” category.
The Honolulu Advertiser, 28 January, 2002

Tuvalu
THE PACIFIC ISLAND STATE OF TUVALU, consisting of nine islands and 11,000 people, is about to pay the ultimate price for global warming. For years, the most interesting thing to happen in Tuvalu was the sale of its Internet domain, “TV”, for $50 million. But having traded in its virtual domain, it now is about to lose its real one to rising sea levels. Tuvalu authorities have conceded defeat and have sent out appeals to the governments of Australia and New Zealand to help in the evacuation of Tuvalu’s population. A rebuff by Australia (see below) has led to the first group of evacuees heading for New Zealand. Tuvalu is paying for the rich world’s experiment with global atmosphere, and literally going down in history.
Guardian Weekly, 6-12 December, 2001

LAST YEAR, AUSTRALIA REJECTED the request from Tuvalu to take part in a resettlement program for its residents. But then, as part of its “Pacific Solution”, the government of Australia planned to ask Tuvalu to accept asylum seekers! So Tuvalu, with limited resources, was being asked by Australia to take in asylum seekers, despite the rising sea levels that are contaminating water sources and crops, and the fact that the islands are being abandoned.
Pacific News Bulletin 16(11), 2001

IN JANUARY, IT WAS ANNOUNCED that Tuvalu is considering taking legal action against the industrialized nations of the world for causing global warming. The court case would be funded by money received from the dot TV Internet suffix. In some villages, particularly on the smaller islands, rising seawater is seeping under the islands and coming up underneath villages. Although people find it unthinkable to move off their family land where they have lived for thousands of years, climate changes are forcing them to leave. The problem is also a social one in that, to go to someone else’s land, they lose their identity, and this causes both social and health problems.
Pacific News Bulletin 17(1), 2002

Tonga
AN ARTICLE DESCRIBING EXCAVATIONS CONDUCTED by David Burley at Tongatapu made the NY Times. The item, by John Noble Wilford, described Burley’s find of Lapita shards in 1999, indicating that seafarers had reached the Tonga Islands between 850 and 900 BC. The sandy minerals found in the pottery were not from Tonga, but are found only on the Santa Cruz Islands in Melanesia, some 1200 miles to the west. This suggests that the settlers who reached Tonga came directly from central Melanesia, not via Fiji.
New York Times, 8 January, 2002

KING TAUFA’AHU TUPOU IV, age 83, has been accused of hiding some $350 million in a secret bank account, according to Kele’a, a Tongan newspaper. It was not clear just where the king’s alleged fortune supposedly came from. However, last month the palace used the government-owned Tonga Chronicle to claim that a Tongan national living in Australia was blackmailing the king over some gold bullion (said to be worth billions of dollars) allegedly taken from the 1806 wreck of an English sailing ship.
The Honolulu Advertiser, 19 January 2002

Samoa
AN ANTI-HIV/AIDS COMPOUND derived from the bark of the Samoan mamala tree (Homolanthus mutans) has the potential to inhibit HIV. The compound is called Prostratin. It was found that Samoan healers in Savai’i were using the mamala plant to treat hepatitis; their mixtures were sent to the NCI where the Prostratin compound was isolated. In licensing the compound for development, the people of Samoa will share in any potential reward: the Samoan government will get 12.5% of profits, and 6.7% will go to the village where the healers provided the initial information. The families of two Samoan women who passed along their knowledge of the tree’s healing powers will each receive 0.4%.
Pacific News Bulletin 16(12), 2001

WEEKLY AIR CARGO SERVICE BETWEEN HONOLULU and American Samoa is being restored. Pacific Air Cargo will re-introduce cargo service as a result of winning a contract with the USPS to carry mail from Honolulu to Pago Pago and Guam.
The Honolulu Advertiser, 28 January 2002

Rarotonga, Cook Islands
FIGURES FROM THE RECENT CENSUS SHOW that the Cook Islands are experiencing a decline in population. Last year, 18,027 people were counted, a 5.6% decline since 1996. More Cook Islanders now live in New Zealand than in their home islands.
The Honolulu Advertiser, 22 January 2002

Tahiti
THE EURO HAS ARRIVED IN TAHIITI but French-occupied territories in the Pacific will go on using the French Pacific Franc (CFP). Although the Euro will be available soon in even the most remote islands, it is not expected to make a large impact. A Euro is worth 119.33 CFP.
Pacific News Bulletin 17(1), 2002

Hawai’i
DENGUE FEVER HAS BEEN REPORTED FROM MAUI AND O’AHU. Three new cases in Maui and one on O’ahu have pushed the number of confirmed cases to over 100, according the Department of Health. Most confirmed cases are on Maui, with O’ahu second. Kaua’i has four cases. Health officials continue to urge residents to get rid of standing water. Dengue is spread by the bite of the Aedes mosquito and can be fatal. The current strain in Hawai’i is less serious, generally causing fever, headache, muscle pain, etc.
The Honolulu Advertiser, 25 January 2002
The Hawaiian Cave Task Force (H.B.375) has been formed to draft legislation pertaining to the protection of natural and cultural resources in the caves of Hawai’i. Currently there is no statute regarding cave “law”. Due to the popular interest in exploring caves and the fact they often contain cultural features such as petroglyphs and burials, a risk has been perceived. The bill includes fines of not more than $10,000 for each separate offense. This legislation may pit Native Hawaiians interested in the preservation of burial caves and sacred sites against entrepreneurs such as tour operators. Some insist that more Native Hawaiian involvement in the decision-making process is needed.

Society for Hawaiian Archaeology Newsletter 2(10), 2001

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded a grant of $1.4 million to the Archaeological Research Facility at UC Berkeley for a 3-year project, Human Ecodynamics in the Hawaiian Ecosystem, 1200-200 Years Before the Present. The project will be directed by Patrick Kirch of UC Berkeley, who will head a multidisciplinary team from Berkeley, University of Hawaii, Stanford, UCSB, and the University of Wisconsin. This is the largest single grant ever received by the Archaeological Research Facility at Berkeley. The project will examine two study sites, one on the Big Island of Hawai’i and one on Maui, and will address four research themes: study the spatial and temporal processes of agricultural development of Hawaiian landscapes, determine how human population growth and fluctuations were linked to resource use; examine the emergence of socio-political complexity, and track the dynamic effects of a growing human population on its natural resource base.

Society for Hawaiian Archaeology Newsletter 3(1), 2002

The University of Valparaiso INAUGURATED the new Centro de Estudios Rapa Nui in November, the aims of which are to promote preservation of the island’s culture and traditions.
as well as its natural resources. Preservation, sustainable development, and the dissemination of information about the culture of Easter Island through academic activity, are some of the objectives of the new Centro de Estudios.

José Miguel Ramírez, director, stated that in order to reach these objectives, the Centro will be associated with the Fonck Museum, the Biblioteca Rapa Nui, and the Easter Island Foundation. Working together for academic exchange, publications and seminars, research and public extension are the main purposes, but the more specific common goals are to look for a new building for the Center at the Fonck Museum and the organization of the Sixth International Conference on Rapa Nui and Polynesia at the University of Valparaíso in Chile, in 2004.

The concept of having agreements with foundations and organizations is that it will facilitate the to receiving of support for conservation and sustainable development of the island. “We wish to assume the agreement that signifies Chile’s (and Valparaíso’s) historic connection with Rapa Nui,” Ramírez commented. He noted that there exists scientific information in all fields and that, without doubt, these contribute to the culture of Rapa Nui and its people.

The new Centro de Estudios Rapa Nui is now a part of the Instituto de Estudios Humanísticos of the Universidad de Valparaíso. One of their first projects will be an English/Spanish paper on the history of Rapa Nui from 1888, with Grant McCall. Besides research and publications in English, Ramírez stated that he would like to publish a Spanish-language version of the Rapa Nui Journal.

He also envisions the involvement of the local Rapanui community, including students. The Centro will function under the Faculty of Humanities of the Universidad de Valparaíso, and is located at 1 Oriente 74, Viña del Mar.

“We will work on the interests and the necessities of the island, and in this context, it is equally valuable to make Rapa Nui known to Chileans because, curiously, foreigners know more about the island than we do,” said Ramírez.

The “ceremonia académica” for the official opening of the Centro de Estudios Rapa Nui took place in the Sala Ruben Dario of the Centro de Extensión de la Universidad de Valparaíso, on 22 November 2001.

After a short presentation by Carlos Verdugo Serna, the Director of the Instituto Humanístico, Alma Campbell, the daughter of the late musicologist Ramon Campbell, introduced a choral group which sang one of her father’s songs inspired by the island. A speech by José Miguel Ramírez followed concerning the aims of the Centro.

A new edition of Father Sebastián Englert’s book on the legends of Easter Island, was introduced and this was followed by a dance performance by Karu Henua, a group of young Rapanui students from the University in Valparaíso.

Grant McCall presented a talk concerning the years around 1888 and the take-over of Easter Island by Chile and Policarpio Toro. McCall stated that he has searched in vain for the original document that gave Chile the official right to take charge of the island. However, he showed a contemporary copy that was not, of course, a Xerox (1888!) but was hand-written. It showed that six islanders had signed it with “Xs” after their names. While not quite saying that because the document no longer exists and the whole thing might have been a fabrication, McCall suggested this possibility.

José Miguel Ramírez-Aliaga, Director, Centro de Estudios Rapa Nui, Universidad de Valparaíso, can be reached at: rapanui@uv.cl

WHAT'S NEW IN HANGA ROA

AN EARTHQUAKE OCCURRED ON 15 FEBRUARY some 600 miles Southeast of Hanga Roa, intensity of 6.0 at a depth of ten km. The time was 01:46:38 UTC. The USGS chart below shows the plate boundaries, seismic events since 1990 to the present (dots) and the recent event (star). More information on USGS web site: http://neic.usgs.gov/neis/bulletin/020215014638_H.html

Earthquakes over the centuries surely made an impact on Rapa Nui, and likely caused damage to the archaeological sites. Many think that strong quakes in the past caused some of the island’s statues to fall.

AN ARTICLE IN EL MERCURIO DE VALPARAISO STATED, “Easter Island Could Become Independent, if the ‘Carta Fundamental’ is Altered”. The article explained that congressmen from both parties were analyzing the possibility of administrative independence for the island. It is clear that islanders are in favor of more autonomy. The ‘Carta Fundamental’ was written around 1950, and it defined the twelve regions of Chile; Easter Island was assigned to the Fifth Region (Quinta Region or V Region), and some senators suggested that it was time to make a