

FROM THE EDITORS

THIS ISSUE OF *Rapa Nui Journal* includes reports on various projects and endeavors across a broad area of Polynesia: Samoa to Hawai'i to Rapa Nui. From Samoa comes a report by Helene Martinsson-Wallin, Geoffrey Clark and Paul Wallin concerning their archaeological project at Pulemelei Mound, Savai'i. Their Samoan research is continuing and we hope to have updates in the future.

WE WELCOME Windy Keala McElroy, Julie Field, and Peter Mills from the University of Hawai'i. McElroy's paper deals with Hawaiian *poi* pounders; Field's paper is a classification for discoidal Hawaiian artifacts, and Mills' paper concerns landscape and settlement patterns. It is instructive to have a view from these far corners of the Polynesian triangle.

TURNING TO RAPA NUI, in this issue Hans-Rudolf Bork and Andreas Mieth, University of Kiel, contribute their study of the extinct palm of Easter Island and provide some amazing information about the density of the palm groves as well as a possible reason for their disappearance. We also welcome a new contributor, Caroline Polet of Belgium, who describes her study of bone fragments found at the Ahu 'o Rongo excavations conducted by Nicolas Cauwe and Dirk Huyge. Might these bones provide evidence of cannibalism?

A MISSING *RONGORONGO* TABLET and the mystery surrounding it read like a detective novel, and we thank Yoram Meroz (who has been doing his digging in the archives) for bringing us this fascinating story. Now if we could just bring the missing *rongorongo* tablet to light...

FRANCESCO DI CASTRI CONTRIBUTES a thought-provoking paper on the issue of autonomy for Rapa Nui. This movement toward autonomy has galvanized the island—and also mainland Chile. Can this really happen? and will it solve the island's many problems? This is an important issue for Rapa Nui, and we are grateful to Francesco for sending us this timely report.

VETERINARIAN JON ARTZ'S update on his Rapa Nui research discusses the livestock problems on the island. These are difficult issues for the island's future. Most of the islanders who own herds of horses and cattle – many of which are sick and dying – remain unconvinced that a few healthy animals are better than a lot of sick ones. And now it appears that the illness could affect the human population as well.

FOLLOWING ON THE HEELS of the last *RNJ* where we presented a translation of a letter by Eugene Eyraud, this issue features a report by Father Hippolyte Roussel written in 1869, and extracted from *Annals of the Sacred Heart*. The Roussel report was, like the Eyraud letter, translated by Ann M. Altman. To have these two early glimpses of life on Rapa Nui in English is a rare treat. We once again thank Ann her excellent efforts.

TWO NEW BOOKS are reviewed in this issue: John Flenley and Paul Bahn's *Enigmas of Easter Island*, a re-make of their popular *Easter Island Earth Island* (reviewed by Shawn McLaughlin); and *Easter Island*, a remarkable first novel by Jennifer Vanderbes (reviewed by Scott Nicolay). Based loosely upon the Katherine Routledge expedition and the arrival of the German fleet in WWI, this book beautifully interweaves three story lines and hauntingly reflects the moods and ambience of the island.

IN OTHER NEWS, THE PACIFIC ARTS ASSOCIATION has a new president: Dr Carol Ivory of Washington State University. Virginia-Lee Webb is the new American Vice President. Congratulations to both Carol and Virginia-Lee. The next meeting of the PAA will be in Salem, at the Peabody Essex, July 2005.

LONG-TIME READERS of *RNJ* will recall Dr Stanley C. Skoryna, who died on July 6th in Montreal, Canada, aged 83. Skoryna was the director of the Canadian Medical Expedition (METEI) to Easter Island, 1964-65 (see *RNJ* Vol. 6(2) and 6(3); and Vol. 6(4), 1992). Sponsored by the World Health Organization and the Medical Research Council of Canada, METEI was an international multi-disciplinary study of Rapanui islanders, and an unmatched voyage in Canadian history. It also encompassed a political revolution on the island.

Skoryna was searching for a "... closed, isolated society with birth and death records, whose every member could be examined and tested by a range of modern medical techniques, where environmental and hereditary factors could be separated" (Boutillier 1992:21), and Easter Island was a logical site for such a study. The project was well underway on the island when a local revolution erupted. This involved Rapanui islander Alfonso Rapu, an unjust colonial situation, and the arrival of a French frigate – all of which brought nervous Chilean marines to the island. Fearing for the METEI expedition, Skoryna managed to prevail, and his project ultimately did examine the entire population of the island. The expected follow-up study, however, never materialized. "One of Skoryna's achievements was the establishment of a warm and lasting rapport with the Rapanui" (Boutillier 1992:49). The Government of Chile presented him with the O'Higgins Award and he also was a recipient of the Cross of Merit of the Republic of Poland.

Skoryna was born in Warsaw, Poland, and did his medical studies and Ph.D. at the University of Vienna, moving to Canada in 1947 at the invitation of McGill University, where he directed the Gastro-Intestinal Research Lab for more than 40 years. Despite his final illness, he continued working on research papers from his hospital bed. He is survived by his wife Jane, three children, and numerous grandchildren.

Boutillier, James A. 1992. METEI: A Canadian medical expedition to Easter Island, 1954-65. *Rapa Nui Journal* 6(2):21-33; 6(3):45-53.
Skoryna, Stanley C. 1992. METEI: An Epilogue. *Rapa Nui Journal* 6(4):69-72.