to try to explain to some Japanese friends at an Easter party. “The original idea over a year ago,” said Barry, was to combine Christian concepts of Easter with the images of giant stone heads, perhaps made like giant candy, peeps and bunnies.” Nonetheless, Barry did not take his task lightly. His motto, he writes, is: “anything worth doing, is worth overdoing.” He began researching Easter Island, even contacting the EIF for advice. Along the way, he encountered the theories regarding the ecological catastrophe in the island’s prehistory. In February 2002, he went the extra mile (and many more) and traveled to Rapa Nui for Tapati. From the start, Barry was impressed with the level of craftsmanship he saw there. “The stage sets/huts, the floats, and organization were all superb!” The more Barry saw of the Rapa Nui people and learned about their history and culture, the more he began to have doubts about the original concept. “Once there, I realized I couldn’t mess with the culture that way, and I had to find a more fitting way to communicate the ecological aspect.” He recalls having a crisis there on the island, thinking: “I can’t begin to do justice to this … what have I done?” Then came one of those moments that changes everything. On the night of the coronation finale, the bonfire beach extravaganza, Barry turned to his companion and said, “This is sooo Burning Man!” to which he replied, “No, Burning Man is so THIS!” After that, it all came together. The theatrics of Tapati, the elaborate staging, the monumental sculpture, body paint and skimpy costumes, all harnessed to an important message about conservation and survival. Barry credits Tapati with opening his eyes to the possibilities of participatory theater. Back in Los Angeles, Dragon Debris moved into action, making large moai replicas of papier mache. There was a problem though: how to keep the moai standing in the often stormy desert environment. Then came the Heads Project. The idea of using the potties started out as a bad joke, one from which Barry says he initially recoiled, but eventually, the group began to consider it seriously. “Incorporating them turned out to provide a very viable support system,” said Barry, “a pre-existing stable structure onto which we could attach the heads allowing them to stand on their own. We just prayed nobody knew the part of the legend where the warring tribes knocked down all the moai leaving none standing.” What really made the project attractive was the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the festival. There had been a problem in previous years with a small number of irresponsible people using the potties as dumpsters, which placed the festival in danger of losing its waste removal service. Although there were too many portable toilets to attach moai to each, it was feasible to place signs on every one of them with a message about responsible waste disposal, messages that came to be known as “pooetry.” “The pooetry,” said Barry, “was a humorous attempt to educate and inform. Most of the words came from the Burning Man organization. We enhanced them with pix and a bit of Rapanuism.” Every portable toilet had pooetry, but the ones with the heads had substantially larger signs, and these told the full story of the ecological catastrophe on Rapa Nui and its connection with the group’s project. There was also the captive audience aspect. As Barry pointed out, everybody has to use the potties, so messages on the doors would not go unnoticed. “We liked being able to combine the cautionary tale of Easter Island’s ecologically disastrous decline with the pooetry’s vital message of waste aware-
growing in the Cook Islands. Added to that was tropical storm Trina, which brought five days of floods and wind. The island of Mangaia was particularly hard hit by the storm, which wrecked the island’s taro crop.

The pearl industry is now the third largest industry in the Cook Islands, with pearl farmers expecting a further boost in production. The pearl industry continued to do better than the local fishing industry. Island leaders are becoming increasingly aware of the rich potential offered by seabed mining resources within Cook Islands waters.

A visit from the New Zealand Health Minister resulted in a pronouncement that the Cook Islands health service rivaled that of similarly populated areas in New Zealand. This acclamation did not prevent an outbreak of dengue fever that struck Rarotonga at the same time the island was hit by flooding. As cases increased, the Ministry of Health urged a major cleanup to fight the mosquitoes that spread dengue. A few tourists contracted the disease and, in February 2002, differences developed between the minister of health and the mayor of Mangaia, who wanted to isolate his island (about 110 miles south of Rarotonga) to prevent the fever from reaching there. By March, dengue fever had reached Manihiki Atoll, an island much further from Rarotonga.

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NIUE

UNTIL RECENTLY, the tiny Pacific island of Niue had only a few hand-cranked telephones. But now this 259 sq km atoll, located 2400 km northeast of New Zealand, has launched the most sophisticated national internet service in the world. Anyone with a laptop and an aerial can surf the net at home, from a boat, or wherever. The island will have free public wireless service using solar operated aerials hanging from coconut palms and the internet will reach all 1700 inhabitants. In 1991 there were just 376 telephone lines in use on the island, but now Niueans send up to 30,000 emails a week. A good portion of the island’s web investment was financed by selling the rights to its domain name.


NEW ZEALAND

IN FEBRUARY OF THIS YEAR, the film of the Maori-language version of Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice played to rapturous audiences throughout the country. Despite the historic and cultural importance of the piece, in particular because of the endangered state of the Maori language, it received little media coverage. Yet a four-star rating and an excellent review from a Pakeha film critic appeared in the New Zealand Herald. Massey University later conferred an honorary doctorate on the producer, Don Selwyn, for his many years of stage, television, and film work, and his training and mentoring of young talent.

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SAMOA

CORAL BLEACHING IS OCCURRING at all research sites in the US territory of American Samoa, including reefs within protective boundaries of the US National Park of Samoa. Up to 30 percent of the Maleata Bay coral reef has bleached, with up to 20% at most other sites. When stressed, corals “bleach”; the stress caus-
found. Steps have been taken to register a non-stock and non-profit scientific and educational foundation to be called W. G. Solheim II Foundation for Philippine Archaeology, Inc. Final arrangements are being made regarding the official registration of the foundation. Anyone interested in becoming an incorporator of the foundation or extending support may respond to the address below. All incorporators are asked to donate at least P 500.00 (ca. US $10.00); larger donations are needed and most welcome. As of this writing, P146,000.00 in grants and loans have been raised and deposited in a Foundation account. Contact Bill at: wsolheim@edsamail.com.ph Mailing address: Archaeological Studies Program, University of the Philippines, Palma Hall, Quezon City 1101, Philippines.

HAWAI'I
THE MYSTERY OF WHY SOME Europeans who used products containing kava extract and subsequently suffered severe liver damage may be solved. A number of nations banned sales of the herbal supplement as a result of reactions to the product. Scientists believe that the problem is a compound found in the stem peeling and leaves of the kava plant, but not in the roots used to make the traditional kava drink, as consumed by Pacific Islanders. Anything made from leaves or stems of the plant should be avoided. While kava supplements are not banned in the US, the Food and Drug Administration issued an advisory warning of risk from dietary supplements containing kava.

The health alarms left farmers in Hawai'i and elsewhere with crops that were hardly worth harvesting. Until researchers found the key, experts were unable to explain how a plant used for centuries could be so toxic. But now it appears that the dangerous alkaloid is not found in the root, which is used for the traditional drink.

Piper methystine belongs to a group of natural amide alkaloids of which a wide range are found in different members of the Piperaceae plant family, including kava.


PITCAIRN
In RNU for October 2002 (Vol. 16(2):114), we reported that twenty men from Pitcairn were being investigated for sexual abuse, including rape. Prosecution is moving forward, according to news from the island in March, which included the following: "...Pitcairners learned that some of the men here were to be charges (sic) with sexual offences." And, "Readers may have been puzzled by many of the people appearing on Pitcairn over recent times..." "When criminal allegations were made the British authorities set up a Pitcairn Logistics Team (PLT) to provide support for investigations and possible trials on Pitcairn... The PLT is responsible for securing personnel, arranging transport and accommodation to and from the Island, (no easy task) providing accommodation here and support through food and provision and satellite communication and setting up a court here complete with video link. This has meant the construction of new buildings such as the 'Pink Palace' and three-cell 'Remand Centre', as well as refurbishing and extending the hostel and the lodge. Personnel employed by the PLT include two Ministry of Defence policemen here for terms of three months, two social workers appointed from New Zealand here for six-month terms. We have a full time governor's representative. There is a communications specialist and his wife here setting up a satellite video link to New Zealand, and a medical officer funded by the PLT. In April we are expecting a further team of twelve to arrive: two defense lawyers, three prosecuting lawyers, a court official, a magistrate and a further five British policemen. It is not surprising that many Pitcairners are feeling dismayed by such a large presence of outsiders on the Island. If the PLT chartered ship sends the crew ashore in April, outsiders will almost equal Pitcairners in number. Certainly this presence has changed the daily life on Pitcairn. It is also interesting to note that millions of dollars can be found for pursuing criminal matters but not for urgent work around the Island such as an airfield, sealing of the main road, a breakwater for the jetty, a new school and school house and a rebuilt hall. In fact progress on these projects seems to be frozen."

Pitcairn Miscellany for March 2003

WHAT'S NEW IN HANGA ROA

RUMORS ABOUND THAT RAPA NUI could become autonomous, and thus no longer dependent upon the V Region. Mayor Pedro Edmunds stated that, after 100 years of dependence, Rapa Nui may have their longed-for administrative autonomy. The commission that is studying this agreed unanimously to convert the island into the first Special Territory of Chile. This will give the island a direct relationship to the Chilean Government. Two types of authorities on the island are being considered: one with executive power and the other a kind of cabinet. All will be elected by popular vote. Edmunds stated that he felt the individual should be called President of the Special Territory, thus Rapa Nui will have a president, and the collective authority will be like an assembly. Edmunds added that such a move would eliminate the bureaucracy that exists now. For example, when the hospital urgently needs some drugs, it sometimes takes weeks for approval and delivery. Skeptics are less sanguine about the autonomy; some commented that it would only be "cosmetic" and not "real surgery".

WE ARE HAPPY TO REPORT on a conservation project at 'Orongo. Eduardo Villafranco, Manager, Professional Services Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC), has implemented a site redevelopment and interpretive plan for 'Orongo. A proposed trail layout was completed and approved by the Rapanui community. On site training was provided for the crew that was working on the trail and the rehabilitation of areas that were affected by erosion. The next part of the project will be interpretive, including signs. Comments have been positive and now discussions are underway to begin planning for conservation work at Rano Raraku.

THE GUIDES ASSOCIATION OF EASTER ISLAND has a project to help clean up the archaeological sites. Local tourist organizations support the volunteers with money for gasoline, food and drink, and transportation. Each Wednesday the volunteers clean and maintain one site.

A PRIVATE SCHOOL CALLED San Sebastian de Akivi is operating with the first 5 basic years and it is hoped that, in future years, it will be continuing on to the 8th grade. Each classes has a maxi-