Polynesian cultures. One event was an outrigger canoe competition which drew a large crowd of local Polynesians. At the end of the celebration, the Rapanui outrigger club was inducted into the International Polynesian Canoe Federation. Hokule‘a departed on the 20th of July, headed for San Diego.

During the festival, a booth selling Easter Island wood carvings and T-shirts was manned by Rapanui—both locals and visiting islanders. Rapanui islander Christian Arevalo

What’s New in Hanga Roa

• Approximately 8000 tourists arrived to Rapa Nui in 1994. December and January had the highest number of visitors; June the least. The first six months of this year recorded 5539 tourists. A tally of the 1995 arrivals so far shows that most tourists come from Europe; South America is second; North America, third; and Asia is fourth. These data do not separate out length of visit, thus the figures include those arriving on cruise ships, most of whom spend only a few hours on the island. The official Sernatur (Servicio Regional de Turismo) brochure now lists 10 hotels and 28 residenciales on the island.

EASTER ISLAND

Map showing the location of the proposed port at La Perouse Bay and a second airport, just inland from La Perouse. This section of the island is loaded with archaeological sites which will be impacted and/or destroyed by development. See story on page 89.

• Hanga Roa’s main street, Policarpo Toro, has two supermarkets and a third one is on a side street. New stores and restaurants have appeared, and a surprising variety of items is available. One can even buy a cup of expresso! Stores often display Visa and Mastercard signs—even some of the wood carvers in the mercardo take charge cards! The island has its first veterinarian.

• The paving of the village roads continues. New trees are planted along the main street. Things are looking good. A few of the streets have sidewalks, and trash cans have appeared along the main street. These are welcome additions and the

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trash/litter level has dropped considerably. [This is a contrast to Tahiti where litter has reached epidemic proportions; anyone wishing to do a photo-essay on litter should head to Papeete and Moorea].

• The numbers of vehicles is astonishing. Would you believe traffic jams on Easter Island? Everyone seems to have a vehicle, and more come from the mainland with each supply ship. We were told there is one car for every two persons on the island—not counting motorcycles and mopeds. Policarpo Toro street has No Parking signs and posted speed limits.

• Construction is going on at the soccer field where dressing rooms are being constructed and the playing field extended. Lights are to be installed for evening games.

• The most prominent of the new supermarkets is a “hipermercado” built by former governor, Sergio Rapu. It is modeled after the Ala Moana center in Honolulu with a covered courtyard and small shops opening into the “mall”. Called Tumu Kai (roughly, Foods for the Family), it is the first to feature pushcarts and serve-yourself shopping. It has a meat market, bakery, and a deli in preparation along with a sushi bar. Rapu plans to feature fresh local products. Islanders consume 90 tons of chicken a year—all coming from Santiago, along with eggs and meats. It is estimated that $400,000 to $500,000 leaves the island yearly for food. The island needs to raise its own chickens, eggs and pigs, instead of bringing them in from the mainland, and this is one of Rapu’s goals. His store features locally made guava jam. The label has a moai on it and should be a great tourist item to take home (we bought some!)

• The sub-secretary of the Ministry of the Interior, Belisario Velasco, came to the island in July to study the problems of the continuing strike. Members of the Consejo de Ancianos #2 still occupy the church grounds where large signs proclaim their desire to have control of the island returned. A meeting was called between the islanders and Velasco. One islander placed a tape recorder on the table before the Secretary so that others, not in attendance, might hear his words. Velasco pounded a fist on the table and said it was not permitted to record the meeting. Islanders shouted back, pounding their fists on the table. End of meeting—which lasted all of five minutes. The Secretary returned to Santiago. The strike continues.

In a later newspaper article, Velasco dismissed as ridiculous the threats by islanders who demanded that all Chileans leave the island in 30 days.

Velasco stated that reform of the Indigenous Law would permit the Treasury to hand over land, some of which has been in their control since 1933. He cited the project for supporting island children who study on the mainland, and suggested that the island school be transformed into a polytechnic school so that young Rapanui (and those from the Juan Fernandez Islands) will not have to move to the continent to study. They now live in government sponsored homes on the mainland (35 students from Easter Island, and 5 from Juan Fernandez), which cost the government close to $2000 a year, per student. As the sponsoring of government homes is not an actual program, funds—around one-third of a million dollars—must be found for them each year.

• Shortly after the above-mentioned confrontation with the Secretary, another meeting was called by the Alcalde, Petero Edmunds, to discuss a ‘thirty-year plan’ for the island. Islanders shouted down one of the speakers, a fight broke out, and police in riot gear charged in and shut down the meeting. The following day admittance was by invitation only: by the third day, tempers had cooled and the meeting went forward. However all are not thrilled to hear of the plans which involve another airport to be built near La Pérouse Bay along with a harbor and dock (see below).

• The 30-year plan proposes a large dock/harbor at La Pérouse Bay which will have space for shipping containers and cargo heading on into the western Pacific/Far East. Aside from the new port, a staging area will be needed for containers to be loaded and off-loaded. All this is in a very sensitive archaeological area. Many islanders were outraged by the idea of such a development. But that paled in comparison to the plans for constructing another airstrip nearby, just inland from La Pérouse (see map on page 88). One can only wonder why an island only 15 miles long with a present runway that is 3353 meters long needs another one—particularly as this section of the island is, also, a sensitive archaeological area. Plans are to make the new airstrip the one used for tourism, and the present one turned over to the armed forces. The idea of an airport on the north coast goes back to one Ismail Parga and his Comité de Adelanto, and is a favorite plan of the former mayor, Alberto Hotus.

• Alcalde Petero Edmunds has plans for developing the current port of Hanga Piko into a cultural park by restoring two ahu, tearing down some unsightly buildings, and planting
trees in front of other buildings. It is assumed this beautifying plan will come about as shipping activities are shifted to the north end of the island, at the projected new harbor at La Pérouse Bay.

- Next year's Tapati festival is scheduled for 26th of January to 4th of February. Already handsome posters are up, featuring a photo of the restored ahu at Tongariki with its 15 standing statues. Make reservations early; Lan Chile flights may be disrupted due to airport repairs.

- Tongariki's restoration has 15 standing statues but many statue fragments also were found in the rubble of the ahu platform or in surrounding areas. These fragments have been grouped together and placed behind the shrine. The most unusual (headless) fragment has its arms across the mid-section in the same pose as those seen in the Marquesas and Austral islands. One statue fragment in the back sea wall has buttocks clearly indicated. Although the central part of the ahu at Tongariki is together, the wings still have not been reconstructed, nor are topknots replaced as yet. These await further funding. It is an impressive site. According to archaeologist Claudio Cristino, plans are to prepare the court area in front, restoring some of the cultural features, and construct a wall around the perimeter to keep animals outside.

- Heavy rains have caused the collapse of two of Orongo's stone houses. These had been restored in March of this year. Erosion at the petroglyph site, Mata Ngarau, continues with gravity exerting its pull. Without stabilization, it is feared the site will fall down the cliff. Claudio Cristino excavated a house at Orongo earlier this year and discovered an umu that predated the house construction, thus representing an earlier occupation at this site. Prior to when the birdman cult activities were ongoing. We hope to have a report on this excavation for RNJ readers.

- Te Reo Rapa Nui is a local radio station run by the Consejo #2 (the other island stations are government-run). Reo Rapa Nui provides history, language, island news and island music for 6 hours a day. A local newsletter was attempted but it went out of business.

- Ahu Huri a Urenga, restored by William Mulloy and studied by William Liller (The Ancient Solar Observatories of Rapanui, 1993) has long been lost in shoulder-high weeds and has had a forlorn overgrown look. Recently the Municipalid provided empanadas and soft drinks and enlisted the help of local school children who cleaned up the site, cut the grass, and improved its appearance 100%. Congratulations to Alcalde Edmunds and the Rapa Nui school kids.

- A new CONAF ticket office/entry is to be constructed at the foot of Rano Kau near the present business offices and experimental garden, according to José-Miguel Ramirez. It will replace the current structure which is located up at the entrance to Orongo. The new building also will house displays and information. Plans include the construction of much-needed toilet facilities at the entrance to Orongo.

- Vandals have struck at Anakena. The new dressing rooms/bathrooms were broken into and fires set, and the stone entry sign to the site torn down. Last year vandals completely annihilated the outhouse near the parking area at Rano Raraku. An anti-sanitation plot?

- On August 16th, some 500 Rapanui islanders marched in protest of the nuclear tests in Mururoa. The action was called by the island priest, Padre Ramiro. After marching through the village, they ended with a curanto (earth oven) feast held at the home of an islander. An ecologist at the Universidad Austral stated that, in the event of a nuclear accident, a serious amount of radioactive material would arrive to both Easter Island and to the South American continent (in the regions between 38 and 40 degrees south) by means of oceanic circulation, currents and westerly winds.

- Domingo, the Sunday section of El Mercurio de Santiago for September 10th carried an article concerning Easter Island, specifically questioning why is it not a major tourist center: no golf courses, no tennis courts, no tourist centers for surfing, no swimming pools [sic], no luxury hotels, no organized horseback riding. (But gee, fellahs, that's why we like it!!)

The author, who interviewed several residents of the island, focused on some odd facets of island life: Governor Hey stated that there are only two alcoholics on the island, and archaeologist Claudio Cristino noted that out of 20 or more guides, no more than 3 or 4 are professionals. Sernatur, the Chilean tourist service, said that Rapanui hotel owners do not want (at this time) to have their hotels rated by the number of stars and, of some 700 beds available on the island, less than 10% are at "international levels".

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For the future, the Hotelera Panamericana has ambitions plans to remodel the old hotel Hanga Roa ("where Kevin Costner slept"), and in 1996 Lan Chile airlines plans to offer a package tour for high school and college students in Chile and Tahiti.

The author also commented that there are no bars on the island where one can drink a cold beer nor are there restaurants where one can eat local fish. Did this person actually visit Rapa Nui?

- Restoration of a moai in Rapa Nui

Under the initiative of the Museo Sebastián Englert, the damaged moai at Ahu Tahira, Vinapu, was repaired. This statue was vandalized earlier this year, as reported in RNJ 9(1): eyes and a smile were scratched into its face. The restoration was done by a specialist in rock art conservation, Antoinette Padgett, who volunteered her services. The cost of materials for the repair was financed by the Rotary Club of Isla de Pascua; shipping charges for the materials were paid by the Easter Island Foundation. The restoration was done by authorization of the Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales, with technical support from the Centro Nacional de Restauración y Conservación, the collaboration of the Easter Island Foundation and under the supervision of the Museo Sebastián Englert and CONAF.

Conservation Assessment Project 1995

In July of this year, a month-long project to assess changes in the condition of some of the island’s petroglyph sites was undertaken by Antoinette Padgett and Georgia Lee, under the auspices of the University of California, Berkeley, University Research Expeditions Program (UREP). The study was based on a series of documentation programs that began in 1981 and resulted in the accumulation of slides, photographs, drawings and field notes (Lee 1992). Using the earlier research as a control, several sites were selected for assessment: these include Orongo and others that receive a fair amount of visitation from tourists.

The project was approved by the Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales and CONAF (National Parks of Chile). As part of the program, the World Monuments Fund provided funding in order that Paula Valenzuela of the Centro Nacional de Conservación y Restauración, Santiago, could represent that organization and work with the project. A total of 16 volunteers from the United States, Canada, and Sweden provided the work force.

The study focused on a variety of problems: animal damage, microflora or plant damage, spalling, erosion, unstable rock surfaces, graffiti, and abrasion. Preliminary results suggest that several sites are in peril, with the petroglyph site at Orongo being the most fragile. Although it was anticipated that the site was suffering from erosion due to natural forces and foot traffic, close examination revealed that general erosional forces are at work and the site is in danger of falling down the cliff. Cracks were observed in the petroglyph panels and the petroglyph area is generally undermined. Stabilization is vital if the site is to be preserved.

Sites with petroglyphs on ground level lava flow (papa)

Figure 1. Petroglyph at Hanga Piko that appears to represent a large tree. Drawing shows the panel prior to its being vandalized.

Figure 2. Rano Kau’s spectacular panel before vandals carved initials into it. The panel is 5 meters across. Deeply carved designs—some in intaglio—swirl around the boulder. The large bearded face on a fish body is similar to some that are carved on the heads of wooden kavakava figures.