

Moai Sightings

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY in Washington D.C. held a dedication ceremony on 7 June to welcome a 9 foot tall *moai* that was carved by Easter Island artisans for an exhibit at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Because of their global orientation and large international student enrolment, American University is proud to become the home of the *moai*. The dedication ceremony and reception took place at the display site, between Hughes and McDowell Halls on the campus. His Excellency Andres Bianchi, Ambassador of Chile, dedicated the statue.

WASHINGTON STATE HAS A HANDSOME *moai* created by Carl Magnusson of Langley. Adorning his front yard, the statue has become a local landmark. It is 12 feet high and constructed of a layer of modified concrete over a styro-foam base, and weighs around 600 pounds. It was in a local Fourth of July parade in 1997 (see photo). In the parade, the statue was pulled by friends of Magnusson, who were dressed in native costume and moved it along on a base of round poles. Magnusson plans to move to a new place with a large orchard, with room for a sculpture garden. So Langley may soon be seeing a *moai* population boom.



SOME ODD *MOAI* WERE SEEN at the Hotel Tropicana in Benidorm, Spain, by François Dederen and his wife Ivette. Two statues flank the entry; another (really ugly) is in the hotel hall (Photos by F. Dederen).

What's New in Polynesia

Fiji

AMERICANS IN FIJI ARE URGED to leave as soon as possible, according to the State Department. Australia and New Zealand issued similar warnings to their citizens, and tourism at most of the islands' resorts dropped sharply. Estimated losses to the tourism industry were close to \$500,000 day in mid-July. Rebel

groups seized four tourist resorts on Turtle, Laucala Island, the Buca Bay resort on Vanua Levu, and the Rukuruku resort on Ovalau. The Canadian couple who managed the Laucala Island resort were beaten and held for 24 hours.

Telegram Tribune (San Luis Obispo) for 23 July, 2000

IT APPEARS THAT REBEL ACTIVITY is not the only problem for Fiji. A 'hot spot' of weather over those islands has resulted in an unprecedented coral bleaching 'event'. This has affected many pristine reefs and appears to be the most destructive ever recorded for Fiji's coral reefs.

Bulletin of the University of the South Pacific (Vol. 33(14)

Tonga

KING TAUFA'AHAU TUPOU IV appointed his son, Prince Lavaka Ata 'Ulukalala, as the new prime minister. A change was expected, but most assumed the king would give the position to his eldest son, Crown Prince Tupouto'a. The prince, however, has been critical of the current government. Tonga's new prime minister is a staunch conservative and opposed to the pro-democratic movement in Tonga.

Tok Blong Pasifik, Vol. 53(4)

The Pacific

THE *WORLD DISCOVERER* CRUISE SHIP hit an uncharted reef in the Solomon Islands and has been declared a total loss, with damage is too severe to be repaired. She was scheduled to be towed out and sunk in deep water. The ship, one of the two original ships specifically built for expedition cruising (the other being the *Explorer*) had sailed from Fiji and was headed to the Trobriands, New Guinea and Yap. At three-thirty in the afternoon, as the ship was cruising through Sand Fly Strait in the Solomon Islands, she passed over a submerged reef. A great rumbling sound from under the keel was heard; then there was absolute silence as the ship went over into deeper water. Edmundo Edwards, long-time resident of Rapa Nui, was on board as lecturer, and he reported the following details.

"I knew we had hit a reef but as the ship is supposed to have a double hull, I did not worry too much and thought we had only slight damage. But just a few minutes later the ship started to list to starboard. We ran up on deck to find out what had happened. By the time we made it to the lounge, water had already covered some sections of level C—including our cabin—now underwater, along with all my equipment and books. As the trip had started on Easter Island, I had carried on board everything I might need for my lectures plus my brand-new computer, a printer, scanner, semiprofessional digital video camcorders and digital video cameras, editing software, etc. Approximately US \$25,000 of my equipment was under water.

"As soon as we made it on deck we were asked follow procedures for abandoning ship. A few minutes later we found ourselves floating around in lifeboat Number 3, dressed only in T shirts and shorts. At that point everyone was inundated by a heavy tropical storm. Each time we could see the ship through the sheets of rain, it was listing more and more and, at one point, I thought that it would capsize in front of us and sink.