

Moai Sightings

WE HAVE A RASH OF *MOAI* sightings to report. These range from small to large and from the weird to the improbable. Two back-to-back were *moai* found in a nursery in Ontario, Canada, by Marilyn Garrett Stearns. Is this a garden ornament? Book ends? Clearly, some sort of mystery object.



DAVID FOULKES OF GREAT BRITAIN sent us a photograph of a very sour looking *moai* from Chester Zoo, UK, located in a feature called "Lost Islands". Inside the building (behind the statue) there is nothing related to Rapa Nui but, as David notes, "...this is the only way I will ever be in the *Journal*, [so] I am hoping it will be printed. Looking forward to the next issue; keep up the excellent work" Gee, David, how can we ignore that plea?



THE MOST EPHEMERAL of the *moai* entries comes from Stillwater, Minnesota, where Charlie Tolman discovered a statue in the front yard of a friend. This *moai*-snowman prompted some philosophical questions: "Why do they always face the swamp? Where do they go every spring? What do the Chevrolet-orange eyes signify? Why do their dimensions match those of 33 gallon trash containers? And, why do local domestic animals make territorial claims on them?"

MORE *MOAI* ARE APPEARING IN ADS and as logos for companies, including a view of four *moai* on clothing tags for Arizona Jean Company's "Vintage Seersucker" shirts. A full page advertisement from the *Wall Street Journal* features a trademarked *moai* design and the name of the firm uses "*moai*". Can our beloved statues be copyrighted? A beauty salon called Headhunters (in California) has images of *moai* all over their advertisements.

THE GRANDEST *MOAI* SIGHTING of all comes from our British correspondent, Paul Bahn, who tells us that the Great Court at the British Museum has a new glass roof, the storage areas of the old British Library are cleared out, and the wonderful huge 18th century inner court is restored. The 19th century circular reading room is in the middle. Some dozen sculptures are on show in the court, including Hoa Hakananaia, the famed basalt statue taken from the island in 1868 (see page 109, this issue). The statue sits on a high plinth allowing one to walk around it. The carvings on the back are barely visible due to lack of lighting but this problem likely will be rectified. The Queen will officially open the restored museum on 6 December 2000.

What's New in the Pacific

A MEETING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC in August discussed the problems of sustainable fisheries and marine conservation. Throughout the Pacific, as well as in the rest of the world, the populations of fish are declining, along with the number of coral reefs. It was pointed out that indigenous Pacific Island communities have a wealth of knowledge about their own coastal resources, but lack access to recent biological findings, which could assist them to improve local management. Over-fishing is a key threat and the reason most frequently cited for harvest decline. The Pacific is in a global marine crisis, showing signs of collapse due to increasing fisheries, over-exploitation and habitat degradation.

The University of the South Pacific Bulletin, 33(26), 2000.

A RECENT LECTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC by Tania Rangihueua, lecturer in Maori Studies (Victoria University of Wellington), highlighted many of the problems facing the Maori people of New Zealand. Low income, unemployment, and marginalization of the Maori community in the areas of health and education were cited.

On the positive side, many Maori are getting organized politically, and hope to set up their own radio and television station, and to encourage indigenous language use. Today only 15% of the population are fluent Maori speakers.

The University of the South Pacific Bulletin, 33(32), 2000.

CHRISTMAS ISLAND. Britain will begin the clean up of radiation contaminated areas on Christmas Island, Republic of Kiribati. The island is contaminated by fallout from six 1958 British atomic and hydrogen bomb tests. While the UK has accepted some responsibility for the environmental clean up, it refused liability for health impacts on people.

Pacific News Bulletin, No. 15(10), 2000

TUVALU, A MEMBER OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM, became the 189th member of the United Nations in September. It is a full member of the Commonwealth. Tonga, Kiribati and Nauru joined the UN in 1999.

Pacific News Bulletin, No. 15(10), 2000