

OWING TO CUTS IN ELECTRICAL ENERGY, residents in Hanga-roa are experiencing blackouts, some lasting as long as three hours. These have been happening for more than a year and causing problems, particularly in relation to tourism. According to the head of Sasipa (the electric company of the island), Gerardo Velasco, an increase in tourism has caused an enormous expenditure of money on electric devices and other equipment that islanders did not have previously, such as washing machines, driers, TVs, DVD players, and air conditioning – things that hotel clients have requested. And also, many activities take place at night. Some hoteliers have bought stand-by generators. Electricity is very expensive and locals are angry. The island's mayor, Petero Edmunds, blamed Sasipa's head, Gerardo Velasco, for not fixing the problem. "It's very serious ... and he is not able to say that this is due just to increased tourism; that seems to me an infantile response. I attribute [the problem] to an archaic administration that has not kept up with the times.."

El Mercurio de Valparaiso, 22 February, 2006

THE GLASSY-WINGED SHARPSHOOTER, called "*chicharrita de las cristalinas*" (*Homalodisca coagulata*) in Chile, has found its way to Easter Island, arriving on some produce from Tahiti and sending shock waves through vineyard owners on Chile mainland as the insect is notorious for killing grape vines. The forces of SAG (*Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero*) have fumigated between 60% and 70% of Hanga Roa village and "sticky cards" were placed around the island to indicate the distribution of the insect. Quarantine has been placed on all types of vegetation. SAG is studying biological ways to control the insect, involving the introduction of a natural predator of the *chicharrita*, another insect called "*Gonatocerus*." However, they worry about such an introduction. The *chicharritas* secrete sticky urine so that large concentrations of the insect in urban areas creates problems for people; this has been one of the main dilemmas in Tahiti.

El Mercurio de Valparaiso, 22 February, 2006

AFTER 86 YEARS, A MOAI IS BEING RETURNED. A statue was removed from Easter Island in 1927 and then traveled from Chile to Argentina in 1970. Originally from Hanga-roa, it was a gift to the then-Chilean president, Carlos Ibáñez del Campo. From the photo shown in papers, it is a modern carving. It has a huge schnozz and looks like Jimmy Durante.

El Mercurio de Valparaiso, April 10, 2006

ENDURING RAPA NUI: THE 2005 MARATHON

BY SUSIE RUTHERFORD

THE RAPA NUI MARATHON OF 2005 was the grand finale of an action-packed weekend in June, usually a quiet time of year on the island. The winter weather was typically wet and windy but competitors, local and some not quite so, arrived to swim, bike, and/or run their way around Rapa Nui as part of a triathlon, mountain bike race, and marathon, all organized by Olimpo Productions of Santiago.

Events kicked off with the triathlon: a 400m sea swim,

20 km bike ride (5x4 km laps), and a 5 km run along the coast and back. A sizeable swell at the start of the swim created problems: the marker buoy drifted off-course and nearly capsized the rescue boat! However, once the buoy was re-positioned and the rescue-boat rescued, competitors gathered at the starting point and, at the sound of a loud air-horn, all dashed into the sea.

Local athlete Alicia Ika was first woman out of the water, two minutes ahead of Megan Prinster, a Notre Dame student based in Santiago on a year- abroad study program. Prinster closed the gap on the bike and, slicing through gusting winds, finished 6 minutes clear of Ika in 1:12:53. Prinster admitted after the race that it was her first ocean swim, quite an initiation with 3ft+ waves causing difficulties for all!



Megan Prinster, a student at Notre Dame, comes ashore at the *caleta* after completing the swimming portion of the marathon.

In the men's race, first place was decided by an unfortunate crash. The leader of the pack, amidst shouting crowds and the slamming of brakes, was thrown off his bike and out of the race, fracturing an arm in the process. This opened the way for Omar Duran to cruise around the 5km run to win in 1:00:08, with Jorino Tuki in second (1:02:36), and Felipe Aviles of Santiago, third (1:04:15).

Overall winner of the sprint triathlon Omar Duran, was eight-time winner of the original Rapa Nui triathlon. The mountain bike race of the weekend started from Hanga Roa and climbed out towards 'Orongo, and then descended and continued towards Puna Pau and then off-road via Ahu Tepeu and the coastal road – a tough course. Islanders Jovino Tuki and Marisol Medina, both annual participants in the competition, held off the few challengers to win, completing the course in just over an hour.

The marathon was less complicated with a straight out-and-back route, but equally challenging. The sun came out for the morning start but moisture-laden clouds soon eclipsed the intense Pacific sun as the course looped around Hanga Roa and followed the road out towards 'Anakena. The weather took a turn for the worse and, for the last 10 km, rain came down in buckets. Many runners returned with blisters caused by waterlogged shoes.

On his first visit to Easter Island, men's winner Erwin Valdebenito from Chile kissed the saturated ground after crossing the finishing line in 2:59:17. Running solo for most of the way, it was a dream come true for Valdebenito to finally visit Rapa Nui. Anthony Russo from the US came home third. Kristine Hupp from Minnesota was first woman home, finishing the course impressively in 3:51:10.

Both Megan Princeton and Cliff Jennings plan to return in 2006. They may have caught the Rapa Nui bug but ultimately, whether triathlons, mountain bikes, running, or a combination of all three are your passion, could you survive a trip to Easter Island? The fourth annual Easter Island Marathon, half-marathon and 10K, is scheduled for June 11, 2006. In addition, there will be a Sprint Triathlon June 9 and a Mountain bike race on June 10. For further information see:

<http://www.olimpo.cl/sitio/RAPANNIFOR..htm>

<http://www.marathonstours.com/easterisland/index.shtml>

Easter Island Scam

SOME RAPANUI ISLANDERS who live on the Chilean mainland are providing certificates assuring authenticity of artifacts being sold on eBay. Carvings come with an official-looking "Certificao de Autenticidad." Without exception, they are modern and some are obviously not even from Easter Island. Fakes are sold everywhere but the anonymity and reach of the Internet makes it easy. And eBay is the center of a new universe of counterfeit items with virtually no policing. EBay argues that it has no obligation to investigate counterfeiting claims unless the complaint comes from a "rights owner," a party holding a trademark or copyright. A buyer who believes he purchased a fake has almost no recourse. ♦

Progress

by

J. Douglas Porteous

*All great events ... in world history reappear
...the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.*

Karl Marx (1852)

I

Rapa Nui Tragedy

Hard to be Rapanui
Wondering why
Grandfathers felled the final tree
To move the far-from-last moai

II

Cosmic Farce

The earth is dying by degrees—
Ecocatastrophe—
As patiently we search the skies
For a facsimile.

DA PREZ SEZ:

THESE ARE CONTROVERSIAL TIMES for Easter Island researchers. In 2002, a paper by Paul Rainbird (*World Archaeology* 33(3):436-451) raised an issue about the extent of ecological change and the timing of societal collapse in ancient Rapa Nui society. He proposed that both severe environmental and cultural changes were triggered by European intervention. This is in contrast to the historically accepted scenario that puts forth an internal collapse generated from a variety of ecological and demographic problems, well before contact with non-Polynesians. Just recently, another strike at conventional thinking has emerged with an equally bold assertion put forth by Terry Hunt, University of Hawai'i. In a paper published in *Science* (311:1603-1606) he asserts that Rapa Nui was settled ca. AD 1200, about 400 years later than current opinion and, if true, it has significant implications for the rate of population growth, the tempo of cultural development, and the rapidity of habitat alteration. Both of these hypotheses require careful evaluation and the next international conference on Rapa Nui and the Pacific (to be held at Gotland University, Sweden, in 2007) will provide a setting to discuss these propositions. Careful reasoning and problem-oriented research will eventually sort out the competing interpretations of the evidence. Until that time, it is good to grapple with alternate scenarios that challenge a nearly 50 year old homeostasis about the chronology of key events in Rapa Nui prehistory.

Christopher M. Stevenson, President EIF

THE EIF IS HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE our current scholarship winners, Daniela Macarena Araki González, Antonio Fernando Muñoz Tukú, and Tiare Maeva Carolina Aguilera Hey.

Daniela is in her 2nd year of kindergarten/nursery school education at Central Valley Professional Institute and is the winner of the Nicholas Haoa Sr. Scholarship Award; Antonio is a 2nd year law student at University Mariano Egaña; he won the Foundation's scholarship award. Tiare is in her 3rd year of studying law at the National University Andrés Bello, and she was awarded the Easter Island Foundation's Director's Award.

The two students who are recipients of the Wiegand Scholarship awards are on-going winners. They are Juana Atan and Ioan Soler Hotu. Juana is studying medicine in Argentina and Ioan studies computer technology in California.

The EIF extends congratulations to all Scholarship recipients. We are very proud of their achievements and grateful that we can have a small part in helping them go forward with their future careers.