



Paul Bahn sent us this picture of a bottle of vodka that was found in a Moscow store. The moai-shaped bottle has a black rubber top and lettering (in Mongolian) on the front. Photo by Elena Miklashevich.

## WHAT'S NEW IN THE PACIFIC

### What's New in Fiji

PATRICK NUNN, PROFESSOR OF OCEANIC GEOSCIENCE, University of the South Pacific, stated that the ultimate causes of all changes in Pacific societies around AD 1300 appear to be climate-driven, with the environment shaping the way in which societies evolved. In his lecture, "Reefs and Seafood in Ancient Times: Interactions between People and Marine Resources in Pre-modern Times in the Pacific Islands," Nunn pointed out that marine

food resource availability drove the colonization of the Pacific Islands: "People knew when they found an island where no one was living, the food resource on that island would sustain them for generations. That was a powerful pull factor for migration into the Pacific islands." He added that, "There's a fair amount of data which shows that in most parts of the Pacific, coral reefs are not able to keep up with sea level. Sea levels were rising until the last ice age, so sea level reached its maximum about four thousand years ago. And, fluctuations in marine foods ... were associated with changes in environment.

*USP Beat, May 2007.*

UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC announced the publication of a new book, *Pacific Genes and Life Patents*, cataloging unethical research and gene theft in Pacific countries. The book, by Dr Steven Ratuva and Aroha Mead, describes the worst examples of unethical bio-research and patenting of genes by international countries. Researchers harvest and patent genetic resources by simply gathering and taking ownership, and the absence of regulations – combined with naiveté about genetic technologies and patent laws – has made the Pacific a target for bio-prospectors.

*USP Beat April 2007.*

### What's New in Palau

PALAU HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST rates of schizophrenia in the world, affecting 1.7% of its some 17,000 residents at some time in their life. In parts of Palau, men have an even

higher percentage, 2.8%. The disorder manifests itself in hallucinations, delusions, apathy, inability to interact, blunted emotions, and disordered thinking. The percentage is higher in Palau than in other parts of the world. Today, small scale societies seem to aggravate the disorder more than does a modern, industrial society. The situation is worse for young males who get little family/clan support, and have few job options. They become "cultural outcasts." From B. Bower, "Trouble in Paradise. High rates of schizophrenia rate among Pacific Islanders raise cultural questions."

*Science News, July 7, 2007, Vol. 172.*

### What's New in Hawai'i

THE HAWAIIAN VOYAGING CANOE, *Hōkule'a*, departed Yap for Okinawa, Japan, on April 12, 2007, and arrived there on April 22. She continued onward to Amami Island, Kumamoto, Nagasaki, Fukuoka, Iwajima, Oshima, Hiroshima, Uwajima, Muroto, Miura, and Kamakura before completing the voyage with her arrival in Yokohama on June 9.

The *Hokule'a* was transported back to Honolulu on a NYK Shipping Lines container vessel. The canoe got a "lift" because "going upwind against the trades would have taken more than 200 days" and that would have been "impossible".

## WHAT'S NEW IN HANGAROA

MASSIVE PROTESTS ON E.I.! Island children were out on the streets demonstrating against cigarettes and their noxious effects. Thirty-five percent of island students between the ages of 11 and 21 smoke. The protest was coordinated by the Director of the school San Sebastián de Aquiles.

*El Mercurio de Valparaíso, June 1*

FIVE SPECIALISTS FROM THE MAINLAND completed 1,899 dental checkups in a dental health program donated by the Chilean Armada. Efforts were concentrated on children and pregnant women. During six days, the five specialists worked in Hanga Roa's hospital. Still to come are some medical doctors including an eye doctor and a nose and throat specialist.

*El Mercurio de Valparaíso, June 5*

INDEPENDENCE" FOR THE ISLAND IS NEAR. The Chilean congress passed, by an overwhelming margin, a bill that would make both Easter Island and Juan Fernandez Islands "special territories". This means independence from the 5<sup>th</sup> Region so that, instead of having to beg for money from the V Region, islanders can request directly from the government at Santiago. Administratively, the island will be dependent on the Ministry of the Interior. The head of the First Naval Zone, Vice Admiral Cristian Millar, reports that, with the new special territory, nothing will change