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News and Notes

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MOAI SIGHTINGS

UNITED STATES

Antoinette Padgett and Luis Tepano Pont found black and brown candles in the shape of *moai* statues for sale at Urban Outfitters. These 8 inch items cost \$15 each and are manufactured by Greenwich Village Candles, PO Box 2693, Orleans MA 02653.

The latest issue of *Wine Spectator Magazine* features a full-color spread of computer-imaged *moai* at Rano Raraku, advertising Chilean wines; the caption reads "Two things you should know about Chile ..."

Alan Drake noted the cover of *Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* (for May) which has a painting of three *moai*. The cover story? "Lemuria Will Rise".

ANTIGUA, WEST INDIES

Another alert Rapanuiphile, Dorothy Feltham, spotted posters along the roadsides and on sides of buildings in Antigua that show our beloved *moai* wearing sun glasses and a pirate-type bandana—as seen through a Smirnoff bottle. What next?



WHAT'S NEW IN POLYNESIA

SUVA, FIJI

A project of the climate research group at University of the South Pacific has won a technology award in Japan. The project was on vulnerability and response strategy in regard to climate change and sea-level rise. The work was funded by the Environment Agency of the Government of Japan and coordinated by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

Bulletin of the University of the South Pacific, Vol. 31(2) 1998

FRENCH POLYNESIA

Although the nuclear tests at Mororua and Fangataufa were said to be "innocuous" by French authorities, it now appears that radioactive fallout reached the highest levels as those found around the Chernobyl, Russia, disaster in 1986. Now-sealed defense documents from the SMSR (radiological safety service) recommended evacuating residents of Reao, Tureia, Pukarua and Mangareva prior to the first atmospheric test on 2 July, 1966. However, the record states that "... the hypothesis of an evacuation was excluded for political and psychological reasons."

It gets worse. No decontamination measures were taken despite high levels of contamination of the food resources on Mangareva. Record levels of radioactive rainfall on Mangareva followed the second test, on 24 September but, before the explosion, no safety measures were taken aside from assembling the population close to shelters. The Defense Ministry declined to comment.

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RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS

Five villages have agreed to participate in a two-year ban on fishing in order to attempt a "restock" of dwindling ocean resources. On the western side of the island, Puaikura district will enforce its ban for six months only. These are attempts by the government to combat the problems that have resulted from over-harvesting fish.

MARSHALL ISLANDS

The Marshalls are seeing a revival of traditional canoe building with assistance from the Outrigger Marshall Islands Resort in Majuro, host of this year's second annual Outrigger Marshall Islands Cup. The races will feature traditional one-person (*korkor*) sailing canoes. These differ from Polynesian canoes in that the hulls are not symmetrical. Thus, the sailor can change direction by moving the sail from one end of the canoe to the other.

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WHAT'S NEW IN HANGA ROA

TAXI SERVICE

Taxis appear to be a booming business on the island. There now are 21 taxicabs. All of them are independent, and they charge a fare of \$500 (Chilean pesos) for any trip within Hanga Roa and between \$6,000 and \$10,000 to 'Anakena. However, for tourists, the rate goes WAY up! During Tapati Festival, they charged tourists \$15,000 Chilean pesos (approximately US \$40.) for a ride to Rano Raraku.

TAPATI

News about this year's Tapati festival continues to trickle in. It was the first year that a competition including tourists was put on the program. This was considered "a night of humor," as tourists attempted Rapanui dances, tried speaking Rapanui, or tried to explain their body designs, painted for the occasion—to the great amusement of locals.

The carnival-like parade with floats (*farandula*) that always is a spectacular event and occurs toward the end of Tapati, was described as fantastic. This year, many non-Rapanui joined in the parade, suitably dressed (actually undressed) for the occasion. One observer was surprised to note so many tourists as well as local (but non-Rapanui) participants who wore body paint and *hamis*, and little else. Many women went topless. It reminded some of the carnival at Rio—where anything goes. This year's carnival parade began on Policarpo Toro, just beside the airport and ended at the Caleta instead of the middle of the village as it has in the past.

Problems in the organization of the festival began with the