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## New Zealand Handbook, 5th Edition (Review)

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the mainland newspapers, etc., has left us with very few hard facts. We have been informed that the Governor, Don Jacobo Hey, has resigned from his position. However, he has been asked to stay on the job until a replacement can be found. The Mayor, Petero Edmunds, has asked for a leave of absence until the end of his term of office, citing fatigue. The interim mayor appointed by Edmunds is Iovanni Teave, son of Juan Chavez. The council seemingly will hold internal elections, and rumor has it that the most likely to be selected will be Alberto Hotus, as he has the "second majority". The regular elections will be held next October, and we were informed that Edmunds will run for reelection.

**SPEAKING OF RUMORS**, we have been receiving inquiries about a 'rave' concert that was to be held on Easter Island in May. Young people were scrambling to get seats on a flight so they could attend this event. A lot of email back and forth finally established that yes, a rave was to happen, but had been called off. What about this? A group of young islanders had wanted to host a Techno music concert (a 'rave'). The event was approved, but then the organizers in Santiago with whom the islanders had partnered wanted to pocket half the money and have the dj's stay for only five days, not the ten days that had been agreed upon. So it was cancelled by the islanders involved.

**ISLAND CRAFT PERSONS** are unhappy with the new *mercado* (see RNJ 14:1, page 23). It seems that guides take their tours to stores owned by their relatives, so few tourists even come to the *mercado*, and business has been very slow. Because of lack of ventilation and numerous windows in the *mercado*, summer heat turns the structure into a hot box, further discouraging visitors. The income of many islanders depends totally upon what they can sell to tourists.

**WE HEAR THAT A NEW HOTEL** is being built on Apina Street by the Kia Koe travel agency. This latest venture will bring the number of hotels and residenciales up to 47.

**FIVE ARTISTS AND PERFORMERS** from Rapa Nui recently demonstrated the process and materials used for body designs at an exhibition in New York at the American Museum of Natural History. They also participated in a cross-cultural exchange weekend program, Native Cultures of the Americas.

**THE CENTRO DE LOS PADRES**, an organization that represents the parents of the students, has expressed concern about drug use among students. A government representative from the continent arrived to the island to discuss the problem with parents.

### News from Off-Center

**EBAY STRIKES AGAIN!** In early April, ebay's auction site advertised for sale a "Rare Easter Island Ancestor Mask" The description read, "A very rare ancestor mask from Easter Island, carved from coral. Not much is known about the mythology and ceremonial background of these masks, which were found by a

French archaeological team (who excavated several burial sites on Easter Island on behalf of the National Museum of Mankind in France) in 1968. According to the research carried out by the scientists, the mask is ca 450 years old; whereby several very similar masks were found of a much earlier date. This artifact comes from the estate of the doctor who was a member of the excavation team. An appraisal and a hand written note by the late doctor also comes with the artifact. The appraisal was later issued by a gallery specialized on Oceanic Art in Germany. Measurements: 19 cm high x 16 cm across x 6 cm deep."

There are a couple of things wrong here. This mask is wholly outside the artistic milieu of Rapa Nui. As for the "... several very similar masks" of an earlier date: where might these be? Who has ever seen one? Who might have been the members of this mysterious French team in 1968? The date does not coincide with any expedition we have ever heard of. As for the appraisal, anybody can write one of those. The "rare Easter Island mask" was bought by some speculator for \$850 and he/she now is the proud owner of what appears to be an authentic fake.

### Reviews

 *New Zealand Handbook*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition.

Jane King, 1999; 512 pages, illustrations, photos and maps.

US\$ 18.95; UK £ 12.99; CAN\$ 29.50

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Moon Travel Handbooks, Emeryville, CA

*Review by Steven Roger Fischer*

The fifth edition of the *New Zealand Handbook*, one of the celebrated series of Moon Travel Handbooks, is the latest update, impeccably researched, of what must be one of the most useful travel books on New Zealand in print today. If its major competitor—Lonely Planet's encyclopedic *New Zealand*—excels in minutiae, Moon's *New Zealand Handbook* stands out for its reliable compactness and handy, on-the-scene precision. Small enough to toss into a backpack and hardly feel it there, it supplies all the local information one will ever need on virtually every tourist spot on both the South Island and North Island, with Stewart Island in the far south included in surprising detail. (One looks in vain for the Chatham Islands, however, which should be included in future editions.) Regional, local and city maps fill the tome. The many illustrations and black-and-white photographs add to the book's cultural attraction. "Special Topics" are generously sprinkled throughout the volume—such as "Outdoor Health", "Glowworms", "Where the Mountain Marries the Mist". The 49-page introduction is a brief, refreshing dip into the pool of New Zealand history, society and touring, with many handy hints for the first-time visitor. The detailed regional chapters carry one from Northland to Southland, providing accommodations, restaurants, historical background, cultural sites and fascinating asides that will be certain to educate and entertain with equal delight.