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A Fine Time on the Volcano

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Special Events; Cathy Grant and Lolly Davis, conference assistants; and the student volunteers who helped in so many ways, from running the AV equipment to directing new arrivals to their rooms. Our sincere thanks to the EIF: Renée Hamilton, who handled logistics; Antoinette Padgett who sold our publications; and Calvin Malone, who chauffeured many participants from the airport. Personally I want to acknowledge the many hours of planning by Steven Fischer, our conference chair; and of course Georgia Lee, who worked on details of the conference

ning to expand its horizons. We are in the process of redesigning the EIF with a broader focus, one that will maintain its support of projects on Easter Island and, in addition, will support research, education, and conservation projects on other islands in the Pacific. We will inform *RNJ* readers of new developments as they are formulated. We thank you for your patience with this process and for your continued support.

Kay Kenady Sanger, President, Easter Island Foundation

A Fine Time on the Volcano

By Grant McCall

PACIFIC 2000, THE LATEST in a superb line of conferences with Rapanui at their core, took place on the slopes of a sleeping volcano, at the Hawaii Preparatory Academy, Kamuela. Let's remember: the first public conference of this kind was on Rapanui itself in 1984, with the next in Germany. Following that, the host was the University of Wyoming, where Bill Mulloy worked and George Gill works, both major figures in Rapanui studies. In the first conference, there was no need to invite Rapanui participation; the Islanders were omnipresent and a good thing it was too. In Laramie, both official and unofficial Islander participation was evident. Albuquerque was the next venue, owing to it being Carlyle Smith's long-term institution and the place where the ground breaking first two volumes of the Heyerdahl expedition reports were co-published. Again, Rapanui, both resident in the USA and coming especially from the Island, were an assuring feature of the proceedings, adding to formal presentations and informal gatherings. (Did Renee ever manage to clean up after that *umu* party at her place? No, she told me: she just sold it instead!)

Hawai'i, the cross-roads of the Pacific as they sometimes stylize themselves, was an appropriate venue for several reasons, but a daunting one for others. By meeting in one of the vertices of the Polynesian triangle, we were closer to the Pacific promise than we had been as a group since 1984. Also, we were able to experience, through the generosity of local archaeologists, another expression of Polynesian culture, an implicit comparison to the other places many of us have visited in our research and travel careers. The surroundings themselves were a constant reminder of our Pacific location and on one day, there were excursions to local archaeological sites.

However, it was a costly excursion to the Big Island for people not cashed up personally or professionally, and this meant that some potential attendees just were not present, including the accustomed contingent from the Island itself. Even US based Rapanui did not turn up in the numbers as before. That made all the more gratifying the presence of Hawai'i based Mahina Rapu Tuki and now-California carver Luis Tepano Pont. From Chile, researchers Alejandra Grifferos and Andrea Seelenfreund were welcomed additions, as was José Miguel Ramirez, with his remarkable plastic bag and pocket 'shop' featuring Rapanui-motif watches, T-shirts and an endless supply of other collectibles, together with limited copies of his stunning new book.

The papers were of a very high standard as we have come to expect. Given the Hawai'i context, there was an extended



Peter Bellwood (left), Keynote Speaker, and Mark Blackburn discuss things Polynesian at the luau beach party.

for at least twelve hours a day during the past year.

Special thanks also to Mark and Carolyn Blackburn, who hosted a delightful EIF fundraiser at the historic Parker Ranch. During this event, the first "Golden Moai Awards" were presented to three founding members who have made significant contributions to the EIF since its inception: Georgia Lee, Joan Seaver-Kurze, and William Liller. At the closing session of the conference, Emily Mulloy was recognized for her vision and for keeping alive the dream of her husband, William Mulloy, to open a research library on Easter Island.

Now that the books have been shipped to Easter Island and the William Mulloy Library is about to open, the EIF is plan-



Kay Sanger (left), EIF President, presented the "Gold Moai Award" to Joan Seaver Kurze and Georgia Lee at the Parker Ranch party. A third Gold Moai goes to William Liller of Chile, who was unable to attend the conference.

non-Rapanui focus to much of the proceedings, including a very significant symposium in its own right, on Lapita. The most recent news from the Island came through Charlie Love, who only a fortnight before had been excavating *moai* roads. In a moment of great candor, Charlie admitted that what he had found during his just-completed research was that all *moai* moving theories so far could not cope with the structure of the road he explored! Oh, well: back to the logs, ropes and cement casts....

As a kind of theme, both intellectual and personal, the presence of Peter Bellwood as a keynote and active participant was very welcome. Bellwood's books would be known to most if not all the conference participants and he clearly is interested still in what the Pacific has to offer in the piecing together of human history. Emily and Brigid Mulloy, as always, were great to see again. And, how does Juan Grau keep on keeping on! What an amazing and clear thinking man he is!

With some amusement too, there was a constant procession of shame-faced people stealing off to the library, to be interviewed about wild theories and to be expertly filmed. During my session, more time was spent adjusting the ambient lighting and a vase behind me on a shelf than was allowed for answering the questions. "That's fine", the director would encourage, "but can you make your reply 15 instead of 20 seconds"? I could feel the commercial break looming.

People reacted in very personal way to the venue of the conference: The Hawaii Preparatory Academy is remote from Kona-Kailua and the flesh pots of Hilo. Those of us familiar with boarding schools reacted by throwing our food when the Headmaster addressed us. Others, mindful of military parallels, became shifty and ran stealthily between buildings, keeping a low profile. Still others seemed delighted that no one (except those at their table) could tell them not to put disgusting combinations of food on their plates. There were the rebels, of course. A riotous ping-pong party, fuelled by Diet Coke, was firmly quashed by the authorities by removing, first, the paddles and, then, returning later, to hide the ball itself! Dastardly clever those prefects!

There would be little point in a short account of this kind in going through the many excellent papers, even the highlights, for each of us will have our favorites where, in astonishment, we learned something very new and/or puzzling. I gave Charlie a plug because we spent the day after the conference driving leisurely around Kona-Kailua and spending money in enticing bookshops where we ran into other colleagues similarly engaged. He paid for the petrol, so I give him a guernsey, in true academic payola fashion.

One of the points that should be made is that there was a healthy (and I do mean healthy) contingent of younger researchers from the USA, Spain, Norway, Germany, France, Japan, Chile and New Zealand (that I met) ready to take over in Pacific Studies when us "crumbles", as Australian slang has it, doze off. A very good sign.

Perhaps a last item to notice is the puzzling (to most people) announcement made by Steve Fischer at the luau that the Easter Island Foundation is due to transform into something very different to what it is today. Maunga Kea did not rumble in the background, but some people did. Scarcely had life-time

achievement awards been given to Joan Seaver Kurze and Georgia Lee in the form of weighty 'gold *moai*' (accompanied by fragile chocolate *moai* petit-fours) than the demise of the institution seemingly was being announced. Leaving aside for the moment that both these two stalwarts have many more good years to come (along with the fighting fit Frank Morin!), it is not clear to me what people have in mind. Is it impossible to keep as the core of a Foundation an interest in one little island in the Pacific? I suppose that is the question: To be or not to be. Nice ring, don't you think? Might use it in a play.....

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AFTER FOUR MONTHS OF WORK, the conservation of the *moai* at Viña del Mar is completed, and the Easter Island statue is now protected from future weathering. The *moai* that stands outside the Fonck Museum is said to be from Ahu One Mahiki, on the south coast of the island. After analysis, it was determined that treatment was essential because continual exposure to bad weather was eroding the surface. Several months ago it was possible to see cracks that could have caused major damage around the neck and shoulders. The conservator in charge, Mónica Bahamóndez, head of the laboratory at the Centro Nacional de Conservación y Restauración, directed the treatment, explaining that once the interior of the *moai* became totally dry, it was then possible to protect it with a consolidant, making it resistant to rain.

Thanks were given to the Easter Island Foundation, which provided a grant toward the treatment, making it possible to finance the process. The treatment used on the Viña *moai* is similar to that utilized on the statues of Easter Island and consists of the application of a German-developed product that enables the volcanic stone to resist erosion by weathering.

The conservation crew also removed some white deposits and injected an adhesive into the cracks and fractures to prevent larger losses of material.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 27 July, 2000

Items from the Edge

OUR ROVING CORRESPONDENT, Peter Thornquist, informs us that yet another coral mask "from Easter Island" was being sold on eBay. We reported on this phenomenon in our last issue (RNJ 14(2):40). This sales blurb contains a few more tidbits of information, a different year collected, and an odd comment about it being "brought by other people to Easter Island..." Oh yessss. Maybe those little guys from Outer Space?

The mask is described as "A fairly crude ceremonial mask carved from coral stone and found on Easter Island. The mask belonged to a French Scientist, in fact a medical doctor, who was part of a French excavation team in 1972, who studied various burial sites on the island. 3 of such masks were found; 2 of them in one grave; the other half exposed and not allocated to a specific burial site approx. 500 metres away. There are some notes of the former owner (now deceased) and a rough sketch of the location; but except that one of the masks was given to the Musée des Hommes in France, and one sold to a private collector last year not much more is known. Speculation exists that