

Tok Blong Pasifik

News and Views on the Pacific Islands

March/June 1997

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PEOPLES FOUNDATION

After the Bomb

What's Next for Marshall Islanders?



Photo: Giff Johnson

Featuring

Nuclear legacy continues to haunt Marshall Islanders

Youth continue work of health activist, Darlene Keju-Johnson

Businesses promote local economic development

Special Reports: Regional conferences tackle nuclear & sovereignty issues

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*Cover Photo: Darlene Keju-Johnson performing with members of Youth to Youth in Health.
Photo by Giff Johnson.*



Recycled and chlorine free papers are used in the production of Tok Blong Pasifik.

ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

Tok Blong Pasifik is a phrase in Pidgin, a language used in parts of the Pacific. A rough equivalent would be "News from the Pacific". **Tok Blong Pasifik** (ISSN: 1196-8206) is published by the South Pacific Peoples Foundation of Canada (SPPF). Our aim is to promote awareness of development, social justice, environment and other issues of importance to Pacific Islanders. Through the magazine, we hope to provide readers with a window on the Pacific that will foster understanding and promote support for Pacific Island peoples. SPPF gratefully acknowledges support for this publication from the Canadian International Development Agency.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

We welcome contributions to **Tok Blong Pasifik** and readers' comments. A priority is placed upon contributions from Pacific Islanders and others living in the Islands. As an issues focused magazine, **Tok Blong Pasifik** often includes material that is contentious. Views expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of SPPF or financial supporters of the magazine. We reserve the right to edit material.

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Tok Tok



1997 Pacific Networking Conference

November 14-16
See page 26 for details

There is a knowing in the head and another kind of knowing that is right in your heart or bones. I learned that lesson yet again during a trip to the Marshall Islands last year. SPPF has addressed the climate change issue in various activities over the years and I had read a fair bit on the subject, but last September was my first visit to one of the Pacific's atoll nations. As the airplane descended towards the airport, it seemed almost as if the wings would touch the water on both sides of the island. For the first time, I understood in an immediate and personal way how fragile the future of these nations is in the face of global warming. With their total land masses rising only a meter or two above sea level, they may literally cease to exist within the next 50 years.

The limited land base has other implications. Even a small concentration of population can impose considerable strain on available resources and the environment. Local economic devel-

opment also has few resources on which to draw.

The Marshall Islands faces many challenges, but it also has a valuable resource in its people. This issue of *Tok Blong Pasifik* is dedicated to the Marshallese people, profiling some of their challenges and accomplishments.

SPPF has served for many years as the North American contact point for the Nuclear Free & Independent Pacific Movement. Recent months have seen several important meetings and developments on nuclear issues. We report on several of them in this issue.

Two new staff have joined the *Tok Blong Pasifik* team. Arlene Wells is working as assistant editor, while Karen Weggler is coordinating subscriptions, advertising and fundraising.

This expanded edition of *Tok Blong Pasifik* is a double issue (March and June).

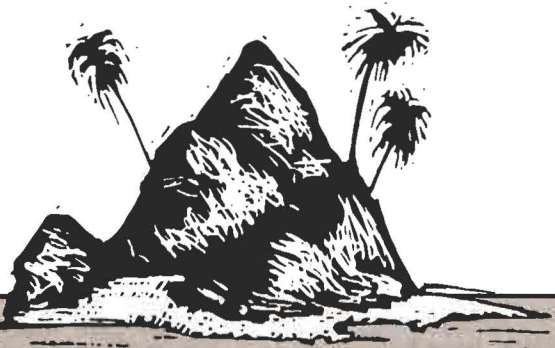
Stuart Wulff for SPPF



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PACIFIC NEWS UPDATES

Regional

SPREP has New Director and Action Plan

The member countries of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme have elected Cook Islander Tamari'i Pierre Tutangata as SPREP's new executive director. A new action plan was endorsed, focusing on conservation of biodiversity, climate change, waste management, environmental education and environmental management. The Global Environment Facility will provide US\$2.4 million in support of SPREP's Pacific Islands Climate Change Assistance Programme. The programme will assist participating countries to inventory greenhouse gas sources and sinks, assess national vulnerability, evaluate mitigation and adaptation options, and prepare national plans.

[From: *Washington Pacific Report*, Dec 15/96;
IRETA's South Pacific Agricultural News, Jun/97]

Marketing Millennial Tourism

As the Year 2000 approaches, Pacific Island countries aim to capitalise on their locations near the International Dateline. Countries just west of the dateline will be the first to see 2000, while those to the east will be the last to

bid goodbye to 1999. Hotels in Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and the Cook Islands have been booked by jet-setters who want to welcome in the New Year in Fiji or Tonga, then zoom east for a second New Year's bash in Samoa or the Cook Islands. The Tourism Council of the South Pacific and several airlines have launched the Millennium Project, an extended New Year's eve television broadcast from the Islands to a world audience, promoting the Pacific as the 21st century's ultimate tourism destination.

[From: *Islands Business*, Mar-Apr/97]

Melanesia

Fiji Has New Constitution

Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka has secured approval from Parliament, the Great Council of Chiefs and the Senate for a revised constitution. The new constitution will take effect in July 1998, though Rabuka says he wants to implement some changes sooner, notably a multi-ethnic Cabinet reflecting parties receiving more than 10% of the popular vote. The revised constitution provides special protection for Fijian (Indigenous) rights, but restores political rights lost by non-Fijian citizens after the 1987 coups. While the president will be Fijian, the vice president will be non-Fijian and the prime minister can

be from any ethnic group. The current voting by race for all seats, with a majority of seats reserved for Fijians, will change. While 46 seats will continue to be elected by race, there will also be 25 multi-ethnic seats elected by all eligible voters.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Jun 23/97; *Fiji Times*, Jul 11/97; *Washington Pacific Report*, Jun 15/97]

Fiji Bank Debts Drain National Budget

Bad debts incurred by the government owned National Bank of Fiji will absorb over 12% of the government's 1997 budget. Planned spending includes F\$133 million this year on top of \$80 million already spent to deal with the debts. The bank bailout accounts for over half of an anticipated budget deficit of F\$219 million.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Nov 15/96]

Mercenary Deal Prompts PNG Political Upheaval

Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan, Deputy PM Chris Haiveta and Defence Minister Matias Ijape agreed to "stand aside" during an inquiry into their hiring of South African and British mercenaries to aid in the Government's war against Bougainville rebels. The hiring of the Sandline mercenaries led to widespread public protests and a revolt by PNG Defence Forces under their commander, Jerry Singirok, who was sacked by Chan. While Chan survived a vote of non-confidence in Parliament, he subsequently agreed to step aside as part of a deal to defuse the crisis, appointing John Giheno as Acting PM. Critics of the inquiry expressed concerns about the narrow terms of reference and the Government's decision to

fund legal costs only for pro-Government witnesses. The inquiry, headed by Justice Warwick Andrew, concluded that neither Chan nor Ijape were guilty of any impropriety, but strongly criticised Haiveta for his actions in hiring and paying the mercenaries. Chan, Haiveta and Ijape resumed office on June 2, following release of the inquiry report. The PNG police have raided the offices of several NGOs and charged 4 NGO leaders with illegal assembly during the Sandline protests.

[From: *PNG National & PNG Post-Courier*, numerous dates; *Pacific Report*, Apr 14/97 & Jun 9/97; *Radio Australia, Herald*, numerous dates]

Skate is New PNG Prime Minister

After several weeks of political manoeuvring following Papua New Guinea's June election, Bill Skate was elected as the new prime minister at the head of a multi-party coalition. The election results represented a strong repudiation of many veteran politicians in the aftermath of the Sandline affair and a range of other concerns about government ethics and policies. Three of PNG's prime ministers since independence lost their seats in the election, including outgoing PM Sir Julius Chan, Paias Wingti and John Giheno. Several Cabinet ministers also went down to defeat. Efforts by some MPs to form a reform government under National Alliance leader Michael Somare, PNG's first prime minister, fell short. Skate was supported by a coalition that included the two main parties in the Chan/Haiveta government and a group of independent MPs that had run on a platform of ousting the Chan/Haiveta government and bringing ethical behaviour back to government. Chris Haiveta, singled out for the most criticism by the

inquiry into the Sandline affair, is back as Deputy PM in the new Government. The result, especially the support by the new MPs who had played leading roles in the Sandline protests, drew widespread public and media criticism. Two women won election, Lady Carol Kidu and Dame Josephine Abaijah, the first women elected in 15 years.

[From: *Asia-Pacific Network*, Jun 30/97, Jul 4/97, Jul 22/97 & Jul 23/97]

Bougainville Peace Talks Resume

Informal talks between various parties to the Bougainville conflict have occurred in the weeks leading up to the PNG election. The PNG national government has mostly been absent from these discussions and BRA/BIG leaders have emphasised, in the aftermath of the mercenary crisis, that they wouldn't deal with the Chan government. Bougainville MP John Momis was seized by BRA rebels for talks with rebel leader Francis Ona. The two men issued a joint

statement with a commitment to work towards lasting peace and Momis was released after 16 days of captivity. The BRA, rebel Bougainville Interim Government, Bougainville Transitional Government and PNG Foreign Minister Kilroy Genia have all endorsed plans for a conflict resolution workshop facilitated by the Harvard School of Conflict Negotiation. Leaders from the various Bougainvillean factions travelled to New Zealand in early July for peace talks hosted by the New Zealand government.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Jun 23/97; *PNG Independent*, Jul 4/97]

More Musical Chairs in Vanuatu Politics

Vanuatu has its fourth coalition government since 1995. Facing a non-confidence motion from Opposition Leader Maxime Carlot Korman, Prime Minister Serge Vohor offered Korman a chance to form a new coalition government. The offer came despite President Jean-Marie Leye Lenelgau's plea for

IN MEMORY

Temawa Taniera

July 2, 1966 - May 23, 1997

by Sylvia Linggi

Kiribati suffered a great loss with Temawa Taniera's death. Temawa devoted her life to Kiribati, one of the poorest nations in the Pacific, and improved i-Kiribati lives by sharing her extensive knowledge and skills. She left behind her husband and two infant children.

Temawa received a BA in Chemistry and Math from the University of the South Pacific and an MA in Marine Management from Dalhousie in Halifax, Canada. She applied a strong interest in women in fisheries to her work at the Ministry of Natural Resources Development, the Atoll Research Centre, the Kiribati Government Women's Unit and UNICEF. As Environmental Education Officer at the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSP), Temawa was preparing programmes to address the severe environmental degradation that plagues South Tarawa.

Temawa's effusive spirit and sense of humour endeared her to everyone. Her absence leaves an emptiness in all our lives. We shall never forget the commitment to Kiribati she demonstrated throughout her young life.

FSP Director Sylvia Linggi worked closely with Temawa.

government stability and a 38-11 margin of votes in Parliament for the previous coalition government. Vohor and Korman lead rival factions of the Union of Moderate Parties and have both held the prime ministership at various points in recent years. The new arrangement bumps the Vanua'aku Party back to the Opposition and leaves Fr. Walter Lini's National United Party in the governing coalition. It also brings Barak Sope's Melanesian Progressive Party back into Government, with Sope again becoming Deputy Prime Minister despite the government ombudswoman's recommendation that he never again hold any position of public responsibility.

[From: *Washington Pacific Report*, Jun 1/97]

Polynesia

Paeniu Back as Tuvalu Prime Minister

After holding on for two months despite losing his majority, Prime Minister Kamuta Latasi finally had his day of reckoning in December, when the Opposition pushed through a vote of non-confidence. Former PM Bikenibeu Paeniu was returned to that position in a Parliamentary secret ballot. Paeniu also had some good news on the financial front. Tuvalu's development trust fund, established with foreign endowments to insulate the government's budget from fluctuations in regular aid flows, recorded a US\$3 million surplus in 1996 after budget needs were met.

[From: *Washington Pacific Report*, Jan 1/97]

Cooks Expect Rebound from Financial Crisis

After struggling with near bankruptcy and an extremely painful period of economic

restructuring, the Cook Islands government is predicting the "upside of economic reform" for the 1997-98 fiscal year. The budget projects growth of 6.2% in 1997-98 and 11.1% for 1998-99, following a 4.1% economic contraction for the country in 1996-97. Government debt has shrunk from \$5 million to \$700,000. Tourism, agriculture, marine resources, offshore financial services, and local industry and services are the key areas identified by the government for future economic growth.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Jun 30/97]

Tongan Government Continues Attack on Journalists

Tonga's Court of Appeal has ruled that the Tongan Parliament jailed three men in 1996 for an offence that did not exist. The royalty/nobility dominated Parliament jailed pro-democracy MP 'Akilisi Pohiva and *Times of Tonga* editor 'Eakalafi Moala and deputy editor Filokalafi 'Akau'ola for alleged contempt of Parliament. They were released after 26 days following a writ of habeas corpus filed by their lawyer. The Tongan government appealed their release, leading to the June court decision that there was no legal basis for the arrests and imprisonment. However, the government has not given up on its attempts to limit press freedom in Tonga. 'Akau'ola was arrested again the day before the court decision and charged with sedition for publishing a letter in the *Times of Tonga* that was critical of the government.

[From: *PNG National*, Jun 20/97 & Jun 23/97]

Samoa Wins Environmental Prize

Chief Fuiono Senio of Falealupo village, Western Samoa, and Nafanua Paul Cox of the Seacology Foundation shared the 1997

Goldman Environmental Prize for their work in conserving the Samoan rainforest. The two were instrumental in establishing a rainforest preserve around Falealupo village. In 1988 the village was faced with logging of their forest to raise funds for a new school. Cox offered to raise funds for the school if the village would leave the forest intact and Senio persuaded the villagers to accept the offer. Cox donated his \$37,500 share of the Goldman prize, matched by donations from US companies Nu Skin International and Nature's Way Products, to establish a permanent endowment for the Falealupu Rain Forest Preserve. Unfortunately, Senio died 1 month after receiving the Prize, but his legacy continues.

[From: *Seacology Newsletter*, Summer/97]

Micronesia

Debt Problems Confront New Nauru Government

The Government of President Kinza Clodumar, elected in February, is grappling with overseas debt problems associated with bad investments. Clodumar, also Finance Minister, has produced a budget where A\$19.1 million of the \$59.9 million in total expenditures will go to meet urgent payments on defaulted and overdue debts. As a result of these urgent payments, no provision has been made in this fiscal year for servicing the overall public debt.

[From: *Pacific Report*, Jun 23/97]

Marshall Islands Leadership Change

President Amata Kabua, the only president that Marshall Islanders have known, died in December.

Kabua's parallel status as both president and paramount traditional chief allowed him to exercise a profound influence over the country's development. The Nitijela elected another traditional chief, Imata Kabua, as the new president.

[From: *Washington Pacific Report*, Jan 1/97]

Nena Takes Over as FSM President

With President Bailey Olter unable to resume his duties as president of the Federated States of Micronesia due to a stroke suffered in July 1996, Vice President Jacob Nena assumed the position of president on May 8. Senator Leo Falcolm was elected to fill the balance of Nena's vice presidential term.

[From: *Washington Pacific Report*, May 15/97]

ADB to Fund FSM Reform

The Asian Development Bank will provide a US\$18 million loan to the Federated States of Micronesia to support a public sector reform programme. With US funding related to the Compact of Free Association in decline, the FSM are facing a major financial challenge. Public sector expenditures and the size of the public service grew rapidly with US support, but are now unsustainable as external assistance drops. The ADB supported comprehensive reform programme aims to reduce the size of government, fund government operations from domestic revenues, and stimulate private sector development.

[From: *Pacific Report*, May 12/97]

Palau Election Sees Little Change

Incumbents, including President Kuniwo Nakamura and Vice President Tommy Remengesau Jr., were reelected in a status quo Palau election.

[From: *Palau Gazette*, Nov 10/96]

Canada

Scandal Bursts Bre-X Bubble

Canadian mining company Bre-X Minerals claimed that it had discovered the largest gold deposit in history at Busang, Indonesia. However, in a stunning conclusion to the Cinderella story of the little company that made it big, independent analysts have concluded that there is no significant gold present, only a hoax "without precedent in the history of mining anywhere in the world." Bre-X executives continued to tout the mine's prospects, producing ever larger estimates of the size of the deposit, even as questions mounted. Reports in March that Freeport-McMoran, which had won the rights to develop the Busang deposit, had not found any significant gold and had noted "visual differences" between its samples and those provided by Bre-X, challenged the size of the deposit and raised questions about the possibility of fraud. Bre-X's stock value collapsed by \$3 billion almost overnight. An independent audit was then conducted by Strathcona Mineral Services. The Strathcona report, released on May 6, detailed extensive evidence of massive fraud. The fallout from the Bre-X saga includes several lawsuits, the likelihood of criminal charges, serious losses for many small investors and large pension funds that invested heavily in Bre-X, and questions about the adequacy of regulations governing the Canadian mining sector.

[From: *Globe & Mail*, May 3/97; *Victoria Times-Colonist*, May 6/97 & May 23/97; *Maclean's*, May 19/97]



Sun Lights Namdrik Nights

The people of Namdrik Atoll have switched on solar powered lights and put away their old kerosene lamps. In July 1996, a solar energy system was inaugurated there, bringing power to 133 homes on the small Marhsallese atoll. The \$500,000 French government funded installation project has meant that the island can now operate night lighting and electrical appliances, conveniences which much of the world takes for granted. At \$8 a month, solar power costs less than kerosene. Namdrik residents believe the atoll generated electricity increases their self-reliance, since they no longer depend on irregular kerosene deliveries by field trip ships.

[From: *Marshall Islands Journal*, July 26/96]

What's Next For Marshall Islanders?

Between Rocks and Hard Places

An Interview with Marshall Islands Foreign Minister Phillip Muller

Phillip Muller was interviewed by Stuart Wulff in Majuro, after the 27th South Pacific Forum hosted by the Marshall Islands in September 1996.

WULFF:

This year you participated in the Post-Forum Dialogue. Were you satisfied with the responses from Forum partner countries on the climate change issue?

MULLER:

I was satisfied, but I think we could have got more. The dialogue partners agreed to certain levels of emission, but we are looking for more commitment from the industrialised countries to assist small island states, especially the low-lying islands. We need programmes that will alleviate the problem.

WULFF:

When you heard the Canadian delegation announce that Canada expected to miss the 1990 target by 13% in the year 2000?

MULLER:

I was shocked. I guess Canada has their priorities

and they're looking at their own economic development and progress. I think the issue will need continuous dialogue.

WULFF:

What would you say if you could speak directly to the Canadian people and government about global warming?

MULLER:

They should realise that countries around the world, and especially in the Pacific, really will suffer if greenhouse gas emission does not stop. I would urge people to come and see what we are talking about. We are not talking about ten years from now. We're talking about today.

WULFF:

The Marshall Islands has been very active internationally on this issue. Is the government also looking at projects that would help deal with sea level rise and global warming?

MULLER:

Yes, we realise that we have to do something. We have programmes funded by our own and the US environmental protection agencies and other regional

Nuclear Waste Dump on Hold

Marshall Islands President Imata Kabua has announced that his government's plan to investigate and possibly build a nuclear waste storage facility has been frozen indefinitely. The proposal met widespread opposition internationally and within the Marshall Islands since it was suggested a couple of years ago, but has stimulated interest from several Asian countries looking for a solution to their waste problems.

The government claimed that the facility could help the Marshall

Islands deal with waste from US nuclear weapons testing and could produce revenue by accepting waste from other countries. However, other Pacific governments and the US have been critical of the risks associated with shipping and storing nuclear waste in the region. Greenpeace noted that "storing nuclear waste on a low lying coral atoll in a region prone to cyclones and considered the most vulnerable to climate change is not solving the world's nuclear waste problem."

The controversy flared anew in May when four Cabinet ministers approved a feasibility study for a facility on Wotho or Erikub atolls.

Wotho is inhabited, while Erikub has a turtle sanctuary. The study was to be conducted by a US company, Babcock & Wilcox Nuclear Environmental Services, and funded by Taipower, an operator of nuclear power stations in Taiwan. Concerns that the secret agreement might go beyond a study to include approval of an eventual facility prompted increasing local opposition, including some members of Kabua's Government. The President's announcement followed that criticism and a meeting with US Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt.

[From: Pacific News Bulletin, Jun/97; Pacific Report, Jun 30/97]

organisations. A coastal management study is mapping which parts of the islands are most vulnerable to tides. We have set up stations that monitor how much the water rises. The coastal management project is concentrating on shores which are more exposed. We're breaking up a lot of the barrier reefs, so that when the waves come in they don't affect the island so much.

WULFF:

No recent action by your government has created such international furore as the proposal for a nuclear waste facility. What is the status of that proposal?

MULLER:

We have nuclear waste storage now in the Marshall Islands and the storage is leaking. We have islands that are still radioactive and, after 30 years of trying to find a solution, people with attachments to those islands still cannot go back. Clean-up involves scraping the topsoil. Where can we take it? We cannot dump it in the lagoon or ocean. No other country will welcome the waste. The next logical step is to see whether we can build an international facility that will meet the requirements of the IAEA and others. It will require millions and millions of dollars. Maybe we should ask the United States to find friends — countries, organisations or companies — interested in assisting us. We can reserve part of the facility for those who help.

WULFF:

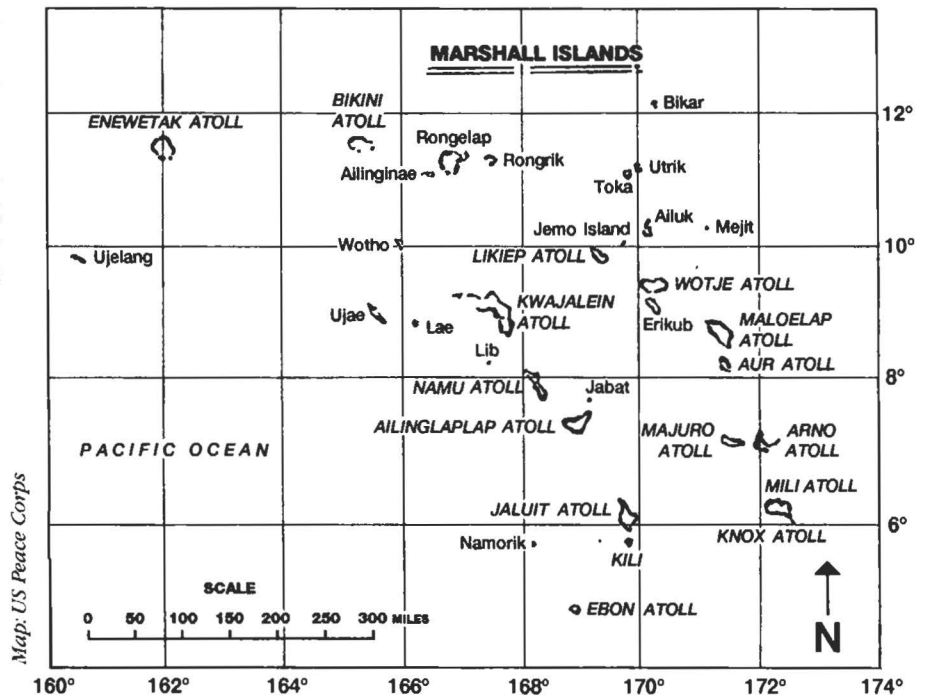
At this point you are still studying the possibility?

MULLER:

Yes. There have been a number of proposals, notably from the Taiwan Power Company. We've had people visit the site, but it's still in the talking stages. Nothing has been signed. As we promised, before we do anything we'll do the feasibility study and let all of our Forum countries and the US know. We have asked the US to lend us their technical know-how and scientists, but they have not been supportive.

WULFF:

Pacific leaders have said they don't want a waste facility in the region, even if it responds to needs as perceived by your government and is done to the highest standards.



MULLER:

We would welcome any other solutions they think will help us resolve the issue. As I told Greenpeace, "If you have better solutions, please let us know. We are open to looking at any other options." Maybe the last option is to move people from the contaminated islands to the United States.

WULFF:

The people I've met were very clear that they want to go home, not to the US.

MULLER:

The government is stuck between a rock and a hard place. The people are pushing us to go back to their islands. Yet when we try to do something, everybody says it's not a good idea.

WULFF:

Two years ago the US government finally released confidential documents from the nuclear testing era that were not available to your government when you negotiated the compensation contract. In light of those documents, are you satisfied with the compensation?

MULLER:

We are not satisfied. If we had known then what we know now, we would have asked for much more. The compensation has almost run out and we have only touched personal injury. We have not even looked at land compensation. A section in the contract allows the Marshall Islands, in the event of changed circumstances, to go back to Congress and



Photo: Jack Niedenthal

*Bikini Islanders want to return home
Jamore & Meriam Aitap*

ask for additional compensation — money or practical care. We are putting together a proposal to go to Congress. With the fiscal environment in Washington, it is going to be difficult, but I think it is a moral responsibility of the US to address this issue.

WULFF:

US funding associated with the Compact of Free Association is reducing. As a result, your government is facing a serious financial situation. What is the scope of the problem and what is your government proposing to do about it?

MULLER:

You are correct about the economic situation, but the optimistic part is that we realise there is a problem and we are taking painful steps to address the issues. We are going to do what we can to accommodate the decrease in funding. I think that is why the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has said, "We think that you are sincere in trying to address the issue, so we would like to help you ease the pain that would result from some of the reductions." We are facing the issue dead on, not trying to tell everyone that everything is okay. Everything is not okay.

WULFF:

I understand that you're looking at cutting the public service by about one quarter over the next year.

MULLER:

We started the last fiscal year with about 2600 public servants and we've cut almost 600 people. Our aim for this coming fiscal year is about 1500 people, which is about half the original. That is a big cut, yet we want to do it without putting too many problems on people and their families. We are working with the ADB to start retraining programmes and with the private sector to find where we can fit these people into jobs. This new hotel (Outrigger Marshall Islands Resort) is a beginning. A lot of the people working in the hotel were in the public service.

WULFF:

What is the government's strategy for developing new sources of funding?

MULLER:

First of all, our tax system is inefficient. Many businesses and individuals are not meeting their obligations. So we brought in experts to look at the tax structure and the idea of a value-added tax instead of import taxes. The next step is to encourage investment to create jobs. We're looking at tourism. Our president will be meeting with tourism and hotel people to see how government and the private sector can work together to promote the Marshall Islands. We've been working with local handicraft producers to sell handicrafts overseas. We have a lot of investment interest from Korea and Japan. We'll look at incentives for people to come and do business. It's a combination of actions that we must take. We already reduced the salaries of the top leaders from the President down to ministers and senators. I think nobody in the region, or in the world, can feel that we're not sincere about addressing the issue.

WULFF:

The Marshall Islands doesn't have much of a relationship with Canada. Would you like to see that change?

MULLER:

I'd like to see a new era in our relationship. I'm sure that Canada can contribute a lot to the Marshall Islands, specifically in relationship to the environment, fisheries and tourism. I understand a lot of Canadians like to travel. There is an opportunity for our government people to visit Canada or to arrange for a trade delegation from Canada to come to meet with our private sector. That would be a good beginning. I would be delighted to embark on some efforts to bring the two countries closer together.



Going Home

Bikini and Rongelap Islanders Dream of Ending their Nuclear Exile

by Stuart Wulff

If you can't return me to my island, then tie my hands and feet and throw me into the sea.

Iroiylaplap Jibas
Died 1985

If they say my island is clean, my family and I will swim to the boats that they send to take us back to Bikini.

Isoiylaplap Kilon Bauno
Died 1992

In this increasingly mobile world, many of us find ourselves living far from home, but most of us know we can return home if we wish. However, for the people of Bikini and Rongelap, the radioactive legacy of American nuclear weapons testing has for many years barred that possibility.

Evacuated prior to the nuclear tests, Bikinians have suffered exile on smaller atolls and frequent hardships, including periods of starvation. After shorter stays on two other islands, the main body of Bikinians was settled on Kili Island. Kili is much smaller than Bikini and there is no enclosed lagoon to provide safe fishing grounds. The extremely rough waters around Kili have made fishing impossible and even regular transport a problem. Mike Jibas, a Kili councillor on the Bikini Council, points out that Kili is isolated both by distance and the rough seas. This has made it very difficult to develop local business initiatives that could reduce their financial hardship and dependence on aid.

Told in the 1960s by US officials and scientists that radiation levels had declined to safe levels, some Bikinians

began returning home. It was later discovered that people were being exposed to dangerous levels of radiation. Another evacuation took place in 1978, assisted by the US administration.

Rongelap was exposed to fallout from nuclear tests, especially the 1954 'Bravo' test, but the US government has always downplayed the impact of the testing on atolls that were not test sites. Assured that their home was safe, the Rongelapese returned and remained until the development of radiation-linked health problems. In the face of US government indifference, the Rongelapese turned to Greenpeace. Almost 400 people were evacuated to Mejato Atoll in 1985 by the Rainbow Warrior on its last voyage prior to being sunk by French agents.

The Bikinians and Rongelapese have become more widely dispersed, with significant numbers moving to Majuro and Ebeye, the largest urban communities in the Marshalls. The populations have also grown. Rongelap Mayor James Matayoshi notes that there are now over 2,600 Rongelapese. There are a roughly similar number of Bikinians, with the largest concentrations on Kili and Majuro.

The dream of return is more urgent than ever. The generations that first journeyed into exile are aging. Many have already died in exile and, in a tragic departure from custom, are buried far from the atoll home where their ancestors have been buried for many generations. Mike Jibas says that Bikini elders talk all the time about going back to Bikini. Younger generations are growing up in ignorance of their atoll homes. James Matayoshi notes that their lives and use of resources were guided by an

intricate body of traditional knowledge which is only held by the older generation. The longer a return to Rongelap is delayed, the harder it will be for the younger generations to learn this knowledge and adjust to atoll life. He also wonders how many of today's youth will retain traditional Rongelap values or even want to return.

While a safe return may still be years away, steps have begun to make Bikini and Rongelap once again livable for their people.

After many years of lobbying and lawsuits by the Bikinians, the US government agreed to provide trust funds (currently US\$108 million) to assist with cleaning up the two main islands in Bikini Atoll

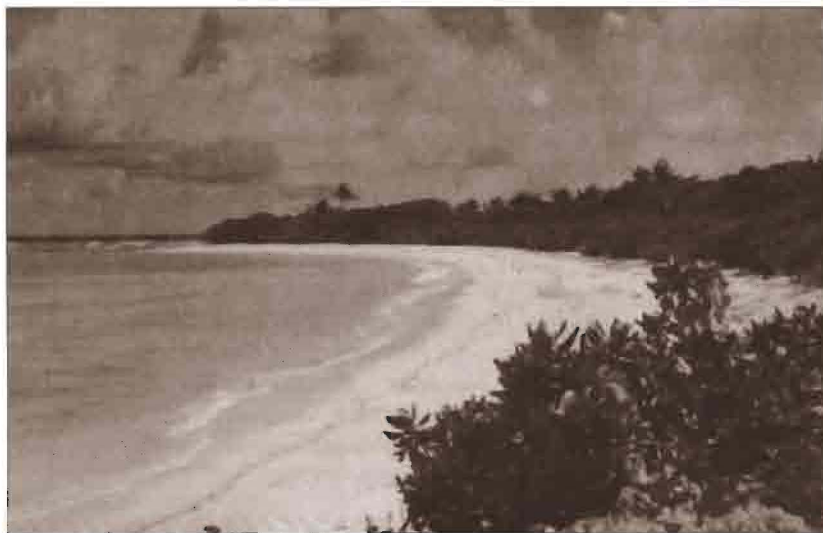


Photo: Jack Niedenthal

Bikini Island - beauty amidst a toxic legacy

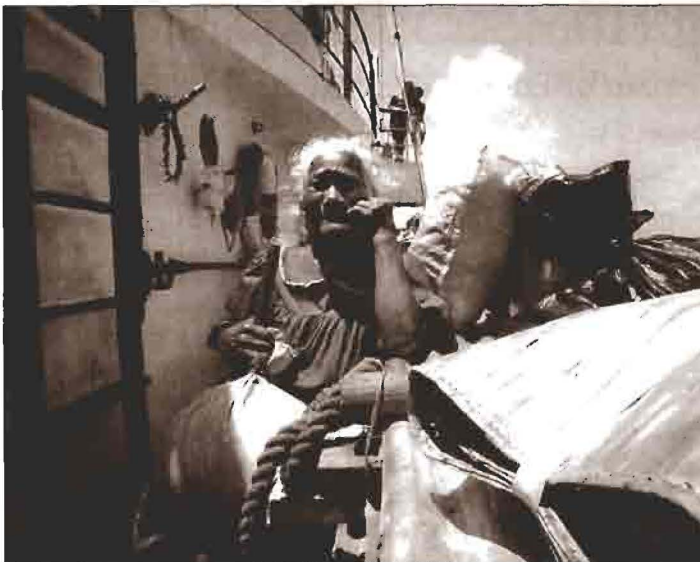


Photo: David Robie

Rongelapese woman on the Rainbow Warrior

(Bikini and Eneu) and with resettlement. The Bikinians have continued to lobby for funds to clean up the rest of the atoll, but have also moved ahead with plans for cleaning up Bikini and Eneu.

The best method of cleanup has been a contentious issue. The US government and scientists have long urged leaving the contaminated topsoil in place and saturating the islands with potassium fertilizer. This is expected to reduce food crop uptake of radioactive materials by 95%, supposedly making them safe to eat. Proponents of this approach emphasize that it is cheaper and less environmentally damaging. However, the Bikinians are sceptical about US scientific advice, given their previous experience, and have favoured an approach that would see the topsoil scraped away and replaced with non-radioactive soil.

An international panel of scientists convened by the International Atomic Energy Agency has examined the issue and recently recommended removing topsoil from a village area and saturating the rest of the island with fertilizer. The panel believes this approach would minimize negative environmental impacts while reducing to a safe level the human intake of residual radiation. Jack Niedenthal, the Trust Liaison for the People of Bikini, says that the IAEA option could be implemented with the existing US\$108 million trust fund.

What would be done with the removed topsoil? One option under consideration is to build a causeway between Bikini and Eneu islands. Storing the waste on another island in the atoll is another possibility. The Bikinians do not favour the option promoted by the Marshall Islands government, building a large scale nuclear waste storage facility and accepting waste from other countries as a source of revenue. Mike Jibas notes that the Bikini Council seriously considered this idea, but decided that it would be safer not to bring more nuclear waste to

the Marshall Islands. They passed a resolution in 1995 stating that they are not interested in pursuing this idea.

The people of Rongelap have received less compensation than the Bikinians. After years of lobbying, the US government has offered a settlement package of US\$45 million. Rongelap leaders do not consider the settlement adequate for their needs and what they have suffered, but have decided to accept it as the best they can obtain for now. These funds will be used for cleanup and resettlement. The Rongelapese have chosen the potassium fertilizer approach as the only option within their financial means.

Having been both reassured and disappointed before, Bikini and Rongelap leaders combine healthy scepticism with their cautious hopes for going home. They emphasize that resettlement will only occur once the cleanup efforts have demonstrated that they are successful, and cleanup could be a long process. Mike Jibas estimates that it might take 10-15 years for a full cleanup of Bikini. Sadly, this will be too late for most of the older people who originally moved from Bikini. James Matayoshi expects that, though Rongelap's less elaborate process could proceed more quickly, it may still take 4-5 years before resettlement is safe.

Ironically, the Bikinians have decided to capitalize on their nuclear legacy. They've signed an agreement with local business, Robert Reimers Enterprises, to develop dive tourism on the undersea wrecks of numerous naval vessels sunk during the Bikini nuclear tests. The initial enthusiastic response gives the Bikini Council hope that dive tourism could help to diversify the Bikini economy away from its dependence on US trust funds. Bikini Trust Liaison Jack Niedenthal notes that media interest in the dive operation has also helped to educate a new audience to issues surrounding the nuclear tests and exile. When tourists see Bikini's incredible beauty and natural wealth, they realize just how much its people have lost through their 50 years of exile.

In late February 1997, more than 80 Bikinians traveled home, returning for the first time in over 50 years. They were there to commemorate Bikini Day by breaking ground for the cleanup programme. They hope that within a few years they will be returning to stay.

This article is based on: September 1996 interviews with Mike Jibas (translation by Jack Niedenthal) and James Matayoshi; A History of the People of Bikini Following Nuclear Weapons Testing in the Marshall Islands by Jack Niedenthal; Back to Bikini (June 1997 New Internationalist) by Giff Johnson; and Pacific Report, Nov 15/96.



Walking into Strong Currents

The Life of Darlene Keju-Johnson

by Giff Johnson

Darlene became known to many people around the world through her advocacy for nuclear test victims in the Marshall Islands. She was among the first Marshall Islanders to publicly challenge the US cover-up of health problems caused by the 66 nuclear tests at Bikini and Enewetak. Her testimony put a human face on the tragedy of nuclear exposure, particularly as she spoke about the birth and cancer problems of Marshallese women. Darlene's relentless and eloquent advocacy widened the nuclear debate in the Marshalls at a time when it wasn't popular to criticize US policy in the islands.

That she developed breast cancer, which ultimately led to her death at 45 last year on June 18, was an irony not lost on Darlene. She used to say that, growing up on islands downwind of the 1954 'Bravo' hydrogen bomb test, she didn't know how long she would live. But for Darlene it was a challenge that stimulated her to an even more hectic pace in the last years of her life.

Yet Darlene's work to bring world attention to nuclear-caused health problems represented only a small part of her contribution to the Marshall Islands and the world beyond.

Darlene was the kind of person who took risks to bring about change and challenge outdated assumptions. In the late 1970s, her desire for justice led her to investigate health problems from nuclear testing. We island-hopped through the Ratak Chain in 1979. As the ship stopped to pick up copra and drop off passengers, we interviewed dozens of older residents on each island. Their stories of inexplicable illnesses and an

epidemic of cancers on islands downwind of Bikini and Enewetak opened our eyes to the magnitude of the problem. Not one of these islands was considered by the US to be 'exposed' to radiation, nor were any receiving health care or environmental monitoring.

“Darlene showed me that it is possible to make dreams come true. To start with an idea and to make it into something concrete and visible.”

Darlene's impassioned and informed testimony at the World Council of Churches' Vancouver Assembly in 1983 undermined callous US government policies that had been accepted for 30 years. The US responded with vitriolic condemnation, calling her statement a “nauseating example of bizarre propaganda.” A dozen years later, President Clinton's Advisory Panel on

Human Radiation Experiments vindicated Darlene's contention that fallout in the Marshall Islands was far more widespread than previously acknowledged and recommended that additional islands be included in a US-sponsored medical program.

By then Darlene had moved on. When she saw others taking up the challenge of nuclear test concerns, Darlene shifted her focus to empowering young people and communities to take control of their health. In 1986, she founded Youth to Youth in Health (YTYIH).

Everything Darlene did was pioneering. On a 1987 fundraising trip to Europe for YTYIH, we met with

people who had heard Darlene speak in Vancouver or read her statement. Someone asked her if she'd 'sold out' because she now worked for the government and wasn't beating the drum for nuclear victims. Darlene chuckled at this criticism and used the opportunity to share ideas and information about YTYIH; her message hadn't so much changed as evolved



Photo: Shimada Kousei

Darlene (left) with members of Youth to Youth in Health

to focus on broad health and social needs in the Marshalls. It was time to convince people in and outside the Marshall Islands of the importance of enabling youth to be 'change agents'.

Darlene's vision had expanded tremendously in those few years. Returning to the Marshall Islands in 1983 after completing her Masters in public health, she realized that nuclear testing was just a highly visible symptom of a much larger crisis, the impact of Westernization and the American colonial administration. It had devalued the pride of many Marshall Islanders to the point of apathy despite escalating social and health problems, including malnutrition (leading killer of children under five), youth suicides, alcohol, child and spouse abuse, and unsustainable growth. A rich culture was being destroyed at such a rapid rate that young people, and even many adults, were adopting American attitudes and characteristics, ashamed to be seen as Marshall Islanders.

Darlene set out to counteract that, knowing that only a Marshallese response based on cultural pride and identity and armed with modern health knowledge, could stem such a tide of social ills. She directed the government's family planning program from 1987-1992, during which time the Marshalls' birth rate dropped dramatically after population growth had peaked at a world-leading 4.2 percent in the early and mid-1980s.

"When we first opened our family planning clinic in 1984, we couldn't get any clients," she remarked. "It then came to me; the answer is to get youth involved."

Youth to Youth in Health was born. Darlene crafted an energetic mix of cultural identity building, health knowledge, music and drama that drew enthusiastic youth volunteers by the dozen. What started as a band of youth 'peer educator' volunteers assisting Family Planning burgeoned into a non-governmental organization with a dozen paid staff providing full-time health promotion and services for youth and the community. Each year YTYIH has trained 50-75 youth peer educators, developed primary health projects with its 20 rural outer island chapters, sent staff to the remote atolls for site visits, developed income generating projects so outer islanders have an alternative to copra-making, and sponsored a clinic for teenagers. The youth program continues to be a key part of the Ministry of Health's community health promotion campaign.

What kind of an impact does YTYIH have? After Darlene's death, a young Marshallese woman trained by

the programme wrote, "Darlene ... taught me most of what I know of my customs, traditions and the Marshallese songs and dances."

Another young person commented, "Darlene showed me that it is possible to make dreams come true. To start with an idea and to make it into something concrete and visible."

Young people's self-esteem, and by extension the entire community's, was at such a low ebb during this time of transition between two cultures; they had little ability to positively contribute to their society. Once young people gained a firm foundation and strong cultural identity, their ability to become community 'change agents' was limited only by their imagination — and Darlene had plenty of that for everyone.

An American wrote, "I remember her overseeing a dance and music rehearsal. Her ferocious sense for discipline, passion and exactness in the music and the language and a burning respect for the traditional ways was so inspiring to the kids ... It was as if she were an ancient one come back to set them on their rightful path again ... What an enormous gift of love she was giving to so many."

Darlene's innovative approach to primary health care drew international recognition and honor, from the US Public Health Service to the World Health Organization. Some hailed YTYIH as a model for other countries.

When she began her ground-breaking work with YTYIH, many questioned why Darlene was wasting her time with a bunch of youth. But as people saw it work, they too became believers in the power of youth to make change — just as people would later confirm her nuclear testimony years after she had taken a risk for something she believed in.

That was her style. The phrase *tuak bwe elimaajnono* or "face your challenges" guided Darlene's life. Its literal meaning is "walk into the strong ocean currents between two islands." Darlene did a lot of walking into strong currents during her abbreviated life. But her optimism and determination continually helped get her to the opposite shore.

*Giff and Darlene first met in 1978 and were married on Wotje Atoll in 1982. Giff is the editor of the **Marshall Islands Journal**, a weekly newspaper published in Majuro, and a volunteer with Youth to Youth in Health.*



...many questioned why Darlene was wasting her time with a bunch of youth. But as people saw it work, they too became believers in the power of youth to make change...

Youth to Youth in Health

Building Healthy Marshall Island Communities

by Arlene Wells

Here's a recipe for success. Select people from the most plentiful group in the country, youth, just as they are coming into maturity. With caring, creative leadership, season their optimism, energy and creativity. In no time, their innovative programmes will nourish communities throughout the land, creating healthy citizens with renewed pride in their cultural heritage.

The source of this recipe is *Jodrikdrik nan Jodrikdrik ilo Ejmour*, or Youth to Youth in Health (YTYIH). Since 1986, YTYIH has been empowering young people of the Marshall Islands, where three quarters of the population is below age 25. Darlene Keju-Johnson started the organisation by involving youth in family planning education and promotion. The response to family planning initiatives increased dramatically and YTYIH began to take on other issues.

YTYIH programmes have won community and government support because they involve out-of-school youth, high school and college students, along with their families. Hundreds of peer educators have completed their Youth Health Leadership Seminars. This programme has expanded over the past few years, reaching out from Majuro to the thirty per cent of Marshallese scattered through its 1,000 islands.

In YTYIH clinics on the outer islands, trained youth volunteers assist with one-to-one counselling, workshops on AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, and other health education services. YTYIH presentations for schools and communities are lively, using music and drama to convey messages of social consciousness or to relate Marshallese history and culture.

The sea provides the setting for a new training programme, building *waalaps* or outrigger canoes. YTYIH Director Marita Edwin hopes that, instead of motorboats, Marshallese will sail these outriggers just as they did in the past. "We believe in self-reliance," she says.

YTYIH has produced videos and tapes, like *One of a kind island music*, a cassette of Marshallese tunes, to raise funds for future activities. This practice led the

way for helping outer atoll communities to generate their own income. Maloelap village on Jang was the first to be involved in such a project, training girls and young women in traditional handicrafts. Local craftmakers Wosita Lauror and Luwen Minor taught traditional fibre arts to young apprentices. These new artisans earned money through sales of their *obon* (woven pads and wall hangings) and *ieb keke* (baskets) in the YTYIH store in Majuro. Initiatives on other islands have made coconut oil, grown garden produce and processed salt fish. In 1995, 150 producers netted more than US\$20,000.

"We now have 20 chapters on the outer islands running income generating projects," says Ms. Edwin, commenting on people's enthusiastic response. "Whole communities are involved in production started by their youth."

YTYIH has cooked up another great idea — a centre to house offices, programmes and drop-in activities for youth. Marshallese youth need healthy alternatives to the enticements and dangers of town life. The facility, which will include basketball and tennis courts, will give youth a place for meaningful activities. The organisation has land for the centre and wants to start construction soon.

"We have raised \$100,000, but we will need \$1,000,000 altogether," notes Marita Edwin. "We plan to name the centre after Darlene Keju Johnson, our founder."

What a fine memorial it will be to fulfil another of Darlene's healing visions.

To help build the youth centre, send donations to:

YTYIH Centre Fund
P.O. Box 3149
Majuro, Marshall Islands
TEL: 692-625-8326, FAX: 692-625-5449

Tok Blong Pasifik profiled YTYIH in 1992. Stuart Wulff welcomed the opportunity for an update during a visit to the Marshall Islands last year.



Photo: YTYIH

YTYIH members rehearse a skit on smoking



White Elephant or Windfall?

The Marshalls Government Builds a Hotel

by Stuart Wulff

Tourism is a major industry in several Pacific Island countries, but the Marshall Islands is not one of them. Until last year, the tourism industry had largely neglected this atoll nation. The existing hotels were all small and locally owned. Most visitors to the Marshalls arrived on business rather than for tourism. However, if the Marshall Islands government has its way, this situation is about to change.

The country faces a crisis with the decline of US aid, and the government sees tourism as a key element in their strategy to bring in revenue and produce jobs. A cornerstone for this strategy is the new Outrigger Marshall Islands Resort, opened in time to host the 1996 South Pacific Forum. The US\$11 million 150-room facility more than doubles hotel capacity in the nation's capital of Majuro. Owned by the government, the hotel is managed by Outrigger Hotels of Hawai'i.

Many poorer nations have built expensive resorts to host prestigious international meetings and promote tourism. More than a few have ended up as 'white elephants', expensive monuments to grandiose dreams and more limited realities. The new hotel has already created concern, with local hotel operators fearing that the Outrigger will draw away their clientele. Critics question whether the promotion promised by the government and Outrigger Hotels will bring in sufficient increased tourism to fill the new rooms.

The largest hotel until the Outrigger's arrival was Robert Reimers Enterprises. Chief Operations Officer Peter Fuchs comments, "So far, we've seen little impact. If they can use their vast marketing network to get new business, it may end up positive. However, time will tell and it is a source of concern. More importantly, it made our

lenders reluctant to finance expansion. We had spent a fair amount on architects and had a tentative loan package. The bank is now taking a wait and see approach."

Reacting to the government teaming up with an outside operator, Fuchs says, "We would have been happy to have financing from the government to add hotel rooms if that was their goal."

Outrigger general manager, Laverne Salvador, visibly bristles at suggestions of a "big bad multinational" coming in to roll over the local competition. She points out that the Outrigger chain is a local company in Hawai'i and this is its first international project. She emphasizes that their seven year agreement with the Marshall Islands government commits them to "stimulate the economic growth of the Marshall Islands, provide jobs to the unemployed, and help develop and strengthen the local tourism infrastructure."

"Our goal is to teach the Marshallese and to eventually turn this property over to an all Marshallese managing team," Salvador notes. "We have three expatriates here now and employed 85 Marshallese to start. When occupancy grows, we can offer employment to 125-150 Marshallese."

In keeping with the goal of stimulating local economic growth, the hotel aims to purchase supplies and services locally as much as possible.

Responding to the charge that the Outrigger will compete for the same small number of visitors, Salvador points to the South Pacific Forum and suggests that, with appropriate packaging and promotion, Majuro can become a significant destination for tourists and greater numbers of business travelers. Ultimately, she sees such promotion and expansion of tourism benefiting other hotels, not just the Outrigger.

Certainly, Marshall Islands political leaders are optimistic that the tourism path can work for them. Approval was recently given for an even larger development by Korean investors. The multi-billion dollar resort and casino is intended to eventually turn three atolls into a 'Korean Islands' destination aimed at the Asian market [*Asia Times*, Jun 6/97].

Pointing to the potential for tourism on other atolls, Laverne Salvador enthuses about Majuro as the future "gateway to opportunity." If so, the Outrigger Marshall Islands Resort will have well repaid the government's investment and confidence.



Drawing: Outrigger Hotels & Resorts

New hotel aims to promote tourism



“Big Business” Marshallese Style

by Stuart Wulff

Robert Reimers Enterprises (RRE) is the Marshall Islands' largest homegrown business, with involvement in many aspects of the local economy and over 400 employees. Robert started out in shipbuilding in 1940, but the company has since grown into a family empire, with Robert's son, Ramsey, as the current CEO and various operations managed by members of the Reimers clan.

RRE built its success in the local retail and service areas, including several stores, a hotel and restaurant, a boat repair facility, a water purification plant, vehicle sales and rentals, boat charters and office rentals. However, in recent years it has branched out to include a number of export oriented projects. RRE management recognized that, with US Compact funding ending in 2001, it would be important for the company's and country's financial health to establish new sources of economic development.

“We made plans to diversify beyond the retail trade in order to bring in outside dollars,” states Chief Operations Officer Peter Fuchs. “We did this in order to better the way for the Marshallese people. This is a Marshallese company and we've always given back to the community.”

Their first effort was farming giant clams, *Tridachna gigas*, to sell for food. The clam raising was successful, but marketing proved to be difficult. Asian markets expect fresh seafood and shipping, given the clam's weight, is very expensive from the Marshall Islands. US Department of Agriculture regulations posed problems for exports to the US.

“Then we stumbled on the aquarium market. There is

another giant clam species, *Tridachna maxima*, which are brightly coloured. They're a real hot ticket for salt water aquariums. We've had a lot of success in spawning and starting to sell those.”

Fuchs notes that the techniques to breed and raise clams are not difficult. RRE hopes to train people on the outer atolls to do the farming, with

RRE doing the marketing. As clams for aquariums are shipped when they are fairly small (3-5 cm), the cost of transportation is more favourable than with food clams. RRE expects the operation to break even within a year and to eventually be quite profitable.

Pearl oyster farming is a more recent initiative and is more technically challenging than the clams. The oysters are relatively rare in the Marshalls and are difficult to spawn. Marketing is also highly competitive.

“It has fantastic financial potential,” says Fuchs, “if it works. So far we've produced over 100 black pearls, some of very good quality, so we know it can be done.”

RRE has also invested substantially in its dive operations, buying a custom dive boat last year and hiring several experienced divemasters.

“It's kind of a chicken and egg thing. If you don't have the facilities, you can't get the divers in. Now that we've got the people and facilities, business has tripled and every month it gets bigger.”

Branching out from their Majuro dive operation, RRE has signed an agreement with the Bikinians. The unique experience of diving at Bikini is proving to be an effective hook in attracting divers to the Marshalls, providing significant potential financial benefits to the Bikinians and RRE. Fuchs sees the very small airstrip at Bikini as the biggest obstacle at this point. Plans to upgrade the facility are linked to the broader rehabilitation of Bikini.

If Marshall Islanders are to prosper in the post-Compact era, it is clear that they must develop a more diversified economy. Robert Reimers Enterprises intends to be part of that effort.



Divemaster Edward Maddison is part of new Bikini dive tourism

Photo: Jack Niedenthal

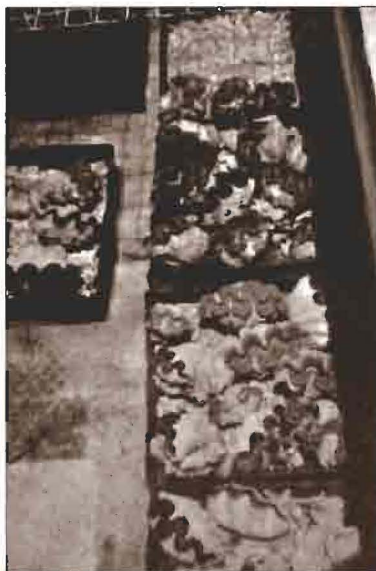


Photo: Robert Reimers Enterprises

Clam farming is one RRE activity



Working Towards a Sovereign Kanaky

The Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) brings together most of the pro-independence political parties and groups amongst the Indigenous people in Kanaky (New Caledonia). Raphael Mapou, a senior FLNKS representative, met with Stuart Wulff during the 1996 South Pacific Forum to share his thoughts about the future of the Kanak liberation struggle.

For Raphael Mapou, there is no question about the ultimate political status of New Caledonia.

“There must be one common perspective (among the various communities in New Caledonia) and the only viable one is the construction of an independent state. The question must be settled. If not, there will never be peace for New Caledonia.”

Mapou belongs to Palika, one of the larger parties in the FLNKS coalition, and sits on the FLNKS’ governing Political Bureau. He was in Majuro to meet with South Pacific Forum leaders and to report on the progress of the Matignon Accords.

The Accords were signed in 1988 between FLNKS, the French Government and the Rassemblement Pour la Caledonie dans la République (RPCR), and represented a significant compromise for the FLNKS. Setting aside their goal of immediate independence, they accepted a 10 year transition leading up to a 1998 referendum on New Caledonia’s future political status. The Accords also provided

a range of steps to promote economic and political development for the Kanak people.

The Matignon Accords ended a period of increasing violence in the independence struggle, during which significant numbers of Kanaks were killed. Accord supporters saw it as a way to compromise on means, yet remain true to the independence goal. However, critics felt Kanak leaders were being co-opted and the Accords would reduce the chance of eventual independence. The debate has assumed greater urgency as the 1998 referendum approaches.

Mapou stated that the FLNKS generally views the Matignon Accords as good for New Caledonia, but they have their limitations. They represent a step towards decolonisation, but they do not automatically lead to independence. Even beyond Matignon, France must be committed to continuing the decolonisation process.

The process has been complicated by the increasing strength of other political parties among both the non-Indigenous population and the Indigenous Peoples from other Pacific Islands (particularly Wallis & Futuna). In the FLNKS’ view, the non-Indigenous parties want to stay attached to France and do not respect the spirit of the Accords. Mapou recognizes a need to involve other political forces, but says a common perspective is required to “mobilize all our energies in the construction of an independent state.”

The influence of other ethnic groups is significant. Unlike decolonisation votes under UN principles, the Matignon Accords allow anyone of voting age to participate, as long as they are 1988 residents or their children. This concession particularly worries

pro-independence Accords critics, since people of European, Asian and other Pacific Islander origin will together make up a majority of referendum voters.

Disputes over the nature of the 1998 vote led the FLNKS to boycott April 1996 meetings with the other Matignon partners. The French Prime Minister’s proposed option of “internal independence” (like French Polynesia), raised concern about the influence of those parties. The FLNKS demanded that France, as the coloniser, negotiate first with the colonised Kanak Peoples, then involve the other parties.

Mapou believes that the transition to independence should not exceed a period of five years, feeling that tensions can develop if the period is too long. He stressed that in the interim government, “the Kanak symbols must be at the forefront... Everyone must recognise the Kanak identity.”

Following independence, the FLNKS expects that the large French bureaucracy, about 5% of New Caledonia’s population, would leave. The almost 200,000 people who will remain come from many backgrounds, so the new image of the country will be pleuri-ethnic as well as Kanak.

If discussions between the FLNKS and the French Government are not satisfactory, Mapou sees two possible outcomes. Either the FLNKS would participate in the 1998 referendum without necessarily endorsing its results, or they would boycott the referendum. For Mapou, both paths would leave New Caledonia’s future status unresolved, which is the very situation that the Matignon Accords were meant to avoid.



The Future of the Pacific Depends on Us

by Shelley Means

In early December, I had the fortunate opportunity to travel as an Indigenous delegate to the 7th Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Conference in Suva, Fiji. I come from a region of the Pacific that is in the first concentric circle from a significant Cold War bullseye — Washington State — smack in the midst of Bangor, Keyport, Indian Island, Boeing, Whidbey Island and Hanford. Nuclear war industry. As I started my journey to Fiji I spotted my first nuclear submarine.

During my first few hours in the South Pacific, shortly after dawn, I drove past acres and acres of Third World sugar cane fields. Returning to the airport after a week of immersion in the NFIP Conference, we passed the same fields, tired workers and labouring sugar trains. The sugar struck me as symbolic of the colonising, dominating world's relationship with the earth and its Indigenous peoples. The demand for sugar, a simple carbohydrate and once-simple pleasure, has been taken to absurd levels. Today we find processed sugar in everything — fruit juices, corn chips, cheap wine and extra-strength cold medicine. Do we need sugar this badly, or have we placed the definition of our needs in corporate hands, losing control of our own choices?

The NFIP meetings were breathtaking. With less than a decade of grassroots organising under my belt in what we call 'Indian Country', I had not yet experienced the strength and spirit present when nearly 100 Indigenous people from more than 30 distinct parts of the world unite under one roof. I look forward to as many such gatherings as I can possibly attend. Our strength is in our community — our united community.

The NFIP Movement struck me as remarkably united. We shared common tears when Lopeti Senituli recited the names of NFIP activists and leaders who had died in the six years since the last conference. We shared common horror at struggles in Bougainville, Kiribati and East Timor, places I had barely heard of before. We shared our stories and listened with respect. Even in moments of disagreement, we seemed united in our intent to keep the movement whole.

From all parts of the region — the heart of the Pacific and the lands embracing the edges — came the activists and leaders who had been present in the struggle

and its successes for more than 20 years. In their footsteps came youth — from Aotearoa, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Japan, Hawai'i, Canada and Tonga — beautiful, strong Indigenous and non-Indigenous young men and women united in a vision of independence from colonial, corporate and nuclear powers.

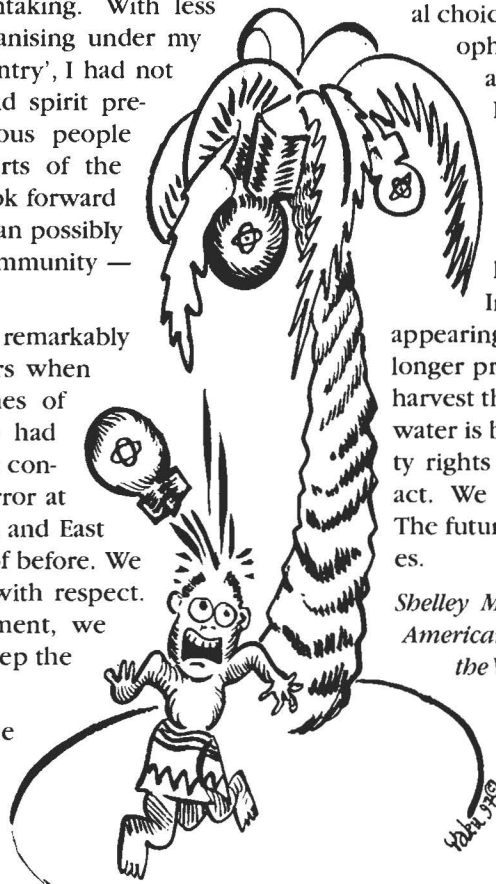
In my corner of the Pacific, instead of sugar, we grow open pit uranium mines and corporate, nuclear and military myths. Just as with processed sugar, we are told, "The market demands electricity, so we must have nuclear reactors and we must desecrate sacred rivers and waterfalls. The market demands safety from military threats, so we must test nuclear weapons that we promise we won't use."

Corporations and governments turn to Indian reservations and rural communities to dump the waste from their nuclear transactions. Our children, grandchildren and many generations beyond are left to deal with the nuclear legacy.

I carried a vital lesson home with me from Fiji and the NFIP Conference. Independence is far broader than sovereign relationships and government declarations. It includes human rights, community values and personal choices. Independence is not about philosophy so much as it is about direct action

and integrity. Independence for Indigenous people, then, relies on our direct action to protect our health, our food sources, our waters. In my corner of the Pacific, the dominating culture seems intent on paving, polluting and oppressing the earth and its Indigenous people. Our salmon are disappearing; where they still exist, the 'market' no longer provides a livable income to those who harvest them. Our ability to protect salmon and water is being swallowed up by private property rights and nuclear waste dumps. We must act. We must truly regain our independence. The future of the Pacific depends on our choices.

Shelley Means is the coordinator of the Native American Network, a Seattle based initiative of the Washington Association of Churches. She was one of six delegates in the SPPF coordinated Turtle Island (North America) delegation to the 7th NFIP Conference.



mapping a course for the 21st century

Report on the 7th NFIP Conference

On Day One of the Seventh Conference of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movement, 100 participants from 27 countries celebrated NFIP's 21st birthday at the University of the South Pacific, in the very building which housed the inaugural conference. The event brought together delegates and resource people in Suva, Fiji on December 9-13, 1996. A six-year gap since the last NFIP conference made this meeting an important opportunity to reflect on the past and strategise for the future. Regional and country reports, thematic presentations and workshop sessions celebrated struggles that had seen some victories, recommitted to those that were ongoing, and raised new areas of focus for the movement.

The conference demonstrated an increased emphasis on women's rights for justice and equal participation. 'Women's Rights are Human Rights' was the leadoff panel. Panelists spoke of the prevalence of violence against women across cultures and pointed out that women also need to be decolonised. Men are as obligated to end sexism as whites are to end racism. Viktor Kaisiepo challenged the men present to start a Men Against Violence group in each Pacific Island nation. Conference participants and locals ended the day by joining together in a march and rally organized by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre. The Executive Board elected during the conference has equal numbers of men and women, a major change from just one woman member previously.

The central role of Indigenous people from the region has been a great strength of the NFIP Movement. In past NFIP conferences, related issues have sometimes been a source of tension and conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous delegates, particularly after the coups in Fiji. This time, however, the debate was open and constructive,

with delegates able to share their views while keeping Indigenous perspectives central to definitions of human rights and democracy. The panel discussion of the recent Reeves Commission Review of the 1990 Fiji Constitution was a conference highlight, balancing criticism and support of its controversial recommendations.

Land rights and sovereignty issues were raised by a panel representing Aboriginal Australia, Maori Aotearoa, Kanaka Maoli Hawai'i, First Nations North America and Ainu Japan and included:

- The Native Title Act in Australia effectively extinguishes 90% of Aboriginal rights;
- The UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples advocates autonomy but excludes independence;
- Dams, deforestation, mining and toxic dumping are manifestations of environmental racism toward Indigenous peoples.

Decolonisation provided another strong conference focus and with good reason. Of the 17 countries on the UN Decolonisation Committee's list of non-self-governing countries, 6 are from the Pacific region — New Caledonia (Kanaky), East Timor, Guam, Pitcairn, Amerika Samoa and Tokelau. One of the key resolutions passed by delegates urged re-inscription of West Papua, Te Ao Maohi and Hawai'i to the UN list.

Youth participation was given prominence and provided refreshing new direction for the NFIP Movement. Young people came as delegates and observers from the Pacific and around the world. The youth caucus shared ideas and spoke up in plenaries. They presented a key resolution calling for increased involvement of youth in the structures of the movement. Their innovative ideas included a mentoring program for younger activists, rotating participation in Executive Board meetings, and a website on the Internet for Pacific youth.



Along with the respected knowledge of the movement's elders, youthful outspokenness and vigour provides a vital addition which bodes well for the movement as the 21st century approaches.

The NFIP Movement embraces a disparate range of organisations across the vast Pacific. The conference provided a crucial opportunity for sharing of different perspectives between people around the region. Moreover, Indigenous and Islander populations had a rare chance to access media and community organisations from the larger Pacific Rim countries like Australia, Japan and the United States.

Conference delegates renewed the NFIP's central mandates. They reaffirmed ongoing activism in securing independence and sovereignty rights of Indigenous peoples in the region. The end of French nuclear testing in 1996 symbolized the great successes of the movement over the last 20 years, but it is just a step towards nuclear freedom for the region. A discussion about changing the name of the organisation concluded that the name and heritage must be kept, for much yet needs to be done to make the Pacific nuclear free and independent. Issues of denuclearisation include:

- the campaign for compensation, cleanup, and rehabilitation of French nuclear sites in Te Ao Maohi;
- nuclear waste dump sites being considered by the Marshall Islands government and for other Pacific locations;
- plutonium shipments from France to Japan across Pacific Island waters;
- new uranium mining possibilities on Indigenous lands in Australia, Canada and the US; and
- strengthening of the Rarotonga Treaty for the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone.

The conference broadened the focus of the NFIP's future agenda in the areas of environment, demilitarisation, sustainable development and Indigenous rights. In the words of Fijian delegate Isoa Korovulavula: "Our natural resources are the basis of our survival. There is all this talk of a world economic order. We need to speak about a Pacific economic order which includes our cultural values."

The conference looked at the ongoing challenges of finding the needed human and financial resources for the work of the movement; communicating across the distances, languages and cultures of the region; coordinating/liasing with other networks such as PCC, SPACHEE and PIANGO; and dealing with governments engaged in human rights abuses, by both colonial and independent leaders.

The issues which emerged during the conference were distilled in 35 official resolutions, which form the basis for the NFIP agenda over the next three years.

Participants left the 7th NFIP Conference with renewed energy and ideas for their quest to make the Pacific independent and nuclear-free. These words of Minoaka Fitzsimmons of Ka Pae Aina are a fitting representation of the mood of the departing delegates: "I want to remain 'militantly outraged'. At home we say *Ku'e, Ku'e! (Resist, Fight!)*"

This report is adapted from the December 1996 Pacific News Bulletin. The drawings that accompany this and the previous article are by Michael Yabgulanaas of Haida Gwaii. Michael was the Turtle Island representative on the NFIP Executive Board from 1990-96 and led the Turtle Island delegation to the NFIP Conference.

To order copies of the 7th NFIP Conference report:

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Voyaging into a Nuclear Free World Abolition 2000 Meets in the Pacific

by Pamela Meidell and Kilali Alailima

On January 27, one year after the last French nuclear test exploded in the Pacific, 500 people marched through the streets of Papeete calling for a nuclear free world. Joining in the march were over 130 nuclear abolitionists from 20 countries. Local labour leaders, independence advocates and test site workers marched side by side in the concluding event of Abolition 2000's annual conference. From January 21-27, representatives of the over 700 groups that form *Abolition 2000: A Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons*, met on the islands of Moorea and Tahiti to listen to the voices of the Pacific and to craft the next steps in efforts to abolish nuclear weapons.

Abolition 2000 joined with the American Friends Service Committee and Hiti Tau, a local NGO, to organize the meeting in Te Ao Maohi (French-occupied Polynesia), which was hosted by Hiti Tau and the village parish of Maharepa on the island of Moorea. Abolition 2000

had come to the Pacific to honour the leadership of Pacific Island nations in the ongoing efforts to abolish nuclear weapons, to witness first hand the effects of the French nuclear testing program, and to support local efforts to restore health to the people and the land.

Gabriel 'Gaby' Tetiarahi, national secretary for Hiti Tau, set the stage for our deliberations on opening day: "Today we will listen to the voices of the Pacific — the people, the land, the sea. We will hear their needs, struggles, thoughts and dreams. For 45 years, the nuclear weapons states have not heard these voices."

The sound of conch shells announced each speaker and echoed through our meetings, connecting us to the atolls of Moruroa and Fangataufa. In Gaby's words, the sound reminded us that "reconciliation will come through the voices of the sea."

Speakers from Aotearoa, Belau, Marshall Islands, Tonga, Hawai'i, the Philippines and Te Ao Maohi catalogued the effects that nuclear activities have wreaked on their land, cultures and lives. Pauline Tangiora, Maori elder and Earth Council representative, reminded us that all nuclear testing has occurred on the lands of Indigenous peoples, and indeed all links in the nuclear chain touch Indigenous peoples first. A Maohi collective formalized the concerns of Maohi people and groups in the Tarahoi Statement, named for the place where General de Gaulle announced France's plans to begin nuclear testing in Polynesia.

Isabella and Rafaela Sumang from Belau told the story of their island's lonely struggle with the United States to remain nuclear free. After observing US activities in the Marshall Islands, Belauans determined to prevent such misuse in their homelands. They adopted the world's first nuclear free constitution and protected it for many years, despite a series of referenda forced

on them by the US. Unfortunately, the US later won its way and the nuclear free clause in the constitution was removed. Belau was forced to sign a Compact of Free Association granting the US an option to use the islands for military and nuclear purposes. The price was a short-term payment of US dollars. The Sumangs returned to Belau vowing to pass the struggle on to the next generation.



Photo: Terry Foss

Abolition 2000 and local activists march in Papeete

The youth caucus, with its large percentage of Pacific Islanders, well represented the next generation. Four Marshallese from Youth to Youth in Health told their stories with music and film, embodying what Gaby called “the spiritual and cultural transmission to our youth.”

All the testimonies made the link between independence and nuclear freedom, reminding delegates of the leadership that resulted from such a pairing. Independent Pacific nations crafted the Treaty of Rarotonga, the world’s first nuclear weapons free zone treaty. They also nurtured the World Court Project which resulted in last July’s historic ruling of the International Court of Justice on the general illegality of nuclear weapons. Ironically coincidental with the meeting, a shipment of high level nuclear waste from France passed through the Pacific to Japan. The Treaty of Rarotonga does not prohibit such shipments.

Delegates addressed these and other challenges, resulting in fourteen resolutions touching on the Abolition 2000 agenda and issue of the Moorea Declaration, a supplement to the founding Abolition 2000 Statement (see Page 23).

The prevailing spirit of unity and consensus expressed itself in many ways. Elaborate and beautiful welcoming ceremonies opened our days. Everywhere we were met with garlands of flowers. A Maohi elder consecrated the opening day of our meeting with a ritual *kava* ceremony. For the first time in Te Ao Maohi, leaders of the independence parties, labour leaders and NGOs sat together to tell their stories to the delegates. We slept in parish halls and ate together under an awning by the sea, enjoying the hospitality of the people of Maharepa Village and Hiti Tau. A rare and gentle southeast wind, the Mara’amu, blew throughout the conference. “Mother Earth is very

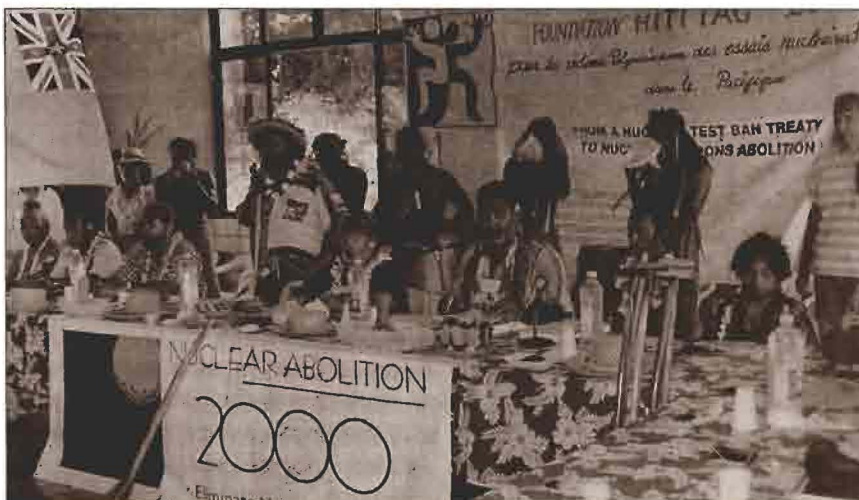


Photo: Terry Ross

Conference participants hear from Pacific Islanders

pleased,” said Island residents.

Exposure tours organized by Hiti Tau before and after the meeting showed delegates the Islanders’ efforts to build a sustainable economy independent of French handouts. Delegates visited organic vanilla plantations run by Hiti Tau youth, and *monoi* (traditional flower-scented coconut oil) cooperatives run by the Hiti Tau Tuahine, the women’s groups. Already over 300 jobs have been created by these efforts.

Other practical results of the meeting included the formation of a Radiation Health Effects Working Group linking radiation survivors of nuclear sites worldwide to work together for treatment and compensation. As conference gifts, Hiti Tau is now linked to the world through an email address (hititau@mail.pf) and website (<http://www.hokele.com/hititau>). Abolition 2000 gave 17 Pacific Islanders the opportunity to address nuclear issues confronting their region. The Pacific Council of Churches, a formidable force in the region, has endorsed Abolition 2000 and will actively promote it.

The convergence of Abolition 2000 and the Pacific became clear in the closing ceremony when, flanked by burning torches and accompanied by the sound of conch shells, Hiti Tau invited delegates into a

symbolic voyaging canoe. Evoking the courageous spirit of Polynesian navigators who guided flotillas of double-hulled canoes across unknown seas to settle the Pacific, Gabriel Tetiarahi exclaimed to all, “On this voyaging canoe, the symbol of our culture, Hiti Tau and Abolition 2000 will journey together into a nuclear-free twenty-first century.”

The journey has already begun.

Pamela Meidell directs the Atomic Mirror, which facilitates the Abolition 2000 Global Network Office in California. Kilali Alailima coordinates the Hawai’i based Pacific Programme of the American Friends Service Committee.



**SPPF Joins
Abolition 2000**

SPPF has become a member of the Abolition 2000 movement. The decision to endorse the Abolition 2000 Founding Statement and become a member was made at the December 1996 meeting of the SPPF Board of Directors. Board members also welcomed the decision of Abolition 2000 to have its 1997 conference in the Pacific.

Breaking Moruroa's Silence

Nuclear test site workers speak out

by Steven Staples

A new voice in the anti-nuclear struggle is about to be heard — Polynesian test site workers at Moruroa and Fangataufa forced into silence by the French authorities in exchange for jobs in the nuclear weapons testing programme. In January an elderly Polynesian man stands in the midst of anti-nuclear activists from around the world, gathered in Tahiti for a historic meeting of Abolition 2000. The Tahitian, Marcellin Mateha Wong Fo Kouï, harbours both pain and hope. The pain is from an illness he thinks is caused by radiation exposure during the 23 years he worked at the test sites; the hope is that this meeting will find ways to pressure France to clean up their mess on the two atolls.

Marcellin confirmed long-held suspicions about the sites leaking radiation. "The rock underneath the atolls is full of holes, like Gruyère cheese," Marcellin says. "I was the first to notice cracks along the airstrip, fifty centimetre wide fissures from which bubbles come up and escape into the atmosphere."

Very little scientific data is available about radioactive leakage because the French refuse independent inspections. However limited testing has found radioisotopes such as Cesium 134 and Tritium in the water and Plutonium 239 in plankton.

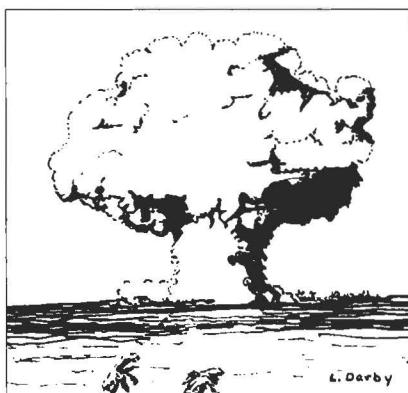
A nuclear test in 1966 was the first of 44 atmospheric and at least 100 underground nuclear explosions. Marcellin took a job at the Moruroa test site in 1966, ferrying people to the barge at the detonation point in the lagoon. He was forced to sign a secrecy agreement with the French military.

He remembers well the first nuclear test he witnessed. "We saw

flames and mushrooms roaring out," he says, "which burned the atoll of Moruroa."

The very next afternoon, workers were sent back to the lagoon to prepare for the next test. Marcellin took two French surveyors to fix the location for the next explosion. The lagoon reeked with the stench of dead fish, and the beach was covered with a strange sand-like debris.

"You wouldn't believe what it was, wood piled chest-high, totally



ground-up," says Marcellin. "I had to push through it to get to my boat. The surveyors didn't want to come."

Marcellin witnessed 20 more explosions, including a test of the much larger hydrogen bomb at Fangataufa. However it was after that first experience that Marcellin began to suffer from what he thinks are radiation related diseases. Now retired, he has difficulty sleeping and experiences a strange tingling sensation and muscle cramps in his legs. The tingling has moved to his chest in the last year. Tahiti's doctors, who all work in military hospitals, deny that he has any disease. The secrecy agreement he signed on Moruroa took away his right to see his own medical records. Many of Marcellin's friends and fellow test site workers

have already died after suffering similar symptoms.

"What really gets me is that the French knew there was contamination with each explosion. They put up a barricade after a test happened to stop people going on the site, but we workers had already been in there," he said. "The thing I regret the most is that young people may get the same illnesses."

Angry and worried about his children's and grandchildren's future, Marcellin no longer allows the French secrecy order to keep him silent. He was interviewed by Hiti Tau, a Tahitian NGO, as part of the first independent study of the testing's effects on Islanders' health. Hiti Tau conducted more than 1,000 interviews of test site workers and will soon release the results of their study.

In response to the testimonies of Marcellin and others who have suffered the results of more than 50 years of nuclear weapons development, the Abolition 2000 delegates adopted the Moorea Declaration, calling for an independent study of environmental conditions at the test sites and establishing a working group to seek medical aid and compensation for the victims of radiation exposure. Marcellin knows that the French government hides what it has done to the South Pacific, but hopes the truth will now be carried from his island to all parts of the world.

At the time of the Abolition 2000 conference, Steve Staples was the coordinator of End the Arms Race, a Vancouver peace organisation. The interview with Marcellin Mateha Wong Fo Kouï was translated by Phillip Saffrey.



ABOLITION 2000 — Founding Statement

A SECURE and liveable world for our children and grandchildren and all future generations requires that we achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and redress the environmental degradation and human suffering that is the legacy of fifty years of nuclear weapons testing and production.

FURTHER, the inextricable link between the 'peaceful' and warlike uses of nuclear technologies and the threat to future generations inherent in the creation and use of long-lived radioactive materials must be recognized. We must move toward reliance on clean, safe, renewable forms of energy production that do not provide the materials for weapons of mass destruction and do not poison the environment for thousands of centuries. The true 'inalienable' right is not to nuclear energy, but to life, liberty and security of person in a world free of nuclear weapons.

WE RECOGNIZE that a nuclear weapons-free world must be achieved carefully and in a step by step manner. We are convinced of its technological feasibility. Lack of political will, especially on the part of nuclear weapons states, is the only true barrier. As chemical and

biological weapons are prohibited, so must nuclear weapons be prohibited.

WE CALL upon all states — particularly the nuclear weapons states, declared and de facto — to take the following steps to achieve nuclear weapons abolition.

WE FURTHER urge the states parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty to demand binding commitments by the declared nuclear weapon states to implement these measures:

1. Initiate immediately and conclude by the year 2000 negotiations on a nuclear weapons abolition convention that requires the phased elimination of all nuclear weapons within a time bound framework, with provisions for effective verification and enforcement;
2. Immediately make an unconditional pledge not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons;
3. Rapidly complete a truly comprehensive test ban treaty with a zero threshold and with the stated purpose of precluding nuclear weapons development by all states;

Continued on Page 27

MOOREA DECLARATION

Supplement to the Abolition 2000 Founding Statement

Adopted January 25, 1997

This conference reaffirms the commitments and the vision of the Abolition 2000 Founding Statement initiated in 1995 — the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing of the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — to work for the definite and unconditional abolition of nuclear weapons, and redress the environmental degradation and human suffering that is the legacy of 52 years of nuclear weapons usage, testing and production.

However, this meeting, held in Te Ao Maohi a year after the end of French nuclear testing, has highlighted the particular suffering of Indigenous and colonised peoples as a result of the production and testing of nuclear weapons. The anger and tears of colonised peoples arise from the fact that there was no consultation, no consent, no involvement in the decision when their lands, air and waters were taken for the nuclear build-up, from the very start of the nuclear era.

Colonised and Indigenous peoples have, in large part, borne the brunt of this nuclear devastation — from the

mining of uranium and the testing of nuclear weapons on Indigenous peoples' land to the dumping, storage and transport of plutonium and nuclear wastes, and the theft of land for nuclear infrastructure.

The founding statement of Abolition 2000 states that "the participation of citizens and NGOs in planning and monitoring the abolition of nuclear weapons is vital." We reaffirm this, in spirit and action, but also state that Indigenous and colonised peoples must be central to this process. This can only happen if and when they are able to participate in decisions relating to the nuclear weapons cycle — and especially in the abolition of nuclear weapons in all aspects. The inalienable right to self-determination, sovereignty and independence is crucial in allowing all peoples of the world to join in the common struggle to rid the planet forever of nuclear weapons.

Therefore this conference agrees that this Moorea Declaration becomes a supplement to the Abolition 2000 Founding Statement.

Nanoose Activists Challenge US Weapons Testing

Environmentalists and peace activists who have worked for 13 years to close a naval weapons test facility north of Victoria have recently had reason to hope that their struggle might be coming to a conclusion. Their target, the Canadian Forces Maritime Experimental and Test Ranges (CFMETR) in Nanoose Bay, is used by the US Navy as a weapons test facility. The Nanoose Conversion Campaign (NCC) has led the fight to see Nanoose Bay converted to non-military uses. They point to the US Navy's own studies, which show test-related dumping of toxic lead, lithium, hydrogen cyanide and copper torpedo wire into sensitive fish habitat.

Politics makes strange bedfellows. Seeking a weapon in the Canada-US dispute over salmon fishing, British Columbia Premier Glen Clark has issued a 90-day cancellation notice

for the facility's sea-bed licence. Though CFMETR is a Canadian government facility, the seabed is leased from the province. Clark has taken advantage of this to express his government's dismay over the salmon issue.

NCC has kept Nanoose in the public eye and has pressed the Canadian and BC governments to take action. Earlier this year, BC's Environment Minister promised a full public review of CFMETR, a step the Canadian government has always resisted. With the BC government's recent action, NCC could see its dream come true.

Not all activists have welcomed the salmon-CFMETR linkage. If the provincial government achieves their salmon aims, where does that leave Nanoose?

The Canadian government has threatened legal action to keep the base open

and available to the US. Stay tuned for the next chapter of the Nanoose saga.

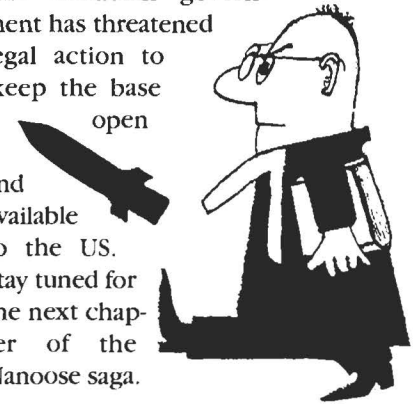
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Nuclear power must be phased out. From uranium mining to weapons production to power generation, each step in the nuclear cycle is dirty and dangerous. As long as nuclear waste continues to be generated, any discussion of solutions to the problem is premature and misleading...Citizens and communities will continue building international alliances...to effectively direct government policy, share information and experience, and educate themselves and others about the impacts and dangers of nuclear technology...The nuclear industry and governments must bear responsibility for past, present and future harm.

— excerpt from draft *Global Citizens Charter*



Citizens Forum Challenges Nuclear Waste

by Don Kossick

Delegates from the Pacific, Germany and Canada gathered in Saskatoon in January for a Global Citizens Forum on high level nuclear waste. Communities from around the world sent e-mail, video and taped messages. Losena Salabula of the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre summed up the Forum's central message: "The power is in our hands to stop the accumulation of nuclear waste. We must try to make a good change so that our Mother Earth does not suffer."

Chief Gerry Fontaine of the Sagkeeng First Nation called the worldwide practice of siting nuclear waste dumps on Indigenous lands environmental racism.

"Under no circumstances will we allow any kind of nuclear storage on our land," he stated. Chief Fontaine added that communities must present a common front against any attempt to impose nuclear dump sites. "If we do not protect what we have today," he said, "we will have nothing tomorrow."

The Forum's recommendations on handling and eliminating nuclear waste were incorporated into a *Global Citizens Charter*.

Don Kossick is on staff with CUSO Saskatchewan, who co-sponsored the Forum with the Inter-Church Uranium Committee.

Indonesian Activist Visits Victoria

by T.J. Wolfwood

Carmel Budiardjo, 1995 recipient of the Right Livelihood Award from the Swedish Parliament recently provided Victoria audiences with a perceptive overview of human rights issues and political developments in Indonesia.

The Right Livelihood Award cited Ms. Budiardjo for "upholding the universality of human rights and for more than 20 years of work on behalf of Indonesian political prisoners and the oppressed people of East Timor." Budiardjo wrote about her three years in an Indonesian prison in her recent book, *Surviving Indonesia's Gulag*. Following her release from prison, she went into exile and founded TAPOL, an international organisation for human rights in Indonesia, West Papua and East Timor. Ms. Budiardjo was brought to Victoria in October by SPPF and other organizations as part of a North American tour.

After General Suharto's 1965 military takeover of Indonesia, over a million people were killed and thousands, including Budiardjo, were imprisoned for leftist or allegedly leftist activities. Repression continues in the '90s with the support of the US, supplier of most of Indonesia's military equipment, and other countries.

In a public talk at the University of Victoria, Budiardjo described how in 1963, without consulting the Indigenous people, the US government forced Holland to turn West Papua over to Indonesia. The UN sanctioned the takeover, doing nothing to protect the Indigenous people's claim to self-determination.

The main reason for the conquest of West Papua was the fabulous mineral wealth of the region. Since 1967, US-based Freeport McMoran has exploited the massive copper and gold deposits of Grassberg

Mountain, which has gold reserves estimated at 50 million ounces. Freeport, in cooperation with the Indonesian military, has caused vast social and environmental damage to the ancestral home of the Amungme peoples. They launched a lawsuit against Freeport in a New Orleans court in 1995, charging eco-terrorism and genocide, and calling for large scale redress of damages. Budiardjo said the outcome of the case will be significant for other countries similarly exploited by foreign companies.

Budiardjo showed a video, produced by Global Exchange, about pro-democracy and human rights forces in Indonesia. It depicted workers in transnational factories such as Nike and Reebok calling on unions and solidarity groups around the world to support their demands for better pay and working conditions. New political actions by the late President Sukarno's daughter and her political party are being repressed, but cracks in the Suharto regime are appearing.

Canada has long standing economic ties with Indonesia. INCO has recently renewed its contract there so it can continue exploiting nickel deposits. Prime Minister Chretien's 'Team Canada' traveling trade show aims to increase trade with Indonesia and other Asian countries, many with dubious human rights records. Canada has also sold military equipment to Indonesia. Concerns are focused on economic arrangements, not the ethics of doing business with dictators.

In 1975 the Indonesian government invaded East Timor, wiping out over 200,000 people and declaring sovereignty over East Timor, all with US government collaboration and military equipment. Although the UN still recognizes East Timor as a Portuguese colony, it

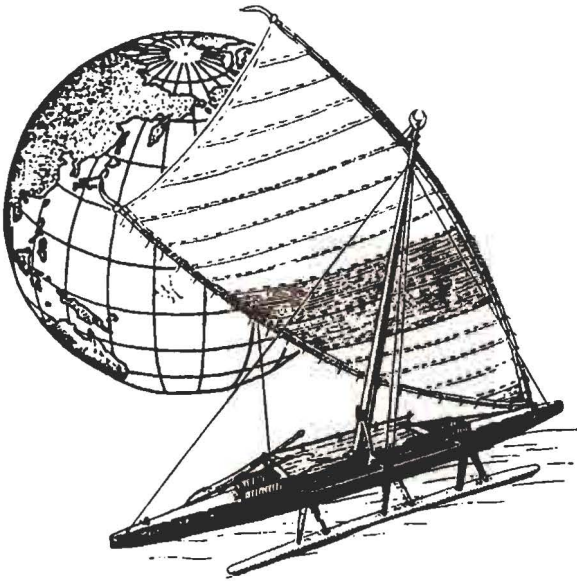
consistently refuses to enforce resolutions calling for Indonesian withdrawal. However, the East Timorese independence movement has never been crushed. Budiardjo said she gains hope and inspiration from East Timor activists such as last year's Nobel Peace Prize winners, exiled resistance leader Jose Ramos Horta and Bishop Belo. The award has greatly increased international awareness of the Timorese cause; but the Indonesian government's influence on neighbours remains strong. In Malaysia, a legal conference on East Timor was broken up by paramilitary thugs. The Philippine government refused entry to the Timorese Nobel laureates, invited to speak at an alternative forum before the Manila APEC conference.

Budiardjo also spoke about UK sales of Hawk military aircraft to Indonesia. The Ploughshares Four, British women armed with hammers, did \$2 million damage to a plane in the British Aerospace factory one evening and then contacted authorities to arrest them. They were recently acquitted of all charges, based on the claim that their action prevented a greater crime, the death of many East Timorese people.

Budiardjo cannot return to Indonesia under the present regime. Yet with so much brave work by Indonesians, Timorese and West Papuans, she hopes to live long enough to see Suharto fall to democracy and to be able to return to Indonesia.

Terry Wolfwood is a Victoria activist with the East Timor Action Network (ETAN). This article appears with permission of the Barnard-Boecker Centre Foundation.





Missing in Action?

1997 Conference Challenges Asia-Pacific Myopia

Canada hosts APEC (the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group of 18 countries and economies) in 1997. With much fanfare, the Canadian government has also proclaimed 1997 as Canada's Year of Asia-Pacific. Major government and business meetings will take place in Vancouver in November and will be paralleled by a People's Summit counter-conference. Regionally, the rhetoric focuses on the increasing importance of the Asia-Pacific in the global economy, but where is the Pacific in this new Asia-Pacific? That will be the theme of SPPF's 1997 Pacific Networking Conference, which will take place in Victoria from November 14-16, immediately preceding the Vancouver APEC meetings.

We will be joined by several resource people from the Pacific Islands. The timing of the conference will allow the Pacific Islanders to also participate in the APEC People's Summit.

For more information or conference brochures, contact Karen Weggler at SPPF.

SPPF in action

Pacific Youth Visit Canada

Two young indigenous leaders from the tropical Pacific braved Saskatchewan and BC in January to meet with Canadian youth. Ku'ulei Minchew of Hawai'i and Tetuahau (Oscar) Temaru of Tahiti were in Canada to speak about the sovereignty and development struggles of their people. Their visit was organised by SPPF and co-sponsored by World University Service of Canada. They spoke at WUSC conferences in Regina and Vancouver. Victoria presentations took place at the University of Victoria and Camosun College. Ku'ulei and Tetuahau also met with First Nations youth.

Ku'ulei works with the Hawaiian Home Lands Action Network, an organization that promotes land and housing rights for Native Hawaiians, and is a Hawaiian sovereignty activist.

Tetuahau is the son of the principal independence leader in French occupied Polynesia and has been active in the independence struggle and campaign against French nuclear weapons testing.

Everywhere they spoke, Ku'ulei and Tetuahau left audiences with a deeper understanding of the situation faced by their people and an appreciation for the role that young Pacific Islanders are playing in their peoples' struggles.

Good News for Overseas Projects

Two of SPPF's overseas projects have a renewed lease on life. Our project with the Vanuatu Society for Disabled People successfully concluded Phase I in March and has gone into a second phase. Altaire Butler, a Canadian therapist, has returned to Vanuatu to continue her work with VSDP staff. Phase II also provides support to community based rehabilitation and public awareness activities of VSDP. Funding for Phase II was received from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), St.

John the Divine Anglican Church, St. James Anglican Church and individual donors.

Ecowoman, our women and environment project with the South Pacific Action Committee for Human Ecology & the Environment, has also received good news. As reported in the last issue of *Tok Blong Pasifik*, CIDA had decided not to fund a \$500,000 4-year Ecowoman project. However, following further negotiations, CIDA agreed to fund a scaled down (\$100,000 over 2 years) version of Ecowoman. The project will begin in September.

Round Table Urges Attention to Indigenous Rights

Participants in a March 22 **Round Table on Indigenous Peoples, APEC and Canadian Foreign Policy** provided the Canadian government with a rich set of ideas for promoting Indigenous rights at home and around the world.

The SPPF organized meeting was funded by the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development. A majority of the 35 participants were Indigenous people, primarily from Western Canada with smaller representation from the Pacific, Asia and Central America. A third of the participants were youth.

A stimulus for the meeting was Canada's hosting of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) group of countries/economies in 1997. SPPF and some of our Indigenous friends have noted with concern that Indigenous Peoples, already marginalised, are being further undermined by the rush to economic globalisation, including developments such as APEC. The Round Table discussed a

wide range of APEC and foreign policy related issues and put forward many ideas and recommendations. Highlights included:

- Foreign and domestic policy are linked. Canada's credibility in promoting Indigenous rights internationally is undermined by our failure to address these rights effectively within Canada. The government should also promote international agreements that would support Indigenous rights at home.
- Canada should recognize the valuable experience and perspective of Indigenous Peoples. Steps should be taken to involve them in the development and implementation of foreign policy and international development programmes.
- Space should be created within APEC and similar processes for Indigenous Peoples to be heard and involved, and in more than a token way.

- The government should provide financial aid for participation of Indigenous Peoples from Asia and the Pacific, including youth, in the APEC People's Summit.
- The activities of Canadian and foreign corporations on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples should meet appropriate standards in respecting Indigenous tenure and rights, promoting Indigenous economic benefits and respecting the environment. Enforceable business codes of conduct are one means to promote such practice.
- The traditional knowledge and intellectual property of Indigenous Peoples must be legally protected nationally and internationally.

The participants felt that the Round Table was worthwhile. They urged that the government support SPPF to continue the process and support other opportunities for involving Indigenous Peoples in discussions of foreign policy.



SPPF Promotes Indigenous Rights

Support for the rights of Indigenous Peoples is an important part of SPPF's work. In October, we assisted Koroseta Too of O le Siosiomaga, a Samoan environmental organization, to attend meetings in Geneva on the *Draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Follow-up to the Round Table on Indigenous Peoples and Canadian Foreign Policy will feature prominently in SPPF's work over the coming year.

The SPPF Board of Directors also adopted the following resolution at their April meeting:

That SPPF endorse and support the efforts of Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous Peoples from the Pacific and Canada, to win international recognition and protection for their rights through an international convention on Indigenous rights. SPPF recognizes the many years of effort by Indigenous Peoples that has culminated in the UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and SPPF supports the efforts of Indigenous Peoples to use the Draft Declaration as a basis for their efforts to achieve an international convention on Indigenous rights.

Continued from Page 23

4. Cease to produce and deploy new and additional nuclear weapons systems, and commence to withdraw and disable deployed nuclear weapons systems;
5. Prohibit the military and commercial production and reprocessing of all weapons-usable radioactive materials;
6. Subject all weapons-usable radioactive materials and nuclear facilities in all states to international accounting, monitoring and safeguards, and establish a public international registry of all weapons-usable radioactive materials.

Christianity, Custom and a Manus Village Wedding

A father and son grapple with reconciliation

by Catherine Ngenge

On July 10, 1996, in Rei Village on Lou Island in Manus Province of Papua New Guinea, Sasa Keliwin held a traditional wedding to celebrate the marriage of his son, Ngenge. It was a wonderful day. The smiles on people's faces said it all. It felt good to be dancing and drumming again Lou Island style! Such a ceremony had not been performed since 1935, when the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church banned as satanic all 'custom' — including traditional weddings.

Four months later the SDA Church in Rei Village 'censured' Sasa for breaking church rules by hosting his son's traditional wedding. Censuring removed Sasa's name from the church membership — and from the list of those eligible to go to Heaven — for two months.

Sasa, now 70, embraced the new church and its teachings when a youth. The SDA Mission wasted no time putting this bright and energetic man's talents and enthusiasm to good use. After completing missionary training at Jones SDA Missionary College in East New Britain, Sasa and his wife Inana were sent as missionaries to the Sepik River area. They spent seven years converting Sepik peoples to the SDA faith.

Sasa and Inana have lived on Lou Island as devout SDAs since their return in 1960. Sasa is convinced that the SDA mission brought the truth to Lou and that Lou Islanders were ignorant people whom the

church converted into good, obedient souls. He believes the path to Heaven lies in following SDA rules. Thus, it was very difficult for Sasa to be censured.

Despite Sasa's SDA upbringing and his ongoing church commitment, he is still not convinced that custom is all bad. He finds it difficult to believe that God is unhappy when people play *garamut* drums and dance the way their ancestors taught them. So when his son wanted his father to host a traditional wedding ceremony, Sasa decided after much soul-searching to do it.

Sasa's son, Ngenge, was also brought up a devout SDA, completing high school and college at the same SDA campus his father attended 30 years earlier. Following college, Ngenge spent five years in Rei Village. In 1990 he went to live with his older brother in Port Moresby, but after four years Ngenge was ready to move back to Rei. In the village, he could be his own boss, working in his garden according to his own time schedule, enjoying fresh garden foods and fish every day.

While still in Port Moresby, Ngenge met people with new ideas that

influenced his life greatly. He also met me, Catherine, his future wife, and we spent another two years in the city getting to know each other. Ngenge became involved in the popular critical literacy movement. He became keenly interested in a range of issues, particularly those associated with political and cultural self-determination in Melanesia. He completed training as a critical literacy teacher and a community development worker.

In 1990, Ngenge had placed little value on his own culture and roots. He used his Christian name, Joey, and was interested mainly in the latest Western fashions and pop music. But by 1995 he had changed. He used his custom name, Ngenge, and lost interest in trendy clothes. What became important was going back to his village to help others feel as proud of being Melanesian as he now did and to try to revive the almost obliterated local culture.

In 1996 Ngenge and I moved to Lou Island. We planned to live in Rei, gardening and fishing to survive while doing awareness and community development work. However, we first planned to get married and we wanted to be married according to Lou tradition.

Despite Western influences, a strong sense of community remains in contemporary Melanesian villages. To make our dream of a traditional wedding a reality, we needed the support of Ngenge's father and other community members. Following Sasa's decision to



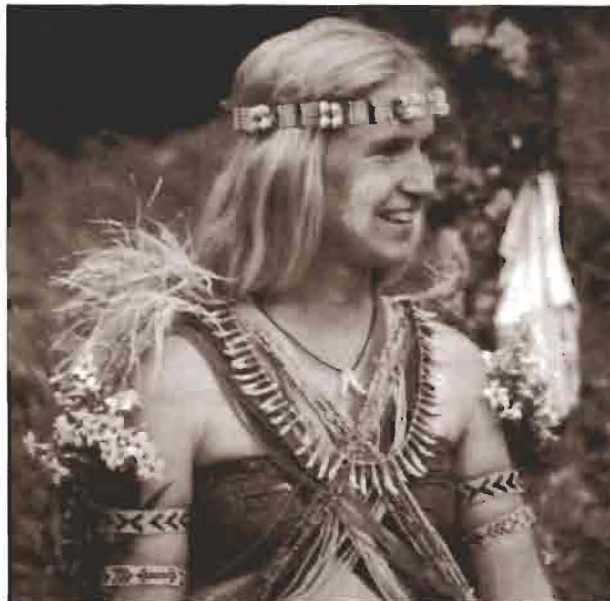
Photo: Jean Sparks

Sasa Keliwin, Ngenge Sasa and Richard Sparks (Catherine's father)

support his son's idea, the planning and community mobilising began. There were dialogues with elders about how to stage a traditional wedding and clan meetings to discuss the idea, logistics and division of labour. Sasa called together the 'bigmen' of his clan, *Um Bua*. After a few hours of hard discussion, the bigmen agreed to support Sasa, although to varying degrees. Only one other bigman, Quian Paun, was bold enough to agree to *suk suk* (dance) with Sasa to the beat of the *garamut* drums, but the others agreed to help in other ways. Some would provide fish for the wedding feast or do other preparations; the more hesitant would just attend.

The young men, Ngenge's clan brothers, were much less concerned about possible church repercussions and eagerly agreed to play the drums or *suk suk*. However, they needed to learn how. A few mothers and fathers had continued discretely to teach dancing and drumming to their children, so the knowledge was not entirely dead. However, the clandestine nature of such lessons did not allow for thorough instruction.

In 1985, on the 50th Anniversary of the SDA church's arrival in Rei, the Mission had allowed people to incorporate some aspects of tradition into the celebration. Villagers played *garamut* drums borrowed from neighbouring Baluan Island. (Lou's *garamut* drums, traditional clothes and other decorative attire had been sold to soldiers during World War II.) This limited tolerance of custom inspired some to think about reincorporating elements of tradition into Rei village life. Ten years later, *Um Bua* bigmen Semeal Sevua and Quian Paun made a set of *garamut* drums. When we arrived the next year,



Catherine Ngenge in traditional wedding bilas

Photo: Jean Sparks

these drums had not yet been formally used.

The month before the wedding, Sasa, Ngenge and I traveled to Baluan Island to purchase another drum set for the wedding and, we hoped, future community use. For the next few weeks the young men practised under Sasa's instruction.

Ngenge's mother, Inana, worked with one of the oldest women in the village to make my grass skirt wedding dress. Because of the SDA Mission's prohibition of traditional culture, Ngenge and I could not find the *bilas* (beadwork, shells, dog's teeth and other decorative parts of the bride's traditional attire) on Lou. Sasa requested the help of his distant relative, Paul Maradei, on Ahus Island. Ahus was converted by the Catholic Church, which has been more tolerant of custom. Ahus women still make the traditional *bilas*. Maradei agreed to lend his wife's *bilas* and shortly before the wedding, Sasa, Ngenge and I went to Ahus to pick them up. Maradei's wife showed me how to wear them.

Finally, on a sunny day in July, the wedding took place. The drumming and dancing continued long after the ceremony was over.

People were having too much fun — they didn't want to stop!

No-one looked happier than Sasa, who together with clan brother Quian and Ngenge's clan brothers, danced to the *garamut*. They danced to welcome Ngenge's new wife to the family and to say thank you to my parents for giving their daughter away.

After it was over Sasa said, "I do not feel guilty at all." But as he spoke his eyes filled with tears. Sasa was grappling with a confusing mix of emotions as he tried to reconcile his strong

belief in both the SDA Church and his traditional customs. He does not believe they are incompatible. However, many people disagree with him and the church punished Sasa by censoring him.

Ngenge wishes that his father's punishment could have been directed at himself. He doesn't believe that such action would affect his spiritual relationship with God or his eligibility to go to Heaven. He is critical of church policy which has left Lou society virtually devoid of its traditional beliefs and practices, and consequently has robbed the people of their cultural identity and pride. He cannot believe that God supports such a policy. As Ngenge explains, "Who gave the Lou Island people their custom in the first place? God, of course."

Catherine Ngenge, née Sparks, is a former SPPF staff member. She worked as a CUSO volunteer in PNG with a women's group in Simbu Province and the Melanesian Environment Foundation in Port Moresby, before moving to Lou island with Ngenge Sasa.



Bringing Environmental Studies Home

The Micronesia & American Samoa Student Internship Program

by Venus Lantin

Eight University of Hawai'i (UH) interns took a bite out of the natural resource management field in the Pacific Islands last summer, each tasting a world that few know. They were in the Micronesia and American Samoa Student Internship Program (MASSIP), a part of UH Sea Grant's Pacific Program which addresses a gap in natural resource management expertise in the US-affiliated Pacific Islands.

The students conducted research on their home islands. Projects investigated Pohnpei's reef fish export and *sakau* market, the value of Kosrae and American Samoan mangroves, resource management education programmes, marine invertebrates of Palau, and the tourism resource needs of Chuuk.

Rosemary Arnold from Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), is majoring in business administration. She helped the College of Micronesia develop a survey to determine tourism needs by interviewing airline and hotel operators, tourism industry personnel and visitors. Arnold said she wants to help sustain the environment on Chuuk as well as promoting tourism. In the future, she hopes to be involved in an island-wide beautification project and to raise public awareness about tourism and the environment.

Reef fish market decline was MASSIP intern Stevick Edwin's research concern. Edwin is from Pohnpei, an FSM island surrounded by a barrier reef and a wide variety of marine life. The UH Hilo economics major researched consumption and selling practices of local markets and reef fishermen. He also collected, analysed, and

compared data on the amounts of Pohnpei reef fish exported. Edwin made several suggestions regarding the reef fish export market of Pohnpei: a stronger environmental policy to help protect reefs; the creation of reef fish sanctuaries; and community workshops to help islanders play active roles in resource management.

"This project continues to be successful in involving Micronesian and American Samoan students in environmental projects and helping them relate their studies to the needs of their home islands."

MASSIP coordinator Sharon Ziegler-Chong

"Although the data I've collected is not sufficient to explain the fish population decline," said Edwin, "with proper monitoring of the impact of inshore fishing, we can produce conservation and management strategies necessary to preserve vital marine resources and sustain us in the future."

Andy George wants people of his beloved Kosrae, another FSM state, to realize that for today's generation the land is vital and resources are limited. George used MASSIP to assist the Kosrae Island Resource Management Program (KIRMP) to increase community

education and continue environmental impact assessment of local development. According to George, the main objective of the four-year-old program is to assess and plan sustainable development projects. During his internship, he wrote an article on the project in the Kosrae State newsletter, did radio spots, interviewed the four village mayors and shared his knowledge of environmental issues with Kosrae boy and girl scouts and Grade 8-12 Upward Bound students.

"As an environmental educator, I was trying to get people familiar with this new program, which some think is trying to take away land rights," said George. "I explained that the purpose of the program was not to take away from the people of Kosrae."

Public awareness was also an objective for Alice Malepeai of American Samoa as she promoted Ta'u, Tutuila and Ofu, the three areas of the 9,000-acre National Park of Samoa. She was responsible for disseminating information about the park, encouraging visits and giving tours of the visitor center. The park was established to preserve the only mixed-species old world rainforest and Indo-Pacific coral reef in the US National Park System, as well as the 3,000-year-old Samoan culture. It ranks with Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon, but few people know about it.

"The top line of the park's flier reads 'America's newest and least known park,'" Malepeai said. "My job was to change the latter part of that line."

Malepeai compiled a fact sheet from park brochures, books, articles and employee information, as

Helping Youth to Succeed in PNG

By Joan Donaldson

In a Port Moresby suburb, atop a road winding upward beneath flowering trees, the Hohola Youth Development Centre greets visitors with a big sign: "Don't give up — be like the spider!" It is a legacy from the Brigidine Sisters who founded and ran the Centre from 1973 to 1995.

The Centre, now run by the De La Salle Brothers, provides a four year course for girls and boys who have completed Grade 6 in government schools, but cannot get into regular Grade 7 classes. Last year, Port Moresby's regular Grade 7 classes only had room for 37% of Grade 6 graduates. This year, the Centre's 250 students took classes that included carpentry, cooking, silk-screening, English, maths, sewing, cane work, music, art and business practice.

Hohola is also a CODE centre. Community members and students enrolled in the Department of Education's *College of Distance Education* courses get lesson material from the Centre and return there for correction and recording.

My husband and I first visited the Hohola Youth Development Centre for lessons in Pidgin, one of many ways in which the Centre raises funds. Since then, that bougainvillea lined road has become very familiar to us. The Centre provides a safe place for expatriate volunteers to connect with the local people, which isn't always easy in a city with a high crime rate and reputation for violence.

Government funding for the Centre is minimal and irregular, so they raise funds by selling crafts like greeting cards, tablecloths, cane plant stands and tables. You can always find their stall in the famous

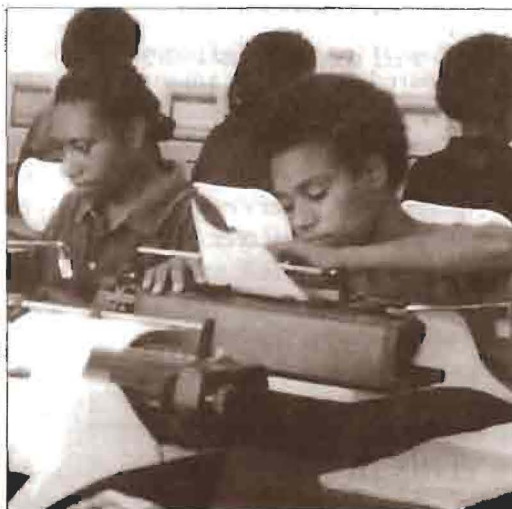


Photo: Joan Donaldson

60% of graduating Hohola students get full time jobs immediately after graduation

Ela Beach Crafts Market, held downtown on the last Saturday of each month. At any public gathering you're liable to see the Centre's van, staffed by students, selling refreshments to the multitudes.

Last year, the Canada Fund and local businesses helped add the new two storey building completely constructed by students supervised by a local tradesman. One of its four classrooms houses 20 Macintosh computers donated by Australian De La Salle schools.

The place always has a feeling of busyness. Even in lunch hour things are going on — a music group or rehearsal for a *singsing*. When afternoon assembly ends at 3:00, you have to keep out of the way of students on clean-up duty. They're enthusiastic sweepers!

The students are good at repairs too. The Centre has been broken into several times in the few months I've been volunteering, target of the 'rascals' that threaten the whole country. But doors get replaced, walls reinforced, windows barred and the work goes on.

Every year, Centre Director Brother Denis Loft and his staff organize

Work Experience for third and fourth year students, sending 120 youths out to work from a week to a month in local stores, factories and service industries. Sixty per cent of the 1995 graduating class of 60 students moved into full-time jobs immediately after graduation, an amazing record in a country plagued by education problems and high unemployment.

The Hohola Youth Development Centre now attracts young people from outlying islands as well. These students and their parents see education as a door to opportunity in a country forced to make staggering cultural transitions in the space of a few generations. Like the spider in the motto, they're not giving up.

Joan & Russell Donaldson are SPPF members. Joan volunteers at Hohola while Russell works on a PNG government training programme.



Madame Prime Minister

by Mansong Rua

In Papua New Guinea, we vote for men all the time. Why can't we vote for a woman to represent the people, so women can help rule the country with their own thinking? Women are very important and they're the mothers of this country. So if we have a woman representative in the House of Parliament, that will be really great. So come on, try to vote for a woman to become Prime Minister!

Excerpted from *The Web* (Sept/96), a magazine produced by 3rd year girls at Hohola Youth Development Centre.

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"The top line of the park's flier reads 'America's newest and least known park,'" Malepeai said. "My job was to change the latter part of that line."

Malepeai compiled a fact sheet from park brochures, books, articles and employee information, as

well as her own park tour. She also developed a speech about her findings which she presented at the park's visitor center to many wide-eyed and eager to learn elementary school children.

"My partner and I targeted potential visiting groups, including church groups," Malepeai said. "Feedback was that the park was beautiful, beneficial to American Samoans, and more people should be made aware of such a resource."

Another MASSIP intern, Fuata'i Tuialu'ulu'u (Ta'i), a junior majoring in natural sciences at UH Hilo, worked with the US Forestry Service and American Samoan Community College Land Grant Program to study the restoration of mangrove areas on the main island.

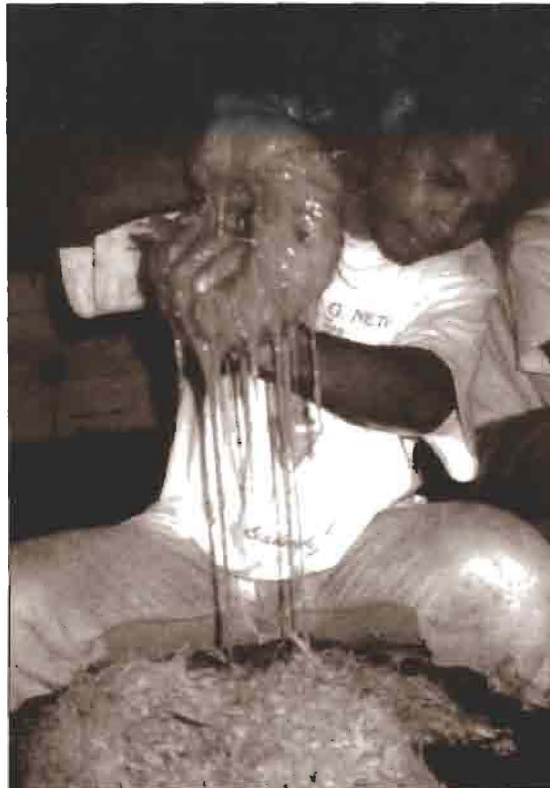
"Mangrove forests are very important to American Samoa because they serve as buffers in the coastal areas against storms," she said. Ta'i found that the Samoan community, not aware of their value, continues to encroach on the ecosystem.

Ta'i collected common red mangrove seedlings from a park near Nuuli Lagoon for greenhouse plantings using various fertilizer regimes, hoping to improve ways of growing mangroves for reforestation. Ta'i hopes to apply her knowledge in future Department of Education work.

Mangrove also played a part in Tara Tara's project at the Kosrae Division of Forestry, which concentrated on its uses when fully grown and the consequences of its misuse. Tara, a natural sciences major, learned that mangrove forests make up 20 percent of Kosrae. He investigated different varieties such as the cannonball mangrove, used for carving sculptures or building furniture, and the oriental mangrove, best for firewood. Tara's project was a personal success.

"It gave me an opportunity to evaluate myself out in the field and see what I could do out there," he said.

Johnny Yakana of Pohnpei, saw *sakau* as an excellent economic resource and an interesting topic for his internship project. *Sakau* or *kava*, a pepper plant relative, is processed into a traditional beverage. With its growing popularity as a bar drink, according to Yakana, its production has increased in Pohnpei in the last four years.



Rickson Eran, friend of MASSIP intern Johnny Yakana, squeezes juice from the sakau root

"There were times when I didn't think I would finish, but nobody else was going to do it for me," said Yakana, who had 10 weeks to complete the project. He hopes to run his own grocery store in the future.

One MASSIP intern added a biological touch, and a human one. Palauan Koebel Vitarelli-Sakuma studied the ascidian, a marine invertebrate most would deem a mere slug. But this slug may carry

in it an anti-tumor chemical or even the cure for AIDS, which is why researchers are studying it. Vitarelli-Sakuma, who attends UH Manoa, worked with the Coral Reef Research Foundation to photograph and collect over 100 specimens. If his collections lead to a cure, Palau would get sales royalties.

Ascidians, lovely and colorful, range from fingernail to grapefruit size; colonial ascidians, connected in a single skin, can grow to a length of three feet. Found in murky waters, fast-running channels, or even as deep as 2,000 feet on the sea floor (they don't need light to survive), few creatures feed on them because they create toxic chemicals.

Said Vitarelli-Sakuma, "I learned many things about scientific methodology, photography, and also working with people."

A curious, focused mind and the drive for knowledge characterized all the MASSIP interns. They not only touched on issues affecting the Pacific Islands — tourism, mangroves, marine life, resource education and economics — but also learned about their own potential so they can educate others.

"This project with the University of Hawai'i at Hilo continues to be successful in involving Micronesian and American Samoan students in environmental projects, and helping them relate their studies and interests to the needs and realities of their home islands," said MASSIP coordinator Sharon Ziegler-Chong.

Venus Lantin is responsible for communications with the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant Program.



Window On The Arts

Traditional Healing Arts Featured at Pacific Festival

by Kerrie Strathy

Participants at the Second Regional Women's Traditional Medicine Workshop believed the 1996 Pacific Festival of the Arts in Western Samoa would offer a great chance to make more people aware that medicinal plants need to be conserved. They were right! The traditional medicine *fale* was described by many as the most popular exhibit at the festival. Hundreds of people came each day to see the healers, get traditional medicines and receive therapeutic massages. Displays introduced them to work being done to save medicinal plants and document traditional medicine knowledge.

The workshop and display were hosted by O le Siosiomanga, a Samoan environmental organisation, during the South Pacific Festival of the Arts (September 8-23, 1996). Assistance was provided by Wainimate (Women's Association for Natural Medicine Therapy), a Fijian organisation dedicated to traditional medicine and "Saving the Plants that Save Lives." Funding came from the World Wildlife Fund and the Canada Fund.

Each morning twenty-three healers from Western Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tahiti, Hawai'i and other parts of the world met with festival visitors to discuss

concerns of Pacific healers. Francois Martell, a community forestry worker in Western Samoa, told participants that only 22 per cent of lowland forest cover remains, but 80 per cent of the healing plants used in Western Samoa comes from such forests. Such information helped the healers understand why it is harder to get the plants they

based medical treatments," reported one practitioner. "A patient began to walk for the first time in weeks after receiving treatment from a healer!"

Wainimate and O le Siosiomanga will continue their joint support of the newly established Western Samoan Traditional Healers Association. The traditional ways of healers in Western Samoa have not involved working together. However, after seeing the success of cooperative efforts between healers in Fiji and Tahiti, they came to believe they can accomplish a lot by uniting around common goals. Western Samoan healers could join forces to protect the remaining lowland forest ecosystem in order to preserve the plants they use for

medicines. They also liked the idea of establishing community gardens to grow a readily available supply of medicinal plants.

With the regional traditional medicine programme now including Samoan representation, healers in Western Samoa can work closely with other groups to "Save the Plants that Save Lives."

Kerrie Strathy is a CUSO volunteer serving as Education Advisor to Wainimate.

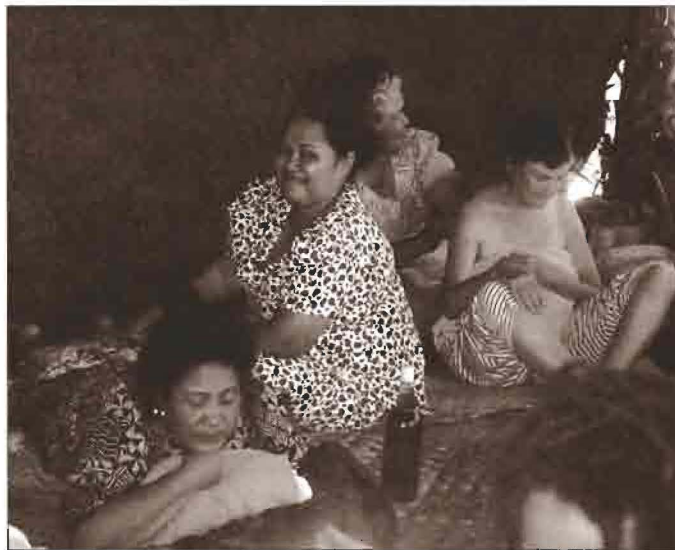


Photo: Kileti Atafitama

Traditional medicine fale drew big crowds

need to make medicines.

On weekends, the healers visited other islands to learn ways of working with doctors and nursing sisters at hospitals and health centres. During one visit to a medical facility, a visiting healer who was an experienced midwife assisted with a delivery.

"We saw traditional medicines and massages being administered to patients along with Western-

Resource Reviews

Contemporary Women's Issues Database

Research resource on CD-ROM and Internet from Responsive Database Services, Beachwood, OH, USA.

Researching a women's issue and can't access an international source? Check *Contemporary Women's Issues Database (CWID)*, available by subscription on CD-Rom or Internet. *CWID*, compiled with input from activist groups and women's studies professionals, covers topics like education, human rights, violence, health, law, reproductive rights and youth. Because *CWID* provides full text, not just abstracts, entire documents can be accessed without a second search.

CWID includes over 600 international periodicals and other publications from 1992 on: government and NGO reports, journals, newsletters, fact sheets, guides, reviews and alternative press articles. Each quarterly update adds thousands of new items. Its already substantial international content, which will increase as the year-old resource expands, includes: *Lila-Asia Pacific Women's Studies Journal*, *DAWN*

News, *CEDAW Reports* and *Reproductive Health Matters*. *Tok Blong Pasifik* is also a source.

The CD-ROM version eases searches, with novice to expert search modes, cross-references and a key-term thesaurus. The Internet version, even more user friendly, has enhanced titles and pull-down menus; you can read an article instantly or mark it for later retrieval. My search on key term 'Pacific Islands' found 81 articles.

Responsive Database Services are committed to "providing women throughout the world with access to empowering information." In countries where isolation and budget restraints limit research, *CWID* is a welcome resource. Third World subscribers get a 40% discount (high schools, 50%). The no-frills DOS and text-only CD-ROM is great for older computer systems.

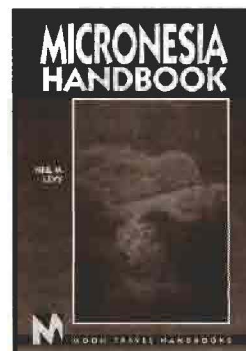
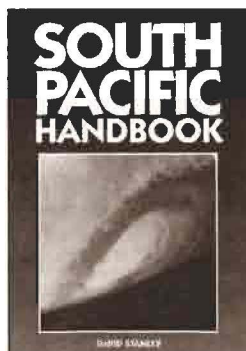
I highly recommend *Contemporary Women's Issues Database* to every library, school and resource centre, for its range of quality sources and focus on women in a global context. Contact: Responsive Database Services. TEL: 216-292-9620 FAX: 216-292-9621 <customer_service@rdsinc.com> WEB-SITE: <http://www.rdsinc.com>

Pacific Journalism Review

Edited by David Robie. Published by the South Pacific Centre for Communication and Information in Development, University of Papua New Guinea.

Pacific Journalism Review (PJR) brings much needed analysis of media in the Pacific, a field rapidly growing in volume and technical sophistication, but largely controlled by foreign or state interests. Within *PJR's* pages, established journalists, promising students and academics inform readers and stimulate debate about media issues such as journalism and ethics, women and the media, and violations to press freedom. Special issue "Ting Ting Bilong Me" (June 1996) presents the work of Campion Ohasio, a young Solomon Islands political cartoonist. *Pacific Journalism Review* should be read by anyone interested in Pacific media issues. Contact: *Pacific Journalism Review*, SPA 1407, UPNG, Box 320, Uni PO, NCD, Papua New Guinea. TEL/FAX: 675-326-0127 <drobie@pactok.peg.apc.org>

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Aging Gracefully

Continued from Page 30

"We want to encourage quality care of the elderly in their homes," says Committee member Gwynnette Johnson. "The programme will give new skills to about 30 participants in each area, including officers of women's and youth groups, professional caregivers in residential homes, volunteers and family members of seniors. Since many participants will go on to present rural workshops, the benefits will extend to a larger population."

To learn more about the work of HelpAge or the Canadian Committee, contact SPPF.

Alison Gardner is a freelance writer; Associate Editor of Maturity, a magazine for older Canadian readers, and a member of SPPF's Tok Blong Pasifik Committee.

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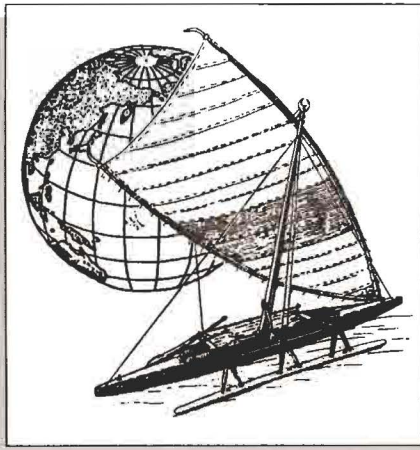
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Looking the Other Way: *The Indonesian Bond: Partnership or Plunder?*

By Malia Southard. Published by SPPF. 1997. 167 pp. Examines a range of Indigenous rights, human rights and environmental issues in Indonesia. Also looks at the Canadian connection with Indonesia. \$13 for single copies, \$10 each for 5 or more copies. Canadian residents add 7% GST. Shipping & handling charges, add (per book) \$3 (Canada), \$6 (US) or \$9 (overseas).

Are Sweet Dreams Made of This? *Tourism in Bali and Eastern Indonesia*

By John McCarthy, 128 pp and **Discussion Guide** by Glenda Lasslett, 28 pp. Published by Indonesian Resources and Information Program. 1994. Thought provoking account of the

social and environmental impact of tourism on communities in Bali, Lombok, East Timor and West Papua. The book is well researched, readable and generously illustrated. Discussion guide includes activities for discussion and reflection. Useful resources for travellers and teachers. Order book and discussion guide for \$20 or separately, book at \$15 and guide at \$7. Canadian residents add 7% GST. Shipping & handling charges, add (per book) \$3 (Canada), \$6 (US) or \$9 (overseas).

The Indonesia Kit

By Elaine Briere and Susan Gage, illustrated by Dan Devaney. Published by ETAN. 2nd edition. 1993. 44 pp. Useful introduction to Indonesia, including politics and everyday life. Sections look at West Papua, East Timor, and Canadian links to Indonesia. Includes resource and contact lists. Appealing illustrations and format make it a good resource for educators and students. \$9 per copy. Canadian residents add 7% GST. Shipping & handling charges, per book: \$3 (Canada), \$6 (US) or \$9 (overseas).



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