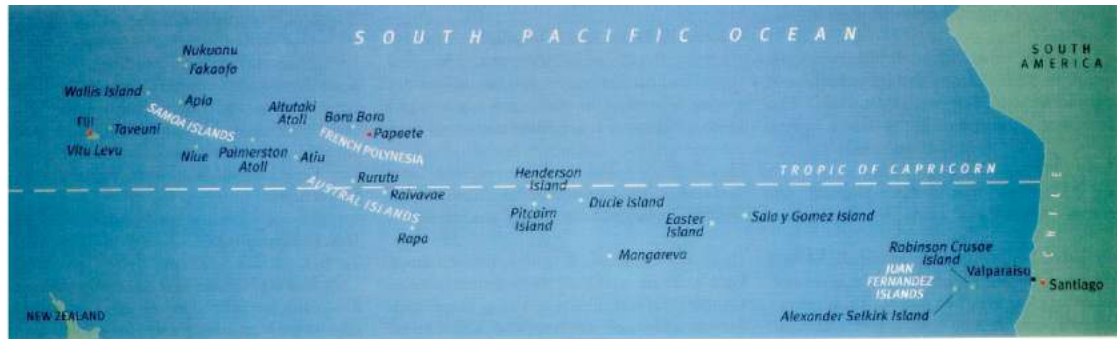


This document is a log that I wrote on a trip that I took with Marine Expeditions of Toronto, Canada in March and April of 1999. The trip took us from Valparaiso, Chile to Tahiti in French Polynesia. Along the way, we visited some of the more remote islands in the world.



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 3/27/99/1752 - Santiago, Chile at the Fundador Hotel  
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It's been a long day since Sharon and I got up at 0530 yesterday. My flights from Seattle to LA to Lima, Peru and then to Santiago, Chile took nearly 19 hours. We arrived here in Chile at 0530 local time (PST - 5). I probably got an hour or two's worth of sleep on the planes. Gertraude Kinet, a good friend of ours, is also on this trip. She and I met at the LA airport. She came in from San Francisco.

The flights were all on time. Gertraude and I were supposed to sit together - me at the window and she at the aisle. She ended up in another row at the window.

In the 24 hours or so before the trip, I got quite stressed. Something about knowing that so many hours of sitting confined are coming and also something about giving up the control - once you have given yourself to the flight plan, you must endure it because the consequences are so negative if you bail on it. In my case, probably not less than \$7,000 to \$8,000 wasted. The evening before I flew, I developed a cough and I just felt stressed in general. I didn't tell Sharon but that evening, after we returned from our last night's dinner, I noticed that I had a small sore throat and, even more ominous, I had rashes under both arms. I haven't had a rash problem since I was in college and under immense stress. The cough is more typically how stress manifests itself in me. I really hate this kind of situation (which is probably why I get dealt it) in which some symptom shows up which makes you wonder if going is a bad idea - maybe you should cancel, I thought. After all, what if the rash is indicative of something much more serious. These are not good thoughts to lower stress by. I decided to just keep an open mind and watch things.

The next morning, the rash was still there - no better, no worse and it is the same with the throat. I decided to go for it. My thought was that I was probably manifesting these things because I was stressed rather than these things have independently arisen at this time by coincidence.

On the flight from SEATAC to LA, I sat next to a Mormon from Idaho who was taking his family down to Disneyland. He was a nice guy - an apple-pie sort of a person. Other than being tired from lack of sleep, nothing was different. The throat was about the same.

On the LAX to Lima leg (8+ hours), I began to feel worse as the flight dragged on. Finally, I decided to meditate and focus on what I was feeling. As part of doing that, I realized that the only way I was going to defuse my anxieties was to consciously embrace what was happening - meaning the trip and what I was feeling physically. I did that and while it took quiet awhile to get a meditation focus of any strength going because of the noise around me and the flight's turbulence, I did finally manage it and it helped a lot. I've been repeating it as needed since (along with lots of vitamin C) and it seems to be working. The throat is anywhere from way better to the same from hour to hour. The rash has mostly faded.

Finally arriving in Santiago also helped as it allowed me to get out of that trapped feeling I can get on really long and onerous flights.

As I said, the flights were long. We had some movies and I read some magazines. Couldn't do anything that required deep thought because I was too fatigued.

I felt pretty good as we came to landing at Santiago. There was a \$45 surprise entry fee for American's. Apparently, we are doing the same thing to Chileans so it is a tit for tat exchange.

We took a bus to the hotel, which is very near the heart of downtown Santiago. Not much to distinguish the city from other Latin American cities I've seen except that the European influence and be seen more in some of the buildings here.

This bus ride was the first occasion I had to see all of our trip mates and to meet a few of them. I'm probably one of the youngest people on the trip at 51. They seem like a nice group. There's a lady named Clare who reminds me a lot of Sharon's mom.

Once at the hotel and checked in and after a short briefing by our Marine Expedition group leaders, I went up to my room which I'm sharing with a fellow named Ron from Minnesota. He's quite nice. We've talked about the stock market thus far and that was fun.

He laid down for a nap and I took a shower and then went down for some coffee and breakfast. Gertraude and I had agreed to meet at 1030 for a trip to the Pre-Columbian museum so I had about an hour to fill. At breakfast, I sat down at a table with a man named, Ayhan Turna, Turkish business man who now lives in New Jersey. He's in the business of setting up boutique Hotels at a very high level. Since Sharon was in that business, we were able to talk for awhile on that subject and then we went off into American politics and the current Kosovo situation. He's quite an idealistic man. I think he's slightly too optimistic, however, with respect to basic human nature. I really enjoyed talking with him and I asked for his business card.

I met Gertraude at 1030 and Clare came along with us. Clare lives in Seattle. We walked six blocks or so and found the museum after one mis-start. The museum was fun. One of the museum staff came with us and talked to us about the exhibits. We all got tired pretty early, however, and left to go back to the hotel. When we got back, I lay down and took about a two-hour nap. That helped a lot.

In the afternoon, the group was going on a tour of a winemaking facility. I decided that I'd rather walk back into the pedestrian only areas we saw on the way to the museum and walk around there. I did that for about three hours just getting the sense of it all. I met two college girls who were soliciting for money to help with their college expenses. I gave them 1000 pesos (about \$.75).

Finally, I walked back to the hotel and began these notes. About 1900, I found Gertraude down in the lobby with most of the people in our group. She and Ron and I sat together for dinner and talked about Kosovo, Bosnia, Clinton, and Pinochet.

After dinner, Gertraude went up to bed and I sat in the lobby with Ron and talked about stocks.

About 2100, I called Sharon. It was only 1600 there. Vicky was over, visiting. We talked for about ten minutes and then rang off saying that we'd probably talk next when I was on Easter Island. Then I came up and joined Ron and finished these notes.

===== NEW DAY =====

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3/29/99 1402  
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My first note since the hotel in Santiago. A lot has happened since then - the day before yesterday. The main reason I haven't written anything sooner is because I've been seasick along with most of my trip

mates and some of our tour guides. Seems that even if you are a guide, if you are off the ship for two or three weeks, you have to reacclimatize yourself.

It is mid-afternoon on Monday now and we are sailing towards the Juan Fernandez Group of islands where we will arrive tomorrow. I've just eaten lunch which is the first thing of substance, which I've eaten since lunch ashore yesterday. And, I think yesterday's lunch, in a large part, went down the toilet <g>.

Yesterday seems so long ago as I try to remember back. Lots of impressions and flashes stand out. Like standing by the sea wall in Valparaiso after we ate our lunch.



**Figure 1 - Condos and Seawall in Valparaiso**

The sun and the temperature were beautiful, as was the scenery. Valparaiso's latitude is similar to Los Angeles'. The ocean water offshore is also cold like California's. We were waiting for the bus to take us down to board our ship. All along the shore stand high rise condominiums nearly as far as the eye can see. It is a paradise except for the water's temperature.

Three or four Gypsy women came by and began to talk with several of us. They wanted to tell our fortunes. One tried her skills with me for awhile without getting any money from me. I was quite interested to see what they were like but also quite wary of them as I know they will steal from you instantly, if given a chance. She spoke no English and I no Spanish so lots of meaningless words along with hand waving ensued. First I said, "No dinero" when she asked if I would like my fortune told. The she said she would do it for "no dinero". And she looked at the lines on my hand and talked unintelligibly for some time. Then she began to signal that I should place some money into my hand from my wallet and then tightly close my hand. At first I didn't understand and then when I did, I continued to play dumb. She kept motioning towards my wallet and saying dinero and then folding the fingers of my hand closed tight to show that I must hold the money there. I suppose it was an incantation to bring me money but I also suspect that it's ending would have been that she would have the money from my hand and then be gone.

Eventually they gave up on us and left without saying rude things about our parentage as I thought they would.

The day began early for me. My roommate, Ron Wyman, while a very nice guy, snores like mating dump trucks. Once I'd slept my fill (by 5:30 AM), I lay listening to him and couldn't go back to sleep. Finally, I went down to breakfast, which they start serving quite early. I sat and ate and tried to read my Neurocomputing book for awhile. The eating was OK but I couldn't concentrate on the book very well. When I returned to the room Ron was up and before long it was time to put our bags out for the staff to put them out to carry down to the lobby.

The first place we went when we left the hotel was to a square in front of a building used by the Chilean military. Every other day, they do a 'Changing of the Guard' ceremony and we were to see it. There was a lot of 'inspiring' military music and 100 to 200 troops marching and drilling in close order. The entire

thing took nearly an hour. There were bursts of drawing swords, marching from one spot to the other, slapping the heels together (very Germanic), and then standing stock still for long periods. My primary thought during all of this was that it seemed a great waste of time and money for all involved.



**Figure 2 - Changing of the Guard in Santiago**

So, I wasn't too impressed by the military display. I was more impressed by the brief history of Chile given to us by our local Chilean guide, Christina, on the bus as we drove down from Santiago to Valparaiso and around town there. She told us about a time at least a century ago when saltpeter (Potassium Nitrate) was discovered up north in the Atacama Desert. Saltpeter is one of the three essential ingredients for gunpowder. Pretty soon foreign nations were buying tons of it from Chile. Then it was discovered, by Peru and Bolivia, that most or all of the mines were actually on their territories. A brief war, the only one Chile's been involved in, broke out and, because Chile was better backed with money and weapons from the foreign interests who were buying the saltpeter, they prevailed. The net result was that Bolivia and Peru had their borders rearranged and Chile continued to make money until 1915 when it was discovered how to make artificial saltpeter. Bolivia lost its corridor to the sea in this conflict and to this day, they do not have an ambassador in Chile.

The most interesting part of Christina's story about Chilean history concerned how Pinochet came to power and what happened and how people feel about it all today.

Chile was run as a democracy for a long time and then, in the 1930's, I think, they had a military coup. After a year or two, the military government scheduled civilian democratic elections, which were held and honored, and the country returned to civilian rule. During the years of civilian rule, the same family names came to power over and over. Allende tried for the presidency several times and finally succeeded in 1970 (or was it 72?). He had been saying that the copper mines (70% of Chile's income) belonged to Chile not to the US corporations like Anaconda. Once he was in power, he nationalized them and the result was that with a year or two the Chilean economy was in ruins with 37% unemployment and 5000% inflation.

The Air Force and the Navy attempted an abortive military coup but the Army didn't support it. It failed and not long after, the head of the Army resigned and then committed suicide. At this time, the general feeling among many Chileans was that a change was necessary. Allende's policies were destroying the country. Our guide says she was of this opinion at that time. Once the army chief quit and died, a new chief was needed and General Augustine Pinochet was called up to fill the post.

He bought the army into it and soon tanks were spread throughout Santiago and he announced that Allende could go outside to the helicopters and be flown to the South American country of his choice. He declined and the Chilean people last heard from him in a broadcast he made in the morning of that last day. He told them that he was the democratically elected president and that he was going to stay and defend democracy with his life if necessary. Pinochet announced that the Palace would be bombed at noon. It was at 1500 that day, Allende was dead.

There was a lot of mystery and controversy over how he died but after many years people have come forward to say that they were there and that he took his own life at Pinochet's forces closed in.

Christina, our guide, said that in those opening days, she and many Chileans were very happy to see that changes were taking place. It was only weeks later as the executions and disappearances took place that people began to sense that something horrible was going on and that it wasn't going to be a simple business like in the 1930's. Pinochet declared a 2200 to dawn curfew that lasted for six years. Later, he let the populace vote on a new constitution but in the fine print it was hidden that he would be given amnesty and that he would become senator for life.

Christina said that people didn't trust each other during those years and that even now, the country is deeply divided over Pinochet and his policies. For example, when the announcement came that the British government had allowed the Pinochet extradition to go forward but that he couldn't be tried for crimes before 1988, she was in a room with many people and not one said anything because the opinions are so strong and so divided.

She says that public opinion is divided into four camps with each about 25% adherents. One camp wants him extradited and tried. Another wants him to come home and remain an honored person, another wants him to come home and be left alone but have no more access to or influence on the country's political process. The last group wants him to come home and to have the country's constitution changed to allow him to be prosecuted and then to have him tried in Chile.

Interesting to look out the window as she talked and scan the people we passed. I wondered what parts they all played in this and what was it like, even on the beaches at Valparaiso during those oppressive years. I wondered if some people I saw had 'disappeared' relatives and if some had brothers that may have participated in the killings thinking that it was all for the betterment of the country.

Christina mentioned that US movie, Missing, with Jack Lemmon. I asked her if she was familiar with Requiem for a Woman's Soul by Oscar Rivabella. She was not.

We saw Valparaiso as we drove and it was pretty. Some one found out those condos there on the beach go for about \$100K US. I realized that I go through the same fantasies each time I go to a new place that is nice and that I usually get over it within hours or days.

On the drive to Valparaiso, we went through two large valleys and through long tunnels until we cleared that last ridge and saw the sea and Valparaiso flowing down the slopes towards it. As we went from the interior towards the coast, the land became more animated. The desert like nature of Santiago gave way to forests of mixed evergreens and Eucalyptus. I saw a number of trees that I didn't recognize and one that I wanted to call a Mimosa but I wasn't sure. It had leaves like ferns that hung down.

From what I can see, Chile's infrastructure is better than the other Latin countries I've been in. The streets look good and the phones work and are plentiful. The shopping centers look a lot like ours. Literacy stands at 96%. We were warned about street crime so I took precautions when I went out in Santiago but I walked around in public areas (shopping streets closed off to cars) for three hours and never felt danger though I watched my back closely.

We finally boarded our ship about 1600. My first impression of it was that it was quite small. Once inside, however, it seems to be quite large. We were told that calling it the Marine Spirit is only a marketing thing and that once on the ship, we would never hear it called anything other than The Academic Shuleykin, which is its proper Russian name.

We got our bags transferred to our rooms. I'm in cabin 310 with Ron Wyman – the same roommate I had in Santiago - and then we all went upstairs to watch the casting off. When we got up to the top of the ship which is actually a large open deck space above the 6<sup>th</sup> deck and just over the bridge, it had grown quite windy. Even 30 minutes earlier, it had been relatively calm. It was definitely a harbinger of what was to come.

We cast off with the captain and crew struggling hard to keep us against the pier so the ropes could be slackened and released. Once they were pulled in, we set out and the wind was really blowing. I took three or four photos of the city receding and we went out of the harbor.



**Figure 3 - Harbor scene as we departed Valparaiso**

Once we were fully away and about 40 minutes had elapsed, we were called down to the Coffee/Tea and bar room for a mandatory safety talk about life jackets and lifeboats. It was a long talk in a stuffy room and we were rocking and bobbing harder and harder as we got further out from shore and I began to sweat. Lightly at first and then more intensely. I realized, after awhile, that the movements were stressing me and I thought this might be the run up to getting seasick, which it eventually was.

With the meeting finally over, we went back to our cabins to await a lifeboat drill in which we were to don our life jackets and report to our lifeboats. After 15 queasy minutes, the alarm of seven shorts and one long finally went off. Ron and I grabbed our coats and our lifejackets and went off to our lifeboat (lifeboat # 1 on the Starboard side).

When we got outside, I was careful not to look at the sea - like a liquid medusa, I was sure it would turn me to vomit. Once in the lifeboat, I stared at my shoes and breathed shallowly and waited. I think only half of the 35 of us actually made it to the drill, the rest were already sick. One lady, in our boat, lost it right there and puked all over on the seat next to her. I think she was really embarrassed. I kept looking at my shoes and breathing shallowly. Sailors ran and shouted things in Russian and they came and got her out and for our boat, the drill was pretty much over at that point. Ron and I returned to our cabin and I was quite grateful to go there. On the way, however, I smelled the evening meal of Fried Chicken and it was just about the worst smell I've ever smelled. No way was I going anywhere near that smell!

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3/29/99 2231  
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Well, after I got back to my cabin, I just sat on the bench next to my bed unable to contemplate any movement since puking was only one motion away and I didn't know which motion it would be. I sat and let myself rock with the boat while I sweated and then, finally, I felt the undeniable evidence that it was time so I stood and went to the WC and threw up. It was actually a great relief and I immediately felt better. Then I returned to the cabin and sat for a long time again until I could muster the concentration to move my suitcases from the bed and dispose of them so they were not in our way and not on the bed where I wanted to be. Each movement brought a fresh attack of sweating and the strong imperative to sit still and rock with the boat rather than resisting the motion.

I remembered a story my neighbor Wayne had told me before I came on the trip. Wayne had been in the US Coast Guard and had spent a lot of time in a buoy tender bobbing up and down off the coast of Washington. He said that whenever new men would come onboard they would inevitably become seasick for a day or two until they acclimatized. The cooks had a warped sense of humor and on that first evening,

they would always break out the old cooking grease they'd been saving for the occasion and cook fried chicken in it. Something about that smell would just put anyone feeling at all edgy right over the edge. Seemed like the cooks here had the same sense of humor. It is suspicious that I don't recall them cooking fried chicken any other time during the voyage.

My cabin mate was unaffected by sea sickness and went into dinner and when he returned, my sense of smell was so keen I could smell the fried chicken odor on his clothes when he sat next to me. Yuk!

I finally got into bed without puking a second time and lay there half-awake and half-asleep until about midnight. Lying on the bed, I was almost entirely symptom free. The sweating stopped and my stomach settled down. Around midnight, I thought I might be cured so I set out for a walk. The Bar room was open and lighted but no one was about. Then I made my way up here to the library for the first time and came in and sat down. All evening the ship had been rocking violently in spite of its stabilizers and it was still going when I came up to the library. I sat a few moments and the sweating came back and I realized that if I didn't want to be sick again, I had better return and lie down which I did without seeing a soul.

The next morning (today), I got up for breakfast with Ron. By the time I was sitting and eating oatmeal and drinking orange juice, I was beginning to sweat again so I finished as much as I could and went off again for a lie down. Strange dreams this time of staggering around and watching myself drive a car and crashing into things. I took a second seasick pill just before breakfast and discovered that they are chewable. The first I took last night, I just swallowed so perhaps it had less effect than it should have.

When I got up next at 10:30 AM for a lecture on the Juan Fernandez Islands, I felt better but was still on the edge of a light sweat. By lunch, however, I was able to eat an entire meal and feel pretty normal.

During the day, I've made two or three journeys up topside to look out at the ocean. It is pretty impressive. It stretches as far as you can see and there is nothing in sight but clouds. The sea has calmed down since this morning and the crew says this is much more typical of how most of the voyage will be.

When we got up this morning, the chair in our room had fallen over and the bowl of fruit on the desk had been flung all over the floor by the ship's movements during the night.

In the afternoon, we had a Zodiac boat safety briefing and then a Happy Hour in which I had a Foster's beer.

I spent a lot of this afternoon catching these notes up and then, after dinner, I came up here to the library to finish them but got tangled with the Easter Island book instead, as I said.

Tomorrow, we will awake to find ourselves anchored off of Robinson Crusoe Island. We have an 0730 breakfast and then go ashore for a day of exploring the island. We're going to see the places where Alexander Selkirk lived and hunted during his four years and four months marooned here. I've got to go and put my backpack together now before I go to sleep.

We set our clocks back tonight. At 2300 we set them to 2200.

I've found out that I can send e-mail for 2 cents a character from the radio room. I may fire off a short e-mail to Sharon in the next day or so. I wonder if she will be able to respond to the return address. This document is up to 19,000 characters so far. That would be about \$360 dollars to transmit it. Too bad because I'd love to send it as I write it.

===== NEW DAY =====

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3/30/99 0907  
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Waiting to embark on the Zodiacs for shore. Got up at 0630 and couldn't sleep any more. We anchored off Robinson Crusoe Island sometime last night and it is there now off the port side. There are 500 people

in a small town with towering cliffs and mountains behind them and some fishermen's boats in the small harbor. I think I'm ready so I'm going to go topside and take one or two pictures while we wait.

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3/30/99 1942  
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Wow. What a fine day this is. I just returned with the Marine Expedition guys on the last Zodiac. They are a fun bunch. This was a great day all day long. We went ashore at English Bay and saw Alexander Selkirk's cave and where they are digging for treasure. We had two guides for the Island. One was an older fellow with a great beard that spoke a passable English and a younger guy, named Danny, who spoke only broken English but who was quite a personality. The Zodiac landings there were fun but not nearly so much fun as the departures. It got pretty wet and wild and a bit dangerous as they were trying to load folks (most of whom are quite elderly and a bit frail) onto the Zodiacs with the surf running in behind them hard and slamming the boat every minute or so. Gertraude got a  $\frac{3}{4}$  dunking and lost one of her aqua sox. I thought it was great fun pushing the boats out and jumping in.

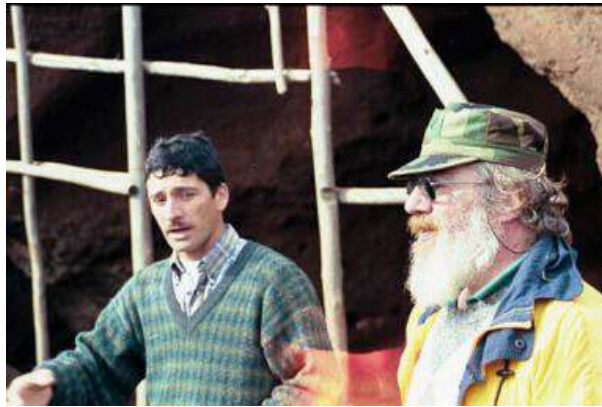


**Figure 4 - Off the coast of Robinson Caruso Island**



**Figure 5 – English Bay and the view from Alexander Selkirk's cave**





**Figure 6 - Our Guides on Robinson Caruso Island - Danny and Marcos**



**Figure 7 - Lobster barbecue in San Juan Batiste village**

Then we went back around the point to the bay in front of the town and landed there at a dock, which was a lot easier. We strolled through town and ended up at a restaurant where we had a lunch, which was a mix of local cuisine, and stuff our Russian cook brought from onboard. The local stuff was Lobster. I ate one and went back for a second so I had an entire Lobster in the end.

Next up was either a tour of the town or a hike up to Alexander Selkirk's viewpoint with Danny. I opted for the latter along with about ten others. It was a long climb and I did a lot of sweating along the way but it was so beautiful. What a little paradise this place is. Danny told us that there are 280 species of plants and 63 are endemic to only this island. He showed us quite a few of them along the way and knew their Latin names as well. Gertraude stayed to do the village tour but I think she would have liked this part.

Once at the top of the ridge, we had a spectacular view of the harbor below with the town and our ship and off the other side, you could see the backside of the Island and also the smaller Island of the three that make up this group. The third island, to which we are sailing tonight, lies 160 miles to the west and Danny said one can see it from the lookout when the air quality is really clear.



**Figure 8 - View east from Alexander Selkirk's lookout**



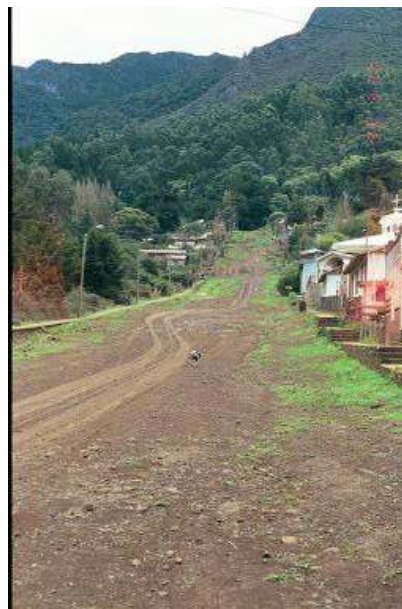
**Figure 9 - View west from the lookout with the village of San Juan Batiste and the Academic Shuleykin anchored offshore**

Coming down was much easier but trickier to not fall since there was so much mud from the rains last night. The trail is quite steep and muddy at places. On the upper 1/3 of the hike, you are in endemic forest. In the middle 1/3, you are in the open and in the lower 1/3 you are in a forest planted by the Chilean Government 25 years ago all around and through the town. I saw so many trees I didn't recognize and I considered taking pictures but I would have had so many!

Once back in the town, I wandered just looking at the small houses and thinking about what it must be like to live here. Shane told us today that this Island only gets one or two ships a year like this. Other than that, it is government boats and/or a few rich yacht charters. It is a very sleepy and idyllic looking place. People seem relaxed and happy and our guide Danny feels it is the best place to live in the world.



**Figure 10 - San Juan Batiste along the harbor**



**Figure 11 - San Juan Batiste's main street with Alexander Selkirk's lookout above**

I remembered that Ron had told me that there is a place as you go around the bay to the where there is a WWI shell embedded in a wall of solid lava. It dates from 1915 when three British ships tracked down the German cruiser, Dresden, which had fled here after a battle in the Falklands. When the British appeared and fired a few shells, the Dresden's crew scuttled her and she's still down there on the bottom in the bay right in front of the town. One of the shells fired by the British hit the wall of lava. I decided to walk over and see it.

I walked through the town and past what looked like an abandoned military soccer field and then came to the town's graveyard. I paid my respects and then walked in for a bit and shot a photo. Then I continued on and came to where the coast begins to curve away from the bay and soon I found a sign marking the place where the British shell hit. You can climb up and look inside the hole and see the nose of the shell still embedded within the rock. The hole is approximately 12" across and the shell's nose is another 14 or 16" into the lava face. It was apparently an armor piercing shell with a penetrating nose and an explosive after compartment.

When I looked further down the beach, I saw the fur seals playing which we'd passed in the Zodiacs going to and from English Bay where Alexander Selkirk's cave was. Theresa gave us a talk on them last night. I went down and sat on a rock watching them groom themselves just offshore for a long time.

Finally, it was getting late so I walked back into town and went to collect my life jacket, which had been left at the restaurant. Everyone had already come and picked their's up and there were none left. I walked back to the bar in town where I'd seen Shane and the other Expedition crew talking and drinking beer. I asked if anyone had recovered an extra life jacket and no one had so Shane had them bring one back from the ship on the next run to ferry folks out. In the mean time, they gave me a beer and I sat and talked with them. Two local guys were building a wall next to where we were sitting and I went and helped them put it up for a few minutes.

Finally, it was time to take the last Zodiac run back out. I was the only passenger not already on the ship. The ship is carrying a local girl, the wife of one of the fishermen, to Alexander Selkirk Island tomorrow. She rode out in the Zodiac with us. It was a wild ride back out and it left me wanting shout YEAH! It has been quite a day.

I've been hoping to get a cabin of my own since there were some cancellations and of 44 passengers only 35 sailed.. Steve told me this evening that it now looks 100% that I will get a solo cabin tomorrow. The only reason I am not getting it this evening is because the girl we are transporting to Alexander Selkirk Island is staying in it tonight. It will really be nice to have my own cabin.

===== NEW DAY =====

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3/31/99 0529  
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I'm up early this morning. I can only sleep about six hours a night and this is too much for me. I went and got some instant coffee in the bar and had a look topside. Overnight, we sailed from Robinson Caruso Island to Alexander Selkirk Island and now we are anchored off the coast. It is quite windy outside. My understanding is that the Zodiacs have to make landfall in a very small beach not much wider than the Zodiac is. It may be difficult if not impossible unless the wind abates.

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3/31/99 0659  
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Just meditated for 45 minutes and read a book for another 15 minutes and it is still 30 minutes until breakfast.

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3/31/99 0759  
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Just finished breakfast. It is still windy outside. Shane is up on the bridge deciding about trying to make a landing. He said the fishermen might have to come out and get the girl we brought. I am beginning to doubt that we will be landing today as a group. I told Shane that if they were going to take the girl in on a Zodiac, I'd like to come along to add some extra ballast. We'll see. I've laid out my rain gear and life jacket out just in case.



**Figure 12 - Off the fishing village on Alexander Selkirk Island**

If we don't go ashore, this will be the first of six days of relative quiet until we reach Easter Island. Later today, I may try to send Sharon my first shipboard e-mail. I can feel some reading in my Neurocomputing book coming on as well as a bit of programming. Especially, after I get my own room and I can lay my things out a bit.

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3/31/99 0914  
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Well, I'm having some regrets that I didn't have my camera for parts of the last hour. It was too windy for us to put a Zodiac over the side so the fishermen from the Island came out to get the girl we brought. It was pretty high drama. The wind and the waves made it tricky for them to come up beside the gangway which hangs down from the side of the ship. They were amazing, however. They were all standing up in their dories. Any of us would have been sitting and clinging to whatever we could have gotten a hold of.

They drew up and her backpack and then a box were handed over and then she made it over. As the ship and boat moved to the wave action, it all came down to timing. I was so enthralled watching it all, I didn't go and get my camera. Wish I had now. After the transfer, I got it and took a shot of one of their dories.



**Figure 13 - Fishing dory at Alexander Selkirk Island**

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3/31/99 1414  
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The wind and waves stayed up and eventually the idea of our going ashore was abandoned. While we waited, one of the local guys from the fishing village where we dropped the girl off came aboard and sat in the bar and sold some coral pieces. Gertraude bought one or two. Someone said it was illegal to bring coral into the US.

About 1100, it was decided that we would not be going ashore so we pulled up the anchor and headed off for Easter Island. We'd been anchored off the eastern coast of Alexander Selkirk and, as we left, we went around the north side of the island. I went and sat upstairs and watched the island as we passed it. An unbelievably large piece of rock jutting up out of the ocean so far from everything. I could see enormous sweeps of hillsides, waterfalls, forests and canyons as we passed. On one cliff, the erosion had revealed the internal structure so clearly. You could see the roughly horizontal layers of lava that had been laid down and then radiating up through them, you could see where intrusions from a lava dome forming farther below had pushed their way up through fractures in the earlier lava layers.



**Figure 14 - Alexander Selkirk Island lava intrusions**

We're in the open ocean now and it is really rocking and rolling. I have to sit with my legs spread wide to keep my chair from falling over as I type. The seasickness I had earlier seems to have left me though I took another pill a few hours ago when I could see that it was going to get rougher. I got through lunch OK so that's a good sign.

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3/31/99 1436  
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Just went up on deck. The island has dropped behind us and can no longer be seen. It will be five days now until we see land again. While I was up, I went out onto the bow where I haven't been before. I hung my head over and watched the bow cut the water and looked at all the water out in front of us as far as I could see all rising and falling and surging. There are white caps all the way to the horizon and it is strange to think when I look to the left, to the south, that the water goes all the way to Antarctica. The weather I've seen since I arrived in Chile has all come from the south so far.

The girl, Paula, we delivered to Alexander Selkirk Island was telling Jayne, the Australian member of our Expedition crew, that she was born here and has lived all her life on the Juan Fernandez Islands except for a few holidays on the mainland in Chile. She said that she and her husband go for long camping walks on the island and just setup camp wherever they like. All three of the islands in the group are a Chilean National Park so they consider themselves as 'out checking up on things' when they go camping. It's impressive when you look at the size of the island and the huge sweeps of countryside and forests on the slopes and peaks. They can just walk off when they want and have an entire world to themselves. They can camp and look out over such an enormous expanse of ocean and know that there are only 40 or 50 other people on the island and all of them are down in the one tiny village. It was all so close as I watched it pass in the binoculars and yet so far away.

This morning I got permission to change cabins and I pulled all of my gear out of cabin 310, which I'd been sharing with Ron, and moved it all into cabin 307 where I am now. I'm on the port side just one cabin aft from where I was in 310. It is a bigger cabin and I have it all to myself. Too cool. I've finally

unpacked and made myself comfortable. I talked to Steve, the expedition's hotel manager and he says I won't pay anything extra, not even for cleaning.



**Figure 15 - My new cabin**

When I was topside with Jayne and Chris, watching the island recede, I saw my first flying fish. They really fly for a long time. They go 10 to 15 seconds two or three feet above the water zooming like an odd looking bird. They are a very pale translucent blue color and their wings (fins) seem to vibrate as they fly.

I also went up the bridge and sent Sharon e-mail. Isn't very convenient to do. You have to type the message in right there on their system. Also, the people you send to cannot reply to you unless they join a service of some sort. It was nice to think she'll get e-mail from somewhere out in the Pacific.

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3/31/99 1820  
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I've been sleeping and then reading my Neurocomputing book. Periodically, every few hours, the speaker in my cabin breaks into Russian as one of the ship's officers makes an announcement directed at the Russian crew. Interesting mix of cultures we have going out here in the wide and empty Pacific.

===== NEW DAY =====

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4/1/99 0642 - 1<sup>st</sup> day West of Juan Fernandez Islands  
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Long night's sleep in my own cabin. At one point, I had a coughing spell and I thought it might help if I got some fresh air so I opened the porthole in my cabin. Half an hour later, I heard a big splash and turned the light in to see that a wave had come in and doused the couch under the porthole. Porthole was closed thereafter but the cough was better.

I haven't had any dreams I'd call remarkable thus far in the trip but I'm watching. This does seem to be a good place for meditation.

Just came down from the Bar where they set out coffee at 0630 for early birds like me. I saw Alex Chamberlin and his wife there. He and I had a good conversation as the ship pulled out of Valparaiso but, in general, I haven't found a lot in common with people yet on the trip. I'm in a bit of an odd spot in that most of the passengers are quite a bit older than I am and most of the Expedition crew are quite a bit

younger. I think the crew can't decide if I am a bit decrepit or not whereas the passengers can't decide if I'm mature enough to be interesting. Good thing I have it all worked out <g>.

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4/1/99 1331  
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Well, not much to report today. Breakfast was a non-event. I came back to my cabin and worked on the Neurocomputing book. Parts of it are a bit more mathematical than I would like. Then, at 1100, we had a lecture on seabirds. I was OK but I was falling asleep looking at the pictures of the subtle differences between one bird and another.

For lunch, they fed us on the after deck. It was a barbecue and it was nice. I ate salmon and even had a bit of chicken just to try it. It has been a steady diet of fish so far for me on the Academic Shuleykin. I was looking around at the various people gathered on the back deck and I was thinking how little I really have in common with most of them. It makes me wonder if I'm just not a social person or if it really is that I have nothing in common with them. I haven't a clue at the moment. I've been wondering if I should try to engage some of the Russian crew in some politics. We'll see.

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4/1/99 1442  
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Well, just when I was thinking I am completely unsociable, Kristen, one of the ladies on the trip, dropped into my cabin for a visit and had me show her computer stuff for 30 minutes or so. It was fun.

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4/1/99 2012  
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Well, time for a big catch up in these notes about the day. I just finished dinner. I sat with Shane, the expedition leader and Steve, the hotel manager. I quizzed Shane about how he got connected with Marine Expeditions and etc. He said a fellow came into his marina (he owns one he inherited from his family in Ontario) and had a problem with the engine in his boat. Shane fixed it on the spot and the guy was impressed and one thing led to another and soon Shane was doing Antarctic expeditions and doing boat maintenance. After three years of that, he moved up to being an expedition leader. He said there are about 10 expedition leaders working for Marine Expeditions now. He's done only Antarctic trips up until now. This is his first into another area, i.e. the South Pacific. Steve was talking about how long he's been at sea. I think he said 130 days at sea and then six days off followed by another 88 days at sea and then five off. I kidded him that he must get overtime, eh? It doesn't sound like they get paid much but what an adventurous life they get to lead while they are doing this stuff. I would have liked it 15 years ago but I wasn't mature enough then to deal with it. Now, it wouldn't fit into the life I have and that's fine. My life, as it is, is one of the best one's I'm aware of.

It finally dawned on me this afternoon that there is more to this trip than landing on islands, reading, eating and sleeping. I mean, this is the South Pacific! Once people started lying about today in the sun up on deck, it was like a light went on. I've definitely been in Seattle too long when it doesn't occur to me that laying about enjoying the sun should be a major part of what I do on every available day this trip. I really had to laugh at myself about this. I went in and changed into a swimsuit and took the SciFi book I'm reading for light entertainment and I went up on deck too. It was really nice. I know Sharon will talk about sunlight and skin damage and she's right but I'm only here in the South Pacific once cruising five days towards Easter Island.

I've been enjoying myself and, other than meals, I'm just making up what I do with my time. I'll read some of my Neurocomputing book until I'm saturated (but the ideas I'm gleaning there are really neat) and then I'll go out and watch the sea pass by for awhile or I'll lay on my bunk and read the SciFi book until I'm drowsy and then I'll doze for 30 minutes and then I'll take a walk to the bar and get a cup of coffee. A little of this and a little of that. It is too fine and I know it all will all pass too quickly so I am giving myself to it completely.

It bothered me a bit earlier that I don't seem to have a lot in common with the folks on the ship but I don't think it really matters much. I remember who I am and I can touch the Inner Light of spirit there when I



want to be refreshed. The great mystery of the sea passing by that I've wanted to know for so long is just outside now and it is so refreshing somehow. I was thinking about it today as I looked out. The sea has looked exactly like this for almost all of the history of the Earth. True, the moon hung larger in the sky then and the constellations were moved about some a billion years ago but the waves moved and surged endlessly the same then as now. When you look out, it could be any day in the past several billion years and it would have looked just like this.

I've looked every time I've been up on deck and I've never seen a plane or a ship since the coastline of Chile disappeared. You can stand on the top deck of the ship and turn completely around and the ocean's waves recede and recede until the horizon ends the sky. Occasionally, a few seabirds sweep low over waves and the sunlight comes in and out of the clouds - and there is nothing else. The ship passes ghostlike and, when it is gone, the ocean is utterly untouched by its passing and the waves continue to surge and roll and add and subtract each other in some utterly unselfconscious now.

I looked over the rail at the blue of it and tried to see down but, except for the bubbles forced under by the ship's passing, the ocean is opaque. Only my imagination and memory tell me that it is thousands of feet deep below us and that if I drop a penny over, no power of man could recover it if I wanted it a moment later.

There is continuous water from here to Japan and the distance is nearly a third of the way around the planet. 70% of the world is covered with this stuff and I remember thinking Wyoming and Texas were big.

I've almost finished the part of the Neurocomputing book in which he talks about the kinds of 'learning' strategies neurocomputers can employ. So, thus far, I've learned about what neuro computers are, what building blocks they are made up of and what learning strategies they can employ.

===== NEW DAY =====

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4/2/99 0554 - 2nd day West of Juan Fernandez Islands  
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Just awoke from a dream. I had been back sharing my enthusiasm for this trip with a blond girl. I don't think it was Sharon. We were both younger. It felt like I was in the mid-west somewhere. She and I were both in school and I liked her but I really hadn't told her so before, it seemed. It opens and we're in class and I'm trying to tell her and another girl about it but I can't get the map unfolded right and other people keep making distractions but finally, I get the map laid out right and I'm talking and scanning for the island I want to tell them about. I'm having trouble reading the fine print and I say so. I'm not sure that the island I want to tell them about will appear named on this map, as it isn't great on detail. I can't find it. I mention that I'm having trouble seeing and then the light shifts and I can see perfectly but I still don't see the island. Now that I'm awake, I realize that I was looking over near Pitcarin Island trying to show them Alexander Selkirk Island. The map business ends. I have to go and the girl walks out with me. Seems like I tell her I like her as we walk though I can't recall doing so. As we walk, we're holding hands. We're running and I ask her if she runs much and she says, "no", only when she has to scoot around places. Then we're walking again and I'm noting how comfortable it is to hold her hand. Thin and light but it has hard calluses on it in places. It seems cold to her but not to me and it begins to snow lightly. The cold really seems to bother her, like it does Sharon, but I tell her it doesn't bother me much. I tell her I just seem to steam when it is cold. I think about asking her what work she does but I don't. Then, we're in a small store buying something and there's a man walks through who says "Hello, Dennis" and smiles as he passes us. I tell her that this is the third person who's acted like they know me who's spoken to me since I've been back. She asks me, "Are you suppose to be here?", and smiles and I say, "No, I haven't finished my trip". And then we both smile and there's a feeling that I'm leaving soon. We're still in the shop and I've been looking at things the owner has for sale on the shelf behind the counter. There's Sound Blaster computer board. You can put in a quarter and see if you can win it or there's another thing you put a penny in to see if you win something. The owner seems like he's Eastern European - perhaps an Albanian or some kind of Muslim from that general area. I look and I have a quarter and a dime. I tell him that I want to try the quarter but just as I speak, I notice it really says 75 cents so I can't do that one. Then I tell him I want to try all ten pennies from my dime in the penny machine. He begins to speak

excitedly and I gather that this is bad form but that he'll let me try one. His assistant then puts my penny in and begins to turn the bowl around and around slowly while looking into the top. I'm not sure what he's trying to do or when it will be over or what has to happen for me to win. Then I awaken.

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4/2/99 0618  
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Last night, we set our watches back another hour as we went to bed. That's two setbacks since we left Santiago. The first, I think, was a daylight-saving issue and the other was a time zone crossing. I think I'll sleep some more now until it is coffee time at 0630.

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4/2/99 1148  
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Just finished a lecture on coral reefs. It is dull and overcast outside today. Temperature is OK but it doesn't look like much. Big talk over breakfast today was the freighter we passed about 2000 last night. Some of the people saw it and the radio operator talked to it and they were bound for Los Angeles. We looked at a map and it looks like for them to have met us where we were and be going to LA, they must have come round Cape Horn.

If I can find Shane, I'm going to ask him if we could adjust course to make a visual pass by Sala-Y-Gomez. It would only required a few degrees of course adjustment from here and given that it looks like we will arrive just at sundown at Easter anyway, it seems we wouldn't lose anything and we gain the opportunity to see and photograph and extremely remote place.

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4/2/99 1310  
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I made my suggestion to Shane. He said we will arrive at 1630 at Easter Island and we may be able to make a landing the first day. If we did my plan, it would preclude such a possible landing. We'll see.

Just came from lunch. EAT EAT EAT - it is all we do (don't worry, Bunky, I'm still slim and trim <g>). It was a lively group. We talked a bit of politics and a bit of religion. I loved it.

In the hallway I met the Russian I talked to yesterday and he told me he'd been listening to Radio Kiev from the Ukraine. Apparently, the bombing continues in Kosovo. Radio Kiev said that for every 100 Serbian military killed, 1000 civilians die. He also told me that polls in the US and UK show 60 & 70% of the people there oppose the war. I'm happy to talk with him and get some news but I think it has some propaganda embedded within it. Interesting, nonetheless.

I think I'm going to begin coding a Neural Network component. I feel like I want to do some hands on stuff to complement the book reading I've been doing. Also, at 1400, I'm signed up for the first ship tour group.

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4/2/99 1322  
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Nicolai, that's the name of the Russian I've been talking with, is working now on the fantail chipping rust off equipment. I went and asked him if I can listen next time on short wave with him. I told him I'm in cabin 307. I'm not 100% sure he understood me, however. He's pretty pumped up about the Serbian situation - in an anti NATO way.

While he and I were talking, Jayne, from Marine Expeditions, was sitting nearby and told me that they have a short-wave unit with them along with a booklet giving international radio frequencies and times. She said I could borrow it tonight, if I liked. I said I'd like to.

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4/2/99 2120  
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Not much has happened new in these last hours except that Shane announced that because we cannot make Easter Island in time to land on the 4<sup>th</sup>, we've altered course for Sala-y-Gomez Island. We cannot go

ashore as it is a world bird sanctuary but we will circumnavigate it and maybe put some Zodiacs over the side to go close in if the seas are calm. That was nice. They've been really responsive to suggestions on this trip.

I still have my cough. It seems to be bacterial and fairly well entrenched. Very annoying.

I went up and did a meditation on the top deck above the bridge awhile ago. It is overcast with no moon tonight and it is so dark outside that it was impossible to pick out the horizon for a long time until my eyes adjusted. The water temperature has come up into the upper 70's as has the air temperature so even when it is overcast and dark, it is comfortable to sit in a tee-shirt in the breeze created by the ship's passage.

Meditation is easy here. I went completely empty and opened to where I was - a huge dark empty sphere of space seemed to enfold me. Not cold, not warm, not loving not fearful - just there. It seemed like my spirit's awareness penetrated deeply into the water below (over two miles deep) and the dark sky above and in the center were we on a small moving vessel hanging suspended engines softly thrumming in the center of the awareness.

I stood by the rail for a long time afterwards looking into the moving water which I could barely see and trying to imagine the huge volume of watery space there filled with animals by the millions in inky blackness eating ... and suddenly being eaten and the story being played out without stop for the entire existence of life on the planet. If the tree falls in the forest and no one hears it...for miles and miles down to the bottom and for a thousand miles in every direction...I am not adequate to think of this.

Afterwards, I went onto the bridge. Earlier today, we had a tour of the ship, which encompassed the bridge and the engine room. During the tour, I found out that the radar units are turned on at night and that we can come in and take a look at them. I looked at a lot of radar screens during my years in the Air Force but I was still curious. I was surprised that the bridge was jet black when I entered and then I realized that, of course, they leave the lights off so their night vision is acute. I looked at the radar and the office on watch switched it from 16 km to 32 km to 64 km and there was noting nothing as far as the radar could see except the reflections off the wave tops nearby. We couldn't even see each others faces and, tomorrow, we'll have no idea who we each talked to but, in spite of this, the officer and I chatted for about 20 minutes interspersed with long periods of silence. I told him what kind of work I do and he told me that he too, like Nicolai, was also from Saint Petersburg. He studied in school to be a navigator. He sailed last year to Easter Island and he's been at sea since '92. It was a comfortable place. Through the bridge windows, we could see the dark gray band of the horizon swinging first up on one side and then on the other slowly while the green light of the radar and the soft lights of various controls and indicators glowed around us. After awhile, I said good night and left by passing through the heavy curtain hung between the bridge and the radio room, which was also dark. From there, a door opened out into the 6<sup>th</sup> deck's hallway.

I sent Sharon another e-mail today. I just felt like I wanted to reach out and say 'hello', I am still out here somewhere. I quoted our latitude and longitude position to her in the e-mail. I wonder if she will try to look it up on a map. I miss her but this is such a priceless experience - unlike anything I've done before.



**Figure 16 – The Bridge of the Academic Shuleykin**



**Figure 17 – The Chart Room just off the bridge**



**Figure 18 – The Engine Room**

===== NEW DAY =====

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4/3/99 0834 – 3<sup>rd</sup> day West of Juan Fernandez Islands  
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Up to watch a pretty sunrise and then breakfast. The overcast seems to be breaking. It's about 70% clouds and 30% sky just now.

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4/3/99 1648

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 A beautiful and lazy day, this, our third full day sailing since we left Alexander Selkirk Island. The sky has cleared and it is now 80 to 90% clear with only a few clouds. All day long, I've noticed the long rolling swells coming from the southwest. They are very regular and seem to be growing slowly in size. They are 10 to 15 feet high and each time the ship encounters one, we rise high up on one side and you can see for a long way, and then we drop down into the trough until the next arrives. If you face directly forward at the bow, they are coming from about 30 degrees to the left of center.

A few hours ago, the word got around that these swells are coming from a storm which is about a thousand miles southwest of us. They told us to close the portholes in our cabins tonight because they think the waves will get higher still.

It is hard to tell or believe we are moving other than that you can see the water passing by. All day long the engines keep exactly the same low thrumming note. All day long, the ship rocks and tilts and the swells pass and all day long the sun slowly changes position overhead while the clouds slowly rearrange themselves. It looks the same in all directions except for the sun's reflection on the water. There is nothing to see but water and an occasional seabird.

For lunch, we had a barbecue again on the fantail. I took some photos. Most all of the passengers were there. Theresa took a photo of me with Shane, the Expedition's leader.



**Figure 19 - Barbecue on the fantail**

Later, I lay out in the sun on the upper deck and read the SciFi book I've been entertaining myself with. Surprisingly, for it being a book I just picked up here on board, it is really quite good. Not quite Greg Egan's level but not far off either. Howard V. Hendrix, the author, calls it, Standing Wave.

I had a lot of dreams last night - none of them so outstanding that I wanted to get up and write them down but interesting none the less. At one point, near morning, while I was dreaming lightly, I heard a voice in the cabin say, "Wow". It was quite loud and distinct and did not seem to me to be part of my dream. I even pushed the bunk curtain back to see if there was someone there. I've only heard voices like this a few times in my life.

I've been modifying my prototype Windows program so it will serve as a starting point for a program I can use to manipulate Neural Network objects. I've been working on it for an hour or so and then I go out and take a walk around the ship or read my SciFi book or doze in the bunk. One of my favorite things to do is to go stand up on the bow and feel the ship rise and fall under me as it cuts into the sea ahead of us.

I'm still thinking about a Chilean 100-peso coin I dropped over the side out my porthole. Once I dropped it, I sat and imagined things from the coin's POV.

I saw the underside of the ship passing overhead, dividing the water - the sunlight fractured by the water surfaces, filtering down. And the coin tumbling down and down until the ship's underside and sound faded away into the distance and opacity. The coin, still plummeting down and the light fading away. The water, green-blue and then darker and darker until there was only a hint of light. Still tumbling and falling, the temperature of the water dropping sharply. In moments, the rising darkness erases the fine engraving of the "100 Pesos" script on the coin's side. Nothing now but the seemingly endless twisting and turning in the pitch-black icy water and increasing pressure as the coin continues to fall.

If one assumes that it takes from one to two seconds for the coin to drop each twenty feet, and knowing that the bottom is about two miles down here, then it will be approximately 10 to 20 minutes until the coin finds its final resting place on the bottom.

It will come to rest in a place where light will never touch it again. A place where human sight will never gaze on it again. It will come to rest there in the inky oceanic ooze surrounded by tens of thousands of square miles of never seen and barely imagined terrain. And it will remain there for all practical purposes, forever, while the continents slowly move and man and life on the surface become unrecognizable to anything living today. Until every single thing we take as significant or important has been utterly erased by the passage of time. Until then, it will rest there in the darkness.

Once it left my hand, it may just have well ceased to exist in this universe for, with all our technology and supposed intelligence, if we went back now, even an hour after I released it into the sea, and tried, we should never find it. It is irretrievable. It cannot now be proved to exist.

I've borrowed the short-wave radio from Jayne. I plan to try it out tonight up topside and see what I can pick up.

===== NEW DAY =====

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4/4/99 0543 - 4<sup>th</sup> day West of Juan Fernandez Islands  
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I forgot we set our clocks back another hour last night so I just went to get coffee an hour too early.

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4/4/99 2015  
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Well, it's been a long day without any log entries. It has been the quietest day so far on the trip.

I just finished dinner. I sat next to Gertraude. She's still recovering from the ankle injury she sustained when we landed on Robinson Caruso Island. There was talk over dinner of an expedition by another company that went badly wrong last year. They lost two people on the trip. One died when a Zodiac over turned in the surf on a reef when the driver drove it too fast and sheared the motor off and then they had no control and were at the mercy of the surf. The second person left the trails on one of the islands they landed on and was never found. They finally assumed he'd fallen off a cliff into the sea and they had to leave him.

After dinner, I walked up to the bridge and sent my third e-mail to Sharon. I really hope you are getting these, Sweetie. I'd hate to think that the computer's hosed and you are sitting there in dead silence for days on end. I told you about the Easter surprise I hid down by my feet under my monitor in the computer room. I bought these chocolates when I went out with Alan awhile back in anticipation of being gone over the one day when I absolutely have to buy you something. I hope you found them today. I love you, Sweetie.



**Figure 20 - Sunset between Juan Fernandez and Sala-y-Gomez**



**Figure 21 - And another**



**Figure 22 - And another**

After I sent the e-mail, I went up topside and took a look around. It's been dark for over an hour and we have the most open sky we've had this far in the trip. Orion is very high in the sky - actually, a bit north of vertical whereas, at home, it always sits fairly low to the south. It looks odd too because the nebula, which at home, always sits under the three stars in the belt, here is above the belt because Orion is upside down compared to home. Sirius is directly overhead here and very bright. Last night, when I went topside to catch the news on short wave, some of the Marine Expedition guys filled me in on which stars comprise the Southern Cross. The Milky Way is really dense and bright here behind the Southern Cross. I'm not sure where the Magellan Clouds - greater and lesser - are. Maybe I'll be able to ask someone tonight. I'm

going up again with the short wave this evening. My report on the news was much sought out today once people heard that I'd been listening.

Today, I spent mostly inside. I got a bit fried in the sun yesterday. I was surprised because I was watching it but I should have known better because I remember now that when I was younger, the sun I took didn't 'convert' into its final color until several hours afterwards. It's not really painful but I didn't need anymore just now. So, I mostly programmed. I'm still deep into setting up a program framework with which I can make and play with basic neural network nodes and their connections. It is all wrestling with Windows issues now to make it do the things I need it to do like drawing shapes and dragging them about.

This afternoon, I watched a movie called "Rapa Nui". Kevin Costner did it in '93 and it was quite underwhelming. They took big liberties with the historical Easter Island story. They filmed it on Easter Island, however, so looking around the island on film was nice.

I'm excited that we're arriving someplace tomorrow. Actually, about 0200 tonight, we'll anchor off Sala-y-Gomez Island. It is a very small uninhabited pile of rocks about 200 hundred miles East of Easter Island. Birds nest there. Chile owns it. If the seas are calm, we'll put Zodiacs over the side and go in close and circumnavigate it but we're not allowed to land as it is an international bird sanctuary.

===== NEW DAY =====

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4/5/99 0752 – Sala-y-Gomez Island  
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I actually slept in today until they called us at 0700 to see the sunrise over Sala-y-Gomez. The island is amazingly small with only a tiny lighthouse on it. Nothing, really, but a pile of volcanic rock just barely poking up out of the ocean.



**Figure 23 - Sala-y-Gomex Island**

The entire thing doesn't look like it is more than one or two football fields in size. We're anchored on the northern side to get what protection we can from the southwestern swells. There are a lot of birds on the island. Jeff, our naturalist and birder was up topside calling out what they were as they flew by. Sala-y-Gomez is so small; it seems amazing anyone ever found it out here in the vastness of the Pacific. I guess they must have followed birds here. The Island is part of the same undersea rise that birthed Easter Island but it is quite distant from Easter Island (200 miles) and, other than these two islands, there is nothing else for a very long ways. The Russians and one or two of our passengers are fishing off the back of the ship. Manny, one of the passengers, caught a really big fish this morning which is going become part of our lunch today. The Russians have apparently caught several sharks and are preparing them as well.

I listened, last night topside, to the short wave again. People are really starved for outside news so I told them what I'd heard over breackfast.



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 4/5/99 0813  
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Shane just announced that because the swells are still so large, we will be pulling up anchor at 0900 and circumnavigating the island in the Shuleykin rather than in Zodiacs and then, once we've completed the circuit, we'd head out for Easter Island. Jeff is giving his Captain Cook series of lectures at 1100. That should be excellent, as his first one was great.

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 4/5/99 1008  
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That was a lot of fun. We weighted anchor and sailed slowly around Sala-y-Gomez Island. What a pile of rocks it is. Nothing on it but a small automatic lighthouse similar to the one I saw outside the village of San Juan Batiste on Robinson Caruso Island. There is also a small weather station with a wind speed and direction setup on it atop a short (6 foot) metal pole mounted some distance from the lighthouse. I think Sala-y-Gomez will probably be the most remote place I ever visit in this lifetime. There were a few small patches of green, a small area with some sand; some flotsam and jetsam washed up from the sea and lots of jagged volcanic rocks. After going slowly around the entire thing, we turned west-southwest and headed for Easter Island. Nothing else but one pile of rocks as far as you can see.

===== NEW DAY =====



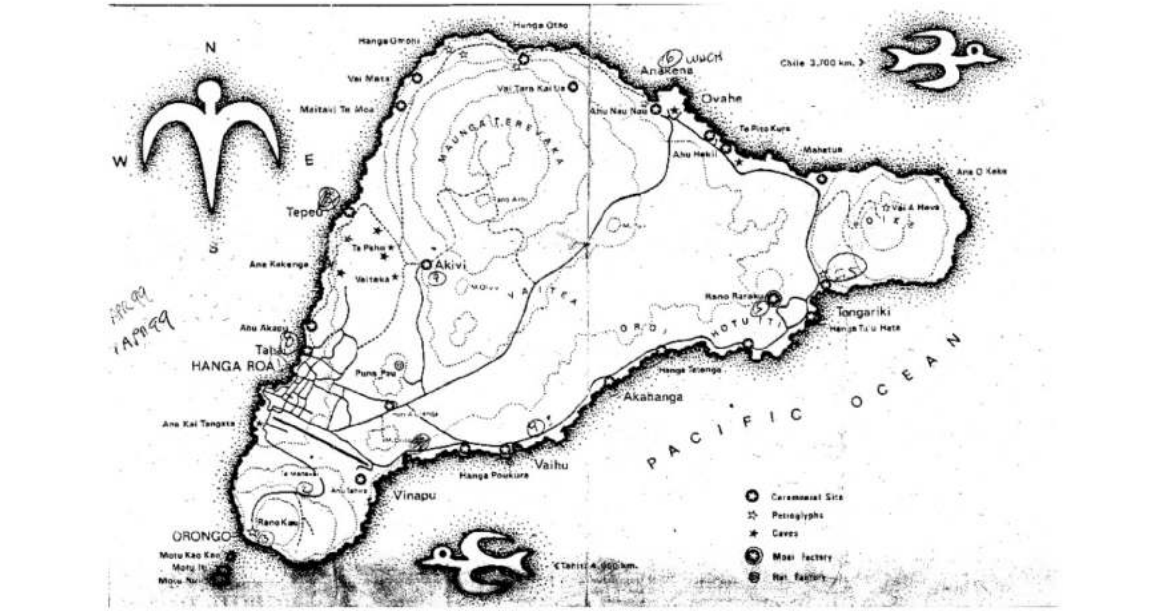
**Figure 24 - Dawn and Easter Island on the first day**

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 4/6/99 1917 – Easter Island, the first day  
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Well, it has been a jam-packed day. We awoke to find ourselves anchored off Hanga Roa, the only town on Easter Island. About 0900, we took the Zodiacs in to shore and met our guides. They had six or seven vans arranged for us including one or two for members of the Russian crew. We traveled and looked at archaeological sites and played all day. We just finally got back to the Academic Shuleykin about 20 minutes ago after a wild and wet exit from the harbor through the surf. When you leave, the kind of ride you get is just luck according to how the surf is at that exact moment. Two of the Zodiacs got soaked and two were relatively dry departures. You can see what's going to happen when you see a big wave breaking and coming at you. The Zodiac driver puts the nose into and whoop - it is up and over with lots of water in between. We've all got life jackets on and our cameras are in our packs and most of us have the cameras in waterproof plastic zip-lock bags. I think some of the passengers aren't that happy about the water but I love it.

It was a beautiful day and the only thing that didn't happen, as it should have was that I didn't get to call Sharon because we never had a free moment in town all day. It was bright and sunny and probably about 85 or so. There were big cumulus clouds in the sky all-day and, later in the afternoon, it rained warmly and lightly on us.

Tomorrow will probably be the big shopping day if I do any shopping but I did buy one thing today for \$30 (original price was \$50). I'm not sure even what it is so I won't try to describe it other than to say that it looks some what like a cross between a wooden knife and a small club and it has a bird's head and a Rapa Nui's head both as part of the motif. Oh, and it is about 12 to 14 inches long and carved from Mahogany.



**Figure 25 - Map of Easter Island**

On our tour, we first drove up to where we could look down into Rano Kao crater which is at the southwest corner of the island. It's a large extinct volcanic crater that is now partially filled with fresh water and Toro Reeds. The crater is about 3/4 of a mile across.



**Figure 26 - Rano Kao crater with Orongo on the far side**

For our second stop, we drove on to Orongo, which is also on the rim on the Rano Kao volcano on the southwest side where the outside of the cone slopes sharply down to the sea. Orongo was the place where the Rapa Nui (the name Easter Islanders call themselves) held the Birdman Ceremonies (too long to go into detail about here). There are many low buildings there built into the ground and all with good views of the Motu Nui islet, which lies off the southwest corner of the Island. Many of the rocks in this immediate area are also carved with birdman images. It is a wildly pretty place. Behind you, the caldera of the volcano

stands open and before you, the ridge top is filled with low structures made of slate-like pieces of lava and, in front of these, the cliffs plunge almost straight down to the sea and, just offshore, lie the three sacred islets which are an integral part of the bird-man ceremony. More than most historical places, I could feel/imagine the Rapa Nui doing their bird-man ceremonies here century after century and believing that their Island was the center of the universe and that there was nothing beyond the horizon but more water stretching on forever.



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**Figure 27 - Orongo of Birdman Cult fame on the rim of Rano Kao with the three small islets off the coast including Motu Nui**



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**Figure 28 - Entrance to one of the dwellings at Orongo**

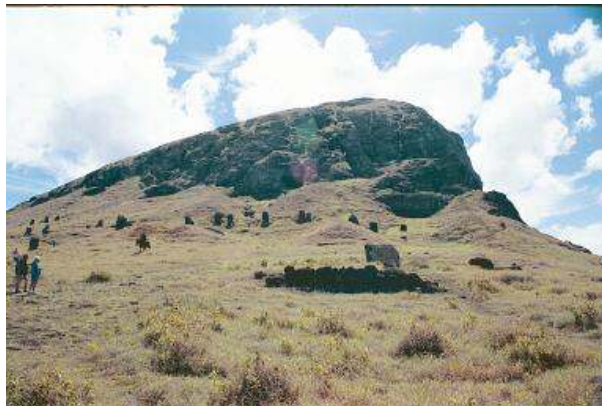
Our third stop was at Vaihu. A place by the sea where all the Moais had been cast down and they are still lying there broken and in disarray. These were our first Moais close up. I bought my whatever it is tourist thing here from some local women who were setting outside the entrance to Vaihu..

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**Figure 29 - Fallen Moais at Vaihu**

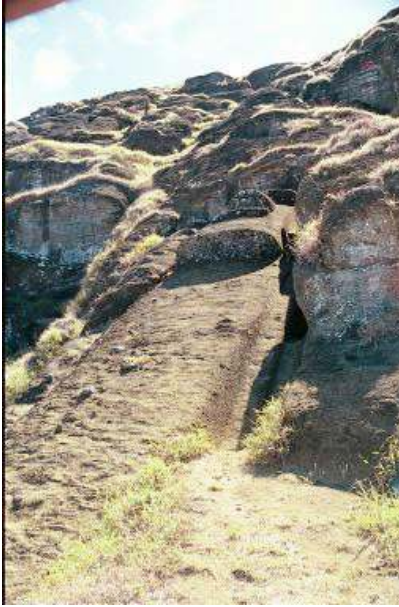
For our fourth stop, we drove to Rano Raraku, the extinct volcano and quarry where all of the Moai were cut out of solid lava. This was an amazing place. I've read the books and seen the pictures but it still doesn't prepare you for the place. You climb up a steep incline hundreds of feet to get to where they cut the Moais fully formed from the living rock and then, somehow, managed to move them down the side over several hundred feet of decline (objects weighing 50 tons and more) and then across the island. The quarry is full of Moais in various states of completion. We spent a long time here and I took quite a number of photos.



**Figure 30 - Rano Raraku with Moais barely visible on the lower slope**



**Figure 31 - Moais stand mostly buried on the slope**

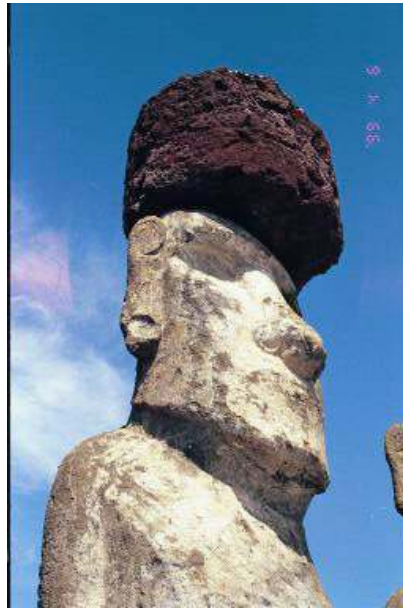


**Figure 32 - The largest Moai left partially cut from the mountain**

Next, we drove down to another site by the sea named Tongariki. Here, there is a long Ahu (the platform the Moais stand on) with many Moais setup on it as they were originally. In 1960, the Moais were lying on the ground as they had been for centuries when a tidal wave created by an earthquake in Chile came and destroyed the Ahu the Moais used to stand on and flung the Moais themselves hundreds of feet inland. Later, in the 1980's or 1990's, the entire Ahu was reconstructed based on photos from the 1950's and the all Moais were gathered and re-erected.



**Figure 33 - Tongariki reconstructed**



**Figure 34 - Closeup of Tongariki Moai**

At this point, we'd been looking at things for awhile so it was finally lunchtime. We drove out to Anakena Beach on the north coast and had lunch and a swim there. This is the legendary site where Rapa Nui's first king and leader of the original colonizers (circa 400 AD), Hotu Matua, first landed. It is also the site where Thor Heyerdhal's 1956 expedition camped. Gertraude was here before and she says the palms, which are now quite large, were just small when she was here in 1980. Anakena is the only white sand beach on Rapa Nui, I believe. After lunch, many of us changed into our suits and went down into the surf. The water really is warm compared to the ocean water of my youth in Southern California. The waves were fairly small and a number of us tried body surfing. I tried about four or five times before I caught one cleanly. I'm sure it has been nearly 15 years since I tried that. My watch didn't survive this adventure. Water leaked into it and in a day or two, it died.



**Figure 35 - Anakena Beach on the north coast**

Also, at Anakena, are some Moais. One, which Pedro Atan, mayor of Hanga Roa in 1956 when Thor Heyerdhal was here, raised for Heyerdhal's expedition as a demonstration. Nearby is another row of more recently erected Moais standing in a row on an Ahu. The entire place is really quite scenic.

From Anakena Beach, we drove southwest until we were just north of Vinapu and then we turned north and drove up to Akivi where there are seven Moais facing the sea (all the others on the island face inland). This

part of the island is much greener which makes sense as it faces the west where the weather and the normal winds come from. These Moai are unique in that they are the only group erected to face the sea.



**Figure 36 - Moais facing the sea at Akiva with Gertraude and I in the foreground**



**Figure 37 - Group photo of all of us at Akiva**



**Figure 38 - Landscape near Akiva**

From Akivi, we drove almost back into Hanga Roa to a place called Tahai, which is just north of town on the beach. Here there were more Moais and a number of people selling things. I took one photograph of an old Polynesian woman's face that I think will be quite nice. I didn't buy anything here. It rained while we were here and it was nice after the hot dusty day driving around.



**Figure 39 – An interesting cloud formation over the Tahai Ahu on the coast**



**Figure 40 - Rapa Nui woman bargaining with John and Kristen at Tahai**

Once we finished at Tahai, we drove to the dock and started Zodiac runs back out to the ship. I asked our guide about renting a scooter tomorrow and she said it would be 30 to 35 dollars for all day and that I can go anywhere without fear. Gertraude and I will go over on the first Zodiac at 0800 and visit the museum and Father Sebastian’s church and a do bit of hopping area and then, if I am still inspired, I will rent a scooter and go adventuring. Tomorrow, I will also call Sharon from the island which I am really looking forward to.

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 4/6/99 2157  
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I’ve decided I will send Sharon an E-mail tonight as soon as Sergei, the Russian radio operator comes back on board (he’s due at 2200). I want to tell her that I will definitely be calling tomorrow in case she’ll wants to stay home. It is a Wednesday so she shouldn’t be working.

===== NEW DAY =====

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 4/7/99 2011– Easter Island, the second day  
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Well, it is the end of our second day on Easter Island and we’ve departed and the Island has dropped behind us now. I’m going to write up all the things that happened today, tomorrow in the morning after I’ve had my morning coffee. I’m too tired now. The main thing that sticks with me, however, is my disappointment that I didn’t connect with Sharon by phone. I think I really wanted that contact - just to know that she’s been getting my e-mails and that she’s OK and to hear her voice. I see her picture on the computer every day and remember what a blessing she is in my life. In a year or two, once cell phones have gone to satellite based, people will never have to experience such separations again. Love you Sweetie. Sorry I missed you.



===== NEW DAY =====

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 4/8/99 0745 - 1<sup>st</sup> day at sea sailing towards Ducie Island  
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Woke at 0200 and at 0530. Got up to pee and went back to bed. Since my back has been giving me grief, I've been more careful of what I'm doing. I've also been looking for the culprit activity. Last night, at Gertraude's urging I pulled the mattress off the unused bunk in my cabin and made my bunk two levels deep. That's a good deal more comfortable.

This morning, however, when I sat down here to catch up my notes, I couldn't help but wonder if the problem hasn't really been the ergonomic situation here at the laptop. There is a small chair and a desk and the physical situation has me sitting here for hours at a time leaning slightly forward to access the keyboard while, behind me, there is no lumbar support. I could pull the chair in much tighter to the desk but it is hard to do across the cabin's carpet on a chair without rollers and it feels shaky if there are seas of any significant height outside such that the ship is rolling and pitching. When it is like that, you instinctively understand that whatever it is you are standing, sitting or resting on should have one essential attribute - a wide base.

I've taken one of my pillows now and placed it behind me on the chair to support the lower back. I'll try it this way and see if things don't slowly get better. We've got three sailing days now to Ducie Island so I've got some time to experiment.

Had a dream just before I awoke the last time at 0715. A real mix of things. I'm in some crazy bus with lots of people and I'm not sure about the driver's skills. Seems like there are big semi-trucks that we're coming within inches of. Then there is some shifting around as people change seats. Some one asks me to repair some computer/electronic gizmo and I start but then it turns out that it should have been given to someone else who is the 'official' repair person. He seems a bit offended and I'm trying to treat the situation lightly as I relinquish the item to him so that polarity and tension doesn't embed themselves in the aftermath. Suddenly, I'm out of the bus with an older couple who are delivering something. I ask and we are apparently within blocks of Union Street where I am supposed to meet Sharon. We enter an apartment and there's a lot of confusion as there are several people there. I lose track of the older couple. Some guy is talking to me and gives me a drink, which I accept. Other people seem to be wandering in and out. This guy is nice but the longer he and I talk, the more it becomes clear that he's gay and he's coming on to me. I'm flattered and polite but it is irrelevant. I'm asking him which way it is to Union Street and how long it will take to walk there. He answers two blocks and I can see that I'm going to have to climb a hill through urban clutter to get there and I'm wondering if it is really two blocks and I'm thinking what I'll do if the directions are bogus. People arrive and it is confusing again. One fellow who comes in hears that things have been delivered and he's excited saying that they are from his Uncle. I take these happenings as my moment to go and I do. As I'm trying to walk out, I'm suddenly staggering and stumbling as if I'm on the ship in heavy seas. I'm wondering if I'm tired or if the drink really trashed me or if what I'm experiencing is the feeling that floor is moving that people who've been on ships for a long time describe once they return to land (which I haven't yet experienced). Suddenly, I'm in a place that looks like a cross between a baggage handling area at the airport and a parking garage except that I cannot see any signs or human sized corridors or doors. I'm not having any trouble walking now. There are stainless steel boxes like dumb-waiters and there are roller ramps and wiring and machinery everywhere. I'm thinking that once I get back outside, I'm going to have to ask the direction to Union Street again since I've lost my external orientation in here. I see someone approaching carrying a large box and I ask the way to Union Street but, as the person begins to pass me, I see it isn't a person at all but a robot machine carrying a box. Where I expected to see a head emerge from behind the box, there is nothing but a metal stalk with a video input unit mounted on the end which briefly examines me as it rolls by. I'm really surprised and start thinking that I've gotten into the future somehow. I wake up.

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 4/8/99 1316  
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Well, now I will begin to recap the second of my two days at Easter Island - Rapa Nui.

Zodiac landings began about 0915 after the Chilean authorities had come on board and gave us permission to land. Gertraude and I went over in the first Zodiac. When we arrived, one of the previous day's guides was there and he offered horses, cars or tours - whatever we wanted. I had been thinking about renting a small motorcycle but had given the idea up after someone pointed out that I would probably be eating a lot of dust. So, I opted to rent a four-wheel drive car for the day for \$60 US. Once I'd obtained the car (a little red Suzuki Samuri), I drove back down to the docks and picked up Gertraude and we took off to the museum, which we'd located, previously on the map as being at the north end of Hanga Roa. Driving is on the same side as the US so I didn't have to learn any new skills. I'd asked the guide if there were any areas I couldn't go and if there were any dangers I should be aware of. He said I would be safe anywhere I went and the only danger was cows and horses suddenly wandering out onto the highways.

The museum was small but nice. Gertraude struck up a conversation with the Rapa Nui woman running the museum and soon she had a private translator and guide showing her each exhibit and explaining them. All the labeling was in Spanish. After awhile, I got wise and tagged along. It was really very interesting. I always find that there's a bit of a time lag for me. I come in and look at the museum materials as if I'm viewing a lost and remote culture or epoch. After Rosa talked for awhile, I began to get that this was all very much alive for her and the people here. She pointed at old black and white photos of various people and they were relatives of hers. The taboos and customs are still living parts of the subjective day to day experience of people who live here. But, things have really changed a lot too in the last 50 years. In the 1950's, there were only two cars on the island. Now they have a nice paved two-lane highway that goes to most of the major destinations on the island. In spite of that, however, I drove for quite long distances during the day without seeing another vehicle.



**Figure 41 - Gertraude and I with the Museum curator at Hanga Roa**

As we left the museum, I got a photograph of Rosa with Gertraude and I. Then, a few minutes later, as we were preparing to get into the car, Rosa came out and asked Gertraude if she could contact her if she came to the US. She's planning on traveling there in July this year. She and Gertraude traded information.

After the museum, Gertraude and I went in search of the Post Office. She wanted to get some stamps and she thought they would have a phone I could use to call Sharon as well. It took us a long time to find the post office. Things are not very clearly marked (everyone who lives here know where everything is so what's the point). Also, I asked for directions several times during the day and, invariably, they were either wrong or inadequate. I believe the people we asked were really trying to be helpful so I'm not sure what the problem was. Perhaps Rapa Nui is a culture of loose approximations.

The Post Office had stamps but no phone. There was one lady working there and, under the table where you could place your packages while you labeled or stamped them, was a small boy of perhaps 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade age reading from a book in Spanish. The entire time I was in there, he was just reading away blissfully unaware of any of us. Perhaps, the postmaster was his mother and he was doing his homework.

We could see that there were no public telephones at the Post Office and so Gertraude and I agreed to part ways. She had specific things she wanted to do and so did I. I drove for a few minutes to one of the two places where I'd noted outside public phone booths and stopped and tried one of them. It was frustrating because no matter what numbers I entered, it would give me a pause like it was going to do something useful and then it would return to the dial-tone and a message would be displayed saying that I'd entered an illegal number in Spanish. Next, I went into one of the larger hotels (still very small and run by one person) and I asked if there was a way I could make a collect phone call to the US. The fellow said that I couldn't call collect but that I could call directly and pay him. I declined his offer. I knew there had to be a way to make a call in town - I just hadn't found it yet.

I decided to postpone my call to Sharon and to get on with exploring with the car since I could feel my time ticking away. First, I drove back up towards the museum to try to catch the road up to the Akivi site we'd been to yesterday. Earlier, I'd driven Gertraude directly to the museum without incident. This time I got lost and couldn't find the museum. I wandered for 15 minutes or so around on the roads at the north end of town and finally decided that I was incompetent and this was going to be pretty stupid if I couldn't even figure out how to get out of town. I decided to drive back down into the heart of town and try to perhaps exit from the southern side. I believed that once I was on the roads outside of town, I'd be OK.

Passing back through town, I went down the main business street. There seemed to me to be only two main N/S streets - the one that ran along the water and another that was a block further east which was the one I was now on. It was that same one where I'd rented the car. Earlier, when Gertraude and I were looking for the Post Office, we'd noted that the names of the streets, as given on the map, and the names of the streets, as painted on the curbs, didn't seem to bear any relationship to each other whatsoever which wasn't very helpful when you were trying to locate something.

I was looking again for pay phones but not thinking that finding one was going to do me much good. I was also developing a thirst. I'd packed a lunch (a sandwich, and apple and a container of Flan (like yogurt) as well as my filled water bottle) but I felt like some caffeine would do me some good so I was watching for some place where I could go in and buy a can of coke. I found a street side open-air café and there was a small LAN Chile office next door so I thought I could kill two birds with one stone here. I figured that the LAN Chile people would have no reason to not tell me the straight scoop on where and how I could make a collect call to the US. In fact, this turned out to be the case. The lady there wrote down "Entel Chile" and told me that it was the only place. She also gave me some of those 'approximate' directions. Next door, my hopes for a coke were also rewarded for about \$2.50 US and I was off again.

I thought about wandering back into town and trying to locate the "Entel Chile" office but I'd already seen the sign pointing out of town towards Vinapu and other places and I was eager to actually go someplace after having had the car now for nearly three hours and not even getting out of town yet.

I took off east from town and took the road that goes north towards Anakena Beach. Soon I saw the turn off for Akivi and I turned there. My plan was to try to locate the road that was shown on the map to go from the northeast side of the Akivi site up to the top of Rapa Nui's highest peak, Maunga Terevaka. On the road, I passed the Puna Pau quarry where I knew they'd cut the red topknot pieces out to become the red headdresses for many of the Moai. I didn't stop even though we didn't see it yesterday either. I was more interested in going to rarely visited places. I continued until I came to the seven Moais of Akivi, which stand facing the sea. It seemed different now, as the site was completely empty. Yesterday, there had been our group and another both on the site at the same time. I didn't stop again and I began to look for the road to Maunga Terevaka.

I found a road that looked likely based on its location and direction and I took off upward on it headed roughly northeast. It took me through some nice twists and turns through pretty country but before long I came to a closed gate. I regretted then not asking about the protocol on closed gates on the island when I was asking about driving. I wasn't sure if this was the road I was seeking and that it would be OK if I just went through the gate or, if I was simply on the wrong road and I was about to invade someone's private place as a clumsy and lost tourist. In the end, I turned around and decided I'd have another go at the hill

from the other side as the map also showed a road that ascended to the peak from the eastern side of the mountain half way between Puna Pau and Anakena.

I had several things I wanted to try to accomplish for the day, however, and now I switched to another plan and put the ascent of Maunga Terevaka off for the moment. Given that I was very near the western end of the island, I thought I would try to find the road that was shown on the map to going around the northwest corner of the island. This was apparently the most remote and least visited area of the island from what I could see of the archaeological sites and what I had read about the various areas of the island. The road I was looking for was clearly shown as branching off from the road between Akivi and Tepeu.

As I was looking for the road, I saw an amazing sight coming towards me. There was a party of 15 or 20 horseback riders coming at gallop. I immediately slowed down and gave them lots of room so I wouldn't spook anyone's horse. As the first three riders passed by, I saw Steve and Shane from the Marine Expeditions crew along with Kristen from the passengers. Then the following group passed and what a lot of wild expressions were on their faces. Everything from elation to terror to "oh, shit - hang on" looks. People were slamming up and down and most of them looked like twice as slow would be a much better speed. But Shane, the expedition's leader, was out in front whooping them all on. It all happened in about a 10 second span and then they were by. A few moments later I cursed myself for not having had the presence of mind to have flung up my camera and captured the scene instead of just gawking and grinning at them.

Soon I found a road that looked like it might be the right one. Nothing really seemed to match the map, however. I remembered that one of the guides had told me that it was possible to drive around the northwest part of the island.



**Figure 42 - On the road to the northwest corner of the island**

I took off down the road. Basically, just two lightly worn ruts in the grass with most of the large chunks of lava tossed out of the path. It went for quite awhile and climbed until it came to a small grove of Eucalyptus tree and then it ended in a pile of lava. I got out and took a look and I could see that the lava was not a new addition. This road, at least as far as cars were concerned, had not gone farther than this for a long time, if ever. I could see a footpath on the other side and I considered it but, even if I won through, my car would then be back here so it was no good.



**Figure 43 - End of the road to the northwest**

I got the car turned around in the narrow space and headed back the way I'd come. This time, however, I began to look around me more, especially on the ocean side to see if there was anything of interest. Before long, I came to a place down the slope towards the ocean and cliffs where there was a pile of rocks and a tree that looking intriguing so I pulled over and walked towards it. This approach turned out to be well worth it. I stopped in two or three places and found some caves that were big enough to crawl into (though I didn't because my back was tender). I found some very large and well preserved Rapa Nui house foundations which are quite unmistakable, and I came upon a large Ahu site with all the Moais pulled down. I'm not sure but this was perhaps the Maitaki Ta Moa site. It was really neat there.



**Figure 44 - A cave with bones**



**Figure 45 - Rapa Nui house foundation**



**Figure 46 - small Moai head near the house ruins**

I didn't feel like I was on a site that had been run over by 10,000 tourist feet. It was much more remote and less visited and it felt like I was seeing parts of Rapa Nui's cultural heritage that I would have never seen except that I struck off into the brush. I wondered, as I walked and poked about, if I might be on private land or in an area considered sacred by the family or cult whose area this was. There were bones on the ground in many places and there were a lot of bones within the caves I looked in. Many were, I'm sure, from horses and cattle and small creatures that'd come to bad ends. I couldn't have said if any of them were human, however, but given the history and archaeology of the island, it was certainly possible. I poked around in these areas for quite awhile.

Finally, I decided to try to ascend Maunga Terevaka again, or to at least get off into another area of the island since I'd spend so much of my limited time on the western side. As I drove back out towards Akiva, I passed Gertraude and the fellow she hired for the day to guide her. They were near Te Pahu and I waved as I passed but I think they were so engaged in talking that they didn't see me.

As I passed Akivi, I looked again for the road to the top of Maunga Terevaka but I still couldn't see where it went so I continued on past Akivi and back down to the main Hanga Roa - Anakena road where I turned left and headed northeast towards Anakena Beach.

This is really pretty rolling gentle green countryside. It looks verdant but everywhere you look, but lava rocks fill the spaces between the grass clump and the tree roots. I saw some fields that looked cleared of lava but I suspect they'd just hauled the larger stuff off. The island is mostly open but there are a number of heavily treed areas where forests have been planted. There are some large Eucalyptus groves in the center of the island in the Vaitea area which I drove through. You could almost imagine the original island fully treed over when Hota Matuea originally arrived.

I was doubtful if there would be a sign for the turn off I was looking for but there was one which said Rano Aroi which is along the road I was seeking so I turned there. It immediately took me onto a dirt road that climbed into a large Eucalyptus forest.



**Figure 47 - The road through the Eucalyptus Forest**

After awhile, a fence appeared on my left paralleling the road and on the other side I began to see woods with different kinds of trees. It looked like they were finding out what worked at what locations and at what altitudes by planting large groves. For awhile, I saw evergreens and then I saw deciduous trees. They seem to alternate back and forth while, on my right, it was Eucalyptus all the way. After a mile or two, I broke into more open country. There were cattle and horses grazing. They were well scattered. I don't think the land supports many head per unit of land. I recall seeing one small herd of 10 or so horses down by Akivi earlier in which you could see their ribs standing out quite clearly.

Periodically, as I climbed, there would be a grove of trees standing together, sometimes with a few buildings within them and other times not. The groves seemed mostly to be Eucalyptus. At some point, the road became deeply rutted and in bad condition and I got out and spun the hubs into lock position and put the little Samurai into four-wheel drive.

The road seemed to go on and on upward and it seemed to get worse as I went. This is always the way it seems when you don't know what's next and how far there is yet to go. I was definitely getting higher, however because I was beginning to see the sea on all sides more and more. Now, except for small groves of trees, the country was rolling and rising hills of open low coarse grass with the ever-present lava stones peeking out here and there. I had to be careful driving as the road was quite bad at places. There were at times large lava boulders lying just next to the tracks and sometimes, smaller one in the road. So, I was constantly on guard to not hang up on a high center or rip a hole in the oil pan by dropping on something high and sharp. I was also keeping my speed down so I didn't break an axle in a hole.

All the time, during the climb, I kept glancing at my watch and wondering, if I did have a disaster, could I make it down on foot in time for our sailing. Normally, since I'm a runner, I would have said, "yes". If I had to abandon the car and my stuff and let the details get sorted out later by long distance, I could have done it. But, today, with my back always just a motion away from seizing up, I had my doubts about even walking that far. It all added spice to the experience.

Finally, I saw a hill with a tree at its top that looked like it might be the summit. Certainly the road led right to it. I drove up to it and then backed down a bit and swung the Samurai sideways so I didn't have to bet everything on the emergency brake and then I got out to look around. The hill was small on the top. From the center with its single old Eucalyptus tree, if you went out 15 feet or so, you found the ground began to drop off. The most gradual approach was the one the Samurai was now sitting across. The wind was strong here and it cooled off the sun's heat. It felt really isolated and clean and special there. I looked at the ground and wondered how many people had stopped at this same spot and thought similar things. Even back to before the Europeans, when the Rapa Nui would have come with their tatoos and their world-

view so unimaginable to us, they could have seen the view and felt the wind just as I did now. Perhaps they thought it was sacred ground. I looked around even more carefully, wondering what they might have left so long ago, hidden here or buried there.



**Figure 48 – By the Eucalyptus looking south towards Hanga Roa**

I sat under the tree on the shady northeastern side looking towards the ocean at Anakena to my left and the Poike peninsula directly ahead and I got out my lunch which I'd made onboard the previous night. It was a simple sandwich of cheese, lettuce, tomatoes and onions. I also had a small green apple and a container of Flan as well as my water. I ate and soaked up the thought of where I was - on the most isolated island in the world, on or near the highest point under the single tree that stood there. I said "thank you", for my life and this moment, to the spirit behind this manifestation.



**Figure 49 - Lunch under the Eucalyptus**

When I finished the apple, I tossed the core down the slope where some small someone would find it. Who knows if its seeds could take in this place? Let nature decide. The rest, I packed up and put into my lunch bag. I stood up again and took another long look at the ground here. The sense that it was a special place was strong and I wondered if there was something here which I was supposed to find. After a few minutes, I found a small piece of obsidian on the ground under the tree. It was the second one I'd found today. The first I found just in front of the Ahu I'd explored at Maitaki Te Moa. I'd thought that one was significant and I felt the same about this one - good signs, both. I'd been watching for obsidian since Gertraude had mentioned it.

I also found several patches of what looked like moss between the roots of the Eucalyptus. I remembered the small bit of moss I'd brought home with me from Corsica in 1994 and how, even today, I still treasure that small bit of life from that distant island as it grows on a stone in a bowl on the deck behind our house. I took a small piece about an inch by  $\frac{3}{4}$ 's of an inch of the moss along with the dirt it clung to and I put it



into a small plastic sack to take with me. As I'm writing this, sailing through the empty open sea towards Ducie Island, it sits here basking in the light of the desk lamp. I hope it makes it all the way home with me. Life from the most remote island from the highest spot on it from under the single tree that stands there. I love it.

I looked around the surroundings of the hilltop I was on more closely and I could now see that I was not really at the absolute pinnacle of the island yet. The road continued on from here going down for a ways and then up more steeply to another place, which might or might not be the ultimate height. I loaded my things back into the Samurai and took off again after glancing at my watch and deciding that I would have to be where ever I was going by 1530 or turn around. This felt like a reasonable margin or safety. As I drove again, I could see a small caldera that was hidden until your position rose above its edge. The road passed a hundred feet or so below its rim and at the nearest point, I stopped and walked up to see its interior. There wasn't any water, just grass and a few small trees there. A little bowl with its own private piece of sky.

I continued on and this time, I was sure I could see the top and, indeed, when I came to it, there were several makeshift cairns of rocks saying "we were here - see our transient signal just like so many other pilings of rocks come and gone in this place". And, nearby, a small pedestal of concrete two feet on a side and barely an inch or two above the surrounding ground. It sat embedded on what was the highest spot and from its center rose a small piece of rebar signaling that whatever had been placed here by whatever official at whatever time with whatever pompous ceremony – well...it wasn't here any more.

I stood here and took another 360-degree panorama capturing the entire Island. I tried to set the camera up to automatically take a picture of me and Samurai from the pedestal but my technical skills didn't seem sufficient to convince the camera to perform this little service for me. So my friends will always just have to take my word for it that I was actually there.



**Figure 50 - The top of Easter Island**

After one last look, I began my descent. There was only one spot on the return that worried me particularly (so long as it didn't rain). I remembered that on the way up, I'd encountered a steep down slope between where I'd eaten lunch and the pinnacle. On that section, it had been hard to keep the little Samurai from sliding, as I'd come down it. I wondered how well it would climb that same section. When I came to it, I could see that there were no particularly dangerous rocks jutting out that prevented me from making a fast run at it so the little Samuri climbed it sure footed the first try.

I encountered another small caldera I'd missed seeing on the way up. I jumped out and had a look at this one too. It was a bit bigger than the previous one and without water it was as well. Apparently, neither of these was Rano Aroi because I'd been told that it held water and reeds much like the big Rano Kao crater. So I never did see Rano Aroi.

I drove carefully but quickly down the hills and in 20 minutes I was back on the Anakena - Vinapu road. I realized that I didn't have time for any more major adventures so I'd have to skip my plan of ascending the Poike peninsula to Val a Heva. So I still have an adventure in store here if I return. I turned back towards town and I was thinking about my call to Sharon and looking forward to it. I was also feeling good about having had such a fine private adventure for myself. As I drove, I could see the sea to my left towards Vaihu and Hanga Poukura. There were fields and woods and open grasslands and houses and buildings scattered widely. It was really hard to believe that I was out on a speck of land a thousand miles from anywhere else. It all looked so pastoral, verdant and ordinary.

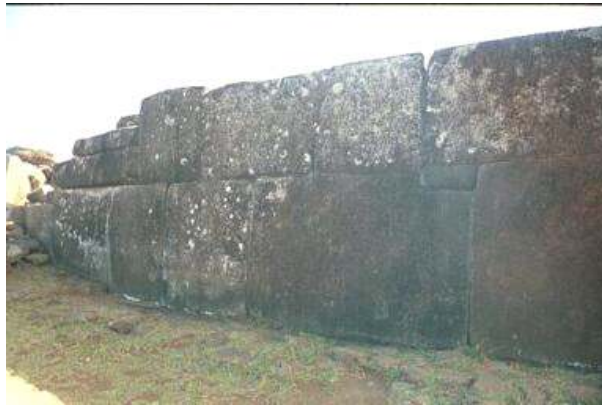
There was one impression of the island that continually surprised me and that was its size. I know what its geographical size is and I've poured over the maps and read the history. Many of the place names are familiar to me as are the records of various visitors like Routledge, Heyerdhal and Van Tilberg but none of that really gave me a direct feeling for how big it is. People always talk about Easter Island being a speck in the vast Pacific and it is but once on it, it seems quite large. Before, I wondered how up to 20,000 people could have lived there and how people could have caves hidden where only their families knew the entrances. I don't wonder anymore. It is much easier now to see how their civilization could have become so complex and self-obsessed - believing themselves alone in all existence here on the naval of the world.

Soon, I reentered the outskirts of Hanga Roa where I found Wolf and Alex, passengers like me, from the ship walking. I stopped to see where they were going and they said they were going to walk out to Vinapu which was about two or two and half miles from where I found them. I looked at my watch, it was about 1530, and I said, "hop in", and I drove them to Vinapu. I hadn't seen it either and it is quite famous as this is the place where the Ahu stone work is so superior that Heyerdhal came to the firm conclusion that only masons from the Inca civilization could have done such fine work. This place was one of Heyerdhal's main reasons for asserting that Easter Island was at least partially settled from South America. The site now sits on the coast with the extreme eastern end of the airport runway just above it.

We walked in and looked at the site. The stones are just as everyone says. They are joined very finely. The rest of the site looks very similar to the other sites; both restored and tumbled down at the same time. The quality of the Moais and the Topknots are identical so far as I could see. It is only the stone work of the Ahu that appears to be of such superior quality compared to other locations on the island.



**Figure 51 - The Ahu at Vinapu**



**Figure 52 - Detail of the Ahu wall at Vinapu**

It was here, just in front of the Ahu, that I found my final piece of obsidian. It was a huge piece the size of my fist. It was spectacular and it was the only one. I saved it and gave it to Gertraude later that evening. I knew she wanted one.

I was getting concerned about time so as it drew close to 1550, I suggested that I had to go either with them or without as I had to get the car back and make a phone call. They elected to go and so we took off and drove back into Hanga Roa - this time passing around on the southern side of the airport (we'd come out via the north side). We arrived at the car rental place and it looked closed but no sooner than we got out of the car, the owner appeared and opened up. I pointed and my watch and mimed a question to him asking if I was returning the car in time and he indicated he was happy. Once inside, he told me that I'd gone off and left my credit card there. We all had a good laugh over that and I realized that these are very honest people. It turned out to be good fortune to have Wolf along as he speaks pretty fluent Spanish and, with his help, I asked where the "Entel Chile" office was. I knew it was open to at least 1800 from talking to the lady at LAN Chile. Wolf got the directions sorted out and we departed after some smiles and handshakes. It was about a 5 block walk and part way there, Alex took off on another errand and Wolf and I continued on alone.

Wolf is an interesting guy as I'm finding many of the people on this trip to be. He worked for the US government in their mapping operations for his career and he's been all over the world on assignments.

When we got to the street where Entel Chile was suppose to be, we found that the directions were 'approximate' again so we had to ask a young fellow walking by if he knew and he pointed up down the block and around the corner where we found it at last. Once inside, we had (with Wolf's translating help again) the lady call my house collect but all we got was the answering machine so I had her connect me to an AT&T operator and I placed the call against my AT&T card (which the operator said was the cheaper option anyway) and I called the machine and left Sharon a message. That was about 1620.



**Figure 53 - Having a beer on Easter Island with Wolf**

After that, we walked down to the harbor, which was only two short blocks from Entel, and we sat in an outside restaurant and had some beers at 800 pesos each (about \$1.70 each). Wolf told me more about his career and I told him about some of my experiences in the military during the Vietnam War. Sergei, the Russian radio operator who also doubles as a Zodiac driver was there and he came and talked with us a bit as well. The beers were so cold they were partially frozen but they were good. About 1710, I thought I'd make one last try to connect with Sharon so I walked down to the Entel office again and asked for an AT&T operator. I called but it was still the answering machine. I felt pretty guilty for letting my call slide to the end of the day instead of try several times during the day and thus improving my chances to connect with her. Also, once back on the ship, it occurred to me that I could have tried the cell phone number as well but I wasn't bright enough to think of it. I was pretty bummed because we may not talk now until I'm on the brink of returning home.



**Figure 54 - Downtown Hanga Roa with seawater swimming pool in foreground**

The trip back on the Zodiac was fairly uneventful. We escaped getting doused like we did the evening before. The two guides we had while we were on the island all came down to the dock to see us off which was really nice. I took a picture of one of them with Gertraude.



**Figure 55 - Gertraude, Wolf and our Easter Island guide, Alexandra waiting for the Zodiac**



**Figure 56 - Zodiac departure from Easter Island**

===== NEW DAY =====

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 4/9/99 0928 - 2<sup>nd</sup> day sailing towards Ducie Island  
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Well, it took all day yesterday to write up my second day on Easter Island. The net result was I didn't find time to say anything about what happened yesterday. Yesterday was a sailing day. The first of three we'll pass on our way to Ducie Island in the Pitcairn Group. I'm getting used to life at sea I think. I still go to the porthole and look at the long swells as they come by one after the other - raising and lowering the ship gently. I still go up on deck several times a day to look at the hugeness of the ocean and to watch the clouds and sky change. Yesterday, we spent about 30 minutes watching flying fish leaping and flying out of the way as the ship passed. I still do all these things but without the breathless wonder of the first days aboard.

Jeff gave a lecture yesterday about the mutiny on the Bounty, which was excellent. He was, of course, focused on what actually happened rather than on the Hollywood version of reality. In the afternoon, I went topside and lay about in the sun for 30 minutes or so but I'm more careful now after being burnt once. Most of the day was, as I said, spent typing in my notes from Easter Island. In the evening, we had a silly hat contest and then a game of Trivial Pursuit between the Marine Expedition crew and the passengers. This was the second contest. The passengers lost the first one but we won last night. All in all it was a pretty quiet day.



**Figure 57 - The entire silly hat contest gathering**

This morning, I'm working on my Neural Network program. I just came back from breakfast where we had an excellent political discussion.

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4/9/99 1714  
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Yah-hoo! I got e-mail from Sharon this evening. I was really hoping she'd try to send some e-mail. I guess I've read it about 10 times now. I went up and sent her a response so she'll know I received hers. She sent hers at 2330 last night and I got it at 1945 tonight. Quite a delay.

Anyway, that was some really good news! Today has been quiet. We have been sailing through some small squalls and the sea is a little rougher than it has been in days but it isn't much. We're due to drop anchor at Ducie Island tomorrow at about 1600. Shane says no swimming, however. Tiger sharks. We may go ashore in the Zodiacs tomorrow or wait for morning - it will depend on the sea and the time.

My Neural program is coming along. I can create and drag neural nodes around and I can link them and the links follow dragged nodes.

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Seas are getting rougher.

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An uneventful day thus far. Jeff gave a talk on the Mutiny on the Bounty which was good. Other than that, I finished the SciFi book, Standing Wave by Howard V. Hendrix, which I've been reading. LA and Alan are definitely getting copies of it. We are due to arrive at Ducie Island within the next few hours and in about 10 minutes, we'll have a lecture on Ducie and, perhaps, Henderson Island.

I have to admit that I am, for the first time on this trip, beginning to feel a bit bored. Ah well - not much to be done about it.

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4/10/99 1543  
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**Figure 58 - Landing at Ducie Island with Shuleykin offshore**

We're currently anchored off Ducie Island. It is a coral atoll and it looks a lot like the kinds of desert islands you see in various cartoons where the fellow is sitting in a beach chair waiting for his case of Chivas Regal to wash up. Zodiacs are going in at 1600 and we'll be back off again about 1800. Tomorrow, we'll have pretty much the entire day until we sail at 1600. I've got all my gear packed and ready to go including my snorkel stuff. This will be my first time to try it out.

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Back on board after our first excursion to Ducie Island. This was my first time on a coral atoll. It was interesting to say the least from the first moment we set foot on the island. The Zodiacs dropped us on a coral reef (the coral was dead so it wasn't as sharp as it could have been) which was just at water level as the small breakers rolled in. To get to shore, you had to walk along the reef top, which slanted towards the beach. On the landward side, there was deeper water and in it were completely tame tropical fish of various sizes and colors including spectacular green parrotfish.

Once ashore, your attention was immediately drawn to the material the beach was made of. It was thousands of pieces of coral of all sizes and shapes. Most of it was white near the water but it got darker as you went away from the beach and the ground rose. Mixed in among the white were pieces with red and orange on them. Every few feet were tame birds setting on their nests (Masked Boobies, Jeff called them). There were shells mixed in as well and it didn't take long until it was discovered that hermit crabs lived in some of these shells.



**Figure 59 - A Booby nesting on the coral beach**

We landed on the north side of the island. After awhile, Theresa led us west down the beach to a place where a path to the interior lagoon had been hacked through the underbrush. Jeff had warned us to be very careful as we walked through the underbrush because pelagic (meaning they live virtually their entire lives flying over the open ocean) birds nest here. Because they are so tame, they simply lay in the path until you are almost on them. If you don't go very slowly, they will leap up and try to run (since the brush is so thick, they can't fly here) and they can very easily break their legs on the irregular coral debris. Because they are pelagic, their legs are very stick-like and under-developed and, hence, easily breakable.

Scattered everywhere is the flotsam and jetsam thrown up by the sea on a place like this. Many round floats of the kind use on nets, bottles, plastic, and stuff of every description. I asked Jeff today how many ships visit Ducie per year and he said there are two and we're one of them. The rest of the time, the place just sits out here alone with the birds cawing and swooping and the surf breaking endlessly on the reef. It seems strange to look at a place and think that it sits here for so many months every year without a soul on it.

A five-minute walk took us through the brush (with a few delays for slow birds) to the interior lagoon. It is the classic enclosed coral lagoon. Towards the south, it is enclosed by water level reef with high surf breaking on it (the weather and the swells are currently (and perhaps always) driven in from the south) and three tiny mounds of land while the northwest to northeast quadrants are enclosed by the largest island, which we were on. The water in the lagoon was beautiful shades of blue near the sand and changed to a deeper blue further out.



**Figure 60 - Interior lagoon at Ducie**

I arrived at the inner lagoon to find that some of my trip-mates were already donning their snorkel gear and going in. I pulled my pack off my shoulder to get my flippers, snorkel and mask out and promptly



discovered that in my excitement looking at things as I walked here from the Zodiac, I hadn't noticed that my flippers and snorkel had fallen out of my pack somewhere along the way. I retraced my steps (with some slow bird delays again) and I found the errant items lying on the coral beach nearly where I started at the landing site.

After a trek to the outer beach and back to recover my lost gear, I arrived again at the inner lagoon. This time, I got my gear on and went in to try it out. It sounds easy but there were some logistics involved. First the coral is very hard to deal with to walk on without shoes or to sit on without butt protection so changing into snorkel gear is something that must be carefully thought out. Hopefully, the solution you come up with is close to the actual water because walking a long distance in the flippers is both frustrating, comical and tiring. Once, I'd worked all this out, I waded in.

This was only my third time to snorkel. Last times were 1994 and 1986. All my equipment was new and untested so, needless to say, I didn't just plunge in. The good news was that my facemask sealed the first time I applied negative pressure. I walked out to about waist high level water and then tried it. It worked like a champ. Even the mechanism, which deals with water coming down the tube, worked great. It was windy and there was some chop so water did come down several times but all I had to do was blow and it was all expelled easily.

Underwater was beautiful. Sand and coral and a few fish greeted me as I went under. I leaned forwards and began to use my flippers lightly to advance. At first, I stayed parallel to the shore where the depth isn't more that what I could stand up in. Once I'd spent a few minutes doing this and had some confidence, I turned away from the shore and moved out. It was amazing. One second there would be sand and coral just below you and then the bottom would suddenly drop down to 30 or 40 feet. It was all very three dimensionally sculpted in wild and weird forms. Coral heads, I guess you'd call them. The water was totally clear and the bottom was clearly visible at any depth I saw.

I discovered that when you are looking down, it is hard to see if someone is crossing your path snorkeling just ahead or beside you. More than once, I discovered someone immediately beside or in front of me. I swam around for 10 or 15 minutes and then came out. I wanted to see how my back felt. It is better but I'm still watching it carefully. Also, the sun was low and the sky was partially overcast so the light penetrating the water was less than it will be tomorrow when it is at the zenith. Then, I want to swim out quite a ways into the lagoon. You can see from how the water colors change that there are areas out in the center of the lagoon when the bottom comes up again quite close to the surface.

Also, tomorrow, I want to talk a long walk around the entire large island. When else will I ever in the life be on such an isolated spot on this earth. I want to savor it.

The Zodiac return to the ship was exciting. I'm always a bit amazed that some of these people, elderly as they are and as physically frail as they can seem, make it in and out of the Zodiacs again and again without mishap. The skill of the Marine Expedition staff in managing these entries and exits is impressive. On shore, we're always confronted with surf and at ship-side, the Zodiacs are always rising and falling precipitously with the swells as the ship sits at anchor. The transfer to or from the Zodiac from the gangway of the ship is, I think, the most dangerous part.

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4/10/99 2034  
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I find myself wondering a lot how long it will be until I receive Sharon's next e-mail. I'm really looking forward to the contact. I miss her.

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4/11/99 0829  
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Getting ready to go ashore for a full day on Ducie Island. I've got all my snorkeling gear again.

Had a good conversation this AM with Alex over coffee and then breakfast. He likes to talk about the world and its ills and what can be done about it. The two doctors, Ann and Paul, joined in also. It was great fun.

Gertraude says she's going to stay aboard for today's outing. She wants to make sure her foot's OK to go ashore at Henderson.

We set our clocks back another hour last night so now we're past PST and into the next one west of the US West Coast. Windows calls it Alaska Time zone.

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4/11/99 2021  
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A long day with major fun. I'd say it was a 10 out of 10 day. It had so many things - a desert island, incredible beach combing, adventure and a pristine inner lagoon to snorkel in. Even the ending was really fine as we sat up topside and sailed away from Ducie, the evening sky was so pretty and the breeze and the temperature were just perfect. To top it all off, as we were sitting around in the bar discussing the day and waiting for dinner, Sergei, the Russian radio operator came in and gave me my second e-mail from Sharon.

We began running Zodiacs to shore about 0830 and by 0915 or so everyone one was transferred that wanted to go. Gertraude and some others stayed aboard. Once ashore, we established a sort of base-camp to which everyone would return and at which we could leave what ever we didn't want to carry like our life jackets (required on every Zodiac transfer). Theresa was going to lead a walk around the East End of the island.

To get the perspective, you have to know that Ducie consists of four islands, which rise from a basically circular coral reef surrounding a lagoon. We landed on the northern side of the northern-most island, which is also the largest by far. As an aside, Ducie is the furthest east and the furthest south coral lagoon island in the Pacific.

Theresa's group, which I'd joined, was going to go east and work their way all the way around the eastern end of the northern island until they'd come around to the inner lagoon and then they were going to continue until they reached the snorkeling site which is basically directly inland from the landing base-camp site. There were so many things to see while walking. Jeff, Theresa's husband, who is a naturalist and an avid birder, was constantly scanning and pointing out birds. If you are a birder, the islands we are visiting are extremely interesting because of the bird species which live here and no where else. On the beach, as we walked, were every sort of wild coral shapes and pieces you could imagine. There was a lot of man-made stuff as well such as fishing net floats and odd debris including materials left over from ship wrecks of which these small island have quite a few recorded. It was hot and very bright. I was wearing long pants and a tee shirt and I'd applied sun block to my arms and neck. The breeze helped but whenever it lapsed, it was a cooker. It was during this walk that I ran out of film in my camera and went to change to another roll and discovered that in my inattention, I'd brought two used rolls rather than two new ones so, other than for underwater photograph, my photos for the day were over since all my film supplies were back on the ship.

As we walked, the group became more and more spread out and finally, at one point, Jeff and several of us came to a place where Jeff wanted to cut across the island directly to the lagoon rather than continue all the way around the end. Everyone went that way except for Alex and myself and we elected to make the entire circumnavigation of the eastern end of the island. Each of the four islands has a name but I don't know them. I do know that the small ones are generically called Motus.

Alex and I walked and continued a discussion we'd begun over dinner the night before and had touched on this morning over coffee again. It was wide ranging over history, sociology, philosophy and a lot of other "ologies". It was great fun. He asked what my deepest goals were and after I told him mine, he shared his. He wants to own and develop an island into a resort. He said he's become a millionaire through stock market investments and he doesn't care about making more money but, for some reason, he's really focused on locating and developing an island.

When we reached the extreme end of the northern island (which was due east of the center point in the lagoon, bare reef stretched between  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile from where we were to the first of the three Motu islets. We decided to see if we could walk over and visit the Motu. It was a long hike across reef surface. It was very wide and flat. Flat, at least in the large sense. Once you were actually walking on it, it was fairly irregular, as were all the reef tops. At one point we stopped and looked at some water on the reef. We could see that it appeared to be slowly moving onto the reef as if the tide was beginning to come in. We considered that it might be coming in but then we looked around and found another place where it looked like the water was ebbing out. We shrugged our shoulders and pressed on. Soon we reached the Motu itself. It was indistinguishable from the larger island in all respects other than size. It had coral beach all the way around and low and fairly impenetrable bushes in the interior. We walked around it to the farther side to see if we could go to the second Motu but when we got there, there was a fairly narrow but deep passage between the islets so we continued on around the islet we were on.

When we arrived back at our original arrival point, we could see that the tide was indeed coming in and that large sections of the reef we'd crossed were now under moving water. It became obvious at this point that keeping our shoes dry was not an option and that there was nothing to be gained by waiting so we started across. I didn't feel worried. I recalled how essentially level the entire reef surface was and that meant two things. One, the water would not be rushing with very much force in any particular place and, two, the water would not be significantly deeper than the amount the tide had risen at any given point either. In fact, both of these suppositions were born out on our crossing and we never stepped into water more than 12 inches deep the entire way and it was always moving fairly slowly.

Once back on the northern island, we continued on around on the lagoon side. Theresa had told us about some holes in the lagoon bottom where you could see whirlpools setup when the tide was exiting the lagoon. The entire island at this point in its evolutionary history is limestone-based and these holes probably led directly or indirectly to the island's exterior, hence the whirlpools. Alex and I parted company because he wanted to see if some more material from an old shipwreck we'd found had washed up further into the bushes beyond the coral and I wanted to press on around the inner lagoon (towards lunch). It was then that I found two of the holes in the lagoon bottom. Both were only 15 feet or so off the beach and with the water crystal clear, finding them was not hard. I think a Volkswagen bug could have fit into each of them. When I saw them, the tide was waxing so there were no whirlpools but people, later in the day, said they saw the water whirlpooling (counterclockwise).

After seeing the whirlpool holes, I blazed a new trail through the brush to the outside of the island and then worked my way back to the base-camp for lunch.

After lunch (sandwiches we made the night before and then carried over in a Zodiac by the Marine Expeditions people, I grabbed my snorkel gear from where I'd left it on the beach and headed for the lagoon again to do some swimming and underwater sightseeing.

At the lagoon, I could see that most of the people who wanted to snorkel had done so in the morning so there were only three or four of us in the afternoon. A lot of people had gone back to the ship on the noon Zodiac run (didn't like the heat I guess). I put my gear on and waded it.

The water was cool to the skin but just barely. The surface of the lagoon was covered with little wavlets not more than 2 inches high which was perfect (don't want water constantly washing over the upper end of the snorkel and ending up mixed with the air you are trying to breathe). The view under water was much as it was yesterday except the sun was higher and so things were much more illuminated. Also, I was more comfortable and confident of my equipment and myself today. Yesterday, I found it unnerving to be swimming over bottom that was only three or four feet below me and then to have the bottom drop into a huge depth 50 or 60 feet down. It was sort of like an underwater version of fear of heights. Today, this feeling waned the longer I swam. In the end, my big fear was that my back, which has been quite sensitive, might seize up on me while I was swimming. I knew, if it did, I would have to have a lot of presence of mind to just relax and let the spasm clear even if it meant holding my breath for a few moments while it did.

In the end, I could feel that it was tired and complaining a bit but it never seized and so I just kept on while watching it closely.

Some people who have snorkeled in a lot of places said that the Ducie Lagoon was really quite special because of the huge coral heads and the strong three dimensionality of the underwater landscape. I didn't have much to compare against it but I was certainly impressed. It was like a wonderland underwater the way the bottom dropped out and then rose in piles and pillars of coral. Swimming through all of it were various fish including the brilliant green Parrotfish that eat coral. At one point, I was about four or five feet from one munching on the reef and I just stopped swimming and breathing and became quiet and I could hear the small crunch each time the fish took a bite of the coral. I took several photos with my REI underwater camera. It is a very strange experience using a camera underwater. We'll just have to see how the photos turn out.

So, about 1430, I wrapped up the snorkeling and grabbed my gear and went back to the base-camp and waited for the 1530 Zodiac back to the Academic Shuleykin. It was hot sitting there waiting so I just went into the water and found a flat piece of reef to sit on and let the small waves batter me and keep me cool while I watched the fish swim right up to me feet.



**Figure 61 - Ducie Island as we begin to pull away**

All in all, it was an excellent and exhilarating day. Getting Sharon's e-mail was a very nice present too once I was back on board and cleaned up. Hard to imagine it when she says it is rainy and cold and snowy. Bummer - sure isn't like that here <g>.

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4/12/99 1712  
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Another very full day - this time at Henderson Island. It is 1715 now and we departed the island about an hour or so ago. We are currently moving directly into a tropical rainstorm, which will be our first significant weather since the evening we left Valparaiso, Chile. The sky looks really ominous but the rain, which is falling lightly now, is quite warm. Reminds of the years I spent on the Gulf Coast. The crew just came on the ship-wide intercom and asked us to close all our portholes so it apparently going to blow pretty good or else they are just taking standard precautions.



**Figure 62 - Henderson Island - 100' up to the flat top**

We anchored at Henderson this morning about 0730. We dropped anchor at the extreme western end of the north coast of the island. This morning, about 0900, Shane and most of the Marine Expedition crew took a Zodiac and went ashore at the standard landing site to check things out before they committed passengers to a landing. They didn't like what they saw. Normally, I think the weather approaches this area from the Southwest but today, the wind was coming straight down from the north and, since we were going to land on the northern side of Henderson, we were getting the wind driven swells at the landing site. That's my theory of why the landing site was bad today. In any case, they had no problem getting ashore but they had a hell of a time getting off again. Both Steve and Shane each got sucked out to sea by the rips while they were trying to get the Zodiac out again and each had quite a swim to get back. The problem was that once ashore, the breakers kept rolling in one after the other without a break they could use to get back out again. It took them 20 minutes to make it out to sea again. We watched a lot of this long-distance via binoculars from the ship.

Shane told us by radio that the landing there was off for the day and that they were going to head eastward around the cape there to see if there might be a landing spot there and off they went. I was drowsy at that point and all packed and ready to go so I went and lay down on my bunk and snoozed until they made their next announcement.

Henderson Island is quite different from Ducie. Ducie was a coral atoll. These form when a mid oceanic volcanic peak gets a ring of coral around it and then the peak slowly erodes away or subsides and only the coral ring or atoll remains. Henderson was such an atoll at one time (four by six miles in size) but the theory is that when the volcano that made Pitcairn Island came up, it caused the tectonic plate under Henderson to rise. The result is that Henderson is now a flat plateau of limestone (old coral) 100 feet above the sea and what had been its central lagoon is on top and dry. The island's periphery is about 90 to 95% sheer 100 foot cliffs undercut dramatically by the sea and in many places carved with giant water level caves and blowholes. The remaining 5 to 10% of the coast is made of sandy beaches behind wicked coral reef approaches. It was at the largest of these beaches on the north coast, that Shane and crew tried to land this morning.

We could see a grove of palm trees behind this morning's landing site. The ME crew had already told us that there was a steep trail up from behind the grove to the top of the plateau. From there a trail had been hacked into the interior. Apparently, the brush is so thick up top that getting off the trail is not much of an option. The original plan for the day was to go ashore at 0900 to 1000 and then be off by 1900 that evening. It didn't work out that way.

An aside - I just went up topside to see what the weather's doing. I gave my new Dutch Harbor outfit a good testing out. The warm rain is driving so hard, I couldn't keep my eyes open in that direction for long. I also now know what the expression, "the wind in the rigging" means though it is perhaps not the same rigging that the old sailors were referring to. It was a gas. The waves haven't come up much yet but I could see from the wind direction indicator that the darkest clouds off to the northwest are bearing down on

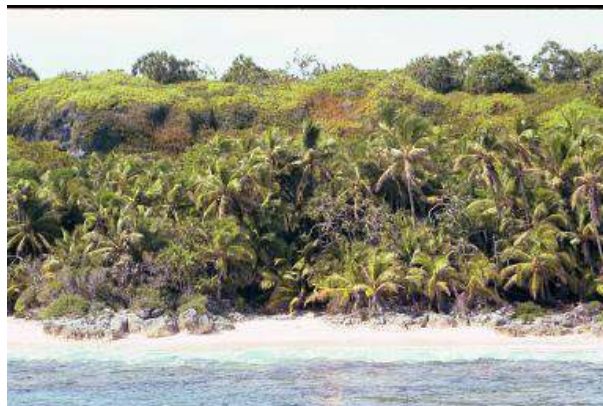
us. I may get the storm I've always wanted yet. Though I hope it doesn't wash out our Pitcairn landing. That would really be a shame.

Well, back to the story of what happened today at Henderson Island.

Shane and crew came back from their reconnoitering of the western cape and said that while we couldn't land, those of us who wanted to could go in Zodiacs and that we'd go along the coast and have a closer look at the island. I think that of 35 of us, only four elected to stay aboard the Academic Shuleykin.

We grabbed pre-made sandwiches and filled our water bottles and loaded up. I was on the first zodiac loaded. There were eight to 10 passengers and two crew. Our driver was Sergei, the Russian radio operator who some of the passengers think is a bit of a hotrodder as a Zodiac pilot - but I like him. Matt from the ME crew was also along. He and Jayne are the one's who loaned me the short wave I listen to VOA and BBC on most nights.

The plan was to go around the Northwestern cape and run along the cliffs on the Western side of the island for awhile so we could get the drift of the place. It was fascinating. Huge rollers would swell past us and run on in and smash into the cliffs and pour into the huge caves and blast back out again. Large reflection waves would often come back at us from the cliffs as well. We had four Zodiacs. Three had 8 passengers each plus crew and one had Shane and Steve and two Russians. As I said, along most of the coast, there is no place to land. You'd be better to just keep swimming along beside the island than to try to go ashore on most of it. With sheer 100 foot cliffs deeply indented at the bottom, you'd either be chewed to shreds by the waves and coral or, if you were lucky, you might make it up onto a pile of rubble or onto a high spot in a cave and then where would you go? It would be ugly. I had cause to think about this more later.



**Figure 63 - Where we would have landed**

At first we stayed out from the cliffs a ways but then Shane, who has been driving boats since he was 8, and it really shows in his skill, took his Zodiac in closer to have a better look at some of the remarkable caves and features. Sergei then took us in closer too. With Matt watching closely over the front so that we didn't discover a coral head the hard way, we cruised in and out and along the coast working our way south along the western side of the island. I had my camera along. Normally, in the Zodiac, I have it inside a sealed plastic bag as insurance against us getting flipped or a large wave from coming in and dousing us. Today, however, I was taking a bit more of a chance since I wanted to get some photos of the stuff I was seeing.



**Figure 64 - Shane in close by the undercut cliffs and caves**

The cliffs and caves and waves and everything were so dramatic that I shot quite a few photos until I finally decided I was being redundant. Even so, every once in awhile, another scene would appear so much cooler than the last that I'd whip the camera out again and fire away. We came to two or three places where the waves would force themselves into a narrow space with such force that a huge spray would erupt straight up like a geyser with a huge cloud of accompanying mist and sound. They reminded me of a place on the Baja California coast called La Bufadora (the blowhole).

At another place, when a large roller would crash into the cliffs, a truly awesome sound would result. At first we thought it was just the force of the surf against the cliffs but then we began to realize that the sound was being naturally amplified. Many of the cliffs are riddled with caves and many of these are undoubtedly interconnected. In this case, the surf would pour into a cavern and create a huge roar and the sound would go up through the wall and come back out directed at us from several large cave openings there. Theresa named the place "Dragon Breath". The sound it made was quite impressive.

We continued for quite a ways and then Shane radioed that perhaps we should get together and do some transfers as some folks wanted to circumnavigate the entire island and other felt they'd seen enough. There was some radio chatter but nothing seemed to get decided and we kept meandering on southward down the western coast. On our Zodiac, there were only two of us who clearly wanted to go on and the rest felt they'd rather turn back. I was thinking that I was about to experience my first inter-Zodiac transfer at sea. Big fun so long as I could keep the camera out of the water.

But we kept wandering and looking until, after another 20 minutes or so, Shane called us all on the radios again and focused on the question of who wanted to do what. The discussion didn't get far until someone asked how far we'd come now and various opinions were kicked around until the consensus was that we were almost halfway now. At that point, it seemed foolish not to just all continue together since, if the estimate was right, it was as far one way now as the other. Once this was decided, we all took off again.

We kept on and after awhile we rounded a cape (probably the southwest cape) and the seas became a good deal rougher and spray started to come across all of us much more often. I put the camera securely into its belt holder and slid it around on my waist until it was on the opposite side from where the spray was coming from.

My sense was that the trip's nature changed subtly at this point from a journey to see the sights to a journey to make it back to the ship. The waves were bigger and we were farther from shore and the things the coast was showing us were not so much different from what it had already shown us. We drove on for a long time fighting the bounce of the Zodiac as it fought its way through the sea. About this time, we ran out of gas and the engine sputtered to a stop. We had an entire second container which was full and it only took a moment to make the change over but, still, it was a thoughtful moment as I looked at the surf crashing against the line of sheer coral cliffs not more than one or two hundred yards from us that stretched both ways as far as I could see. Sergei got us restarted and we pressed on.

On and on we drove through the waves hanging on to the ropes on the sides of the Zodiac. We came to another cape (probably the southeastern cape) and as we neared it, the waves built and built as the sea became focused trying to make its way around the point of land jutting out. We were riding our way up and down large waves that seemed to come from all directions as they passed us and reflected off the point. Some of the other Zodiacs were in sight but they remained at a long distance away. We fought our way around the cape and I half way expected to see the Academic Shuleykin then but all that greeted us was another long stretch of coast. All the way up the coast (the western side of the island) we could see the seas and they looked fairly rough though not nearly as bad as they'd been rounding the cape.

The trip up the west coast seemed very long to me. Most of us were uncomfortable by now from sitting in awkward manners. In a Zodiac, the front is always higher than the back and you also have to lean inward and hold onto a rope that loops along the outside top of the Zodiac. You lean in because otherwise, you may be tossed out when you hit the next wave as they can hit, sometimes quite by surprise, from most any direction though usually they come from the front. Zodiacs are fairly light and they bounce quite a bit and they zoom across the waves. I was worried that my back would become cramped since I was sitting unevenly and under constant strain. Also, after an hour or two of bouncing up and down, your but becomes quite tired of it all. One good thing was that we are all, apparently, fully acclimated to the sea's motion because in the three and a half hours we slammed, plunged, rocked and bobbed, no one felt motion sick that I was aware of.

After an interminably long time, we finally made it up the west coast and approached what I hoped would be the last cape before we'd see the Academic Shuleykin. I wasn't really sightseeing during this stretch other than an occasional glance at the cliffs. I spent most of my time shifting around to get comfortable and to relieve tired muscles. Given that the other Zodiacs were just on the edge of being visible and given that the seas were high, I spent some time looking at the cliffs, which were all sheer and deadly along this entire coast. I was reflecting that everything depended on the motor continuing to run and on our not capsizing.

There was a light moment along this stretch. Matt said that he had to make a call of nature and that it couldn't wait any longer so he had Sergei stop the boat and he climbed over the side into the water so he could pee. Then, once he was in and the cold water hit him, he said he couldn't so we all waiting for several minutes until his system sorted out its priorities and he climbed back into the Zodiac and we were off again.

As we finally approached the cape, the seas began to get high again. Higher even than the previous cape's waves had been. Sergei cut the cape fairly close too. The other Zodiacs rounded it quite a bit farther out than we did. It is really amazing how the sea acts at a cape like this. The waves come from several directions and they add and subtract to each other in unpredictable ways. At one point, I saw several waves suddenly 'add' to each other and the water just seemed to rise straight up near the actual cape itself. About this time I noted that our Zodiac was beginning to take water in. We'd been told, in our Zodiac briefing, that Zodiacs could be full of water and still float fine. We'd also been told that they have five separate air compartments and even if one is holed, the boat will still perform reasonably. Given all of this, I wasn't unduly worried about the water sloshing in the back. It did seem to be weighing us down and making the stern even lower in the water than it normally is and it also seemed to be slowing our speed. The net was it was a slow slog around the cape with lots of water for everyone inside the Zodiac and flying over and into it and a view of the wild crashing surf to our left reminding us of the power of the water.

Some few minutes after we cleared the cape proper and the seas calmed a bit, three things happened. One, we spotted the Academic Shuleykin far down anchored off the next cape. We'd just cleared the northeast cape and she was sitting down off the northwestern cape of Henderson Island. Two, Ron Wyman, sitting across from me looked at me and then looked significantly at the gas container we were running on. It was floating in the water sloshing at the back of the Zodiac. The remarkable thing was not that it was floating but how high it was floating. For it to be floating that high, it could only have two or three inches of gasoline remaining in it and it was a long way to the Shuleykin. The third thing that I noted, though it



wasn't nearly so pressing, was that behind the Shuleykin, the sky was beginning to look quite dark. It had been three and a half hours since we set out and the weather was changing.

I think I began to feel a sense of concern at this point that wasn't just based on things that might happen. It was beginning to be based on things that had an increasing probability of actually happening. The good news was that the north coast has about half of its length composed of sand beaches behind reef approaches. This, of course, was a whole lot more palatable than a sheer 100 foot cliffs of pounding surf and razor sharp coral. We drove on and on and the boat seemed to get more and more sluggish as more water came in and we had to lug the additional weight. Sergei had the motor cranked up to full power and it was stirring up a lot of froth behind us but we weren't moving particularly fast. At this point, we were far ahead of the other two Zodiacs with passengers and Shane, who had been in sight of us, though distantly, until now, decided to double back and to check on the other Zodiacs so we were now in the final stretch alone towards the Shuleykin.

Sergei was cutting a direct course for the ship and 100 to 150 yards to our left was the morning's original prospective landing site. I was thinking that if we lost power, we'd at least have a good chance to get ashore there with only a few cuts from the coral. Beyond this beach was a small cape off which the ship was moored. The seas off this cape were not wild as they were at some of the other capes, which is probably why we anchored there. The cape, however, was a rocky escarpment with jagged boulders in the surf.

Just as I thought we were surely going to make it, the gasoline ran out and we were adrift. The irony of it. We'd come all the way around the entire island to lose power 100 yards from the ship and 150 yards off the surf and the cape. At this point, none of the other Zodiacs were in sight of us. We looked around and found that our Zodiac was equipped with one oar. Sergei radioed the ship and told them our state. People were at the rails looking down at us. We were so close that I wasn't very concerned but I was wondering if we were in a current and which way it was going to draw us and how fast. Apparently Sergei wondered too as he picked up the single oar and climbed to the front of the Zodiac and tried to paddle as best he could. Several of us leaned over the sides and began to hand paddle the Zodiac towards the ship. This went on for several minutes until we got the clear sense that if anything we were slowly drifting closer to the ship so we didn't need to be particularly concerned.



**Figure 65 - Out of gas 200 yards from the ship and paddling by hand**

It crossed my mind several times during the last 15 minutes of this adventure that we were far ahead of the other two passenger carrying Zodiacs (including the one carrying Gertraude) and, if we were having fuel supply problems, they might also have them and be in a less favorable position when their fuel ran out. I was also remembering that just last year a passenger died here when a Zodiac flipped during an aborted landing attempt. As much as we'd all like to treat all of this as a harmless adventure, things could be very serious indeed with just one or two miscalculations or oversights.

Things sorted themselves out perfectly in rapid order, however. First Jeff came by in his Zodiac and wanted to know why we were bobbing about there and we told him and then he asked if we had any Grey Pupon and gave us a big grin and said that as soon as he could off load his passengers, he'd be back. While he was unloading, Shane arrived and threw us a rope and laughed at us a bit and towed us over to the ship where we all disembarked after our bigger than expected adventure. In a few minutes, Theresa's Zodiac showed up with Gertraude and the others and everything ended quite well.

It all turned out well and everyone made fairly light of it but I think it was dicey for a bit at least for our Zodiac. Dicey and exciting. I hadn't expected to be out there thinking to myself as to what my real life and death options might be if our fuel ran out at this point or at that point. I wasn't particularly scared but I definitely felt a sense of intensity about our little Zodiac run around Henderson Island. Shane told us later that so far as they know, no one has circumnavigated Henderson before in Zodiacs. It was a good day and an intense one. Oh, and it began to rain pretty intensely not long after we pulled anchor and departed from Henderson.

Tomorrow, we'll awake to find ourselves anchored off Pitcairn Island, which is one of the major destinations of this entire trip. Hopefully, tonight's storm will blow over so we can make a landing.

I sent Sharon e-mail tonight when I got back to the Shuleykin - this was in response to the one she sent me last night.

===== NEW DAY =====

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I think my e-mail to Sharon crossed paths with hers. I arrived back at the ship to find two e-mails from her saying, in the first, that I hadn't replied to her so she resent it. The second dealt with the stock market. I just came down from the radio room where I sent her another response saying that I had delayed a full day in responding last time and giving her some input on the market which she says is looking quite good.

I'm tired. It has been another long physically and experientially intense day. When we awoke today, it was iffy about us going ashore at Pitcairn but Shane finally said it was a go. Loading people into the Zodiacs at the side of the ship was certainly as wild as I've seen it. The sea swells were raising and dropping the Zodiac six and eight feet and in between those wild swings, each passenger had to step across. So far, no one's been hurt which is a tribute to the ME crew's skills.

Pitcairn looked very much like the photographs I've seen. The small landing bay, the large breakers rolling in, the boathouses and then, above on the plateau, Adamstown. It is a wild and jagged volcanic thing rising abruptly up from the sea.



**Figure 66 - First view of Pitcairn with boathouse landing area**

Once ashore, I spoke briefly to a young blond fellow who was there with a young girl. His looks reminded me of Dan, my son, a lot. I asked if that was his sister and he smiled and said that this was a nice complement but, no, it was his daughter. We both had a good laugh over that and I told him that as I get older, everyone is always looking younger and younger to me. I shed my Life Preserver in the place where we were piling them and then Anna Mae and I began to climb the "Hill of Difficulty" which is the long path that climbs the 500 feet up to Adamstown. Many of the others were hiring the Pitcariners to take them up on the four-wheel drive dune buggy vehicles.

Part way up the climb, we stopped and saw the plaque commemorating the Mutiny on the Bounty men. I noticed that only the names of the European men were listed - none of the Polynesians. We also saw the Anchor from a ship that sank at Ducie in 1881 and which was raised and brought to Pitcairn in 1991 for display.



**Figure 67 - Plaque commemorating the Mutiny on the Bounty men.**

We climbed some more and that brought us into the town proper and right to the town square where the people had put up tarps and laid out their goods for us to look at and buy. I bought 10 postcards and ten stamps and then promptly sat down and filled out nine of them and then took them inside and mailed them. I figured that I could be none too prompt seeing as how they will probably grace the mail boxes of their intended recipients in as little as two or three months.



**Figure 68 - View of the landing area from the top**

There was some shuffling around and at one point I was going to go off with Alex but then only two plus the driver could fit on the four wheeler so I was on my own. It was just as well - I like to wander by myself most times in a situation like this. I had a map and I took off up the dirt track in front of the square. I had a vague plan to go see Christian's Cave. I was quickly distracted, however, and went off down a road which said "Thursday October's house". I never found the house but I did find the graveyard and I wandered about there for awhile and then went out and headed up the road again.



**Figure 69 - walking through the woods on Pitcairn**

This time I took off up a trail to Christian's Cave but I found myself in front of the school where a number of people from our ship were looking about and talking to the teacher - a really nice lady and her husband from New Zealand who are 18 months into her two year contract to teach here. Daniel's a builder so he's been helping with building projects around the island. They rebuilt the boathouse, for example. I looked around the school and the attached museum and talked with the schoolteacher about their life here. Later, at the lunch get together, I had a chance to talk to her husband, Daniel. He's quite an interesting person as well. I stayed and visited until it was almost time for lunch and then I started my walk back down to the square. Before I left, I asked if they had a CD player and, in fact, they did so I gave the teacher my copy of The Chants of India by Ravi Shankar. It felt like a good thing to do.

Along the way, I came across Kristen and Ann who were being "guided" by eight year old Ariel who every one agreed was the precocious darling of the island. She had apparently been shaming adults for most of the day by demonstrating her fearlessness with respect to all kinds of things to climb on and heights in general. She took us to visit a friend of hers and the two of them showed us a garden there. . When I last saw her, she was up in a Banyan Tree.



**Figure 70 -Ariel and her friend in the garden**

===== NEW DAY =====

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I was too tired last night to finish these notes so I went to bed. I got up a half-hour ago and joined the early morning coffee bunch in the bar and went out and had a look at Oeno Island. We are sitting at the moment in fairly heavy swells about a mile from the atoll. It is a pretty small place and it looks especially so from this distance. The skies are overcast and gray. I think we were quite lucky to get into Pitcairn yesterday. It rained quite hard the day before and as we were leaving last night, it began to rain again. My guess is that we will not be making a landing at Oeno Island today. Shane said yesterday that to land on this particular island, the conditions have to be particularly calm. The seas are rolling the ship hard enough now that things are starting to want to slide back and forth across my desk.

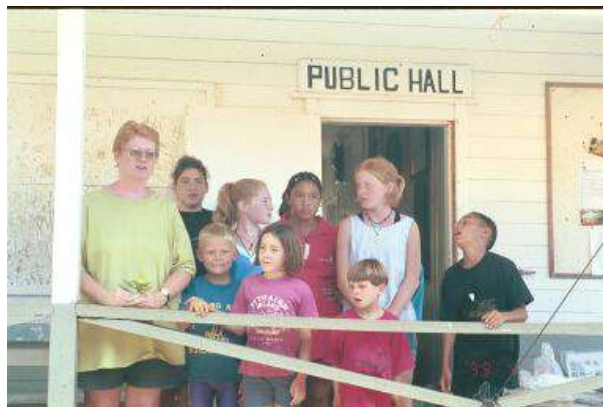
To resume with yesterday, I arrived back at the town's square to find preparations for lunch well underway. I found the blond fellow I'd met at the landing site again and we started talking and we really hit it off. His name is Hendrick Roos and his wife's name is Nicola and they are a German family, which has emigrated here to Pitcairn. So far as I know, they are the only ones which have wanted to do this and who have been approved for a very long time. They have three small children - two boys and a girl. Hendrick is 31 and, I believe his wife is the same or very close to it as they were in University together. Hendrick looks to me a lot like my older son, Dan.

During the lunch, which was jointly put on by the island people and the ship's people, I stirred around and also got to talk to Daniel, who is the husband of the schoolteacher. Daniel is a builder in New Zealand. He was a nice guy and we talked about his experiences on the island and about his impressions for awhile. He said he's experienced a bit of a cultural shock with respect to trying to get things done because there is a pervasive "Manana" attitude that you have to adjust to here. It is just a slower pace of life.



**Figure 71 - Lunch and shopping in the Adamstown square. Note the Post Office in the back to the left and the meeting hall to the right.**

I again sat and talked with Hendrick and we were getting along so well that I asked him what he was doing in the afternoon and if he would like to spend it walking about with me so that we could continue to talk and I could see some more of the island. He readily agreed. Before he could depart, however, he had to participate in some group singing that the Pitcairn Island people did to honor our visit. First, the schoolteacher led the children (there seem to be only about 10 or so on the island) in singing for us. Their singing, I thought, was quite good. Then, all of the Pitcairn Island people got up on the balcony of the Island Meeting Hall and sang to us. What they sang were religious songs and a farewell song, which they sing when visitors are leaving. The adults weren't nearly as on key as the children but many of them sang with feeling and I enjoyed looking at all of their faces as they sang trying to see how each of them felt about the experience. It was quite a mixed bag.



**Figure 72 - School teacher to the left and then Ariel in front between Hendrick's two children. The school teacher's two daughter's are the redheads in the second row.**

I had told Hendrick that I was going to give him one of my music CDs as a gift and he and his wife Nicola sat in the square with me looking at all the CDs and trying to decide until we realized that I should just leave all of them with Nicola to listen to while Hendrick and I went walking. This was deemed a good idea so we all walked off to their house. When we arrived, they showed me around and then we sat in the kitchen and talked for quite awhile and drank cool water from their refrigerator. They have quite a large house, which they rent from an island couple for a very nominal fee. The couple is currently living in Australia or New Zealand for an extended period and they just want someone to live there because in the tropics, and unused house is very rapidly taken over by nature and destroyed. The house seems primitive in some ways (plywood inner walls, very simple construction techniques and a classic out house outside) but very livable in other ways. Hendrick took me out on the patio, which faces the sea and is quite large and it

was extremely beautiful to look out over the Pacific Ocean. They let me walk around and photograph their house and the four of them together in the living room.



**Figure 73 - Hendrick Roos and his wife, Nicola, in their living room**



**Figure 74 - The Roos kitchen**

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I took a break from writing my log to go up topside and see Oeno Island and to watch Shane make the determination as to if we would land today or not. Oeno is another classic atoll like Ducie. With Oeno, however, the difference is that the dry land island part is largely within the central lagoon. It looks like a beautiful place with groves of palm trees and white sandy beaches. Unfortunately, the lagoon lies behind a reef with a single passage in and if the surf is high, entry can be quite dangerous.

Shane had the Shuleykin's crew lower him and a Zodiac over the side and he went in close to the reef by himself to see if landing was going to be possible. Most of us went up topside with binoculars to watch him. He went in close and went back and forth in front of the opening for 15 minutes or so watching the surf and counting the wave patterns. When he came back, he said that he was going to make the call that it was too dangerous for us to try a landing. My instincts as I watched the surf came to the same conclusion so I thought it was a good call even though I would have loved to go ashore to enjoy the island and do some snorkeling.



**Figure 75 -- Shane going into to examine conditions at Oeno Atoll.**

After the Academic Shuleykin pulled Shane and his Zodiac back on board, we took off to circumnavigate the island once and now we are headed towards Mangareva which is about 280 miles distant.

At one point, as we circled the island, we were bow-on to huge swells and the ship was rising and falling bow to stern in a really dramatic fashion. Most times, just by luck or chance, we seem to encounter the swells at an angle. Once I saw what was happening and I could see quite a number of additional swells out in front of us, I went down and stood up in the bow of the ship to feel the rise and fall and even, hopefully, to be there if we plunged so far as to bury the bow for a moment in a wave. It is a wild feeling as it rises and falls. One moment you weigh 100 pounds and the next 300. It felt great with the breeze ripping by. Almost as soon as I arrived and stood up in the bow, we dipped so low that the spray from the bow driving into the sea came up and over and gave me a good spray. Wonderful! I looked at what I was going to do and where I was going to hold on if an actual wave came over. Unfortunately, that one big dip was the only time I even got sprayed though the ride was great the entire time I was there.

I went back up topside then and stood at the front rail and chatted with Ann for 20 minutes or so. She's ½ of the doctor husband and wife couple on board. She told me how it was they came to be married the other night and it was a wonderful story. They both grew up within blocks of each other in Berkeley, California and went to school together. Their lives have been intertwined to various degrees over all the intervening years - through they each married other people and had families. Finally, after many years and one or two marriages each, they both got divorced and then got together 10 months ago.

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So, to resume with my adventures on Pitcairn Island. Hendrick and I left my daypack and my CDs with Nicola to listen to and he and I took off a walk about the island.

Hendrick and I, as I said, really hit it off. I think he is really isolated here and, except for the schoolteacher and her husband (Sheila and Daniel) and his wife, Nicola, he doesn't have many people to really talk to. I don't think, from what he said, that any of the Pitcairners are particularly introspective in this way though I really don't know. Anyway, there was the sense that he's been here, without distraction, for quite some time pondering various things and he was ripe for someone new to talk about it all with. We had great fun ranging over a huge variety of things from cultures and sociology to types of governments and the problems with them to evolutionary ideas to computers and physics. And, towards the end, we moved into meditation and spiritual things, which is always a particular favorite of mine to discuss. I haven't run into anyone for a long time that was so willing, able and motivated to talk about such a wide range of stuff.

As we talked, he took me up to an area named Flatland where a nice house owned by Randy and Dobrey currently sits empty. They are apparently off on a six-month vacation to Australia or New Zealand. Nearby, is a tennis court by Hendrick says it goes virtually unused all year round. He brings his kids up



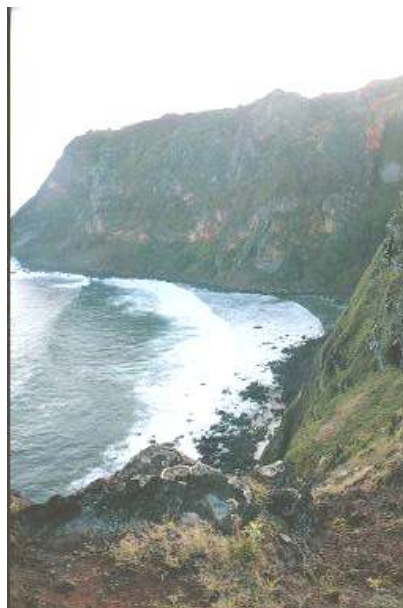
occasionally to teach them a bit but that's about all the use it gets. He studied Physical Education in University so he's very sports minded. I was to find out more about this later.

From here, we took off towards the Radio Station which sits on the top of the mid island ridge near the center of the island. There was a good amount of fairly flat land up here and from the station you could look out over most of the island. There is a spot, which is the highest point of the island, but Hendrick advised me that the reward to get there wasn't worth the struggle and that we could see more interesting things with that same time.



**Figure 76 - At the Radio Station on Pitcairn**

While we were at the radio station, Kristen came by. She had just come from The Pool and was going to head up to the highest point. We chatted for a bit and then we each headed off to our destinations. Hendrick and I walked towards St. Paul's Point where there is a spectacular pool ringed with lava. When the waves come in, they pour over into the pool and then drain out at the other end over rocks. We walked to a place just above the pool where I could see and photograph it. Just before we got there, we looked down over another cliff into a small bay called Downrope. Hendrick showed me the path down. It looked very steep and dangerous. He told me he takes his entire family down there for picnics and he goes out and spears fish in the bay among the lava boulders which they then eat.



**Figure 77 - Downrope, where Hendrick takes his family**

As we walked and talked, he told me a lot about his life growing up in Leipzig in what was then East Germany. He had already told me that he was a physical education teacher. Now he began to tell me about his strong obsession with sports. He really reminds me of Dan, my son. He got into swimming and running and biking and soon he was deeply involved in Ironman triathlete contests. He said he was deeply involved and competitive in this for quite a few years. He loved competing and he loved the feeling of self-generating the endorphins which result from such extreme exercise. He said he was so obsessed that it was hard to keep job for a long time.

He said he tried for a year or so to hold a corporate job. He had a brief romance with the idea of digging into the corporate world and getting rich but he got over it before too long and it wasn't long after that when he noticed an advertisement in a newspaper about Pitcairn Island and one thing led to another and then they were here starting a new life. I gathered from both Nicola and Hendrick that they don't see themselves as living here in Pitcairn for the rest of their lives. Maybe just until the first of their children reaches the age where she has to go off to New Zealand for further schooling. Hendrick is a restless and questing person. My feeling is that he may try several more things in his life - each substantially different from anything done previously. Who knows where they may end up next?

After we took a look down into The Pool, I began to wonder about the time. My watch stopped working a few days ago and Hendrick didn't have one. I knew that last Zodiac was due to depart at 1800 and I didn't want to be the cause of any delays so I opted not to go on down to the pool though I would have liked to and, instead, we turned around and began to head back up. It was a long hot and humid climb, which taxed me quite heavily but didn't seem to touch Hendrick. We continued talking on our way back and I told him about my understandings about meditation.



**Figure 78 - The pool on Pitcairn**

On our return, we again went by their house. Inside, we found a note from Nicola saying that of all the CDs, the one she liked the most was the one by Kiko Matsui. I thought that was an excellent choice though I know that my wife, Sharon, will not mourn its passing <g>.

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4/14/99 1331  
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Just got up from a short nap. I went at 1140 to watch some videos Theresa shot at Easter and Pitcairn and by the time that was over and it was lunch time, I was feeling a bit green so when everyone else went off to lunch, I came and had a lay down in my cabin. Not sure what the problem was but I seem better now. Pretty sure I won't starve without the lunch anyway.

So, Hendrick and I had returned and found Nicola's note. After talking with him about spiritual things, I decided that I wanted to give them the Prayer CD that Sharon and I have come to like so much as well as the Kiko Matsui CD, so I did. I gathered up my daypack and we had another glass of the fine cool water at his house and then took off for the bay below.

When we arrived, there were several of the Marine Expedition crew there and I had about 15 minutes to spare before the last Zodiac was due to leave so the timing was perfect. The crew told us that Nicola and Hendrick's children, along with a number of other Pitcairners, were already out on the Academic Shuleykin. I think Hendrick was pretty surprised at that. Just as we piled into the Zodiac and he and I had said our good-byes, the Marine Expedition crew asked him if he wanted to come out as well so he jumped in and we were off.

Entering and leaving the little Pitcairn harbor always requires a bit of timing to make sure you do it between the big breakers so we floated for a moment of two until someone on the quay with a clear view shouted "go" and we went. Hendrick told me that he'd come aboard last year so this wouldn't be his first time on the Shuleykin. Even so, once aboard, I took him around and showed him the fantail, my cabin and a picture of Sharon on the laptop. Then we went up to the bridge and then, finally, we went up topside where we found his son eating some candy they'd given him down in the bar. Then his other child, a girl with her hair cut very short, showed up with a bag of candy as well. The kids said that their mom was down in the bar with a lot of other people and so we went down there and sure enough, there was a big gathering of passengers, crew and Pitcairners. I got Hendrick a glass of cold water which was his request and for myself a sprite and we visited for a very few minutes until it was time to send all the island folks home so we could pull the anchor and sail on to Oeno Island. The Zodiacs were bobbing up and down furiously but everyone, including the little children who were handed over like sacks of potatoes, got aboard OK and they were off. A few minutes later, the Zodiacs were back and the anchor was pulled and our experience at Pitcairn Island was over. And, what a day it was. As we pulled away, it began to rain. We were very fortunate indeed to have gotten ashore to spend the day we had as it had poured rain the day before and was obviously going to start in again as we left. That evening, in our recap session, Theresa said our visit was vastly better than the visit last year. On the last visit, the passengers sat to one side and the islanders on the other and there was only a small amount of mixing whereas this year the two groups mixed strongly and everyone had a great time.

I wrote earlier of our visit to Oeno Island after we left Pitcairn so I won't cover it again. Currently, as I finish my story about Pitcairn, we are making our way towards Mangareva Island and I am going to go up and catch some sun topside now that I'm feeling OK again.

===== NEW DAY =====

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4/15/99 0836  
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We're anchored off Mangareva and we're about to go ashore. It is a pretty collection of islands. Most of us got up at dawn to watch the sunrise and to watch our entry into the inner lagoon. Before the day is out, I may have bought a black pearl for Sharon.

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4/15/99 1712  
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Back from Mangareva. All in all, it was a good day but not as extremely exciting or exotic as Easter or Pitcairn were. It is a quiet island - the largest of a group inside a 15-mile across coral atoll.



**Figure 79 - First view of Mangareva in the morning**

The ship anchored about a mile and a half from the landing dock so it was a long Zodiac ride coming and going. The evening return was pretty wet as well since the water in the lagoon had been driven into a chop by the afternoon winds. In the morning, once ashore, we went to the town hall of the island's only town/village and the local people put on a show for us and offered us plates filled with small pieces of local fruits. The show was an enactment, in native costume, of some sort of a struggle by a man for a woman. They sang and acted and danced for about 15 minutes and then we had our fruit plates. I found it mildly interesting.

After the entertainment, we went up to the island's main church and the father opened up for us and showed us around. There is a lot of fairly ugly history surrounding this church but, of course, this wasn't mentioned. It seems that a certain Catholic Priest, who was assigned to these islands, had the natives labor for years to build it out of coral blocks taken from the lagoon. During that time, the population dropped from 9000 to less than 1000. Some people say it was the introduction of European diseases and other say it was the nearly slave conditions attending the construction of the church that killed so many of the people.

Before the introduction of Catholicism, the island had an interesting history, which Theresa told us about. It seems that about 1200 AD, people from here established small colonies on Pitcairn and Henderson Islands. We know this because we find evidence of Polynesian occupation of these islands from about 1200 to 1450 or so. Among the evidence left, we can see that fine grained basalt from Pitcairn (which existed no where else on any of these islands) ended up on Henderson and Mangareva. And Black Lipped Clam shells, which only exist on Mangareva, ended up on Henderson (not sure if they've been found on Pitcairn or not). They've found caves on Henderson, which people used throughout this period and in the oldest layers of debris, they find the Black Lipped clamshells, which made superior cutting instruments. As they come up through the layers however, they can see that these shells gradually disappear and are replaced by inferior materials local to Henderson. The people on both Henderson and Pitcairn, neither group which probably ever exceeded 100 to 200 people, either left at some point or eventually died off.

The theory is that they probably just died off in place because the traders who used to come out from Mangareva abandoned them. Certainly the evidence in Henderson's caves supports the idea that trade with Mangareva was cut off sometime during the colony's existence.

Back on Mangareva, what was happening during this time was a period which began calmly and ended in severe social disruption. The people outgrew the ability of the island to support them. They accelerated the situation by cutting down all the trees which led to severe erosion. The result was that they had no more trees to build boats for fishing, travel and trade and they could not grow sufficient crops on land because of the degradation of the soil due to the erosion. Society broke down into open warfare for resources and soon cannibalism took over as a way to deal with enemies and get food at the same time. It was at this time that the remoter islands of Pitcairn and Henderson were abandoned to their fates.

When the first Europeans arrived at Mangareva, cannibalism was still practiced and we were told today that several of the early priests sent to work on the island were eaten. We saw a painting of one fellow hanging up in the church today. The father who talked to us today seemed like a very sincere man. He's worked in the South Pacific for 36 years, the last six of them here on Mangareva. He spoke only French and we have at least three people who speak passable French so as he told us things about the church and the history of Catholicism in these islands, we had several overlapping translations of varying volume and confidence running. I think we got most of what he said but he certainly delivered a number of DOA sentences to us as well.



**Figure 80 - The Father at Mangareva**

Once we left the church, we split up into two groups and visited two different places where we could buy things produced locally. The main industry here at Mangareva is the Black Pearl industry. It is largely dominated by a Japanese concern but there are also lots of independents growing pearls too. One place we went to sold tee shirts, shirts and Black Pearls. The other was a shop that took the mother-of-pearl shells and ground images into them and put them up for sale. The place where they cut the images into the shells reminded me of a sweat shop Sharon, Gertraude and I saw in Thailand in 1994 where people were doing very fine work without intense light and magnification and ruining their eyes in the process. This wasn't so bad. They had negative air pressure pumps to suck up most of the dust from the grinding and they had good lamps to work under but they didn't provide magnification.

Neither of these places interested me much. I'm not much of a shopper. At the first one, however, I decided to buy a tee-shirt that said "Mangareva" on it and quite a comedy resulted. Some of the shirts were \$13 US and some of the other ones (which looked identical except that had different images imprinted on them and were made in a different place (Tahiti vs. France)) were \$40. I'd heard the \$13 price but, unknowing, I grabbed a \$40 tee-shirt and went up to pay. I reached into my wallet and pulled out my French Francs and laid them down. The lady was looking extremely confused and she was writing numbers down left and right and I started thinking that if she made a sizable mistake, I'd never know since I was unaware of the exchange rate so, finally, I suggested that I pay in US dollars and I took back my francs and laid down \$13 and she once again started looking confused and scribbling numbers and she finally told me in very broken English that I owed \$40 US. I was pretty amazed and I called the guide over who spoke excellent English and he sorted out the \$13 vs. \$40 tee shirt issue and I told them I didn't want a tee shirt for \$40 - thank you all the same.

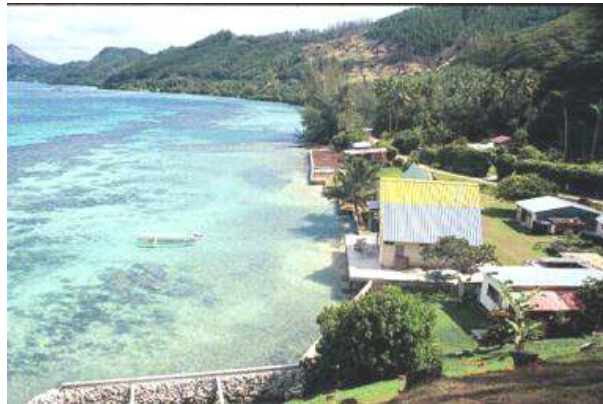
Later in the day, I went into the one small store in town and asked for a coke and I once again flopped my French francs out for payment. English was again an issue and there was no guide around this time but eventually a rather drunken fellow next to me explained that French francs and French Polynesian francs are not the same thing and that French francs are foreign money here. Well, that certainly explained a lot about the fiasco at the tee shirt place. So I laid down \$2 US and more head scratching and figuring went on until I received back 70 francs in French Polynesian currency. I have no idea what the Coke cost except that it was more than a dollar and less than two. Good enough for me.

At the second of our two shopping opportunities, I didn't see anything I wanted and I was about to leave when someone asked if anyone had any loose pearls to sell and I went along to take a look. The lady had two bags. The pearls in one bag were \$10 each and the ones in the other bag were \$50 each. I was immediately drawn to the \$10 bag. I picked out one that I liked and said I wanted it and she picked out a second one that seemed like a good match so I took both for \$20. Hope Sharon likes them. I imagine they will end up in her small raw jewels collection which is fine.

We were told that if the pearls go to Tahiti, their price jumps 100% and if they go to Seattle or New York they take another very big jump. I think you could make some money here but you'd have to know what you are doing

Our guide, who spoke fluent English, had been to Hawaii to college for two years. His father is a jeweler here on Mangareva. I asked him what he's going to do now and he said that he would probably start his own pearl growing operation. I gave him my e-mail addresses and suggested that if he wants to try some import-export stuff when he's ready, he should e-mail me. A shot in the dark but what the heck.

After these shopping opportunities, we headed back to the town hall for lunch which consisted of sandwiches made and brought on shore by the ME crew for us. I ate one along with a beer given to me by our guide and then it was time to jump into a pickup and go for a tour of the island. This was fun because I ended up in the back instead of the double cab and back there, I just stood up and held a small roll bar like support just behind the cab. What a great way to take a tour. It really reminded me of my two weeks in Nicaragua when we rode around in the back of Toyota Landcruiser Trucks for two weeks through the heat and the rain and dust and everything. I loved it.



**Figure 81 - The inner lagoon at Mangareva**

The tour consisted basically of a drive around about half of the island's periphery. What a lazy idyllic place. It seems like everyone's house is right on the water. The doors and windows are open to the world and big porches covered from the rain are common as are outside tables setup next to the water. Nothing was very modern but neither did anything look run down and unhealthy. It seemed like the classic image of Polynesia to me - as if most of these people scrape a living together from the lagoon and their gardens and the things that grow around them naturally. It looks like a very slow pace of life. On the tour, we stopped at several places for photo opportunities, to look at smaller churches or at points of interest. It was all beautiful and verdant but it didn't seem to appeal to me as it does to so many people. I would miss the stimulation of the modern world and I doubt I'm willing to trade it away for this version of planet beautiful.

The tour ended and we went back to the boat dock and waited for the next Zodiac run which came fairly soon and we were headed back out to the ship. I felt that I'd seen everything I wanted to of this place and I was ready to move on. Sergei, the driver who always puts excitement in the ride, drove our Zodiac. While we were ashore, the lagoon's water had come up into a good chop so the ride back was a bit wet. I managed to keep the camera dry so all was well.

The sunset today, as we were pulling out of the Mangareva lagoon, was excellent and I stayed up topside with Gertraude and talked for awhile. We shared our experiences of Easter Island and Pitcairn Island and of the trip thus far as a whole and then it was time to go down for the daily recap and then dinner.

Tonight we begin a two-day journey south to Rapa Island. Mangareva was just above the Tropic of Capricorn so we've been in the tropics all day today. Because we're headed south again, we will cross back out of the tropics tonight and then, in a few days, when we head north to the Society Islands, we will cross into the tropics again.

Had e-mail waiting for me from Sharon tonight. That is always such a pleasure.

===== NEW DAY =====

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4/16/99 1721 - 1<sup>st</sup> day proceeding towards Rapa Island  
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This has been a particularly quiet day as we've made our way towards Rapa. I woke up this morning after nearly 10 hours of sleep and had breakfast and coffee and then came back and slept another hour. This is one lazy place.

Ann gave me a copy of Flatland by Edwin A. Abbott, which I read today. An interesting little book, to say the least.

I've laid out in the sun, taken a shower, eaten lunch, eaten the 1630 snack and I've just come down from the bridge where I sent Sharon an e-mail saying I've seen no UFO's <g> but I'll keep looking.

I sense this trip is going to begin wrapping up pretty quickly after we reach Rapa. After that we visit three or four islands in a row, one per day, I believe and then Tahiti. I think it will probably go pretty fast. I've been enjoying the reading and thinking time, however. I'm cogitating on where to take my Neural program next and I'm absorbed in the stuff I've been reading in the Complexity book Alan gave me. I could see just reading and studying the things I want to look into for the rest of my life. I could do that.

===== NEW DAY =====

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4/17/99 0712 - 2<sup>nd</sup> day proceeding towards Rapa Island  
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Up at 0630 (set our clocks back another hour last night) for coffee and a chat with the coffee early birds. I'm finding I really like a lot of the people on this cruise.

I looked at the schedule for today and it looks pretty slow. I think I'm going to make a major focus on my Neural program and on reading the Complexity book. There is actually significant overlap between these two projects though it would be hard for me to say just where.

On the Neural program, I'm going to add context sensitive menus, convert the right mouse clicks to use them, remove the main dialog box in favor of menus and context sensitive menus and then I'm going to start thinking about adding Slab objects. I'm not too sure about the latter as it seems to me to be a human derived construct which probably doesn't have a natural counterpart - at least not as a fundamental building block. I suspect, if nature uses such a construct, it is on a case by case 'form follows function' as needed basis.



**Figure 82 - My work area in my cabin.**

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 4/17/99 1605  
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The day has gone quietly, as I thought it would. It's about 1600 now and we can see Rapa Island in the distance. It is the southern-most island in French Polynesia. Quite isolated, actually. We're going to anchor off the island tonight and then go into the harbor in the morning.



**Figure 83 - Sunset anchored off Rapa Island**

We just had a lecture by Theresa telling us about Rapa Island based on what she saw last year. I think it will be much better than Mangareva. The locals are going to put on some shows for us and we'll hike up to one of the 'forts' that William Malloy and Thor Heyerdahl excavated back in 1957. I think we'll also get some snorkeling in tomorrow before we depart at 1700.

===== NEW DAY =====

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 4/18/99 0714  
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Last night we played our third game of Trivial Pursuit against the ME crew. I missed the first one. They won game one and we've now won two and three. John, who has been our team's leader, was feeling ill last night so I was appointed leader for the game. It was extremely close. Manny, on our team must have been responsible for four or five of the six pies we got.

We're waiting now to eat breakfast and then to take the Zodiacs into Rapa. It looks beautiful.

===== NEW DAY =====



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4/19/99 1210  
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Yesterday was Rapa Island. It was, to be sure, classic Polynesia. It is so far south and so isolated, that it gets very few ships. The last tourist ship here was this ship last year. Other than that, they get supply ship once per month and the odd French Naval vessel letting sailors off for some R&R. Because they get so few visitors, they are largely unspoiled and unjaded. Whereas, on Mangareva and Pitcairn, the people sang and put on a show for us, you could tell by watching their faces that many of them were "going through the motions". The 200 some odd people on Rapa seemed genuinely happy to sing and entertain us. They were in general, as happy, friendly and relaxed a people as I've ever seen.

We began the day by pulling anchor and cruising into the inner harbor of Rapa which is essentially a deep volcanic caldera open on one side to the sea. Surrounding the caldera, are some of the most jagged and wild looking mountains I've ever seen. The highest point on the island is just under 2000 feet.

There are two villages. One on one shore of the caldera and the other on the opposite side. 90 live in the smaller one and another 120 or so in the larger. There may be another 30 to 40 people scattered in the remoter valleys on the other side of the ridges. Each of the two villages has its own church, which you can see quite prominently from the water. We found out that the people here are Protestant and they alternate going each Sunday to one church and then to the other.

We pulled in midway between the villages in the center of the huge inlet and dropped anchor again and then loaded the Zodiacs to go ashore. We went into the larger of the two villages where they were expecting us. And, I mean they were really expecting us. I believe they had spent days in close order drill preparing things for our arrival. I know that Marine Expeditions paid the island \$50 for each passenger and crewmember who went ashore. This was to defray the island's cost for entertaining us and to give them some profit from our visit. This island is so rarely visited that there is no tourist industry in the sense that they had nothing they wanted to sell us.

When my Zodiac pulled up to the dock, most of the other passengers were already there as well as about a dozen Rapaian. It was quite a show. They had one fellow, whose name I forgot, who was a wild looking guy with great Maori-like tattoos down his left arm and he was holding a small palm plant of some sort and waving it about and shaking it at us and thrashing it onto the ground and grimacing and talking very loudly in Polynesian. Behind him were half a dozen local women who were dancing. It was impressive though we couldn't understand what he was saying. For all I know, he could have been saying, "Look how fat and tasty these tourists are!" Perhaps he was because the women laughed quite often at what he said.



**Figure 84 - Our main greeter at Rapa**

Once we were all ashore, we walked to the new community center and dropped our life jackets there. Shane took a survey to see how many of us wanted to climb to one of the lookouts or forts (there are twelve of them on the highest ridges and their original purpose has been lost over the years. About 25 of us wanted to go up and the rest were going to do a tour around the town and go across the bay to the other little town as well.

In Thor Heyerdhal's book, [Aku-Aku](#), there are photographs of his expedition's visit here to Rapa. His group was the first to prove that the forts were not just natural structures but were actually built by man for some purpose, which is now forgotten. We walked up the path he followed to the same fort, which he excavated in 1957. It was a long and steep walk but it was only about half of what the ascent on Robinson Caruso Island had been. Still, with the heat and the humidity, I was thoroughly wet and tired when I arrived. Four or five of the villagers accompanied us up. Theresa later told us that one of them had spent days before we arrived clearing the paths of vegetation and cutting nice steps in the dirt because they recalled how much trouble people had experienced last year.

The view at a number of places on the way up and down was spectacular. The ridges here are truly wild looking. You can look down into the harbor/caldera and see the **Academic Shuleykin** setting there so small when you look down from the top. Along the way, I saw a number of unique looking plants. I even shot photos of some, which for me is unusual. We also tasted a fruit, which grows on the island. It wasn't quite like anything else I've tasted. They are small (about 1 to 1.5 inches across) and they are reddish. Tasty with small seeds inside. They were growing everywhere.



**Figure 85 - View of Rapa's harbor with the Shuleykin far out to the right**

At certain places on the ascent, a breeze would sweep up the ridge and be so refreshing and in other places, the terrain would mask it and it was hot and humid. At the top, we sat around and looked around for 20 minutes or so. Some of the people actually climbed the fort, proper, but I thought I was close enough and I admired it from its base. I gathered some small rocks from the immediate vicinity of the fort for my collection and then, rested, I headed back down.

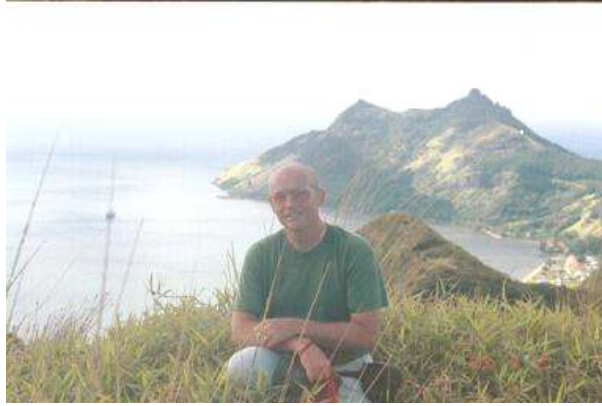


**Figure 86 - On top at Rapa at the fort.**

While I'd sat up top, I'd seen the Shuleykin's Russian doctor climbing another adjacent ridge alone to an unexcavated fort and I was curious what was there so I resolved to take off that way rather than go straight down, if I could. I went down alone and when I found the branch in the path to the other ridge, I took it. I met the doctor coming down and asked him what he'd seen. Our English/Russian wasn't too good but he managed to tell me he'd seen some ruins and said something about French nuclear testing. That peaked my curiosity. I continued on up. This trail obviously had not been cleared but it wasn't too bad.



**Figure 87 - The wild mountains of Rapa**



**Figure 88 - Me with the Rapa harbor behind me**

After awhile, I came to what he'd been talking about. Some distance below the peak, where the ancient fort was, there were several concrete slabs on the ridge. One was for a small building maybe 30 by 40 feet and then about 10 feet above it up some old concrete steps was another pad maybe 20 by 20. The second pad appeared to have held a circular tank of some kind. The first pad had supported several rooms as you could see by looking at the patterns of walls on paint on the slab. I also found two more much smaller pads; one for a small water tank, perhaps, and the other looked like it might have been a tie down point for an antenna. Other than this and some concrete block debris, there wasn't much to see. I spent a long time snooping and playing amateur archaeologist wondering what it had been and how long ago it had been demolished (and it obviously had been demolished as the pads were completely bare and all the former concrete block walls had been completely knocked away).

Out of the corner of my eye, I'd been watching the others make their way down the other ridge from the excavated fort and I decided that I should go down now or risk being the last person down and worrying someone (since, other than the doctor, I doubted that anyone knew I'd come this way). I didn't make it therefore, up to the second fort but I was content with that. There hadn't been all that much to see on the excavated one. So, I started down. I like going off the beaten path on my own on small adventures. I end up feeling like I've made a more personal contact with the place and enriching my own experience.



**Figure 89 - The maidens of Rapa who made sure I got down the mountain**

As I returned to the place where the paths to the two forts diverged, I found two of the island girls waiting there for me. Apparently, they'd seen me go off and their job was to make sure they came down the mountain with everyone. I sat and talked with them a little when I arrived (though with my lack of French and their sparse English, it was a short talk). I asked them about the ruins and how long ago they were from. One of them said 45 years ago, which would date the pads to the early fifties. That's about all I learned. I asked them if I could take their photo and they said yes and then we headed down. They let me

walk in front and they chatted the whole way down in Polynesian. At several points, they broke into soft song and sang some inane thing like "Yippie-Kye-Yo" or some such thing they'd apparently picked up from an old TV show. I gave them a good rendition of the Gyatri Mantra after one of these and that really got them giggling. They asked what country I was from - apparently since they could tell that I wasn't singing English nor a western music cadence. I told them USA but that the music was from India and it was in the Sanskrit language. I wasn't sure how much of that came across, however.

Soon we came up on Jeff and Theresa and we all walked together back into the village where lunch preparations were well underway.

Back at the community center, which we learned had just been dedicated only six days before, we all sat down and they gave us fruit drinks (I had several) and we just hung out while the preparations continued. The wild guy, who'd led the reception at the pier, was there with five or six other musicians and they were playing guitars and drums and singing Polynesian songs. I wish I could have recorded some. They sounded really nice. We were really hot so everyone kept shifting around to be in or out of the sun and near or far from the music. I had to put some sun tan lotion on my arms and neck as they were feeling like they were getting into the danger zone.

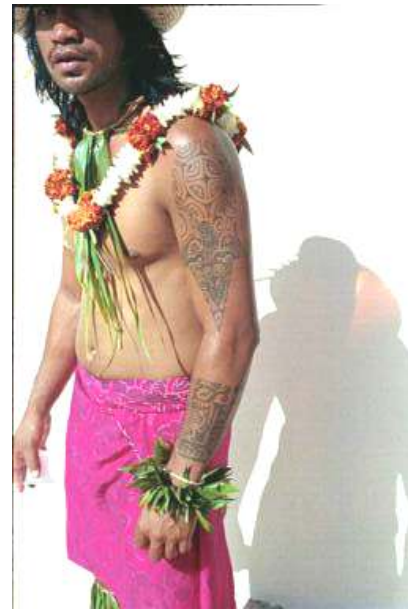
About this time, I made the acquaintance of a dog. He'd been wandering around amid the commotion and had come up to me once and I'd extended the universal dog-human greeting and extended my hand for him to sniff and then he'd gone off again. Now, he was back and came and looked up at me and I spoke to him and he immediately came over and cuddled into me. Ah, I thought, some local good will communication. He loved when I scratched his ears and his jowls and after a while, he wanted to jump up on me. Well, to make a long story short, he decided he loved me and wanted to make my acquaintance in a very personal way. Given that we'd just met, I thought things were moving a bit too fast for a first date so I was trying to discourage him without hurting him. He was pretty persistent and I kept whopping him on the nose harder and harder until he finally got it and walked off. Estelle, from our group told me later that she'd been watching and that she really enjoyed the struggle and the expressions on my face. The dog later wandered up to John, another member of our group, and started the same routine. I enjoyed it much more this time. Later, over dinner, I told John, tongue in cheek, that I was really upset that he'd stolen my dog away.

The wait for lunch was really worth it. These people really put on a fine spread for us. Everything had been made up especially for us. We had barbecued lobster, Cevichi (local raw fish with lemon on it), Taro Root, local fruit juices and fruits. It was really good.

The civic center is inside a roughly triangular area with the front gate up near the apex of the triangle. Around the periphery is a chain-link-like fence. There were dozens of village kids gathered just outside the fence and hanging on it to watch the happenings. A bit further off on a small bridge, which crossed a ditch, some adults were sitting and watching us. Inside with us were a number of locals including the mayors of both villages as well as the musicians, the dancers, the village policeman, the people fixing the food and the people who'd been our guides in the morning. I also think that there were a number of people there who were high in the village hierarchy. Several of us wondered how it had been decided in the village as to who would be inside and who would be outside. Didn't seem to matter as everyone looked like they were having a good time. At one point, I asked the main dancer if I could photograph the tattoos on his arm and he let me. They impressed me and they started me thinking about tattoos.



**Figure 90 - Dancers at Rapa**



**Figure 91 - Tattoos on main dancer**

After the infamous dog had tried to have his way with John and was still wandering around in the commotion, he got in the village policeman's way and with a big kick and a loud accompanying dog yelp, he demonstrated how to sort out dog problems - island style.

After lunch, there was some more dancing and singing. I think these people are like children in grown up bodies. They seem so simple and happy and expressive which I guess is what has been captivating people about Polynesia for years. They genuinely seem to like to sing and dance. They just play at it but they apparently do it enough, that they are quite good at it. So, there was more dancing and singing and then the mayors gave some speeches which Steve translated for the first mayor from French into English with a little help from Ursula. He told us they were hoping that we were having a good time and that we should know that this was a lot of fun for them too and they were also enjoying the whole thing as well. Then, the other mayor, a really large and fat Polynesian woman came and spoke in Polynesian with great expressiveness and welcomed us. This took two levels of translation but the message was pretty much the same. Then, she said, "let the partying begin" and she went out in the middle and did a little hula and it was a wonder that such a large person could possibly move with such grace. She had a strong presence.

Now, we all adjourned out of the civic center compound and moved next door to a large concrete pad (a basketball court, perhaps, with no equipment up). Here, long benches were laid out for us to sit on. Apparently, this was going to be the main event for the singing and dancing. It was quite a production too. Most of the people in the village came to watch. They sang and they danced and they changed costumes and the wild guy was always at the center of it all. He was quite a personality. Shane said that he's apparently traveled around to many islands including Pitcairn. I took a number of photographs and I'm going to leave the description of these dances to that as they would be too hard to describe other than to say they were great.

When the dance event broke up, we still had two hours until the last Zodiac out to the ship. I'd heard by now of some of the adventures of the folks who'd stayed in town while we'd climbed and I almost wished I'd stayed with them. Just not enough time to see it all in a day. I decided to just stroll and see the town. I didn't get very far at all, however, when I came to the waterfront and quite a scene. Shane had one of the Zodiacs and he was giving rides to the kids and, my, what clamor and chaos there was. It was one of those vignettes where you just watch and smile. After a lot of hand waving and smiling, he got all the kids out of the Zodiac (there must have been 30) and then conveyed that he was going to take the girls out first. So,

he'd point to each specific girl and tell her to get in. Several times, he was almost mobbed again. It was a scream. Finally, he was off with a full load of little girls and they waved and screamed and then they sang (did I mention that ALL these people LOVE to sing?). They sang and sang and he kept shouting Encore and they'd sing some more. We could hear them almost all the way out to the Shuleykin. He took them out to have a look at the ship and he dropped off Steve and picked out several cases of Coke and then he returned. Each little girl now had her own can of coke and was thrilled. Soon, the boys were piling in and it all started over again.

I ended up standing around watching the boat trips and never did walk around town. Finally, I walked down the waterfront and out onto the landing pier where the passengers were departing on other Zodiacs for the ship and there was another gaggle of kids there. Sergei was there with a Zodiac as well. I started entertaining kids by letting them look through my binoculars. It was another pandemonium but I finally got them to line up and I gave each one about 20 seconds and then I'd grab the binoculars and motion them to the end of the line and give them to the next kid. I love stuff like that.

Shane had earlier taken the main dancer (with the tattoos) out to the Shuleykin and on the dock was another eight or ten of the main dancers and singers who wanted to go and were waiting to see if we'd let them come out. Steve came back from the ship and radioed out to the captain and he said OK so long as they are off by 1645 so we can depart 1700 to 1730. They were overjoyed when Sergei told them OK and they all piled into the Zodiac and they were off. Another Zodiac arrived just a moment later and four more of us piled in and followed directly on the other one's heels.

Onboard, Steve had taken all our visitors to the Bar room and had given them all soft drinks or beer and everyone was talking and laughing. Then Steve remembered that Jane Church hadn't gone ashore today because of her frailty. She's a wonderful intelligent lady but she has a hard time getting around and has only come ashore once the entire trip. Steve asked them if they would do a small dance for her if she came to the bar and they immediately and enthusiastically agreed. So again, we saw how they love to sing and dance. There were only four or five passengers and a few ME crew in the bar with the Rapaianians when they did all this so we got an additional treat and in very close proximity.

Next Steve led the group around the ship on a tour and I tagged along. He took them up to the bridge and surprised the captain who enjoyed it. They all came in dancing and singing. They looked at all the equipment with big eyes and one of the ladies looked at one large panel with lots of switches arrayed and asked the captain if this was where we shot off all the bombs. We all had a good laugh about that. She was, of course, kidding with him.

Then we toured down several decks and when we passed my cabin, I invited several of them in to see it. Finally, we went up topside in time to see Shane with another load of kids in a Zodiac cruising around the ship and everyone laughed and screamed and waved back and forth. Theresa said they didn't come on the ship last year so this was a real treat for them and it looked like it.

Finally, it was time to go and we all walked down to deck four and watched them go down the gangway onto a Zodiac and one of their longboats. They departed and, with lots of waving, they were gone. Thirty minutes later, we pulled the anchor and made a long slow turn in the caldera and headed out to sea.



**Figure 92 - Our last returnee from Rapa - Sergei, the Radioman**

I think everyone I talked to has said Rapa was a 10 for 10 place. Just incredible.



**Figure 93 - Last view of Rapa's village**



**Figure 94 - Rapa fades away in the twilight behind the Shuleykin**



Today, we've been sailing towards Raivavae. Actually, it is about 1745 and we are off the island and approaching our anchorage. We're going to have dinner as a barbecue on the fantail this evening. First time we've had the evening meal outside.

Sergei just handed me a nice long e-mail from Sharon. Always fun to receive one of those. I'm really looking forward to getting home and being with her.

===== NEW DAY =====

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Last night we had talent night. There's a surprising amount of talent in some of the people on board. We had an excellent performance by Jayne who sang us two songs and then, later, by Steve and Matt who gave us their rendition of the Full Monte. Funny stuff.

Last night we also turned the clocks back again an hour.



**Figure 95 - Raivavae in the evening as we arrived**



**Figure 96 - The school children greet us at Raivavae**

This morning we ate breakfast at 0630 (new time) and were landing at Raivavae (Ra-I-va-vee) by 0830. This island was nice but it didn't have the exoticness of Rapa. The men and women put on a dance performance for us and fed us but, compared to Rapa, it was a lower energy affair. Maybe I'm getting a bit jaded and ready to go home. We toured the island's circumference in the back of ersatz school buses and stopped at the grave of a princess and the site of a Tiki statue. The interior is quite steep and everyone seems to live in fairly nice houses right on the shoreline.



**Figure 97 - Where the princess is buried on Raivavae**



**Figure 98 - The Tiki at Raivavae**

I've become intrigued with the wooden drums we have been seeing since Mangareva and I've decided I'd like to buy one. I know Shane has the same idea. I went around to the musicians and asked if any drums were for sale and I found out that Shane had already been there and had offered \$400 for a drum. Bummer, as I wanted to get one for \$100. He may have ruined the market. In any case, by day's end, no drums were forthcoming for either of us. I'm not sure if they are hard for the islanders to get/make or if they have a significance that mitigates against letting them go (a family heirloom) or if our prices and/or bidding techniques were off. I'm going to try again at the next island. Once we're in Tahiti, their cost will be astronomical.

So, after the dancing and music and the island tour, we went down to the beach and swam in the warm water and just hung out. When it came time for the first Zodiac run back to the ship, however, I was on it. I thought that if I was not going to get a drum and if I was going to catch some rays, I'd rather do it lying on the top deck of the Shuleykin than in the sand and seaweed.

Once I was back on board, I did lay in the sun for an hour or so and then I read my Complexity book for another hour and then I went down and showered and tackled a bug in my Neural program. It took about an hour to sort that out and I believe the program, so far as it has been implemented, is now solid. I can

create nodes, link them, move them and all existent link lines update their positions correctly and I can delete nodes and all associated links are cleaned up correctly. And, the program is fast.

Tonight, I've been reading through a copy of Raja Yoga that Gertraude loaned me. She'd marked out a number of passages she especially liked and I've been going through these. I've been enjoying them as well. I haven't been as focused on meditation as I might have been on this trip.



**Figure 99 - Last Zodiac returns from Raivavae**

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I tried to watch the evening's movie, "An Affair to Remember", but it was dragging and more than a bit unrealistic as only a 1950's movie can be so I left and went topside. I'm glad I did. The moon was hanging dead in front of us above the horizon and it was an exquisite sight. It was as if the ship was sailing down a path of liquid Mercury. Very beautiful.

One thing I've come to like is the constant views of the horizon and the enormous bowl of sky above. The air out here is so clear that you can see tiny cumulus formations so far off that they look tiny poking above the horizon but you know they must be towering many tens of thousands of feet into the sky over that distant part of the earth.

I was thinking as I walked back to my cabin, how familiar the ship seems to me after nearly a month. The rituals of raising and lowering the anchor, the calls to meals, the many tours I take on deck on my own just to see what things look like in this weather at this time of day.

Today, not long after we left Raivavae, the sky was full of dark clouds and you could see rain falling off in several directions. It had a sense of grand drama about it and it happens all the time out here - whether someone sees it or not. Part of me is quite ready for this trip to be over and another part of me is thinking that this has been a wonderful and unique experience that I'm not likely to ever repeat so, amid this mix of feelings, I'm savoring each moment and feeling happy that I will see the ones I love soon. I am very blessed.

===== NEW DAY =====

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End of another day and another island - the last, I think, of those which are relatively untouched by civilization. Tomorrow is a sailing day and then we come to Moorea, which is very close to Tahiti and, I suspect, quite commercialized.

Today's island was Rurutu. It was a long sail from Raivavae so we didn't arrive until about 1200. It was a full day, however, once we went ashore. There was an island bus tour again. We stopped at a number of interesting places including a very large cave.



**Figure 100 - The Bar and Restaurant "Catherine" on Rurutu**

Rurutu is a mixture of coral/limestone and lava/basalt. The geological history is that it began as a volcanic peak (there are multiple hot spots slowly moving under the south pacific tectonic plate/s just as there is one very large hot spot moving under the tectonic plate upon which the Hawaiian islands are situated). Then, later, it acquired a coral reef of some size close around it. Still later, tectonic movements caused this part of the plate to rise up so Rurutu is 100 feet higher than it was before. So, around a lot of its edge, there are 100 foot limestone cliffs (the old reef and its ancient underpinnings now raised) falling to the sea. At other places, the beaches are low and gradual with sparkling white sand (which is really zillions of small pieces of coral). In other places the lava/basalt comes to the sea.

The cave we saw was part of a limestone area and there is a cliff 100 feet high with a huge hole/cave into it. The roof of the cave is extremely thin and in four or five places daylight was shining through holes easily big enough for a person walking on top of the cliff to fall through.



**Figure 101 - In the cave at Rurutu**

On our tour, we stopped at a beach area for 30 minutes and I quickly donned my snorkeling gear and swam out and had a look around. It was OK but nothing like Ducie. It was too bad we had a washout on our Oeno Island landing - I think that would have been a spectacular snorkeling site. Here, I saw some small and colorful fish around the blocks of coral in close to the beach but further out, there was mostly white sandy bottom with nothing swimming around. I've gotten used to how warm the water is in this part of the world. All the water I grew up with in California and, later in Washington, is bitterly cold.

At one point, we stopped at the island's airport (first island we've been on since Easter that has an airport) to visit their gift shop. I took a brief look but it was all shlock so I took a walk around. Then I

remembered that I wanted to try to buy a drum so I dug out the paper I'd drawn some ideograms on and I took a wild shot and walked over and showed it to one of the drivers. He didn't speak any English but I think he understood and he indicated he had no drum to sell. Well, that was my drum buying effort for the moment so I went and sat down in the shade to wait for the shopping frenzy to subside so we could press on and in a few minutes, another one of the drivers, who spoke passable English, came over and asked if I was trying to buy a drum and I said, "Yes". He brought over another driver (who may have been the first fellow I spoke to - I'm not sure) and said this fellow had a drum he'd be possibly willing to sell. I asked for what price and he wanted 30,000 francs which is about \$300 US. I said, "Let's talk more about this when we get back to the area where they are going to hold this afternoon's dancing". He said OK and indicated that he'd have to go and get the drum because it was in his home. I said I'd wait and it was all agreed - at least that we'd begin negotiations at \$300 once I saw the drum. All of this was communicated through the driver who spoke English. The fellow with the drum spoke only Tahitian and French.



**Figure 102 - Musicians with the kind of drum I wanted (and eventually got)**

The island tour continued on until we crossed the road that goes over the center of the island and returned to the biggest town on the island which was also where we'd started from and where the dancing for us was to be held. Once we arrived and everyone piled out of the bus, I walked around to our bus driver, who had the drum, and asked if he was going to go get it and he signaled that I should jump in so I went around and got into the cab with him. I saw Matt, from our group, and told him I was going off to look at a drum so someone would know where I was and we took off. We drove for maybe half a mile south and then turned up a dirt track and almost immediately came to his house which was pretty nice looking.

We walked up to the house and onto his covered patio and he asked me to wait there and he went in to get the drum and to see, I suspect, if anyone else was home. I glanced into his kitchen and it all seemed a lot more first world than third world. Apparently, the French heavily subsidize French Polynesia and it shows.

He came out with the drum and it looked pretty nice though I hadn't seen one up close before. It was (I later learned) carved from Miro wood and was quite heavy. I asked he had a tapping stick to go with it but he did not. Seems like he had it for 10 years but he didn't play it himself. At one point, I thought he said he made it but language was really a problem so who knows. It seemed pretty obvious that it had been sitting around in his house for a long time. This was exactly the kind of person I'd wanted to make contact with to buy a drum.

I wasn't sure what to look for so I looked it over for cracks and soft spots and saw none. The carving looked nice and when I rapped it with my knuckles, it sounded as I'd expected (we've been seeing these drums at each Polynesian dance for the last four islands). I decided that if I could get it for a reasonable price - stick or no stick - I wanted it. I asked if he had a paper and a pencil or a pen. I knew that this would be the only way we could negotiate without confusion and/or possible misunderstandings.

First, I wrote down \$300 and indicated that he gave that to me as the price. Then I wrote down \$150 and I indicated that this was what I was offering back. This was a bit dicey because I wasn't sure that price

haggling was part of the local culture but I assumed it had to be in some form. He looked a bit disappointed and confused so I indicated that it was a back and forth and that he should tell me his price (and I was hoping it would come down). He said several things by way of explanation that I didn't get and then he wrote down \$400 and indicated that this was what he'd paid (so much for the idea that he made it, I guess). Then he wrote \$600 and indicated he could get this from a tourist coming to the island. Then he wrote \$800 and said he could get that for it in Tahiti. A lot of these numbers were in Francs but we'd established, early on, that \$100 dollars was the same as 10,000 Francs.

I took the ball up again and wrote down that I offered \$200. We sat for awhile and he repeated some of the stuff he'd told me earlier and I could sense he was thinking things over though I wasn't sure if he was close to saying yes or no. At this point, I wondered if he might like a mix of cash and other stuff so I pulled out my swimming flippers and then my binoculars and even my snorkel tube and mask. He didn't indicate interest in any of those. At this point I took a look at what I actually had in my wallet and figured out that \$225 was going to be the line for me regardless. I wrote down 22,500 Francs and then I took out the \$225 and counted it out slowly and laid it on the ground in front of him. I know that many times the sight of the physical cash will push the deal through and I was hoping that this would be the case because I was going no further. I also indicated that I still had some money in my wallet but that I needed it for Tahiti. I gestured that this amount now was my limit - I had no more or I could spend no more. Again he seemed to be thinking and language was a problem.

Finally, I got that he was going to accept but that he wanted to go to the hotel and do a currency exchange. It had been explained to us that US dollars were used very infrequently on this island. I realized that he wasn't sure if they had dependable value. Also, one of the twenties I'd laid out was of the new sort while all the other twenties were the older variety and I could see as he lingered over that bill that this was bothering him as well. Because of the language barrier, I couldn't make out if the deal was contingent on the currency exchange or not but, I thought, just go along. If the entire deal folds at the last second, so what. I'll still have the \$225, which is exactly where I'd be anyway if I hadn't gone over to talk to the driver at the airport.

I held onto the money and the drum and we went back out to the truck and drove back to town. First, he drove to a small store but it was 1705 and they'd just closed. Then he drove to a second store and walked in with me tagging behind, and talked to a woman in there. I'm not sure if he asked her to exchange the cash, or if he asked her if US dollars were good money or what. It even occurred to me that he might think I was going to cheat him with fake money and he was watching to see if I acted nervous when he tried to change the money (with him probably knowing full well he'd be unlikely to be able to accomplish an exchange). He'd mentioned a "hotel" back at his house when he discussed exchanging the dollars for Francs but he never went near a hotel so I'm not sure what that was about.

He had an interesting way of speaking. If he had just been talking, then he would just continue but if there had been a pause of 30 seconds or so (not sure what the limit was), then he would begin the next address with the preface, "Aay!". It was sort of a sharp explosive sound. Must have been derivative of the local language.

After the second store, we got back into the truck and drove back towards the dance festivities, which were just blocks away. As we drove, he looked at me and said, "Aay!" and indicated I should give him the money so I handed it over and we shook hands and then I finally decided we had a deal. Moments later, he dropped me off in front of the dance event and I said thanks and that was that. A moment later, I kicked myself for not getting a photo of him with the drum. All in all, however, I was pretty happy with the deal.

Shane and I had asked about drums on Raivavae. The opening price Shane had had mentioned then was \$400 and still no drums came forward. If I hadn't have gotten one today, it would have cost me a lot more in two days on Moorea or Tahiti.

After the excitement of the drum purchase, returning to the dance event was bit anticlimactic but the dancers were good and I was pulled out of the audience twice to dance.



**Figure 103 - The island dancers and Shane, our expedition leader**

The sky was looking like it could dump any minute which actually made the air temperature quite nice compared to the other dances we've been to in the broiling sun. Finally, the dancing was over and we headed for the Zodiacs and the day was mostly done. At 1900, we had our usual daily recap in the bar. It was interesting because as a group we've developed more skill at asking questions of the locals about what their lives are like and how they make a living and what they think of their governments and etc. and we had a lot of that to share around this evening. I also got to describe how I'd bought the drum.

After dinner, I went up and sent Sharon what should be my last e-mail from the Shuleykin. All of our chit expenses will be sorted out after the books are closed tomorrow night. This is beginning to wrap up rapidly.

Tomorrow is a full sailing day (our last one) and then we're at the fabled Moorea.

===== NEW DAY =====

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A very quiet day followed by a beautiful sunset. All day the sea has gotten smoother and smoother until, at sunset, it was amazingly flat like a shimmering silver tabletop. I lay out in the sun for part of the last full day at sea - conscious all day that these are now 'last' moments. The last full sailing day, the last this and the last that. Things will inevitably accelerate now and soon it will blur and I will pop out the other end in Los Angeles or Seattle ready to return to my life as it was before this trip.

I've enjoyed this so much. It was everything I'd hoped for. Not a place I can return to, however. Someone said, you can never put your foot into the same river twice and I will have to consciously let this go. Sweet moments, cupped in my hands and placed, lovingly, on a shelf called the past.

I've been impressed and refreshed by many of the people I've met here. There are quite a number of couples who've been together for years and who obviously have excellent marriages. Intelligent and

graceful and a pleasure to talk to. Over the month, it has been interesting to see everyone sort themselves out with respect to each other. Some are social animals and some are loners but every one of them, it seems to me, has made a sincere effort to be friendly and personable.

And the Russian crew of the Shuleykin has been an interesting study as well. Nicolai, the deck hand, who seems so sincere and who listens to the news about Kosovo from the Russian side and who is so passionate discussing it and struggling with his English. And Sergei, the radioman who also drives the Zodiacs and who has become so familiar to many of us. He has a great amount of life and courage in him. And the woman who cleans my cabin each day - she and I can't say a word because neither of us speaks the other's language but I liked her immediately. So, we simply smile at each other a lot. I was always so curious to know more about her life but I suppose I will never know. I've heard that many of the Russians working on the Shuleykin are actually professional people with various university degrees who've taken this work because it pays and things, economically, in Russia are so bad these days. I'm sure, if we spoke each other's languages, we would have endless things to learn from each other.

The Marine Expedition crew, I've already lauded. They are as an adventuresome, competent and talented bunch of people as I've ever met and their skills and talents have made the trip a great success. If any of the Marine Expedition crew has occasion to read this, I want to say, directly to you, many thanks for an excellent trip!

So, tonight I will start packing. Hunting down materials to pack up my drum from Rurutu is my biggest challenge. Shane found me a length of rope this afternoon. I'm going to get a cardboard box from Clare and maybe some others from Adam. I may have to buy twine and packing tape on Moorea tomorrow.

Speaking of tomorrow, we'll arrive off Moorea tonight between 2200 and 2400 and in the morning we'll go ashore. We'll tour around a bit and then early afternoon, we'll pull anchor and head for Tahiti, 9 miles southwest where we'll anchor in port for the night so we can go ashore. Then, at 0900 the next morning, we're off for the airport and home.

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I've just spent the last hour or hour and a half topside watching our arrival at Moorea. Moorea, the name seems to evoke some strange association I can't quite place. I see in my mind's eye rugged jagged knife edged mountains shrouded in clouds - a place of Polynesian mystery vaguely like Edgar Rice Burroughs Lost World. I must have read something long ago that is triggering these associations.

The approach was beautiful. On the port side, Moorea rose darkly from the sea with a string of diamond lights where the island's shadow met the water. Above it, a huge mass of black clouds rose straight up. Stars here and there were showing through gaps in the clouds and, behind us, to the west, a half moon hung above the horizon illuminating silver gray clouds in a huge luminous sky. Within the dark mass above the island, I could see indistinct flashes of lightening and drops of tropical rain were spattered me as the ship sailed into a strong warm wind. I stood holding the rail and drinking in this place and the moment - so quickly to be a memory, so glorious now - the island sliding slowly by me on the right.

Our ship was arriving from the south from Rurutu and we had come around and up Moorea's western side and now we were turning east to cross the top of the island to find our anchorage for the night. Beyond Moorea's most eastern extent, I could see the lights of Papeete on Tahiti 9 miles distant. After 25 days, we had come to the center of French Polynesia and the place we would end at.

===== NEW DAY =====

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4/24/99 0943  
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We took off from Papeete's Faaa airport about 15 minutes ago. Now, we sit for a LONG time waiting for Los Angeles to appear. I've been quite lucky on this trip with respect to seats and cabins and etc. It has happened again. I asked for an aisle seat when I checked in to the AOM counter and I got it. It was part of a pair of seats on - window and aisle. Even though the plane is nearly full, the window seat next to me is unoccupied so I can keep my carry on under one seat and sit in the other and move back and forth as I wish. Currently we are traveling at 775 km/hour and we have 6424 km to go.

I want to go back and catch up on what happened yesterday. It was a busy day with us being at Moorea in the morning and on Tahiti in the evening.



**Figure 104 - Moorea in the morning**

In the morning we woke to find ourselves anchored in a beautiful inlet on Moorea's northern coast. We were suppose to have been in Cook Inlet but the Paul Gaugain (probably spelled that wrong) luxury liner was there and there was not sufficient room for two ships. The previous night, when we had arrived off Moorea, I'd seen some of this but hadn't understood what I was seeing. We'd come around on the northern side of Moorea (beautiful at night) and when we'd come abreast of a certain point north of the island, I'd noticed something really bright there and I'd assumed it must be a casino or something similar. Right about then, I'd thought we would slow and drop anchor but the ship turned slowly out to sea and I heard Shane called to the bridge. About 10 minutes after that, we drifted to a stop and just sat there. I didn't understand what was going on and I finally went down and went to bed.

I didn't go to sleep, however. I put the Tigers of the Raj CD on to give it one final listen before I gave it away and I lay in the dark with headphones on and just let the music and the memories of the trip wash freely through me. It was a long time before I went to sleep. I think I was savoring my last time on the ship.

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Just finished breakfast #2. Had the first one on the Shuleykin and the second one here thousands of feet up in the sky. We've been aloft an hour and 15 minutes now.

In the morning yesterday, we took the Zodiacs ashore to Moorea and met the bus Marine Expeditions had arranged for us to tour the island. We landed near the first church built on the island. Gertraude took me over to see it. She had discovered what wonderful acoustics it had. It was an octagonal shaped building. When we went in and we were the only ones there and she sang a song in German and the sound was quite lovely.

The bus tour was about 3 hours and we went around the entire island and also up to a lookout point called Beleverder (sp). It was a good tour and we had a guide who spoke excellent English. He was of European descent and his grandfather had come over in 1925 to farm and later to run a motel when tourism

began. He spoke fluent Tahitian and French and very good English. He had a most unusual accent, however, with all those mixes at play. He was really funny at times as he explained various things to us.

The island itself was far more populated and mainstream than any place we've been since Chile but as we drove around the island, the style of the houses and the lives most people lived still seemed to me to be typically Polynesian. There was just a veneer of tourism laid over it all. At one shop I spent \$20 and bought myself a nice tee shirt. At another place where they made liquors, I considered buying a bottle but passed on it. We stopped and saw a place where a huge Tahitian building had stood and we heard where the chief had sat and about the human sacrifices that were practiced. The view from the lookout point was wonderful like so very many have been since we started this trip.



**Figure 105 - The view of Moorea from Belvedere Point**

After weeks, you can almost get used to the beauty and then you have to look again and realize anew how spectacularly beautiful the knife edged mountains and the verdant green lush vegetation is. The electric blue variations of the water and the fact that most of these people live right there in a fairly nice house (thanks to strong French subsidies) a few feet from the water. Many of them have outrigger canoes and they work just enough to pay their electric bill and to buy gasoline.



**Figure 106 - The view of Tahiti 9 miles away from Moorea**

The bus tour was nice but I was ready for it to be over because we were too crowded and it wasn't air-conditioned. I wanted to have another go at snorkeling before we departed. We arrived back at the octagonal church and we still had two hours of free time before we had to return to the ship to sail over to Tahiti. Some of us wanted to shop some more and some of us wanted to snorkel and some just wanted to walk around a look at things. Anna May and myself were the only two who seemed to want to snorkel and our guide said the best snorkeling was up the road about 10 minutes and that he would drop us there and we could get a taxi back. He also dropped Gertraude, Estelle and Claire off at the shopping area. The place where he dropped us was a nice beach hotel complex. When we got down by the water, I was

concerned about my camera and things so I took them in and left them with the bartender at the beach bar bungalow. We ended up snorkeling for about 35 minutes before we quit to see about getting a taxi back.

The snorkeling was nice. Nicer than the last place at Rurutu but not nearly so nice as Ducie was. In any case, the bottom sloped out gradually and once you were 100 feet or so off shore, there were coral heads and tropical fish and it was all well worth it. At places, it was so shallow, you'd wonder if you were going to scrap your belly as you swam over the coral and at other places, it dropped so the bottom was 10 feet below you. It is endlessly interesting to just swim along and explore. At each turn, there will be some unusual coral formation with some interesting colors or some tiny electric blue fish the size of your fingernail darting in and out. There were quite a few fish that seemed to either eat the coral or some of the softer things around. The fish were quite unafraid and would just continue on about their business unless you actually reached out for them and then you could get your hand about six inches away from them before they would dart off. Anna May discovered a bottom fish that was white. It would lie quietly on the white sand camouflaged and only move if you came too close. Ann Pierson told me later that she thought those kind changed their coloration to match the bottom. I'm quite comfortable now with snorkeling and I really like it. I wish we had warmer water where I live.

Shane had loaned me his watch and I was checking it periodically underwater to make sure we weren't late. He had said that this was one sailing which absolutely could not be delayed. Finally, when we had 35 minutes left before Zodiac time, we came out and walked back up towards the road after I got my gear from the bar. We asked the lady at hotel check in to request a cab for us and she had to make several calls before she found one. She said it would come in 15 minutes. It was 25 minutes before 2:00 then and Shane had said the last Zodiac out at 2:00 sharp. The captain was going to raise anchor at 2:15. That left us only a 10 minute margin of safety so I asked the lady if she would be able to take us if the taxi failed to come because then we would be in an emergency situation and she smiled and agreed. We stood and talked about various things and then the taxi arrived just when he said he would so I thanked the hotel lady and we were off. He charged us \$10 for the short trip but, oh well, we had no choice. It was too long to walk. We arrived with five minutes to spare and all was well.



**Figure 107 - Returning to the Shuleykin from Moorea**

We took the Zodiacs out to the ship (our last Zodiac ride). As I boarded the ship from the Zodiac, I dropped my camera and Nicolai, the Russian seaman, grabbed it an instant before it would have sunk into the waters of Moorea. Whew! Once aboard, we found a number of people swimming off the ship. Several were even diving from two and three deck levels up into the sea. I went in (without diving) and swam about for a bit and then we all had to get out as the last Zodiac was being hoisted in and we were about to sail.



**Figure 108 - Panorama with Tahiti ahead and Moorea behind**

The night before, I'd managed to get my drum packed up with materials I'd gathered from Shane and Adam. I think Sharon, my wife and master packer, will be proud of me. I've been watching her do this sort of thing for some time now. But my other packing wasn't done yet and I was wondering when I was going to get it done. Once we were back on board, I went down to do it but first a ship passed us quite closely and I had to go up and see that and then 15 minutes later, we were alerted that a school of seven Twister Dolphins were playing in our bow wake so I had to go see that.



**Figure 109 - Dolphins playing in the bow wake**

That was pretty spectacular. They were having a ball weaving back and forth just in from of the bow. Sometimes they would do a 360-degree roll and slap the bow with their tail as they crossed from side to side. I went down again and did a bit more packing and then we were arriving in Papeete harbor and that, of course, required careful supervision from several points on the ship.



**Figure 110 - In Papeete harbor at sunset**

Finally, I went down and packed some more and then went to the bar for an all passengers meeting so we could hear about the details of the evening and the next morning. During this meeting, the official trip logs

were handed out and Shane thanked the various people who'd helped him with the trip and there was lots of applause all around.

Gertraude and I had agreed to eat ashore that evening rather than go in and then have to come back at a specific time to eat on the ship. When our passenger meeting was done, we were ready to go. Clare came with us and we all walked down the gangway and onto Papeete. We were docked about two blocks from the main street, which runs along the harbor and the beach. We walked along with a larger group of people from the ship and, once on the main street, we all stayed together for awhile but eventually, we split up. The three of us migrated down to the water's edge where there as a long row of small van-like trucks set up selling food. They had quite a few different kinds.

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I got sleepy while I was typing this and then I read for a long time and now we are about an hour out of Los Angeles. I am  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way through the Complexity book. Excellent.

As we were eating our small pizzas at the waterfront in Papeete, the Paul Guagan cruise ship pulled in right in front of us. It was huge. We lingered for a long time watching the docking and the preparations afterwards as they set up a temporary building so that the passengers could come down the ramp into an enclosed space and claim their luggage. We were hoping the passengers would come down as we watched but it took too long and so we finally walked back to the ship.

I can't say I was much impressed by downtown Papeete. It seemed to be mostly discos and setup to service the crews of ships that arrived. I imagine it was probably a lot more domestic and interesting out a ways from the center but given that we only had a few evening hours to explore in, we didn't have time to try and find out.

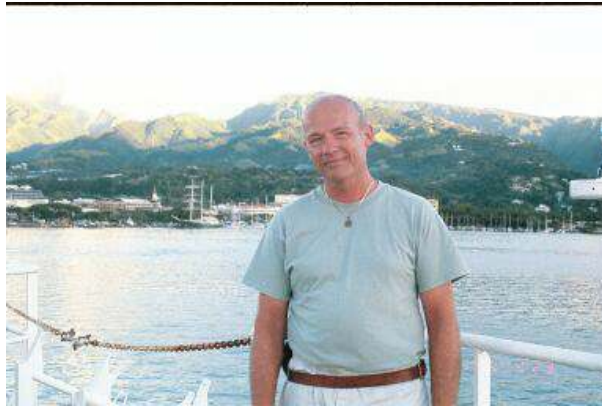
We returned to the ship and Gertraude and Clare returned to their cabin and I went by the dining room and found people who'd eaten on the ship just finishing their deserts and I wangled one for myself from Yuri, the Russian cook and I sat and talked to several people for awhile. After dinner, I ran into Nicolai and I was glad to find him because I had a gift for him. I gave him the little multipurpose knife tool I'd gotten from Rogue Wave Software a few months ago. I had been intending to do so already but after he saved my camera from going into the ocean the other day, I really wanted to do something for him. He seemed really happy with it and I felt very good about it as well. Earlier, in the afternoon, just after we'd paid off our chit debts to Marine Expeditions, I'd run into Nadia, who is the woman who cleaned the cabins on my deck. She and I have no language in common but smiles and she's always been a pleasure to be around and I wanted to give her s present as well. I gave her the CD I had along called, "Tigers of the Raj". I think I mentioned this earlier.

After talking a bit with Nicolai, I went back to my room and finished up the last of my packing and set my two checked items out in the hall as the crew had requested. At that point, I still wasn't sleepy so I went up topside to sit in the warm air and look out at Papeete until I got tired. After a while, Kristen showed up and we talked for about an hour. She's got an interesting life style as a traveling neonatal nurse. She's been moving and working in different places for over a decade at this point and still loves it. It sounds fascinating but I don't think I could deal with the emotional isolation of it all. She must have had a very secure childhood.

This morning, Steve made the breakfast announcement at 0530 and we were eating by 0600. Things moved quickly after that and the bus came that took us to the airport. Good byes to the captain and crew were said, we came down the ramp for the last time, turned around and took on last look at the Shuleykin and then we were gone.

The drive to the airport gave me a chance to see a bit more of the city. Then we were at the airport (they are the same everywhere) and then I was on the plane and that brings me to here. The end of the story of my trip.

To anyone who reads my log, I hope you enjoy it.



**Figure 111 - In Papeete harbor - the last hurrah**

The end.

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