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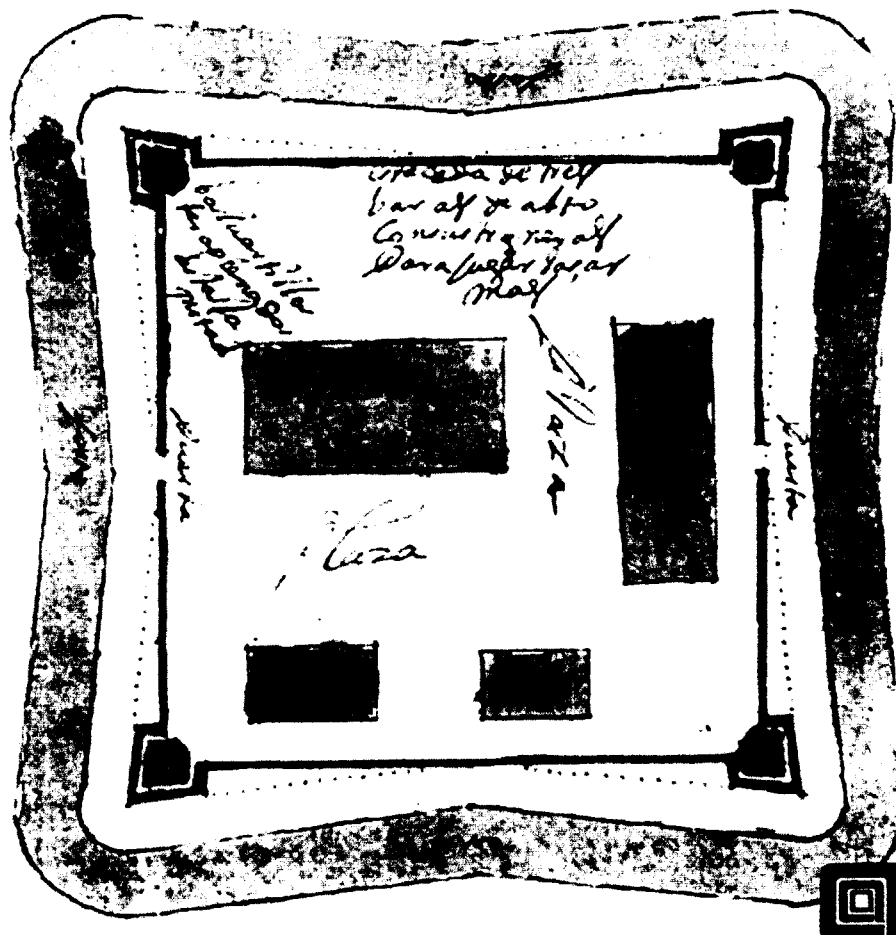
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Inside AN

- 12 Committee Meets to Plan Centennial
- Commentary
- 5 The Art of Story Telling
P YOUNG
- 7 Profit Makers vs Profit Takers
M OLDANI
- 9 Beyond the "Savage Slot"
L LINDSTROM & P STROMBERG
- 11 Scientific Insignificance
L LIEBERMAN
- Knowledge Exchange
- 15 "Honolulu, This is Hōkūle'a, Over"
B M EVANS & S MCPHERRON
- Academic Affairs
- 24 What to Do About Sexual Harassment
- Public Affairs
- 26 The People's Anthropologist
L MILLER



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KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

"Honolulu, this is Hōkūle'a, Over"

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BERNICE P BISHOP MUSEUM

In this age of worldwide satellite communication, receiving an international long distance phone call may sound passé. That is, unless the person you're talking to is in the middle of the Pacific ocean, more than a thousand miles from the nearest island, aboard Hōkūle'a, a reconstruction of a Polynesian doublehulled voyaging canoe. During the fall of 1999, Hōkūle'a and her crew are on a more than 8,000 mile journey throughout the Pacific, attempting to navigate between Hawai'i and the tiny island of Rapa Nui (Easter Island), solely by clues provided by the natural environment.

For the crew of Hōkūle'a, this voyage is the culmination of 25 years of sailing throughout the

Pacific, retracing ancient pathways and relearning celestial navigation methods that Polynesians used to settle much of the Pacific Basin. Since the 1970s, Hōkūle'a has traveled to dozens of islands throughout Polynesia. Now only the voyage to the remote eastern point of the Polynesian Triangle remains.

Unprecedented in Hōkūle'a's travels is the complex array of communications equipment aboard her and her escort boat, Kamahele. Instead of using these hightech devices to determine their location, it is helping bring daily updates of this experimental anthropological project to the schools, television and newspapers of Hawai'i, and the world via the Internet. Voyaging has become one of the primary paths the Hawaiian community has taken to rediscover their heritage, and the appetite for information



Navigator Chad Baybayan determines the canoe's location by the stars. Despite advanced communications equipment, the focus of this voyage is on the use of celestial navigation.

about Hōkūle'a's voyage from news organizations, teachers, students and the local community is enormous. The Bernice P Bishop Museum is giving these diverse communities a closer, more intimate and, for some, a realtime look at life aboard this floating laboratory.

Highest to Lowest Tech

Aboard the Hōkūle'a are specially designed waterproof camera housings containing Sony camcorders. Crew members use these cameras to document activities ranging from the serious (navigation and medical issues) to the mundane

NEWS FEATURE

(cooking and fishing) to the frankly comic (first-time voyagers occasionally entertain the seasoned crew with skits, songs and hula performances). This footage is beamed to the Kamahele via two solarpowered microwave transmitters. Due to difficulties in transmitting a quality image, this hightech broadcast of video between the ships is sometimes replaced by the decidedly lowtech, Malolo (flyingfish) Express—a sealed five gallon plastic bucket (with videotape safely ziploc-ed inside) dropped into the water and retrieved by Kamahele.

Kamahele's crew chooses particularly good footage to "framegrab" using a laptop computer. The resulting images are prepared as email attachments and sent to Honolulu. Emailings also serve as daily updates for the audience in Hawai'i on the navigator's estimate of position, canoe's actual location (provided by GPS readings aboard Kamahele, but not known by the crew of Hōkūle'a), weather conditions and the welfare of the crew. The operator connects to an internet service provider via satellite phone to transmit the emails. Images and information are disseminated to various news and educational organizations by the Museum in Honolulu.

Satellite phones also aboard the Hōkūle'a are used to speak directly to school children around Hawai'i. Scheduled teleconferences between the canoe and selected schools throughout the state are coordinated by the Museum, allowing students of all grade levels a chance to personally ask navigators aboard the ship how the voyage is progressing. Educators at the Museum work closely with teachers to focus student questions to fit into each teacher's voyaging curriculum and eliminate redundancies (satellite phone time is expensive). Recordings of teleconferences are combined with e-mailed still pictures and video mailed to Honolulu to create "Ke Ala o Hōkūle'a" (The Path of Hōkūle'a), a twice monthly, half hour, cable access television show.

From Canoe to Classroom

Bringing the excitement of voyaging to the people of Hawai'i has been a difficult proposition as cutting-edge technologies are notorious for steep learning curves and temperamental hardware. Compounding these difficulties are the realities of life aboard a sailing vessel: saltspray, lack of access to maintenance and repair, fatigue, tem-



Hōkūle'a is a reconstructed Polynesian double-hulled voyaging canoe. Its voyages have renewed interest in traditional navigation across Polynesia.

perature extremes, seasickness and cramped space. Crew members nevertheless continue to refine the communications systems, and we look forward to future voyages that will incorporate a next generation of technologies. Newer hardware with faster data transmission speeds and worldwide coverage may allow live video conferencing between canoes at sea and classrooms back home, bringing the excitement of voyaging to an even wider audience.

Hōkūle'a has been integral to a rediscovery of traditional Hawaiian culture and language and has led indirectly to the creation of a number of Hawaiian language immersion schools. One benefit of working with cable access television is that the Museum can be flexible in determining the program's content from week to week. A recent teleconference, for example, was conducted entirely in Hawaiian with questions posed from two Hawaiian language schools to fluent crew members aboard Hōkūle'a. Television programming completely in Hawaiian is rare and the resulting

program should prove a welcome resource for Hawaiian language instructors.

Many aspects of this undertaking have employed commonly available technologies, yet cost is still a limiting factor. Without generous corporate and public support, the cost of satellite phone air time alone would have rapidly exhausted much of the project's budget. Special thanks go to Outrigger Hotels and Resorts, NASA, Polynesian Voyaging Society and Ōlelo (Corporation for Community Television). ■

Bradley M Evans (ignatz@bishopmuseum.org) is a cartographer and is finishing graduate work at the U of Hawai'i-Mānoa using computer simulations to research Polynesian voyaging. Shannon P McPherson (shannon@bishopmuseum.org) is an Associate Anthropologist. His research interests include computer applications in archaeology, and he is currently writing a textbook on this subject. Together they wrote "Challenge of the Wind," an interactive computer program on Polynesian voyaging. For more information: www.hokulea.net, www.bishopmuseum.org, leahi.kcc.hawaii.edu/org/pvs/.



ASSISTANT CURATOR

The Field Museum invites applications for an Assistant Curator in complex societies of the Americas. We wish to encourage applications from energetic scholars with demonstrated commitments to field research, successful grant writing, and high-visibility publications. Strong promise for contributing to public programs and education in a museum environment and to teaching at the university level is highly desirable. Candidates must have experience with material culture in their research and be willing to take an active role in working directly with the Museum's extensive collections. The individual should have the potential to contribute to theoretical discussions that extend beyond their areas of topical and geographical expertise. We are looking for candidates who will make significant long-term contributions to a strong and growing Department of Anthropology. Although the geographical focus of this position is open to any region in the Americas, preference will be given to candidates who complement rather than duplicate the area expertise and field experience of our existing curatorial faculty.

The Field Museum is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages applicants with diverse backgrounds. By January 7, 2000, please send a letter of application, a statement of future research goals and objectives, as well as a list of 3 potential references to Chair, Search Committee, Department of Anthropology, The Field Museum, 1400 S. Lake Shore Dr., Chicago, IL 60605-2496.

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Museum

