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Going Places

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON MICRONESIA AND SOUTH PACIFIC PROGRAM

Protecting a Precious Resource

by Elizabeth Caraker

Editor's note: In 1994, Elizabeth was a technical assistant in Kosrae, working with the state tourism agency for three months. In June 1995, she returned to the FSM to work in Pohnpei as team leader for three technical assistants who helped the state develop a land use planning process.

In the middle of a desert, water is precious. In the middle of the Pacific Ocean, land is just as precious. The island state of Pohnpei, FSM, possesses a sample of almost every precious land resource endemic to a tropical island. For more than a thousand years, island dwellers have based their lives on careful use of these resources, but growth and western influences have threatened that sustainability.

Traditionally, the king controlled Pohnpei's land and its resources, including marine resources. He would allocate land for people's homes. Houses were built on stable, well-drained soil, close to drinking water sources, fertile soil, and shore access. "Development," therefore, was fairly spread out around the island's lowlands, the region of the island falling between the steep mountain slopes and the mangrove swamps.

The king tasked chiefs with particular responsibilities such as allocating resources, including fish and seafood, breadfruit, yams, and other bounties of

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Elizabeth Caraker visits with her "Micronesian family," Ricard Waltu and his children. Ricard is a conservation officer who teaches farmers about conservation and enforces conservation policies.

Marshall Gale

FROM THE DIRECTOR

TAs Prepare for Pacific Projects in 'Crossing Cultures' Course

From January through March, the MSPP staff focuses on training potential technical assistants. Persons interested in serving with the program are required to participate in a graduate course, "Experiencing Crossing Cultures," offered through the Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management at the University of Oregon. Nancy Peyron and I team-teach the course, which meets for a three-hour period weekly for ten weeks.

Only by first learning about ourselves and the "cultural baggage" we carry with us can we begin to understand others and our interactions with them.

While the course is required for people who plan to apply to become technical assistants, it is not limited to those students, and the course has much wider applicability than just to work in the Pacific islands. Our focus is on learning about how we function, interact, and respond, as individuals and in groups, particularly in circumstances which are not ordinary for us. Only by first learning about ourselves and the "cultural baggage" we carry with us can we begin to understand others and our interactions with them.

Course topics include perceptions and accountability; communication and

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Protecting a Precious Resource

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the land. Strict planting and harvesting laws restricted these activities to certain times of the year. This type of planned seasonal diet allowed necessary soil nutrient replenishment. Today, as a thousand years ago, harvesting season begins with a ceremonial feast during which community members present the biggest and most prized crops to the king.

In the past, the chief responsible for monitoring marine resources would place taboos on particular sections of reef during a species' breeding season, to restrict harvesting in that area. This ensured the reef's overall health and its ability to sustain precious food sources.

During the past century, Pohnpei has been colonized by a chain of successive western powers who have introduced different types of land uses and disrupted much of the traditional resource management. At the same time, traditional constraints on population growth have diminished. According to the 1994 census, Pohnpei's population grew an average of 1.81 percent annually from 1985 to 1994.

In 1994 the island's population was 32,000; about half the citizens are under age fifteen. Increasing population pressures are manifesting themselves in many ways. Today, fishermen use more intense fishing methods and take more time to harvest modest catches which produce, on average, smaller fish. Families question the purity of their once clean and abundant drinking water. Farmers travel deeper into the upland areas to cultivate crops, while their ancestors' original farmlands have been subdivided and built upon by children and grandchildren.

Infrastructure built by Japan and the United States has been dictating land use and settling patterns since the 1930s. The Japanese paved Pohnpei's first streets in Kolonia, the island's port town and hub. Today, a road circling the island facilitates transportation. With the aid of U.S. Compact funds, a power line also rings the island, and water treatment and sewage facilities serve residents of Kolonia and its surrounding areas.

Many types of development—residential, tourism, and commercial, for instance—followed the road access and power development. Over the past decades, development in Pohnpei proceeded in a haphazard fashion which now creates health and safety concerns. The state has begun to take these concerns seriously by recognizing the value of land use planning.

The island's first attempt to direct a master planning process and establish an appointed state planning commission occurred in 1974, when the Trust Territory government created a code for land use and the Pohnpei District Legislature passed a law calling for adherence to that code. Typically, land control and regulation tend to be highly political, and this became the case with the territory's effort to enforce the code. The attempts failed, and Pohnpeians witnessed another twenty years of accelerated, uncontrolled growth and development before making a second attempt at land use control.

In January 1994, the Pohnpei State Legislature passed the Pohnpei Land Use Planning and Zoning Act. In compliance with that act, Pohnpei's governor appointed a seven-member planning commission to propose a Land Use and Zoning Master Plan for legislative enactment. The governor also directed the Department of Land to appoint a task force to help the planning commission compile the master plan.

According to the 1994 act, the planning commission has five years to draft the master plan, gain local support, and submit the plan to the legislature for approval. To get this project off the ground, the task force requested assistance from the Micronesia and South Pacific Program.

Advanced graduate students from the University of Oregon's Community and Regional Planning Program and Oregon State University's Marine Resources

Elizabeth Caraker (right) and her friend Joann Rousan pose at a scenic spot in Pohnpei.

Management Program worked with task force members for six months and produced a draft land use plan addressing the twelve elements mandated by state law. Examples of these elements are conservation, historic preservation, transportation, public services, safety, and housing. The state mandate also requires that the master planning process involve state agencies and local governments. Development of a program to educate and involve citizens is also part of that mandate.

For the last thirty years, Pohnpei's state government has compiled a multitude of plans and laws affecting resources, land, and development. Few were implemented or enforced, and even fewer were consistent with one another. Commencing the master planning process therefore required a reexamination of past research, planning, and legal decisions. The task force identified conflicts and overlaps among state agency jurisdictions, plans, and activities. The agencies and task force addressed these inconsistencies and committed to improving coordination regarding land use activities.

Each of the twelve elements is featured in its own chapter of the master plan. These chapters contain goal statements, the element's background and history, and policies and strategies for fulfilling the element's goal. In addition to the resources of existing plans and laws, the chapters are supported by a demographic profile of the island's population, housing, and public services and by a survey of

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Today, as a thousand years ago, harvesting season begins with a ceremonial feast during which community members present the biggest and most prized crops to the king.

existing environmental conditions.

Pohnpei's Land Use Master Plan is still in draft form and requires citizen involvement and input to increase its political viability. To be an effective tool for guiding land use and development, the master plan must embody a common vision of Pohnpei's future. That shared vision can be created if citizens understand that land use planning can benefit them and future generations because it is a means of properly managing development and the island's resources.

Many Pohnpeians today believe that their ancestors were natural land use planners. Their "land use plans" addressed many of the same elements called for by the 1994 act. The king's policies ensured that his people's basic human needs were met. With this premise, the task force and planning commission will meet with traditional leaders and communities to discuss the need for land use planning.

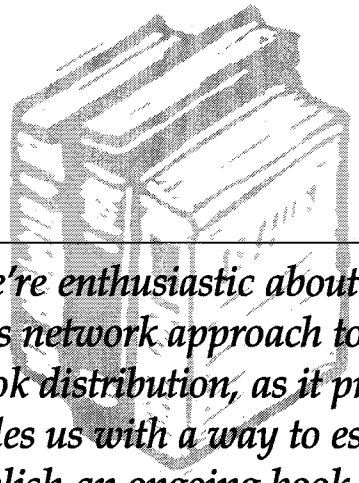
The task force will use the draft plan as an outline to generate discussion, feedback, and input into the plan's goals, objectives, and strategies. Past failures have illustrated that the only successfully enforced laws or plans in Pohnpei will be those which are supported and enforced by its citizens.

From January through June 1996, the task force is mobilizing and facilitating these community meetings. The MSPP will continue to support Pohnpei's land use planning process by supplying further technical assistance in June 1996. This project will focus on compiling citizen feedback from community meetings and editing the master plan to incorporate this feedback. The result will be a master plan which reflects a common vision and shared ideas to protect Pohnpei from being developed to death.

Networking, Helping Hands Solve Book Transport Problem

by Kristen Taylor

Editor's note: Kristen Taylor is a graduate student providing support for the MSPP.



We're enthusiastic about this network approach to book distribution, as it provides us with a way to establish an ongoing book program for libraries in the Pacific Islands

A popular U.S. television show features Tim the Tool Man. But another hardware man named Tim—and other helping hands—provided the answer to this question: How can we transport heavy boxes of books to public and school libraries in the Pacific Islands when we cannot afford shipping costs?

For several years, South Eugene High School has been generously donating boxes of books monthly to the Micronesia and South Pacific Program. Until recently, the boxes piled up in the office until Maradel lugged a few with her on her trips to the various islands. Thanks to donations from the Alliance for Cultural Exchange, in December we were able to mail some of the boxes to the Pohnpei Public Library and the College of Micronesia in Pohnpei.

Despite this generous gift, our challenge remained: How do we transport books regularly to the islands when funding sources are scarce? With creativity and successful networking, we found a more permanent solution. Pohnpei True Value Hardware store's general manager, Tim McPhae, offered to donate a four-by-four-foot pallet on his monthly cargo shipment from Portland. We were ecstatic; now the task seemed simple. We just needed to get books to Portland each month. The solution, however, was not so straighforward.

We pick up books from South Eugene High School, bring them back to the MSPP office, prepare the boxes with big labels (to avoid any confusion), and deliver them to the Eugene True Value Hardware store. Cotter and Company (one of True Value's shipping companies) picks up the boxes and makes a special route stop at Dateline Exports in Wilsonville, Oregon, near Portland to drop off the books. Dateline then packs the books in the cargo shipment going to Pohnpei True Value Hardware. After all these connections, the books are finally on their way to Pohnpei. Once they arrive there, Tim McPhae notifies the various librarians. Logistically this may sound a bit crazy; however, our first shipment went out before the holidays and the libraries received their books without a hitch!

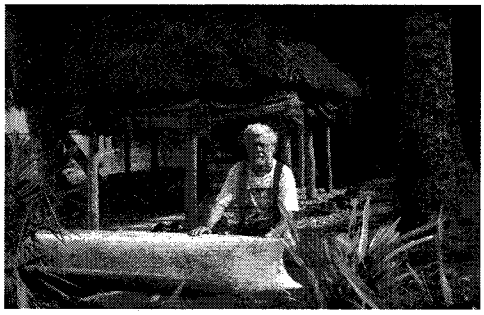
We're enthusiastic about this network approach to book distribution because it provides us with a way to establish an ongoing book program for libraries in the Pacific Islands. Our thanks to True Value Hardware, Cotter and Company, and Dateline Exports. We are now working to find a way to distribute books to other islands and remain optimistic about the continued expansion of our library development program.

On another front in this program, the MSPP has linked the library at the College of the Marshall Islands with the Follett Company, producers of the software utilized by most libraries for collection cataloging and management. Once the details are settled, the MSPP will provide an appropriate software package to the College of the Marshall Islands Library, now under the leadership of Maxine Becker.

Tokelau Olosega: Laughter, Music . . . and Rats

by Eldon Haines

Editor's comments: Eldon Haines, who has a Ph.D. in chemistry and expertise in solar energy, was a technical assistant with the American Samoa Territorial Energy Office. During the course of his project, he traveled to Swains Island (Tokelau Olosega) to assist with the installation of a solar electric system. This story reports on the trip and Eldon's experiences.



Linda Rose

Eldon Haines

The ship Manu'atele set out from Pago Harbor bound for little Swains Island (Takelau Olosega), 200 miles north-northwest of Samoa. She carried about twenty residents of Olosega to a family reunion, plus three working teams: biologists to study the rat problem, an energy team to install a solar electric system, and agriculture people to collect quantities of the sweet variety of coconut grown on the island.

The twenty-hour passage was peaceful. A magnificent sunset blessed our journey, and flying fish soared as much as a hundred meters above the hull of the ship. I rolled out my sleeping mat on the hard bridge deck under the stars and slept for intervals through the night.

Normally about five families occupy Olosega's coconut jungle, turned wild after thirty years of neglect at the old plantation. Now only five young men, ages twenty to thirty, occupy the island. A family from Tokelau plans to return in November if the rat problem can be licked. The marine and wildlife biologists, led by former technical assistant Holly Freifeld, had come to assess the problem.

Clearly it may not be solved by November. A brackish lagoon covers almost half of the island's 800 acres. More than 20,000 rats occupy less than a square mile—it's a mess! Rats are everywhere and into everything; they had driven the families off a year ago. Their population is saturated and they are hungry, even devouring their own from the snap-traps set out by a biologist to assess their density.

We danced barefoot on the wave-rounded white coral rubble, lava-lavas swirling around our legs, under the soft light of the lanterns, the stars, and a new moon, until we were completely exhausted.

More than 20,000 rats occupy the island—it's a mess! Rats are everywhere and into everything; they had driven the families off a year ago.

Because we slept in tents on the beach, we weren't bothered by the rats, since there was no food supply. However, they did swarm all over everything in the village at night—and over a coconut I broke open and left briefly one day—and when I walked through the forest, I could hear them scampering away from me.

On Sunday morning we were invited to the little white one-room church for service with lots of *a cappella* singing, which raised memories of my childhood. We were asked to refrain from working on Sunday. Our presence was also requested each evening at dusk for *sâ*, or vespers, with more *a cappella* singing of Samoan hymns and a long prayer of thanks for the sun and sea, the island's productivity, and people's warmth.

We were treated to the island's coconut crabs (fierce foot-long monsters which can husk a coconut), the lagoon's lobster and fish, one of the family's domestic pigs baked slowly in the underground oven, and lovely hot rolls baked in a barrel oven over a wood fire. But more than anything else, we were treated to Tokelau-Samoan friendliness, welcome, joy, laughter, music, and dance.

I worked with an engineer named Chris and our two Samoan assistants, Taliga and Sio, to install the solar electric system. Three photovoltaic panels charge twenty batteries in a twenty-four-volt system that operated the DC refrigerator and lights for the island's dispensary and one-room school. We ripped out all the 110-volt wiring and reused it in the twenty-four-volt system, doing some ingenious "bush wiring" for missing light switches. It went well.

Following *sâ* the evening before our departure, old one-armed Poni of the island announced the *fiafia*, a departure party of music and dance. *Sâ* and *fiafia* and feasting all took place in the

Denise Jackson

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Tokelau Olosega

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Denise Jackson

common *fale*, an open wood-pole structure covered by coconut frond thatch and lighted by two Coleman lanterns.

What followed were four hours of song and dance contests, taunts sung humorously between the Pago Samoans and the Olosega Tokelauans, extemporaneous verses, and crazy slap-stick skits which had everyone rolling with laughter. Our *palagi* (Westerner) contribution paled in comparison: Under my direction we sang the round "Hey-ho, nobody home!" and got everyone up for the hokey-pokey to great gales of laughter.

Songs of soft beauty, gentle moving harmonies, and tender counterpoint wafted through the air. Fighting songs were belted out to muscular, masculine dancing. The *siva* is a soft dance with symbolic arm, hand, and eye movements much like a modest Hawaiian hula. One man danced a men's *siva* that was beautiful, and each woman danced the *siva* at least once.

For the last dance, seventy-eight-year-old Eliza danced the most sensitive *siva* and became a young woman before our eyes. After several minutes of dance, she invited each of the *palagis* and Pago Samoans up to dance with her while the Tokelau people played guitar and sang their hearts out.

We danced barefoot on the wave-rounded white coral rubble, *lava-lavas* (wraparound skirts) swirling around our legs, under the soft light of the lanterns, the stars, and a new moon, until we were completely exhausted. At the end of the evening, we went off to bed on the coral beach, laughter still ringing about the village as small groups recounted the evening's celebration.

Dream Job Becomes Reality with Head-spinning Start and a Lei

by Nancy Peyron, Project Coordinator

When people ask what I do, I often tell them, "I have the job of my dreams." In 1989, I dreamed of facilitating community development in an international setting. That vision led me to return to college at age thirty-seven to obtain an undergraduate degree in international studies and a master's degree in organizational development.

Before my studies were barely complete, I was flying to Micronesia as the first full-time project coordinator with the Micronesia and South Pacific Program. In a few short years, my dream had become reality.

It was a crazy time—in July 1994, two days before my graduate courses ended, I found myself driving to Eugene from Seattle, buying and packing clothes for the humid Pacific climate, hoping they were appropriate, and jumping on a plane to Honolulu. Maradel greeted me at the airport with a lei, and my job began.

My head continued to spin as we traveled from island to island for three weeks, meeting agency supervisors and TA counterparts and learning about the program and the wide variety of summer projects in which everyone was involved.

While Maradel assessed project development, I questioned TAs about their relationships with people on the island and checked on their personal well-being. This team effort was the harbinger of our challenging and exciting working relationship. Since then, we continue to build on one another's strengths—Maradel's passion for creating and nurturing projects and my interest in people, how they feel about the work they are doing, and how they interact.

The summer site visits demonstrated that my extroverted personality was going to add a new dimension to the program as I pay attention to the people component when coordinating and developing projects.

It was an ideal time in the development of the organization for someone with my background to join the team. I am committed to facilitating healthy communication and promoting reciprocal support among our staff, participants in the TA training program, and people in the island agencies.

During the summer, one of my responsibilities is running "base camp." When TAs leave Eugene to begin their three-month island trek, I become their link to places and people they leave behind. If they need additional supplies or research materials, have a message to be relayed, or want to tell someone about their amazing journey, I'm the one at the other end of the telephone and fax machine.

This summer, I'll be making site visits to agencies on Palau, Yap, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Majuro, and American Samoa, logging more than 30,000 miles. I look forward to seeing TAs "on assignment" and meeting agency personnel with whom they will be working. Maradel will be in Eugene covering "base camp" during that time.

Maradel and I usually take turns traveling, and between us, we generally make three site visits a year. A four-week May trip covers the same islands mentioned above except for American Samoa, and in February Maradel spends from two to four weeks in the Pacific.

These trips can be grueling—traveling thousands and thousands of miles, schlepping luggage from place to place, and coping with high humidity (a real contrast to summer in Eugene). Crossing the international dateline, sometimes I'm not sure what day it is, but I am sure of one thing: This *is* the job of my dreams!

From the Director: MARADEL GALE

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listening skills; cultural lenses and cultural identity; values, norms, and ethics; entering a new culture; adapting cross-culturally; dealing with ambiguity, problem-solving and conflict resolution styles, and transition and culture shock.

While these topics may seem dry listed on paper, the context in which they are covered in the class is anything but dull. We believe in creating opportunities for students to jump in and get their feet wet in trying out new behaviors, stretching the limits of their beliefs, and learning more fully about their impact on others. The course is primarily experiential, with a smattering of theory to provide food for thought as the body and senses go through very new experiences.

The course includes opportunities for interaction in dyads and small groups and as an entire class. In addition to role-plays, simulations, and games, we utilize two instruments: one examines conflict resolution styles and the other focuses on how adaptable we are cross-culturally.

In one simulation, Minoria, a country with a traditional culture, invites assistants from the industrialized nation of Majoria to share expertise. Two teams of students, the Majorians and the Minorians, are given separate briefings, and the resulting interactions help students learn what is appropriate assistance—and what isn't.

Each class activity is thoroughly discussed to encourage students to integrate what they have just undergone with their beliefs, past experiences, and other real-world situations. Written response papers provide further opportunities for integration.

This year the course benefited from my participation in the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication, held at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon. As an intern for the institute, I was able to work closely with Sivasailam Thiagarajan ("Thiagi") and Stella Ting-Toomey, learning many new educational activities for this type of training.

Students in our course observe: "This class is not like any other I have ever experienced." We consider that a compliment.

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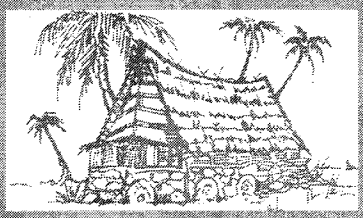

This edition of Going Places *was edited by Maradel Gale, MSPP director. Articles by Gale, Elizabeth Caraker, Eldon Haines, Nancy Peyron, and Kristen Taylor. Layout by George Beltran. Editorial assistance by Pat Bray.*

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The Micronesia and South Pacific Program was established in 1988 at the University of Oregon to assist with the development of sustainable communities in the Pacific islands. The university affiliation faculty development program links the University of Oregon with the University of the South Pacific and the College of Micronesia-FSM, Palau Community College, and the College of the Marshall Islands. The technical assistance program transfers technical skills to counterparts in public agencies and nonprofit organizations in American Samoa, the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. A library development program works with public and school libraries throughout Micronesia.

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The Micronesia and South Pacific Program follows the letter and spirit of all equal-opportunity, civil-rights, and accessibility laws.