

Going Places

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UNIVERSITY OF OREGON MICRONESIA AND SOUTH PACIFIC PROGRAM

FROM MARADEL GALE,
MSPP DIRECTOR

Spring has arrived in Oregon, and with it, a new crop of technical assistants-in-training. This year we expect to have about twenty-four people working in the islands in the summer and fall of 1994 and winter of 1995. The bulk of the assignments are for the summer. The next *Going Places* will include a complete listing of technical assistants (TAs) and their assignments

At this time of year, MSPP staff are busy preparing the TAs for their island sojourns. We have a thirty-hour course which is required for all TAs, and which covers issues of cross-cultural communication, differing value systems, dealing with ambiguity, perceptions and assumptions and how they affect our ability to operate in new situations, improvement of helping skills, and working with counterparts. During this same time period, TAs are conducting research on their particular topic and island so they can learn as much as possible about their project prior to leaving for the islands.

Another spring-time staff responsibility involves assuring that the island agencies are ready for the arrival of the TAs. In May, Maradel takes a trip throughout the islands to meet with the project supervisors and counterparts to finalize the parameters of the assignment and determine that housing is ready for the TAs. In the technical assistance program, provision of housing is the responsibility of the requesting agency.

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Pacific Islands Student Reintegration Project Continues

In 1991, the MSPP was awarded a NAFSA incentive grant under Project ASPIRE to design and implement a reintegration program for Micronesia students attending colleges and universities in the U.S., with the particular geographic focus for the project on students attending schools in western Oregon. The five objectives of the project included:

- Identify, in a systematic fashion, the students from Micronesia attending the public colleges and universities in Western Oregon.
- Develop a network among potential employers in Micronesia.
- Develop a support network of alumni and graduates of colleges and universities who currently reside in the islands.
- Link the Micronesian students currently attending western Oregon colleges and universities with potential employers and alumni and graduates on their home islands.
- Generate private sector funding to continue development of the program.

During the course of the grant work, it became apparent that the degree of difficulty of realizing the first objective was well beyond that anticipated at the outset of the project, and consequently would seriously affect the ability to realize the other objectives. Because of the difficulty of identifying Micronesian students, the original grant objectives were modified in order to gain more information about the current needs of Micronesian students attending colleges in the U.S. Students from the former Trust Territories, as well as

American Samoa, are allowed free entry into the U.S. Because they are not considered foreign students, Micronesians are usually not identifiable from the records of the U.S. colleges and universities. Thus, the first objective required several approaches to attempt to identify Micronesian students in western Oregon.

We followed several approaches to identify Micronesian students in Oregon. We requested information from state scholarship agencies in Micronesia that support students who are attending U.S. institutions of higher education; we sought information from registrar's offices and international student offices from nine colleges and universities in western Oregon, and we asked identified Micronesian students to help locate other students through their friends and family networks.

When we had the information needed to contact local Micronesian students, a survey was developed and administered to the students in order to assess the problems perceived by them in relation to

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UO Affiliation Programs

Narendra Reddy

The four months flew by for Narendra Reddy. Narendra came to the University of Oregon in November, 1993, as part of the University of Oregon's University Affiliation Program with the University of the South Pacific (USP). He is a business instructor at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji and used his time in Oregon to write and publish a research project.

Narendra's project involved researching the influence of culture on business decisions in five island groups of the Pacific: Samoa, Tonga, the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Fiji. He spent a week with several CEOs in each island country. He observed their work habits and attended meetings with them. At the end of the week, the CEO completed a related questionnaire. Narendra found that the cultures of the various island countries influenced business decision-making to varying degrees, and that all the CEOs involved in the study believed local culture made doing business in the Pacific different from doing business in a Western country. His research is being published by the University of Oregon Center for Asian and Pacific Studies (CAPS).

Narendra returned to Fiji in early February. Another USP scholar from Fiji, Biman Prasad, arrived in early March. He spent three weeks learning about the Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management's Community Planning Workshop. It is a model which he plans to modify for use in the South Pacific.



Yapese dancers.

Maradel Gale

Library Program

Barnwell Goes to Palau

In February, Jane Barnwell left her post as Pacific Islands Collection Development Specialist at the University of Oregon Library to assume a two-year position as Librarian at Palau Community College in Micronesia. "It's an especially big challenge because the college is making a transition from a vocational to a liberal arts focus," Jane commented in an interview just prior to leaving. "Naturally this change in focus means a major overhaul of the library." Three recent studies done at the college—one by a consultant, one by the college itself and one by the library staff of the college—indicate there is widespread awareness and acceptance of the need for change.

Jane indicated that she sees her role as 1) advisor to the college board of trustees and the faculty regarding the potential of the library, 2) grant seeker for those items outside the regular budget (for instance, a copier) and 3) an enthusiastic role model for young Belauans who might one day choose a library career. Jane would also like to start a Belau Library Association to link all the librarians in Palau for the purposes of sharing information, lobbying, promoting literacy and documenting oral traditions.

En route to Palau, Jane visited the libraries of the other Micronesian islands on behalf of MSPP. She assisted them in their strategic planning efforts, did some training and updated the initial assessment of the libraries conducted in 1989 for MSPP.

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In mid-June, just after final exams, most of the TAs depart for their assignments, remaining in the field until mid-September. The main emphasis of their work is skills transfer in the context of the projects on which they are working. A final report on the project is developed by each TA in conjunction with their counterpart. In addition to copies left with the agency, these reports are distributed to the College of Micronesia/FSM. A complete list of reports is available from the MSPP office.

This spring, there is a world-wide focus on the issues and potential of small islands. From April 25 to May 6, the United Nations Global Conference on Sustainable Development in Small Island Developing States will be held in Barbados. Two Preparatory Committee meetings have struggled to define the program of action that will come from this conference. The chapters cover a wide array of issues, including climate change and sea level rise, biodiversity, transport and communication, tourism resources, and human resource development. The UO Micronesia and South Pacific Program has been officially accredited by the United Nations to the Global Conference. The MSPP will be represented at the Conference by Maradel Gale and Beverly Moore. Beverly has worked as a TA in Kosrae and will be returning to Kosrae this summer to continue her work there with the Kosrae Integrated Resources Management Program.



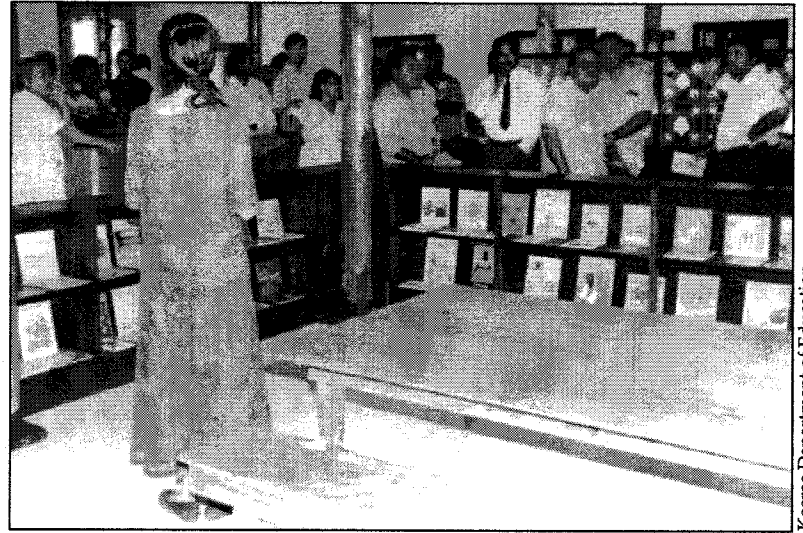
Rose Mackwelung Library Dedicated in January

On January 7, 1994, the State of Kosrae dedicated the new Rose Mackwelung Library in Tofol, Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia. The library is a combination high school and public library for Kosrae, administered by the Kosrae Department of Education. Located in a former school cafeteria, the transformation of the old building was guided by the work of two University of Oregon Micronesia and South Pacific Program technical assistants, Sarah Rosner, landscape architect, and Laura Hafermann, architect. Sarah and Laura worked during the summer of 1993 with the staff of the library to determine the redesign of the building and the layout of the new library. Sarah and Laura worked closely with the carpentry staff to design the new bookshelves, the door, and the main desk. They even designed the interior signs and the sign to go over the door of the new library.

Rose Mackwelung, in whose memory the library is dedicated, was educated in Kosrae, Jaluit, and the U.S., and was determined to return to her home as a teacher. After teaching first at a mission school on Kosrae, and then becoming an

English teacher after World War II, Rose was asked to organize Kosrae's school system. She served as the superintendent of Kosrae's schools until 1952, when she moved to Pohnpei to serve as assistant superintendent of schools and adult education supervisor. Rose Mackwelung retired in 1974, returned to Kosrae, and passed away in June, 1985, at the age of 73.

The University of Oregon Micronesia and South Pacific Program congratulates the State of Kosrae and the Department of Education on this wonderful new library, which will open the world to many generations of new readers.



Kosrae Department of Education

Dedication ceremony for Kosrae's new library.

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their education experience in the U.S.

Here are some data from the survey:

- 94 percent of the students responding first arrived in Oregon after 1985, with 61 percent arriving since 1990.
- 77 percent of the students are under 25 years old.
- 80 percent of students felt that contact with other Micronesian students here in Oregon is very important.
- 77 percent of the students plan to return to Micronesia after receiving a college degree.

Overall, adequate and appropriate support for Micronesian students in western Oregon colleges is significantly lacking. Grant recommendations for further work with these students includes better processes for identifying Micronesian students in U.S. colleges and universities, providing non-academic support to students, assisting with financial aid, and assisting with cultural and learning style adaptation.



Kosrae Department of Education

Dedication ceremony for Kosrae's new library.

Designing a Community Center for Yap

"It seemed like we flew forever to get there," said Technical Assistant Larry Vasquez, who spent last summer on the Micronesian island of Yap. Larry, a graduate student in planning, and Ned White, an architecture graduate student, were on Yap to help develop a plan for a piece of land which the government owns in the center of the

with poles and steeply-pitched thatched roofs, with an adjacent vegetable garden. However, our technical assistants were given a Western-style concrete house with a small lawn. John was especially excited and proud to show them the telephone, a service which had just recently come to the village.

A few days later, Ned and Larry were on the job, meeting with government officials to outline the project. The governor told Larry and Ned that he wanted whatever was developed on the land "to be beautiful—a place where people would enjoy gathering." Larry and his counterpart, John Wayaan, Physical Planner for Yap, began the process by talking with the different groups who had expressed the need for facilities. The historic

preferred plans will now be used to help raise money for construction.

Life on Yap was not all work for Larry and Ned. Their village was about six miles out of Colonia. This was a bit unusual as most of the technical assistants in our program are housed near where they work. But Ned and Larry fit right into village life. Children from the village constantly filled their house. They seemed to flock to Ned, and loved to play croquet with coconuts and "home-made" mallets of bamboo. Older Yapese boys often accompanied Larry on his runs and walks, showing him the family taro fields, and their special betelnut trees. Often the villagers brought fish, bananas or taro for them to eat. Ned and Larry traveled to and from work on the "little blue school bus" which is the public transportation system and a great opportunity for getting to know people. "We knew we had been accepted," remarked Ned, "when we could share betelnut with our Yapese friends on the bus." "People just embraced us," said Larry.

Larry is returning to Yap this April for four months to assist in a community-wide land-use planning project. Obviously, the Yapese were pleased with the technical assistants' "slow down and observe" philosophy.



Ned White

UO TAs Chris Descantes, Larry Vasquez and Ned White with Anna Tinmed.

town of Colonia. "We didn't know what to expect. We knew Yap was more traditional than many of the other islands. But it was hard to form ideas ahead of time. So we just forced ourselves to slow down and observe."

As expected, Larry and Ned's first experiences were nothing they could have anticipated. They were met warmly by their Yapese supervisor, John Sohlith, at the airport. After a brief stop at the office in Colonia, John drove them over a bumpy dirt road for miles into the jungle to the village that would be their home for the next three months. Traditional Yapese homes are built on coral platforms

preservation office needed a museum. There was no place to house the government archives. The tourism office was too small. A new space for the public library was needed.

Next, they did a site analysis, and made a photographic survey of traditional building styles. These photographs will be a permanent addition to the Yap Planning Department's documents. As the needs, site opportunities and preferred building styles came together, Ned and John Wayaan started drawing plans to help people visualize the different options. By the end of the summer, one set of plans emerged at the top. The set of

A Note to Alumni

Please keep us informed of your current address so we can keep you on the mailing list for *Going Places*. We love to hear from you and to find out what you are doing now, and where you are. Keep us posted!

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Going Places

This edition of *Going Places* was edited by Kathleen Roos, a graduate research assistant for the MSPP. Bev Moore also contributed. Information about Rose Mackwelung was provided by the Kosrae Department of Education.

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