

First Ladies visit Jined Kibed

ISAAC MARTY

The RMI University of the South Pacific (USP) sponsored weaving circle 'Jined Kibed' was visited by the Federated States of Micronesia First Lady Emma Mori and RMI First Lady Lieom Anono Loeak last Thursday. The visit showed part of Marshallese culture to the group.

Master Weaving Instructor Ashken Binat flew out for an Expo at South Korea last Friday with other RMI representatives to present Marshallese traditional handicrafts (see story below). Binat will showcase a 'jaki-ed' (traditional mats) that she started working on in April. She told the Journal, "I'll finish it at the Expo to show how it's done."

Also Master Weaving Instructor Susan Jieta is heading for Ailinglaplap Atoll to represent USP at the closing ceremony for the completed four months training involving 10 local girls on Ailinglaplap. "The master weaving instructor for Ailinglaplap is Terse Timothy," said Jieta. "We are all grateful for

Internal Affairs Secretary Daisy Alik-Momotaro (left) and FSM's First Lady Emma Mori hold up one of Ashken Binat's clothing mats during a visit to the USP weavers' house. Photo: Isaac Marty.



USP because they provide training, stipend for taxi and meals, and especially for preserving this traditional weaving."

Meanwhile, preparations are continuing on Majuro as club members and independent weavers who graduated from the club are sprucing up their 'jakis' for the annual auction scheduled to for September at the Marshall Islands Resort.

Training opportunities for new weavers has been temporarily halted due to lack of funding. "We're looking for more funding to do more training, especially for the outer islands," said USP Director Irene Taafaki.

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RMI no-show at fest

The RMI government formed a committee to organize attendance of a Marshall Islands group at the every-four-year Pacific Festival of Arts.

The two-week "Olympics" of culture in the region started last week in the Solomon Islands with only Internal Affairs Minister Wilbur Heine there for official meetings and the kick off of the major event. According to Internal Affairs Assistant Secretary Wallace Peter, the committee voted not to send off a cultural team

due to short-notice communications from the hosting country. So the committee didn't have any funds because they felt it not appropriate to ask for funds since they weren't ready to participate.

Heine met with festival organizers and other Pacific island representatives in the Solomons to better prepare for the next festival.

The first Pacific Arts Festival was held in Fiji 1972 and has been held every four years since.

Yamamura leads delegation to Korea

HILARY HOSIA

Public works Minister Hiroshi Yamamura and his wife Meliser are leading a delegation of 20 RMI representatives on an exposition voyage, destination Yeosu, South Korea. The Minister's delegation is a mixture of eight governmental officials and 12 performers. The performers include two master weavers and 10 "war dancers" from Jebo, Utrik.

The RMI team is joining 106 nations in what's called the "Living Ocean and Coast Exposition," sponsored by the government of South Korea. The team will also be

joined by two of its staff members already posted in Yeosu, who were sent in advance to tend the RMI booth on a day-to-day basis for the entire three months of the event.

This Thursday, world leaders and participants representing different walks of life will bear witness as the RMI colors hover high, the national anthem reverberates in its shadow, commencing the Marshall Islands national day, followed by a showcase of cultural dances and traditional fine arts.

Wallace Peter (commissioner of section) and Antari Elbon (coordinator) emphasized that 90 percent of the funds for the RMI delegation were provided through the generosity of the government of South Korea.

When asked why we are sending a delegation to the event, Expo Coordinator Elbon responded, "expose Marshall Islands to the world. Sell Marshall Islands."

"Expose us, our products and our heritage."

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