



PICTURE: AP

**WAY AHEAD:** New Zealand's Black Magic leaves Young America trailing in the America's Cup off San Diego.

## Ecstatic Kiwis celebrate

MERCURY

Auckland 15/5/1995

NORMALLY stuffy New Zealanders sang and danced from morning to night. Queen Elizabeth II's representative compared it to Sir Edmund Hillary's conquest of Mount Everest. And the winning yacht club ran out of Champagne.

Wearing lucky red socks and grins from ear to ear, euphoric Kiwis staged a nationwide party yesterday to celebrate Team New Zealand's stunning 5-0 sweep in the America's Cup finals.

"This is New Zealand's proudest day since Everest," said Governor-General Dame Cath Tizard.

One radio station urged the Queen, who is head of state, to knight the crew leaders as New Zealander Hillary was after he climbed the world's tallest peak in the 1950s.

"It might be called the America's Cup. But it's New Zealand's cup now," said Richard Ramsay, one of thousands who cheered

and jumped for joy as the Kiwi's Black Magic 1 dashed to the finish line well clear of Dennis Conner's Young America.

It was early yesterday in New Zealand when the race was held off San Diego Saturday afternoon. Bacon and eggs were washed down by champagne and beer in homes, restaurants and pubs.

Before the race, some preachers said they would interrupt weekly church services with updates. Jetliner pilots planned to announce the result to passengers.

"This is a tremendous day for New Zealanders," said Prime Minister Jim Bolger who congratulated the crew via satellite. "You are typical New Zealanders, doing it well and winning."

The Auld Mug's new home, the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron's modest clubhouse on Auckland's Waitemata Harbour, was crowded with ecstatic members who drank it dry of bubbly. - (Sapa-AP)