What a Team!

For the past six weeks, a dedicated team from our ‘ohana has been working literally around the clock to replace the antiquated computer and software systems at the Ala Moana Hotel and convert to the latest versions of the Stellex and JDE systems generally used in hotels operated by affiliates of Outrigger and OHANA hotels. It was a massive and very complicated task; however, everything went beautifully, and I want to congratulate everyone involved.

The details of the conversion are covered in the excellent article by Grant James and Bruce Schneider. It was, by far, the largest computer conversion our ‘ohana has ever accomplished, and to have flawlessly completed such a task in just six weeks, during the peak of the mid-winter high season, in an operating hotel with high occupancies is almost unimaginable.

It was not quite as challenging, perhaps, as it might be to replace the engines of a Boeing 747 while in flight over the Pacific Ocean, but that is the comparison that comes to mind when I contemplate the enormity of the Ala Moana Hotel conversion.

From what I have heard, there were few, if any, glitches or guest inconveniences. Contrast that to the problems US Airways and its passengers faced last weekend when it attempted to convert its computer systems to something compatible with the systems of its merger partner, America West. The check-in kiosks did not work and thousands across the nation waited hours in airports and missed their flights.

The Ala Moana Hotel conversion also makes me think of how far our companies have come since Ann Harada and I first dabbled in hotel management technology about 35 years ago. Roy Kelley did not approve of computers, so, in a fashion similar to the moonshine “Skunk Works” depicted in the old, satirical *Lil Abner* comic strip, we covertly set up an early Burroughs accounting machine in a room behind the Main Showroom of the Outrigger Waikiki Hotel. Reservations were first taken by hand, then keypunched onto a card, which was dropped into the accounting machine. “Whirr, kerplunk. Whirr, kerplunk,” groaned the machine as each reservation was recorded, one at a time. It took forever, but it worked!

Since that time, technology has advanced by light-years, and members of our ‘ohana working in the various companies of the Outrigger Enterprises Group have become highly sophisticated. We are in fact industry leaders in using technology in hospitality. New things are happening in this area every day, and, as the carnival Barker used to say, “You ain’t seen nothing yet!”

To all who helped, directly or indirectly, in the Ala Moana Hotel conversion: Congratulations and many, many thanks!