Thoughts on the Boston Bombing
By Dr. Richard Kelley

As I write this article, I know that every member of our ‘ohana is deeply saddened by the horrific events that marred last Monday's running of the Boston Marathon. We grieve for the three who (as of Thursday) lost their lives, the more than 170 who were injured and their families. This brutal assault on hundreds of innocents is a shocking reminder of the times in which we live. Science and technology have put tremendous power into human hands. That power is generally used to create many wonderful things for the benefit of humankind. Yet in the hands of those with evil intent, that power can do unimaginable harm.

Monday's events are of particular interest to me because I lived and worked in Boston for five years while attending medical school. I have walked down Boylston Street, the site of the two explosions. I am more than familiar with Massachusetts General Hospital, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Children's Hospital, where the blast victims were taken and treated.

Three of my children were born in Boston – Kathy Carey, Dr. Chuck Kelley and Linda Jane Kelley. A few years ago, Linda Jane went back to run in the Boston Marathon herself.

The bombings remind us that we in Travel & Tourism have an obligation to protect our guests from injury under a wide range of circumstances. The Lenox and Mandarin Oriental hotels, located on Boylston Street very close to where the bombs exploded, were immediately evacuated and secured.

Other hotels in the area did a magnificent job of handling a wide variety of guest issues resulting from the blasts. Security was immediately tightened. Many guests who had taken personal belongings, room keys, identification, etc. in a backpack to pick up after the race were unable to retrieve their things since streets along the race course had been locked down for security reasons. I am sure that jammed telephone lines, transportation disruptions and trash disposal delays – in fact, chaos surrounding everything that needs to happen in a hotel on a tight schedule every day – must have created a nightmare.

Linda Jane Kelley, who worked for many years in the Kailua-Kona offices of the Ironman Triathlon on the Big Island, tells me that the Boston Marathon is one of the best-organized races in the world. Security is exceptionally tight. Manhole lids along the course are welded shut. Trained dogs led by expert security personnel walk along the streets in search of explosive material. Coordination among local police, FBI, first responders and health care providers is magnificent.

All that preparation and training paid off on Monday. When the bombs went off around 2 p.m., a good number of the 23,336 registered runners were still out on the 26.2-mile course. Many were approaching the finish line and were very close to the locations where the bombs had been planted.

From the descriptions of the blasts and the injuries I have read and seen, the death toll might well have been far higher if the blast victims had not been cared for so quickly and professionally. The New York Times described “gruesome leg injuries, shattered bones, shredded tissue and nails burrowed deep beneath the flesh.”

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