

i's celebration is last — but not least



Parties roar; Y2K glitches fail to appear

By Kevin Dayton
ADVERTISER STAFF WRITER

Hawaii watched the new millennium roll raucously across the rest of world before it touched here today with a final dazzle of fireworks, light and hope.

Despite the dread generated by fears of a massive computer crash, terrorist attack or fireworks inferno, Hawaii and much of the world enjoyed a relatively tame and orderly celebration.

Worries about a computer system meltdown dropped away early in the day. Instead of failing, the world's communications and computing networks beamed celebrants' images at one another.

In Rome, Pope John Paul II gave thanks for humanity's triumphs and asked forgiveness for its sins. "What suffering, what dramatic events!" the pope said of the last century. "But, also, what incredible achievements."

Banks, utilities, airlines and the military reported no disruptions. "It's smooth as silk," Hawaiian Airlines spokesman Keoni Wagner said.

Honolulu's celebration was marred by the fatal shooting of one man and the wounding of another in a dispute that may have involved fireworks.

The haze from fireworks settled over the Leeward Coast early in the day, and an enormous cloud formed over Kahuku. By nightfall, smoke and the acrid scent of sulfur hung over Honolulu. Deafening blasts echoed through every neighborhood.

Police expected 100,000 revelers in Waikiki, and at least 5,000 were expected at a concert at Kakaako Waterfront Park. Thousands also gathered below Aloha Tower to watch as the landmark's clock hands struck midnight.

CORY LUM • The Honolulu Advertiser

Aloha Tower just after midnight as Hawaii welcomed Year 2000 and the new millennium.