



# THE GALILEO OBSERVER

A Monthly Newsletter of the  
Galileo Alumni Association

VOL. I, NO. 8

November, 2003

- THE BEST OF BROADWAY SHINES
- SENIORS WIN SONG AND YELL CONTEST
- CAR DIRTY? HAVE IT WASHED BY GALILEO STUDENTS!
- FLOWER DRUM SONG
- THE PENDULUM NEEDS YOUR HELP
- WHAT IS AVID?
- THE PRINCIPALS OF GALILEO
- ALUMNI GO TO 49ERS GAME IN ARIZONA
- FASHIONS OVER THE YEARS
- The Helen Wills Basketball Gang
- Letters to the Editor
- CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS
- GAA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## THE BEST OF BROADWAY SHINES

The second Galileo Gala fundraiser, held on October 18<sup>th</sup>, was a huge success. Attendees, mostly alumni, were treated to a medley of songs from the best Broadway shows. The highlight of the afternoon was an outstanding magician who appeared twice during the show. Speakers included Margaret Chiu, Galileo Principal, Dr. Frank Tom, Assistant Superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District and Galileo graduate of 1968, Ron Ertola, head of the Galileo Sports Hall of Fame committee, and of course, Jim Dresser, GAA President. Photos of the event can be viewed on the Galileo Alumni website, [www.galileoalumni.org](http://www.galileoalumni.org).

## SENIORS WIN SONG AND YELL CONTEST

Over the years the Galileo Song and Yell Contest has been a tradition and an opportunity for students to display their school spirit. This year's 59<sup>th</sup> annual event, held on October 17<sup>th</sup>, was no exception. Competition among the four classes was fierce, and the Seniors won with the Freshmen coming in second. The events included the Galileo Fight Song, the Lion's Whisper, Skits, Big G Yell, and the Galileo Hymn. The Homecoming King and Queen were crowned. Judges for the contest were Jim Dresser, Monica Kirkland, Gloria Louie, Bayard Fong, Gordon Lee, Charles Higgins, Jack Walker, Steve Bokura, Alvin Yee, Mariaelena Barbosa, and Cynthia Behar-Morrow. Unfortunately, the Galileo football team lost to Washington in the

game that followed the contest.

### CAR DIRTY? HAVE IT WASHED BY GALILEO STUDENTS!

Galileo students will be having a car wash on Saturday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, at the Marina Middle School parking lot (enter on Bay Street near Fillmore) from 9 am to 4 pm. It is sponsored by the Senior, Junior, and Sophomore classes. Proceeds from the car wash go towards graduation, the prom, Valentine dance, boat dance, class picnic, pep rallies, and assembly programs. So if your car needs a wash (and whose doesn't during this rainy season?), take it in on Saturday and help the students.

### FLOWER DRUM SONG

Ed Belasco and the Belasco Theatre Company will present *Flower Drum Song*, the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, on Saturday, January 24, 2004, at 2 pm, in the Del Valle Theatre, 1963 Tice Valley Road, Walnut Creek. The musical, "a glowing and colorful portrait of life in San Francisco's Chinatown", had its New York premiere on December 1, 1958 (directed by Gene Kelly), and since was made into a movie with Nancy Kwan, Miyoshi Umeki and James Shigeta. Songs include *A Hundred Million Miracles*, *I Enjoy Being a Girl*, *Like a God*, *Grant Avenue*, and *Love Look Away*.

The cast is comprised entirely of youngsters from ages 8-17. A portion of the proceeds goes to the Galileo Alumni Association. Reserved seat tickets are \$20 each and can be purchased by sending a check made out to Galileo Alumni Association and mailed to Galileo Academy of Science and Technology, 1150 Francisco Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. Tickets can also be obtained from members of the Board of Directors of the Association (see the end of this newsletter for their names).

Ed Belasco, who has been in show business ever since he graduated from Galileo, has been producing these musicals for the past 22 years to great applause. Last year's production was of *Annie*. Don't miss this once a year benefit event for a good cause.

### THE PENDULUM NEEDS YOUR HELP

As most of you know, it is not easy running a newspaper. It takes money and dedication. In the case of Galileo's newspaper, the *Pendulum*, the dedication is there, but the money isn't. With rising costs of production, the staff has had to rely on outside sponsorships to defray part of the costs. The call has gone out to businesses and individuals who would like to sponsor the paper for 2003/2004 with any amount. Advertising also will be gladly accepted. As a sponsor, your name and/or your business will be included in each issue of the current school year, under the section of Sponsors. You will also receive a copy of every issue by mail.

Your sponsorship will go to:

- R• Subsidizing a \$600 payment for each issue (1,500 – 2,000 copies)

- ✎• Funding for purchase of needed equipment (updating camera equipment, computer equipment, and the paper's own printing equipment)
- ✎• Education/enhancement (workshops and field trips)

The goals of the *Pendulum* are to publish an issue tri-weekly (12-15 issues this school year), to grow last year's 4 page paper into a 12-16 page paper, and to begin a budget to acquire the paper's own equipment for publishing.

As a former *Pendulum* editor, I ask that you give this worthy cause your careful attention and try to help the paper, which, after all, is the voice of Galileo.

If you have any questions about the sponsorship program, please contact Advisor Mark Huynh at 415-749-3430, ext. 3452, or email him at [cyrushuynh@hotmail.com](mailto:cyrushuynh@hotmail.com).

## WHAT IS AVID?

Recently Cathy Kornblith, Volunteer College Counselor, visited the Galileo Alumni Association at one of its Thursday night meetings. Cathy is a fulltime counselor at Galileo for the AVID program (Advancement Via Individual Determination). She brought along with her a bright and very personable student who has benefited from the program.

Most of Galileo's students are from low-income families. Sixty-one per cent are considered "at risk" because family income is below the official poverty line. They have had none of the advantages that middle-class American kids take for granted "no summer camps, no books at home, no family vacations, no special classes and tutors, no parents who can help with lessons. Many have heavy family responsibilities and must work after school to contribute to family income. That is where AVID comes in.

AVID was formed to help students who will be the first in their families to go to college to achieve success at a four year institution. The program stresses writing and reading. Students are tutored, helped to understand what college will be like, and assisted with school and scholarship applications. Would that AVID existed when we were students.

AVID helps prepare students for the challenges they will meet in college. It eases the shock of transition to a college environment and makes survival there more likely.

Cathy presented case histories of students who have benefited from the AVID program. These young people have already demonstrated their ability and their readiness to work to achieve their goals. Summer enrichment programs cost between \$500 and \$5,500, depending on the nature of the program length, and location. Because AVID is staffed entirely by volunteers like Cathy, there is no overhead whatsoever. All monies received go directly to deserving students. Not a penny is spent on administration. Contributions are tax deductible. Your gift can change the lives of students who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford college. What better future for our young

people is there than helping them further their education and become worthy citizens and productive providers?

If you would like to contribute to help Galileo students achieve their goals in college or have any questions about the program, please contact Cathy at 415-821-1486 or 415-749-3430, ext. 3247. Your tax deductible check made out to Galileo AVID Summerfund can be mailed to AVID, Galileo Academy of Science and Technology, 1150 Francisco Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.

## THE PRINCIPALS OF GALILEO

We all know the Presidents of the United States (or do we?). We had to know them for U. S. History, remember? How many of you know the Principals of Galileo? I, for one, knew only a few, until the day I saw all of their photos on the wall of Room 210. Beginning in the near future we will have a monthly biography of each of Galileo's Principals dating back to the first one, Major Joseph P. Nourse, in 1922 up to and including Margaret Chiu, the present Principal, who took office last year. For the time being we are listing all the Principals in chronological order. How many do you know? All in all, there have been 15 Principals, two of them being women. (Incidentally, Bettie Grinnell, Galileo's Secretary, has served under nine Principals beginning in 1972, and graciously offered to help with the research on this series.)

Major Joseph P. Nourse (1922-1937)

Fred W. Koch (1937-1940)

William A. Wieland (1940-1944)

Ras E. Johnson (1945-1954)

Dr. James C. Morena (1955-1968)

Walter J. Odone (Spring, 1968)

James W. Kearney (1968-1973)

Stanton H. Tong (1973-1978)

Calvin C. Haena (1978-1980)

Dr. Robert L. Harrington (1980-1983)

Jack C. Abad (1983-1985)

John P. Quinn (1985-1996)

Chiung-Sally Chou (1996-1999)

Richard A. Maggi (1999-2002)

Margaret Chiu (2002-)

## ALUMNI GO TO 49ERS GAME IN ARIZONA

A group of ex-Galileans went to Phoenix to see the 49ers play the Arizona Cardinals last month. Alumni on the trip were Kay Lazzari Michelis (1953) and her daughter Lisa, Don DiBasilio (1951) and his wife Barbara, Rich Cozzarin and his wife Joyce (both 1951), Marie Ancona Buttici (1954) and her husband Armond, Rose Garcia Melcher (1954) and her husband Ted, Vickie Hernando Spadaro (1954) and her husband Jim, Debbie Dittman (1950) and her husband Philip, the Devitas, friends of the DeBasilios , and Mel Chiarenza (1952) and his wife Karen. Mel arranged the trip. Photos are forthcoming. Oh, yes, the Niners lost.

---

## FASHIONS OVER THE YEARS

Over the years our lifestyles have largely been determined by the clothing we have worn (or the lack of it) and the music weâ€™ve listened to. Women have been more fashion-conscious than men in the past, but that has changed. In the 20s and 30s my Dad used to wear a suit and a necktie when he walked a dozen blocks to his shop on Sutter Street. I donâ€™t think he owned a casual jacket or windbreaker, needless to say a pair of jeans. Look at photos of San Francisco and Market Street in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and youâ€™ll find men with suits and hats. Nary a one is dressed casually. My Mom wore dresses and hats, and I still have a few flapper dresses of hers in the closet. Women were not supposed to dress like men in trousers and jackets. There was a time when one wouldnâ€™t venture downtown without being dressed properly.

Presidents Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Harry Truman never wore casual clothes in public. I never saw Richard Nixon in other than a suit even when he was in his study. Jimmy Carter, on the other hand, wore casual jeans and plaid shirts when working on houses. Ronald Reagan wore cowboy outfits on his ranch. And Bill Clinton wore all of the above.

Things have certainly changed. From rolled-up Levis and bobby sox in the 40s to the maxi skirt in the 50s, then the mini-skirt and hot pants (my date wore a pair to my 25<sup>th</sup> Galileo reunion) and todayâ€™s low-riding jeans and bare skin outfits. Today anything goes, and it goes without saying that what a person wears reflects on his/her personality. Whatâ€™s next?

---

## The Helen Wills Basketball Gang

Back in the 40s and 50s, Helen Wills Playground at Broadway and Larkin Streets was the hub of high school basketball. Guys used to play half-court pick up games and occasionally when there were enough players, a full-court game. As a youngster at Spring Valley School, then Marina Junior High, and finally at Galileo, I hung out at the playground every chance I got. Most of the guys were my brother's age, four years older than I. There was many a 3 on 3 game. I was shorter and younger than most, so I was chosen last. On weekends many of these players who were also high school players, played at the Marin Town & Country Club in Fairfax. Among those always around at Helen Wills were many future Galileans, such as Don Bragg and his twin brothers Arlyn and Allyn, Mario Lombardi, Pete Moreci, Ed Belasco, Dolph Pippus, Gordon Cuneo, Tony Morena (James Morena's younger brother), Naitius and Emil (the Boofer) Marinello, Bob Gilardi, George Moscone (later Mayor of San Francisco), Louis Keers (swore a lot), Dino Natali (I introduced him to the Playground), Mario Lechuga (lived across the street), Rene Sartou, Bob Wiebusch, Bob Bondanza, and a fellow called Hopkins. Some of these guys went to other high schools, but they all knew each other. Moscone was handsome in his always suntanned look. The NBA didn't exist, and semi-pro scouts would come down and talk to tall guys like Cuneo, trying to recruit them for their teams.

As a kid I started in the sandbox at Helen Wills and ended up on the basketball court. The most memorable moment for me was when I was the only witness to an extraordinary feat of shooting. Bob Bondanza, who went to Lowell High, and I were alone on the court, it was around 6 pm, and everyone had gone home. Bob asked me to feed him the ball as he stood at half court and took a shot. It went in. He asked for a second ball. That, too, went in. A third shot also swished through the net. All three shots were made from half court by a teen-ager! I had never seen this before. I have never been so impressed. And after some 55 years, I am still impressed. Yep, those were the days.

---

**Kudos to the organizers of the Galileo Reunion Class of 1994 for including GAA membership in the price of the reunion admission.**

**We hope that other classes will follow their lead and offer membership in GAA as part of the reunion package.**

**Nice effort!**

## **Letters to the Editor**

**The Observer has been receiving emails and letters regarding a wide assortment of topics, mostly nostalgic in nature. We have decided to print excerpts from some of these that have been edited for brevity.**

**From Harvey Tepfer who lives in Southern California: I once was a professional**



musician back so long ago. Had a dance band in the days when people danced with each other instead of individual fanny shaking and St. Vitus-type solo movements. Studied piano with the staff pianist at NBC's radio station on Taylor and O'Farrell, later with Darius Milhaud. The Big Band era came to an end, thanks in great part of the Musician's Union boss, Petrillo. He made live music so expensive that people turned to Maestro Vic Trola and his many recordings. Which brings to mind old Tom Kennedy, the bandmaster at Galileo when I was there. He came, he said, from the days of wooden ships and iron men. He was a tough old Irishman. He had to be to cope with some of my fellow music students. Short and stocky, with grizzled, lined features, short cropped white hair, he was all of 5'3" standing on tiptoe. But built like an anvil. Regarding restaurants, a number of pleasant intimate cafes have opened in San Diego's Gaslight District. Still, I'd trade them all in for one of Original Joe's hamburgers on San Francisco sourdough bread. (Ed. Note: Attaboy, Harvey!)

**From Richard Lopez (Class of 1955):** The Galileo football team of the 30s known as the Eleven Men of Iron was the most awesome in the school's history. The players played offense and defense for the whole game. They won the city championship, crushing all opponents. I worked at Roma Bakery on Greenwich Street in the Marina, and it was owned by one of the players, Frank Pescera. Even then he could get on the floor and do about five one arm pushups. Being at Galileo in itself was a lot of fun. We would go to Ott's Drive-in and show off our cars (I had a 1940 Buick) and drink coffee. When the car in front of you was ready to leave, all the cars behind it would have to back up and move out, then move back in toward the front. It was a big deal when we had a front space, especially on Saturday night. It was Galileo's special place after sundown. Going from car to car visiting other kids was a big thing, too. There was very little trouble there, everyone was there to enjoy the moment. I look back on those times with fond memories. (Ed. Note: We do, too, Richard. Like *American Graffiti*, no? Incidentally, in a future issue of this newsletter, we shall have a more detailed story of the Eleven Men of Iron.)

### CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

January 24, 2004: *Flower Drum Song*, Del Valle Theatre, Walnut Creek.

May 8, 2004: Galileo Sports Hall of Fame Dinner, Italian Athletic Club.

---

## **HAPPY THANKSGIVING, EVERYONE!**

The Galileo Observer invites your letters, memories, inquiries and suggestions. All submissions are subject to editing. Send them by email to: [editorgalileoobserver@yahoo.com](mailto:editorgalileoobserver@yahoo.com), or by postal mail to: Galileo Observer, care of Galileo Alumni Association, 1150 Francisco Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.

---

### GAA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Jim Dresser (1951)

Vice President: Joe Scafidi (1950)

Secretary: Monica Parenti Kirkland (1953)

Treasurer: Augie Venezia (1953)

### Directors

**Mel Chiarenza (1953)**

**Frank Clima (1951)**

**Nina Pattini Clima (1950)**

**Diane Wall Cowart (1965)**

**Kay Lazzari Michelis (1953)**

**Fred Setting (1950)**

**Cordy Porter Surdyka (1953)**

**Janet Sullivan Neilsen (1953)**

**Ben Vanni (1948)**

### Committee Chairpersons

**Public Relations: Cordy Porter Surdyka (1953)**

**Membership: Diane Wall Cowart (1965)**

**Database: Mel Chiarenza (1953)**

**By-laws: Monica Parenti Kirkland (1953)**

**Communications (Newsletter): Sisvan Der Harootunian (1951)**

**Webmaster: Vaughn Spurlin (1960)**

---

**FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION, VISIT THE GALILEO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION WEBSITE,  
[WWW.GALILEOALUMNI.ORG](http://WWW.GALILEOALUMNI.ORG).**

<p>The Galileo Observer is a monthly publication of the Galileo Alumni Association, 1150 Francisco Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. Views expressed are strictly those of the Association and in no way reflect those of the Galileo Academy of Science and Technology, its students or faculty. James Dresser, President; Sisvan Der Harootunian, Editor; Vaughn Spurlin, Production Manager/Website Director. Copyright 2003, Galileo Alumni Association.</p>
---

---

***Comments? Contact the [Galileo Alumni webmaster](#)***

***last updated 10november2003***

***Â© 2002, 2003 Galileo Academy of Science and Technology Alumni Association of San Francisco***