

THE GALILEO OBSERVER

A Monthly Newsletter of the Galileo Alumni Association

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FREE SHOWING OF "AN UNTOLD TRIUMPH" AUGUST 2ND

The long-awaited repeat showing of Galileo alum Fred Basconcillo's documentary film, "An Untold Triumph: America's Filipino Soldiers", will take place at 3:00 pm on August 2nd at Herbst Theater in the War Memorial Building, 401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco. There is no admission charge. A summary of the film appeared in the last issue of The Observer. The producer invites all Galileo alumni and friends to view this historic and educational film. Scheduled to appear in person, among others, are actor Lou Diamond Phillips and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Fred (Class of 1954) is already at work on another project involving the San Francisco Bay Area Sports Hall of Fame.

GALILEO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION FUNDRAISER

What: The Best of Broadway

Where: Galileo Academy of Science and Technology Auditorium

When: Saturday, October 18, 2003, at 2:00 pm.

The show's producers are calling alumni to sell tickets for \$20 each or a family plan of 5 tickets for \$50.

If you prefer to purchase tickets directly from GAA, you may do so. GAA receives a larger share of profits from direct purchases. Make checks payable to Galileo Alumni Association and mail to GAA, 1150 Francisco Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. Tickets will be mailed in early September when school resumes.

Our Vaudeville Show in February was a great success. Don't miss out on this one!

A MESSAGE TO ALUMNI FROM EUGENE WING

In my 33 years of teaching at Galileo, I have discovered that our students are impressed by the various accomplishments of alumni, and we need to showcase alumni more.

We are hoping to find a distinguished Galileo alumnus/alumna to address the student body at graduation. The speech would run no more than 5-10 minutes. If anyone is interested in being placed on the list of potential speakers, please contact me.

We need assistance from alumni who are willing to donate time and energy to these activities:

- 1) Help us start and manage Escript with Safeway. Part of the money will go towards our extracurricular activities and sports teams. Check out <http://www.escrip.com>.
- 2) Help us solicit ads for our Pendulum newspaper and Telescope yearbook. This year we ended with a deficit, something we want to avoid in the future.
- 3) Help us plan Galileo's Night at Chevy's Restaurant (located on Van Ness Avenue) in November. 20% of the profits that night will go to Galileo.

If anyone is interested in helping out with these activities, please email me at Ishiwing@cs.com.

Thank you,

**Eugene Wing
Student Activities Director
Galileo Academy of Science and Technology**

GALILEO HOMECOMING 2003

ATTENTION: CLASSES OF 1953 AND 1963

Eugene Wing, Galileo's student activities director for the past 22 years, has asked GAA to recruit two or three alumni from the Class of '53 and the Class of '63 to be judges at the 59th Annual Homecoming Song and Yell Contest on Friday, October 17, 2003 (Mr. Wing is recruiting from the classes of '73, '83, and '93 himself). Reception starts at 10:15 am. The event will last from about 10:45 am to 12:15 pm. A few complimentary tickets for the football game featuring the Washington Eagles vs. the Galileo Mighty Lions will be offered to participants.

Last year the 58th Annual Homecoming Song and Yell Contest was a success because Galileo alumni from Classes of '72, '82, and '92 served as judges. Principal Margaret Chiu introduced the judges and gave brief career backgrounds. The students were astounded by the accomplishments of the alumni.

If you are interested in serving as a judge at this year's homecoming event, email president@galileoalumni.org by August 10. Include your name, address, date of graduation, and any other relevant information. Judges will be chosen on a first come-first served basis.

DID YOU KNOW.

Galileo Academy received a Digital High School Technology Grant for \$540,000.

Funds from the II/USP Program bring \$320,000 to help fund the Literacy Program.

The Principal is responsible for everything in the school. She tries to make education the best possible

with the people and resources available. She is the instruction leader whose vision moves all staff towards higher student achievement.

(From Galileo Handbook)

BIOGRAPHY (Edited and reprinted from UCLA Today)

INTERNEE GETS H. S. DIPLOMA AT LAST By James Tranquada

Earlier this year, Harry Kitano, Professor Emeritus of Social Welfare, flew to San Francisco to finally receive his high school diploma.

I do things backward, Kitano said with a chuckle. "I got a Ph.D first and then I got my high school diploma."

Actually, the occasion for the long-time scholar's return to his hometown was no laughing matter. More than a half-century after the fact, the San Francisco School Board decided to award diplomas to hundreds of former Japanese-American high school students who were put into concentration camps with their families during World War II.

As one of the most distinguished members of this unusual group of alumni, Kitano was asked to address the May 6 commencement ceremony in San Francisco Civic Auditorium, together with poet Janice Mirikitani and one of his former teachers, Eleanor Sekerak.

For Kitano, the ceremony brought a sense of closure not just on his experience at Galileo High School, but on his Bay Area boyhood as a whole.

"I still remember, not too fondly, growing up in San Francisco," he said.

The son of Japanese immigrants, Kitano grew up in Chinatown, isolated not only from Anglo society by racism and laws that barred his parents from becoming citizens and his father from buying the hotel he ran, but from his Chinese neighbors by the hostility generated by the Japanese invasion of China in 1937.

He was a 15-year old Galileo freshman when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Shortly afterwards, his father was arrested by the FBI because he was a prominent figure in the Japanese-American community, Kitano said.

Kitano and the rest of his family were shipped under armed guard to Santa Anita racetrack in Arcadia. They lived in a converted stable for six months before being sent to their final destination, a tarpaper barracks in Topaz, Utah.

It was at Topaz High School, amid the boredom and monotony of camp life, that Kitano first encountered Eleanor Sekerak, his social studies teacher.

"She kept us, at least in our class, from feeling sorry for ourselves, being victims. She demanded that we be on time, that we turn in our homework. She's the one we hated at the time," he said. "But thank goodness for teachers like her."

After a brief career as a trombone-playing jazz musician, Kitano went on to become a pioneering scholar of the Japanese-American experience and of race relations generally.

“Being a musician gives you a strange sense of humor,” he said of his ability to laugh at the indignities he suffered. “I do see the world in very humorous terms. I suspect that’s the thing that has always been able to sustain me.”

Kitano is taking his new Galileo diploma very seriously. “I think I will frame it,” he said.

NOSTALGIA

A Family of Opera Lovers

The Woerber Family has always been involved in opera. Mother Norma di Tano was a voice coach and worked with Gaetano Merola, conductor of the San Francisco Opera. Daughter Joanna Woerber Gaskell sang at many Galileo assemblies from 1949-51 and in the chorus of the S. F. Opera. Daughter Claudine (“Cookie”) along with her sister was a “super” in the S. F. Opera.

Recently Claudine sent us her reminiscences of her early years growing up in a musical family. Herewith we include some of her memories of that time.

“We were surrounded by opera night and day. However, as a young child, I didn’t come to realize the greatness of the music and/or the story tellers who wrote the tragic stories. My favorite opera in which I was a “super” was La Boheme, and Mimi’s death scene was traumatic to me each time. Of course, I was infatuated with Rodolfo, and during the scene where the quartet is eating dinner at a restaurant and singing their arias so beautifully, I, who was playing a street starving urchin in mucky, dirty clothing, had the brainstorm idea of running up to the table where the four were seated and stealing a piece of salami. I thought I would be thrown out of the chorus after that, but Maestro Merola loved it and told me to keep doing it at other performances. It was fun, and I probably really was hungry in those days.

My mother was an opera coach and gave lessons all day long and coached most of the star singers with the SF Opera Company back in the 40s. So we got to meet them all – Licia Albanese, Salvatore Baccalone, Ezio Pinza, etc. After my mother died, I found among her things a telegram from Maestro Arturo Toscanini congratulating her on the birth of my sister Norine on July 25, 1927. During her retired years, my mother taught Music Appreciation, though she was still giving lessons, and my sister Joanna and she would put on little classical music performances in the auditorium of the Jewish Community Center, and everyone loved it. Thank goodness I have them both on tape from 30 years ago.”

LETTERS TO THE OBSERVERS

Today I received your newsletter. It was good to read even though my computer doesn’t seem to care for the text program. But I persevered. I had been receiving Phil’s newsletter which is now forwarded as an attachment which I cannot open for some reason. So your offering was doubly appreciated. Keep in touch. Up here in the North Country (Alaska, since ’61), word from my alma mater is truly a treat.

Karen A. Tschannen (Haines, Class of ’55)

Vaughn, it’s a pleasure to read such a well written newsletter, please let Sisvan know I appreciate this

and my compliments to the chef (webmaster) for distributing this!

**Beverly Barusch Hilby (Class of '52)
Kingman, AZ**

Just came home from work and read the article you did about me for the Galileo newspaper. It was a beautiful article. Thank you so very much. As ever,

Ray Piccinini (Class of '51)

Thank you all for your letters and kind words.
The Editor

The Galileo Observer invites your letters, memories, inquiries and suggestions. Send them by email to: editorgalileoobserver@yahoo.com, or by postal mail to: Galileo Observer, care of Galileo Alumni Association, 1150 Francisco Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.

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WWW.GALILEOALUMNI.ORG

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

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