

HSGA QUARTERLY

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by the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association

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At the 1995 Aloha International Steel Guitar Club Convention in Winchester, Indiana, (left to right) Bernie Endaya, John Auna, Aunty Genoa Keawe, Gary Aiko, and Duke Ching.

Genoa Leilani Adolpho Keawe 1918-2008

Special thanks to Howard Dicus and KGMB-9 News for permission to excerpt from Howard's regular feature 'Howzit Howard' from the KGMB9 website (<http://kgmb9.com/howard/>).

Genoa Keawe, one of the most important musicians in the history of Hawai'i, died Monday [February 25, 2008] at the age of 89.

Aunty Genoa was so influential on successive generations of performers in the islands that her musical family is as large as her own personal family, which includes 40 grandchildren, 98 great-grandchildren and 81 great great-grandchildren.

Aunty was usually praised for her superb falsetto style or her impossible

breath control, but she also had an unusually large range of Hawaiian songs. And she told me a couple years ago that before she became a professional Hawaiian singer she was a jazz singer in the great age of Hawaiian swing. She found her way into Hawaiian repertory gradually after singing "For You a Lei" on the radio one day to mark her niece's birthday. After that, she said, her Hawaiian repertory, consisting of songs she had learned in her youth, gradually became the core of her act. By 1953, when I was born, Genoa Keawe, then 35, was appearing on the "Lucky Luck Show" and "Hawaii Calls." By 1969 she had her own record label.

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HSGA QUARTERLY

Volume 23, Issue 90



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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association is a tax-exempt, nonprofit educational corporation in the State of Hawai'i under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Our primary purpose is to develop a global network of players and lovers of traditional Hawaiian music and to encourage the study, teaching, and performance of the Hawaiian steel guitar. Our primary financial goal is to provide scholarship assistance through donations to steel guitar students who demonstrate the ability and intent to become accomplished performers.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all steel guitar players and non-players around the world who support the perpetuation of the Hawaiian steel guitar. Annual dues are US\$30. The membership year begins July 1. Members receive the *HSGA Quarterly* and other group benefits. The *Quarterly* is mailed four times a year First Class to addresses in the United States and by Air Mail to foreign addresses. Members can obtain an Associate Membership for a spouse or family member at a cost of \$10, added to the annual dues; an Associate Member is entitled to discounts at certain HSGA functions and can vote in HSGA Board elections.

SUBMIT LETTERS & EDITORIALS TO:

HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waioma'o Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424 USA. Our email address is hsga@hsga.org. Articles and photos can also be emailed directly to the editor at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com. Photos are welcome and will be returned on request. Quality original prints or high resolution digital camera output, please. Mahalo!

GENOA KEAWE *Continued from Page 1*

The news conference at the Waikiki Beach Marriott Monday was practically a family reunion, with dozens of relatives on hand, not to mention Raiatea Helm and Danny Kaleikini. My heart was so full I could barely ask a question and I noticed Billy V was the same.

But with people like Aunty, grief takes a back seat to happy memories. This was a woman who lived her life as she thought best, patient and genial and yet also capable of toughness when she felt it was appropriate—several friends and relatives have mentioned how passionately she pushed singers of Hawaiian songs to make sure they got the words right. (One of the most enjoyable things about being nice to people is that when something arises that you feel passionate and uncompromising about, people happily pay heed.)

Eric Keawe checked his memory and said Aunty last performed in public at the Marriott on January 31, though she sang with her visitors practically to the very end, and last Thursday, on her

way home from the hospital, she stopped by the Marriott to enjoy her band performing with her granddaughter taking lead. In that make-up the band will continue to perform. Thus it is that sometimes a person can live on even in this life.

The hard news from the news conference: the family has a collection of private recordings of live performances, a gift from a family friend, half a century old and never released in any format, which are undergoing audio processing so they can now be put out on CD. What a fitting finale to the story of a woman so durable that her career lasted more than 60 years.

Even now, Aunty Genoa has one more album in her. ■

Delivery Problems?

If you are having problems related to the delivery of your Quarterly, please contact our office immediately. If you are moving, let us know as soon as you can. Please contact us at: HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424 or johnely@hsga.org.

A real gem from Warren Slavin: Aggie Ah See, Aunty Genoa Keawe, the incomparable steel guitarist Benny Rogers, and Violet Lilikoi, taken in Los Angeles, 1965.





New Board member Capt. Ivan L. Reddington on steel at Joliet 2007 with Gil O'Gawa, Virginia Grzadzinski, and Dick Martiny.

Hawai'i 2008 Schedule

From Kamaka Tom

As you know this is an "off-year" as far as our official Honolulu conventions go. However, we have a few worthwhile events and casual get-togethers in the works.

Stephanie Araki of the Parks and Recreation Lei Day Committee has again invited HSGA to perform steel guitar music at the annual Lei Day celebration at Kapi'olani Park. Our time slot is from 2-4 PM on Thursday, May 1. Park staff will provide a covered stage, and refreshments will be available to HSGA performers and support persons. Guest parking for vehicles are available on a limited basis by contacting me at tomg007@hawaii.rr.com or 808-392-4583. Backup musicians will be Wayne Shishido, Isaac Akuna, myself, and others. Steel guitarists will be scheduled on a first come, first served basis at the stage area on the afternoon of the concert. Steel guitarists should bring two copies of charts for backup musicians.

Our concert at the Waikiki-Kapahulu Public Library is scheduled for Saturday, May 3 from 1:00-2:30 PM. Stephanie Strickland is looking forward to our concert, which will be publicized in the *Honolulu Advertiser* and *Star-Bulletin*, and will be listed in upcoming library public notices.

Alan Akaka has graciously offered to feature HSGA performers at the Outrigger Reef Shorebird Restaurant's monthly steel guitar series. The date is Sunday, May 11 from 2-3 PM. The concert may be extended to 4 PM if enough performers are available. *Please contact Kamaka Tom to reserve a performance slot.* This is pending confirmation from Mary Lou Foley of the Outrigger Reef. A live group is usually scheduled to begin at 4:30 PM, and hopefully, all of

Board Election Results

We are pleased to announce the nine winners of the HSGA Board elections this past quarter. They are, in alphabetical order:

Frank Della-Penna
Pete Kamea'aloa Kahele
Don Keene
Chris Kennison
Paul Kim
Terry Miller
Capt. Ivan L. Reddington
Lorene Ruymar
Donald Weber

The winners will serve from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2010. Lots of new faces this time around! We'd like to extend a special welcome to first-time Board members (I hope we're right on this!), Chris, Paul, Terry, Ivan, and Don Keene. We'll try to get them to write a little about themselves by way of introduction in the Summer issue.

I think it was General Sherman who proclaimed on being drafted to run for U.S. President more than a century ago, "If nominated, I will not run! If elected, I will not serve!" Well such recalcitrance is not unheard of within the ranks of HSGA's most capable. But it's for sure that HSGA could not run but for the time, energy, and commitment our Board members give us. Big mahalos go out to all our fine candidates who generously offered themselves up for service.

By the way, another presidential campaign quote from the past comes to mind. 1952, I think it was. "I like Ike!" Hmm...

our HSGA artists can be accommodated by 4 PM. The Shorebird Restaurant will provide a complimentary buffet luncheon to each performer and a guest along with free validated parking.

The Outrigger Reef is on the beach at 2169 Kalia Road, Tel. 808-923-3111. Driving directions: Proceed past Ft. DeRussy on Kalakaua Avenue, past Beachwalk Avenue, turn right on Royal Hawaiian Avenue, then right on Kalia Road. Outrigger Reef valet parking will be on your left (oceanside). The buffet will be served until 3 PM. ■

It's Dues Time Again!

Remember, HSGA's membership year begins on July 1, 2008. Please use the renewal form included with your newsletter. OR, renew electronically at our website via PayPal. Renew today!

HSGA Scholarship Fund Bears Fruit

By Lorene Ruymar

In the last issue and in the Summer issue of the *Quarterly* we told you of a young lady who came to our 2007 Hawaiian convention and played her steel guitar for us. She is a Hawaiian living in Hawai'i, a member of HSGA, and her name is Jade Louie. She played as well as most of us, which means not quite up to professional level. She has been a part-time student at the University of Hawai'i, working on a B.A. in Music, with emphasis on Hawaiian music.

Her studies include the playing of 'ukulele and the slack key guitar. But alas! There is no steel guitar instructor at UH. So she is learning from her uncle Ronald Kanahale who is proud to teach her the special tuning of the Rogers family. However, the going was tough for Jade, studying and working part-time, and supporting her young son. So the Scholarship Committee and the Board of Directors decided to award the sum of \$500 to Jade to pay for the final session of her steel guitar lessons.

Jade is a gal of many talents and considerable education, which in January 2008 got her a part-time music teacher position at the Wailupe Valley Elementary School in Aina Haina. She spends the remainder of her time still studying at UH. She immediately got a 'ukulele class going, because the schools of Hawai'i are equipped and do expect to give 'ukulele instruction. *But*, Jade was keen to teach a steel guitar class, and that is something that does not happen in Hawai'i schools. They are not equipped for it. So your Scholarship Fund committee got to work planning with Jade. She has 14 volunteers who want to study steel guitar. That includes students plus one or two parents and the school custodian. Yipee!! What fun!

Steel guitar classes are to be held twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Could every student be

expected to buy his or her own guitar and carry it to and from school twice a week? Where would the guitar be as the student moves from playground to classroom—to the gym, lunchroom, and so on, all day long? How would Jade handle all those guitars with all sorts of string and tuning problems, plus missing bar and picks by the time they got to her class? She'd spend so much time on guitar maintenance, the teaching would never start.

So after much debate, your board members voted to instruct our President Kamaka Tom, who doesn't live too far from that school, to supervise and pay for the purchase of ten 6-string acoustic guitars plus ten steel bars, and the metal nuts to raise the strings to convert them to steel guitars. These items are to stay in the school for use in future classes. They are not for sale to the students. If Jade moves to another school, she takes them with her.

It will be a bit of a job getting all those guitars set up for classroom use, but aren't you happy to know that *finally* we will have the first ever steel guitar classroom instruction in the schools of Hawai'i? Classroom instruction was done by the Oahu Publishing Company many years ago and many HSGA members got their early instruction from that excellent company. They set the example that we follow now.

Our thinking is that—out of a whole class of Jade's young students learning to read music notation and understand how the chords work and so on, and having the fun of playing songs together plus strumming and singing songs in the old A major low-bass tuning—out of a whole class there might be at least one who shows unusual talent and loves the instrument enough to take private lessons. Then, we'll encourage that special student to get an electric steel guitar, and switch to the C6th tuning, and our next Casey Olson will be on the way. I am so excited!



University of Hawai'i student, Jade Louie, a student of Ronald Kanahale and future steel guitar instructor.

Oh, how much is it going to cost? We figure around \$1300 but Kamaka Tom will supervise the shopping and give us the exact figure when the job is done. Oh, Kamaka, throw in two chromatic tuners, too, huh? As for finger picks, I think the kids will have to buy their own since they must squeeze them to fit their own fingers, and the picks can be carried in a pencil case.

Hey, wouldn't it be great if that class of young steel guitarists were to come to play for us at our next convention in Hawai'i? Year 2009?? ■

Mahalo, Members!

Keep those great letters and photos coming! YOU are the heart of our association. If possible, send original photographs or output from a digital camera. We cannot use grainy or washed out photos. As always, photos will be returned on request. Please send news, comments, or photos to: HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424. Email us at johnely@hsga.org and hsga@hsga.org. Mahalo!

Members, Got Issues?

Aloha, HSGA members. Your editor here. I am initiating a project to create electronic versions of every HSGA newsletter ever created—from January 1986 to the present. These would be delivered via our website to members in PDF format.

To create the PDF newsletters, I need hard copy of every newsletter, so I can recreate the look and content of each issue. Unfortunately, we are missing 16 past issues. Below is a list of the missing issue numbers.

- Issue 33 (1994)
- Issues 38-47 (1995-1997)
- Issue 59 (2000)
- Issue 60 (2000)
- Issue 65 (Winter 2001-02)
- Issue 74 (Spring 2004)
- Issue 75 (Summer 2004)

If you have any of the listed issues, would you consider donating them to our office? Or *lending* them to us! If so, please contact me at: John Ely, P.O. Box 509, Virginia, MN 55792; Email: johnely@hsga.org; Fax: 866-827-6808.

Coco Wire

From **Ken Emerson**: “I’m here in California now. It seems just as I left Hawai‘i I won the Hawaii Music Award for the steel guitar category, so that was a nice send off. I will still spend time in Hawai‘i. However, I will base out of California. I have a lot of work in Europe this year – three trips. I will be playing Dobrofest [in Trnava, Slovakia] and playing blues festivals in France with steeler Freddy Roulette. In April I’m starting a project in Austria, so it will be a busy year.”

This tidbit from **Gloria Murawski Akuna**. On February 28, **Isaac “Doc” Akuna** played the Steel Guitar Showcase at the Ala Moana Hotel Pakele Lounge. The show was webcast live on the Aloha Video TV website under the ‘Pakele Live’ sidebar link. Way to go, Ike! Members with a good internet connection should check out this web resource for upcoming performances. Just go to: http://www.alohavideo.tv/index_live.htm.

If you would prefer to sell any issues you may have from the above list, we may be in a position to “buy back” your issues.

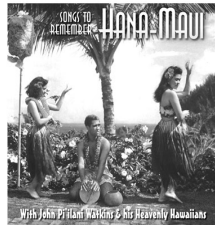
This is a very worthwhile project and we hope HSGAers will step up to the plate. *Mahalo nui*, all! ■

♪ Cord International and Hana Ola Records...

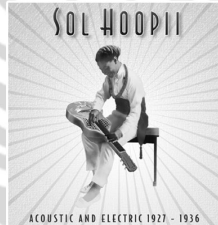
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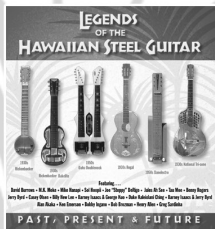
Sol Hoopii
King of the Hawaiian Steel Guitar



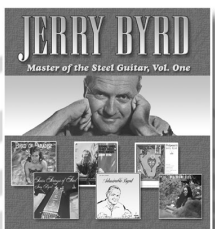
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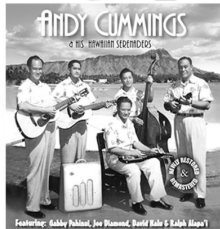
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Getting To Know You...

HSGA Member Bill Wynne

HSGAers, here's an unusual story from one of our talented younger members recounting a tale familiar to any of us who are under 60—about our roundabout musical journey from pop, rock 'n' roll, heavy metal (and worse!) to serious Hawaiian music addiction. Don't forget to check out Bill's internet radio show Sundays at 9:30 AM Pacific Time at www.50thstateradio.com. Here's Bill...

I have been a “professional” musician since I was about 3 years old—performing first with my father and mother’s Hawaiian troupe. More recently I have immersed myself in very traditional Hawaiian music, especially music for the hula. Of course, this means less *pa‘ani* [solos] for the steel player, but if they play tastefully, they’ll get their notice on those recordings either way!

I taught myself to play by listening to recordings of the greats. I began with the ‘ukulele, which I rarely touch now because there are good ‘ukulele players in abundance; and then slack key guitar, listening to and copying primarily Sonny Chillingworth and Ledward Kaapana; and then finally the steel guitar, focusing on the greats from the “Hawaii Calls” era like Barney Isaacs, who is my hero and favorite. But on the mainland I’m known mostly for my rhythm guitar work, which I learned from copying everyone from Sonny Kamahale, Pua Almeida, and Pauline Kekahuna to Barney Kessel, Joe Pass, and Herb Ellis.

My grandfather came from the Philippines to the U.S. via Honolulu. He was a musician who played guitar, mandolin, and upright bass. So while in Hawai‘i this short time, he played with bands around Honolulu. When he left Hawai‘i for the mainland, he brought the music with him.

So, when my father was born, there was already Hawaiian music playing around the house. My father fell in love with the steel guitar and decided to take lessons. He later found work playing steel with the local Hawaiian ex-patriots who were doing hula shows. But most of his playing was done at the backyard lū‘au of these Hawaiians with whom he became fast friends because of his love of the music and the culture.

When my father married my mother—a bass player and singer of mostly Cherokee extraction who then only knew rock-and-roll—she fell in love with Hawaiian music, too! So the hula shows became a family affair. My mother even learned to hula! I remember my mom singing me to sleep with “Kamakani Ka‘ili Aloha.” I remember, too, my mom and dad singing duet on “Ke Kali Nei ‘Au.”

When I was born, however, I wanted no part of it. My father played mostly “Hawaii Calls” records around the house, and that sound did not “do it” for me, especially



New Jersey member Bill Wynne pictured here at the 2005 Aloha Festival Falsetto Content, in which he took First Place.

when my friends were turning me on to AC/DC, Van Halen, Peter Frampton, and The Police. But I was pretty much forced to go along to the hula shows when my parents ran out of friends and family willing to babysit every Friday and Saturday night when they were out performing. I learned a few songs and got up and sang with Mom and Dad’s band. People threw money at me—I’m still not sure if that was out of appreciation or if they were trying to pelt me!

Because we were always around Hawaiians, I began hearing other kinds of Hawaiian music, the kind they played at backyard parties. One aunty went home to Hawai‘i for her annual visit and she brought me back a souvenir, an LP called “Young Hawai‘i Plays Old Hawai‘i” by a group I had never heard of—Hui Ohana. The music on that record was like nothing I had heard from Hawai‘i before. The guitar player was playing something uniquely Hawaiian, but it was also infused with jazz, country, R&B, and rock. The bass player played these crazy ‘eight to the bar’ jazz runs. And the lead singer had the voice of an angel. Together, they sang these tight, clean, jazzy harmonies. I thought I could listen to that record forever. But, more importantly, it made me want to sing like Dennis [Pavao] and play like Led [Kaapana]. So that’s when it all started for me.

This same aunty saw that I caught the bug and she brought me more records. The Sunday Manoa’s “3” and the Makaha Sons of Ni‘ihau’s “No Kristo” sealed the deal for me. I knew that I wanted to be a musician and that Hawaiian music would be a part of my life for the rest of my life. I spent every spare moment with headphones on, wearing out these records while I tried copying every lick and learning every word to these songs in a language I didn’t even understand and without any lyric books, which were rare in those days.

I didn't pick up the steel guitar until I was in my early twenties. I think I was rebelling against my father by not taking up the steel sooner because that was his instrument. But I gained a new appreciation for those old "Hawaii Calls" records I once despised, and I suddenly wanted to play like Jules Ah See, Barney Isaacs, Billy Hew Len, Eddie Pang, and Joe Custino. And I learned the bass out of sheer necessity when I started recording songs in my home studio on a four-track recorder, because I didn't know any bass players who understood or desired to play Hawaiian music.

And throughout those formative years I continued to amass a collection of Hawaiian music recordings, first by begging my aunts and uncles to bring me back the latest everything on their trips home, then by mail order making best friends with the good people at the now forgotten House of Music at Ala Moana Shopping Center and Jelly's on Ke'eaumoku, and then via the Internet. I now have over 2,500 recordings of Hawaiian music, plus over 1,000 CDs, cassettes, reel-to-reel tapes, miscellaneous 45s and 78s, and rare radio broadcasts, interviews, and bootlegs.

In 2004, I was in Honolulu for the Aloha Festival Falsetto Contest. There was a last minute cancellation in the Halekulani's Steel Guitar Week schedule, so Alan Akaka called me and had me fill in with Harold [Haku'ole], Lem [Aweau], and Helene [Woodward] as my "band." I lost the falsetto contest, but I was in heaven playing real Hawaiian music in Hawai'i with legends of Hawaiian music. I think it was then that I dedicated myself to traditional Hawaiian music and abandoned my thinking that I should "jazz everything up" and make it "contemporary." It was then, too, I think, that I finally gained the respect of the kupuna.

Japan group Na Kamaaina: (standing, l. to r.) Yoshihisa Okano (uke/vocal); Kohei Makino (rhythm/vocal); Hidekazu Kinukawa (vibes/vocal), a fine steel player who owns a nationwide health care chain; Masahiro Abe (bass/vocal); and Tom Tohma sitting in front. Songbird, Tomoko Uehara, is in the hospital but will be back soon.



Buy & Sell

Instruments Wanted

Wanted continuously by Michael Cord for his awesome collection: All models of vintage lap steels (like Hilos, Konas, Weissenborns, Rickenbackers), vintage amps and basses. Contact Michael Cord toll free at (877) 648-7881.

For Sale

1949 Oahu lap steel, 6-string, beige perloid, very clean, \$250. 1960 Rickenbacker 8-string steel with legs and original case, mint condition, \$750. Contact Wayne Joseph at (541) 997-7561 or classic_co@hotmail.com.

Tab Wanted

Looking for tab for "Blue Hawaii" and "Hawaiian Wedding Song," basic melody lines in C6th or A6th tunings. Contact Wayne Joseph at (541) 997-7561 or classic_co@hotmail.com.

I returned to Hawai'i the next year and took the grand prize in that falsetto contest. We went into the recording studio and they wisely did not let me play the steel, opting instead for Casey Olsen! But I did play rhythm guitar. You can hear excerpts around the internet. Just look for "Aloha Festivals Falsetto Contest Winners, Vol. 7." I know there are some soundclips at Hula Records website at www.hularecords.com.

And now, I host an internet-based radio program called "Ho'olohe Hou" at www.50thstateradio.com. It airs every Sunday at 9:30 AM Pacific Time. I spin primarily out-of-print recordings by artists you rarely hear about anymore. It is "edutainment," I think, since the aim is to expose younger people to a style of Hawaiian music you just don't hear enough these days and to the artists they have never even heard of. To folks of another generation, it is just a lot of good memories... Hawaiian style!

I guess the overall profile of me is that I eat, sleep, and breathe Hawaiian music and just want to do anything I can to contribute to its perpetuation.

I wish I could come to the Joliet convention this year, but I have said that every year for many years; I spend almost my entire four-weeks vacation time in Hawai'i, usually in two-week increments. A man has to make sacrifices, you know!

I have recorded more than 200 songs in my home studio, mostly back-up tracks for me to use when I perform live for hula shows. If you want to hear more, let me know and I will post them to my website at www.hawaiianmusiclives.com. Enjoy! Me ka ha'aha'a, Bill

MEMBERS CORNER

Lorene Ruymar, Vancouver, BC

Well, it started with a phone call from a strange young man asking if he and his friend Max could come to our house to interview us on the subject of Hawaiian music and the steel guitar. So my first reaction was: "Can this be a hoax? I've heard of other ways crooks have gained access into a home and robbed, raped, murdered." So I asked how he got my name.

Well, he's a student of Ethnomusicology at a local college and was given the assignment to report on how music fulfills the lives of people, even into their old age. The students chose which kind of music they would investigate. He said he'd gone to a local music store and asked if they knew of someone who was "fulfilling" their lives with Hawaiian music. And my name came up. They used to sell my book. OK, so Art and I figured we'd take a chance that this is not a hoax.

Leon and Max came last week with cameras and computers and we spent three hours with interviews and demonstrating the steel guitar and finding out how much we had in common.

They were two very well dressed (black suits, yet!!!!), good-looking, very polite young men in maybe their early twenties. We had so much in common! Max has a girlfriend in Hawai'i so he goes there as often as he can. Knows a lot of Hawaiian words, and an' al' dat. They use Mac computers, as we do. They use Final Cut Pro for video editing, as I used to do.

They handed in their research assignment and their prof said it was *excellent stuff!* In fact, he sent them back with a professional photographer to do it over again with a bigger budget. We wore Hawaiian shirts, leis and all, and they spoke of room lighting and "ambience." Art and I turned on the charm, talked HSGA history and efforts to start instruction in Hawaiian schools, and played "Hawai'i Aloha" twice as fast.



Lorene Ruymar serving up some "pan-fried goodies" at Joliet this past year.

Apparently this will be aired as a documentary on our Canada-wide TV network, the CBC. We just don't know when. Probably in the middle of the night during a hurricane. But, that's better than nothing.

Aside from that, I sing in the choir and we've been practicing double time for all the services we'll be singing at on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday this Easter weekend. Now, you tell me when I'll get some house cleaning done?

Robert Abbott, Santa Barbara, CA

I started playing the Hawaiian guitar in 1946 and now I'm 78 and still playing. The greatest reward I got for my music was meeting my wife in 1955. After 52 years, she still likes the steel. I play non-pedal steel, pedal steel, and love the dobro.

George Majoros, Vancouver, BC

Thank you for making me feel so welcome. I've logged on to the website and have found a wealth of information. I feel fortunate to be part of a group that shares the love of Hawaiian music. I look forward to the journey ahead.

HSGA Donations

Thanks to HSGA members who really outdid themselves with generous donations to our General Fund and Scholarship Fund this past winter.

"Emperor" **Bernie Endaya** once again came through with a remarkable contribution to both of our funds for a total of \$300. Mahalo, Bernie! **Capt. Ivan L. Reddington** donated a generous \$170. **Bill Thomson** of Ocean City, Maryland kicked in another \$120. If that wasn't enough, donating \$100 each were California members, **Don Keene**, **Bill Rhyne**, and **Dee Ryan**. And **Kitter Stanley** of Grand Rapids, Minnesota. What a showing of support!

Big mahalos to everyone who contributed. The following members donated at least \$10:

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Carol Odom, Plano, TX
Wally and Peg Pfeifer, Joliet, IL
Bill and Kay Rickles, Poway, CA
Harold L. Sampson, Chicago, IL
Dennis Scott, Greenfield, IN
Sig and Jean Vogel, Grover Beach, CA
Roger Ward, Sheffield, England

Ivan Ginter, Bristol, WI

We took a cruise to Hawaii in February. They had music in most places we went but no steel guitars. I was a bit surprised about that. Can you post Don Fullmer's 10-string setup in the newsletter? If he is willing. He has knee levers that can be used in place of bar slants and other uses. [ED: Don, what say? Can do?]

Jerry Byrd's National Resonator

By Isaac "Doc" Akuna

I caught a few postings on the Steel Guitar Forum relative to what I'm sharing with you now. I don't know how the story got twisted, but here's the straight dope regarding the Pua Almeida/Jerry Byrd guitar.

Those who have followed Jerry's performances for the last 35 years know that he mostly performed with his two principle electric guitars and an old National tri-cone. That resonator was actually owned by Pua Almeida. Jerry didn't own one and when he needed that acoustic sound he would borrow the guitar from Pua. That guitar was featured on a number of albums, PBS specials and many other gigs. The guitar was actually in Jerry's possession the weekend that Pua passed away. After the funeral, Jerry brought the guitar back to Pua's widow. It was at that time that she insisted that Jerry keep the guitar because she knew that Pua would have wanted it that way.

Just over a year before Jerry passed away I was summoned to his condo. It wasn't an unusual thing as we had kept in close contact after I concluded my formal lessons with him some years before. He led me to his living room coffee table and opened up a guitar case and there it was. He told me that he wanted me to have it. At first I was in a state

of shock that I was the recipient of such an instrument. This emotion was then followed by the sad realization that his performing career was over. He had told me and numerous others that he had accomplished everything he ever wanted to do musically and that there was nothing more to be said. His only directive was that I use it in good health. It was a very bittersweet moment.

The guitar is Serial No. 681, a National tri-cone round neck which puts it's production in the year 1928. It definitely has a lot of mileage on it and I continue to pile more on. Pua was a smoker and it seems that some of his cigarettes and ashes are inside the guitar. The strings have been changed a number of times but I've never taken the time to clean it. I had purchased a 1931 square neck tri-cone about 8 years ago and it doesn't sound anywhere near as smooth and clear as this one.

Funny thing is that whenever Jerry would see me, he would ask, "How's that Dobro doing?" I never bothered to correct him.

As I'm sure Jerry would have wanted, I continue to gig with it for jobs that require acoustic steel. Some of the smaller venues don't allow amplified instruments. We just completed the Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame album last fall and the guitar is featured on a number of songs. The first half of 2008 will see me involved in at least five recording projects for other artists. Two of them have already included the tri-cone. ■



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Intro

Slowly with Feeling

E7 G#dim A A7

E
C
A
G
E
C
Bb

T
A
B

A

D E7 C#m F#m Gdim D E7

T
A
B

A A#dim A7 D E7 C#m F#m Gdim

T
A
B

D E7 A

T
A
B

Listen to audio version at: www.hsga.org/Lessons/QuarterlyAudio.html

Chords: F7, B \flat , B \flat 7, A', E \flat

8 7 8 8 9-10 10 10 9 8 9 10 15 15 15

Chords: F7, D m , G m , A \flat dim, E \flat , F7, B \flat

4 5 10 5 6 8 10 4 5 9 10 8 10 15 15 15 5 8 10 17 17 17 10 10 17 17 17

Chords: B \flat 7, E \flat , F7, D m , G m , A \flat dim

10 8 8 10 15 10 15 15 15 15-16 17 17 17 4 5 10 4 5 9 8 12\11 10 8 9 10 10 10 10 5 16 17 5 16 17

Chords: E \flat , F7, B \flat , G \flat 7, A, B \flat

11 10 10 9 9 10 12 10 6 4 5 16 17 10 10 10 10 5 16 17 8 11 10

rit. —————

Love in the Ruins: Getting Married At the Coco Palms

Thanks to Wall Street Journal writer Tamara Audi for this bittersweet glimpse of a true Kaua'i institution. HSGAers will be glad to hear the latest about longtime Kaua'i musician, Larry Rivera, who regularly features member Jess Montgomery on steel guitar at lū'aus and casuals.

Off a pretty stretch of road running past sapphire waves, wedding coordinator Larry Rivera prepares for another ceremony at an island resort. He leads the bride to the edge of a lagoon and loops fresh white flowers around her neck. Then, he dashes across hotel grounds to retrieve the groom, sidestepping knee-high weeds and broken glass, and striding past a lobby missing most of its roof. Just before the ceremony, Mr. Rivera warns guests to watch for falling coconuts.

As resort weddings go on this postcard-perfect island, this one isn't exactly typical. Paradise requires constant maintenance, and for 16 years, the Coco Palms Hotel, the site of Mr. Rivera's weddings, has been left to rot.

The hotel has been closed and technically off-limits to the public since Hurricane Iniki ripped through Kaua'i in 1992, a blow from which the Coco Palms never recovered. The property decayed while its former owners and their insurance company battled. Since then, owners and plans have come and gone. Politicians and locals have fought, and so far failed, to revive it.

But Mr. Rivera, 77, refuses to leave. He started working at the hotel as a busboy 57 years ago, then as a lounge singer. Now he has made himself its unofficial caretaker. Known around the island as "Uncle Larry," Mr. Rivera has keys to the

On the main stage of the Coco Palms nearly 20 years ago, Larry Rivera, Ernie Palmeira on steel guitar and dancer Ilima.



A recent shot of Larry Rivera on the Coco Palms grounds with HSGA member and steel guitarist, Jess Montgomery.

gate and stops by most days. Welcomed but not employed by the current owners, he pulls coconuts from the lagoon, clears walkways of debris, and keeps tabs on vandalism.

"My heart is here. My spirit is here," he says, standing in the dank ruins of the hotel lounge where, in better days, he says, Elvis Presley watched him perform. "I can't let it go."

Occasionally, tourists, nostalgic former employees and guests stop to take pictures, reminisce and—sometimes—exchange vows. Ceremonies are arranged by Mr. Rivera. His standard wedding involves floating the groom to the bride on a flower-festooned pontoon boat, rowed by muscular Hawaiian men.

"He's Mr. Coco Palms," says the groom at the recent wedding, John Burton, a 60-year-old retiree from Michigan. Mr. Burton and his wife, Nancy, were wed at the hotel 25 years ago. In February, they renewed their vows there.

For more than 30 years, the Coco Palms was the center of Kaua'i's social scene, and a magnet for filmmakers and celebrities. To walk the deteriorating grounds is to trip across a glamorous history: the plaque in front of a palm tree planted by the shah of Iran, the spot where Elvis got married in the 1961 movie "Blue Hawaii," the wedding chapel from the 1953 Rita Hayworth film "Miss Sadie Thompson," the dining room where Liberace once played the piano.

But the hotel was also beloved by locals who felt welcome to bring their children to see monkeys in the zoo on the grounds, host family birthdays, and fish the lagoons.

Mr. Rivera ran the lobby coffee shop with his wife, Gloria, who still arranges flowers for his weddings, and sang in a nightly lounge act. Since the hotel closed, he has performed at other hotels. But Coco Palms devotees associated him with the place, and hired him to host events there.

Continued on Page 20

DISC 'N' DATA



“Hawai'i Sang Me To Sleep” – Ray Kinney and his Hawaiians (Cumquat CQCD-2818)

Review by John Ely

“Hawai'i Sang Me To Sleep” is the fourth Cumquat release in the Ray Kinney series and focuses on the 1939-40 period. The CD features terrific vocal performances by George Kainapau and Kinney. And flawless steel playing from Tommy Castro. This was the period when electric steel guitar was moving out of its infancy, incorporating the cool swingy sound that would eventually be the hallmark of 1950s steel guitar.

After listening to the first 3 tracks—“Nani Wale Na Hala,” “Mi Nei,” and “Hapa Haole Hula Girl—I realized that Tommy has a big dose of that cool David Keli'i touch. He is smooth as silk on “Hualalai,” which features some great singing by Kinney and Kainapau.

The group's version of the hula “Kuu Ipo Pua Rose” is superb. Tommy Castro gives a clinic on playing vamps and solos based on the melody. Wouldn't it be nice if today's hula performances included more steel guitar solos? In “White Ginger Blossoms” Castro starts his solo sweet and pure and then “takes off” as a horn player would. But by and large, he plays sim-

ply and melodically with a very sweet, steady vibrato as in the title track, “Hawai'i Sang Me To Sleep.” You can safely buy this CD just for the steel guitar playing.

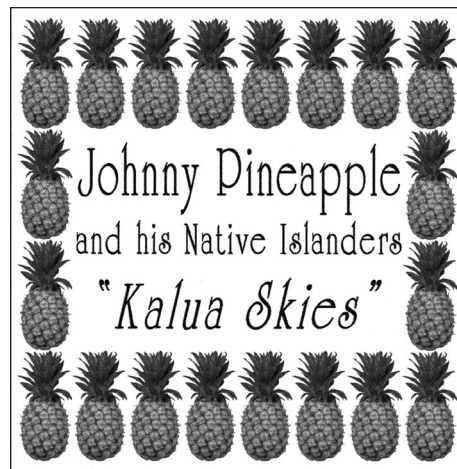
“Tricky Fingers” is a beautiful example of how you can build a fairly intricate arrangement from a very simple theme based on simple yet effective steel guitar strums.

Also featured on the CD is Henry Paul on guitar and vocals. The 3-part harmony is exquisite throughout the CD, as in “Makalapua,” “Pili Me 'Oe,” and “Ho'okipa Paka.” “E Liliu E” features an awesome horn arrangement with swingin' steel guitar interspersed. I love the way Hawaiian groups from this period created elaborate arrangements of the rhythmic, chant-like mele. “Ulili E” is another example with a nice call-and-response vocal.

Check out the swingin' steel on “Manuela Boy.” And the lovely chord fill-ins on “A Song of Old Hawai'i.”

More from the R. Alex Anderson songbook: The band does campy versions of “I Had To Lova And Leva On The Lava,” and the “The Cockeyed Daughter of the Mayor of Kaunakakai” with a very simple but instructive single-note solo by Tommy.

Another terrific, transparent remastering effort by Bruce Clarke, 20 tracks in all. Highly recommended whether you're a steel guitar fanatic or just like listening to stone cold soulful Hawaiian music.



“Kalua Skies” – Johnny Pineapple and his Native Islanders (Cumquat CQCD-2830)

Review by John Ely

Anyone familiar with the “Johnny Pineapple” sound will love this CD. The performances, 18 in all, are direct and to-the-point—as Bruce Clarke states in his liner notes, the sounds seems to come “from a distant shore.”

Bandleader David Kaonohi was discovered by Hollywood talent scouts and appeared in the 1937 film “Hurricane” with Dorothy Lamour. After landing a gig on the radio show “Honolulu Bound,” sponsored by the Dole Pineapple Company, he adopted the name “Johnny Pineapple” and it stuck.

The band featured Jack de Toro on steel guitar for the most part. A very good player. He really swings on “Na Ali'i,” “Hano Hano Hanalei,” “Tomi Tomi,” and “Hooheno Keia No Beauty.” But his signature sound is that sweet, wide-vibrato sound that you hear on “Moon of Manokoora.” It does sound like he was the steel player I heard in “Hurricane.” More of the same on the title track, “Kalua Skies” with plenty of “shimmering steel guitar,” ringing arpeggios reminiscent of vibes.

“Kawika” is quite unusual with the verses and choruses in unrelated keys. I've never heard anything quite like it. Also unique is the band's rendition of “Meleana E,” which begins with 5 or 6 rounds of solos! “Hawai'i Nei” and “Hula (That Naughty South Sea Dance)” are also examples of the group's flair for key changes and other surprises. Check the harmonics in a ragged-but-right “Hilo March.”

The Johnny Pineapple recordings I have all feature classic versions of the classic Hawaiian repertoire. What I liked about “Kalua Skies” is that it showed me another side of the band with some pretty unique arrangements and many musical twists and turns. Check it out! ■

The Carol Hidy Story

By Lorene Ruymar

I'm sure all you gents noticed the lovely lady who played a steel guitar duet with Don Fullmer last year in Joliet. It was obvious we all wanted to get to know her. So, here's her story as she told it to me.

Carol was born in Indianapolis. From the age of six she wanted to play the Hawaiian steel guitar to sound like the steel players in the "Hawaii Calls" recordings. After two years of begging she began lessons with Clarence L. Williams at the Indianapolis Conservatory of Music. [ED: Clarence was steel instructor to HSGA's own L.T. Zinn and Phil Bender. See the article on L.T. in the Summer 2006 *Quarterly*.] Carol said, "My parents never had to encourage me to practice, but there were times I had to be called to supper repeatedly because I was lost in my Hawaiian music world."

Carol was soon called on by the teacher to show the 12 boys in the class how it was done. She was the only girl

Young Carol Hidy, Second Prize winner!



A cool shot of the 1954 American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists, and Guitarists competition. Carol Hidy is in the center of the photo, the only girl steel guitarist pictured.

and the youngest in the class. This was a huge self-confidence builder because Carol was born with spinal birth defects, which caused her to live with constant back and leg pain, and the nerve damage to her legs made them weak. At last she had found something she could excel at.

Her first steel guitar was a white pearl six-string Supro, followed by a National double 8-string, which her parents could ill afford. But their joy and pride to see her achieving at the highest level must have made their sacrifice easy to make.

Her dad drove her to steel guitar class for five years and endured the cacophony of guitars and accordions all going full blast in different classrooms. Both Carol's parents loved Hawaiian music.

When she was 12 years old Carol began entering competitions, including some with the International Music League and some with the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists, and Guitarists (AGBMG). At the AGBMG competition held at the Claypool Hotel in Indianapolis on July 26-29, 1954 (perhaps you were there too?), there

were hundreds of steel guitar and accordion players and it seemed like the boys played the steel guitars while the girls chose accordions.

One of the rules of competition was to have the music memorized and to perform it standing up. Because of her birth defects, this was nearly impossible for Carol. But along with the defects, Carol had inherited the gift of determination. Although she was the youngest, she won second prize. You saw the movie, "A Maid and a Million Men"?? That was Carol. As far as she knows, she was the only girl playing steel guitar. Hurray, Carol!

Her teacher, Mr. Williams, chose her to play a lead part in the concert band he directed (see photo above), in which she was the only girl in a group of eight steel guitarists, along with percussion, bass, rhythm guitars, and accordions. They played "Perfidia," and won first prize. She was also chosen to play lead in her school's guitar band, which included seven steel guitars, rhythm guitars, bass, and percussion. Again, they won first prize. From then on Carol has had no problem with feelings of insecurity.

As Carol moved through high school, college, and university, she played a big part in the music on campus. The parties, the special events, the dance shows, and even in the residence hall lobby. You name it, she played in it. And who says brains and beauty cannot be found in the same head? In 1964, she graduated from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Education with a double minor in Biology and English.

Carol taught in junior and senior high school, worked in medical research support, did medical editing, and formed her own medical transcription company. She single parented two musically talented sons: the drummer became a medical doctor, and the whiz-bang guitar player, vice president of an advertising agency.

In 1986, due to severe health problems, Carol had to take a disability

retirement from the Merrill Dow Pharmaceutical Company where she worked as a scientific information analyst. In retirement she has done volunteer work: lay counseling with the Pregnancy Care Center, Young Life Committee, and has served as spokesperson for the Arthritis Foundation in Cincinnati. So... what are *you* doing today?

Now you're wondering what her National Double-8 was doing through those hard working years? It stood silent in a dark closet. Until... about 15 years ago when she joined her church's musical group. Since then her musical life has soared back into joyful participation with other musicians and other great groups.

Did you know she was with us in Joliet in 2006? I didn't either. But that's when Alma Pfeifer met her, and made her promise to come back in 2007 and get onto that stage and show us a thing or two. *And*, that's when she met Don

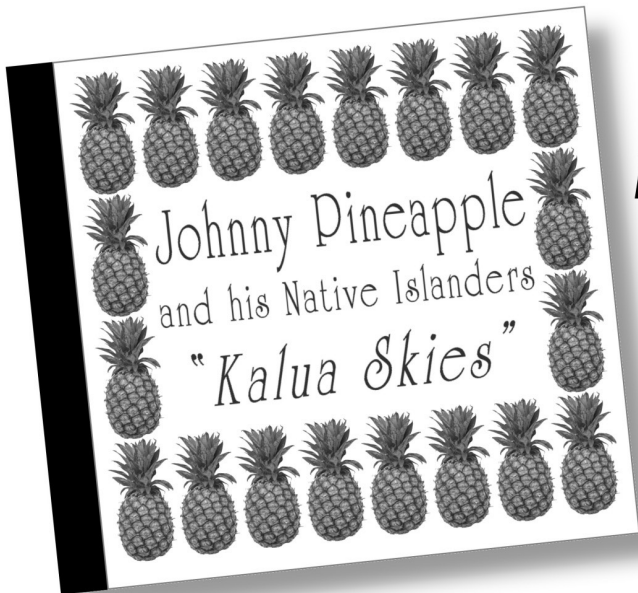


Carol Hidy playing at Joliet 2007 during her steel guitar duet with Don Fullmer, Rhetta Riggs shown on 'ukulele backup.

Fullmer, another steel guitarist, teacher, and arranger. Do you remember how their show went in 2007? Carol and Don played steel guitar duets with backup by three ukuleleists: Rhetta Riggs, Frank Brandenburg, and Andy Barlo, while Dick Martiny played rhythm guitar and Elaine Barlo emceed. What fun for all of us!

Carol's music career is a living thank you to her parents who sacrificed so much to give her the guitars, the lessons, and the encouragement. And now, with more instruction and music arranging from her new buddy, Don Fullmer, she ended her story with a promise that will ring in your ears until October 2008. "Don has made many dreams come true for me and we have more surprises in store for our performances at Joliet in 2008 as well as in Hawai'i in 2009."


I hold my breath. Right now, as you read this, Carol meets daily with Phil Bender, Ivan Reddington, Frank Brandenburg, and Don Fullmer. Do you suppose it's a steel guitar orchestra that they're cooking up? ■



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CLOSING NOTES

Lifelong Kaua'i resident Ah Sau Ahana remembered

By Rachel Gehrlein, writer for *The Garden Island*

Known as “the man who drives the yellow station wagon and wears the Chinese cap,” Lihu'e resident Ah Sau Ahana was a well-known fixture on the Hawaiian music scene in the '40s, '50s and '60s. Ahana, who died February 24 at the age of 100, will be remembered by friends and family today at the Lihu'e First Hawaiian Church.

Eli Kikuchi, Ahana's daughter, said her father always took care of the family. “Throughout the years, there was a lot of love and he always made sure the family was OK,” Kikuchi said. “There are just tons of memories.”

Born and raised on Kaua'i, Ahana was hired to work part-time for the county of Kaua'i while still a student at Kaua'i High School. At the age of 17, Ahana began working full-time for the county, where he remained employed for 48 years until his retirement as deputy finance director in 1972.

While in high school, Ahana learned how to play the banjo, 'ukulele and the steel guitar. During WWII, he would entertain the troops, playing in the Reliance 7 Band and the Annie Holt Trio. Ahana would also entertain troops around Kaua'i, all while wearing a bulletproof vest.

After the war, Ahana played steel guitar in radio announcer Mike Ashman's trio. In a book entitled “Kaua'i: As it was in the 1940s and '50s,” Ashman spoke about his experiences with the trio. “The three of us (Ashman, Ahana and Miki Waiiau) managed to wander from one spot to



Kaua'i steel guitarist, Ah Sau Ahana with guitarist Sam Peahu and Lincoln Young on bass, taken at a gig on the beach at Kalapaki, site of the old Kauai Surf Hotel, now the Kauai Marriott. (Photo courtesy of Ah Sau's daughter Eli Kikuchi.)

another, singing and playing our collection of Hawaiian classics,” Ashman wrote. “I don't think our trio was the greatest, but we were dependable. And that counted.”

Ahana and his musicians were the first entertainers hired by Grace Buscher Guslander at the Coco Palms in the '50s. According to “The Story of the Coco Palms Hotel,” Ahana was the first man on Kaua'i to own a steel guitar and was known for playing the instrument on his lap.

After leaving the Coco Palms, Ahana played at the Luau Gardens, Kaua'i Inn, Lovell's Tavern and the Kaua'i Surf. He is survived by three daughters, 10 grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins. He was preceded in death by his wife Mary E. Ahana, daughter Joyce Watanabe and grandchild Garrett Shiets.

Thanks to Kaua'i member and steelman Jess Montgomery for forwarding this item to us. Jess comments, “Interestingly, I knew Au Sau from the restaurant where I cook, as he used to come in a few times a year, always wearing his trademark red Chinese cap, always ordering his favorite meal, the rack of lamb. He was a truly sparkling soul and we would always chat over the salad bar, but sadly I had no idea that he was a steel player until I saw the article in the paper the other day. Had I known, I certainly would have learned more about that part of his life from him. I wasn't able to go to his service since I was playing a lū'au at the same time, but I sure tried to play to him that day.” ■

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The Life of Aunty Genoa: A Timeline

From Wayne Harada, Honolulu Advertiser Staff Writer

- 1918 – Born Genoa Leilani Adolpho on October 31
- 1928 – Started singing in the choir of the Mormon Church [in La‘ie]
- 1935 – Married Edward Puniwai Keawe-Aiko
- 1939 – Began professional singing career, with pre-wartime shows, with George Ho‘okano’s band
- 1940 – Heard a lunch-hour radio show with Johnny K. Almeida and called in to sing “For You a Lei” as a birthday dedication to a niece, earning a chance for a return.
- 1946 – Did first recording, “Maile Swing,” for 49th State Records
- 1951-55 – Part of the “Lucky Luck Show” on TV
- 1964 – Sang with the Honolulu Rapid Transit Musicians on “Hawaii Calls” on KGU Radio, the first of many appearances
- 1965 – Recorded “Party Hulas” for Hula Records, which introduced “Alika,” one of her most popular tunes
- 1966 – Launched Genoa Keawe Records, her own label
- 1980 – Won the Sidney Grayson Award, part of the Nā Hōkū Hanohano Awards.
- 1989 – Brought Hawaiian music and hula on a goodwill tour to Moscow and three Siberian cities
- 1995 – Won the ‘Female Vocalist of the Year’ Nā Hōkū Hanohano Award for “Hula Hou”
- 1998-2008 – Performed every Thursday at the Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort (also when it was the Hawaiian Regent Hotel)
- 2000 – Received National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts
- 2001 – Inducted into the Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame
- 2003 – Maohi Native Cultural Festival awardee
- 2004 – Honored by Gov. Linda Lingle on her 85th birthday for her contributions to Hawaiian culture
- 2004 – Designated a “Living Treasure of Hawai‘i” by Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai‘i
- 2005 – Earned honorary doctorate (doctor of humane letters) from the University of Hawai‘i-Manoa
- 2005 – Made the City and County of Honolulu’s 100th anniversary “100 most influential” list
- 2005 – Hawai‘i Tourism Authority ‘Nā Kueana a Kealoha’ Award
- 2005 – Won the Moe Keale “Aloha Is” Award for community service; part of the Nā Hōkū Hanohano Awards
- 2007 – Recipient of the Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce O‘o Award
- 2007 – Won Pacific Business News’s “Women Who Mean Business” Gladys Kamakakuokalani ‘Ainoa Brandt Kupuna Award
- 2008 – February 1, admitted to The Queen’s Medical Center
- 2008 – Died February 25 at her Papakolea home



Another photo of Aunty Genoa from Warren Slavin: (Left to right) Alan Akaka, Aunty Momi, Genoa Keawe, and Gary Aiko playing at the Hawaiian Regent, now the Marriott-Waikiki (May 1997).

Aunty Genoa Keawe

By Mary Vorsino, Honolulu Advertiser Staff Writer

The strumming of ‘ukulele, sweet high notes and upbeat tempos filled the chapel at Borthwick Mortuary yesterday as thousands of family, friends and fans gathered to remember Aunty Genoa Leilani Keawe in a way she would have undoubtedly approved—with the Hawaiian music she loved.

More than 5,000 people paid their respects during the four-hour visitation, and at least 1,000 packed into the Chinatown chapel and two overflow viewing rooms for a tribute to Keawe, punctuated by songs and hula performed by her children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews along with noted Hawaiian talents.

Oldest son Gary Keawe-Aiko told attendees that he grew up with music, and was taught at a young age to appreciate Hawaiian culture. He said in grade school, when he was more interested in singing pop songs, Keawe told him, “ ‘You have to learn Hawaiian.’ I said, ‘Why?’ She said, ‘Because you’re Hawaiian.’ ” Keawe-Aiko ended his eulogy with: “Aloha, Mom. I love you.”

During the visitation, dozens of Hawaiian musicians performed, including Keawe’s longtime friend Kealoha Kalama Cabral... Though Keawe has been silenced, her music will live on, Cabral said. Not only in her recordings, she added, but in the music of others. Cabral, who met Keawe in the 1950s and recorded on Keawe’s label, performed at the visitation, singing “Kalamaula,” one of Keawe’s favorite songs.

Keawe outlived nine of her 12 children. She is survived by three sons, Gary P. Keawe-Aiko, Eli Kao Paalua and Eric K. Keawe; 40 grandchildren; 98 great-grandchildren; and 81 great-great-grandchildren. ■



Joliet 2007 Encore

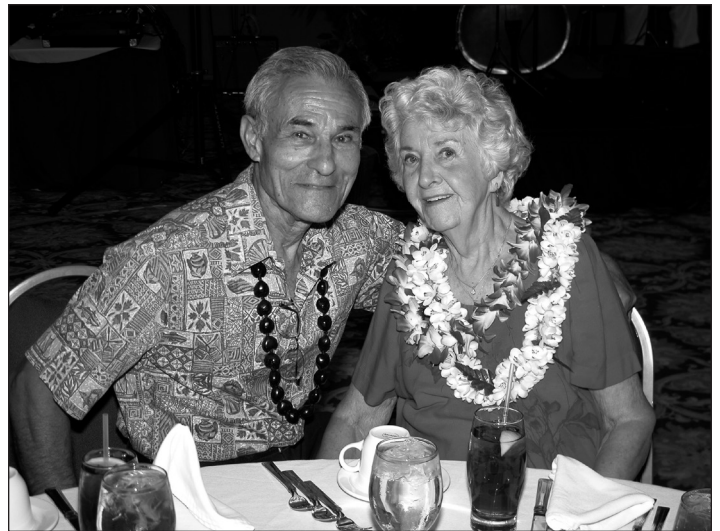
(Clockwise from upper left) Member Gene McGowen from Oregon on steel with new Board member Terry Miller on bass and Dick Martiny on rhythm guitar; From Georgia, John Nickless playing his GFI pedal steel guitar; New Board member Chris Kennison on Rick Electro with Wayne Shishido on bass; longtime music store proprietor and teacher, Kay Koster from Rockford, Illinois with Ivan Reddington on rhythm; and David Kitchen from Fosteria, Ohio playing a National steel guitar.





Joliet – Hanging Out

(Clockwise from upper left) From Ohio, fiddler Barb Kuhns and “paniolo” ex-prez Doug Smith; Donna and Frank Miller kickin’ back—can’t tell you how much we wanted to print the notorious “kiss photo”; lū‘au shot of Art Ruymar, Japan member Katsutoshi “Pepe” Ogata, Lorene Ruymar, and Don Weber. Says Lorene of Ogata-san, “A nicer guy you will not find.” Your trusty newsletter mail-out team Bo’ and Betty Bahret from Poughkeepsie, New York; and Bernice Honold of the Coral Islanders (left) with Rhetta Riggs.



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DENNIS HOLBERT, 605 Broadway Avenue, P.O. Box 211, Saint Charles, AR
72140-0211

JEROME KRAUSS, 4921 Orchard Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043

JOHN MUMFORD, 7956 S. Monaco Ct., Centennial, CO 80112

KRISTABELLE R. MUNSON, 172 5th Avenue #249, Brooklyn, NY 11217

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DAVID SOREFF, c/o Lehnert, 11146 Harbour Springs Circle, Boca Raton, FL
33428

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VERNE AND HELEN NEATE, 648 Redwood Drive, Qualicum Beach, BC V9K
1A2 Canada

WILLIAM DONALDSON, 68 Woodlands Terrace, Dundee, Angus DD4 9BA
United Kingdom

COCO PALMS Continued from Page 12

Mr. Rivera organizes about two dozen weddings a year at the hotel, charging between \$600 and \$2,200. As part of the package, he provides Hawaiian performers, and sings traditional Hawaiian songs and Elvis tunes.

Mr. Rivera says he was crushed after the current owners—Maryland developers Petrie Ross Ventures and South Carolina's Weiser Cos.—recently abandoned plans to turn the property into a condo-hotel development because a local board rejected a planned spa.

A spokeswoman for Phillip Ross, president of Petrie Ross, a partner in the Coco Palms, said the company is aware of Mr. Rivera's history and activities on the site. "Larry is a gentleman," Mr. Ross said in a statement.

According to a book about the property, the first hotel on the site was opened in the 1800s by Kaua'i Queen Deborah Kapule, who had to support herself after her husband, the

king, was kidnapped. The property was purchased by a German who planted the coconut grove with seedlings from Samoa. Then it was run by a widow as the Coco Palms Lodge, until Hawaiian hotelier Lyle Guslander took over in 1953 and made his future wife manager. Since 1969, it has had three other owners, with the current owners purchasing it for \$12.3 million in 2006.

The current owners' planned \$220 million renovation was derailed in 2007. A Hawaiian state senator has proposed turning the 32-acre property and its palm grove into a park.

It's hard to imagine that the hotel could be brought back to its former glory. Much of that has to do with the absence of the hotel's famed manager, Grace Guslander, a woman of such force that older Hawaiians remember fondly that she survived to chuckle at her own front-page obituary. Mrs. Guslander had suffered a heart attack that, at press time, the paper believed

was fatal. She lived 13 more years, and died in 2000 at 89.

Mrs. Guslander, a "haole," or non-Hawaiian, from Pennsylvania, established the hotel's traditions, such as an elaborate nightly torch-lighting ceremony, and gala cocktail parties. Stories about her still abound. According to one of them, Mrs. Guslander and two large male employees sat on nearby railroad tracks, forcing a sugar train to stop because she objected to the noise.

While newer hotels brought a more sterile, Western feel to Kaua'i, Mrs. Guslander hired Hawaiians for visible jobs and installed features like giant clamshells for bathroom sinks, mixing Hawaiian culture with her own ideas of hospitality. She also was important to Mr. Rivera's career at Coco Palms. Mrs. Guslander treated her employees like family, and when she heard her young busboy sing, she asked him to perform for guests. "Grace was like our mother," Mr. Rivera said.

With the latest plans canceled, Mr. Rivera's quest to restore the hotel has become a lonely one.

"I don't think even if Grace came back today that she could do it," says David Penhallow, author of a book called "The Story of the Coco Palms Hotel" and a longtime friend of Mrs. Guslander's. "Coco Palms wasn't a place. It was a time, and that time is over." Still, Mr. Rivera strives daily to rekindle the glow of long-ago memories. On his recent visit, stories of glamorous parties were interrupted by the discovery that someone had broken into his storage room.

"Sometimes I feel like that old lady from "Titanic" when I try to explain how wonderful this place was," he said. "It was alive." ■

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