



The Bridge



Connecting Members of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association
APRIL 2014

...A Weekend Not to Miss!



Since the “customer is always right” in business, then it’s fair to say the “listener is always right” in music. Therefore, it behooves musicians to play music to the liking of those willing to listen. Lucky for us Auburn Knights, there are listeners that love our music for both dancing and for listening pleasure.

In past reunions, we’ve attempted to accommodate both types of listeners, but in the end the dancers have had to

step outside to avoid blocking the view of the concertgoers. Given that Swing music has its roots in Swing Dancing and that Auburn has a strong Swing Dance patronage, the AKA Board has proposed a seating arrangement this year that situates the dancers closer to the stage without interfering with the concert goers. The layout will accommodate both the more dance-centered performance on Friday night and the more concert-type performance on Saturday night. The dance format is achieved by combining the 30s/40s band for the opening set, followed by the 50s and 60s bands to close out the final dance set for Friday night. Then Saturday will be more geared toward listening to the 70s/80s band for the first set, followed by the 90s/2000s band, and finishing with the traditional finale by the current AKO to close out the reunion.

This format attracts a more diverse and larger audience, which ultimately helps raise more money to support the current AKO. Limiting each night to three performances allows for an earlier finish, helps keep a captive audience, results in fewer rehearsals, and thus leaves more time for musicians to relax with family and friends.

The AKA Board thanks you all for your patronage in supporting the reunion, the AKA, and of course, the current Auburn Knights Orchestra! We hope to see as many people as possible for this year’s reunion. So, come on out and enjoy the wonderful music at the beautiful Marriott resort. See you there!

Tim Baur
AKAA President

The 84th Anniversary AKAA Reunion July 17-19, 2014

RESERVE YOUR ROOM BY JUNE 17th!
Wait too long, you may be sleeping in your car!
Group rates for this year’s Reunion will be honored beginning Wednesday, July 16th, through Sunday, July 20th.

To reserve rooms by phone, call (334) 741-9292 (Reservations) or (334) 737-2130 (Karen Gilmore, Event Coordinator, Auburn Marriott Opelika Hotel and Conference Center).

REUNION REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Now’s the time to beat the crowds and register for this year’s reunion. Remember, for all the era band players, *the reunion is a pay to play event*. No freebies! Yes, we’re all there to enjoy the camaraderie, the stories from years gone by, and the awesome musicianship. However, at the end of the day, we are also raising scholarship funds for qualified members of the current band. To register, simply fill out the registration form on Page 2 and send it with your payment to Wade Johnson (address on the form).

**All Contributions to the AKA Scholarship Fund
are completely tax deductible!**

Time to get the Kinks Out!

It’s never too late to hit the woodshed! If you’re planning to play at the reunion, be sure to contact your era band leader(s). Whether you need to flex those fingers, oil those valves, or pick up some new reeds, time’s a wastin’!

Era	Leader(s)	Phone	E-mail
30s/40s	Graham Thomas Richard Garrett	(404) 294-0459 (334) 322-9300	wgthomas@aol.com PIALLC@msn.com
50s	Jay Owen Sonny Harris	(908) 510-3910 (205) 823-4165	bebopbuf@mindspring.com sondrum.harris@gmail.com
60s	Steve Means	(251) 504-6004	aunknights@hotmail.com
70s/80s	Fritz Siler Nat Michelson	(404) 421-8674 (904) 249-0539	dogsiler@hotmail.com nmichelson001@gmail.com
90s/2000s	Wade Johnson	(334) 332-9156	wade.johnson@gmail.com

Getting There is Half the Fun! (Maybe Even More Than Half!)

Throughout their history, the Auburn Knights have been traveling to play their jobs; throughout the state of Alabama and across the southeastern United States. Some of the best memories that many former Knights have of their time on the band are the adventures they had getting to and from their gigs.

In 1979, the Knights were traveling by convoy to play for a dance in northeast Alabama. Unfortunately, they were running late to the job. To try to get there as soon as possible, the speed limit was exceeded...by a considerable margin! Driving into downtown, the convoy soon had blue flashing lights coming up behind it. The first two cars pulled over while the rest continued about a mile down the road. After the tickets were written, the convoy re-formed and went on to the job. The mayor of this particular town was a Knights alumnus and was waiting for the band to arrive. He was also rather unhappy that the band was late. When he learned about the tickets (and in all fairness, more blame for the band's tardiness was apportioned to being pulled over than may have been entirely accurate), he not only voided the tickets but put the band up in a local hotel at city expense!

The greatest stories about travel with the Knights, however, belong to the 1950s when the band owned a bus. The bus, christened Agnes, was a reject from the transportation industry. Alumni from that era recall that Agnes broke down about every third trip. On one particular trip when the bus broke down, the band set up on the side of the road and played a set for anyone to come and hear.

Agnes was converted to a sleeper bus so that the Knights could make longer trips. However, innovation was still required. The only females on the band during that time were vocalists such as Toni Tennille and Danny Sue Bell. When the vocalist needed to get dressed for the gig, a band member's girlfriend would have to hold up a sheet to provide a modicum of privacy.

The bus brakes were one of the main areas of concern. On one trip to north Alabama – sometime around 4:00 am – Kenny Hammett was driving the bus through the middle of a small town when he suddenly realized that he had no brakes. He was able to use a slight hill to stop the bus and two Knights – who happened to be engineering students – were able to repair the air hose that controlled the brakes so the band could return to Auburn.

Perhaps the best story of Agnes, the Knights' bus, comes from the late Jack Dresher. The band was on its way to play a job in Atlanta in the early 1950s. On that trip, Jack met a young coed on the bus and soon lost his heart to her. He and that young lady would spend fifty six years together as husband and wife. They became engaged when Jack proposed to Lynn...on that same Auburn Knights' bus! (Paul McCracken.)

2014 Auburn Knights Alumni Association Reunion, July 16 –20
~ Registration Form ~

NAME _____ STREET _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____ E-MAIL _____

PHONE # _____ CATEGORY: MEMBER ASSOCIATE VISITOR

Event or Item	How Many?	Cost	Total
2014-2015 Dues (Members & Associates)	_____	\$20.00	_____
Concert/Dance, 7:30 PM, Friday	_____	\$10.00	_____
Concert Dance, 7:30 PM, Saturday	_____	\$10.00	_____
Saturday Jazz Brunch, 11:00 AM			
BBQ Beef or Chicken, Baked Beans, Cole Slaw, Bread & Drink	_____	\$9.00	_____
Hamburger, Chips & Drink	_____	\$8.00	_____
Hotdog, Chips & Drink	_____	\$5.00	_____
Contribution to AKAAscholarship Fund (<i>all contributions are Tax Deductible</i>)			
			Total Amount Enclosed _____

Send this form and payment to:
Wade Johnson, AKAAscholarship Fund | 4868 Camp Grandview Rd. | Millbrook, AL 36054

Grace Notes

John Richard (Jack) Drescher: Auburn Knight alumnus and former AKAAs President, Jack Drescher passed away December 13, 2013 at the age of 81. Jack, a very active and long-time AKAAs member, continued to play his upright bass until shortly before his passing.

John Hubert Liverman, Jr.: Auburn Knight alumnus Hugh Liverman passed away October 21, 2013 at the age of 72. A Vietnam veteran, Hugh attended the Julliard School of Music and graduated from Auburn University with a Bachelor's in Music.

2014 AKO Valentine's Swing Dance Kills It!

For the second year running, the current AKO hosted a Valentine's Day Swing Dance in the Opelika Event Center Downtown. This year, the current band was joined by an AKAAs alumni group comprised primarily of Board members in town for the AKAAs Winter Board Meeting on February 15th. According to the gate count, over 400 dancers packed the place! Even better, the current band killed it! They're awesome players!

For this year's AKAAs reunion, the current band will play the closing set on Saturday night. You won't want to miss their exceptional performance!

2014 Reunion Schedule

	Thursday, July 17	Friday, July 18	Saturday, July 19	
8:30 AM	Food and Beverage Lakeview Room Breakfast: 6:30 - 11:00 am Lunch: Noon - 2:00 pm Dinner: 6:00 - 9:00 pm Pool Bar: 4:00 - 9:00 pm	30s/40s Dress Rehearsal (Ballroom)	AKAAs Board Meeting (Conference Suite 303)	
9:00 AM		50s Dress Rehearsal (Ballroom)	General Membership Meeting (Amphitheatre)	
9:30 AM				
10:00 AM		30s/40s Rehearsal (Ballroom)	60s Dress Rehearsal (Ballroom)	Jazz Brunch 11 -1:00 pm (Pool area)
10:30 AM				
11:00 AM				
11:30 AM		60s Rehearsal (Ballroom)	70s/80s Dress Rehearsal (Ballroom)	Matinee Band (Ballroom)
Noon				
12:30 PM				
1:00 PM				
1:30 PM	AKO/AKAAs Mixer (Ballroom Foyer)	90s/2000s Dress Rehearsal (Ballroom)	Free Time Pool Archives Silent Auction	
2:00 PM				
2:30 PM				
3:00 PM				
3:30 PM				
4:00 PM	70s/80s Rehearsal (Ballroom)	50s Rehearsal (Mtg Rm 1)	Lakeview Room Dinner Specials	
4:30 PM				
5:00 PM	90s/2000s Rehearsal (Ballroom)	30s/40s Concert "The Swing Years"	70s/80s Concert "Jazz meets Rock meets Latin"	
5:30 PM				
6:00 PM				
6:30 PM				
7:00 PM	Jam Session(s) TBA	50s Concert "The Big Bands Live On"	90s/2000s Concert "Swing Makes a Comeback"	
7:30 PM				
8:00 PM		60s Concert "The Big Bands Rock On"	AKO Concert "Still Swinging after 84 years"	
8:30 PM				
9:00 PM	Bandstand open for sit-ins	Breakfast Buffet	Bandstand open for sit-ins	
9:30 PM				
10:00 PM				
10:30 PM				
11:00 PM	Bandstand open for sit-ins	Breakfast Buffet	Bandstand open for sit-ins	
11:30 PM				
Midnight				

Silent Auction

Last year's incredibly successful Silent Auction raised \$2,820 for the AKAAs Scholarship fund. Without a doubt, this year's Silent Auction will have even more wonderful artwork and other items available. Please make time to review the items offered. All proceeds will benefit the AKAAs Scholarship Fund.

Volunteers Needed

No AKAAs reunion could happen without the tremendous time and talent donated by countless volunteers. The most visible of those is, of course, the folks who staff the registration tables each year. This year, new volunteers are needed for registration. Please contact Ann Phillips at 'annphilipsmk@comcast.net' or (256) 883-2459.

Changes Afoot!

The 84-year history of the Auburn Knights has been marked by change as the band evolved from its beginnings to the full dance band that took the 40s by storm! Likewise, the AKAAs reunion has also seen its share of change. This year, the most obvious difference will be the merging of the 30s & 40s eras into a single band. Be assured we will continue to honor the music of those seminal decades.

Another change this year will be three bands playing each night rather than four. Also, the start of the first set will be slipped until 7:30 PM. You'll still hear great music and have plenty of time to mix and mingle. After all, that's what reunions are all about!



Auburn Knights Alumni Association
 c/o Peter Blaise, Newsletter Editor
 1195 Muirfield Way
 Niceville, FL 32578

**The 2014 AKA A Reunion
 July 17-19, 2014**

BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED!

July again marks the time that five valued members of the AKA A Board will be completing their three-year terms of office. Obviously, their departure means that five candidates from the AKA A membership are needed to fill their shoes.

The AKA A Board meets twice a year—the Winter meeting in mid-February and the Summer meeting during the AKA A reunion in July. For those of you needing a reason to visit the Loveliest Village in the waning days of winter, here’s your chance! Even better, you’ll be the recipient of a free lunch for your efforts! WOW!

Board members represent a cross-section of Knights alumni from throughout the years. Whether you’re a recent graduate or a grizzled graybeard, there’s a place for you. Contact any officer or Board member for more information (check the listing on the right).

The Auburn Knights Alumni Association

OFFICERS

Tim Baur, President | (770) 650-0898 | tim_baur@rocketmail.com
 Woody Leonard, Vice President | (229) 387-4967 | wleonard54@yahoo.com
 Peter Blaise, Secretary & Newsletter Editor | (850) 897-3728 | blaisepete@gmail.com
 Wade Johnson, Treasurer | (334) 332-9156 | wade.johnson@gmail.com

BOARD MEMBERS

2011 - 2014 Ralph Black Jr. | Andy Duke | Nat Michelson | John Norton | Sonny Mayfield
 2012 - 2015 Cathy Bell Altonji | Ryan Chapman | Rob Cothran | Bob Greenhaw | Tony McCutcheon
 2013 - 2015 Jana Calano | Cecil Wilder | Hank Elliott | Phil Gipson, Jr. | Reid Gavin

APPOINTMENTS

Vic Atkins, Communications | (334) 872-7292 | vbatkins@bellsouth.net
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CURRENT BAND

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