



The Bridge

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Connecting Members of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association
NOVEMBER 2015

From the Prez!

Greetings & War Eagle!

"Wish I could find some words other than terrific, unbelievable, out-of-sight, etc. to describe the latest addition of the Auburn Knights Reunion but, unfortunately, English 101 was not my bag in college, so all I can say is that it was the greatest."
(Charlie Woods' description of the 1993 reunion, from the September 1993 AKA Newsletter)



I can't imagine a better description of our own 2015 Auburn Knights Reunion. First and foremost, the era groups were beyond compare. The 30's/40's band, lead by Richard Garrett & Mike Lyle, opened the weekend with a great lineup of songs. How do they put together such a flawless set from two such diverse decades? J.H. Owen + Sonny Harris + The 50's guys = Swing City! Fantastic charts, wonderful arrangements, and the band just cooked. And the vocals! It was too much!

Aquarius...Beatles...
Watermelon Man: the perfect compilation for the 60s. Steve

Means, you guys were groovy, baby! From calypso to disco to rock to swing to ballads, Fritz Siler and the 70s/80s band have no fear regarding programming! This group puts the "Big" in Big Band! The 90's/2000's, under the superb direction of Wade Johnson—if you close your eyes, you'd think the Basie band somehow had found their way to the Plains. Amazing!

What about the current AKO. Holy Cow! I was speechless! Nobody had more FUN playing at the reunion. Look up "tight" in the dictionary and there is a picture of the 2015 AKO! The future certainly looks bright under the leadership of business manager Tyler Strickland. Throw in a 'copious cornucopia of rehearsal comradeship and camaraderie', the AKA/AKO Mixer, the Saturday Jazz Brunch, Professor Greenhaw's brilliant "Auburn Knights Legacy" presentation, the AKA Matinee Band, Jeff Jones' "Instant Combo", and the finest outdoor pool/bar/party zone in Auburn—Friends, we had all the fun we could stand!

Time for kudos: I would be remiss to not acknowledge outgoing AKA President Tim Baur, our intrepid leader for the past 2½ years. His unflappable demeanor, readily available smile, and thoughtful deliberations have strengthened our organization in numerous ways (and he is one heck of a bass player!). There would be no reunion without John Norton, Reunion Coordinator & Silent Auction host; Richard Garrett, publicity; Wade Johnson, dues/ticket sales; Fritz Siler, archives/scholarships, the two

The 85th Anniversary AKAA Reunion Auburn Marriott - Opelika Conference Center July 7-9, 2016

The Marriott will begin accepting AKA Reunion room reservations on **January 1, 2016**, a change from previous years, so mark your calendars accordingly. For 2016, room rates will be:

Standard:	\$119/night
Junior Suite:	\$139/night
Executive Kitchen Suite:	\$159/night
Executive Suite:	\$179/night

To reserve your room, call Marriott reservations directly at (800) 593-6456 or (334) 741-9292.

TAX TIME IS LOOMING!

WITH THE 2015 TAX YEAR COMING TO A CLOSE, PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE AKA SCHOLARSHIP FUND. YOUR GENEROSITY WILL HELP A CURRENT KNIGHT COMPLETE THEIR EDUCATION AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, KEEP THE LEGACY OF THE AUBURN KNIGHTS ALIVE.

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY!!!

Bobs—Jemian & Greenhaw, the matinee band, our many registration table/silent auction volunteers, etc. etc. Please forgive me if I inadvertently left your name off this list of distinguished colleagues. Finally, thanks to our five departing board members, Kathy Bell Altonji, Ryan Chapman, Rob Cothran, Bob Greenhaw, and Tony McCutchen, for a job well done. Welcome to our new members of the board—Frank Butenschon, Neal Brum-beloe, Nat Michelson, Jerry Phillips, and David Spencer.

So, what's next? First, read The Bridge. There is a plethora of potentially life-altering information in this powerful publication that calls for personal perusal and processing! Second, SAVE THE DATE for the 2016 reunion. Finally, be on the lookout for future Bridge editions as we "...honor our past, celebrate the present, and plan for the future of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association."

Long Live the Knights!

Woody Leonard, AKA President

Notes From the 2015 AKA Summer Board Meeting

- AKA President Tim Baur called the meeting to order at 8:39 AM.
- John Norton, Reunion Coordinator, updated the Board on the status of negotiations with The Marriott for the 2016 reunion. He recommended next year's contract not be finalized until dates for the 2016 PGA Barbasol Tournament were confirmed. At this time, the target weekend for next year's reunion is July 8-9, 2016.
- 2015 Outgoing Board Members are Kathy Altonji, Ryan Chapman, Rob Cothran, Bob Greenhaw, and Tony McCutchen. Tim Baur thanked them for their service to the AKA. Board Member nominations for 2015-2018 are Nat Michelson (60s-70s), David Spencer (70s), Neal Brumbaloe (60s-70s), Jerry Phillips (60s), and Frank Butenschon (50s). The motion to accept the slate of new Board members carried.
- With Tim Baur, President, completing his term of office, Woody Leonard, VP, will now assume the AKA Presidency for 2015-2017. Woody nominated Richard Garrett as the AKA VP for 2015-2017 and, in turn, Jason DeBlanc was nominated to complete Richard Garrett's vacated Board term. The motion to accept the new slate of officers carried.
- Paul McCracken, Historian, is continuing his video interview project to record personal perspectives of AKO history. He hopes to have the project completed by year end. Paul also submitted his resignation as Historian effective at the end of the year.
- Wade Johnson, Treasurer, reported a current balance is \$12,021.45 in the AKA operating account.
- Fritz Siler, AKA Scholarship Chair, reported a scholarship fund balance of \$53,654.77 and recommended two \$2,500 scholarships be awarded this year to current AKO members.
- In his role as AKA Archivist, Fritz Siler, informed the Board that this year's Archives Room has more photos than ever and now included copies of the AKO newsletter from the early years. He's continuing to digitize photos, other material.
- Bob Jemian, Music Librarian, discussed commercial printing options vs. printing on his personal printer and disposition of hard copy charts as much of the library has now been digitized.
- Peter Blaise reported the printing and mailing costs for the May 2015 and June 2015 editions of The Bridge totaled \$951.91.
- The AKO Business Manager, Tyler Strickland, told the Board that some trumpet spots were open and that male vocals were currently being covered by AKO Alum Clarke Williams in the absence of a permanent vocalist.
- The Board meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM and was immediately followed by the general membership meeting.

General Membership Meeting

- The general membership unanimously approved the recommended slate of officers and board members for 2015-2018.
- Discussion about the General & Scholarship Funds generated comments re: charitable giving of stock & property as well as recommending AKA members include donations to the AKA in their personal giving plans.
- The general membership approved the award of two \$2,500 scholarships to current band members.
- The scanning of charts into the AKA digital library continues.
- This year's Archives Room will include copies of vintage AKO newsletters that poked fun at various band members.
- All were encouraged to attend Bob Greenhaw's afternoon presentation on the history of the Auburn Knights.



AKO vocalist, Shanna Stoker, and the current band blew the roof off The Marriott this year!

Two Knights Receive \$2,500 Scholarships

During the current AKO's performance Saturday night, AKA President Tim Baur presented two \$2,500 scholarships to current band members Samuel Liaw, alto sax, and Ryan Blackwell, trumpet. Both musicians submitted impressive applications and easily earned unanimous approval from the AKA Board and General Membership.

Did You Know?

Did you know annual tuition costs for Auburn University undergraduates average \$10,200/year for in-state students and \$27,384/year for those coming from out-of-state?

Did you know the annual living costs for Auburn students for the 2015-2016 school year will average \$17,764?

For many of us who attended Auburn when tuition was \$150/quarter or less, the cost for an AU degree today blows us away! Nevertheless, today's higher costs reinforce the need to support the AKA Scholarship Fund, especially if we are to ensure the continuation of the Auburn Knights Orchestra well beyond its first 85 years. We have the resources to help these kids grow musically and, even better, earn their degrees as they begin life after AU. Contact Fritz Siler, Scholarship Chair, for more details.

Grace Notes

Art Depew: Former Knight Art Depew passed away peacefully at his home in North Hollywood, CA on Wednesday, July 29, 2015.

A member of the 1943-44 AKO before the Army came calling, Art later attended the Julliard School of Music in New York City and enjoyed a successful career as a freelance musician and arranger. He toured the country with Harry James in the early 1950s before settling in Southern California where he worked with the Lawrence Welk Show, the Tex Beneke Orchestra, and led the Harry James Orchestra from the 1980s into the early 2000s. A popular performer at AKAAs reunions throughout the 1990s and 2000s, Art always had his audience in stitches while playing and singing with different era bands. He especially enjoyed singing with his daughter, Lynn Keller.

Art is survived by his wife Linda, three children, and nine grandchildren.



Art and daughter, Lynn, doing their thing at the 2010 AKA reunion.

The 2015 AKA Reunion Was Incredible!!!

The 2015 AKA reunion featured a lineup of bands that mirrored the evolution of the Knights from their inception to the AKO of today. Friday evening began with a '30s/'40s band in excellent form and closed with the exuberance of the '60s band. Not to be outdone, Saturday night began with the over-caffeinated '70s/'80s group energizing the audience and ended with the current AKO blowing everyone away with a show that convincingly proved that after 85 years, the Auburn Knights are stronger than ever!

The combined '30s/'40s Band kicked off Friday night with the '30s group taking the audience back in time with "*Jazz Goes to the Movies*." Starting with the Looney Tunes theme song, Mike Lyle paced the group through tasty arrangements of *Glad Rag Doll*, *I Wanna Be Loved by You*, *It Don't Mean a Thing*, *Minnie the Moocher*, and other era favorites. Mirroring the makeup of the original '30s Knights, the 3-2-1 band employed three saxes, two trumpets, and one trombone with drums, tuba, banjo, violin, and piano. The '40s contingent, led by Richard Garrett, completed the set by expanding to the typical big band lineup of five saxes, four trombones, four trumpets, and a full rhythm section. Beginning with Tommy Dorsey's *Marie*, the band adeptly played such '40s favorites as *All of Me*, *And the Angels Sing*, *Take the 'A' Train*, and *In the Mood*. Smooth vocals and first-rate solos left the audience wanting more.

Their wish was soon granted as the '50s Band, led by Knights legends, Jay Owen and Sonny Harris, kicked things off with a cool Marion Evans' arrangement of *Take the 'A' Train* that featured nice solo work throughout. The rest of the set highlighted tasty arrangements from Jay that offered many opportunities for band members to stretch their solo chops. Those tunes included *Wave*, *Out of Nowhere*, and *Shiny Stockings*. Vocal tunes, *Ask a Women Who Know*, *Let's Do It*, and *Route 66*, also permitted the incomparable Marilynne Myson to exhibit her talents. As they've done for years, the '50s band closed out with *Thanks for the Memories*.

The '60s era band closed out the evening with their set that began with a Jay Owen arrangement of *Aquarius* that started softly and ended with a roar! Under the booty-shaking direction of Steve Means, the band charged their way through a set list that included standards such as *Don't Get Around Much Anymore*, and *Lazy River*. Bringing the evening to an end with their upbeat performance of *Watermelon Man*, the '60s band departed the bandstand with a very satisfied audience in their wake.

The '70s/'80s band kicked off Saturday evening with a Bob Greenhaw arrangement of Sonny Rollins' classic, *St. Thomas*, that saw four members of the sax section strapping on tenors for individual solos—SWEET! Immediately following that tune, the band charged into a disco flavored arrangement of *Old Black Magic* followed by the upbeat, *Allright, OK, You Win*, with Cathy Altonji on vocals. Then, things slowed down a bit with chanteuse Susan Woody singing the Leon Russell classic, *A Song for You*. After Neal Brumbaloe crooned Lionel Richie's *Hello*, the band shifted gears again and charged into the new Ryan Chapman composition, *The Pipe Trane*, that also featured Ryan on solo trumpet. *St. Louis Blues* and *Goin' Home* rounded out the set.

Next up, the '90s/2000s band kicked off their set with the old standard, *Blues in Hoss Flat*. *Cheek to Cheek* and *Frim Fram Sause* featured Clarke Williams on vocals before giving way to the instrumentals, *It's Oh So Nice*, *Wave*, and *In a Mellow Tone*. Clarke returned to sing *Willow Weep for Me* and *It Had Better Be Tonight* prior to the band closing out their set with *Soul Kitchen*.

Entering the ballroom via their traditional march to the bandstand, the 2015 AKO kicked off the final set of the evening with the Chris Walden composition, *This Band Is Bouncin'*. Next up, the band's new vocalist, Shanna Stoker, charged into Jacob Potter's arrangement of *Uptown Funk* before giving way to the band and the classic instrumental, *Take Five*. Shanna quickly returned to sing *Kiss of Fire*, *I Can't Get Started*, and *Minnie the Moocher* before taking a short break to showcase the band as they kicked into *Stompin' At The Savoy* and an arrangement of *Gospel John* that featured Knights alum, Ryan Chapman, on trumpet. Then, Shanna and Clarke Williams traded vocals as they performed a tasty medley of Stevie Wonder classics. Following that, Shanna's rendition of *Over the Rainbow* marked the final vocal of the evening before the band closed with *Will The Circle Be Unbroken*.

Without a doubt, the 2015 AKA Reunion featured exceptional big band music incredibly played by current Knights, alums, and associates. With the obvious talent demonstrated by the 2015 edition of the AKO, the future of the Knights is very bright indeed!

Knights In The News



Knights alum Frank “Boots” Butenschon, a current ACAA Board member, was recently honored with a career achievement award from the Georgia Music Educators Association’s Multicultural Committee. It was the first time the award has been given in Georgia.

Presented during the GMEA multicultural reception in Savannah, the committee bestowed the award to “...recognize those band directors whose names are iconic to many in the field of music education.”

Valdosta High School’s band director for 18 years from the early 1960s to the late 1970s, Boots has always liked the concept of band because it’s open to all students. He’s been quoted, “In sports, you often have to be a certain height, a certain weight, a certain speed. In band, you don’t have to be fast. You don’t have to be tall. You just have to want to do it.”

Eventually leaving Valdosta for his native Alabama, Boots couldn’t resist the lure of returning to south Georgia. He’s retired nearly a handful of times from his career but his love for bands keeps bringing him back. In his travels, he’s led bands at schools with large staffs and at schools where he was a one-man show.

Currently, Boots is one of the directors of the Azalea Winds, a community band with members from throughout South Georgia.

2015 Silent Auction Wrap-Up

The results are in! The 2015 Silent Auction successfully raised \$2,553 for the ACAA Scholarship Fund! Of the 40 different items sold, without a doubt the most popular were the original pieces of art contributed by our Knights alums and family. It should come as no surprise to any reunion attendees that the talents of the extended Knights family run well beyond superbly played jazz.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who made the auction possible. Now, start getting ready for 2016! For those of you wishing to volunteer your time and talent, please contact John Norton.



2015 ACAA Scholarship Recipient Ryan Blackwell wailing with the current AKO.



The ‘30s band paying homage to AKO’s original 3-2-1 instrumentation.



John Conner ripping through *St. Thomas* with the ‘70s/’80s band.

Knights In The News

Knights alums Victor "Brother" Atkins III and Khari Allen Lee recently returned from a worldwide tour with The New Orleans Jazz Orchestra (NOJO) and Dee Dee Bridgewater. Their itinerary included gigs all over the map—New Zealand, Australia, France, Switzerland, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, Hungary, Finland, and Spain. Earlier this year, NOJO even graced Lee County with a performance at the Opelika Center for the Performing Arts. Wow! These guys certainly got around!

Brother joined NOJO in 2002 and Khari came onboard in 2006. When they're not globetrotting with NOJO or gigging around The Big Easy, both have prestigious "day jobs"—Brother with the University of New Orleans' Jazz Studies Division and Khari with the Music Department at the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts.

When interviewed, Khari said, "It is an honor for me to work with a true icon like Dee Dee Bridgewater, and even more so to work, create and travel the world with my friend, colleague, and mentor Victor B. Atkins III, a musician, educator and high crea-

tive artist par excellence!" Brother returned the compliment, saying that Khari's "leadership qualities and gut-bucket swing helped to launch the band into the sound we are known for. He is one of the band's most significant section leaders and soloists."

Following their tour, and in conjunction with the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, NOJO and Miss Bridgewater released a new CD called "Dee Dee's Feathers." Continuing the long legacy of arrangers in the Auburn Knights family, Brother wrote two of the arrangements. The recording, which is getting great reviews, is available on Amazon and iTunes. For more information about the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra, check out thenojo.com.

This September and October, the NOJO will make another trip to Europe, with appearances in France, Norway, Holland, and London, before returning to New Orleans for two gigs at the end of October. Then, they're out on the road again for a session at Sirius Radio in New York City on November 2nd and a concert at the Straz Center in Tampa on November 4th.

REUNION DVD'S AND CD'S

The 2015 CD's and DVD's are now available and are excellent! If you preordered at the reunion, you should already have received yours. If you haven't yet ordered, use the order form below or order direct from ProCat to treat yourself to some awesome music!



AKAA DVD/CD ORDER FORM

BEST DEAL!!!



**ALL 6 BANDS ON Blu Ray
AND CD \$76.00**

\$6.84 TAX + 2.16 SHIPPING TOTAL \$85.00



**ALL 6 BANDS ON DVD
AND CD \$68.00**

\$5.60 TAX + 1.40 SHIPPING TOTAL \$75.00

Blu Ray's

- ☐ **ALL 6 BANDS Blu Ray \$47.00**
\$4.23 TAX + 3.77 SHIPPING TOTAL \$55.00
- ☐ 1930/1940 DVD FRIDAY 7:30PM \$30.00
\$2.70 TAX + \$2.30 SHIPPING TOTAL \$35.00
- ☐ 1950 DVD FRIDAY 8:30PM \$30.00
\$2.70 TAX + \$2.30 SHIPPING TOTAL \$35.00
- ☐ 1960 DVD FRIDAY 9:30PM \$30.00
\$2.70 TAX + \$2.30 SHIPPING TOTAL \$35.00
- ☐ 1970/1980 DVD SATURDAY 7:30PM \$30.00
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- ☐ 1990/2000 DVD SATURDAY 8:30PM \$30.00
\$2.70 TAX + \$2.30 SHIPPING TOTAL \$35.00
- ☐ CURRENT AU KNIGHTS SAT. 9:30PM \$30.00
\$2.70 TAX + \$2.30 SHIPPING TOTAL \$35.00

DVD's

- ☐ **ALL 6 BANDS DVD \$40.00**
\$3.20 TAX + 1.80 SHIPPING TOTAL \$45.00
- ☐ 1930/1940 DVD FRIDAY 7:30PM \$20.00
\$1.60 TAX + \$3.40 SHIPPING TOTAL \$25.00
- ☐ 1950 DVD FRIDAY 8:30PM \$20.00
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CD's

- ☐ **ALL 6 BANDS CD \$40.00**
\$3.20 TAX + 1.80 SHIPPING TOTAL \$45.00
- ☐ 1930/1940 DVD FRIDAY 7:30PM \$5.00
WITH PURCHASE OF ANY DVD OR BLU RAY
- ☐ 1950 DVD FRIDAY 8:30PM \$5.00
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**The 2016 AKA Reunion
July 7-9, 2016**

**The Auburn Knights Alumni Association
2015-2016 Board of Directors**

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BOARD MEMBERS

2013 - 2016 Jana Calano | Cecil Wilder | Hank Elliott | Phil Gipson, Jr. | Reid Gavin
2014 - 2017 Becky Cain | Jason DeBlanc | Sonny Harris | Jeff Jones | David Zuwiyya
2015 - 2018 Nat Michelson | David Spencer | Frank Butenschon | Neal Brumbeloe | Jerry Phillips

APPOINTMENTS

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