

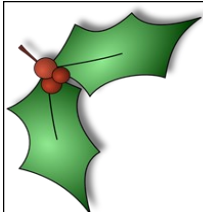


# The Bridge

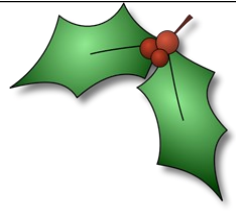
[www.auburnknightsalumni.org](http://www.auburnknightsalumni.org)



*Connecting Members of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association*  
DECEMBER 2017



**Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year  
from your  
Auburn Knights Alumni Association!!!**



## From the Prez!

### Make Big Band Great Again!

No, that's not a political statement. I learned long ago not to include references to politics, religion or sex in public discourse.



I'm just emphasizing that in addition to enjoying the comradery of meeting with old musical friends, playing great music together and having an overall great time at our reunions, we are also taking part in the

worthy endeavor of reliving and reviving some of the greatest music ever known.

I begin this, my first epistle of course, with kudos to all who worked so hard to make our 2017 AKA A Reunion such a success. Of the 50 consecutive reunions I've attended, this was by far the very best!

To our esteemed immediate Past President, Woody Leonard: "Hail To The Chief."

To our supremely competent Reunion Coordinator, John Norton: "Nobody Does It Better."

To our Era Band Coordinators, Wade Johnson, Fritz Siler, Steve Means, Jay Owens and yours truly: "Thanks For The Memories."

To the hard-working and extremely talented members of the current Auburn Knights Orchestra: "Alright, OK, You Win."

To all the band players and soloists, singers, volunteers, officers, board members, Jazz Brunch and Matinee Band leaders and participants, dues-paying members and associate members, Silent Auction contributors, vendors and especially the hundreds of concert attendees: "I Can't Stop Loving You."

## The 87th Anniversary AKAA Reunion

**Auburn Marriott - Opelika  
Conference Center  
July 11-14, 2018**

The standard room rate will be the same as last year, \$119/night. However, a change to our contract for 2018 will require all reservations to be secured with a non-refundable first night room deposit equal to the first night's room rate.

**Reservations open January 1, 2018. Reserve your room by calling Marriott Reservations directly at (800) 593-6456 or (334) 741-9292.**

### 2018 And Beyond

Now we begin planning for the 2018 Reunion! As era band coordinators search for just the right charts and line up their band personnel, players constantly revive their chops and singers work on "just the right key," we need some participation from you!

I know that at some time each of you has said, "That was a great reunion, but if only we'd ...," or "I'd attend the reunions if only they'd ..." or "I'd love to participate more as a ..., but nobody's asked me.."

If you have ideas or suggestions on how to "Make Big Band Great Again" or, more specifically, how to make the AKA A Reunions greater, please let us know! I'll share your responses amongst the officers and we'll take them under consideration. Who knows? You might be invited to share your ideas with the Board of Directors at their next meeting in February!

You may email me at "[piallc@msn.com](mailto:piallc@msn.com)" with suggestions.

Until next time, Long Live The Knights!

Richard Garrett, AKA A President

## Notes from the 2017 ACAA Summer Board Meeting

- President Woody Leonard called the meeting to order at 8:35 AM.
- Former ACAA Secretary, Peter Blaise, reported the minutes of the winter Board meeting had been approved via email. New Secretary Nat Michelson requested a formal re-certification. The minutes were approved as published.
- Fritz Siler reported an ACAA Scholarship balance of \$53,832 (\$32,411 in savings; \$9,438 in checking; and \$11,982 in a 36-month CD). He presented the names of four AKO members who had applied for scholarships—Samuel Liaw, Ryan Blackwell, Steven Britt, Dylan Teel. The committee recommended that each should receive \$1,250. Discussion followed regarding the percentage of donations that the by-laws require to be deposited toward the corpus each year. John Norton, who had served with Charlie Higgins on drafting the current language of corpus percentage, clarified that it is 25%, and that Charlie Higgins, who had initiated the scholarship effort in the ancient history of our organization, had blessed that number. Richard Garrett questioned whether it had been formalized. John Norton will find the actual notes. The Board approved the award of four \$1,250 scholarships.
- Social Media: Jeff Jones emphasized that the purpose of creating and maintaining our Facebook presence is to create community, and that it only achieves that goal if we actively post and interact. He plans to work with Wade Johnson to upgrade our current website for easier management. He likewise emphasized uploading pictures. Mac Tippins and Peter Blaise will funnel their photographs of the current reunion to Jeff for posting. He requested archival photos from Becky Cain.
- Silent Auction: Jennie St. John indicated that she has the room ready for business and that 45 items were available for purchase. She urged Band Leaders and the ACAA President to promote the auction during their time on the microphone. She noted great assistance from Jamie Johnson and she thanked John Norton and his committee for securing the items for sale.
- Historian: Becky Cain reported that she's continuing to scan archival documents and photographs. She reported that she will receive additional materials from Doc Mosley's estate via his granddaughter when she comes to the 2017 Reunion. Teeny Mahaffey has also contributed new materials. In response to Woody Leonard's inquiry, she indicated we are not currently archiving the Reunion recordings. Woody noted the beautiful new albums that she has assembled.
- Music Library: Bob Jemian reported he's added 12 new charts. He also stated the relocation of library contents currently stored in Tom Winstead's home is continuing slowly but surely. Some charts are being stored in the AKO warehouse. The archival scanning is continuing and backup files are in multiple locations including the cloud. When the scanning project is complete, it will include current band charts. Bob will purchase new racks and boxes and bill the costs to the ACAA. His goal is to move all charts out of his house to the AKO storage room. He will start to reduce the footprint of the library by culling all stock charts after scanning, but only after receiving permission from the ACAA board. Online storage is bloated due to multiple copies of the same chart, which he will begin to eliminate. He is looking for a Cloud vendor which will allow him to give access to band leaders, researchers, etc. as needed. Woody thanked Bob for his work.
- Treasurer Report: Wade Johnson reported that this year we have maintained equilibrium between income and expenses, unlike the negative cash flow of previous years. Our current checking balance is \$8,994. He submitted a non-binding skeleton for a budget after researching the income statements of several previous years. Peter Blaise proposed that we consider raising dues and tickets by \$5. Richard Garrett recommended against a dual increase. Bob Jemian asked that we keep student prices at \$5. In response to an inquiry by Nat Michelson, Wade estimated that 25% of our current members are current on dues. Becky Cain recommended a phased approach to implementation; i.e., dues, then tickets. David Spencer asked for an amendment to Peter's motion to reflect an adjustment to only the dues, effective for the 2018 Reunion. The Board approved raising membership dues by \$5.
- The Bridge: Peter Blaise, making a miraculous comeback from recent heart surgery, reported he's published 2 issues at approximately \$400 per mailing, and he extolled the virtues of the vendor with whom he works to print and mail The Bridge.
- Merchandise: Bob Jemian reported we have recouped our costs for merchandise previously purchased and are making profit on all current sales. He plans to expand inventory based on the volume of requests that he has received. He plans to add an event t-shirt in 2018. Joe Watson suggested finding campus-based contributors for t-shirt artwork. A discussion followed regarding the travails of trying to achieve results with no budget. Bob indicated that he will find a way to secure art work without expending \$\$\$, perhaps through his Auburn High School connections.
- Archives: Fritz Siler indicated the biggest challenge he faces is identification of members in pictures that we already have. Becky Cain noted that our agreement with the AU library that allows checkout is not the norm and does not follow the protocol of other collections. She clarified that anyone can view the collection in the library, but only she and Fritz remove items for the reunion. Jeff Jones suggested crowd source identification. Becky agreed to follow-up. We are seeking pictures from the farmhouse reunion, the mysterious blank in our reunion collective consciousness. Jennie St. John suggested that we archive a picture of the current band with names for each reunion ala the Glomerata. Woody commended the current band for its exemplary attendance and involvement at all ACAA 2017 reunion events.
- Publicity: Richard Garrett reviewed our regional blanketing of printed media. John Norton indicated that our advertising made it to The Plainsman and The Villager and that WSFA will film and play a promo. Nathan Michelson reported that while working at the ticket tables during Friday's concerts he did informal marketing inquiries; i.e., "How did you find out about this event?" He reported that 80% of those who had not heard about it from someone who was on one of the bands heard about it via newspaper or radio.
- Current Band Report: Jayson Perry, current AKO Business Manager, stated all positions are finally filled. He reported that he has strongly pushed the members to be visible and participate at all levels during the reunion. The board confirmed that it's noticed

*Continued on Page 3*

**Board Meeting Minutes *continued from Page 2***

- the visibility. Three quarters of the current members have never been to reunion but are extremely excited to have the opportunity to perform for and interact with the AKA membership. He will begin the quest for a new bass player. Jayson reviewed the meager list of upcoming gigs and is ordering new business cards for marketing purposes. He recognizes that the AKO webpage needs considerable updating and wants to make sure it's more consistent and easier to use and manage without programming language knowledge—Ryan Chapman vouched for Word Press. Jayson noted the band is creating a webmaster position to begin his quest. Ryan suggested marketing and webmaster synchronization between AKA and AKO; i.e. use the same person. John Norton suggested more collaboration. Jeff Jones indicated that he has started working with Jayson on the fundamentals of electronic marketing. John Norton pointed out the differences between our web site and that of the Auburn alumni marching band, particularly the ability to contribute and register for events. Jeff Jones suggested that there is a significant difference in available resources with which to achieve such efficiency.
- AMEA Booth: John Norton noted this has been a collaborative effort between the current band and AKA and he singled out individuals who have helped. He's been donating Roland product giveaways to encourage people to sign up for information. Richard Garrett reported that many band directors request concerts, and he expressed a hope that the current band could mount such an effort in the future. Jayson vouched that two current AKO members were recruited via this process.
- New Board Members: For ratification with the general membership, the Board approved the recommendation of Dr. Jeff Jones for AKA Vice-President as well as new Board member candidates Hank Elliot (50s), Ralph Black (60s), Kathy Bell Altojini (80s) Patrick Bruce(90/2000) and John Jackson (90/2000).
- Bylaws Change: Peter Blaise presented his proposal to amend the AKA Bylaws to allow select associate members to serve on the board and/or hold office with the provision that at no time could associate members make up more than 1/3 of the board's seats. He reiterated that the proposal had already been vetted through electronic communication and the newsletter during the past year. Discussion followed directed at ensuring that the organization would never be controlled by or usurped by parties who had not played in the AKO. The Board recommended acceptance of the change subject to general membership approval.

**General Membership Meeting**

- The General Membership meeting was called to order 10:12 AM; 36 members attended.
- Scholarships: The members voted to accept the recommendations of the committee.
- John introduced Kristen Longley, the Marriott Hotel event coordinator, and extolled her attentiveness to our event and her masterful performance under fire when she had become our event coordinator only two days before the 2016 reunion.
- Publicity: Richard Garrett indicated that the Troy State radio program interviews on Friday were a big success. Woody thanked Ralph Black who believes NPR may be picking up on the show and that parts of the show would be available on the internet.
- AKO Board: Woody pointed out how the current band has been more involved and visible at this year's reunion. Jayson Perry stated that this is the youngest AKO in years. Comradery is at its highest in years. Attitude is upbeat. AKO Board members are Jayson Perry (President), John Norton (Chairman), Marie Robertson, Rob Cothran, Fritz Siler, and Sam Liaw (Secretary).
- AKA Board: The membership approved Dr. Jeff Jones as the incoming AKA Vice President as well as the recommended slate of new Board members.
- AKA Membership Dues: The membership accepted the recommendation of the Board to increase dues to \$25 annually.
- Bylaws Change: Serious discussion followed Woody's presentation of the board's recommendation to allow select Associate Members to serve on the board. As Board members, Associate Members would be entitled to hold office. Sonny Harris apologized for not attending the morning's board meeting and asked if we are getting participation from younger alums. He emphasized that we think hard and be sure we are not opening the door for outsider takeover. Bob Jemian suggested that it creates a separate class. Richard Garret clarified that all Board member candidates would be vetted via the same nomination process we have always used to nominate Board members. Hank Elliot called for the vote: the membership approved the change to the Bylaws.
- 2018 Reunion: John Norton reported he is still negotiating with The Marriott, but the hotel wants to see the data from the 2017 Reunion before finalizing a contract. We only use 70 of 130 available rooms. John believes that the addition of 90 rooms, currently being built, will not be in our favor due to increased competition from large conference groups. As soon as a proposal has been solidified, it will be published for approval.
- Becky Cain thanked Woody Leonard for his exemplary service during his tenure, which was followed by deafening applause.
- The meeting adjourned at 12:12 PM.



The AKA Friday Mixer made for some terrific conversation!



## The Shipment of AKAAs Reunion DVDs/CDs Orders is Running Late

Regrettably, the production and distribution of the 2017 AKAAs Reunion DVDs/CDs from ProCAT has been delayed as a result of unforeseen post-production issues. This year, the audio mixing of the 2017 era band performances was the responsibility of a third party, not ProCAT. Unfortunately, ProCAT is not able to complete production of the DVDs/CDs until they receive the audio files. Once ProCAT has the completed files, they'll ship all DVD/CD orders. The AKAAs is working to resolve this issue.

If you overlooked ordering CDs and/or DVDs at the 2017 reunion, they can still be ordered online from Procat Audio Video. Go to "[www.procatav.com](http://www.procatav.com)," in your web browser, search for "Auburn Knights," and you'll find a host of recordings available, including AKAAs reunions from past years.

### Reunion Recap

Chalk up the 2017 Reunion as another AKAAs success! Near capacity crowds crammed the Marriott ballroom for both the Friday and Saturday evening concerts and the performances of the era bands and current AKO, as usual, were fabulous! The Saturday Jazz Brunch was also a great show with the largest food sales we've had in the past four years.

On Friday, a special afternoon event drew a good crowd from the AKAAs ranks as well as from the local community. As part of its 40th anniversary celebration, Troy Public Radio hosted a live taping of its popular "In Focus" program in the Ballroom featuring onstage interviews with several Knights discussing the history of the AKO. The show aired on Labor Day on TPR's three regional stations and online.

### Silent Auction

This year's Silent Auction netted over \$2,800, thanks to brisk bidding on 45 items from corporate and individual donors. Special thanks go to Jennie St. John, Jamie Johnson, and Ann Morrison for handling the crazy closing frenzy on Saturday night!

## HAVE A TERRIFIC 2018!

### Knights Alums Here and There

- David Evans is hot on the jazz scene in Portland, Oregon. A long-time member of bassist Chuck Israel's Orchestra which just released their fourth CD, David reports, "I'm still playing in some bands of long standing, playing with a couple of new groups, still going in to track a solo or a bass clarinet part here and there. Fifteen years teaching at Lewis and Clark College. I've prepared tribute concerts for the PDX Jazz Fest over several years--Stan Getz, Dexter Gordon, Clifford Brown/Max Roach/Rollins--the next one will be for The Crusaders (and the Jazz Crusaders). I've also fallen in with a very good funk band."
- Jon Smith recently celebrated one year as the musical director for the Broadway hit, *A Bronx Tale-The Musical*. The show just became the fourth longest running show in Longacre Theatre history and, as of early February, will surpass *La Cage aux Folles* as its longest running musical. Jon's also supervising the re-opening of "Jersey Boys" at New World Stages.
- Steve Armour, now a Hollywood screenwriter, saw the release of his original screenplay on the big screen this summer with *All Saints*, a Sony Pictures film. If you didn't see it in theatres, the film is coming out on DVD/BluRay and video on-demand December 12th. Steve also reports, "I'm developing a few projects, pitching a movie next week to Sony, finishing two feature scripts I have high hopes for, and now and then blowing the dust out of my horn to annoy the neighbors."



The lovely chanteuse, Marilynne Myson, laid down some sweet vocals for the '50s Era Band.

**During this season of giving, please make a generous tax-free donation to the AKAAs, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Send your donation to Wade Johnson, AKAAs Treasurer, 1995 W. Richland Circle, Auburn, AL 36832.**

## Money, Money, Money!

### An Open Letter To the Auburn Knights Family

The AKAA cannot continue to exist without financial support from its membership. That may sound harsh but it's the cold reality. To do what the AKAA is chartered to do requires money and as much as we'd like to do more to further the legacy of the Auburn Knights, we can't do so without adequate funding. Here are three ways you can help:

1. **Dues:** The most common form of financial support is the payment of dues. For the AKAA, that's \$25 a year. It's imperative everyone pay their dues if you truly believe in the Auburn Knights, its traditions, and our mission to continue supporting the current Auburn Knights Orchestra and its musicians. The bad news is that many of our AKAA members seem to think the payment of dues is optional. Or, dues only need to be paid when attending our annual reunion. Of the 419 names listed in our current membership roster, only 77 are up to date on their dues. This doesn't bode well for our future.

If your AKAA membership is not up to date, please mail payment of your annual dues to Wade Johnson, AKAA Treasurer, using the form at the bottom of this page.

2. **Annual Giving:** Many of you make annual charitable contributions to organizations you value such as colleges, universities, churches, political organizations, and fraternal orders. Some give for tax purposes. Remember, the AKAA is a 501(c)3, charitable organization, and thus, your donations are tax deductible. Any annual gift you can make—from \$100 to \$1,000 or more, would greatly benefit the organization. You can even designate that your gift for the General fund and/or the Scholarship fund.
3. **Planned Giving:** Planned Giving means supporting the organization after you have departed this amazing planet. Which is to say, planned gifts are those that you include in your Last Will and Testament. As they say, you can't take it with you, so you might as well think about this groovy organization that meant so much to you in your early years as a swinging cat (channeling my inner Charlie Wood here). Seriously, monies you leave to the organization can and will make a major impact on programming and our ability to keep the current Knights in business. Please consider including the AKAA in your Will and/or asking for donations to the organization in lieu of flowers.

Again, the AKAA needs your support. Please remember that this membership organization does not have an endowment and depends upon everyone for our ability to continue to swing each and every year.

Dr. Jeffrey Jones  
AKAA Vice President

## Auburn Knights Photos

Do you have old photos of Auburn Knights jobs, rehearsals, trips, reunions, etc.? If so, we need copies!! Flip through your old photo albums (does anyone use those anymore?), open up those dusty boxes under your bed or in the attic and send us your images, especially photos from the '80s, '90s and newer. We're organizing and digitizing the AKAA Archives and want to add all available pictures from the past. Send them digitally to Becky Cain at [becky56@bellsouth.net](mailto:becky56@bellsouth.net) or contact her about sending in other formats. We need your memories for the Archives!

## 2017-2018 Auburn Knights Alumni Association Membership Registration

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ STREET \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_ CATEGORY: ☐ MEMBER\* ☐ ASSOCIATE

\* Members are Auburn Knights alums who played in the AKO.

Item	How Many?	Cost	Total
2017-2018 Dues (Members & Associates)	_____	\$25.00	_____
Donation			_____
<b>Total Amount Enclosed</b>			_____

Please make checks payable to "Auburn Knights Alumni Association," then send this form and payment to:  
**Wade Johnson, AKAA Treasurer | 1995 W. Richland Circle | Auburn, AL 36832**



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

**The 2018 AKA Reunion  
July 11-14, 2018**

**The Auburn Knights Alumni Association  
2017-2018 Board of Directors**

**OFFICERS**

Richard Garrett, President & Publicity | (334) 322-9300 | PIALLC@msn.com  
Jeff Jones, Vice-President & Webmaster | (757) 748-7872 | jpjones7@uga.edu  
Nat Michelson, Secretary | (904) 249-0539 | nmichelson001@gmail.com  
Wade Johnson, Treasurer | (334) 332-9156 | wade.johnson@gmail.com

**BOARD MEMBERS**

2015 - 2018 Nat Michelson | David Spencer | Steve Means | Neal Brumbeloe | Jerry Phillips  
2016 - 2019 Norm Boldin | Neil Sasser | Jennie St. John | Joe Watson | Milton Welch  
2017 - 2020 Hank Elliot | Ralph Black | Cathy Bell Altonji | Patrick Bruce | John Jackson

**APPOINTMENTS**

Woody Leonard, Immediate Past President | (229) 387-4967 | wleonard54@yahoo.com  
Bob Jemian, Music Librarian | (334) 246-1227 | bob.jemian@gmail.com  
Becky Cain, Historian | (404) 985-0849 | becky56@bellsouth.net  
John Norton, Reunion Coordinator | (334) 887-9883 | john.norton72@gmail.com  
Fritz Siler, Archives & Scholarships | (770) 978-1287 | dogsiler@hotmail.com  
Peter Blaise, Newsletter Editor | (850) 897-3728 | blaisepete@gmail.com

**CURRENT BAND**

BUSINESS MANAGER Jayson Perry | (256) 945-0079 | jep0021@auburn.edu