



The Bridge



Connecting Members of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association
MAY 2015

From the Prez!



Dear Fellow Knights and Friends,

It is hard to believe that we will be celebrating our 85th Anniversary at this year's reunion. It was only 10 years ago that we moved the reunion to the beautiful Marriott hotel, which has surely helped with the success of the AKAAs annual event. Thanks to such fine digs, our dedicated volunteers, and our extremely competent reunion coordinator, John Norton, we plan on another great reunion in July. Don't miss it!

On another positive note, the current AKO is really humming along. With more frequent gigs and a couple of major dances each year, the Knights are as busy as they have been in the last 30 years. The recent Valentines Dance proved that they still have it, pulling in close to 400 dancers. The AKAAs board would like to thank the AKO for allowing us to pull an alumni band together for the middle set. It may not have been the most polished performance, but it sure was fun playing for so many dancing students and testing our sight reading capabilities.

As we do each and every year, we need to replace five of our 15 Board members. If you're interested in being nominated to serve on the AKAAs Board, please contact Woody Leonard at wleonard54@yahoo.com. It is always good to get some fresh volunteers in the mix to help forge new ideas and bring new life into the organization. Please help if you can. I promise, it's not that much work.

With only over two months until the reunion, now is the time to pull out those instruments and get those chops in shape! If you haven't made your reservations yet, it's not too late. Contact the Marriott today.

I look forward to seeing you all in July!

Long Live the Knights!
Tim Baur
AKAA President

The 85th Anniversary AKAA Reunion Auburn Marriott - Opelika Conference Center July 9-11, 2015

What's Happening in 2015

- This year's reunion schedule is on Page 3. While it's similar to last year's, a new event, *The Auburn Knights Legacy - 85 Years of Big Band Swing*, will happen at 1:30 pm Saturday. Narrated by Bob Greenhaw, this is a not-to-be-missed multimedia presentation.
- To ensure an up-to-date presentation, Bob asks all AKO alumni to submit their thoughts—heavy or humorous—to him regarding the impact of the Knights on their lives. E-mail your comments to bobgreenhaw@gmail.com or call him at (229) 444-2448.
- Bob Greenhaw and Bob Jemian have joined forces to organize and lead this year's Matinee Band. Everyone is encouraged to sit in with this reading band, if only for a number or two. Please let them know if you wish to play or sing so they can plan accordingly.
- Volunteers are needed to help with Registration and the Silent Auction. Please contact Ann Phillips at aphillipsmk@icloud.com or (334) 246-3838 regarding registration. For the silent auction, contact John Norton at john.norton72@gmail.com or (334) 887-9883.
- The Saturday Jazz Brunch needs a new coordinator since John Norton's duties as Reunion Coordinator tend to be all consuming. As in the past, John will provide his piano and amp. Please contact John if you would be interested in organizing and leading the music for this always popular event.

Marriott Room Reservation Cutoff Date is June 11, 2015

The standard room rate for this year's reunion is \$99/night.

The Marriott has provided the AKAAs a new dedicated toll-free reservation number, (800) 593-6456. Please use that number instead of calling the hotel directly. Note: While you may request a specific room or floor, such preferences cannot be guaranteed.

Notes from the ACAA Winter Board Meeting

- ◆ ACAA President Tim Baur called the meeting to order at 10:06 AM Central, February 14, 2015.
- ◆ Secretary Peter Blaise provided a recap of the e-mail approval of July 2014 Minutes - Hank Elliot motioned to approve, Jana Calano seconded, and 8 of 15 Board members vote. Three of the new Board members abstained from voting since they did not attend the Board meeting.
- ◆ Tim Baur welcomed new incoming Board Members Becky Cain, Richard Garrett, Sonny Harris, Jeff Jones, and David Zuwiyya, Their three-year term on the Board will end in 2017.
- ◆ Outgoing Board Members for 2015 are Kathy Altonji, Ryan Chapman, Rob Cothran, Bob Greenhaw, and Tony McCutchen.
- ◆ Vic Atkins resignation as Communications director was accepted; Wade Johnson will assume his duties.
- ◆ Treasurer Wade Johnson reported a current treasury balance of \$13,408.51; about \$1K less than last year at this time.
- ◆ Scholarship Fund Chairperson Fritz Siler reported a current balance of \$45,496.19.
- ◆ After considerable discussion, the Scholarship Fundraising Committee and the ACAA Fundraising Committee were merged into a single entity.
- ◆ John Norton commented the Silent Auction needs volunteers to help staff the auction room
- ◆ Fritz Siler reported the ACAA Archives now include a collection of vinyl LPs dating back to the '40s, some of which had never been opened. The records were a donation from a Montgomery attorney, a friend of the late Charlie Higgins. Fritz is scanning old photographs in the Archives as the originals are deteriorating.
- ◆ Historian Paul McCracken reported the video interview project with Knights alumni is continuing; accumulating good travel stories; will continue the process. Paul is using a flexible format with general questions to spark the dialog.
- ◆ Bob Jemian reported the Music Library has added 256 new 3-2-1 charts and about 125 charts from Cliff Harmon estate have been cataloged. Further discussion ensued regarding the archiving of original hard copy charts once they've been digitally scanned; suggestions included moving historic charts to the ACAA Archives in the AU Library and donating non-historic scores to high schools
- ◆ Editor of The Bridge, Peter Blaise, reported the total cost to mail out the December 2014 edition was \$558.60.
- ◆ The current composition of the AKO Board of Directors is Tyler Strickland, President; Bob Jemian, Chairman; Jeremy Leff, Secretary/Treasurer; Phil Gipson, VP; and Bob Greenhaw.
- ◆ Jacob Potter from the current Band, representing Tyler Strickland, provided a very positive report
 - Filled 2nd Alto, 2nd Trombone, Bass; still looking for 2nd Trumpet; no trouble recruiting right now
 - Two female vocal callbacks and one male vocalist will try out on Sunday, February 15th
 - The February 13, 2015 Valentine's Dance made about \$1,500 for the band; kudos from Jeff Jones re: creating the Valentine's Day dance "out of nothing;" a brilliant idea!
 - Replaced old baritone sax with new Yamaha YBS-62; looking to acquire a bass trombone
 - Very interested in future recruiting opportunities at AMEA and GMEA; Cecil Wilder offered to place an AKO link on the GMEA website
 - Developing promo package to be placed on the AKO website; updating the AKO brochure
 - Looking to book an upcoming tour and trying to play for Auburn Clubs in the region as a way to promote the band
 - For gigs, AKO currently charges \$1,500 for first hour; \$600 for each subsequent hour
- ◆ Reunion Coordinator John Norton reported the following:
 - 2015 reunion dates are July 8-11, 2015; call the toll free reservation number, 1-800-593-6456, not the hotel directly
 - This year will be our 11th at the Marriott
 - The cutoff date for room reservations is June 11, 2015; in 2014, the hotel sold out our room block around March, well before the cutoff date
 - This year, a 110-room block is available for Friday & Saturday, July 10th & 11th; 15 rooms for Wednesday night, July 8th; 55 rooms for Thursday night, July 9th
 - The band mixer will be Friday afternoon; the hotel will cater the Saturday Jazz Lunch as they did last year
 - Although the Matinee Band got off to a slow start in 2014, we'll try it again in 2015
 - ProCat Video and TNT Sound are on board for 2015; John hopes to have a joint planning meeting on site with both prior to the 2015 reunion
- ◆ Richard Garrett, Publicity, reported the following:
 - The new VP for AU Alumni Affairs is his sister in law, Gretchen VanValkenburg
 - ACAA reunion press releases will go out to area newspapers; Richard will also appear on local TV and radio talk shows
 - With 241 assisted living beds in Lee County; Richard suggested a discount ticket price of \$5 for residents attending on Friday night from the seven assisted living facilities in Lee County

Continued on Page 3

Notes from the AKAAs Winter Board Meeting (continued from Page 2)

- Jana Calano suggested more effective use of social media to attract younger attendees; Jacob Potter recommended she coordinate with Jeremy Leff as Jeremy is doing that with the current band
- ◆ Bob Jemian reported AKAAs Reunion polo shirts are not selling well; barely breaking even. Bob may use Survey Monkey to better discern what items are desired. Phil Gipson recommended a tee shirt for 2015 celebrating the AKOs 85th anniversary
- ◆ President Tim Baur stated the AKAAs Bylaws require updating to reflect actual practices. For example, although our current practice is to elect President and Vice President for two-year terms, the Bylaws state the terms of office are only one year.
- ◆ Wade Johnson will renew AKAAs tax exempt status; he believed renewal only required submission of a form to the IRS.
- ◆ Wade will also renew the Association’s insurance policy.
- ◆ New Business
 - John Norton discussed negotiation of the new Marriott contract; now reviewing possible 2016 dates of July 6-9, July 13-16, or July 20-23; John will team with Richard Garrett and one other Board member to negotiate 2016 room pricing, then report his results in July.
 - John stated he would send out a Survey Monkey to survey the AKAAs membership re: preferred 2016 dates.
 - Vice President Woody Leonard is forming a nominating committee to recommend names for this year’s election of five new Board members for 2015-2018.
- ◆ The meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Alumni Update

Garry Taylor, AKO trombonist and equipment manager, 1973 - 1976, received the Barbara M. Odom Distinguished Service Award at the 2015 Alabama Music Educators Association In-Service Conference. Awarded to a person who has clearly given very special service to AMEA or to the goals and purposes of AMEA, he is "...clearly recognizable statewide, and the service for which the award is given represents a long range commitment that, in every way, can be considered extraordinary and distinguished." His commendation also stated that Garry has "given tirelessly and selflessly to the cause of music education in Alabama." An outstanding band director in Alabama for many years, Garry now serves as the Executive Director of the AMEA.



2015 Auburn Knights Alumni Association Reunion, July 9 –11

~ Registration Form ~

NAME _____ STREET _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____ E-MAIL _____

PHONE # _____ CATEGORY: MEMBER ASSOCIATE VISITOR

Event or Item	How Many?	Cost	Total
2015-2016 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 AKAAs Scholarship Fund (all contributions are Tax Deductible)	_____		_____
	Total Amount Enclosed		_____

Send this form and payment to:

Wade Johnson, AKAAs Treasurer | 4868 Camp Grandview Rd. | Millbrook, AL 36054

Alumni Update

Knights alumnus Khari Allen Lee has been busy! He brought his quartet, the Creative Collection, to Auburn in February where he performed at two local venues, Goodwin Hall at Auburn University and the Eighth & Rail in Opelika. Now living in New Orleans, Khari ably demonstrated his considerable chops as both saxophonist and composer. For his performance at the Eighth & Rail, Khari enlisted the services of former Knights Jason DeBlanc on bass, Patrick Bruce on guitar, and David Zuwiyya on drums for several magical hours. The house was packed with friendly faces and the show was full of energy and groove. Khari showed his mastery of the stage by coaxing out every ounce of talent from those around him, including fellow saxophonist Patrick McCurry who also sat in. The group even reprised several of the charts Khari had performed the night before. The acoustics in the Eighth & Rail were fantastic and the audience was treated to some terrific jazz. Memorable was the beautiful melody of “Pure Imagination,” the slow moving train of consciousness of Marley’s “Redemption Song,” and Khari’s very own gem, “Song of the Goddess.” Check out Khari’s album, *Conscious Evolution*, to really enjoy his talents.



The 2014 Knights were swingin' as they closed out last year's reunion.

**While Attending This Year's Reunion,
Don't Forget to Order Your CDs and
DVDs of All Band Performances!**

Reunion Memories

I attended my first AKAAs Reunion about two months before I joined the Knights in the late 1970s. Looking back over the years brings on a flood of memories. While mine are not necessarily unique, everyone who has attended a Reunion will have their own recollections. These just happen to be a few of mine. I share them with you in the hopes they will stir some happy memories of your own.

- ◆ Listening to several alumni marvel at Jim Akers, the drummer when I was on the band; they all thought he looked twelve years old but he could sure play like a professional.
- ◆ Getting to know Frank Tennille, one of the original Knights from 1930 and the father of Toni Tennille. He always wore a Los Angeles Rams polo shirt to the Reunion and was one of the nicest guys you'd ever meet.
- ◆ Hearing people such as Rick Bell and Bud Taylor play and having that dawning realization that you are a part of something that has been very good for a very long time.
- ◆ Being a part of the current Knights at the 50th Anniversary Reunion in 1980. Experiencing that kind of excitement and history was indescribable.
- ◆ That first...and incredibly depressing moment when you realized, “The people in the current Knights sure look young!”
- ◆ The Reunion when I was the only trumpet player for the 70s/80s band so we filled in with players from the current Knights' trumpet section. After our set, several people told me, “The trumpets sounded great tonight!” I just said, “Thank you.”
- ◆ More than anything, I remember the people. Far too many—Don Culley, Charlie Higgins, Jack Dresher, and Jef Thurman, to name but a few—have gone on to play in the angelic band.
- ◆ The first Reunion at the Marriot to celebrate our 75th Anniversary. Not only was it a celebration of the past but it marked the beginning of a new era for the AKAAs.

At this summer's Reunion, we will be celebrating the 85th Anniversary of the Auburn Knights Orchestra. What memories will be made there? Will you be a part of them?

Paul McCracken, AKAAs Historian

Grace Notes

Robert "Bob" L. Adair, Jr.: Knights alumnus Bob Adair, band leader for the Auburn Knights Orchestra from 1941 - 1942, passed away on December 28, 2014 at the age of 94. After graduating from Auburn in 1942, Bob served as a US Army officer in both the Artillery Corps and Air Corps. After WW II, he enjoyed a long career with the J.C. Penney Company, retiring in 1975 after serving as vice-president and comptroller at the J.C. Penney corporate headquarters.

NEED A TAX DEDUCTION?
REMEMBER—ALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ACAA SCHOLARSHIP FUND ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE!

2015 ACAA Reunion Schedule

	Thursday, July 9	Friday, July 10	Saturday, July 11	
	Registration 1:00 - 4:30 pm (Ballroom Foyer) 5:30 - 7:30 pm	Registration 10:00 am - 3:00 pm 5:30 - 9:00 pm	Complimentary Continental Breakfast Saturday & Sunday 7:00 - 9:00 am in Lobby Registration 10:00 - 11:00 am	
8:30 AM	Food and Beverage Options Lakeview Room Breakfast: 6:30 - 11:00 am Lunch: Noon - 2:00 pm Dinner: 6:00 - 9:00 pm Splash Bar: 4:00 - 9:00 pm	30s/40s Dress Rehearsal 8:30 - 10:00 am (Ballroom)	ACAA Board Meeting 8:30 - 10:00 am (Conference Suite 303)	
9:00 AM		50s Dress Rehearsal 10:00 - 11:30 am (Ballroom)	General Membership Meeting (Amphitheater)	
9:30 AM			Jazz Brunch 11:00 am - 1:00 pm (Pool area)	
10:00 AM		30s/40s Rehearsal Noon - 2:00 pm (Ballroom)	60s Dress Rehearsal 11:30 am - 1:00 pm (Ballroom)	
10:30 AM			70s/80s Dress Rehearsal 1:00 - 2:30 pm (Ballroom)	"The Auburn Knights Legacy" 1:30 - 2:30 pm (Amphitheater)
11:00 AM				
11:30 AM		50s Rehearsal 2:30 - 4:30 pm (Ballroom)	90s/2000s Dress Rehearsal (Ballroom)	Matinee Band 3:00 - 4:30 pm (Ballroom)
Noon	AKO/ACAA Mixer 4:00 - 5:30 pm (Ballroom Foyer)			
12:30 PM				
1:00 PM Thurs-	70s/80s Rehearsal 5:00 - 7:00 pm (Ballroom)		Lakeview Room Dinner Specials 5:30 - 7:30 pm	Lakeview Room Dinner Specials 5:30 - 7:30 pm
1:30 PM				
2:00 PM				
2:30 PM	90s/2000s Rehearsal 7:30 - 9:30 pm (Ballroom)	30s/40s Concert "The Swing Years"	70s/80s Concert "Jazz meets Rock meets Latin"	
3:00 PM		50s Concert "The Big Bands Live On"	90s/2000s Concert "Swing Makes a Comeback"	
3:30 PM	60s Concert "The Big Bands Rock On"		AKO Concert "Still Swinging after 85 years"	
4:00 PM	Food and Beverage Options Lakeview Room Breakfast: 6:30 - 11:00 am Lunch: Noon - 2:00 pm Dinner: 6:00 - 9:00 pm Splash Bar: 4:00 - 9:00 pm	Breakfast Buffet 10:30 pm - Midnight	Breakfast Buffet 10:30 pm - Midnight	
4:30 PM				
5:00 PM				
5:30 PM				
6:00 PM				
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7:30 PM				
8:00 PM				
8:30 PM				
9:00 PM				
9:30 PM				
10:00 PM				
10:30 PM				
11:00 PM				
11:30 PM				
Midnight				



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

**The 2015 AKA Reunion
July 9-11, 2015**

**The Auburn Knights Alumni Association
2014-2015 Board of Directors**

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Wade Johnson, Treasurer & Communications | (334) 332-9156 | wade.johnson@gmail.com

BOARD MEMBERS

2012 - 2015 Cathy Bell Altonji | Ryan Chapman | Rob Cothran | Bob Greenhaw | Tony McCutcheon
2013 - 2016 Jana Calano | Cecil Wilder | Hank Elliott | Phil Gipson, Jr. | Reid Gavin
2014 - 2017 Becky Cain | Richard Garrett | Sonny Harris | Jeff Jones | David Zuwiyya

APPOINTMENTS

Richard Garrett, Publicity | (334) 365-7595 | PIALLC@msn.com
Bob Jemian, Music Librarian | (334) 246-1227 | bob.jemian@gmail.com
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CURRENT BAND

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