



# The Bridge



Connecting Members of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association.

VOL. XII NUMBER 2, APRIL, 2011



Spring has sprung, the pollen count is through the roof, the kids are on Spring break, and our income taxes are due! That can only mean one thing—we're just that much closer to July and our 2011 AKA A reunion! Yes, indeed! I'm happy to tell you final preparations are well underway for our annual gathering of the faithful for another terrific weekend of big band jazz. I can't imagine anything better than spending a couple of summer days on the Plains with several hundred of your closest friends celebrating 81 years of Auburn Knights' music!

If you haven't already made your reunion reservations at the

Auburn Marriott Opelika Hotel & Conference Center at Grand National, I can only say, "Time's a wastin'!" For room reservations, call the Marriott at either (877) 563-4301 (toll free) or (334) 737-2134 and talk to either Amelia Warr or Ashleigh Powell. By the way, the cutoff date for reservations is June 1<sup>st</sup>. As you reunion veterans know, Manager Jay Prater and his superb staff at the Marriott have consistently supported the AKA A in an exceptional manner and there's no doubt they'll do the same again this year. It's a marvelous venue!

For you former Knights who have often wondered how world peace and personal self-fulfillment can be achieved through greater enlightenment, then stop fretting! You'll likely realize that and more by simply volunteering to become an AKA A Board Member and accept the three-year term of office that comes with it. Yes, I realize the financial rewards are lousy, but at least you'll get a free lunch at our February mid-winter Board meeting! Just think—

three years and three free lunches! This year, like every year, we need to replace five of our 15 Board members. If you're interested in possibly serving on the AKA A Board, please contact me. Let the AKA A help you overcome metaphysical alienation and thus achieve greater personal harmony!

In closing, I must once again thank the incredible Charlie Higgins for the work he's done in honing our contract with the Marriott and developing our 2011 rehearsal and performance schedule. He is amazing!

I look forward to seeing you all in July!

Peter Blaise

## Saturday Jazz Brunch

John Norton sends word: "I am looking forward to organizing the Jazz Bunch group again this year. If you will, please note that I am happy to have any and all volunteers. You can contact me at [jnorton@rolandus.com](mailto:jnorton@rolandus.com) or 334-887-9883. Thanks, and War Eagle to all!"

## Reunion Information for Rhythm Section Players:

**There will be a bass amp and drum set on the performance stage to help save time with set up. Bring your own for rehearsals. There will be a piano in the Lobby Lounge as well as at the performance venue.**

## Obituaries

**Dr. Lyman Mitchell Sr, D.D.S.**, age 87, of Florence, Ala., died Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2011. Dr. Mitchell was born Jan. 1, 1924, in Tuscumbia, Ala., the son of Leo G. and Ethel Berry Mitchell. He was a graduate of Deshler High School, attended the University of Alabama and graduated from Auburn University in 1947. He attended the University of Tennessee at Memphis School of Dentistry and received his D.D.S. degree in 1949.

Dr. Mitchell is survived by his wife of 62 years, Betty Jean Wilson Mitchell; one sister, Martha Mitchell Johnston; one daughter, two sons, five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and six nephews. While at Auburn, Dr. Mitchell was a member of Alpha Tau Omega social fraternity, Phi Mu Alpha musical honorary and fronted the "Auburn Knights" big band while playing trumpet with the orchestra. In dental school, he was a member of various honoraries and Zeta Psi Phi social fraternity.

In 1949, Dr. Mitchell married Betty Jean Wilson, of Florence. He practiced dentistry in Florence for close to 50 years.

During [World War II](#), Dr. Mitchell volunteered and served as a bomber pilot with the rank of second lieutenant in the U.S. [Army](#) Air Corps. He was stationed at several loca-

tions, primarily flying B-25s and B-26s. He was a supporter of the [Veterans of Foreign Wars](#) and the American Legion, and received the Silver Good Citizenship Medal in 1994 from the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. An active member, until his recent illness, of First Presbyterian Church in Florence, Dr. Mitchell enjoyed participating in all church functions.

A deep love of music and a talent for playing the trumpet were evidenced early in Dr. Mitchell's life.

He formed his first band at the age of 14 and helped establish the first marching band at Deshler High School. In addition, Dr. Mitchell played his trumpet professionally throughout college and dental school. He continued his association with the Auburn Knights throughout his life, attending reunions with his wife at Auburn, Ala., for many years. During these events, Dr. Mitchell would both play his trumpet and direct the 1940s reunion band.

Several years ago, Dr. Mitchell became interested in forming a local orchestra that would provide concerts with music from the "Big Band Era." With the assistance of several area musicians, he formed "The Big Band" in 1979. Fronting The Big Band and playing with these talented musicians were great joys for Dr. Mitchell and a highlight in his life. Concerts were given to raise funds for scholarships and other needs of the University of North Alabama Marching Band, and for other area nonprofit organizations. Always a strong and vibrant gentleman, Dr. Mitchell deeply loved his family and was happiest when he and his wife were surrounded by their children and grandchildren.

**JAMES ARTHUR (JIM) ENGLE**  
**1930 - 2010 Associate Member-**  
Funeral Services for Jim Engle were

held Tuesday, December 21, 2010 at 1:00 PM. Jim was born in Summer-ville, Alabama, and passed away on Dec. 18, 2010 at East Alabama Medical Center. He is survived by his loving wife, Sarah Coxwell Engle; daughter, Janet Engle Cum- bie. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the [American Cancer Society](#), P.O. Box 22718, Oklahoma City, Okla- homa, 73123-1718.

## The Bridge is going paperless!

Starting with the next issue, "The Bridge" is going to be an online publication. If you wish to continue to receive a paper copy the AKA Board is discussing what the price for mailing will be. The advantages to a publication online are less costs, greater access to more photos and information, and possibly more publications. Color photos are costly to print on a publication such as "The Bridge". AKA and friends are encouraged to visit the Auburn Knights Orchestra and the AKA websites. You can find us on Facebook as well! So, go there and become "friends" with us! There may be even more folks to attend our next reunions, although we are not sure where we will put them!

## Era Band Leaders:

**Contact your band members now, and make requests for music you want to play from Bob Jemian.**

**After many years of dedicated, incredible "labor of love" to maintain and repair the library, Tom Winstead has tendered his resignation. He is a special individual that will be missed.**

## OUR LEADERS

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Peter Blaise  
(850) 897-3728

### VICE-PRESIDENT

Dave Edmunds  
(615) 579-6064

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### PUBLICITY

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Joe Watson  
(256) 896-4323

### AKAA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

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(770) 978-1287

### REUNION COORDINATOR

Charlie Higgins  
(334) 288-5001

### EDITOR, AKAA NEWSLETTER

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Nat Michelson  
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Patrick McCurry

### IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

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Chris Rose  
(256) 520-0319

## 2011 Auburn Knights Orchestra Reunion

JULY 20-24, 2011

### REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Era	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30's	12-2 PM Ballroom	8:30-10 AM Ballroom	1-2 PM Ballroom
40's	2:30-4 PM Ballroom	11:30 AM-1PM BR	
50's	5:30-7PM Ballroom	2:30-4PM Ballroom	2-3 PM Ballroom
60's	7:30-9PM Ballroom	10-11:30AM LL	
70/80	4-5:30 PM Ballroom	1-2:30 PM Ballroom	
90's	2-3:30 PM LL	10-11:30 AM Ballroom	
2000's	7:30-9 PM LL	1-2:30 PM Lobby Lounge	3-4 PM Ballroom

### BAND COORDINATORS

Era	Coordinator(s)	Phone
30's	Charlie Higgins	(334) 288-5001
40's	Graham Thomas Bob Greenhaw, rehearsals/Front man	(404) 294-0459
50's	Al Norman	(404) 237-5916
60's	Steve Means	(256) 549-4646
70/80	Lisa Ray Fritz Siler	(334) 887-1544 (404) 421-8674
90's	Wade Johnson	(334) 285-6846
2000's	Mark Belfast	(334) 332-6279

### PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Time	Friday	Saturday
7:00 PM	40's Era Band	30's Era Band
8:00 PM	90's Era Band	2000's Era Band
9:00 PM	60's Era Band	50's Era Band
10:00 PM	70s/80's Era Band	Current AKO

**AKAA Scholarship Donations should be made out to Auburn Knights Alumni Association Scholarships c/o Fritz Siler, 3110**

