



# The Bridge



Connecting Members of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association.

VOL. XIII NUMBER II, MAY, 2012

## Now's the Time!

Spring is here, we've paid our taxes (at least, most of us have), the insects are out in full force, and the April edition of The Bridge is running late.



In other words, things are normal!

Most importantly, our 2012 AKA reunion is less than two months away—sweet! I can't tell you how much I'm looking forward to our annual pilgrimage to the Plains for another weekend of big band jazz celebrating the 82nd birthday of the Auburn Knights Orchestra.

I certainly hope you've already made your room reservations at the Auburn Marriott Opelika Hotel & Conference Center at Grand National. If not, I highly recommend you do so soon. You seasoned veterans know the Marriott staff consistently does a superb job taking care of us and are always genuinely delighted to host the AKA.

Once again, our indefatigable Charlie Higgins has done a masterful job with the lion's share of this year's reunion preparations. He's incredible! Please do me a favor and tell him that when you see him!

I'll see you in July!

Keep Swingin',  
Peter Blaise

## The 82nd Anniversary Auburn Knights Alumni Association ~ Reunion ~ July 19-21, 2012

### Please Stay!

For **reservations** at the Marriott, call (800) 593-6456 and say you are with the Auburn Knights Reunion. If they tell you that our \$83-plus-tax rooms are sold out, don't worry. Go ahead and make the reservation and contact Vicky Powers at the hotel at (334) 737-2130. **Final date** for group-rate reservations is **June 17, 2012**.

### Please Pay!

Don't forget to fill out the **Registration Form** inside this newsletter and send with payment to Wade Johnson (address on form). All membership dues help keep the reunion going and support the current band. All concert admission and extra donations go to the scholarship program for current band members.

### Please Play!

If you have any desire at all to revel again in the feeling you get from playing in this iconic instrumentation of swing, please contact your era's bandleader (see table below). Even if it's for just one tune, if you want to play, then you will play, chops notwithstanding. This is why we exist! Turn page for rehearsal schedule.

Era Band	Coordinator(s)	Phone	Email
30s	Charlie Higgins	(334) 288-5001	haubtiger@aol.com
40s	Graham Thomas Bob Greenhaw*	(404) 294-0459 (229) 444-2448	WGTHOMAS1@aol.com bbgreenhaw@brmemc.net
50s	Al Norman	(404) 237-5916	almarnorman@att.net
60s	Steve Means	(256) 295-2150	aunknights@hotmail.com
70s/80s	Lisa Ray Fritz Siler*	(334) 703-3661 (770) 978-1287	lisahray@charter.net dogsiler@hotmail.com
90s/2000s	Wade Johnson	(334) 285-6846	wade.johnson@gmail.com

\*Rehearsals, Front man

**Jammin' with Some Barbecue** - John Norton (john.norton72@gmail.com, (334) 887-9883) is once again organizing the Saturday Jazz Brunch jam session. Since it's always warm on the patio, he'll be providing water and beer again to make sure the players are all properly hydrated (and lubricated). If you are interested in sitting in, contact John.

## State of the AKO

*Chirstopher Rose (rosechr@auburn.edu) is AKO's business manager and submitted this snapshot of the band.*

The current Auburn Knights has 2 vocals, 5 saxes, 3 trumpets, 4 trombones, bass, and guitar. The climate-controlled storage unit we now share with AKAAs is proving to be a great investment and making us wonder how we got along without it. We had a blast at two recent public gigs in

Tallasse and Auburn and have a few wedding gigs coming up.

I'd like to thank all of the alumni that have helped out over the past few months--whether it be subbing on gigs, finding missing music, or just giving advice. We are looking forward to Reunion and hope to see you there!

## Smoke Gets in Your Eyes

*Submitted by Frank "Boots" Butenschon (AKO '58-'60) with sincere apologies for any error in memory by a*

*74-year-old cat who loves the Auburn Knights and all the precious memories.*

*A longer version of this story and two more from Boots, both involving Agnes the bus and other colorful characters from the 50s band, can be found on the AKAAs website.*

**auburnknightsalumni.org**

It was a cold night in Nashville, about 1957 or '58, and the AKO was playing a gig at the famous Maxwell House Hotel. A well wisher informed the band that it was the best to ever play there and declared an open bar to the guys during the last break.

I was a teetotaler in those days, so me and Harold "Greek" Alexander got one for our cohorts Larry "Lag" Kirkland and Jim "Teeny" Mahaffey. But they had already gotten their snootfuls. We didn't know it until Bob Ware looked up at the trumpets and shouted, "Come on, guys, you sound like you've got cotton in your mouth!"

It was all downhill from there. Teeny and Lag, trying to get the music trunk to Agnes, the bus, fell down the spiral staircase and lay at the bottom laughing uncontrollably. We finally got them up in the back two bunks on Agnes, and Herb Edwards started off through downtown. I was riding shotgun in the well.

Hearing shouts coming from the back of the bus, Herb asked, "What's going on?" I glanced out and saw black smoke billowing from the bus. Teeny had been shouting, "Fire! Fire!"

Herb shut her down right in the street, and we lit out of there like a covey of quail. A figure passed me with black patent shoes, high black socks, white boxers, a tux shirt, a saxophone in each hand, a clarinet under one arm, and a flute under the other. It was none other than little Dave Edwards flying like the wind!

The folks who topped Agnes off with fuel for us during the gig had set the emergency brake, and it had caught on fire! We put it out and gently nursed Agnes back to Auburn, thus ending another glorious evening on the road with the Auburn Knights!

## 2012 Reunion Schedule

	Thursday July 19		Friday July 20		Saturday July 21		
8:30 AM			30s Era Band Rehearsal (Ballroom)		Board of Directors' Meeting		
9:00 AM							
9:30 AM							
10:00 AM					General Membership Meeting		
10:30 AM			60s Era Band Rehearsal (Ballroom)	70s/80s Era Band Rehearsal (Lounge)			
11:00 AM					Jazz Brunch		
11:30 AM							
Noon							
12:30 PM	30s Era Band Rehearsal (Ballroom)		40s Era Band Rehearsal (Ballroom)	90s/2000s Era Band Rehearsal (Lounge)	40s Era Band Rehearsal (Ballroom)		
1:00 PM							
1:30 PM							
2:00 PM							
2:30 PM	50s Era Band Rehearsal (Ballroom)		50s Era Band Rehearsal (Ballroom)		90s/2000s Era Band Rehearsal (Ballroom)		
3:00 PM							
3:30 PM							
4:00 PM			AKO/AKAAs Mixer				
4:30 PM	60s Era Band Rehearsal (Ballroom)						
5:00 PM							
5:30 PM			70s/80s Era Band Rehearsal (Lounge)				
6:00 PM							
6:30 PM	40s Era Band Rehearsal (Ballroom)		30s Era Band Concert		40s Era Band Concert		
7:00 PM						90s/2000s Era Band Rehearsal (Lounge)	
7:30 PM							
8:00 PM			50s Era Band Concert		90s/2000s Era Band Concert		
8:30 PM							
9:00 PM			60s Era Band Concert		Auburn Knights Orchestra Concert		
9:30 PM							
10:00 PM			70s/80s Era Band Concert				
10:30 PM							

## The Bridge, AKO Mixer, Shared Storage and Fundraising

Below are some key decisions resulting from February's AKAA Board meeting.

- To reinstate regular mailing of The Bridge to all members at no charge.
- To add a Friday Mixer (4-6 PM) to the reunion schedule to "ease the blending of the generations," as Secretary Nat Michaelson put it. AKO members are invited to bring a guest, enjoy refreshments courtesy of AKAA, and mingle with alumni.
- To rent a storage unit to share with AKO.
- To create a committee that will present a plan of action to address fundraising issues at the July Board meeting.

## Spreading the News

*This is an excerpt of a letter submitted by John Norton. On the website, you can find the full version and PDFs of the new brochure and flyer mentioned.*

### auburnknightsalumni.org

In January, the Auburn Knights exhibited for the first time at the Alabama Music Educators Conference in Montgomery. Our exhibit was manned by current AK's and alums.

Of the dozens of registrants, there were four graduating seniors who wanted more information. 23 educators were interested in having a program at their school. Many educators were not familiar with the AKO at all.

The AKAA then authorized a mailing to 369 members of the Alabama Bandmaster's Association. It included a new brochure and a flyer for bulletin boards. Later, John Conner (AKO '78) asked for flyers which he hand-delivered to two Nashville high schools with great jazz programs.

If you would like copies for your own local efforts, e-mail John at john.norton72@gmail.com.

## I Remember You

FREDREICA ELIZABETH HEINZ ATKINS died on Saturday, March 17, 2012 in Birmingham. Fred was the wife of 53 years of Victor Atkins, Jr. (AKO '47-'48),

and for many of those years a devoted volunteer at the registration table at reunions.



PAUL BROWN WHITEHURST, JR. (AKO '51-'54), died peacefully at his home in Pensacola on Friday, October 28, 2011. Among many other things he was a saxophonist and clarinetist both with AKO and in the Air Force. His obituary reads, "In lieu of flowers, spend the day fishing."

## 2012 Auburn Knights Alumni Association Reunion, July 21-22 ~ Registration Form ~

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

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_ I AM A...  MEMBER  ASSOCIATE  VISITOR

Event or Item	How Many?	Cost	Total
2012-13 Dues (Members and Associates)	_____	\$20.00	_____
Concert/Dance, 7:00 PM, Friday, July 22	_____	\$10.00	_____
Concert/Dance, 7:00 PM, Saturday, July 23	_____	\$10.00	_____
<b>Saturday Jazz Brunch, 11:00 AM</b>			
BBQ Beef or chicken, baked beans, cole slaw, bread & drink	_____	\$8.00	_____
Hamburger, chips & drink	_____	\$6.00	_____
Hotdog, chips & drink	_____	\$5.00	_____
Contribution to AKAA Scholarship Fund <i>(All contributions are Tax-Deductible)</i>	_____		_____

**Total amount enclosed** \_\_\_\_\_

Send this form and payment to  
**Wade Johnson, AKAA Treasurer / 4868 Camp Grandview Rd. / Millbrook, AL 36054**

## Serve Proudly... ...or Just Serve

As we do every year at this time, the AKA is looking for five alums to answer the call to volunteer for the three-year stint that comes with being an AKA Board Member. Qualified nominees should be...

exceptional  
high-quality  
extraordinary

okay  
average  
upright  
breathing !!

Not only will you enjoy the terrific camaraderie that comes from working with your fellow AKA Board members and officers, you'll also have the opportunity to spend a February Saturday morning in Auburn each year with your buds finalizing plans for our annual clambake. How fun is that?!!! If you're interested in either joining the Board or returning after some time away, please let me or Dave Edmunds know.

-Peter Blaise

Dave Edmunds: 615-833-2861, destec@comcast.net  
Peter Blaise: 850-897-3728, blaise@pete@aol.com

**Happy Beer-thday, Fop!** - Go online to the AKA website to find out who's in this picture and what Bob Richardson called the nicest birthday cake he ever got.

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



### ~ AKA LEADERSHIP ~

PRESIDENT **Peter Blaise (850) 897-3728** |  
VICE-PRESIDENT **Dave Edmunds (615) 833-2861** |  
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT **Jana Calano** | SECRETARY **Nat Michelson (904) 226-6065** | TREASURER, WEBMASTER **Wade Johnson wade.johnson@gmail.com (334) 332-9156** |  
CO-HISTORIANS **Charlie Kinzer (434) 392-1731**, **Paul McCracken (205) 970-3834** | LIBRARIAN **Bob Jemian (334) 246-1227** | PUBLICITY **Richard Garrett (334) 365-7595** | ARCHIVES, SCHOLARSHIP **Fritz Siler (770) 978-1287** | REUNION **Charlie Higgins (334) 288-5001** |  
EDITOR **Patrick McCurry patrick@luncharm.net (334) 703-4212** | BOARD 2012 **Tim Bauer - Norm Boldin - David Friddle - Jason DeBlanc - Jim "Teeny" Mahaffey** | 2013 **Richard Garrett - Mike Stough - Patrick McCurry - John Conner, Jr. - Joe Watson** | 2014 **John Norton - Jack Dresher - Ralph Black, Jr. - Woody Leonard - Andy Duke** | AKO **Chris Rose rosechr@auburn.edu (256) 520-0319**

The 82nd Anniversary  
~ Reunion ~  
July 19-21, 2012  
Auburn Knights Alumni Association

Auburn Knights Alumni Association  
c/o Patrick McCurry, Bridge Editor  
802 S. Gay St.  
Auburn, AL 36830

