



# The Bridge



Connecting Members of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association.

VOL. XIV NUMBER II, MAY, 2013

## As the Monkey Said...

...when he got his tail caught in the lawn mower, "it won't be long now!"



O u r reunion is j u s t around the corner and

is primed to be one of our best! The forever young Charlie Higgins is still working his event-planning magic. He has kept our rates low and amenities high. And he takes special care of our "Ladies." I'm just sayin'!

As we continue to grow and change, Jay Owen has stepped up to lead the 50's Band, and I'm confident he will keep providing his great arrangements to all the bands. Also, John Norton and Fritz Siler are doing some great work with scholarships and forging a closer relationship with Auburn University. And we have been privileged the last couple of years to have a special guest, Johnny Knapp, former Birdland pianist!

I encourage you to book a room early, pay your dues and come spend another incredible weekend with your brother and sister Knights! Send me any and all comments and suggestions to make this event as good as it can be. Thanks for all your support from one of the original "WineHeads" (you know who you are).

Jazz Lives,  
Dave Edmunds

## The 83rd Anniversary Auburn Knights Alumni Association Reunion July 18-20, 2013

### A good place to lay your head - RESERVE BY JUNE 17!!

You can reserve our special rate at the Auburn Marriott Opelika Hotel and Conference Center at Grand National until June 17, 2013. **This is a firm deadline.** Call the hotel at (800) 228-9290 and claim the Auburn Knights Reunion. It is \$85-plus-tax per night. Our block of dates extends from Tuesday, July 16 to Sunday, July 21. If you run into any problems, call manager Vicky Powell at (334) 741-9292.

### A good way to spend your bread

Don't forget to fill out the Registration Form in this newsletter. Send with payment to Wade Johnson (address on form). **This is a pay-to-play event.** 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.

### A good reason to go in the shed

Below is contact info for bandleaders. The rehearsal schedule is on the next page. If you want to play, we want you on the bandstand!

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 Jay Owen*	(404) 237-5916 (732) 549-3282	alnorman@att.net bebopbuf@mindspring.com
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) 332-9156	wade.johnson@gmail.com

\*Rehearsals, Front man

**Breezy Jazz Jam** - If you'd like to sit in for Saturday Jazz Brunch, contact John Norton at john.norton72@gmail.com or (334) 887-9883. John will provide ice cold beer and water for the players. There's a fabulous new water park there including a covered poolside bar where we'll set up. It's away from the building and there's a nice breeze. Playing conditions are very comfortable.

## Current Band Staying Busy, Getting Exposure

The AKO has been keeping busy this semester with five gigs (more than one per month) in addition to the Golden Eagles gig at which a few current members played. There are currently 17 band members. Re-

hearsals are at the student center, which has proven to be a great way to give the band more exposure to Auburn students.

The Knights helped sponsor a Valentine's Dance at the Event Center Downtown in Opelika. It included an hour for dance lessons followed by 3 hours for the AKO. During breaks, Knights alumni played combo charts.

The night was a phenomenal success with 532 in attendance and 2-3 confirmed bookings. The AKO is excited about doing another dance in the fall.

Current band members are looking forward to the AKO/AKAA Mixer again at the reunion this year, Friday from 4-6 in the Lounge. Last year it was a great way for them to get to know the alumni. Come out and meet the current band!

## 2013 Reunion Schedule

	Thursday July 18		Friday July 19		Saturday July 20		
8:30 AM	<b>Don't forget to visit the Silent Auction!</b>		90s/2000s Era Band Rehearsal, 8:30-10 (Ballroom)	30s Era Band Rehearsal, 8:30-10 (Lounge)	Board of Directors' Meeting, 9-10 (Room 303)		
9:00 AM							
9:30 AM							
10:00 AM			40s Era Band Rehearsal, 10:30-noon (Ballroom)		General Membership Meeting, 10-11 (Ampitheater)		
10:30 AM							
11:00 AM							
11:30 AM			30s Era Band Rehearsal, noon-2 (Ballroom)		70s/80s Era Band Rehearsal, noon-2 (Lounge)		Jazz Brunch, 11-1 (Pool area)
Noon							
12:30 PM	70s/80s Era Band Rehearsal, 12:30-2 (Ballroom)		50s Era Band Rehearsal, 12:30-2 (Lounge)		30s Era Band Rehearsal, 1-2 (Ballroom)		
1:00 PM	...more stories...		70s/80s Era Band Rehearsal, 2-3 (Ballroom)				
1:30 PM	50s Era Band Rehearsal, 2:30-4 (Ballroom)		60s Era Band Rehearsal, 2:30-4 (Ballroom)				
2:00 PM	...more music...		AKO/AKAA Mixer, 4-6 (Lounge, 2nd Floor)		...online...		
2:30 PM	60s Era Band Rehearsal, 4:30-6 (Ballroom)					90s/2000s Era Band Rehearsal, 4:30-6 (Lounge)	
3:00 PM	...at auburnknightsalumni.org !					40s Era Band Rehearsal, 6:30-8 (Ballroom)	
3:30 PM	40s Era Band Rehearsal, 6:30-8 (Ballroom)		40s Era Band Concert, 7-8		30s Era Band Concert, 7-8		
4:00 PM	<b>Please... Pay to play! It helps the Scholarship Program.</b>		60s Era Band Concert, 8-9		70s/80s Era Band Concert, 8-9		
4:30 PM			90s/2000s Era Band Concert, 9-10		50s Era Band Concert, 9-10		
5:00 PM					Current AKO Concert, 10-11		
5:30 PM							
6:00 PM							
6:30 PM							
7:00 PM							
7:30 PM							
8:00 PM							
8:30 PM							
9:00 PM							
9:30 PM							
10:00 PM							
10:30 PM							

## A Band with a View

Bobby Adair joined the AKO in 1938 and went on to front the band as a featured clarinet soloist during the early 1940s. Here he recalls a couple of distinctly Knight-ish experiences. Submitted by Charlie Kinzer (AKO '78-'83).

During the late 1930s the Knights made pocket money by playing for lunches and dinners on weekdays at the College Inn. A drum set, piano, and small sound system were kept in the restaurant's balcony, where the band played. Tobe Griffith's upright bass had to be hoisted over the front of the balcony.

**"...every now and then someone would spot a big gopher rat in the grill area..."**

Adair recalled that the band had a view of everything in the restaurant below as it played: "We'd be in the middle of a tune, playing along nicely, and every now and then someone would spot a big gopher rat in the grill area, which ran along the side of the building. This would get our attention in a hurry. Sometimes the rats would scurry onto the cooking surfaces and lose their footing in all the grease. Man, nobody could play at all when that happened. We'd roll with laughter and have to regroup!"

Throughout the year the Knights also played frequently on other college campuses. The musicians especially enjoyed traveling to Judson College, an all-female institution in Marion, Alabama...

To read more of this story, go online to [auburnknightsalumni.org](http://auburnknightsalumni.org).

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## Help with Silent Auction

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Even with short lead time, last year's silent auction for the Scholarship Fund raised almost \$1,600. We'll be doing it again at the reunion this year, and our goal is to at least double that.

Fritz Siler and John Norton are asking local businesses for donations, and this is also a chance for AKA members to pitch in by donating items or asking others. If anyone has a donation, wants to suggest a possible donor, or needs more info, contact Fritz or John (see p. 4).

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## Gear for AKO, Investments, and More from the Board

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Passed at the February 2013 Board meeting was a motion to allow that scholarship funds be placed with other institutions to achieve the highest interest rate.

We allocated to the current AKO up to \$1,000 for needed gear and will replace the band's banner.

Other motions passed will establish closer relationships with AU music faculty, lock in the 2014 Reunion contract with the Marriott, and help to honor members recently passed.

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## New Video Project: Time for Your Closeup!

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There will be a video camera set up at the Reunion so that you can share your memories and stories. This can be about your time with the Knights and/or at the Reunions.

If you don't have a specific story in mind, we will have some questions to ask so that your experiences will be preserved. We not only want to tell the history of the Auburn Knights, we want to show the people who made that history possible.

All Regular, Associate and Honorary Members are invited to share.

After the Reunion, the videos will be available online.

***We would also like your help in staffing the video camera.*** To volunteer, or if you have questions, bookncaatz@msn.com is Paul McCracken's e-mail or call him at 205-602-4972.

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## Ronnie Bretz Passing

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RONNIE BRETZ, SR. (AKO '53-'58), 81, passed away June 15, 2012 in Augusta, Georgia. He played lead trumpet, coming to the Knights from Air Force bands to earn a music degree from API.

Before the Air Force, he was playing with Lawrence Welk. After Auburn, he returned to the Air Force for a 30-year career in television production. A stroke in 1989 left him partially paralyzed, but it didn't keep him away from reunions.

His wife Lillian lives in Augusta. His son, Ron Bretz, Jr., lives in Opelika, and has been to many reunions.

## 2013 Auburn Knights Alumni Association Reunion, July 18-20 ~ 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	_____	\$10.00	_____
Concert/Dance, 7:00 PM, Saturday	_____	\$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 AKA Scholarship Fund ( <i>All contributions are Tax-Deductible</i> )	_____		_____

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

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

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## Get in the Groove, Get on the Board

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Without a rhythm section, there's no big band. Those key players provide consistency, strength, and a framework for the horns and singers. They express detail and color, interacting with the soloists and interpreting the arranger's notes on a page.

Our Board of Directors is a little like a rhythm section. The AKA exists to keep our reunions going year after year and to support the current band. Without the ongoing planning and behind-the-scenes labors of the Board and others enlisted to help, this would not be possible.

In July, we will replace five Board members. We would love to have your insight and, frankly, your time and effort. Please help keep our reunions fun and friendly and the current band strong. To volunteer or if you have any questions, contact Tim Baur at [tim\\_baur@rocketmail.com](mailto:tim_baur@rocketmail.com) or call (770) 650-0898.

### OFFICERS

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NAT MICHELSON, Secretary | (904) 226-6065 | [nmichelson001@gmail.com](mailto:nmichelson001@gmail.com)  
WADE JOHNSON, Treasurer | (334) 332-9156 | [wade.johnson@gmail.com](mailto:wade.johnson@gmail.com)  
PETER BLAISE, Immediate Past President

### APPOINTMENTS

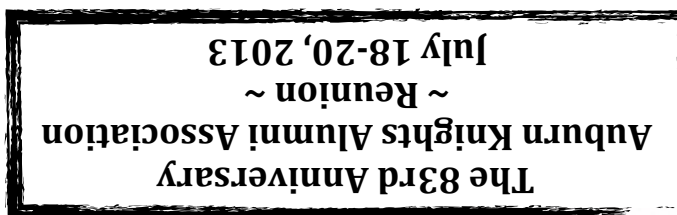
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### MEMBERS

2013 | John Conner, Jr. | Richard Garrett | Patrick McCurry | Mike Stough | Joe Watson  
2014 | Ralph Black, Jr. | Andy Duke | Woody Leonard | John Norton  
2015 | Kathy Bell Altonji | Ryan Chapman | Rob Cothran | Bob Greenhaw | Tony McCutchen

### CURRENT BAND

MANAGER Chris Rose | (256) 520-0319 | [rosechr@auburn.edu](mailto:rosechr@auburn.edu)



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