



The Bridge



Connecting Members of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association

VOL. V NUMBER 1 NOVEMBER, 2003

A Note From The President



Greetings from the Big Apple! As I type this, the Yankees have let another season slip away without bringing home the big one. Since they always seem to make it to the post-season, it's easy to just assume that it will always happen, and in my house we kind of take it for granted. Kind of like the summer Auburn Knights reunion.

But none of us should take for granted what happens every summer in Auburn. Think of the energy that we all put into showing up, playing the music, and all of the joy we find in reuniting with old friends and family. It only happens because people care enough to make it happen. And if you haven't been back in a while, I hope you'll stop taking for granted that it will always happen, and make yourself a part of the party. Every year there's a

new Auburn Knights Orchestra continuing the tradition, and they are the proof that good music survives.

In this issue of *The Bridge* you have another opportunity to get your orders in for CD's and videos. And don't forget to make your summer travel plans early. It's always the last full weekend in July, and this summer that means July 30-31. Lots of folks get to Auburn earlier than that and enjoy chance to relax before all of the action starts. There's a chance to sit in or just listen to a jam session on Thursday night, and there's always the Loveliest Village to enjoy also.

Times change. Dynasties fade. Friends and loved ones pass away. But each summer, if you're willing and able, you have a chance to rekindle the spirit of the Auburn Knights. It's a chance you shouldn't pass up.

Jon Smith
AKAA President

Scholarship Winners 2003

I would just like to say thank you all for such a wonderful weekend! It is an honor and privilege to be able to be a part of an organization with such a history and to get to meet incredible people that share the common ground of our music. I would also like to thank the alumni association and all of its members for providing the scholarship opportunity. I am very grateful for the honor of receiving the scholarship and for the help that it will provide with tuition. I can't wait to see you all again next year if not before!

Thank you again,

Kyle King

Kyle is a saxophone player from Opelika, Alabama and joined the Auburn Knights in the summer of 2001. He is majoring in Management Information Systems (MIS) and working on a minor in music.

Another reunion has come and gone and once again I look back on it and realize what an amazing privilege it is to get to play for and with such talented musicians and be a part of such an amazing tradition.

I'm also privileged enough to have been awarded a scholarship by the alumni to help fund my last semester of school here at Auburn. While this gift does have a dollar amount attached to it, it cannot compare with the value of the alumni's faith in me that you would endorse my education. Thank you so much for this honor, and I look forward to seeing everyone next year.

Clay Cobb

Clay is a trombone player from Auburn, Alabama and joined the Auburn Knights in the fall of 2000. He is majoring in Music Education.

Thank you so very much for this great honor. It is hard to believe that you can play the music you love and get a little help for college for doing it. Thanks again for helping me live my dream.

Zack Feldman

Zack is a trombone player from Auburn, Alabama and joined the Auburn Knights in December 2001. He is majoring in Music Education.

AKAA History Project Underway

As Historian for the AKAA, I would like to let our members know about a new effort to document and preserve our history. With the aim of building upon the previous work of Jimmie Robbins, Dick Johnson, Gene Smithson, Jack Drescher, Kyle Caldwell, and many others, I have begun to gather information in order to put together a “coffee-table” style book about our storied organization. The idea is to come up with something along the lines of the fine volume about the AU Band that Dr. Vinson and Dorothy Wanless wrote in 1997.

During the past few months, I have corresponded with a number of pre-war Knights, and to date have composed a couple of short chapters about the early days of the band. It has been a real pleasure for me to get to know such gentlemen as Charles Blackledge, the trombonist for the original band, and Bobby Adair, the energetic front man of the early 1940s. I plan to proceed chronologically, and the text will probably organize itself into chapters following the “decade” divisions of the reunions. Short “vignettes” might spotlight individual players, such as Urbie Green, Charlie Ard, and Steve Armour (just to name a few prominent slide slingers) or focus on other aspects, like the evolution of the annual reunions.

Over the next year, I hope to contact everyone on the official mailing list. I welcome any assistance anyone can offer, especially if someone has knowledge of the book publishing “bidness.” The most convenient way to reach me is via e-mail at ckinzer@longwoodu.org. By the way, I’m grateful to the members who have sent in questionnaires from the reunion – every little bit helps piece the big picture together!

As an ongoing part of the project, Lyle Johnson and I plan to print anecdotes and excerpts in the upcoming issues of *The Bridge*. This first installment comes from Terry “Doc” Mosley, the popular violinist and leader of the ‘30s Reunion bands. It concerns the original AKO bus, an already-shot REO model acquired in about 1933 from the school system of Monroe County:

The Auburn Knights spent much of the summer of 1935 in Gulfport, Mississippi, where the orchestra enjoyed a multi-week engagement at a luxurious beachfront resort, the Hotel Markham. The Knights played every day in the hotel’s dining room, and then for three or four nights each week the band would move up to the roof pavilion, where there was a nightclub called The Hangar, to perform for dancing.

On off-nights, the Knights played for dances throughout southern Mississippi. On one such occasion the band was fortunate just to make it back to Gulfport. “We depended on that old bus,”

recalled Terry Mosley. “We had played in Hattiesburg, and were driving back late to the Markham to get some sleep and be ready for dinner the next evening. We were way out in the country and it was pitch dark. The engine overheated, and it turned out that the bottom of the radiator had simply corroded away. There was a stream nearby, though, and several of the guys gathered water in whatever we had that would hold it. Since I was the band announcer, and didn’t play on every number, I was in a sense the most ‘expendable’ fellow in the group, so it fell to me to climb out on the fender and pour water into the open radiator every couple of miles. We drove about ten miles an hour and I rode that way, hanging on to the front of the bus, all the way back to Gulfport. It took all night. The guys were miserable. They tried to sleep, leaning on each other on the two wooden benches that ran lengthwise along the sides of the interior. The steam from the radiator burned my arm pretty badly – I spent some time in the infirmary and couldn’t play for a few days. Luckily, I was the only casualty that summer. We are all busy having the time of our lives!”

*Charles Kinzer, AKAA
Historian*



Charlie Wood, a member of the 40s Auburn Knights and a longtime contributor to *The Bridge*, passed away on June 18, 2003. He was a very active member of the AKAA and will be sorely missed by all. A memorial scholarship fund has been set up in his name. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please send donations (made out to *eh Charlie Wood Memorial Fund*) to Vic Atkins, 22 Berkeley Road, Selma, AL 36701-6805.

Need a great band for your club or organization’s next dance? Contact now:

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P.O. Box 1024
Auburn, AL 36830
www.auburnknights.com

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(334) 750-7532
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The Bridge is the official newsletter of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association. Letters and articles are welcome. Lyle Johnson, Editor, 108 Millsford Drive, Madison, Alabama 35758.

Introducing the new editor of *The Bridge*



This is the first edition of *The Bridge* under the editorship of Lyle Johnson and I thought it might be helpful to say some things about him that some of you might not know.

Lyle is 33 (young enough to be my grandson, but isn't) and lives with his wife Denise in Madison, Alabama near Huntsville. No kids yet. He was a trombonist on the Knights from 1989 through 1992. He is currently working as a computer software engineer.

I am happy to say that Lyle volunteered for this job and we are all fortunate that he did. But it made me wonder if he was misinformed about the salary or just impulsive and still running around with his cap on backwards. But he was neither. Lyle is a dedicated AK alumnus and everybody knows these computer software gurus all have I.Q.'s coming out the top. Also, in Lyle's favor, there is absolutely no evidence for any ties to Al Qaeda or Hillary Clinton.

But he'll need some help. Articles for *The Bridge* are always needed from any AKA member, but especially appreciated from younger alumni (younger is anybody who doesn't remember WWII).

So will the next Charlie Wood please step forward?

Dick Johnson

A Message From Don Culley

Starting in July 2004, players should limit participation to just two bands and leaders and coordinators are asked to help us observe this rule.

There are several reasons for this change:

1. When players participate in three or more bands, it is impossible to have a rehearsal schedule with no conflicts.
2. There are players from all eras not coming to the reunion because they have no band to play in. Many of these are fine players – let's find them and encourage their participation.
3. We have many players who perform with only one band, but would enjoy being a part of a second group.
4. Lastly, we should be inviting the younger players (current, 90's, etc.) to perform with the older guys. We need to get acquainted!

Following is a list of the leaders/coordinators. If you want to play in 2004, contact them and let it be known that you are available!

<i>Era</i>	<i>Coordinator(s)</i>	<i>Phone</i>
30's	Charlie Higgins (haubtiger@aol.com)	(334) 288-5001
30's	Terry Mosley	(828) 697-8604
40's	Lyman Mitchell	(256) 764-8655
48/49	Don Irvine (knight4849@aol.com)	(251) 666-4720
48/49	Bob Hurston (bhhurston@aol.com)	(901) 755-4567
50's	Don Culley (dculley@gulftel.net)	(251) 980-1362
50's	Al Norman (almarnorman@mindspring.com)	(404) 237-5916
60's	Steve Means (auknights@hotmail.com)	(256) 549-4646
70/80	Lisa Ray (lisahray@charter.net)	(334) 887-1544
70/80	Fritz Siler (dogsiler@aol.com)	(770) 978-1287
70/80	Tim Chambliss (tchambliss@mindspring.com)	(334) 821-5300
90's	Jebb Long	(205) 324-4056
90's	Craig Lunsford	(919) 870-1906

Don Culley
Coordinator of Bands

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LIBRARY ARCHIVIST
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Charlie Higgins, (334) 288-5001

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