



The Bridge



Connecting Members of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association

VOL. VI NUMBER 3 JUNE, 2005

From the Prez



My fellow Knights, it is that time of year to gather once again to revive our friendships, play some great music together, see the families of others, speak of lost loved ones, and wish others were there with us to eat, drink and be merry. If you are one of those who waits until a certain time of year to make sure the chops are still working, now is the time to do so. It's not the set(s) you play on your night(s) that kills you; it's the rehearsals that lead up to the moment(s) that prove to be the challenge. The number of groups you play on could also be a contributing factor to fatigue. Drinking beer is a crutch, and I have several.

The arrangers have been hard at work with their labors of love to prepare new material for the bands to play (as it was in the beginning...), Doug

has been working on new material, and if Bob Chambers were still with us, he would be looking for the perfect reed. Everything is in place, thanks to the efforts of your reunion committees, for you to have a great time, and for things to nearly flow like clockwork. If you should find yourself "caught between a rock and a hard place" with rehearsals on different bands, I suggest you let the leaders work it out. There are probably others who would be happy to fill in for a rehearsal if asked.

This brings another thought to mind. I was privileged to be on the band that started the reunions on a regular basis in the summer of 1966, at the old Holiday Inn at the "Y" on 280, with Dale Quillen and Steve Means as our fearless leaders. The idea behind this gathering was to invite alumni to get together, have lunch, play some music together, and maybe learn of new gigs (and isn't that always the case?) If you are an alumnus and would like to sit in, please let the era leader know. He may still be looking for someone to fill out a section. There are others who come, and "the spirit is willing but the chops are failing," who would like

to play on a limited basis in their group. All the groups should be represented at the reunions. All are important. We will be keep our heritage represented. I have a plan...

Bring your cameras, instruments, "big note" glasses, golf clubs, beverages of your choice, and happy faces. If you don't have a reservation at the inn yet, call a motel at the Opelika or Auburn exit because there are no more rooms available at the Lodge. See you there! War Eagle!

Attention All Current Auburn Knights!

Scholarship application forms have been sent by e-mail to all current Auburn Knights Orchestra members with a note encouraging all who qualify to apply for an AKA scholarship. This is a reminder to all applicants that July 15th is the deadline for applying.

The Auburn Knights Alumni Association 75th Year Reunion

July 28-30, 2005

The Auburn Marriott Opelika Hotel
and Conference Center
at Grand National

3700 Sunbelt Parkway
Opelika, Alabama

(334) 741-9292

<http://www.marriottgrandnational.com>

Come help us celebrate 75 years of the Auburn Knights Orchestra!

Good News, Bad News



Two old AK's, friends since the 30's were talking. Frank said to Ernest, "If you die before I do please come back and tell me if there is an AK band in heaven."

Sure enough, wouldn't you know, Ernest dies and at 2 a.m. a fortnight later, Frank is awakened by an eerie voice calling – "Frank, Frank, there is good news and bad news." "The good news is that there is an AK band in heaven – the bad news is that you will be playing the 3rd alto book next Tuesday."

Dick Johnson

Final Days of the AK Bus

This story of the demise of the last AK bus, in 1963, comes from Ken Hammett and Cecil Wilder, two-thirds of the Knights' trombone section in those days. – Charlie Kinzer, AKA Historian

"When I first got on the band in '60," writes Ken, "we rode in Agnes, the pink hearse. I understand Agnes was cut down and made into a delivery truck when we sold her. After that we bought buses from Ingram Bus lines in Tallassee, and they did what maintenance we could afford and they had

time for ... we had three while I was on the band. One sat in front of the Cat House most of the time, and the engine fell out of it when they tried to tow it away. We also had a yellow and red bus, and finally the last blue one."

According to Cecil, that bus stayed parked on Thomas Street and Ken and George Hammett (sax) were the drivers: "We didn't use it much because it was somewhat unreliable. My second year on the band we had a job in Fernandina Beach, FL, followed the next night by one in Charlotte, NC, and we had a big discussion at rehearsal the week before about whether to take the bus or go in cars. I argued against the bus but those who wanted to take it won out. We got as far as Tifton, GA, on I-75 and the engine threw out a rod, leaving us stranded in the rain. I got my pound of flesh in the form of several I told you so's. Someone got a ride into town and we rented a station wagon and a trailer and drove on to Fernandina Beach. Some of us got there about the time the job was to start and faked the first set until the others showed up."

The Knights had been hired to back up trumpeter Dean Hudson as his orchestra. "We mostly played our book except for a few tunes Dean played on and some vocals his wife sang," recalls Cecil. "After the job we got in the cars and drove to Charlotte. A couple of the guys rode with Dean and Mrs. Hudson in Dean's Cadillac because the sta-

tion wagon was pretty crowded."

"I rode in the car behind Dean," says Ken. "Somewhere in South Carolina Dean, possibly asleep, drifted off the left side of the road, skimmed across the top of a culvert, narrowly missed a deep gully, and came to rest on the ground beyond. Dean was bleeding from the mouth and we could just envision massive internal injuries from hitting the steering wheel. We got him to a hospital, but it turns out he just bit his lip in the crash." The impact did break Mrs. Hudson's arm. "We drove on to Charlotte and played the job at Davidson College. Dean made his wife sing with her arm in a sling," laughs Cecil. "We left after the job and drove overnight back to Auburn. I think we made about \$25 apiece when all was said and done."

And the AK bus? It was towed to a storage lot in Tifton and ownership was relinquished when the storage fees exceeded the value, which wasn't long. The band rented a U-Haul trailer after that. Cecil says, "I was driving on I-75 several years later and remembered about the bus when I approached Tifton. I pulled off the highway into town and the bus was still parked by the garage where it had been towed when it blew up, rotten tires and all." And as for the veracity of the above? Again, Cecil: "If you told someone who had no experience with the Knights this story they would accuse you of being the biggest liar since Richard Nixon but it is true, or mostly so."

John B. Conner, Sr.

John B. Conner, Sr., a longtime associate member of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association, passed away on March 16, 2005.

After serving as a V-5 Naval Aviation Cadet, Mr. Conner was in an early graduating class of Building Construction in the School of Architecture at Auburn University in 1949. He worked in the Conner family businesses in Tuskegee and later became a principal of Conner Brothers Construction Company, which relocated him to Auburn in 1953. Mr. Conner and his wife Dannie Sue have been faithful attenders of the Auburn Knights reunions for many years, and their son John is a regular player in the 70's and 80's bands.

If you would like to make a memorial contribution to the scholarship fund in his name, please send donations to Vic Atkins, 22 Berkeley Road, Selma, AL 36701-6805. Checks should be made out to the *Auburn Knights Alumni Association – Scholarship Fund*. Be sure to designate on your check (or in a cover letter) that your donation is in memory of John B. Conner, Sr.

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

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

Dorsey Tippett
(334) 524-9801
tippesd@auburn.edu

**2005 Auburn Knights Orchestra Reunion
July 28-30, 2005**

Rehearsal Schedule

<i>Era</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
30's	1-3 PM Ballroom	9-10 AM Lounge	1-2:30 PM Ballroom
40's	6-8 PM Ballroom	10-12 Noon Lounge	
48/49	4-6 PM Ballroom	10-12 Noon Ballroom	3-4 PM Lounge
50's	4-6 PM Lounge	2-4 PM Ballroom	
60's	8-10 PM Ballroom	12-2 PM Lounge	
70/80		2-4 PM Lounge	3-5 PM Ballroom
90's	8-10 PM Lounge	4-5 PM Ballroom	



This is a revised version of the rehearsal schedule discussed at the February AKA Board Meeting!

Band Coordinators

<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

Performance Schedule

<i>Time</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
7:30 PM	50's	30's
8:30 PM	90's	70/80
9:30 PM	40's	48/49
10:30 PM	60's	Current

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3110 Deer Chase Ct. SW
Snellville, GA 30039
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Farmville, VA 23901
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Jef Thurman

LIBRARIAN

Don Culley, (251) 980-1362

LIBRARY ARCHIVIST

Tom Winstead
(256) 852-0138

PUBLICITY

Tim Chambliss

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Charlie Higgins
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Lyle Johnson
(256) 837-5540 or lyle@knology.net

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Jon Smith

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Auburn Knights Alumni Association
 2005 Reunion Registration Form
 July 29th & 30th 2005

NAME: _____ STREET: _____ CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____ PHONE#: _____

Member: _____ Associate: _____ Visitor: _____

Number	Event or Item	Cost	Total
_____	2005-2006 Dues (Members & Associates)	\$ 10.00	_____
_____	Concert/Dance, 7:30pm, Friday, July 29th	\$ 6.00 (\$7.00 @ Door)	_____
_____	Concert/Dance, 7:30pm, Saturday July 30th	\$ 6.00 (\$7.00 @ Door)	_____
_____	Saturday Jazz Lunch, 11:00am	\$ 6.00	_____
_____	BBO Beef or Chicken, Baked Beans, Cole Slaw, Bread & Drink	\$ 4.50	_____
_____	Hamburger or Hotdog, Baked Beans, Slaw & Drink	\$ 3.50	_____
Contribution to the AKAA Scholarship Fund			_____
Total Amount Enclosed			_____

Send form & Payment to:
 T Craig Lunstord, AKAA Treasurer
 2608 Crofton Springs Dr
 Raleigh, NC 27615