



The Bridge



Connecting Members of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association

VOL. IX NUMBER 1 OCTOBER, 2007

A Word from the President

by Mark Belfast



It's hard to believe that yet another AKAA reunion weekend has come and gone, and what a weekend it was! I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Jay Prater and the staff of the Marriott for the wonderful accommodations and hospitality they show us each summer. Thanks are also in order for Craig, Judy, Barbara, Ann, Shirley, Mimi, Martha, and Lynn for their unfaltering dedication to the organization, and their dependable assistance each summer at the registration table. The success of the reunion weekend is due in part to your warm personalities and welcoming smiles. Charlie Higgins also deserves a round of applause for his relentless efforts to make each year's reunion the best one yet. Thanks Charlie for your attention to detail and your passion for the preservation of the AKAA, the AKO, and all of their traditions. Finally, thank you to the loyal Auburn Knights who made the trek back to the plains for a weekend of great music and camaraderie like none other. I pray that your weekend was fulfilling and that you found time to take in Toomer's, Samford Hall, and all the other sights

that help make Auburn the place we know and love.

Each era band was a delight as always, with all musicians proving they've still got what it takes to perform a show that is both entertaining and inspiring to an audience of all ages. Congratulations to the band coordinators for programming a weekend of exciting, passionate, and at times comedic performances. The current AK's performance late Saturday night was arguably one of the best-heard performances in recent AKAA reunion history. Make no mistake; AK's for years to come will line up in the archives room to listen to the 2007 current band recording. Once again, Dorsey Tippet wowed the audience with her beautiful voice, unique phrasings, and charismatic stage presence. Current band rehearsal coordinator Ryan Chapman demonstrated his ability to hang with the big boys by firing note after note into the stratosphere on several of the evening's selections, including a tribute to Maynard Ferguson. The band also featured Jimmy Johnson on a lush tenor saxophone feature, and performed a couple of charts arranged by members of the band. One such arrangement was by trumpeter Courtney Jones featuring himself on the theme from *The Green Hornet*, after which no doubt could be left of the technical proficiency of this young musician. At the conclusion of the current band's performance it was quite clear the Auburn Knights tradition remains in good hands.

If you were unable to attend this year's reunion, know you were missed, and make plans NOW to join us next July 25th and 26th, 2008. Another weekend of great music and fellowship

is just around the corner!

Yours in music,

Mark A. Belfast, Jr., President

Auburn Knights Alumni
Association ♪

The Search for Missing Parts

Finding parts to old charts is really hard on the nerves. The library has had up to 130 charts with missing parts, and I've made up several lists for the newsletter, and have gotten only a few responses, so I must have the wrong approach. So here's the new question:

Every AK has a collection of parts in "the corner" or "in the closet" or "in a box somewhere" that hasn't been looked at during the last millennium, and one of those parts is the last one in the world! The Librarian needs those collections to find that jewel needed to complete a chart! Please mail your collection to Tom Winstead, 12002 Mt. Charron Drive, Huntsville, AL 35810.

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

Auburn Knights Orchestra
P.O. Box 1024
Auburn, AL 36831-1024
www.auburnknights.com

Stuart Ivey
(256) 653-6060
iveystu@auburn.edu

Reunion Thoughts



by Dick Johnson

I realize that poetry is a most unusual offering for *The Bridge* publication. I also realize that, poetically, my poem has obvious flaws (trite phrases and a strange exclamatory line stuck in between verses). Yet, despite all that, it does capture a flavor of an Auburn Knights Reunion, especially the last one and, as such, might be appreciated by some. 🎵

Our concerns were of the moment.
Who has arrived so far?
When is our next rehearsal?
Is there time for a drink at the bar?

Rehearsals met. Much laughter.
Old friends to greet.
New jokes to share.

And some of us play with
2 or 3 bands,
So when do we eat, and where?

With all these busy goings-on,
There's little time to reminisce.
What happens now is center stage,
The past was then, the present, this.

That wall of sound from
the current Knights
Blew us all flat out the door!
And would you believe,
on the very next tune,
They did it again, and more!

(Maynard Ferguson,
eat your heart out!!)

The 30's to 90's era bands,
Playing those fine old charts,
Set melodic lines from earlier times,
Echoing in our hearts.

And other voices are remembered,
Those of friends from days gone by.
They used to laugh here with us.
Could we hear them if we try?

So we waited and we listened,
Still with hopes that we might hear.
But the voices held their silence,
And were not heard this year.

Joe Noojin

Joseph Echols Noojin, Jr. passed away on September 24, 2007. Joe graduated from the Alabama Polytechnic Institute in 1942, with a B.S. in Agriculture. While he was in school at Auburn, he played piano with the Auburn Plainsman Jazz Band. Joe was perhaps best known to us in the Auburn Knights family for his "Joe Noojin and Friends" jazz combo that played for the Saturday luncheons at Auburn Knights reunions, but he also sat in with the 30's AKO alumni band, and played with Gadsden's "Kings of Swing" jazz band. Joe was also the owner of Noojin Owens Building Supply Company, and was a distinguished builder and developer.

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. on your check (or in a cover letter) that your donation is in memory of Joe Noojin. Checks should be made out to the Auburn Knights Alumni Association – Scholarship Fund. Be sure to designate





The members of the 40's and 48-49 AKO alumni bands have agreed to merge into one band starting with the 2008 AKAA reunion (details to be arranged). Pictured here are the four survivors of the 48-49 band who played at the 2007 AKAA reunion: Bob Hurston, front man; Graham Thomas, lead alto; A. J. Coleman, tenor saxophone; and Mallory Pierce, trumpet.

Neis Digital Productions AKAA Reunion CD & Cassette Order Form

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These recordings are being provided as a service and are not for distribution outside of the AKAA.

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AKAA Board of Directors and General Membership Meetings

The AKA Board of Directors met on Saturday morning, July 28, 2007.

Librarian Tom Winstead reported that as a result of the merge of the 40's and the 48-49 band, the 48-49 library will be incorporated back into the library archives. Steve Means has donated 50 new charts, inherited from the R. J. West Orchestra of Los Angeles, CA. The 40's band played *Ramona*, one of the charts from this collection, during their performance at this summer's reunion.

Archivist Jef Thurman reported that a 1935 recording of an Auburn Knights gig in Biloxi, MS, has been transferred to CD and is now in our archives. Other recent acquisitions include a collection from Bob Richardson's daughter Phoebe, as well as the original disc of the *Happy* album recorded by the 1960's band. Jef's current project, other than the ongoing effort to recover and restore old recordings, is to catalog the archives contents. As always, Jef encourages AKA members to contact him concerning items that they wish to donate to the archives.

The scholarship committee recommended three members of the current band for memorial scholarship awards. Stuart Ivey was awarded \$2000 from the Frank Speight memorial fund, Jimmy Johnson was awarded \$2500 from the general fund, and James "Buddy" Saint was awarded \$2000 from the Frank Tennille memorial fund. It was also noted that Vic Atkins is retiring from his post as scholarship committee chairman and will be replaced by Fritz Siler.

A special committee consisting of Charlie Higgins, Hank Elliott and A.J. Coleman reported on their progress in incorporating the Auburn Knights Orchestra as well as securing non-profit status for the AKO. The incorporation process is complete and the paperwork for the same has been filed in probate court. The AKO, Inc. Board of Directors consists of current AKA president Mark Belfast, current AKO

business manager Stuart Ivey, and appointed member Lisa Ray. The AKO, Inc. board has completed the bylaws for this organization. Charlie Higgins further reported that the application process for non-profit status has begun, with the assistance of Richard Stabler, CPA, who is donating his time.

The board also heard reports from treasurer Craig Lunsford, historian Charlie Kinzer, newsletter editor Lyle Johnson, Marriott hotel manager Jay Prater, current AKO equipment manager Jeremy Leff and current AKO business manager Stuart Ivey.

The board meeting was immediately followed by a meeting of the general membership. In addition to discussion of topics from the preceding board meeting, the membership voted in favor of a motion to move the AKA reunion up to the 3rd weekend in July, as soon as the reunion coordinator can make arrangements with the hotel. **This change will not take effect until some time after the 2008 reunion.**

You can download a PDF of the complete minutes, for both the board meeting as well as the general membership meeting, at <http://www.auburnknightsalumni.org/>.

OUR LEADERS

PRESIDENT

Mark Belfast
55 Rockingham Dr.
Covington, GA 30016
(334) 332-6279

VICE-PRESIDENT

Jana Burns
3140 Seven Pines Court #302
Atlanta, GA 30339
(334) 524-4091

SECRETARY

Nat Michelson
82 Surf Dr.
St. Augustine, FL 32080
(904) 460-1396

TREASURER

Craig Lunsford
2608 Crofton Springs Dr.
Raleigh, NC 27615
(919) 870-1906

HISTORIAN

Charlie Kinzer
1101 Fourth Ave.
Farmville, VA 23901
(434) 392-1731

ARCHIVIST

Jef Thurman, jeft@charter.net

LIBRARY ARCHIVIST

Tom Winstead
(256) 852-0138

PUBLICITY

Hank Elliott, (334) 826-1054

AKA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Fritz Siler, Chairman

REUNION COORDINATOR

Charlie Higgins
(334) 288-5001

EDITOR, AKA NEWSLETTER

Lyle Johnson
(256) 289-9598 or lyle.johnson@gmail.com

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Fritz Siler

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2008

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AKO Business Manager

Stuart Ivey
(256) 653-6060



Auburn Knights Alumni Association
Internet: <http://www.auburnknightsalumni.org>
108 Millisford Dr.
Madison, AL 35758
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