



The Bridge



Connecting Members of the Auburn Knights Alumni Association.

VOL. IX NUMBER 3 JUNE, 2008



Fellow Auburn Knights, family of Knights, friends of family of Knights, and anyone else that pays their dues and receives this newsletter,

FREE GAS FOR ALL AKAA MEMBERS AT REUNION THIS YEAR!!!!

More on that in a moment so keep reading for details. First, many thanks are in order. In July of 2004, I was accosted by a couple of furtive AKAA board members in a dark corridor somewhere deep within the bowels of the old Best Western on South College (our previous reunion location). These gentlemen suggested, nay, insisted I consider serving as Vice President of the Knights alumni. I must admit, I was quite hesitant to accept at first. To be honest, I thought of the AKAA as a well-oiled machine, a group of individuals for whom I held immeasurable amounts of respect and loyalty. I thought... what if I go in there and screw everything up?! What if the great dynasty that is the Auburn Knights came to a crashing and flaming halt after some 74 years because of some act of ignorance on my young and inexperienced part?! Alas, not being one

to run from a challenge, I accepted. I am certain today that God led me to the right decision that evening. Over the course of the last four years, I have truly been honored to serve as your Vice President and President. I cannot thank you enough for giving me the opportunity to be your servant and advocate both on stage and behind the scenes.

During my tenure on the executive board I watched the transition that took place as our reunion moved to a new (and better in my opinion) location. A great big THANK YOU goes out to the innovative staff of the Marriott who met with our leaders and did everything in their power to ensure the traditions of our annual reunions were maintained, and our high expectations were not only met but exceeded each year. I also applaud them for their continued support of the current Auburn Knights Orchestra outside of reunion weekend. It is in part because of advocates like these that the AK's have been able to transcend the dangers that brought about the demise of many other artists of our craft.

I have also had the distinct pleasure of working with Hank Elliott, A.J. Coleman, and Charlie Higgins on the incorporation of the Auburn Knights Orchestra, gaining trademark rights to the AKO name, and filing for tax-exempt status for the band. Today I am proud to say the incorporation is complete and the newly formed Auburn Knights Orchestra, Inc. is a lawful corporation recognized in the state of Alabama. Gone are the days of current band business managers cowering in the shadows for fear of being audited (for more on that topic see Lisa Ray). (continued on p. 2.)

The Auburn Knights Alumni Association

78th Year Reunion
Auburn Marriott Opelika
Hotel and Conference Center
at Grand National
July 24-26, 2008

Rooms for the AKAA Reunion can be reserved **now** at the Marriott, by phoning (877) 563-4301. Ask to speak to Amber Windham, and be sure to mention the **Auburn Knights Reunion** to receive our special rate of \$75.00 per night (plus tax). The cutoff date for reservations under this special rate is **June 22, 2008**, and we recommend that you call **promptly** as we expect the hotel to be full!

If you have any questions or need any assistance, don't hesitate to call Reunion Coordinator Charlie Higgins at (334) 288-5001. See you there!

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

Jay Anderson
(404) 626-2006
anderje@auburn.edu

The trademark application has been filed and awaits decision, and Charlie is working diligently with the current band to complete the 501(c)(3) tax-exemption application. Gaining this status will allow all monies “paid” to the current band to be considered charitable donations, and hopefully, over time, will lead to both more numerous and high paying gigs for the young cats. I could not have asked for a better panel of gentlemen to work on this effort. Hank, A.J., and Charlie, you are true assets to our association, and thank you dearly for your unfaltering loyalty and commitment to the order.

To the executive officers and the board of directors, thank you for helping ensure I didn’t screw anything up to badly! You are truly an incredibly talented consort of men and women and it has been a pleasure working with you. No matter what life throws at me, I know I can get at least two uncontrollable laughs a year... one in February and one in July. Thanks for that. I would especially like to thank Jana. You have been the best V.P. I could have asked for, and I know you will lead the Auburn Knights family to new heights. The amount of work you do behind the scenes is incredible and your passion for excellence is inspiring. You are truly one of the unsung heroines of the AKAA.

So, I’m not sure if all of this is going to fit on the front page of *The Bridge* so I will bring this message to a close. Here are the dirty details: Reunion rehearsals start July 24th with concerts July 25 – 26. If you haven’t gotten a room yet you better jump on it. If all of the local hotels are booked up, Lisa Ray said you could stay at her place! As for the aforementioned free gas... I am told Saturday’s Jazz Brunch menu will include baked beans. Everyone is invited to buy a ticket and partake! Thanks are not necessary. I do what I can for my peeps. 2000’s in da house!

Belfast out! 🎵



An Open Letter to the Auburn Knights, Past and Present

I have wanted to say some special things to and about the Auburn Knights for a very long time but am just now getting around to doing it.

The Knights have been an integral part of my life for 67-plus years. I made so many staunch friendships with fellow AKs when I was on the band, friendships which have lasted a lifetime. These relationships, even after the many twists and turns of life’s vagaries, have resulted in tremendously positive influences in my personal life, extending into the present day. Those who know me well will understand.

At the reunions, (and I have spent four months of my life at AK reunions), new long-lasting friendships were made and I had the great good fortune to hear and admire all the fine current and era bands and the great instrumentalists and singers for over 40 years.

Up until about 2002 or so, I had heated annual reunion confrontations with my old arch-enemy, the tenor trombone. Now, however, I must admit, and sadly so, that my enemy has won by default since I no longer compete with the S.O.B.

And then there has been all the laughter — so many funny guys and so very much laughter.

AKs, I salute you all. Please accept my plaudits and my deepest affection and gratitude.

Dick Johnson
AK ‘40 - ‘42

They’ll Be Some Changes Made...

Long-time reunion attendees should note several changes to the reunion performance schedules starting with this summer’s reunion:

- Last summer, the active, playing members of the 48/49 “post-war” alumni band agreed to merge with the 40’s alumni band. That merger is complete, which leaves an open spot in the concert schedule for...
- A new band for 2000’s era Auburn Knights alumni has been formed, under the leadership of Khari Lee and Mark Belfast. For many years, these musicians have only been able to play by subbing on other bands or sitting in with the 90’s band.
- To ensure that attendees will be able to hear as much music as possible, the concerts on both Friday and Saturday night will now begin at 7:00, not 7:30!

2008 Auburn Knights Orchestra Reunion

JULY 24-26, 2008

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Era	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30's	12-2 PM Ballroom	8:30-10 AM Ballroom	
40's	3:30-5 PM Ballroom	11:30-1 PM Ballroom	
50's	5-6:30 PM Ballroom	2:30-4 PM Ballroom	1-2 PM Lounge
60's	2-3:30 PM Ballroom	1-2:30 PM Lounge	2-4 PM Ballroom
70/80	6:30-8:30 PM Ballroom	1-2:30 PM Ballroom	1-2 PM Ballroom
90's	5-6:30 PM Lounge	10-11:30 AM Ballroom	
2000's	8:30-10 PM Ballroom	11:00-1 PM Lounge	
Current	6:30-8:30 PM Lounge		

BAND COORDINATORS

Era	Coordinator(s)	Phone
30's	Charlie Higgins Terry Mosley	(334) 288-5001 (828) 697-8604
40's	Bob "Sweetpea" Hurston	(901) 755-4567
50's	Al Norman	(404) 237-5916
60's	Steve Means	(256) 549-4646
70/80	Lisa Ray Fritz Siler	(334) 887-1544 (770) 978-1287
90's	Wade Johnson	(334) 285-6846
2000's	Ishbah Cox Mark Belfast	(615) 353-4250 (334) 887-9384

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Time	Friday	Saturday
7:00 PM	30's	50's
8:00 PM	90's	60's
9:00 PM	40's	70's/80's
10:00 PM	2000's	Current

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
(404) 232-5758

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82 Surf Dr.
St. Augustine, FL 32080
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TREASURER

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Raleigh, NC 27615
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Farmville, VA 23901
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Jef Thurman, jefth@charter.net

LIBRARY ARCHIVIST

Tom Winstead
(256) 852-0138

PUBLICITY

Jana Burns, (404) 232-5758

AKAA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Fritz Siler, Chairman

REUNION COORDINATOR

Charlie Higgins
(334) 288-5001

EDITOR, AKAA NEWSLETTER

Lyle Johnson
(256) 289-9598 or lyle@lylejohanson.name

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Fritz Siler

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2008

Peter Blaise
Richard Garrett
Woody Leonard
Jef Thurman
Milton Welch

2009

Rob Cothran
Hank Elliott
Phil Gipson
John Norton
Bud Taylor

2010

Pat Bruce
Graham Thomas
Errick Johnson
Lisa Ray
Jerry Phillips

AKO Business Manager

Jay Anderson
(404) 626-2006
anderje@auburn.edu



Auburn Knights Alumni Association
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Madison, AL 35758
"Address Service Requested"

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Non Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
Paid
Madison, AL 35758
Permit No. 21

Auburn Knights Alumni Association
 2008 Reunion Registration Form
 July 25th & 26th, 2008

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

Member: _____
 Associate: _____
 Visitor: _____

EMAIL: _____

Number	Event or Item	Cost	Total
_____	2008-2009 Dues (Members & Associates)	\$ 20.00	_____
_____	Concert/Dance, 7:00pm, Friday, July 25th	\$ 10.00	
_____	Concert/Dance, 7:00pm, Saturday, July 26th	\$ 10.00	
_____	Saturday Jazz Lunch, 11:00am	\$ 7.00	_____
_____	BBQ Beef or Chicken, Baked Beans, Cole Slaw, Bread & Drink	\$ 6.00	
_____	Hamburger, Chips & Drink	\$ 5.00	
_____	Hotdog, Chips, & Drink	\$ 5.00	_____
Contribution to the AKAA Scholarship Fund			_____
<i>(All Contributions are Tax-Deductible)</i>			_____
Total Amount Enclosed			_____

Send form and payment to:
 Craig Lunsford, AKAA Treasurer
 9660 Falls of Neuse Rd.
 Suite 138 #231
 Raleigh, NC 27615