

November 18, 2003



The Aldrin Buzz

News from the Buzz Aldrin PTA

► Family Night at Aldrin

Bingo & Chili Bash a Whopping Success!

What would you do if more than twice the number of people you expected showed up at your party?

Well, when more than 500 advance tickets to the Bingo Bash had been sold with only four days left before the event, the volunteers and school staff mobilized.

Bingo coordinators, **Roslyn Aroesty and Sharon Keyes** recall saying, "Folks might be able to eat chili and hot dogs standing, but there is no way they can balance bingo cards and dried bean markers in their hands!"

Double the People, Double the Fun!

To accommodate the crowd, we met with Mr. Marinoff (who kindly cleared his calendar) and decided that Aldrin's gymnasium would become the second site for bingo players, creating a need for a second bingo game, and a second set of callers, runners and 6th grade helpers.

Mr. Rice, Mr. Rubio, their teams and volunteers managed to get everything set up before show-time.

All the behind-the-scenes details were invisible to the families who attended. The event was hailed as "a blast", "best Family Event ever" and "almost as good as the Aldrin-Armstrong basketball game!"

Volunteers & Donations to the Rescue!

Behind Bingo Bash was a triad of hard-working volunteer teams. Roslyn and Sharon handled all the Bingo logistics with their volunteers. On a tight budget, they supplied 250 prizes, got **Giant** to



Scenes from Bingo Night. From top left: Avery Wauben plays her cards; sixth-graders Carolyn Downin, Katya Samadurov and Juliana Lopez show off their class shirts; Mr. Marinoff, Mrs. Lewis, and Mrs. Pieruccini call the numbers with help from Shelbi Austin.

donate a gift card used to buy 96 lbs. of pinto beans, arranged decorations courtesy of **Norman's Farm Market**, and found a generous partner in **Robert Zmuda** and **Holy Redeemer Catholic Church** in Kensington, MD. Mr. Zmuda donated the bingo cards and loaned us two Bingo Boards. (Special thanks to **Cathy Patrick** for making that connection for us!)

Mr. Marinoff's and **Mrs. Kiess'** support and assistance in solving the overflow problem was invaluable. A big thanks, also, to the teachers, staff and parents who volunteered as callers, runners, set-up and clean-up crews.

Continued on page 4

Town
Hall
Meeting



December 3, 7 pm,
Aldrin Little Theatre



THANKSGIVING
LUNCH
TOMORROW!

Join your children for
turkey and all the trimmings.
Tickets available

Special School Hours
November 26

A.M. Kindergarten
dismisses at 11:20

P.M. Kindergarten
begins at 11:20

Student body dismisses
at 1:50

**Buzz Aldrin
Elementary School**
11375 Center Harbor Rd.
Reston, VA 20194
703.904.3800

[www.fcps.k12.va.us/
AldrinES/](http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/AldrinES/)

School Directories Are Now Available

Our eagerly awaited student directories are now available.

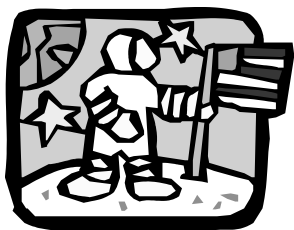
If you are a PTA member for 2003-2004, you should have received your bright red directory along with your membership card.

If you haven't received your directory, contact **Brenda Williamson** at 703.707.0038.

If you are not a PTA member, you can still get a directory for only \$5.00 at the school office.

Special Thanks to North Point Tax Service

The PTA would like to thank Alan S. Costas of North Point Tax Service. Mr. Costas generously completed the PTA's 2002 tax return free of charge.



The Aldrin Buzz is published monthly during the school year to provide parents with school and PTA news.

If you have comments or suggestions, contact the editor, Elaine Kelly, at elainekelly@comcast.net.

▶ PTA News



Presidents' Note

The PTA has sponsored several great events this past month and we are always encouraged by the interest and enthusiasm exhibited by Aldrin parents and students! Thank you to everyone who attended and participated in these events.

The Town Hall meeting was very informative and we appreciate the time and effort that **Mr. Marinoff** and **Mrs. Miller** gave to all who attended. We hope you will be able to attend the next Town Hall Meeting on December 3 at 7:00p.m. in the Little Theatre.

A huge THANK YOU to all the wonderful Bingo night volunteers – more than 100 parents, teachers and students worked together to make this night fun and successful! We especially want to thank **Roslyn Aroesty**, **Sharon Keyes**, **Lee Fortna** and **Jackie Curran** for coordinating this event. **Sherry Wauben** also did a terrific job coordinating the bake sale to benefit the 4th grade Williamsburg field trip.

Thank you to **Ginny Lorenc**, **Maureen Newell** and **Jennifer Thomas** for the awesome Sally Foster sale, to **Bernadette Galloway** and **Cathy Patrick** for their ongoing hospitality work, to **Rhonda Rubin** for coordinating the student telephone directory and to **Brenda Williamson** for her Membership efforts. Look for a new bulletin board in December, listing all the current PTA members.

Our first Parent Education presentation, held before the November PTA meeting, was informative and well-attended. Thanks go to **Terri Phillips** for organizing it. Watch for information about additional presentations.

Next, because there has been some confusion about the fundraising efforts at Aldrin, we wanted to take this space to hopefully shed some light on this area. The PTA provides money for many worthwhile programs at Aldrin, including GRACE Art, Reflections, Odyssey of the Mind, \$15 per student for grade-level programs and materials and \$90 per teacher for staff development.

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Legislative Corner

Lee Fortna, our PTA Legislative representative, attended a Parent Advisory Council meeting in mid-October. The meeting was hosted by Dr. Daniel Domenech, FCPS Superintendent.

- **School Calendar.** Those attending the meeting (mostly FCPS PTA presidents) recommended that the following days be identified as makeup days for inclement weather if needed: January 27 (Day 2 of 2-day teacher workday), February 16 (President's Day), and April 2 (scheduled teacher workday before Spring Break). This recommendation still needs approval by the School Board.
- **New Publication.** The Office of the

Superintendent has published *Fairfax County Public Schools: Just the Facts*. Copies are available in the office at Aldrin and through the Office of the Superintendent (703.246.2991).

- **No Child Left Behind.** Dr. Domenech reviewed the Yearly Progress Report. Out of 185 schools, 184 met the Math achievement standard, and 181 met the English standard. Some participation standards were not met due to state exemptions from SOL testing which reduced the participation rate last year. More details can be found at www.fcps.edu/news/nclb.htm

► More PTA & School Board News

Minority Parent Advisory Council Meets

On October 20, the Cluster I Minority Parent Advisory Council met with Cluster Director Denny Dearden to discuss concerns for the 2003-04 school year.

Dearden encouraged parents to gather information from their schools to give administrators a snapshot of concerns.

Parent Advocacy

The meeting also included a presentation by Lavinia Dickerson, coordinator of the Office of Minority Student Achievement, on the *Advocacy Handbook for Parents*.

The 72-page book provides a K-12 road-map that can help parents steer their kids through each grade level.

The handbook, which is helpful for all parents, includes information on standardized tests, how to work with school administrators, homework issues and even tips on college planning.

Next Meeting

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for December 1 at the Dunn Loring Center, 2334 Gallows Road, at 7 p.m. It will feature a presentation on the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002.

Roz Fehr, an Aldrin parent, is our school's representative. If you have questions about the council or have issues you would like her to raise at a meeting, please contact her at 703.742.9536 or

What is the Minority Parent Advisory Council?

The council is made up of representatives from elementary, middle and high schools in Aldrin's "cluster". The Council's mission is to "advise the cluster director on issues [related to] improving the quality of education for all students with a particular emphasis on the minority population. The cluster director and . . . council will identify concerns and determine processes to address them."

Presidents' Note (continued from page 2)

To fund these activities, the PTA will sponsor three fundraising initiatives this year. We just completed the **Sally Foster giftwrap sale**. Next, we will have a **direct contribution campaign** – you will receive more information about this in a coming Tuesday Recorder. Finally, in February, the PTA will sponsor a **raffle** of class projects and teacher outings. We hope to raise \$15,000 from each of the next two fundraising initiatives.

The family events that the PTA organizes (including the Bingo Bash, Family Fun Dance and the Aldrin/Armstrong faculty basketball game) are designed to foster a sense of community at Aldrin and are not fundraisers per se.

Other fundraisers held throughout the year are **not** sponsored by the PTA. Mr. Marinoff directs money raised from the Outback Steakhouse Night and school pictures and year-book sales to instructional programs, often focusing on technology. The library runs the Book Fair and the SCA holds an Aldrin "SpiritWear" sale at the beginning of the year, as well as a bake sale and a Valentine's Day carnation or lollipop sale. (See the SCA and Library articles for details.) The 6th Grade Committee raises money for an end-of-year celebration for our sixth grade students. In the past, they sponsored a Skate Night, and sold food and drinks during family events and SpiritWear during the faculty basketball game.

We know that you get many requests to donate time and money and we appreciate all you do for Aldrin.

We hope you'll join your child for the Thanksgiving luncheon this week and browse the Book Fair afterwards. Enjoy your Thanksgiving holiday!

Stonni and Beth

Reflections

Thank you to everyone who submitted entries for the National PTA Reflections Program.

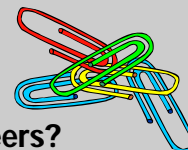


The projects look great and are being reviewed for interpretation by a panel of judges.

Participants will be recognized at the December 9th Winter Concert/Reflections Awards Ceremony. And everyone who entered will receive a Baskin Robbins Ice Cream certificate.

Great participation, Aldrin Eagles!

Office Volunteers?



We vitally need your help in the school office, mornings from 9-11.

Most volunteers help out every other week, but we can easily accommodate your schedule.

It's a great way to meet the school staff, tasks are varied, and training is provided.

Please contact the Office Volunteer Coordinator, **Danny Burk**, at 703-668-0344.



GRACE Notes

Each month, our parent volunteer docents are "gracing" classrooms with monthly art appreciation lessons!

October featured the 20th century Superrealism movement. November brings traditional Japanese art into the classrooms. Look for some great art coming home!

Beardon on Display

Your children may remember making a photo collage inspired by Romare Bearden last Spring in GRACE Art.

An impressive retrospective of this African-American painter and collageist is a huge hit at the East Wing of the National Gallery of Art and can be seen until January 4th.

A children's brochure is available at the exhibit entrance.

Volunteers Needed!

At press time, several classes still need volunteers. No art education experience is necessary and you can participate as frequently as you like.

Please help the children in the following classes: Mrs. Keyser (p.m.), Mrs. Lewis, Ms. Peluso, Mrs. Pierucini, Mr. Carpenter and Mrs. Wood. Please contact

Jean McDougall at 703.904.9848 or mcdougallfamily@comcast.net.

► All Around Aldrin

Town Hall Meeting Opens New Communication Forum

On October 14, several dozen parents and teachers met with Mr. Marinoff and Mrs. Miller in the school's first Town Hall Meeting.

"I wanted to create a forum for two-way communication. It's important that all of us hear from each other about what's on our minds," said Mr. Marinoff.

More Enrichment

To start the meeting, those who attended learned more about some of the efforts underway to provide additional learning opportunities to students.

These included a pilot enrichment program being developed with Eileen Dunne (Aldrin's Gifted and Talented specialist) and the PTA, and a student literary newsletter that the PTA is reviving.

The importance of integrating these activities with the regular curriculum was a recurring theme.

Testing and Staffing

Parents raised questions about the impact

of No Child Left Behind legislation and SOL scores, as well as how the school addresses the performance of children who pass, but only marginally.

Test-taking skills and communicating with parents about their children's test performance were also topics of interest.

Mr. Marinoff also gave some insight into the process used to determine teacher and specialist staffing levels.

Focus Areas

When asked what areas at

Aldrin need improvement, Mr. Marinoff replied, "Like most schools, we need to explore how we can provide better differentiation in instruction so that each child gets what he or she needs. It's a challenge for every educator."

He also noted that we need to work on better communication between parents and teachers, and on using technology more effectively as a tool and a way of teaching.

"We need to explore how we can provide our students better differentiation in instruction"

Bingo & Chili Bash (cont'd from page 1)

6th Grade Caters to a Crowd

No party is complete without food, and **Lee Fortna, Jackie Curran**, and 78 sixth grade students and family volunteers certainly served up.

In fact, they organized the food and then dished out 250 bowls of chili, 300 hot dogs and more than 600 drinks.

In return, a portion of the proceeds will go to year-end 6th grade events. Profits also funded the hot red T-shirts that the 6th graders wore to the event. (Thank you, **Liz Williams** for making that happen with such short notice.)

4th Grade Feeds the Sweet Tooth

The sweets table was a hopping place, too, as the evening wore on. **Sherry Wauben** coordinated the efforts of a host of 4th grade families who baked, bought and sold cookies, brownies and treats galore. Their efforts netted them \$400 to help off-set the costs of the 4th grade Williamsburg trip.

So, how long does it take you to clean up after a party? In just 55 minutes, the volunteer clean-up team returned Aldrin's cafeteria and gymnasium to normal. They were so thorough, only eight beans have been found on the gym floor since!

Sharing the Joy of Books and Reading

19 years and counting. That's how long Aldrin's Librarian, Mrs. Linda Morris, has been working in elementary school libraries.

For the last eight years, Mrs. Morris has been meeting with our children right here at Aldrin. She reads to them, helps them select books for general reading or special projects, and teaches them how to use a library.

"After all these years, I'm still not bored," she said. "Things keep changing. Now the children learn how to find a specific book using our library software on the computer. Hard for a lot of parents to imagine, but this school has never had a card catalog!"



Mrs. Morris, Aldrin's Librarian

Adding to the Collection

When she doesn't have a class in the library, Mrs. Morris may be pulling resources for teachers, or researching new additions. Aldrin's library already has more than 12,000 books, and Mrs. Morris adds hundreds of new ones every year.

"I try to focus on a theme each year. This year, I'm working on our social sciences collection, updating our country books."

Aldrin's library also includes a collection of periodicals and newspapers. In addition, a Parenting section contains many books and other resources that Aldrin parents can browse and check out.

Funding "Extras" through the Book Fair

This time of year is particularly busy in the library, as the annual Book Fair is staged.

75 Authors/Illustrators Everyone Should Know

In honor of Children's Book Week (November 17-23), forget about *Stuart Little* and *Winnie the Pooh*, and pick up a children's book that you've never read before.

A great place to start is www.cbcbooks.org/html/75authors.html.

This list was originally compiled for the 75th anniversary of National Children's Book Week and is meant to introduce children, and the adults who care for them, to newer children's literature. Perhaps you'll discover a new favorite!



Fall Book Fair Ends This Week

Your children have selected their books. Now it's your chance to pick up a few to recognize good grades or just set aside for the holidays.

You can visit the Book Fair in Aldrin's library during the Thanksgiving lunch on Wednesday, or at Parents Night, Thursday from 5:30-8 p.m.

Proceeds from every book sold is added to Mrs. Morris' budget. This year, profits will be used to purchase upgraded TV studio equipment.

Mrs. Morris enthused, "We are very excited about getting our student broadcasting started up again. New equipment will make things so much easier for the children to produce and broadcast."

Creating Book Lovers

Mrs. Morris remembers devouring books as a child and works hard to encourage Aldrin readers. Her *Top Three* for parents? Let your children see you read. Read to them (even when they can read by themselves!) And teach your children to **care** for books. (One imagines she means inside the book and outside — those bindings don't last forever!)

Neat Sites for Students

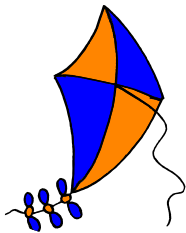
Did you know that you can search **Aldrin's library** from your own computer? Just visit: <http://libcat.fcps.edu/uhtbin/cgiirsi/x/0/57/49?userid=305WEB>

You can easily search a **database of periodicals** in this site created just for kids: <http://discoverer.sirs.com>

For a **fabulous encyclopedia** truly at your fingertips, check out: <http://go.grolier.com> Sign in with the username and password "fairfax" and you'll have access to it all.

The **U.S. government** has a kids portal to federal sites and more at: www.kids.gov

Sally Foster Fund-raiser Flies High!



Thanks to your support, the Buzz Aldrin PTA earned over \$14,000 from Sally Foster sales. This surpasses both last year's profit and our 2003 target.

The Top Dog, 3rd grader Willie Williams, enjoyed a celebratory pizza lunch with Jake Shor, Abbas Idris, Tyler Hartz, and AP Mrs. Miller.

Sally Foster coordinators, **Ginny Lorenc**, Maureen **Newell** and Jennifer **Thomas** organized a fantastic sale, and want to thank our parent volunteers — **Ros Aroesty**, **Kim Casson**, **Bernadette Galloway**, **Kerry Kelly**, **Susie Metz** and **Alicia Schmitt**.

Aldrin families, you have done a great job making this year's Sally Foster a flying success!

Just a reminder, you can continue to place orders online at sallyfoster.com (school code 0290077) through January 15, 2004.

Still Waiting for Your Volunteer Badge?

We still have several photos without names.

Drop by the office soon to see if you're on our "Most Wanted" list. As soon as we have your name, we'll finish your badge and get it to you!

► All Around Aldrin

SCA Working for a Better School Environment

Each month, a group of Aldrin students meet to discuss and decide issues important to the student community.

The group is the Student Council Association (SCA), and it's composed of two representatives from each class at Aldrin, as well as several student officers elected by the whole student body.

At a typical meeting, the members might propose and vote on themes for the next month's Spirit

Day, organize tasks for an upcoming fundraiser, or discuss how to promote a planned charitable activity.

The SCA focuses on projects that help the school, students, faculty, administration and the community. Over the years, the

SCA has raised funds to purchase tricycles for Aldrin pre-schoolers, garden tools that can be used by classes, the benches in the front and back entrances of the school, the Aldrin Eagle welcome mats inside the school, and much more.

The SCA also sponsors the food, clothing and toy drives that allow Aldrin students to give back to the community each Fall.

School counselors Jamie Mahoney and Tracy Stewart coach the council, encouraging their

understanding of the democratic process.

"The kids takes their roles very seriously. They work hard to increase student involvement and school pride," says Mahoney. "It's an excellent learning experience."



Buzz Aldrin's SCA, with many representatives dressed as their favorite book characters for October's Spirit Day.

Aldrin Students to Take an Odyssey of the Mind



Millions of children over the last twenty years have taken a marvelous trip through the challenges and delights of creative problem-solving. Now, Aldrin students are going to have the chance as well.

Thanks to Aldrin parent, **Danny Burk**, and the support of the PTA, an Odyssey of the Mind program is being launched this month. We'll need about a dozen students and several adults to coach and judge.

Then, for several months, the kids will meet regularly to solve the problem. In the process, they'll exercise their ingenuity, stretch their creativity, develop team skills, and have a lot of fun. (What kinds of problem will they try to solve? Check out <http://odysseyofthemind.com> to learn more.)

Full details are included in this week's Tuesday Recorder. If you or your child is interested, be sure to return the bottom of the flyer by November 24! First meeting for teams and coaches is December 2 at 6:30 pm.

► Helping Our Children Learn

Making Progress Reports a Positive Experience

When you open up your child's backpack this evening, amidst all the papers, the one item that will likely get your quickest attention is your child's progress report.

Preparation

Ideally, you've already met with your child's teacher and you have a good idea of the progress your child is making.

It's also a good idea to talk with your child before the report comes home.

Ask, "What do you think your progress report will tell us?" Then let your child tell you if he or she expects any problems. Even if your child does well in school, he or she may be nervous about a certain mark. Getting ready is helpful.

Perspective

A progress report is just one small measure of your child. There have been other reports in the past and there will be more in the future.

A child who gets all "A"s or "O"s still has plenty to learn. And a child with poor marks still has plenty of strengths — and it is this, perhaps, that parents with high standards have to keep in mind most.

Positive Action

Talk with your child about each mark—calmly. Does she know why she got that mark? Can she explain it to you? What

does she think needs to be done?

Think of the progress report as a chance to take positive action. Find something to praise—attendance, attitude, improvement. Then focus on areas that can lead to improvement. Ask how you can help.

Taking Action

"Marks are not a measure of a child's worth, just a picture of current school performance."

Most children will receive progress reports that contain less than perfect marks at some point in their education. There are things you can do to help make a difference.

Talk with the teacher to get her views on needed improvements and suggestions

for ways to improve.

Find out what help your school offers. Additional in-school services or after-school tutoring may be available.

Consider getting outside help. Perhaps an older student will work with your child. It's an excellent way for the older child to fulfill his or her school service requirements.

Remember that progress reports highlight only a few things. They can't tell about your child's dreams or ambitions or what she will become in the future. Marks are not a measure of a child's worth, just a picture of current school performance.

Adapted with permission from material compiled by The Parent Institute newsletters

Elementary School Progress Reports

In Fairfax County, student marks are not based on a numerical calculating scale. (For example, an *A* or *O* does not translate into a "90 or better".)

Academic **progress** is the focus of the reports. Students receive one mark for Achievement and the other for Effort.

Achievement marks are based on progress in learning the concepts studied, the skills and processes needed to learn that subject and ability to apply the knowledge.

Effort marks are based on initiative and participation.

For more information on marking, contact your child's teacher.

Did You Know?

Did you know that November is National Good Nutrition Month?

Curiously though, November also boasts:

- National Bittersweet Chocolate with Almonds Day,
- National Pizza with the Works except Anchovies Day,
- National Indian Pudding Day,
- National Cashew Day,
- and National Parfait Day.

Appropriately enough, November 15 is also National Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day.

Reward Your Child for Reaching Goals

First off, keep in mind that the idea is to build your child's esteem by creating goals that are achievable in a reasonable period of time! Once you've decided on the goals and the reward, post them on the fridge or anywhere you'll see them regularly.

When your child reaches a goal, reward her immediately! Give her a hug. Photograph her as she achieves the goal. Note it in a special achievements journal. Or head out for an activity (ice cream, bowling, a bicycle ride together) the whole family can enjoy.



Mark Your Calendars

November 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	Parent-Teacher Meetings No School		5 GRACE Art volunteers mtg., 7 p.m., Aldrin	6	7	8
9	10	11 PTA Meeting, 1 p.m., Aldrin	12	13	14 Fifth Grade Trip Book Fair Begins Reflections entries due	
16	17	18 Progress Reports Go Home	19 Thanksgiving Luncheon & Book Fair	20 Book Fair— Parent Night PTA "It's A Family Affair" Fundraiser Launches		21 Book Fair Ends
23	24	25	26 School dismisses 2 hours early	Thanksgiving Holidays		29
30						

December 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Town Hall Meeting, 7 pm	4 Human Growth & Dev't—Parent Review, 7 pm	5	6
7	8	9 Winter Con- cert & Reflections ceremony, 2:45- 3:45, Aldrin	10	11 Winter Con- cert (parents) 7:30 pm, Aldrin	12	13
14	15	16 6th Grade Winter Concert 11:30-12:30, Hyatt	17	18 5th Grade Winter Concert 11:30-12:30, Hyatt	19	20
21	Winter Vacation—School Resumes January 5, 2004					27
28						