

Honor Guard helps local community, uses muscle for playground building

A few of them stood in the shade drinking cranberry juice, taking a break from the wrath of the hot sun. The job wasn't finished, but their efforts helped make the mountain a mole hill.

Their accomplishments have been many, but this wasn't just another playground they helped build. "It feels good helping someone else," said A1C William Keyes, a U.S. Air Force ceremonial Honor Guardsman. "Someday, I'd like to come back and see the children playing here."

"It's been a hard day," said A1C Edward J. Mixon, "but it's really been worth the effort."

Airmen Keyes and Mixon plus several other members from the Honor Guard, spent April 18 in Arlington, Va., helping the Abingdon community build a new playground.

"We wouldn't have been this far without the Air Force," said Barbara Effron, coordinator. "Most of our people aren't in the physical condition they are."

The guardsman, experienced at building playgrounds, used their muscle setting up the basic structures during the first of four days planned for the park's erection. They joined over 1,000 volunteers from the community.

The need for a new playground arose with the merger of Abingdon Elementary School with Claremont Elementary School. "We needed this project to merge the neighborhoods," Mrs. Effron said. "We feel we're building more than just a playground."

The children helped design the playground created by Robert Leathers, a specialist in playground design. The design included handicapped access. "The children wrote songs and essays, and made models describing what they wanted the playground to be like," Mrs. Effron said. "Mr. Leathers

took their ideas and designed the playground."

But designs don't build playgrounds; people do. "We could have just raised the money and paid to have it built," Mrs. Effron said, "but we wanted to get people involved."

The coordinators began getting commitments, then formed seven committees, including a volunteers committee. They ran into problems getting group commitments until they contacted the Honor Guard. "They have such a great attitude about helping," Mrs. Effron said. "We know how hard the job is. Their help makes us feel good about everything."

"They're tremendous," agreed Lt. Col. Dennis Wightman, one of many military residents in the community. "If they hadn't shown up, I'd be 10 years older. They've represented the Air Force well."

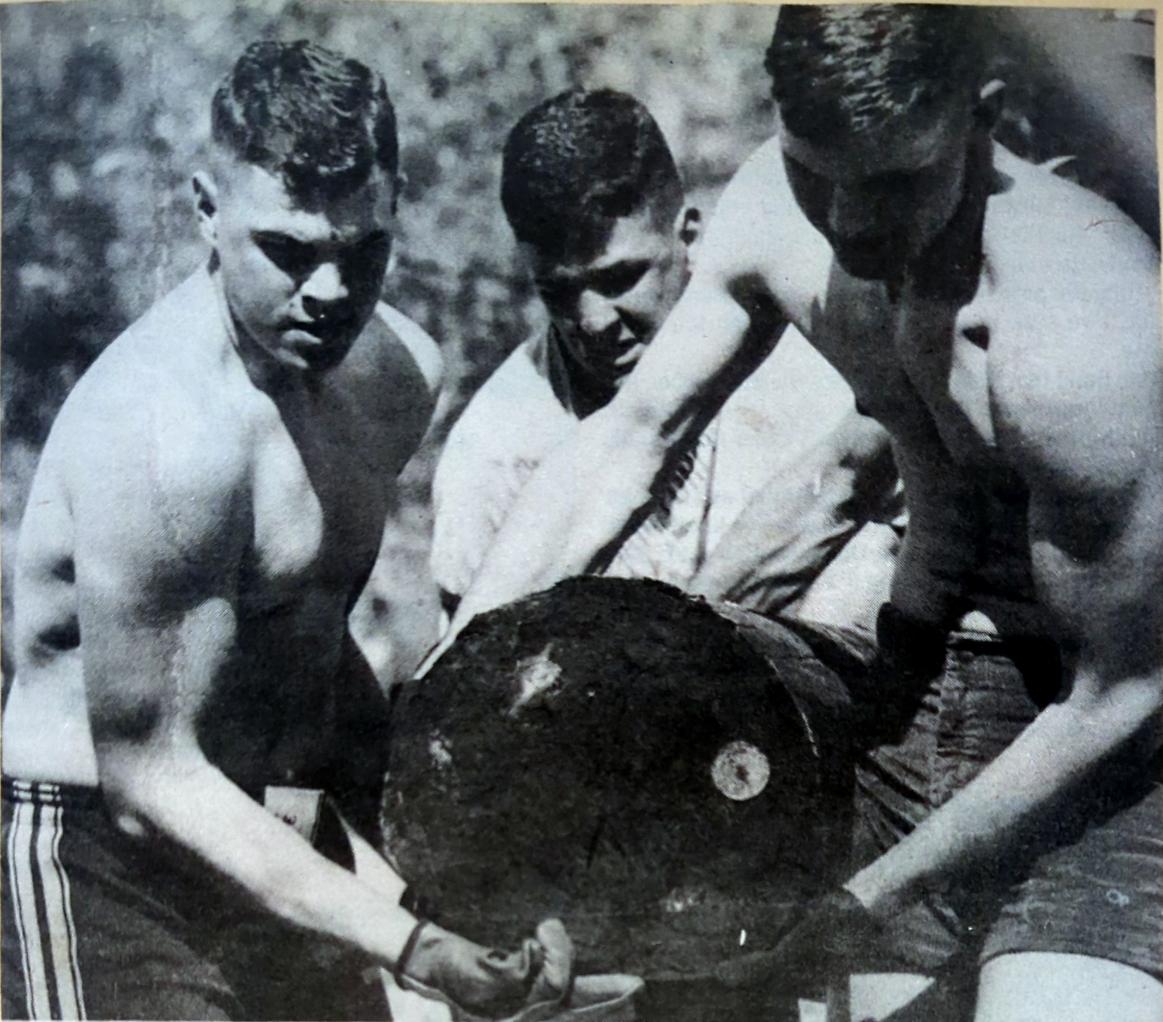
The Honor Guardsmen volunteering their time along with Airmen Keyes and Mixon were: 1st Lt. Tery L. Donelson; SSgts. Talib Ali, Robert E. Brown and Walter C. Payne; Sgts. Kenneth R. Horne, Kenneth E. Mallard and William C. Burdett.

Other volunteers were: SrAs. David Dudenhoeffer and Troy Ferber; A1Cs Michael Feltenberger, Steven M. Manning, Eric C. Elsenbroek, George M.J. Delgado, Chauncey Stewart, David E. Wasem, Michael Steinkraus, John W. Callery, Victor A. Araujo, Randy Etherington, Glen A. Hensley, William T. Fearnley, Brian L. Gage, Raymond Bulka and Robert K. Goddard.

Others were Amn. Daniel E. Allmond and Amn. Donald P. Deacy Jr.

by A1C Scott Davis
1100th ABW Public Affairs





U.S. Air Force photos by Sgt. John Chew, Det. 4, 1361st AV

Above, Carrying a log, from left are, A1C Brian Gage, A1C George Delgado and Amn. Daniel E. Allmond. Right, A1C John Frock shovels dirt into a wheelbarrow, and far right, a local youth scrubs one of the playground's tires.





Left, Standing up a post from left are Sgt. Kenneth Mallard, and A1Cs Brian Gage, William Fearnley and George Delgado. Bottom, from left, SRA. David Dudenhoeffer, A1Cs Robert Goddard and Steven Manning, Airman Delgado plus A1Cs Glen Hensley, Victor Araujo and Raymond Bulka lift a log.



CAROUSEL

CAPITAL CHILDREN'S MUSEUM — Daily, 10 to 5, 800 Third St. NE. Saturday and Sunday, museum hours, "See a Hologram," find out how still pictures can seem to move. Museum admission, \$2. 543-8600.

DOLL'S HOUSE AND TOY MUSEUM — Tuesday through Saturday, 10 to 5; Sunday, noon to 5, 5236 44th St. NW. Antique dollhouses, dolls, toys, games and an exhibit of antique cat games and toys. Adults \$2; under 14, \$1; group rates available. 244-0024.

NATIONAL COLONIAL FARM — Tuesday through Sunday, 10 to 5, 3400 Bryan Point Rd., Accokeek. Sunday, 1 to 4, "Straw Hat Making." Learn to make a hat the old-fashioned way. Adults \$1; children under 12, free. 301/283-2113. check release

RAILROAD STATION MUSEUM — Wednesday through Saturday, 11 to 4; Sunday, noon to 5, Main Street and Maryland Avenue, Ellicott City. The renovated station has a diorama of the trip of Tom Thumb (an early 19th-century train) from Baltimore to Ellicott City. There are also sight and sound shows, model train exhibits and tours of the museum. Adults \$1.25; under 13, 75 cents. 301/461-1944.

BUILD A BETTER PLAYGROUND — Friday-Sunday, 7:30 to sundown, Abingdon Elementary School, 3035 S. Abingdon St., Arlington. Lend a hand in a modern-day barn raising by volunteering to help construct a playground; kids can sand wood and clean tires in a special area set up beside the work site. Entertainment, lunch and childcare provided. 845-7664 or 931-6186.

ANACOSTIA NEIGHBORHOOD MUSEUM — Friday 10 to 6; Saturday and Sunday, 1 to 6, 2405 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE. Afro-American history lectures to ages four through eight as well as group tours and teaching services. 287-3369.

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FRIDAY

April 19, 1985



25 cents

Working for a playground

For pupils, parents and teachers at Abingdon Elementary School, love can be found in an old tire

Kevin Dublin went to school Thursday smiling, ready to work. But not in his classroom.

The 9-year-old fourth-grader lugged his books into school, as usual, but more importantly carried rainboots, sandpaper and rubber gloves for use the next two days.

Like the other 649 students at Abingdon Elementary School, for 30 minutes Kevin got to close his books, put on his work boots and roll up his sleeves to work alongside parents, teachers and other residents of south Arlington on building a playground at the school.

"I'm so happy," Kevin said with a big smile on his face. "It feels exciting to know you're going to have a new playground," Kevin said as he vigorously scrubbed a dirty tire.

In a four-day, 12-hour "playground raising," more than 1,000 volunteers from the Fairlington, Shirlington and Claremont communities in Arlington will join forces to transform the grounds of the school into a creative play area and outdoor theatre.

The playground will be designed in the shape of the U.S. Sitting on a hill, the site has the Capitol and Washington Monument in the background as its shadow.

An amphitheater, tire-mazes, castles, slides, structures and special features for the handicapped will be its most notable features.

The playground will appeal to children ranging from pre-school through elementary school, organizers said. About 175 students will be able to play there at any one time.

Students dressed in jeans, sneakers and T-shirts Thursday sat around on the hill or stood around splashing water when their teachers and aides were not looking. But for the most part they tried to put a sparkle on the tires they were cleaning for the maze.

Today, they will get another "work-break" to sand wood in an area separated from the rest of the volunteer workers and heavily supervised.

It was a family outing of sorts for the Miakar family. Seven-year-old Julie sat on a hill scrubbing a tire alongside her classmates. A few feet away her mother helped supervise the children.

Her father, William, took the day off from work and was at the school from 7:30 a.m. sanding wood. The family plans to be there working all weekend.

"It's amazing to see what's going to happen and watching the transformation," said Paulette Miakar, a kindergarten aide at Abingdon.

Organizers said the project has been the most successful program to unite the Abingdon and Claremont communities since the closing of Claremont Elementary School two years ago and the subsequent merger.

The overall cost of the project is \$30,000. The bill has been footed by donations from local civic groups, area businesses, friends, neighbors and relatives.

The Arlington County Board supplied \$5,000 from its coffers in the form of a small parks grant.

New York architect Robert Leathers, who has achieved a national reputation for his community playground-raising projects, said the real cost of the playground would be more than \$90,000, but two-thirds of the cost will be cut by using volunteers and donated tools and materials. The only commercially bought item will be a circular slide.

There is something for everybody to do, from serving on phone squads and registering volunteers to providing food and child care for the field workers.

In the field, skilled workers will be paired with two or three unskilled workers.

"This experience of working together on a cooperative project like this will provide a valuable lesson in civic action" for the children and their parents, said Judi Garth, spokesperson for the Abingdon Community Playground-Raising Committee.



Walter Payne reflects on work accomplished by the volunteers.



Xuyen Ma, 12, joins the mass scrub.



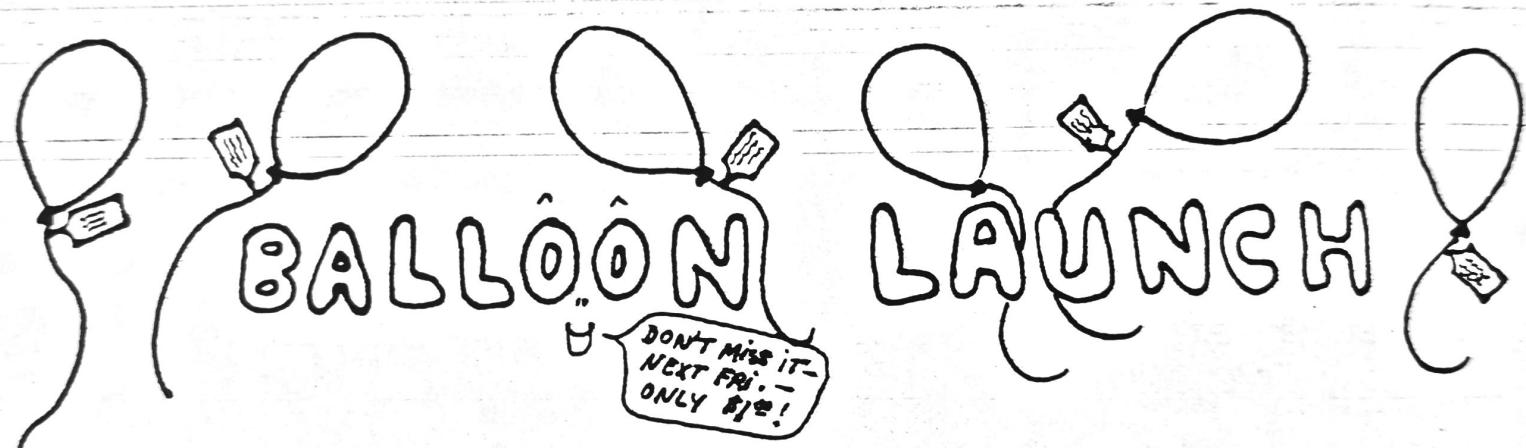
Tires, tires, everywhere. There was no shortage of projects at the Abingdon Elementary playground.

WE BUILT IT TOGETHER!

Through the efforts of more than 1,000 people, we have a beautiful new playground. The Abingdon PTA Playground Committee wishes to thank everyone whose contributions made our children's dream come true!

The Playground will be dedicated

Saturday, May 4, at 1:00 PM.



Next Friday (May 3), as part of the playground dedication, the PTA is sponsoring a BALLOON LAUNCH. For \$1 students may launch a helium balloon with a card attached, requesting that whoever finds it send the card back to Abingdon. The child whose balloon card gets sent back from the farthest point during the two weeks following the launch will win a \$25 gift certificate to Toys R Us.

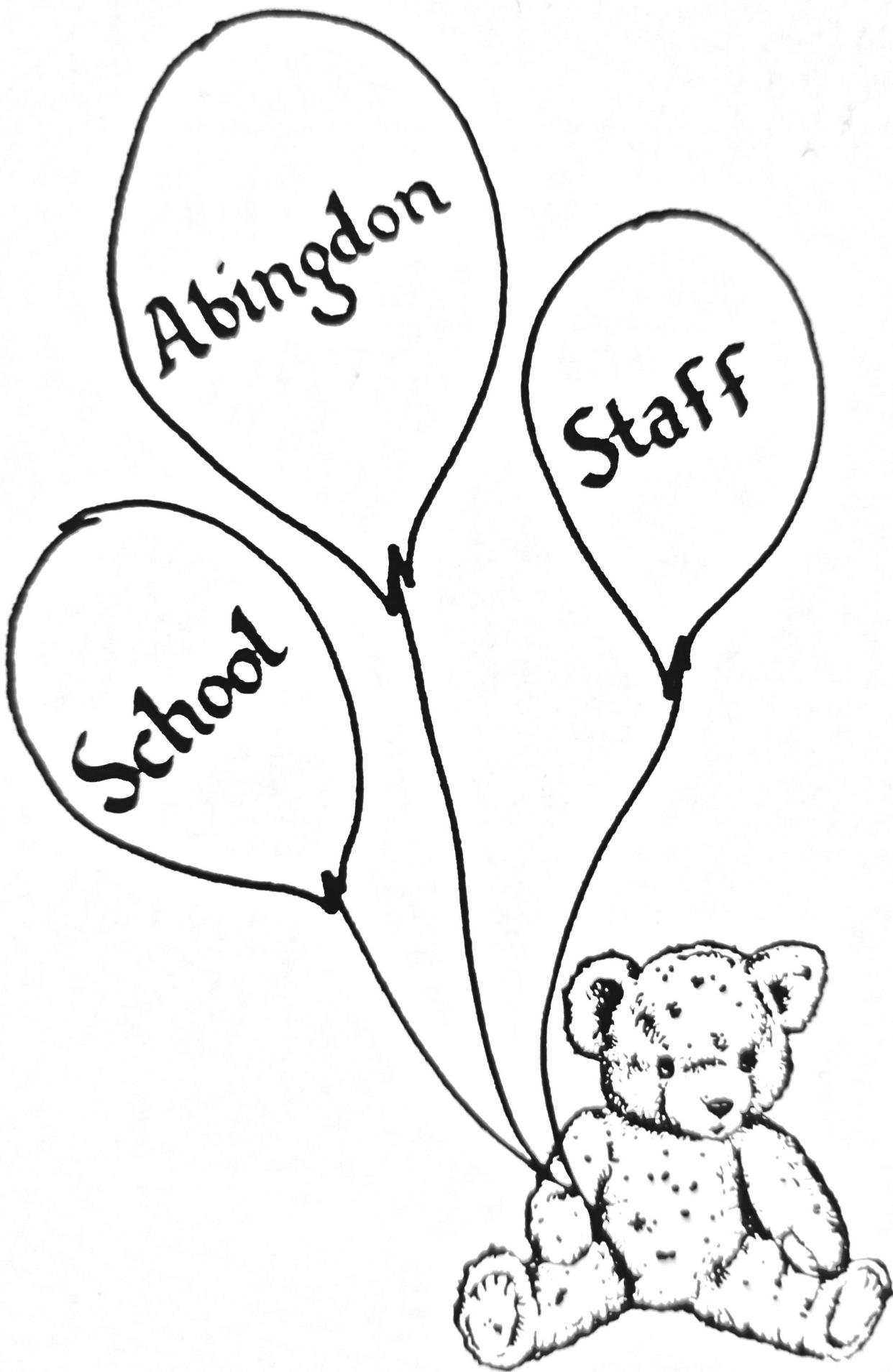
Children may buy as many balloons as they wish. Parents, friends and relatives may also purchase balloons to be launched by their Abingdon student.

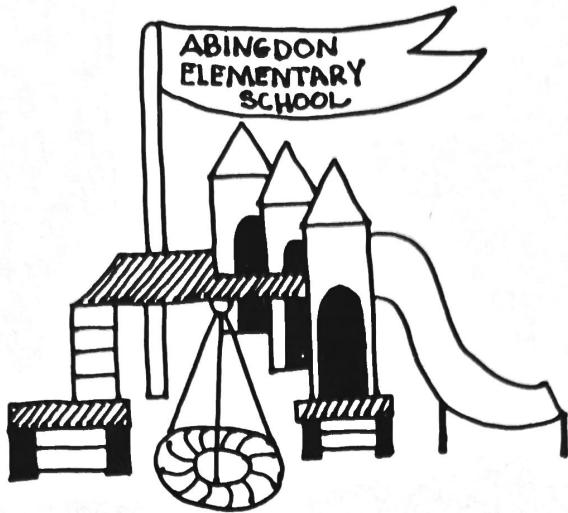
Dollars will be collected by your child's teacher Monday through Thursday of next week.

On Friday afternoon Abingdon students will take all the balloons they bought out to the track and we will release them all at the same time! So send those dollars in and watch for a skyful of balloons at 2:30 next Friday!

NOTE TO A.M. KINDERGARTEN PARENTS

A.m. kindergarteners who are in extended day will be brought out to the track to participate in the launch. Parents of non-extended-day kindergarteners are invited to bring them to their classrooms at 2 p.m. on Friday and are requested to remain with their children for the launch and dedication.





Dear Friends of Abingdon School:

You are cordially invited to attend
the dedication of the new Abingdon
Playground, and All Fairlington Day
sponsored by the Fairlington Citizens
Association.

Saturday, May 4, 1985

All Fairlington Day -
including Craft Fair,
music, "moon bounce" (50¢)
and refreshments.

12:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Playground Dedication Ceremony

1:00 p.m.

Rain Date: Sunday
May 5th

All children must
be accompanied
by an adult.



In appreciation of your support
for the Abingdon Playground,
we cordially invite you to be
part of the dedication ceremonies
and celebration.

Saturday, May 4, 1985

Dedication Ceremony
1:00 p.m.

All Fairlington Day ~
including craft fair,
entertainment and
refreshments ~

12:00 ~ 4:00 p.m.

School Address:
3035 South Abingdon

Rain Date:
Sunday, May 5th

the all-fairlington **BULLETIN**

It's ALL FAIRLINGTON DAY

Volume IX, No. 5, May 1, 1985

FANTASTIC FUN ALL-FAIRLINGTON DAY---MAY 4! As they say in the big-time promotions: "Months in planning--unique in its appeal--something for all ages!" That's true for the 1985 All-Fairlington Day, too. On Saturday, May 4, from Noon to 4 p.m., the entire Fairlington community is invited to enjoy the fun, food, entertainment and celebration sponsored by the Fairlington Citizens Association, being held at the Abingdon School and Playground.

The beautiful new community-built playground will be dedicated at 1 p.m. County Board members and schools officials have been invited to participate, including School Board Chairperson Gail Nuckles, the new Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Arthur Gosling, and Abingdon School Principal Margaret McCourt-Dirner. Ms. Pauline Flynn, chairperson of the Arlington Parks and Recreation Commission, and FCA President Amy Plevin also are scheduled for the ceremonies. Certificates of Achievement for outstanding service to the Fairlington Community will be presented, as well.

Entertainment is a big part of the day. A professional clown will do tricks and perform stunts; Abingdon School's "talent pool" will demonstrate break-dancing and sing special songs, and a "Moon Bouncing Machine" will be set up for kids (or daring adults) to test their balance, agility and resilience.

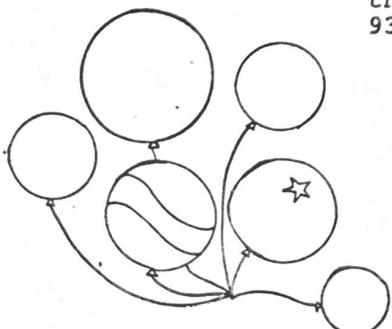
Prefer something a little less active? A crafts fair featuring the work of more than a dozen of Fairlington's skilled craftspeople will display sale items as varied as pottery, wooden cutting boards, soft-sculpture dolls and toy animals, watercolor paintings, personalized lithographs, greeting cards, crocheted afghans, fabric baskets and padded boxes, stained glass, antique dolls, and dried flower arrangements.

Hungry? Have a hotdog -- or two or three -- and lemonade, popcorn, soda, or a snow cone.

Come to browse, listen, bounce, eat, or be entertained. But do come!

What if it should rain? Heaven forbid -- but the next day, May 5, is our rain date.

WHAT A WEEKEND--ACT II: 8th Annual FCA Run. May 5th will see neighborhood runners demonstrate their speed and style in the eighth annual one-mile and four-mile events sponsored by the FCA. There is no entry fee, and all runners are welcome. The one-mile run will begin at 8 a.m. at the corner of 34th & 36th Sts. (That is, at the south end of the bridge over I-395 leading from Abingdon St.) The four-mile event will start between 8:10 and 8:15 a.m. and essentially will be three laps over a 1 1/3 mile course. As many as 45 runners have participated in the past. The time records now stand at 4:22 for the mile and 21:15 for the four-miler. Sentries are needed and welcome. Call Art Amchan at 931-8520.



ABINGDON CARDINAL



Your PTA Newsletter

May



I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to Barbara and Andy Effron. Their sincere interest and loyalty to Abingdon Elementary School has provided the impetus through which our playground project has been completed. Both Barbara and Andy have dedicated an entire year, including weekends, evenings, and holidays to insure the success of this construction. For the children, staff and parents of Abingdon, I say thank you.

The Effron family has done more than build a playground, however. They have provided this school community with a positive, hard-working example of civic involvement that will foster a sense of community pride in all Abingdon students. Many learning opportunities take place during a school year. Barbara, Andy, Robin and Michael Effron have provided our students with the ultimate educational experience by showing that sacrifice, organization and tenacity can lead to success. For this lesson, we can give no better thank you than to follow their outstanding model.

Margaret McCourt-Dirner
Principal

THANKS TO YOU, WE BUILT THE PLAYGROUND!

Over 1,000 people joined together April 18-21 to make our school's dream come true. The beautiful weather and vibrant school spirit made for a wonderful weekend. The dedication book you received last month is but a small token of appreciation for all who participated.

On May 3, a dedication ceremony was held in the school, featuring a balloon launch, outstanding performances by the chorus and band, preparation of the time capsule (to be opened in the year 2000!), and planting a new tree near the playground.

A community-wide dedication took place on Saturday, May 4. Hundreds of Abingdon families and neighbors joined for food, games, break-dancing, and a very special ceremony. Among the many dignitaries who came to honor our playground-raising were County Board Chairman John Milliken, Board members Al Eisenberg and Mike Brunner, School Board Chairman Gail Nuckols, and our new Superintendent, Dr. Arthur Gosling. Many thanks to the Fairlington Citizens Association for cosponsoring this celebration.

Effrons Say "Thanks"

It was wonderful for the PTA to contribute four new rocking chairs to the library in honor of the playground dedication, and it was very kind of you to add a plaque with such nice words about our family. The honor belongs to Abingdon's children, parents, teachers, and staff who worked so hard to build something beautiful for our school. It was our pleasure to share this experience with so many dedicated neighbors. We undertook this effort because we knew that Abingdon had the talent and spirit to make it happen, and the success of the playground-raising is a tribute to the entire school.

Barbara and Andy Effron