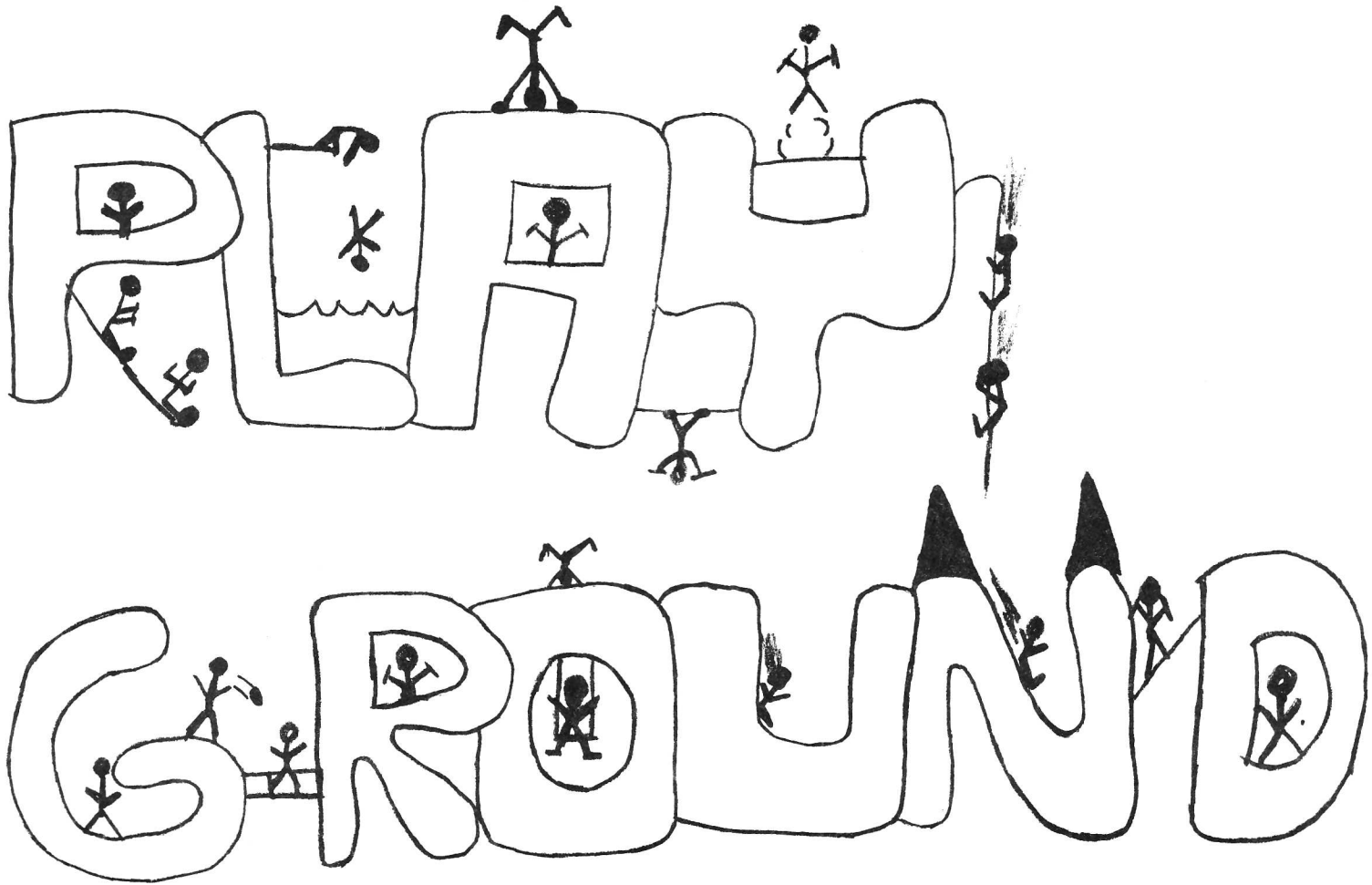


THE  
ABINGDON COMMUNITY



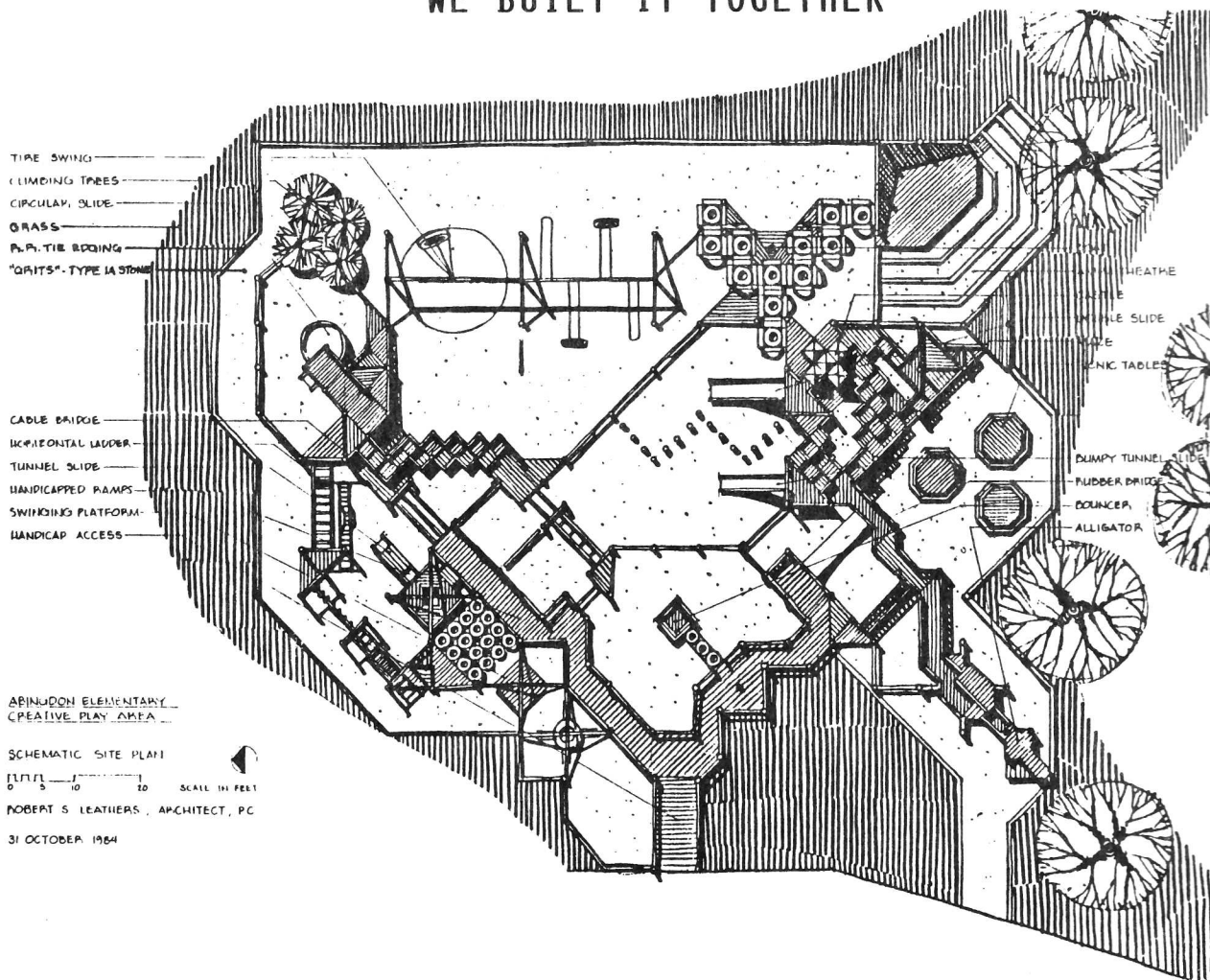
DEDICATION  
MAY 4, 1985

## ABINGDON'S UNIQUE PLAYGROUND DESIGN

Our architect is Mr. Robert Leathers, who has achieved a national reputation by pioneering the concept of community playground-raising. In October, he met with Abingdon's children, staff, and neighbors to prepare a final design based upon the student's ideas. Over the following months, the Core Committee, Mr. Leathers, and his staff refined the plans to produce the design you see today.

Both the Capitol and the Washington Monument can be seen from Abingdon, so it's not surprising that the children suggested that Abingdon's unique design be in the shape of the United States. The primary features of the playground developed by the children with Mr. Leathers reflect their social studies lessons -- "Florida" is in the shape of an alligator; the "National Capital Area" features monuments, mazes, and castles; "New York" has a theater; the "Great Lakes" have a boat; and the "Rockies" have climbing structures!

## WE BUILT IT TOGETHER



A very special thanks to Sarah Chikes for the cover design, to Whitney Bland for the illustrations throughout the booklet, to Travis Wright for illustrating the Volunteer Brochure and other playground flyers and to Caryl Williams, for being there when we needed her.

## DEDICATION

One year ago I entertained the idea of coordinating a playground-raising. I wanted to do something special for my children and for our neighborhood school. In addition, I wanted to do something for the community that I love.

Many people were interested in building a Robert Leathers playground, but they were worried whether we could accomplish such a monumental task. "This is not the age of the volunteer," warned friends and neighbors. Certainly we live in a busy age where people have numerous demands on their time. We have many single-parent families, and many families where mother and father work full-time. People are busy with numerous interests in addition to raising their children.

Despite these facts, numerous people volunteered their time and effort to build this special place. In fact, every chairman of the seven playground committees held full or part-time jobs. In response to our initial appeal, we soon had enough people to form all the committees. All who worked gave credence to the old adage, "To get a job done, ask a busy person." As the months passed by, more and more people became involved. With everybody doing something, whether large or small, we were able to plan for construction.

So many people have helped with this project that it is difficult to thank them enough. The Core Committee (consisting of the coordinator of each committee) provided the backbone for the project. With their committee members, the Core Committee insured that each area's requirements were met. Our Principal, Margaret McCourt-Dirner, gave us continual help, guidance, support, and encouragement. Her contacts within Arlington County were invaluable.

All of the teachers at Abingdon provided tremendous help. They transferred their enthusiasm for this project to the students, who in turn involved their parents. Furthermore, they remained patient and flexible from the onset at Design Day throughout construction, despite the additional burdens the playground imposed on their busy schedules.

The playground provided the teachers with a unique focus for the academic curriculum. The children wrote essays about their ideal playground and even composed songs with the music teachers. Our Art teacher, Caryl Williams, incorporated the playground theme in her art lessons. The school was filled with wonderful drawings in a variety of media and models of ideal playgrounds. She helped the children design playground posters that helped advertise our playground-raising. She even assisted with the cover of this booklet.

The entire office staff made everything we did go more smoothly. They accepted extra clerical work and other related tasks in addition to their daily work. Betty Sterns helped us so much that some of the committees thought that she was one of their members! The executive board of the PTA helped throughout the project. Our President, Ginny Klarquist, graciously accepted the job of processing our Buy-A-Board contributions.

My husband, Andy, deserves particular mention (and I had to override his objections to this paragraph!) In addition to chairing the fundraising committee, he was my constant advisor and full-time assistant.

At the conclusion of our playground-raising we will have given our children more than a dreamplace to play. All of us who have dedicated our time and effort, whether it be a few hours or months, have taught our children an invaluable lesson in civic involvement. Our actions have set a beautiful example in sharing, planning, and persevering towards a common goal. We have shown them that hard work and careful preparation can result in something special. Your participation has demonstrated the depth of your community spirit and pride in our neighborhood school.

I am honored to have worked with so many wonderful people in making our dream come true. THANK YOU!

Barbara L. Effron, General Coordinator

**ABINGDON COMMUNITY PLAYGROUND-RAISING CORE COMMITTEES**

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**THE ABINGDON PTA PLAYGROUND COMMITTEE GRATEFULLY  
ACKNOWLEDGES THE DONATION OF THE ENTIRE COST FOR  
PUBLICATION OF THIS DEDICATION BOOKLET BY:**

**FAIRLINGTON PROPERTIES, INC., REALTORS**



## WELCOME TO ABINGDON -- YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

Abingdon's community playground-raising exemplifies the spirit of our students, the dedication of our teachers, the expertise of our support staff, and the enthusiasm of our parents.

Our school is named after the old Alexander-Custis estate, "Abingdon," where both George Washington Park Custis and Nelly Custis were born. When the school was opened in 1950, it consisted of 10 classrooms, a multi-purpose room, a library and a staff of 18. Today, we have 40 classrooms, a staff of 80, an outstanding gym, and a beautiful new playground!

Abingdon provides a modern education in a traditional setting. We emphasize basic skills, homework, and a positive approach to discipline. The instruction is geared to the needs of the children as individuals, and is designed to challenge each child to make the most of his or her abilities.

Our basic curriculum is supplemented by numerous special offerings, such as the Gifted and Talented program, Art and Music Specialists, Extended Daycare, the Library, and ESOL-HILT. Abingdon's special program for the children of non-English speaking families was featured recently in the Washington Post Magazine. Our diverse student population reflects the strengths of our Nation and its best hopes for the future.

For those of you not familiar with Abingdon, we welcome visitors and inquiries about our programs. Come back after the dedication and visit your neighborhood school!

Margaret McCourt-Dirner  
Principal

### A WORD FROM THE PTA

The new playground is just one example of the many activities undertaken by the PTA to enhance the program at Abingdon. Our volunteers serve as teacher's aides and library assistants. They also offer special enrichment programs. We play an active role in the policymaking process of our school system, providing input to the curriculum committees and the budgetary process. We conduct numerous informational programs throughout the year to keep our community up-to-date on special developments in Abingdon and throughout Arlington's schools.

The playground project reflects the PTA's efforts to assist the staff by enriching the curriculum. The children have written essays about the playground, and the art and music programs have used the playground theme in their projects. The school has been filled with drawings and models of ideal playgrounds created by the children. Their beautiful posters have been displayed in retail establishments throughout our community.

There are numerous opportunities for you to become active in the life of the school. If you have a skill to offer, if you'd like to provide input to the development of school policy, or if you'd just like to find out what's going on, we'd love to hear from you!

Ginny Klarquist  
PTA President

## MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS FROM BUSINESS AND CIVIC GROUPS

The "recipe" for Abingdon's play area and amphitheatre called for 21,000 linear feet of wood, 245 tons of stone, 800 pounds of nails, 3,164 nuts, bolts, screws, and washers, 166 tires, and a host of other materials. We could not have purchased the vast quantities of materials needed for our dream playground without the generous support of the area businesses and civic groups listed below:

### PATRONS (\$1,000 or more)

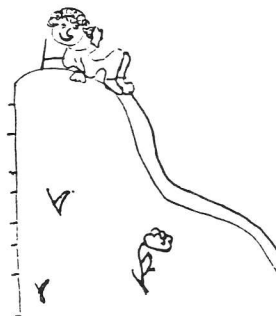
- Abingdon PTA
- Arlington County Board, Park & Recreation Commission
- The Oliver T. Carr Co.
- Fairlington Citizens Association
- Fairlington Villages Unit Owners Ass'n (No. Fairlington)
- Fairlington Properties, Inc.
- Lancaster Landscapes
- Misner Development Corp. (Shirlington Gateway Hotel)
- Tower Construction Co. (Park Shirlington)

### DONORS (\$500 or more)

- The Arlington (Condominium) Homeowners Association
- Bonnie Blaszczyk, Merrill Lynch Realty
- Clayton Legg, Inc.

### SPECIAL FRIENDS (\$250 or more)

- Anden Group
- Fairlington Amoco
- Fairlington Arbor Unit Owners Ass'n
- Fairlington Glen Unit Owners Ass'n
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- Holley, Hargett, & Spain Realtors
- Lindsay Cadillac
- Presto Valet
- Shannon & Luchs
- Thomas & Fiske, Attorneys
- Venture Video & Computer Center



### BOOSTERS (\$100 or more)

- Arlington Paraprofessional Association
- Susan Amchan Piano Lessons
- Bed 'n Bath
- ESOL Teachers, Staff & Intake Staff in Memory of Mr. Sananikone
- Fairlington Friends of the Environment
- Gordon Keller Music, Yamaha Piano Lessons
- Dr. Arthur V. Mitchell
- Morrison Realty (Quaker Lane)
- North Fairlington Babysitting Coop
- Potomac Psychological Resources
- Shirlington Texaco
- Universal Computers
- United Virginia Bank
- Virginia Society of Professional Engineers, No. Va. Chapter
- Washington Real Estate Investment Trust



## VOLUNTEERS

It would take a dedication book ten times the size of this one to list and thank all the people who have made our playground-raising a success, so we offer the following thoughts with each and every volunteer in mind.

A playground-raising is a marvelous lesson for our children in civic action and cooperative effort. No single aspect of the project is more important than the others. To paraphrase a well-known parable:

For want of a publicity committee, we could not have initiated any fundraising or volunteer activities.

For want of a fundraising committee, we could not have purchased high quality materials for a durable playground.

For want of a materials committee, we could not have obtained the best prices and timely delivery.

For want of a tools committee, we could not have converted the raw materials into usable components.

For want of a food committee, we could not have convinced volunteers to work from sunrise into the evening.

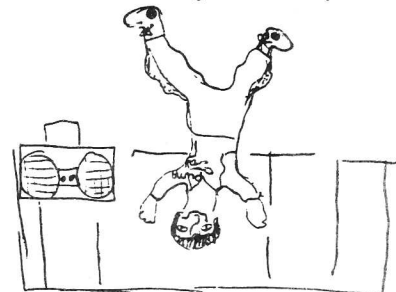
For want of a childcare committee, we could not have convinced parents that they could feel confident about the wonderful time the children would have while the adults built the playground.

For want of a volunteer committee, we could not have recruited the fantastic people who staffed the committees, provided food and tools, assisted with childcare, and built the playground.

For want of a wonderful community, we could not have undertaken a playground-raising!

As this Dedication Book goes to press, over 1,000 people have volunteered to help! The support from Abingdon's parents has been tremendous, and we are also most gratified for the participation by many other area residents, including a significant number who do not have children. The essence of a playground-raising is the individual contribution. Whether your participation has been for the full nine months of planning or for one shift in building, the children of our community are most grateful for your wonderful community spirit.

As this book went to press, offers of assistance were still coming in. If we have omitted any individuals or groups, please be assured your help has been greatly appreciated.



We also received marvelous assistance from civic, educational, and other organizations comprised primarily of persons who do not live in our community, but who learned of our efforts and generously offered to participate. Our special thanks to the following groups:

Air Force Honor Guard  
Arlington Career Center,  
Carpentry Class  
Arlington County Recreation  
Department  
Arlington Firehouse No. 7,  
Engine Co. No. 77

Arlington Kiwanis Club  
Boy Scout Troop #643  
The Jim Snyder Fellowship  
Junior Girl Scout Troop #561

Northern Virginia Builders Ass'n,  
Apprenticeship Carpentry  
Training Program  
Northern Virginia Employment  
Training Center



The Playground Committee is very grateful to the following members of the business community for loaning and donating tools and materials to build our playground.

Appliance Fix-IT  
Arlington County Career Center  
Arlington County Employment  
Training Program  
Arlington County  
Public Works Department

Arlington Firehouse No. 7  
Arlington Printers and  
Stationers, Inc.  
Bartlett Tree Experts  
Bogle Tire Company

C&P Telephone Company  
F. W. Harris Company  
Lancaster Landscapes, Inc.  
Miller & Long Company, Inc.  
Virginia Power

The Food Committee wishes to thank the following businesses that donated paper products and foods to the Playground-Raising. The wonderful support of these restaurants contributed to the festivity of the weekend.

Atilia's  
Atlantis Pizza  
Beefsteak Charlie's  
Bennigan's  
Bread Stick Deli  
Casa Maria  
Chesapeake Bay Seafood House  
China Grocery  
China Restaurant  
Continental Baking Company, Inc.  
Four Seasons

Heavenly Gate Restaurant  
Jerry's Sub Shop  
Krispy Kreme  
McDonald's (Duke Street)  
McDonald's (King Street)  
Magnificos Pizzeria and  
Family Restaurant  
Mr. Gatti's  
Mrs. Chen's Kitchen  
Murry's Steaks

New Canton Restaurant  
Pawn Shop  
Peking Gourmet Inn  
Pistone's Italian Inn  
Pizza Hut  
Popeye's Famous Fried Chicken  
Restaurant Association Industry, Inc.  
Roy Rogers Restaurant (Seven Corners)  
T.G.I. Friday's  
Victoria Station  
Villa Capri

We received expert assistance from Arlington's outstanding public servants and advisory groups. Special thanks go to the School Board and County Board; Mrs. Pauline Flynn, Mrs. Marilla Furcolow, and the members of the Park & Recreation Commission; C. Thomas Weber, Director of Facilities and Operations, Bailey McCreery, Director of Food Services; and Fred Louis of the Park Department.

## "WOOD" YOU BUY-A-BOARD?



When we asked for help in raising funds, hundreds of parents, neighbors, relatives, friends, and area businesses said "Yes!" Thousands of dollars in individual contributions, ranging from one board (\$3.00) to a "trainload" (\$100.00), have enabled us to purchase the high quality materials needed for a durable playground. The contributions are still coming in, making it possible for us to add landscaping and to provide a reserve for maintenance. The following is a list of those who had bought boards at the time this book went to press. Thank you from the students of Abingdon to our wonderful community.

Accurate Junior Shoes	Charles W. Bethany, Jr.	Lorrie Cohn
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Roberta Ashkenas	Maggie and Thom Brown	Janet Cowley
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Jose and Hignia Beaumont	Kate Cohan	Marie Shiels-Djouadi
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J. M. Belle	Michael Chauka	Nancy R. Donley
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### PUBLICITY AND FUNDRAISING

A playground-raising depends on long-term preparation. Long before our construction weekend, publicity and fundraising activities ensured that Abingdon's unique plans would be known throughout the community.

A special thanks goes to Fairlington Properties, Inc., who made a second donation as a Patron (contributor of \$1,000 or more) to fund the distribution of 10,000 volunteer brochures throughout the Abingdon district and to pay for the printing of 5,000 copies of this dedication booklet.

A unique contribution was also made by the Fairlington Citizens Association, through the All Fairlington Bulletin. Many thanks to Sue Sticha, Jean Harrett, and the Bulletin's staff for their publication of monthly "Playground Press" articles highlighting our progress.

Our fundraising and publicity efforts were aided immeasurably by the gifts and materials provided by the following companies:

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**PLAYGROUND SONG**

Composed by  
Miss Zielski's Second Grade Class

Dear Mister Leathers and the P.T.A.  
We'd like to see the playground  
built our way,  
So please listen to what  
we have to say!

A cable rope to swing across on,  
A jungle gym to climb up on,  
A tunnel slide and a merry-go-round,  
and plenty of swings  
with sand on the ground.

A tunnel maze and a circular slide,  
A tree house, tire swing,  
and castle side by side,  
A see saw, balance beam,  
and soccer goals with nets,  
We've made up this list so you won't forget!

Thanks for listening to our song,  
Sincerely the Second Grade.



**PLAYGROUND SONG**

Composed by  
Mrs. Byrne's First Grade Class

A sliding board and swings  
and towers to climb in,  
A rope bridge, a see saw,  
a sandbox to play in,  
A merry-go-round and  
a rope to swing on,  
Oh, what a great new playground!

A balance beam and springboard  
and more bars to climb on,  
A sliding board with platforms  
and a tire bridge to walk on,  
A playhouse and a wooden bridge  
and dragon maze to crawl through,  
Oh, what a great new playground!

We'd also like to have some  
tire swings to play on,  
A circular slide to go  
round and round on.  
Sand on the ground  
to break our falls on,  
Oh, what a great new playground!



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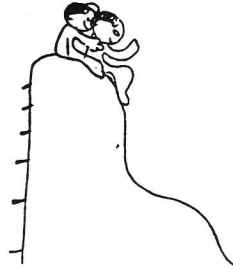
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**PLAYGROUND SONG**

Composed by  
Ms. Davis's Third Grade Class



First they shovel up the ground  
but don't take the chairs  
or the rainbow bars down,  
A swing to ride and circular slide,  
for our new playground,  
We're breaking down for a new playground.

We'd like to see a rope bridge too,  
A tunnel to crawl through,  
rubber mats too!  
Rocket ships to climb up and down,  
for our new playground.  
We're breaking down for a new playground.

We just want to have some fun,  
to play with our friends in the sun  
or rain or snow, it's still fun - you know!  
On our new playground.  
We're breaking down for a new playground.

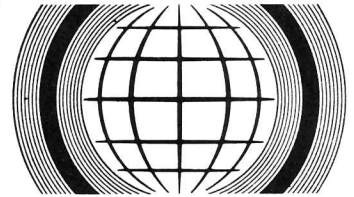


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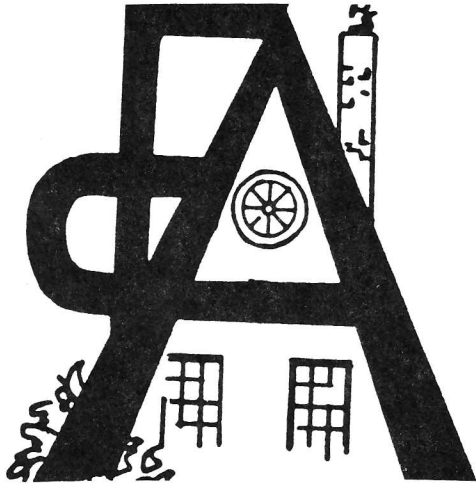
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- Testify about our community's needs at county budget hearings;
- Halt illegal airplane overflights;
- Improve streets and sidewalks;
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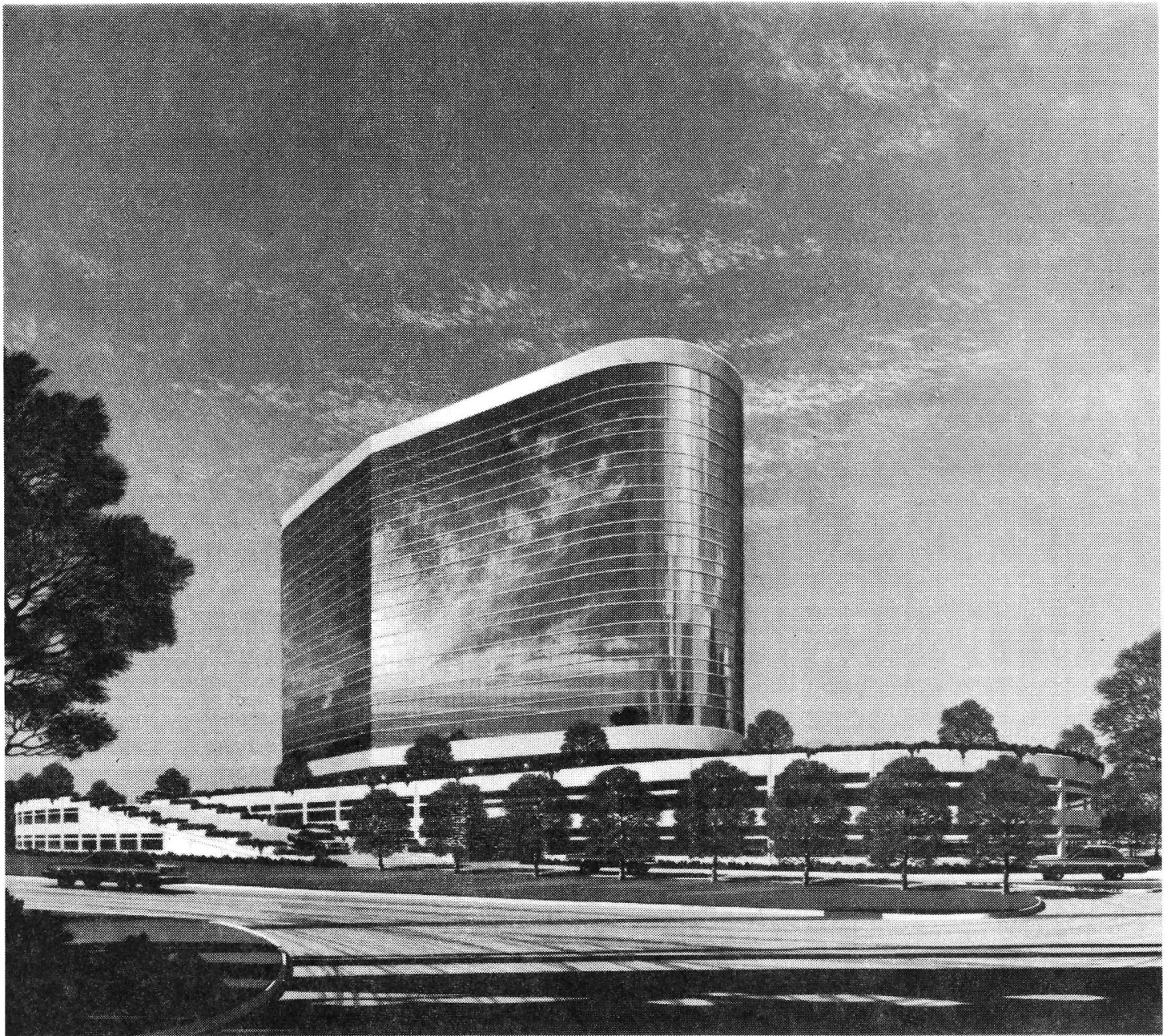
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congratulate and applaud all of our friends and neighbors of Abingdon School P.T.A., and most especially those on the Playground Committee, on this splendid undertaking and accomplishment of establishing this delightful play area for the children of our town. We were happy to help as we could but it was little compared to the effort that was put out by so many.



Peggy Gresham



Ellie Clark

If it's Real Estate in Fairlington or anywhere in Arlington or Alexandria you want help with or advice about, please call us.



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