

# OCELOT OBSERVER

Volume XVIII, Issue II, October 2009, a Monthly Publication of the Aldridge Elementary PTA

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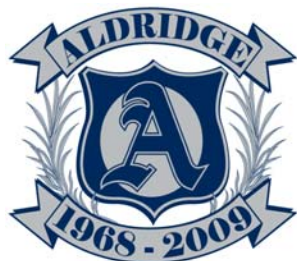
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## October Birthdays

Andrea Harris  
Kaci Nhem  
Nancy Sowards  
Carol Brown  
Marilyn Carruthers  
Cindy Ramsdell  
Mary Watson  
Linda Stephens

## Aldridge PTA

Parents and Teachers  
Working Together for the  
Children of Aldridge



ENTER .. LEARN, LEAVE .. SUCCEED.

## A Word from our Principal ...

Thank you to all of you who have gone online to complete the form to re-identify your students' ethnicity. As stated in the letter I sent home, this is required from the U.S. Department of Education and is used for federal and state accountability reporting as well as for reporting to the Office of Civil Rights and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. We are on a tight deadline to have this information on each of our students, and we do appreciate your help. If you have not completed this brief document, I encourage you to do so at your first opportunity. The form is available in English and Spanish at:

[http://k-12.pisd.edu/Ethnicity\\_Race\\_English](http://k-12.pisd.edu/Ethnicity_Race_English) and

[http://k-12.pisd.edu/Ethnicity\\_Race\\_Spanish](http://k-12.pisd.edu/Ethnicity_Race_Spanish)

We have computers available in the library if you would like to complete this form at school. Contact the office with any questions, and thank you again for your assistance.

As students and staff are getting into a routine in this still-new school year, arrival and dismissal procedures are smoother. As a reminder, the west (K-1) carpool lane is open for student drop off from 7:30-7:45. Students arriving prior to 7:30, or after the 7:45 Tardy Bell must use the front carpool lane. New signs are posted that designate a **right turn only** out of the carpool lanes. Please note that by state law it is now illegal to use a (hand held) cell phone in a school zone. Thank you for your patience and priority on student safety.

Teachers and students have been involved in beginning of the year testing, and results will be shared at Parent Conferences later this month. As a reminder, the primary purpose of this testing is to guide teachers in planning instruction. Students are assessed throughout the year, and take the MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) test on the computer at the beginning of the year, mid year and at the end of the year. Teachers will share MAP and other assessment and observation information at your conference. If you do not have a conference scheduled, please contact your child's teacher. **Conference Day is October 16** (student holiday) and many teachers schedule meetings with parents prior to this date. Parents play an important role in student success, and teachers look forward to sharing information with you!

Thank you for partnering with us to many opportunities to get involved, and I encourage you to keep this newsletter handy. I look forward to seeing many of you here at school.

*Mrs. Carruthers*

## From our PTA President

Can you believe it's already October? Time does fly! Hopefully by now, your family has settled into a school routine and things are going well. I'd like to thank all the Aldridge staff for getting us off to a great start – even carpool is running smoothly!

Along with the cooler weather come lots of fun activities at our school, like Reflections, Fall into Fitness, Walk to School Day and Red Ribbon Week. Check your child's folder for event flyers and our PTA website (<http://aldridgepta.org>) for an event schedule. October 15 marks the beginning of our annual Check Writing Campaign. This is our major fund raiser for the year, and money raised supports all the "extras" that make our school the place to be!

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## 2009 – 10 PTA Board

President	Tammie DeVoe
1 <sup>st</sup> VP – Programs	Karrie Ronk
2 <sup>nd</sup> VP – Ways & Means	Sheila Gabel
3 <sup>rd</sup> VP – Hospitality	Alicia Rinaldi
4 <sup>th</sup> VP – Volunteers	Karen Fleming
Secretary	Amy Gokey
Treasurer	Dawn Hunck
Parliamentarian	Pam Hainlin
Historian	Carla Getz

### Committees

Arts in Education	Diane Valdez
Communications/ Newsletter	Kelli Peters
Council Delegate	Marjorie Campbell
Council Delegate	DeLisa Menton
Cultural Diversity/ ELMS	Beth Smith
Dad's Den	Tim Manders
Directory	Rebecca Ballard
Environmental	Kelly Barton
Legislative	Eve LaMendola
Membership	Kristina Rodriguez
Newcomers	Carol Doyle
Parent Education	Judith Reiter
SAGE	Angela Gibbons
School Supplies	Missy Peelman
Spiritwear	Catherine Jones
Yearbook	Brandy Diamond
Youth Safety	Shawnee Pittman

### PTA Representatives / Co-Chairs

Principal	Marilyn Carruthers
Staff Representative	Sue Melton
Marquee	Susan Lindholm
Hospitality Asst.	Ashlynn Bourque
Ways & Means Asst.	Becky Hodnett
Webmaster	Mark Smith

Visit us at:

[www.aldridgepta.org](http://www.aldridgepta.org)

### Aldridge Ocelot Observer PTA Newsletter

Next Issue: Nov. 5, 2009

Submission Deadline: Oct. 16, 2009

To submit content, contact:

Kelli Peters 972.814.9255

[kelli.peters@hotmail.com](mailto:kelli.peters@hotmail.com)

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Please take some time and consider your donation – no amount is too small. We have a goal to meet that will cover our commitments to our students and staff, and that goal is \$18,000. I realize that collectively it seems like a lot of money ... it is. But if the parent(s) of every child could donate at least \$25, we can meet this lofty goal. I know this could be difficult for some – I understand that and thank you for whatever you choose to give. Each dollar donated gets us closer to raising the funds necessary to provide our promised curriculum enhancements, educational programs and other family events.

Our PTA is organizing a fun, family festival planned to celebrate the end of our fall fund raiser, so please plan on joining the fun on November 7 from 2-5 p.m. We will have bounce houses, kid-friendly games, snacks and a silent auction with some really awesome stuff. Our Aldridge families, staff and friends have always been truly supportive of our PTA efforts, and for that I am truly grateful. Thank you, again and again, for continued your support!

Warmest regards,

*Tammie DeVoe*

### Gear Up for Reflections

The *Reflections* due date is getting close. Are your kids getting ready? Have they been brainstorming? Now that your kids are excited about *Reflections*, how do they get started?

Get creative juices flowing with these helpful tips:

**Tip 1:** Ask your kids, "What is beautiful to you?" The theme is "Beauty Is..." after all.

**Tip 2:** For inspiration, look around your world, around your house, within your family. Take a walk around your neighborhood or go to a museum. Help your kids find the beauty around them.

**Tip 3:** Think about things you love – sports, nature, books.

**Tip 4:** Ask your child, "Does everyone think the same things are beautiful? How do you decide?"

**Tip 5:** Choose how beauty will be expressed. It could be:

- Photography
- Visual Art -- painting, drawing, collage
- Literature – story, poetry
- Musical Composition
- Dance Choreography
- Film Production – animation, documentary, narrative

Have fun! Be creative! Let your personality come through. There's no right or wrong. Any child in any grade can enter as many categories/pieces as desired. **Entries should be submitted to Ms. Vega by Friday, October 23.**

Be sure entries relate to the current theme, "Beauty Is...." Detailed rules and entry forms can be found in the front office or at [www.aldridgepta.org](http://www.aldridgepta.org). Please contact the Aldridge Arts in Education chairperson, **Diane Valdez**, at [dianevaldez@yahoo.com](mailto:dianevaldez@yahoo.com) with additional information.

## Volunteers of the Month

Congratulations **Catherine Jones** and **Donna Frohock**—our October Volunteers of the Month! These two ladies worked hard over the summer and at the start of school to select and sell our fabulous spiritwear. Catherine is the committee chair for Spiritwear and Donna is the Spiritwear assistant.

Catherine grew up in Richardson, went to Berkner High School, and graduated from Texas Tech University in 1995. She and her husband, Cory, have two children, Emily, a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader, and five-year-old Grant. Catherine juggles being a stay-at-home mom with her interior design business, and she will be doing a model home installation in November. Catherine is an avid reader and would love to discuss recommended books with you.

Donna is a Plano native and attended Plano schools. Her two children both attend Aldridge, Preston, a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader, and Chloe, who is in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Donna is very happy to be involved in their school. Donna, too, is an interior designer and a small business owner. Her hobbies include painting, making jewelry, travelling to the mountains or the beach, spending weekends at the lake as a family and exploring Dallas and the surrounding area with friends.

**Catherine and Donna, thanks for helping us show our Aldridge spirit with amazing spiritwear!**

## PACE Referrals

PACE provides services for academically gifted and/or talented students in grades K-12 who have demonstrated the need for advanced, differentiated instruction.

The Plano I.S.D. conducts open, rolling referral, meaning that any student may be referred at any time during the school year; however, elementary students are assessed in the second semester. Students may be referred for the gifted program by teachers, parents, principals, counselors, or by the students themselves. Students are assessed at their home campus during the regular school day.

**Kindergarten** (assessed in October/November)  
Referral deadline is **October 21, 2009**.

**Grades 1-5** (assessed in March / April)  
Referral deadline is **February 19, 2010**.

Contact **Nancy Harrison**, Aldridge's Gifted Specialist to obtain a referral packet. Completed referral packets should be returned to Ms. Harrison by the above deadlines.

## What is Destination ImagiNation?

Destination ImagiNation, or DI, is an international creative problem-solving competition open to all PISD students. PISD is one of many area school districts participating in the NExT Region. Competition guidelines and procedures are managed and updated by the DI organization; you can find the most current information at <http://www.texasdi.org>. PISD establishes guidelines for students, parents/guardians and staff within the general philosophy and rules provided by the DI organization and the NExT Region.

For more information, please contact **Nancy Harrison**, Aldridge PACE Specialist at 469-752-0060.

## Another Fund-Raising Opportunity

**Tuesday, October 6** is **Aldridge Night at JC's Burger House**, located at 401 West President George Bush Highway (on the access road between Custer and Alma). Plan to dine at JC's and let them know that you're from Aldridge Elementary. JC's Burger House will donate 10 percent of your total bill to our PTA. Look for additional details in an upcoming flyer.

## *All Dressed Up and Ready to Go!* It's Our Annual Aldridge Fund-Raising Event

This year we are combining our annual Check Writing Campaign fund raiser with a Family Fall Festival Finale! **The Check Writing Campaign begins on October 15 and lasts through November 7.**

On Saturday, November 7, we'll celebrate the end of our fund-raising campaign with a Family Fall Festival at the school from 2-5 p.m. Join us for kid-friendly games, bounce houses, ice cream treats, popcorn, a performance from our famous Dads' Den band – *The Grateful Dads*, and a silent auction in the gym. The festival is free to all Aldridge families, but please keep in mind that this will be the PTA's major fund raiser. We would appreciate a donation—the amount is totally up to you. Your financial support ensures that we can continue hosting future family events.

**Aldridge Family Fall Festival  
Saturday, November 7  
2 – 5 p.m.**

**Save the date on your calendar  
and plan on coming to this fun-  
filled event!**



## Helpful Online Resource

Looking for a quick way to keep on top of Aldridge activities? Look no further than the Aldridge PTA Website at [www.aldridgepta.org](http://www.aldridgepta.org)! It's easy to remember and offers a collection of helpful links, information and resources at your fingertips. Get the latest information on programs like *Reflections*, new laws being passed which impact you and your kids, other PTA communications such as this newsletter.

We are always looking for ways to improve the website and make it easier to use and helpful to the parents of our kids. This year we are introducing an online event calendar that tracks activities, school holidays, early release days and PTA events so you always know what's happening. If you use Outlook, Google or iCal you can even subscribe to the calendar so events are automatically added to your own personal calendar! You can even submit suggestions or comments to the Aldridge PTA board through our convenient comments form. So the next time you're online, just remember [www.aldridgepta.org](http://www.aldridgepta.org). Check it out, bookmark the link, and keep it in mind the next time you are looking for Aldridge information.

### Important Upcoming Dates

Bike Rodeo	Oct. 3	9 – 11 a.m.
Fire Prevention Week	Oct. 5-9	
Aldridge Night at JC's Burger House	Oct. 6	4 – 8 p.m.
Walk to School Day	Oct. 7	
ELMS Meeting	Oct. 7	
Parents Only		1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
Parents & Children		2:30 – 3:15 p.m.
School Picture Day	Oct. 14	
Early Release	Oct. 15	Noon
Annual Check Writing Campaign Begins	Oct. 15	
Parent-Teacher Conferences (No School)	Oct. 16	
School Bus Safety Week	Oct. 19-23	
Kindergarten PACE Deadline	Oct. 21	
PTA General Meeting & Fall into Fitness Program	Oct. 22	6:30 p.m.
Reflections Entries Due	Oct. 23	
Report Cards	Oct. 23	
Red Ribbon Week	Oct. 26-30	
ELMS Meeting (Same schedule as above)	Nov. 4	1:30 p.m.
Fall Family Festival	Nov. 7	2 – 5 p.m.

## PTA Membership

Thanks to all the parents and Aldridge staff who have joined the PTA. Last year we had 567 members, and this year we currently have 489 members and counting. We would really like to surpass last year's membership. You can join the PTA anytime, but if you want to enjoy the benefits of the discount card and directory, you must join by **October 30**. If you don't know if you have joined, you can easily email **Kristina Rodriguez** at [krodriguez@tx.rr.com](mailto:krodriguez@tx.rr.com).

## Yearbook Orders

It's that time of year again ... Yearbook time! The yearbook volunteers will be working hard to capture all Aldridge kids and activities going on at school throughout the year. Order forms will go home in early October. Don't wait to order your yearbook and return your form at the requested due date. You will want your child to enjoy the 2009-10 yearbook that will be available in the spring.

## ELMS Club

Ever wondered, "What is ELMS?" It stands for "Everyday Language Made Simple" and is a group intended for parents and children who do not use English as their first language. The ELMS Club meets one time each month, and our next meeting will be **October 7 at 1:30**. This group provides an opportunity for Aldridge staff and Aldridge English-speaking parents to welcome and assist parents and students who don't use English as their first language. Volunteers help by answering questions about our school, our community, American culture, current events, etc. For additional information, contact **Mary Watson** at [mary.watson@pisd.edu](mailto:mary.watson@pisd.edu).

## Calling All Bakers

Are you known for baking fabulous deserts? Volunteers are needed to bake cakes and cupcakes for a cake walk in the upcoming fall festival. If you would like to help bake cakes or cupcakes, please contact **Becky Hodnett** at [hhodnett1@msn.com](mailto:hhodnett1@msn.com).



## Aldridge KSE Welcomes You to Walk-tober

Have you ever considered how you can help the environment, and yourself, as you go to school? **By walking to school, of course!**

- Walking and biking to school is environmentally friendly.
- You don't generate pollution traveling to school under your own power.
- And, the exercise is great for you!

So leave the car in the garage on **Wednesday, October 7**, and join us for **Walk to School Day**. Start off with one friend, add more friends along the way, and you'll have a walking school bus. Cheerleaders (parents) will be at the Pleasant Valley-Custer and Pleasant Valley-Forest Hills intersections to support Aldridge walkers. So save the gas money and join your kids as they walk to Aldridge. Can't walk that morning? Organize a carpool—fewer cars on the road reduce pollution and help improve air quality.

Lace up your sneakers, grab your backpack, and meet your friends at the corner as we use *Walk to School Day* to kick off **Walk to School Wednesdays**. Oscar the Ocelot challenges you to walk, cycle, or carpool to school on each of the four Wednesdays during October.

Please mark your calendars! Our annual **Texas Recycles Day** sale is **Friday, November 20**. Our PTA will be selling environmentally-friendly, green products, and vintage spiritwear at Aldridge. At last year's sale, we offered a limited supply of reusable, ecologically-friendly bags from Mixed Bag Designs. The bags were a huge hit and quickly sold out. These fantastic bags will be available again this year. Watch for more details about this Aldridge fundraiser.

## Kudos to Camp Volunteers

The 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers would like to thank the following parents for taking time out of their normal daily lives to be with our kids for three days at Collin County Adventure Camp: Angela Gibbons, Ashlynn Bourque, Beth Smith, Brett Ronk, Christina Jones, Elizabeth Gonzalez, Jim Danen, Jonathan LaMendola, Leigh Anne Halliburton, Myron Lehman, Roger Burns, Rowena Graham and Scott Van Duyne.

Without help from our fabulous volunteers, camp would not have been possible. Thanks to these folks, our 5<sup>th</sup> graders will have many long-lasting memories.

## Feeder School Committee Appointed - Public Hearings Set

Resulting from its work session on September 15, the Plano ISD Board of Trustees appointed a committee and established a process to realign the school district's three senior high school feeder patterns. The Feeder School Alignment Committee will base its work on the recommendations of the 2002 Blue Ribbon Boundary Committee. The group will also make recommendations for the new Otto Middle School and McMillen High School. Three public hearings will be held in October so that the committee may receive input into the process. Visit our Feeder School Alignment Website where committee information will be posted and updated: <http://www.pisd.edu/feeder.realignment.committee/FeederAlign.html>.

## Student Absences

Please keep in mind that you will need to report for all student absences by calling the **Aldridge office** at **469-752-0000**. Instructions will prompt you to report your child's name, grade level, teacher and reason for the absence. If your child is sick, please also tell us the nature of the illness (cold, stomach illness, flu) your child's symptoms (vomiting, fever, diarrhea) and fever temperature. Students returning to school will need to be fever-free for 24 hours and will need a parental handwritten note explaining the absence. Contact the Aldridge office for additional information.

## Fall into Fitness Program

Please plan on attending our **Fall into Fitness** event on **Thursday, October 22 at 6:30 p.m.** Trainers and Owners from our neighborhood athletic club, Crull Fitness, will be coming to our school to host a fitness night. Activities will include strength and agility exercises, using stations with rings, hurdles, cones, mats, balls, and in addition there will be stations set up for special needs students. This was a very fun event enjoyed by the students last year, and the activities are more fun if there are many students to rotate through the activities together. This event is brought to you by the Aldridge PTA and PE Department.

## Box Tops for Education

It's time to start collecting those Box Tops! This is an easy way to help with our school's fundraising efforts. Look for the collection box in the school office, and put the Box Top baggies that were sent home in that box.



**Keep on clipping throughout the year!**