



NATIONAL NEWS

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TFK Chats with Buzz Aldrin

The former NASA astronaut revisits his famous Moon landing in Fly Me to the Moon

By Vickie An

On July 20, 1969, the entire world sat glued to television sets as American astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first humans ever to walk on the Moon. Now, the story of the historic spaceflight is being re-imagined for a brand new audience in the 3D-animated film Fly Me to the Moon, in theaters August 15.

LARA SOKOLOWSKI FOR TIME FOR KIDS



Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin and wife Lois Driggs Cannon attend the New York City premiere of Fly Me to the Moon.

The movie follows three daring young houseflies named Nat, I.Q. and Scooter as they embark on a high-flying adventure into space. Inspired by the tales of his

grandpa's glory days, Nat convinces his friends to stow away with him on board the Apollo 11 spacecraft. And it's lucky that they do! When the spacecraft runs into wiring trouble, only the quick-thinking flyboys are tiny enough to fix the problem and save the mission from likely disaster. Meanwhile, on Earth, Russian fly spies are furious that the Americans have won the race to the Moon. They will stop at nothing to destroy the mission. Can the boys' families stop the bad guys on the ground before it's too late?

In the film, Aldrin revisits his famous lunar landing with a cameo appearance as himself. TFK spoke with the Apollo 11 astronaut about the movie and about his historic trip to the Moon.

TFK: Have you seen the film yet? How do you think it turned out?

BUZZ ALDRIN: Yes, we sure did. I was surprisingly pleased with how it came out. It's a delightful mixture of historical facts and fantasy.

TFK: What do you think about the 3D format?

ALDRIN: It stimulates the audience's reaction. It gets them enthusiastic when they see things jumping out at them. They'll be watching the movie, and all of a sudden, a bunch of flies pop off the screen and go flying over their heads. Having that unexpected element keeps their attention. If one kid screams over here, then the other kids pay attention.

TFK: When you saw the film, did you jump out of your seat a little bit when things "fly" off the screen?

ALDRIN: No, but those scenes certainly generated a smile on my face.

TFK: What is your most vivid memory from the Apollo 11 mission?

ALDRIN: The very brief moments right after the successful touchdown, and the sense of relief that we didn't have to leave at the last second and go back up again.

TFK: In one scene, Scooter drinks floating droplets of an orange-flavored drink, presumably Tang. What kinds of snacks did you have on board the shuttle?

ALDRIN: We had coffee and small shrimps . . . Enough variety so that it really didn't concern me that much. I would take whatever came along and gobble it down.

TFK: If you could describe in one word what it was like being on the Moon and in space, what would it be?

ALDRIN: Challenging. It was challenging to live up to doing the best [job]. Then, having done that, it was challenging to build that credibility and stature toward the challenges of the future.

TFK: Do you ever miss the thrill of being in space?

ALDRIN: Probably. But time passes on, and you set aside some things and pick up other things to do.

TFK: Speaking of doing other things, it seems like you've done it all! You've walked on the Moon, had a Pixar character named after you (Buzz Lightyear), written books... The list goes on and on and on.

ALDRIN: And I've visited the Titanic in a little yellow submarine and the North Pole...

TFK: What else can possibly be left on your to-do list?

ALDRIN: Well, I'd like to trek around the South Pole briefly. That would round out things. I'd like to become a respected, credible role model that can help guide and maybe inspire other people.

TFK: What are you working on right now?

ALDRIN: [I'm preparing for the] 40th anniversary of the Apollo missions [and working on] legal lottery-type selections for experiences in space.

TFK: By that, do you mean space tourism?

ALDRIN: Yes, but taking what other people are attempting to do with individual sales for spaceflight, which is pretty expensive, and expanding the opportunities to larger groups of people. The anniversaries are about informing the public of the benefits of exploration.

TFK: What kind of wisdom would you offer to kids who want to be astronauts?

ALDRIN: Think big and think long range. Take advantage of whatever your talents are and make the most of them. Be all that you can be, and set high objectives.