

# *Woods Yearly Review*

## **New Baby Again?**

Yes Denise "Mama" Woods is busy getting ready to pop another baby into the world. According to the numerous ultrasounds the "new baby" (Alessandra's chosen name for the little one) will be every bit as big as it's sisters. Speaking of which Natasha is keeping up with Alessandra in the size department, in fact they are only 3 pounds apart in weight. The family business has been keeping the woods tribe busy with numerous Dr.'s appointments, and visits to Houston's Medical center. Denise has been very excited about staying home with her little ones. She is also watching a few other toddlers to help balance the family finances. There was some early concern that the baby might be too smart, since one of the ventricles in the brain stem was enlarged, but after numerous ultrasounds, it seems to have scaled down. But no sooner than one crisis is averted Denise developed a sort of "hernia" which has made it very difficult for her to chase the numerous little ones she is watching. We are still anxiously awaiting the arrival of the new little one, which is scheduled for the seventh of December. A c-section is planned due to the projected size of the child and the hernia. Grandma Wagner will be visiting for three weeks to help Denise recover.

## **Family Addition**

Grandpa Colonna moved in with the Woods tribe this March. He hired a professional management company to supervise his property in Waco, and has put it up for sale. Grandpa has been a tremendous help for Denise, who is staying home with Natasha, and Alessandra this year, especially with lifting the children. The children have

both fallen heads over heels for "Papa" and love to play with him. Grandpa has been also helping out with the maintenance of the property, installing security lights, fences, mowing the lawn and numerous other projects. He visited back east for a month and has been keeping life very interesting in Houston. With a new engine the "old Buick" is performing like a champion, but most things are close enough that grandpa can walk to get them. Grandpa has also been fitted with new glasses and hearing aids. Jim Chellis came by to visit grandpa, and we all had a grand time. This summer the Wagner clan from back east visited for a couple of weeks, and we painted the town several new shades. The Beach was painted purple and Houston's new IMAX theater was painted indigo. Little Colleen was a big help with the children. Over thanksgiving the clan ate a lot of turkey and also visited some friends at a beach house down in Galveston.

## **Go West...**

The Woods tribe and Grandpa accompanied Donald on a trip to NASA Ames Research Center near San Francisco. The girls and all involved had a great time touring the town, and visiting Fishermans Wharf, and Sausalito. They also toured Carmel and Pebble Beach. They went down the beautiful scenic drive along the coast, and visited the Monterey Aquarium. Grandpa was able to give us a historical perspective on many of the scenes, including the engineering and construction of the golden gate bridge.

## **Major Surgery**

After 6 months of continuous ear infections, little Natasha finally had tubes put in her ears. Rumor has it that she didn't want to miss out on anything that Alessandra has. The operation went smoothly but she had an adverse reaction to the anesthesia which took a couple of hours to get over. Since the operation Natasha has been great, with no ear infections, but she still doesn't care for ear plugs when she bathes; hence the term "clip & dip" is usually applied to her water escapades.

## **Corpus Christi Conquered**

The new enhanced Woods Tribe (old Woods tribe plus grandpa) invaded Corpus Christi to visit some old College Friends, the Pinos. We all stayed at a condominium on the beach and spent numerous enjoyable hours trying to put up a beach tent. They had a fantastic time, saw a play, and visited the Texas state aquarium. The "Music Man" was a great show, with fantastic performances by Issac and Allison Pino.

## **Space Station Redesigned**

Donald has been busy trying to design a space station given the new budget from congress. The computer systems are being replaced with an Abacus, the power system will be a long extension cord, we will be using ice-cubes for thermal control, and the robots are being replaced with Tinker toys. Actually the work has been challenging and fun and I look forward to the years ahead as we start building the station on orbit. Even with the budget cuts we will probably end up building the most sophisticated engineered system ever assembled in space.

## **Life in the big city**

"Surprise shopping" on Saturday mornings has become quite popular with the little ones. Everyone gets in the car and we visit all the local garage sales looking for surprises. We've been able to find a lot of good cheap clothes for the girls, and plenty of good toys.

Alessandra is becoming quite a skilled conversationalist. Natasha prefers simpler statements like "NO!", a new word she is quite fond of. Her other favorite word is "boat". Alessandra is also quite the artist, and does not feel compelled to limiting her art work to paper; the walls, the sofa, the dog are all fair game. The girls have been quite enthusiastic in looking for Christmas lights in the evenings, and in helping Dad put up our own lights.

All in all this has been a fast paced year with a lot of changes, but all have been for the better, and we look forward to next years adventures. We are planning on travelling to Australia if Dad can get a technical paper accepted at a conference down under.

## **A Note from Johnny O.!!**

It is a joy for me, approaching age 90 to see Don and Denise's two girls "Alex" and Natasha as they approach age 2 years. It seems to me that they are smarter than our tribe was at their tender age. They are also larger and heavier. I hope and believe that their mental development is keeping abreast of their physical growth. As far as I can judge this is true. In their daily activities each one gets her way as often as she can arrange things her way. Nothing wrong with that. This constantly getting her way strengthens her will and is often helped by an effusion of "crocodile tears". I hope everyone has had as enjoyable year as mine, and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all the best for next year.