

WOODS TRIBE TRIBUNE

Bryce Adds Spice

The newest addition to the Woods Tribe, Bryce Benjamin Woods, along with his partners in crime: Dad, Mom, Grandpa, Alessandra, and Natasha have been very busy this year. Denise's Mom and Little Colleen helped Denise recover from having Bryce by C-Section. When they had to leave Denise's Dad came in for the second shift. Bryce, who is named for Donald's late Grandfather Bryce and Grandpa's father Benjamin, has been growing but not fast enough to keep the Physicians happy. This fall Bryce was subjected to a battery of tests to determine if any insidious diseases might have befallen him. He was even checked for Cystic Fibrosis at the Texas Medical Center. Thank goodness that test came out negative. Well to make a very long story very short all systems seem to be go with Mr. Bryce, except for his chronic respiratory difficulties. At 9 months of age he decided to quit eating all baby food even the sweet stuff! He then started gaining weight a little faster. He started walking at 11 months, and the house hasn't been the same sense.

Stay home? Who Us?

We visited Houma, LA for a small town, family oriented, Mardi Gras

in February. We collected trinkets at a parade which the children thoroughly enjoyed. We also attended a children's parade at an indoor mall and that was a big hit as well. On the way home we visited several historic homes along the Mississippi and drank Mint Julips. Grandpa even thought the Mint Julips had "sufficient authority".

In March the Woods tribe visited Florida, and Virginia. We took the children to Disney World and NASA's Kennedy Space Center. Natasha fell in love with Mickey Mouse after meeting him backstage. Grandpa got to try his hand at race car driving. We visited historic St. Augustine and then travelled north from there to Virginia to visit Denise's Grandma Skinnel and Aunt Nancy. We stayed in Uncle Bob's new log house which built himself outside of Roanoke Virginia. Grandpa really enjoyed visiting with Grandma Skinnel. Cousin Angie Huffman visited from Atlanta and then we got to visit Cousin Annette and her new blue eyed baby "Cody". This was a quick one week trip.

We returned in time to put the house on the market, since we were getting pretty crowded. Denise, Grandpa & Alex went to Boston for cousin Sandra Mitchell's graduation. They were

graciously wined and dined by Johnny Mitchell and his daughter Sandra. Sandra has become Alex's "best friend". On the home front Donald managed with Tasha & Bryce to get a contract on the House.

Grandpa then made a short visit to Salt Lake City with his daughter Colleen Wagner for a wedding. Once everybody arrived home we started the job of packing to move to the new house. Everytime we tried to move anything it started raining on us!

In October Donald published and presented two papers at a National Aerospace Conference in Baltimore Maryland. After an early scare with congress's budget planning process the Space Station Freedom Program was allocated sufficient resources to continue progress in 1992. To find out more about Donald's work projects look for the April 1992 issue of the magazine "AI Expert". This magazine is planning on featuring an article by Donald Woods discussing Space Station Freedom (this magazine can be found at most news-stands and book stores).

We flew in to Baltimore-Washington International Airport (also know as "Friendship Airport") which Grandpa used to manage. Grandpa got us out in no time flat, showing us where our luggage was and where the rental car offices were located. We took

a tour of the town in a trolley, saw Fort McHenry where "that star spangled banner yet waves", and cruised the "inner harbor" in a water-taxi. This was another quick trip due to Donald's work commitments (which also helped finance a portion of the trip).

Birthday Parties Galore

In April we had a wonderful 90th birthday party for grandpa complete with a surprise belly dancer. Grandpa was surprised, but the belly dancer was even more surprised when grandpa got up and started shaking his belly. About 45 people attended this gala affair. What made the occasion even more special were all the family members who helped celebrate: Fran Colonna from Kansas, Johnny Mitchell, Candice, Wright and Joshua were all there along with many other caring friends. We have it videotaped so come by and watch.

In early May Natasha turned 2 years old, we celebrated her birthday with a sailboat and all the children had a wonderful time.

In June we had 3 birthdays (6th Donald, 7th Denise and the 8th was Alessandra's). Donald's parents came from Palm Springs, California for the festivities. Denise surprised Donald & his folks by having a big surprise birthday party at Donald's favorite water front restaurant. Friends had arrived early to

decorate the tables and pilings with streamers and balloons. Donald was very surprised. Alex's third birthday party was also a hit, complete with a water slide! The children all wore swimming suits and had a blast!

In early December we celebrated Bryce's first Birthday with about 35 Friends. The festivities were a hit with the "little man" as Grandpa calls him. Grandpa dressed up as Santa to serve the Birthday cake!

New Quarters

With the ever growing Woods Tribe bursting out of the seams of their old house in Clear Lake we went house hunting, and successfully caught a new improved larger residence! In the later part of June we actually moved. Our friends were so helpful, we couldn't have done it without them. Friendswood, our new community is fantastic! For a little town of 10,000 people we have about 10 wooded parks where the children love to play. There are plenty of children - in fact a lot of the town's activities are geared specifically towards children. In the summer we had "Big Band" and "Jazz" concerts outside in the park. We had a snow party for Christmas. The local library has a separate building just for toddlers and storytime every week. We are still close to the ocean, Historic Galveston and downtown Houston;

however, Friendswood is a little quieter and more peaceful.

Staying Busy

Shortly after moving, cousin Kim & Carl Colonna came to visit from Newport News, Virginia. They stayed in the Lone Star State for a week. We had a terrific time with them. Grandpa really enjoyed discussing history with Carl. Before they left, cousins Annette & Mark Henderson, along with baby Cody, came to Texas from Virginia. The Henderson's (who now have a dog named Harry) had such a good time that they now live in Victoria Texas, a little south of Houston.

In August we rented a beach house with friends for the labor day weekend. This was a big hit with the children, parents and Grandpa. We brought enough sand home to start our own beach!

In early September Alessandra started her first preschool classes. She enjoys them so much she would probably go every day if possible. Her artistic talents are coming along and Grandpa Woods gave here a few hints while he was in town this past summer.

In November we had a wonderful Thanksgiving. The day was started early at the Houston Thanksgiving day parade. In the afternoon Johnny Mitchell, Annette and Mark Henderson and 10 other helpful commarades

arrived to be stuffed with Turkey. Now we are closing in on Christmas, and the whole family is pretty excited about that. Santa even made a trip through all the neighborhoods in Friendswood on a fire truck, while handing out candies to the children.

This year has been hectic with trips, medical checkups for three children, parties and other activities. Grandpa has enjoyed the children, and they are heads over heels for "Papa". Other activities have included a Halloween parade and party in our new neighborhood, marionette shows, magic show and plays at the local toddler library. We went to Dickens on the Strand in the historic section of Galveston, and the Christmas Sailboat parade on Clear Lake. Denise's brother and sister Peter and Colleen along with Mom will be visiting for Christmas. The girls will also be attending two plays in the Houston Theater district: "Cinderella", and "Babes in Toyland". Grandpa was a hit at a Houston area VMI alumni dinner at the Houston Country Club. He was the oldest alumni attending and many of the guests remembered Uncle Allison as well. Throughout the year many special people have come by to visit: Tom & Lois Mitchell, Lisa, Les & Becky Newell, Sandra Mitchell, as well as Lisa & Greg Stuart to name just a few.

If you are still awake you deserve a medal! Needless to say our

travelling with three small children, via plane train or automobile, will be put to a minimum. Mom and Dad are worn out! For those of you who have toddlers we're sure you know how that story goes.

A Note From Johnny O!!!

I appreciate the opportunity to live with Don and his fine family and can't imagine a more agreeable environment. I've made Friendswood my home-base. We all appreciate it when family members contact us or drop in. I'm looking forward to another year of happy family life. The children are a constant delight to me. In the morning when we are tracking down the children's shoes it reminds me of what my father called "the field of the lost shoes" where the VMI cadets crossed a recently plowed field of wet Virginia clay during the "Battle of New Market". Every meal is started with a grace. This has grown to four graces: one by Alessandra (age 3), then by Natasha (age 2), followed by my old family grace, and then Bryce (age 1) shows his approval with a grunt! With all these blessings the food is safe to eat. I join with the Woods in wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and all the best in the coming new year.