

WOODS TRIBE TRIBUNE

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

The Woods Tribe: Dad, Mom, Grandpa, and junior partners; Bryce, Alessandra, and Natasha have been very busy this year. The only thing that didn't happen this year were any new additions to the family, except for some kittens. Apparently mama cat thought she would try to steal Denise's thunder.

In early September Natasha started her first preschool classes. She loves to play with the boys building skyscrapers and driving trucks, but demands to wear a "pretty dress" to school everyday. Alessandra and Natasha have started a Dance class and gave a Ballet recital at "open house". Bryce is growing and learned how to say "no" long before his second Birthday. Grandpa enjoys the children, and they are heads over heels for "Papa".

This year flew by in record time. The kids were in a Halloween parade (this year everyone dressed up as Mickey or Minnie Mouse). During the summer we made trips to the Amusement Park and beach. We went to "Dickens on the Strand" (a Christmas Celebration) in the historic section of Galveston, and also the Christmas Sailboat parade on Clear Lake. We even got to visit Santa for Breakfast and cut down our own Christmas tree on the North side of Houston.

While we are looking forward to the Holidays, we are apprehensive about the new year since Natasha is going in for surgery to remove her Tonsils and have a biopsy performed on them.

PARTY ANIMALS

In April we had a wonderful 91th birthday party for grandpa complete with a live band. Grandpa had a great time as he always does. There were only a few

arrests and all told, about 30 people attended this affair.

In early May Natasha turned 3. Natasha is now a confirmed fan of Minnie Mouse and this theme dominated. In June we had the three standard birthdays (Donald, Denise and Alessandras). Alessandra who turned 4 this year is still a "Little Mermaid". Several of her School friends and her teacher came by for the festivities. In early December we celebrated Bryce's second Birthday at the local wild animal park (seemed appropriate). The festivities were a hit with the "little man" as Grandpa calls him.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

We visited Houma in Louisiana for a small town, family oriented, Mardi Gras in February. On this trip we rented a Motorhome and decided that was the best way to travel with children (no bathroom breaks, no moving in and out of Hotel rooms). Denise ended up being the hostess while Donald piloted the ship. We visited several historic plantation homes along the Mississippi on the way back to Houston. Donald had such a good time navigating the motorhome that this past summer he bought an old VW camper van. It has been named "Swepea" for its "beautiful" green color. It is now equipped with a VCR, Radio, sleeping bags, tent, cooler, stove, closet, porta-pottie, well stocked cookie jar (for Grandpa), and even the kitchen sink. We took the "swepea" camping in the fall to some of the wooded lake areas North of Houston.

This summer while Donald was working on Space Station in Huntington Beach, the remaining Woods tribe (and "Aunt Colleen") stowed away in his suitcase. They visited the beach and the children learned how to surf. We had a family reunion in San Diego at Donald's

Grandma Polly's. This gave the girls a chance to meet their cousins Ashley and Zachary; after an exciting Tennis match the children got out and showed the adults how to really play the game - tennis balls are still being recovered down in Tiajuana. Donald misplaced the plane tickets so we made a few extra trips around Southern California looking for them. We still managed to squeeze in a trip to Disneyland with our cousins (Teresa Colonna and her three boys: William, David and Johnny) after a change in travel plans. The kids behaved very well, which was lucky for us, since the adults were out-number 2 to 1.

Mom & Dad had a second Honeymoon down in Cancun Mexico. The water was beautiful and they had a great time climbing the Mayan ruins. They visited Chichen-Itza (not pronounced "Chicken Pizza") and Toloum. They got to go snorkelling and sailing. This gave them a chance to get re-acquainted after having 3 children and one Grandpa added to the basic family unit within the last four years. Back in Houston Mom and Dad escaped to two concerts at an outdoor Pavillion.

Grandpa visited VMI, with his daughter Colleen, for his 70th class anniversary. While we originally thought he would be the only one who made it; it turned out that three of his fellow alumni also made it. Grandpa went with his son Gary to Yellowstone National Park this summer and chased the bears.

For Thanksgiving we visited Colleen and her Family in Roanoke. Colleen put together a fantastic Thanksgiving Feast. We also got to visit Grandma Skinell, Aunt Nancy and Uncle Bob outside of Roanoke up in the Mountains.

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN WELL

Denise returned to the teaching profession this fall on a part-time basis at a local private school. Grandpa usually accompanies her, if he wakes up early enough. He got to dress up as Santa (sporting his new Whiskers) and was a

big hit with the children. All of Denise's class now know the prayer taught to Grandpa's Father (Benjamin A. Colonna) by his troop of "Galvanized Yankees":

Great God bless us in these things we take for
our nourishment,
and we devote ourselves soul and body to thy
service.

When Denise took her class to a Pumpkin patch for Halloween Grandpa got to ride a horse just like the good old days when he was in the Calvary!!

VISITORS

Throughout the year many people have come by to visit: Dr. John Colonna, Mary Jo Chellis, Jim Chellis, Carl & Kim Colonna, Aunt Missy Wagner, Uncle Garard Wagner, and "Handsome" Larry Wagner. We enjoyed their visits and look forward to entertaining this coming year's guests. Keep the cards and letters coming; we may have time this year to respond!

A NOTE FROM JOHNNY O!!

Don, Denise and their three lovely Children have offered me membership into their lovely family, and I have accepted with the greatest of pleasure. In all of our operations the best interests of the children should always come first.

I want to thank all of my good friends and family who have written me letters about family events.

The welcome I have found in this Family is the best Christmas present that I can expect. I certainly send hearty new years greetings to all my Friends and Family throughout the World.