

Woods Tribe Tribune 1997

Family & Friends

This year we were lucky to see many friends and family: the Drews, Huffmans, Henderson, Woods, Tates, Stuff, Wagners, Tates, Stewarts, Stuart, Newell and several others. It was a nice to shift the focus from "going and doing" to "seeing and visiting".

Last Family Addition(s)?

The last member of the Woods Tribe (hopefully!!) arrived Christmas of 1996. Freckles is a second chance pet, part Labrador, part Springier and part Greyhound (at least she runs like one!). In case you haven't figured it out yet, she is a dog. She is an cute energetic puppy who still loves to run away any chance she gets. The only way we can catch her is to drive up in the car, and she will jump in at a moment's notice! She loves to go for trips, which means she fits in with our family just fine. She loves to "talk", and always chews us out when we leave her at home during the day!

In November, Denise's sister Colleen and her boyfriend Jason, came down to Texas to stay with us a while. They are saving up so they can do some traveling next summer. The kids love having some other adults around besides mom and dad.

New Years Resolutions

We celebrated the New Year at a local Hotel with an indoor pool. So in the middle of Winter we spent New Year's Eve and day swimming! The children wore themselves out. In the morning we went down to Moody Gardens in Galveston to watch the 3D I-MAX.

Something new we started this year, were "family meetings". Once a week we mett to discuss what each person liked, disliked, and what could be improved. We keep track of our discussions in the family journal. Denise and Donald also started working out more consistently and eating a little healthier; this was needed in order to keep up with the children (especially after they started running track!).

Travels

Weddings

Beginning of March we attended the wedding of Jennifer Drew (Donald's cousin). We were able to visit with Rob and Steve Drew's (Donald's other two cousins) families as well. Our girls had a great time playing with Maurissa, Laura, Nichole and Rachel. Bryce and Josh were the video game wizards.

In May we attended the wedding of the Newell's daughter Becky in Austin. This was a special occasion, and indicative of how time flies, since Becky had been a bright eyed little girl at our wedding back in Waco 12 years ago!

Roadtrip!!

During spring break, we visited Family back east. The first stop was with Uncle Bob and Aunt Nancy Huffman in their beautiful log house in the Appalachian mountains of Virginia. We had a great view of comet "Hale-Bopp". We then invaded Roanoke and visited with Colleen Jr. and Sr., and Jason; including a quick visit to the George Washington Carver memorial park. Next stop - the Hendersons, Mark, Annette, Cody and Luke live in a beautiful house on an 80 acre farm outside of Roanoke, the children had a great time with their cousins, and they got to ride a horse at Cody's Birthday party, and made forts in the Virginia red clay.

When we got back to Texas, after visiting Tyler and Virginia, the children had seen so much of their family that at one point Tasha asked how some of our local friends were related to them!

Beaches

The first week in August we went to our favorite beach located on Santa Rosa Island off Pensacola, Florida. We rented a condo, and were joined by Grandma Colleen, Aunt Colleen, Jason, nephew Blake Wagner and Uncle Greg Stuart. We visited the Naval Aviation museum, and took a day trip to Panama City to have our yearly portion of Pompano (the filet mignon of fish!). The children scaled a 30 foot climbing wall. Uncle Greg took them for their first go-cart rides. Alex really liked watching the dolphins swimming close by in the water, while the whole family enjoyed relaxing on the beautiful white

beaches. A wonderful time was had by one and all!

Cruise!

During the Columbus day week the Woods Tribe went to New Orleans to board our cruise ship the "Celebration", and that is what we did - Celebrate for 7 days! We left New Orleans and sailed down the Mississippi, which was what Denise had done so long ago when she was 9 years old (same as Alex)! Our first stop was Tampa Florida where Alex (the future marine biologist) was able to visit the Florida State Aquarium.

Our next stop was Cayman island where we swam with Stingrays on a sandbar. These tame velvety smooth creatures were almost too friendly, and extremely graceful as they glide through the water! Bryce was invited to sail the 40 foot power boat back to shore. The highlight of the trip was our next stop to the Mayan ruins of Tulum (in Mexico) with the children. This spot has to be one of the most amazing sights to visit in the world. The Mayan temples and pyramids overlook the ocean, the beaches are beautiful and the water clear. We all swam for a while and then headed back to Cozumel, Mexico, where we did some Christmas shopping.

We enjoyed the days at sea relaxing and not cleaning up, not cooking dinner, not taking the kids to any of their sports activities, but rather spending one-on-one time together! The ship had many "family friendly features"! The children would put the 24 hour pizza service, and camp activities on the top of their list. On board there were many paintings and sculptures on display. Alex saw one "whale painting", and noticed it was up for auction. She then repeatedly reminded her parents of when and where the auction was to be held for here forgetful parents. After explaining the auction process, and setting a price limit, Alex was ready to go! She was the only child in attendance, and while she was delighted with all of the art work and descriptions of the art work, she was anxious to put in her bid on her painting. When it was finally put up for auction, Alex charmed the "art crowd" with her enthusiastic bidding! She stayed within her allotted budget, and came away with her masterpiece. All of this excitement occurred one afternoon while sailing off the coast of Cuba sipping champagne. Champagne always reminds me of Grandpa's old saying "Champagne for our good friends, and real pain for our sham friends!".

When we finally returned to New Orleans, we stopped in the "French Quarter" for beignets and coffee at Cafe Dumond, a stroll around Jefferson square (watching the jugglers, and seeing the various "street artists"), and a visit to the doll shop. This trip was a relaxing and fun vacation for the whole family!!

Tribe Members

Alessandra

Alex's primary focus for the first part of the year was saving up Bonus points (points the kids get for doing something extra or something nice without being asked) to buy an American Girl Doll, "Felicity"! When her birthday finally arrived she had saved up more than half of the \$ she needed so the parents pitched in the rest. Alex and Felicity have been inseparable ever since! Alex is turning into a real soccer power. Her team, the Hurricanes, made the playoffs this year!! In School, she got "All A's and 1 B". She is a very sensitive girl with a big heart, and she is always ready to take on a new project for a worthy cause! We watched the "Tale of Two Cities", in which her Great-Grandpa Donald Woods was one of the major characters, and by the end of the movie we had an upset girl on our hands. The world would be a much better place if 9 year old girls like Alex made the laws! Its hard to believe she will be turning 10 this year! Alex joined the school choir, and auditioned for a solo part in the spring musical...(180 kids in the choir, about 40 tried out for solo parts, only 10 got selected....drum role please)...Alex made it! As you can imagine, we had one excited girl on our hands. She also auditioned for a group known as the "Harmony Singers", which is a special singing group of 30 children who perform at nursing homes. Her choirs first public performance, the Christmas Musical "Christmas in America" sounded beautiful! Alex is a joy to be around, and she is always singing or humming a tune!! Of course all of this singing does get on someone's nerves, now who could that be? Maybe....

Natasha

Natasha started playing Tennis this year, and enjoys running her Dad around the court. At School Tasha got straight A's for the second grade School year. She is very neat, and organized. Give her a list to complete and it will be done before you know what happened. Her room is over-run by an army of porcelain dolls.

She has developed a love of 60's clothes, and 90's music! She made a lot of friends at school, and her favorite subject is "recess" (just the same she got straight As!)? She likes computers, e-mailing her cousins in Tyler, and surfing the Internet. At school she got her computer license.

Natasha had her first communion this year. Pam Stuff (from St. Louis) and Dean Koepke were in attendance. Natasha looked like a little Russian princess.

After being rained out two years in a row, we had the Girls Birthday party "Hawaiian Luau" theme at an indoor swimming pool. I wish I could bottle up the energy these children have! Natasha and Bryce received a special reading award from the Friendswood City council.

Bryce

This year Bryce started first grade, and he has been learning about bats, bones, and Christmas around the world. Dad and Bryce built a robot which has been chasing the dog ever since. Bryce was also the big lottery winner this year, only two numbers away from winning \$28 million, but as they say "close only counts in horseshoes..". So he took his \$104 in winnings and put some in savings and some in his pocket. Bryce was a Man in Black for Halloween. His birthday party was had a Man in Black theme, all of Bryce's little friends looked cute in their little black suits and glasses! Bryce joined the girls in the Church Choir for the first time this year! **J**

Mom's Mad Marathon

The year was pretty exciting for Denise. Park Center Academy closed in May; at which point Denise was busy hunting down a new job. In the mean time some of her former students signed up for what we ended up calling "Denise's Summer Camp". Denise, the Woods Tribe, and 6 of her former students spent the summer zipping around town and having a load of fun. They visited the Houston Ships Channel, the Blue Bell ice-cream factory, the Bolivar Ferry in Galveston, and lots of other local fun spots. Blake, Denise's nephew from Florida, even came over from Florida for several weeks of the activities. Blake practiced his golf in the back yard, and had a fun time with his cousins.

In the fall she started her new job at St. Thomas the Apostle Private School right next to NASA. Her bright new batch of second graders have no shortage of energy, and she is trying to get it pointed in the right direction.

Our own children have started attending the Japanese Kumon math program, and it has helped their concentration and core computation skills a lot!

Dad

Donald got a new job at Boeing this year. Natasha wanted to know if we would get free bowling ("Bowling" sounds like "Boeing")! He continues to work on the software for the first American component of the International Space Station. Launch should occur next summer. He took Alex to "Take your Child to Work Day", and she enjoyed helping Dad with his engineering work. The family got hooked up to the Internet this summer, and the Woods Tribe have been exploring the landscape of cyber space! Don't forget to stop by our home page if you get lost out there, see end of newsletter for the address. He now gets 3 weeks of vacation a year, and he put all three to good use this year (trip back east, Pensacola, and the Cruise).

Activities

Visitors

Grandma Kay visited for the week of the Birthdays in early June (Donald, Denise and Alex). At thanksgiving we had a full House, with Grandpa Wagner from Florida, Aunt Kerala from California, and her Boyfriend Michael (we also got real familiar with the local airports with 4 trips there in 5 days!). We had an exciting time on Thanksgiving, with the microwave going out, and the stove smoking!

We had a fun time visiting with Sandra Mitchell and her friend Katie who traveled to Texas from the great Northwest this summer.

More Summer Fun

This summer was a lot of fun, in addition to "Denise's Summer Camp", we were visited by our cousins from Tyler! Uncle Steve and Bryce became fast buddies, and had a blast on the water slide. Uncle Steve, AKA "Super Dad", kept all his kids, all our kids, and several other kids for several extra hours at Astroworld, after the other "adults" had run down, and returned home!

We also enjoyed visiting the museums, and seeing the Sand Castle Building Competition with the Tate Family from Austin. There is never enough time!

Will they ever finish?

We hope this novel finds everyone still awake, healthy, and happy!! Have a wonderful holiday,

and come visit, the welcome mat is always out, and we will leave a light on!

Connections

Phone Number:

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Home Page:

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E-Mail:

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Stuff we whacked:

We went to a local resort, South Shore Harbor, for the 4th of July Fireworks over Clear Lake. The children had a blast swimming in the pool with the waterfalls.

Track & Field

This spring the children signed up for their first season of Track and Field. This training really taught them the meaning of the old phrase "when the going gets tough, the tough get going!". Not many of us are willing to run 1500 meters in the middle of the hot humid Houston summer! The girls really pushed themselves and we were very proud of them! Alex was a good race walker, and Tasha was a good distance runner. It was fun to watch the Parent's yelling "run, run, run", and then watch the parent try to run a few laps themselves. Unfortunately a bout of pneumonia for Alex and Bronchitis for Tasha cut the season short.

Hurricanes and Tornadoes

No this wasn't natural disasters hitting the Houston area; but rather the names of Alex and Bryce's Soccer teams. Both really enjoy playing soccer and are pretty good. Alex's team which has been playing together since they were in Kindergarten, made the play-offs for the first time ever! The Hurricanes (Alex's team), got a new trainer Julie (a 16 year old division 1 soccer player), who the girls all looked up to. Their new coach Ken has really helped them with strategy and playing more like a team with excellent passing (the days of the Huddled Mass are gone!!).