

# Woods Tribe Tribune 1999

We had a busy, but fantastic year. We hope everyone else did as well! One Millennium down; let's get ready for the next one!

## Travels and Adventures

### Planes Trains and Automobiles

In a great example of strategic planning or just plain insanity, the Woods Tribe coordinated a four day assault on southwest Virginia over spring break in early March. We were able to visit with Grandma Colleen, Aunt Colleen, Uncle Peter, the Huffmans, and the Stewarts. The amazing part of this trip was that we flew to Virginia, took a train back to New Orleans, and then drove back to Houston! This all within 5 days (hence the term "planes trains and automobiles")! We were glad to see Aunt Nancy who seems to be feeling better, and the snow was an unexpected surprise! The kids really liked the train ride back, since they were able to walk around, watch movies, and visit the dining car!

### Western and Eastern Trips

It has been one of our family goals for several years to visit the National Parks out west. We finally decided the children were old enough, and that we were ready for a long car trip. We started by visiting the bats at Carlsbad Caverns. Next we saw the UFOs in Roswell, and the associated meteor crater (just kidding). We next visited Glen Canyon, it was windy, but the gorge was spectacular. Next, came the main part of the trip, the North rim of the Grand Canyon, Zion, and Bryce Canyon. Our Bryce really liked Bryce Canyon. The hoodoos in the amphitheater were really neat looking especially at sunrise when they have a reddish golden glow. Alex

rode a horse (her second favorite animal) in Bryce Canyon along with the rest of the family.

We did some camping and also stayed in a few of the Park Lodges. Thanks to Natasha's persistence at the check in office, we ended up in a mini log cabin lodge overlooking the Grand Canyon (instead of camping as per "Dad's Plan")! Way to go groovy girl!

We figure the kids won't have to take another Geology class until College. Lake Powell, also known as the "Grand Canyon with water", was really strange looking, the water just doesn't seem to fit; however, we had fun on the windy boat trip across this man made lake just the same. We finished up the trip at Natural Bridge, Arches, and Mesa Verde. Bryce really liked staying at the "Apache Motel", in Moab, near Arches National Park. Moab is famous for the many "Westerns" shot in the area, in fact John Wayne and many other actors have stayed at the "Apache Motel". Bryce was particularly impressed that the actors from the Movie "Geronimo" stayed there. The kids were congratulated for completing the most "Junior Ranger" programs in a week! The hikes were wonderful and the scenery fantastic. Living in Houston, we had almost forgotten what a really blue sky looked like! Words can't do this trip justice, but we took 15 roles of film to make up for our lack of literary ability! We are already planning for the sequel, "Western Trip 2".

In June, Dad returned to work ☺; while the rest of the Woods tribe went with our friends the Suffredini's on an Eastern Trip to visit family. It was nice to see Aunt Nancy, the Wagners, and the Stewarts. We also squeezed in time to visit Monticello, the Colonna Houseboat in Norfolk, and Kitty Hawk. A special awards ceremony was held at the White House for

Denise and Jenni, for bravery in the line of duty (e.g. 5 kids in a mini van for 2 weeks).

### **The fun never stops...**

Early August, our yearly venture to our favorite beach located on Santa Rosa Island off Pensacola, Florida was relaxing. Its amazing how one week without any schedules can change your perspective. After spotting some dolphins we invaded the local inflatable shop, stocked up, and returned to the beach. We looked like a Mardi Gras parade (which we also did this year) driving back with the inflatables all over the car! It was neat rowing around among Alex's favorite animal friends (the dolphins)!

Over Thanksgiving we visited Grandpa Larry Wagner down in the Florida Keys and many friends. Alex fulfilled a life long dream and swam with a real live dolphin at the local marine aquarium! These were the same dolphins that she cried about not being able to swim with when she was only 6 years old! Alex was one happy camper! ☺ We really enjoyed sailing on the boat, which Denise was raised on. We saw a Loggerhead turtle, stingray, and a dolphin. We also visited Key West and Miami and did the tourist thing.

We invaded Disney world for 4 days, the kids enjoyed it and the parents survived it! Bryce who was only 4 months old last time we visited really enjoyed seeing Peter Pan, Hook, the Pirates and other friends. Tasha, the thrill seeker, dragged us to the more exciting rides, such as "Tower of Terror". We completed one of our other big family goals by completing our "around the world" trip at EPCOT ("well sorta").

Lest we forget, we actually ventured out west twice. We were also able at the end of 1998 to visit Donald's mom in Palm Springs, CA. The renovations on the house were so extensive that Donald almost drove right by! The house looked terrific, she incorporated

a lot of neat ideas in the renovations. We had a great "warm" time, enjoyed visiting and riding the tramway up 8,000 feet to snow. We also saw Donald's cousins, the Turner family, and Uncle Gerard. There never seems to be enough time! Grandma Kay is adapting well to her globe trotting children. Donald's sister Kerala spent several months in South East Asia, but has made it back safe and sound. She has developed an extensive network of friends in the area.

## **Tribe Members**

### **Alex's Adventures**

Alex, our "outdoor girl", tried out and made a "Super Blue" soccer team, their Olympic coach (really) keeps them busy! She took Freckles (our run-away dog) to obedience school. Besides swimming with Dolphins, a "dream come true", Alex completed baby-sitting (including first aid) school, and now encourages the parents to go out on their dates all the time. Only trouble is even with her discounted rates, we can't afford it! If the other two are a "little bit Rock and Roll", Alex is definitely a "little bit country", when it comes to music. At the new Friendswood intermediate school Alex is first chair in flute, and a member of the book and chess clubs. The parents are amazed at how quickly she learned how to make the flute sound beautiful! Alessandra shows a real aptitude for music with both the flute, and as a member of the church inter-generational choir and the school choir (along with Tasha). Most importantly Alex has a big heart and is very kind.

### **Natasha "Groovy Baby"**

Natasha, now in fifth grade, has really gotten into girl scouts and has had fun camping with Mom and her troop (it's a "girl thing"). Natasha, or "Groovy Girl", as Bryce has named her, is our 60s child. For XMAS the "boogey ball" was a big hit! At the new School,

Windsong, she has joined the choir and was nominated as their official librarian. She likes “wellness” (the new phrase for PE), the Math club and the book club. Natasha has pen pals in Rhode Island and Canada. Tasha, and the other kids have been playing indoor soccer! She was a big hit at the school choir recital. Natasha who is definitely the organized one in the family, seems to have an aptitude for science and math. She finished second in the district science fair, which where we live is not a trivial award. I guess summarizing she is the groovy, efficient scientist! Watch out world!

### **Bryce is Nice**

Bryce, also known as “Pokemon trader”, is a very polite and nice nine-year-old. This year he completed his first communion. His teachers comment on his one liners at school. At home he called one of Dad’s left over goulash dinner surprises “Jail Food”! He has enjoyed camping with the Boy Scouts, and playing laser tag, but his big plan is to build a club house with a moat (no girls allowed). He did a great project about Geronimo this year at School, we all learned a lot in the process.

### **Mom and Dad - “Romance over Galveston”**

For our 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary (hard to believe?) we went to a Romantic Island, OK so it was only Galveston, but we did go on a private sunset airplane flight over the Island. It was exhilarating, but not intoxicating (darn!). While we were gone the kids went into business selling lemonade, the parents plan on retiring soon!

Denise is teaching 2<sup>nd</sup> grade with her Favorite teaching partner ever, Randi Born, who helps us keep everything in the proper perspective (have you ever been in a “funny house”?). All of their international set of 2<sup>nd</sup> graders have learned how to say “give me a hug in 3 languages!”.

Dad has really enjoyed having more time to spend: camping, travelling, and helping with homework (as long as its math or science). After a long retirement, Donald started playing Tennis a bit. His Space Station presentations at the Library and at Bryce’s school were hits, well OK, no body fell asleep. After the past 4 years of hard work to get the software for the Space Station functional, everything is working great on orbit so far! Keep your fingers crossed! In fact we celebrated the one year anniversary of Donald’s software and Bryce’s birthday on December 7; how about that for a coincidence!

### **Other Family Events and Activities**

We had a fun time visiting with Sandra Mitchell and her Dad. The Northwest was the only corner of the United States we didn’t visit this past year, so we were glad Sandra could fill us in on the “Rust Report”. Lisa and Les Newell visited us over St. Patrick’s day for Margaritas (green on green, how could we go wrong!) We have a new set of friends, affectionately known as the “Timber Cove Mafia”. We had fun getting to know them and doing more local activities together, such as: visiting the San Jacinto Monument, taking Ferry rides, “Art Car Parade”, visiting their beach house, attending the Galveston “parade of Victorian homes”, camping at Perdaneles Falls in the Texas Hill Country, and... well you get the idea. It was on this trip that Tasha woke up screaming “There’s an Armadillo on my head!”, it turned out to be just Freckles, the family dog!

Figuring we needed a little more culture, we attended some of the local theater events. We started the summer with a Vaudeville show at the 1894 opera house in Galveston. The “Little Mermaid”, which we saw ringside, was a big hit with Alex! We finished off the year on Christmas day, at the “off Broadway” production of “Sound of Music” with Richard

Chamberlain. "We ain't talking like no hicks now, with all that their culture!"

All of the Woods tribe joined the Timber-cove Dolphin swim team. Due to travels we only went to one event, but Bryce and Alex each finished first in their divisions!

During October Mom had a teacher's conference in Austin, a "mom only cruise" to the Bahamas, and a "Mother/Daughter" campout with Tasha. The house was barely standing when she returned!

The biggest news for our family this year, was the discovery of a lost branch of our family on the East Coast. We hope to get together with Megan Murphy and her family soon, including our newest cousin Graham, a bright blond 3-year-old!

### **Winding up the Millennium**

This is an exciting time to be alive! The progress in the last 100 years has been amazing. In transportation, we've gone from horses and trains to the jets and the moon. Communications has evolved from telegraphs to the internet and cell phones (or at least we like to think that was an evolution). Its hard to imagine what the next 100 years will hold, but hopefully our children will turn this part of the solar system into a place of acceptance, and kindness (amazing how some concepts don't need to evolve).

We will leave you with a more esoteric thought to ponder for this Millennium turn over. This is courtesy of one of Donald's co-workers (why am I not surprised?):

*This past November 19, 1999, or numerically 11-19-1999, was the last completely "odd date" which will occur for over a thousand years. The next "odd date" will be 1-1-3111, which is well over a thousand years away, but luckily with the advances in medicine and bio-engineering, I am sure most of us will be around to celebrate it! Days such as 1-1-2000 have both even and odd digits, thus they are not entirely odd or even. See Y2K isn't as bad, or as unusual, as you may have heard! The next even day will be 2-2-2000, the first one since 8-28-888, when Alfred the Great ruled England. So, if you somehow forgot to celebrate the week before thanksgiving, make sure not to miss Wednesday, February 2, 2000!*

There you have it! Have a wonderful restful holiday. If you have any trouble sleeping remember to keep this newsletter by the bed! Come visit when you get a chance, the welcome mat is out. Besides, as you might have guessed, we are too tired to go anywhere this coming year (famous last words!)

### **Connections**

<b>Phone Number:</b>	
<b>Home Page:</b>	<a href="http://welcome.to/WoodsTribe">http://welcome.to/WoodsTribe</a>
<b>E-Mail:</b>	xxxxxx

*Happy New Millennium!*

*Donald Denise*

*Natasha Alexandra Bryce*

*And Freckles*