

# Woods Tribe Tribune 2002



## Greetings from the Swiss Alps

### Handsome moves to San Antonio and Beyond ☺

Our year has been filled with many events and the writing of our annual newsletter was delayed due to the passing of Denise's father - Larry (AKA "Handsome") who passed away in early December. We traveled to the Florida Keys after Christmas where his boat was anchored for the past 20 years. After a dockside memorial service, family and friends helped spread his ashes at sea under sail on a 50-foot sailboat, on a beautiful starry night. The captain of this vessel was a woman, which would have really tickled Dad's fancy.

Many thanks to Colleen Jr., Lisa, Gerard, and Colleen senior who kept an eye on Handsome while we explored Europe this summer. When we returned he underwent the "Plasmapheresis" procedure, our "last hope". After which he moved to an "acute care facility", one of the few in the state which accepted ventilator patients, but a 5 hour drive away in San Antonio! ☺ We enjoyed our last thanksgiving dinner together. Many thanks to our cherished friends who also helped us out during this difficult time these past two years. Their continued support gave our family strength to help dad.

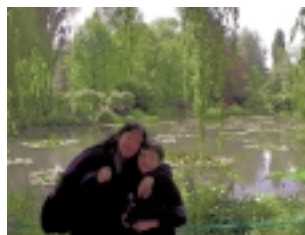
He was a "force of nature" who will be dearly missed by the many who loved him.

### European Invasion - AKA "Woods Wind Tours"

After several years of planning and saving, the Woods Tribe invaded Europe for the summer! In 10 weeks we covered about 17 countries, stayed in B&Bs, campsites, and even a castle, braved "round-about" and even drove on the wrong side of the road! So tighten your seat belts as we try to jam 10 educational weeks into a few paragraphs!

Paris was fantastic with its delicious food! We attended a Mozart concert in St. Chappelle Cathedral, famous for its stained glass. We dropped in to say hi to Mona, and Monet. We visited Versailles while the fountains erupted in all of their splendor, and music filled the gardens. We hopped in our rental station wagon and visited Monet's Garden, and invaded the beaches of Normandy (Bryce the WWII buff was in heaven).

From there we climbed the steep steps of the third Century City Mount St. Michelle.



Monet's Garden



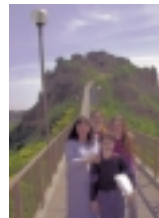
Mount St. Michelle

We visited the castles of the Loire valley and saw the cave art in Lascaux, climbed over the Pyrenees and stayed in a castle near Mount Serrat in Cardona Spain. Barcelona was exciting and we spent a day on the beach in near by Sitges. The children did not approve of the swimming suits, or the lack of them!

Returning to Southern France, we stayed in Arles in the Provence region, where we saw a Roman Coliseum, the Pope's palace, and drank the Pope's wine (a long story, but hey what do you expect in France?). For Dad's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday we drove along the "French Riviera". The views and water were beautiful, but the beach was a little "rocky".



Driving hints?



Civita, Italy



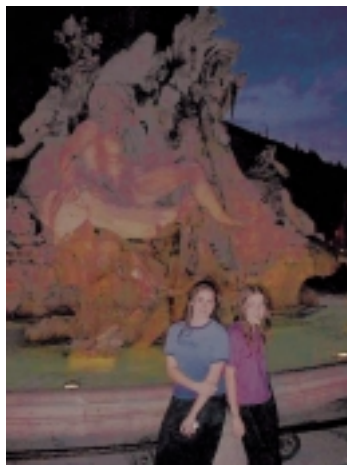
Point du Gard  
(Roman Aqueduct)

For Mom's birthday we stayed in Cinque Terre, on the coast of Northern Italy. These villages are perched on the edge of these lovely mountains along the Mediterranean Sea. This was one of the few places where we actually "relaxed". We all went hiking, swimming, and kayaking, and toured the surrounding cities by boat. We enjoyed making our own food from the local market's produce in the kitchen of the apartment we rented (this is the hometown of Pesto)! We celebrated Alex's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday at a local seafood restaurant, and had great blow-torched crême brûlée (the spelling checker has given up at this point). The entire restaurant sang "Happy Birthday" in Italian. From there we saw the Marble mines of Carrarra, and went to the birthplace of the renaissance, Florence. We saw the Michaelangelo's "David", and visited with Leonardo. He didn't have much to say, in fact you could say he was very statue like. From there we visited some of the Hill towns in Tuscany, such as Assisi, and Siena. The food in this region was fantastic!! Finally we visited Civita, which is an ancient town connected to the outside world by a sliver of a footbridge, with 90-foot drops on either side. It was pretty much deserted when we arrived late in the afternoon. We phoned the owner of the local B&B. He came up to personally let us in and to serve us a fantastic dinner. Franco was a real hero, and gave us some hints about Rome, such as "don't even think of driving there".

Rome, the eternal city was fantastic, loud, beautiful, and vivacious. We stayed in a hotel run by Ukrainian nuns, and saw the typical tourist fare. We visited our Friends the Guidonis for dinner! Their son Luca was a former student of Denise's. Mariarita had a superb dinner for our reunion. We can't wait for their next visit to Texas!



**Romans Attack Bryce!**



**Trevi Fountain - Rome**

We made a quick day trip down to Pompeii, where luckily there were no eruptions by Mount Vesuvius, but we were worn out after walking around this ancient Roman town. The nun's almost locked us out for being too late! We visited the Sistine chapel, saw St. Paul's Cathedral, the Vatican museum, and Trevi Fountain. -- On to Venice, where we did some sightseeing on a Gondola ride, and shopped for some of the famous Venetian glass.

After crossing over the Dolomite Mountains (an Alex recommendation), we saw the summer home of composer Gustav Mahler, and invaded Salzburg. The hills were alive with the sound of music (SOM), and we attended a Mozart dinner in one of the oldest and most elegant restaurants in Europe. Alex played the flute for the family in the garden of the SOM house. Cousin Sandra who hooked up with us for a little while and helped us navigate our way to Vienna, where we camped in the "Vienna Woods". We enjoyed a Strauss concert in the hall where the Strauss brothers actually conducted their famous Waltzes, some 100 years ago! From there we traveled by train to the ancient city of Prague in the Czech Republic. The world

famous baroque architecture was incredible!! The St. Charles Bridge was majestic with its fine statues. Next we visited Medieval Rothenburg along the Romantic road in Germany. Here Alex was helpful with her German language skills. We toured the town with the night watchman, who was as funny as he was informative. After camping outside the walled city, we headed down the romantic road and saw a cathedral completely made of a meteor (guess who's idea that was?).



**Venice - Gondola Tour**



**London Calling!**

We visited King Ludwig's Neuchwanstein castle in Bavaria, and camped at a nearby lake. It might as well have been named "Wagner" castle, since all of the rooms had Wagner opera themes. The guides told us they had not had many Wagner descendants, like Denise, come visit. From there we drove up into the Swiss Alps. Despite some goof ups with our accommodations, the view from the top of the Alps made this visit worthwhile. We tried Swiss fondue, and had a \$40 lunch at McDonalds! We continued on to a wonderful B&B along the Rhine River. The next day we took a day cruise along to Rhine River and visited the ruins of Rheinfels castle, and had lunch overlooking the Rhine. We then zipped on up to Amsterdam and dropped off Sandra, who returned to Seattle; however the gluttons for punishment headed into the countryside of the Netherlands.



**Prague and the girls!**



**French Riviera**

We then visited another one of Mom's former students, the Torremans. The kids enjoyed playing with Tolita, and Neils and our Dutch Smurf, Georges. It was wonderful to drive with them through the beautiful Dutch villages on the way to a fantastic dinner. Neil's uncle owns this delightful restaurant. Our visit was too short with the Torremans! We took a ferry into Belgium and visited Bruges, the "Venice of the North", and had a great time sampling the chocolates! The best we found anywhere in Europe, so we stocked up for the trip across the channel to the Cliff's of Dover. England was invaded on July 4<sup>th</sup>! All right, take a deep breath as we plunge onward!

London was a blast, we saw London Tower and took the "Ceremony of the Keys" night tour, we had box seats for the "My Fair Lady" musical in a haunted theatre. Dad and Bryce visited Legoland, where Bryce lost another hat, luckily all of the hats eventually found there way back to Friendswood. We enjoyed visiting Stonehenge (just another big Lego set as it turns out), and having lunch at the Sally Lunn house in Bath. We saw the Prime Meridian, the "Gypsy Moth" (small sailing ketch in which Sir Francis Chichester made the



World's first single-handed circumnavigation of the globe (1966-7), and the "Cutty Sark" square rigger.

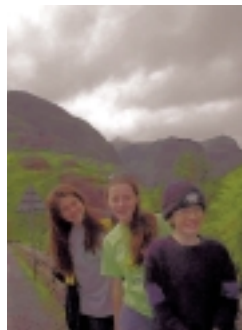
We visited the Roman Baths in Bath, but chickened out on drinking the "healing waters"! We decided to get out of the car to explore the Cotswold region by horse. Here we each mounted our new 4-legged friends for a beautiful ride through the countryside. The Woods Tribe looked pretty funny outfitted in our riding gear. We then stayed in a stone house in the Lake District, where the mountains looked as if they were covered in green velvet. The family that owns this Sleeping Barn was wonderful. We wanted to kidnap the Grahams to take back to the States.



**Stonehenge Lego Set**

We then visited our newly made friends the Kennedys, who gave us the "Red Carpet" treatment through York, while staying at their lovely estate home in the country. We met a fellow who made musical instruments --- a little bit out of our price range, but interesting none the less. We also saw the York Minster Cathedral, Clifford's tower, and the "shambles". From there we visited Whitby (of "Dracula" fame) along the coast, where we saw a replica of the Endeavor, the ship that Captain Cook circumnavigated the earth and discovered Australia. On board was a piece of the original Endeavor (which wrecked on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia) which had been flown on the maiden voyage of the Space Shuttle Endeavor. This particular shuttle took up the first part of the Space Station back in 1998, along with Dad's software. We skirted along Hadrian's wall until we visited the "Forsaken Land" which had been walled off from the civilized part of the Roman Empire --- Scotland!

Edinburgh was an enchanting city, we enjoyed the Castle tour, and walking the "Royal Mile", and the kids climbed a nearby hill known as Arthur's Seat, while the parents rested in the park below. We went on a ghost walk through the catacombs, and enjoyed the "full Scottish breakfasts" served by Donna at her B&B. From there we took a day trip up to the highlands of Scotland to find the Lochness monster. We are still checking some of the more than 3,000 photos we took to see if she was hiding in any of them. We took a boat tour of the lake and saw the ruins of Lochart castle. This leg of our trip was enchanting, the people were so friendly, and full of humor. Mom and Dad finally had the opportunity to purchase some of their wedding crystal, Edinburgh Crystal. We also had a "VIP" class on the fine art of crystal cutting. Each of us returned home with our own hand cut crystal tumbler (in one piece I might add!). These master craftsmen were very patient with this crew!

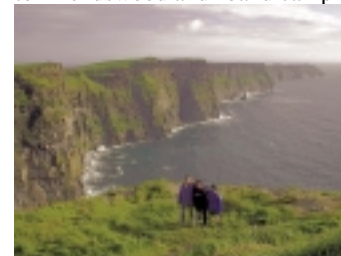


**Scottish Highlands**



**Scotland - Lochness - Nessie Hunters!**

We then flew over to Ireland, and saw New Grange (one of many UNESCO World Heritage sights we visited on this trip), which is a Bronze age community north of Dublin (the stone art here predates the Egyptian pyramids). Alex played her flute in a real family style Irish pub. And no Bryce, the tears you saw when she played "Danny Boy" weren't because she was playing so poorly! We saw the book of Kells in Trinity College Library, and visited number 29 Georgian house, which recreated a household of the 1890s in Dublin. We then headed south along the coast, and stayed at a wonderful dairy farm B&B. We visited the Dumbrody, an immigrant's ship taken by many to the colonies across the Atlantic, as done by Denise's Irish ancestors in the 1700s. Along this rocky coastline we saw "Hook Head" which is one of the oldest known working lighthouses (Gothic Architecture), and we enjoyed the view from the top. Our next stop was the Dingle Peninsula where we took an archaeology tour of the ancient Celtic ruins. Before we left Ireland we were able to visit the tremendous Cliffs of Moher, and take a ferry out to Innish Moore in the Aran Islands. We biked on this rugged and remote island, and explored a ship wreck!. Each of the children now owns an Aran Island Sweater! We wound up our big trip back in Paris, where we climbed the Eiffel tower, and visited the Gargoyles on top of Notre dame. Then back to Friendswood and "band camp" for Alex.



**Cliff's of Moher - Ireland**

Although this letter gives the impression of running from one attraction to the next, we did stop and enjoy the various cultures. While the major sights awed us, we fell in love with the small villages, and gardens on our off-road adventures, an advantage of renting a car for 2 and a 1/2 months. The cafes, bakeries, little shops, and people were so wonderful. It was interesting to see the children immersed in these places of history full of new languages, foods, signs, and people. It was the trip of a lifetime, and gave us lots of ideas about where we would like to spend more time on future trips, while certainly broadening all of our horizons. Some of our Photos can be seen on our web-site, or come on by and we can give you the complete tour, bring your own "No Doz".

### **On a different note...**

**Alex** Our flute player continues to do great things. Her band was the #1 4A school in their district. Alex was the first freshman flute player from her high school ever to qualify for all state competition. She

continues to take advanced classes while juggling her band schedule into the mix.

**Tasha** grew taller than Mom this year! The super Oboist also enjoys Tennis and her team won their district competition. Tasha was nominated as an "All American Scholar". She also was ranked as the #2 Oboist in her Region. She continues to demonstrate how far hard work and determination can take you.

**Bryce** AKA "Harry Potter" is a great fan of Submarines, and World War II. He had a third place finish with his Science Fair submarine project. He played soccer this Fall, and had a great time. He was our tour guide for all of the War Museums in Europe. He has an infectious love of History, Math and Science.



**Too much wine in France!**

**That's all folks!!**

Well another year has run its course. This was a big one for us, and one we will not likely forget.

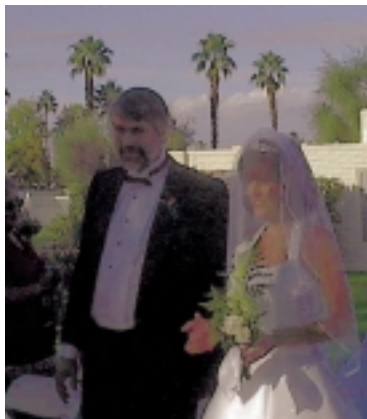
Have a wonderful 2003, and come visit if you are out our way. The welcome mat is always out, the sofa bed is real comfortable and we will leave a light on! Give us a few days warning, so we can find the photo albums. Until next time!



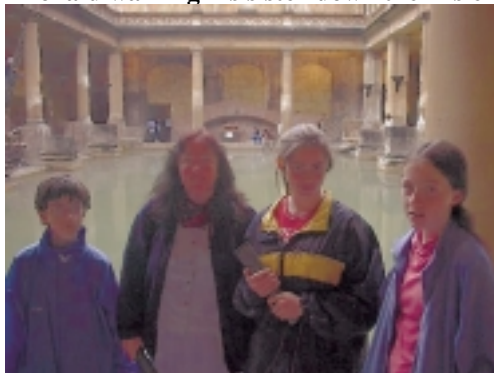
**Family Togetherness  
Kerala's Wedding**

**Future Submarine Designer!**

After Thanksgiving, Donald had the honor of walking his sister down the aisle, for her beautiful wedding in Palm Springs, California. This special occasion gave him the opportunity to share this joyous occasion with many family members. We are thrilled to welcome Michael and his wonderful family into our tribe!



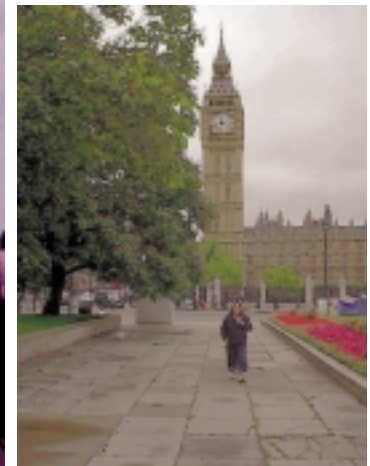
**Donald walking his sister down the Aisle**



**Bath (England) - Yes we needed one**



**Guess Where?**



**Mom's running out of time  
(Big Ben, London)**

More of our photos can be seen on the web:

<http://woodstribetripod.com>

Drop us a line if you are on-line:

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