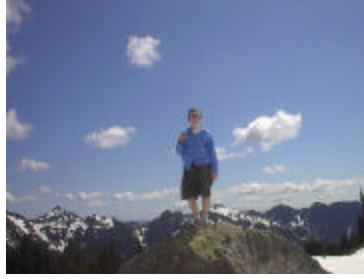


Woods Tribe Tribune 2003



Greetings from Mount Rainier

A Smoother year

Our year has been filled with many exciting events, a trip to Canada, Kerala's first baby, more great music by the children, and visits from Grandmas.

Canadian Invasion - AKA "Woods Wind Tours"

We flew to Seattle and Cousin Sandra was our brave tour guide showing us some of the local sights. Even more amazing, Sandra bravely put up the Woods Tribe for several days in her beautiful apartment overlooking one of the local lakes! After flying in and seeing Mount Rainier peaking out of the clouds, we went and climbed Mount Rainier on our 2nd day. It was like having a white Christmas in July! Continuing a tradition started last year in Europe, we then invaded Canada on July 4th! We enjoyed touring Vancouver, and visiting Victoria. Sandra continued as our gracious tour guide and took us to the Empress Hotel tearoom in Victoria, where we enjoyed "high tea". Afterwards we had a caffeine-inspired game of tag on the front lawn. Then on to Butchart Gardens, which is enclosed in an old Rock Quarry. It was as beautiful as it was fragrant. Back in Vancouver we visited Stanley Park, which was full of totem poles and we had some vegetarian fare, Tasha was in Heaven, that was highly recommended by our gracious hosts, Sandra and her Friend Naomi. We wished we were able to spend more time in the area, but we hit the Trans-Canadian highway and headed to the Canadian Rockies.



On the way we saw the "last spike" that completed the Trans-

Canadian Railroad in the 1800s. The mountains were spectacular and we reached the Banff Lake Louise Hotel in the late afternoon. This hotel fronts a vibrant blue lake. Hidden in the pine-covered mountains surrounding this lake, a glacier peeks out!

The next day we had breakfast at the bottom of Kakwa falls (second largest falls in North America). After exploring that a bit, we headed up the "Glacier Parkway", another spectacular drive. We finally reached the Columbia Ice fields and walked on a glacier. Actually, it was a "tri-phasic" glacier since it drained into three separate oceans (Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic). We returned to our hotel for a swim and a fantastic dinner overlooking "Bow Valley". The next morning the entire tribe had breakfast at a "Bear Reserve" We then rode a gondola to the mountain top looking down at a bear and her little cub. At the top, we went on a Ranger-guided hike that was both informative and fun. Look out bears, the Woodstribes has invaded! Our next stop was the Banff Springs Hotel. Harry Potter fans would love this gracious hotel (designed after a Scottish Baronial Castle) with its torched-lined stone hallways and gargoyles. We enjoyed our stay here before getting back into the car for the next leg of our journey.



We visited Montana's Glacier park and drove the "going to the sun" road at sunset. The following day we drove through Idaho back to Seattle. We even found a desert in the eastern part of

Washington, we certainly had no idea existed.

Sandra took us out to the Olympic Peninsula where we visited the tidal pools and the northeastern-most point in the United States, a Makaw Indian reservation. One hike we took in this area began in a tall forest, continued into a rainforest, and ended at the pacific tidal pools. Absolutely amazing and beautiful! When we returned to Seattle, Mom talked Alex into a day trip offshore to watch the Orca whales. In the Orca Islands they enjoyed the animal life that included bald eagles, seals, and dolphins. Yes, they did see wild Orcas in their pods. It was well worth the time!!

STS 107 Launch

Earlier in the year we decided to take the kids to Florida to see the launch of the space shuttle Columbia since they had never been to a live launch. We were invited to attend by astronaut Laurel Clark, a Colombia crew member - her son Ian Clark was one of Denise's second grade students at the time. The good news is it was a spectacular launch on a clear crisp morning. We were huddled up with other Astronaut guest's at the "static test area". The bad news is the return trip went badly astray, as I'm sure everyone has heard. Laurel was outgoing, vivacious and full of life. She is sorely missed by Ian, Jon (her Husband), her friends and family, and by Denise's entire School.

As noted by Magellan during the age of earthly exploration in the great wooden ships:

The sea is dangerous and it's storms terrible, but these obstacles have never been sufficient reason to remain ashore...seek victory over those things that seem impossible. It is with an iron will that [we] embark on the most daring of all endeavors... to meet the shadowy future without fear and conquer the unknown.

Luckily, neither Magellan nor any of his peers stayed at home. Hopefully, we won't sit things out in this age of planetary exploration.



On a different note...

Alex, our Flute player, continues to accomplish great things. This fall her high school marching band was the #1 4A school in their district and

area, and the band actually finished second in Texas state competition!! The finals were held in the Alamo-dome in San Antonio. The band felt it was their best performance ever! Apparently the judges agreed! 😊 Both girls also qualified to be members of the Houston Youth Symphony, which is composed of the best musicians in the Houston Metropolitan area. She also went to the prom this spring with honey Keith. At least she isn't driving yet!



Tasha, the super Oboist, enjoys Tennis in addition to her music. Her tennis team won their district competition - she finished 2nd in district singles competition. Tasha was nominated as an "All American Scholar". She also was a member of the high school marching band as well as making Region Band. While she has grown taller than mom this year, don't believe anything you hear about rumors that she is taller than her Dad.



Bryce has started playing the Saxophone, and is it Loud! We thought the Oboe was going to drive us to distraction, but it can't hold a candle to the Saxophone. Bryce is getting the hang of it and it's nice to have another Woods Woodwind in the household. However, most important of all, World War II fan Bryce saw more submarines this year! In fact, we visited the submarine museum outside of Seattle and completed an early morning tour of an actual Russian sub. Bryce is kind, considerate and getting smarter all the time. If you need any advice on how to build a sub, call 1-800-Bryce-Subs!



"Dicken's on the Strand" in Galveston. Donald was able to take some time off to show his mom the Museum of Fine Arts' exhibit of Modern Art from New York. She also met the Girls' Night Out "Martini Club", but some things are better left to the imagination.....

I've been working on the ... Boat

The boat "Doris Too" is still in dry dock. She has come a long way since she arrived via truck last year. Her hull is completely repaired and painted, and her decks look just like new. Our helper Jose was a major factor in getting her ship shape. The next step will be to replace scupper drains, get her mizzen mast rigging replaced, and purchase a new engine. We hope to have her sailing by springtime. Plan to go sailing if you are in the area!!! Yo ho, yo ho....

Quincy Arrives

On March 14th, Donald's sister Kerala had her first child, Quincy Conrad Diaz. Quincy is affectionately referred to as the Miracle Baby, since he already has undergone four operations! Through it all he seems to be a very happy and alert fellow. The Woods Tribe hopes to get out to the Phoenix area this coming year to see him in person!

Grandmas Visit

Denise's mom came down to visit the grandkids this fall, and has been a big help in running the household. The kids often start crying if Denise or Donald pickup cooking utensils in the kitchen area! Apparently Grandma's cooking is preferred.

It was wonderful for the children to have their grandmas here to share their love of music. As we mentioned earlier, both girls auditioned and were invited to join the Houston Youth Symphony orchestra. Their concerts are held at the Rice University Auditorium. It truly is amazing to hear these "youngsters" produce such lovely music. Several friends were able to join us for the fall event, including Lisa Newell from Austin, Mrs. Mills (Alex' flute tutor), and the Spehars (one of Denise's students and family) just to name a few! Their next orchestral concerts will be on February 8th and May 9th. Come join us if you are in town!



Sailing Vessel "Doris Too"



Donald's mom came to visit the first week in December for Bryce's 13th birthday and for concerts by the children. We took her to

Pensacola Version 9

At the end of July the Woods Tribe packed up their swimming suits, "boogie boards", awnings, and made their yearly pilgrimage to Pensacola beach on Santa Rosa Island. The Griffis family, including their three boys, and Aunt Megan with Graham came along and we all enjoyed a fun week relaxing around the beach. We were afraid the car wouldn't be able to move with all the shells we collected! ☺



Other Adventures and Visiting Friends

Thanksgiving found us with some dear friends in the Texas Hill country. It was peaceful and fun to relax and have the parents visit with the Borns and Purdums, while all nine kiddos visited and played on their lovely lake front property. The Borns are a hearty bunch to take on this crew!!

Lisa Newell visited several times, and we were able to sneak her away to a beach house on the Bolivar Peninsula (Thank you Sandra #1).

The kids went to various band and tennis camps this year. They particularly enjoyed working with retired Air Force band conductor Colonel Gabriel on "Festival Variations". We had fun canoeing in the East Texas Woods on the way home. We surprised Alex with a concert by James Galway, the world's greatest living flautist. We were able to sneak up to the front row so close we could see the keys on his flute. He sounded fantastic! We surprised mom with a James Taylor concert. It was a little warm, but we enjoyed his clear voice on the hillside up in the woodlands. On the way back from the Tennis camp we visited the Newels, and did a quick visit to Waco, including the Dr. Pepper museum, and Ranger Hall of Fame.

Dog Report

Alex says she wouldn't approve this newsletter without some mention of our dogs, so here goes Bryce's report on the dogs. Honey bunny is still full of energy and loves to rough house with

Freckles or anyone for that matter. Freckles is over the hill! But she can still put Honey in a head lock.

That's all folks!!

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

Have a wonderful 2004, 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!

More of our photos can be seen on the web:

<http://woodstribetripod.com>

Drop us a line if you are on-line:

Woodstribetripod@hotmail.com

Forgot to mention, but very important as well:

- Denise enjoyed a trip to St. Louis for one of her oldest friends, Pam's wedding. It was a beautiful ceremony.
- In May Mom and Dad attended Blake Wagner's graduation in Ft. Lauderdale. They also made a mini-anniversary of it, by going down to the keys and visiting with friends (Ian Cortina & Tommy!).
- Lastly the Guidoni's visited us from Italy. We had visited them summer before on our big European adventure.