

# Woods Tribe Tribune 2005

Season's greetings and happy New Year to ya'll, our Mates! Tasmania, Fiji, Australia, Boston, Virginia, concerts, tennis; it was quite a year for the Woods Tribe. Get some coffee, and we'll get started!



Woods Tribe on Camels on Aussie Beach

## On Location

The Woods Tribe spent most of the year in Australia, while Donald finished his assignment. The children made new friends and enjoyed their schoolwork, both in Australia and by correspondence. Denise was the resident tour guide, taking lots of visiting friends around Brisbane Australia.

## Visitors and Visiting

We had several visitors over the year. Grandma Kay visited in February, and took the Woods Tribe to the Whitsundays for a sail. The Whitsundays are Australia's favorite spot due to the clear water, and beautiful white beaches. We enjoyed sailing and snorkeling in this magnificent area on the Great Barrier Reef. The 3 days of sailing on an 80 foot Tasmanian Schooner was spectacular! It was nice to see Grandma Kay "down under"!



Great Barrier Reef Islands with Grandma Kay

In March Sandra Mitchell and Naomi escaped the rains of Seattle to visit us. We enjoyed their company and showed them around Brisbane and the surrounding areas. They completed their scuba certifications on the Barrier Reef. It was fun taking them to our favorite Himalayan café in Brisbane.

For Tasha's 16<sup>th</sup> Birthday, during Easter we visited Tasmania with our friend Mabbs and her delightful 93 year old Father. We stayed with her Father on the North Coast of Tasmania.



Our Tasmanian Hosts!

We toured most of this Island, seeing Hobart, Richmond, the Bay of fires, Freycinet, Wineglass bay and other interesting areas. We took the Kids Sea Kayaking, saw the world's smallest penguins, and went to the world's largest maze complex! Has anyone seen Bryce?

Tasmania is a natural wonder, one of the few relatively unspoiled areas left in the world, and pretty much at the end of the world, next stop Antarctica! We would love to visit again!



Tasmanian Sea Kayaking Team

In June our good friends the Griffis brought their entire clan over. We took them to the "Crocodile Hunter's Zoo",

our favorite Island Fraser (world's largest Sand Island), and then to Morteon Island's Tangalooma Resort. Phil learned to navigate on the left side of the road. Then they went on to the Barrier Reef, Uluru and Sydney!

Last but certainly not least, Halie and Katie Born came for a visit. These brave teenagers crossed the Pacific, and as a reward we drug them all over Southeast Queensland!

It was great seeing so many friends and family from stateside. It was almost like being at home.

### **20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Donald and Denise celebrated their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Fiji. We went sailing on a 70 foot schooner to "Cast Away Island" of Tom Hank's movie fame. We visited a local village, leaped off beautiful waterfalls, and enjoyed relaxing for several days. We ended our last days of bliss with a fantastic seafood dinner served by candle light on the beach!



Papa and Mama Woods Celebrating in Fiji!

### **All great things must end**

We made many great new friends down under: Mabbs, Jim and Juli; the Adam's and Nance families; Jack and Vicky and the twins (Sass and Leona); the Bortolussi's, Tricia and family, the McCalls, Williams, and Hartung families, and many more. After several sad going away parties in Brisbane, the Woods Tribe returned to Houston in early August. They were greeted at the airport by their great friends the Purdums (all 6 of them)!

Twenty years ago, way back in 1985 Denise and Donald moved to Houston so Donald could work on his Masters in Lasers. In 2005, they returned again so that the girls could finish High school and get ready for college. Denise resumed her teaching in the third grade and has another great batch of kids who are enjoying the pleasure of working with one of the best teachers in Texas. Donald completed his project for the Australian government, and resumed working on the International Space Station for NASA. The children went back to school and resumed their musical activities in Friendswood. Unpacking the 166 boxes has turned into a part time job, and Grandma Kay brought back our long missed dogs! ☺ She was the hero of the day!

### **Children on the loose**

The Friendswood marching band finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the State of Texas. Our long time friends the Govers from Dallas had their kiddos marching in the State competition as well. Life had come full circle: our rug rats had played together while still in diapers, and now as young adults they were marching in the San Antonio Alamodome! It was wonderful!

Tasha and Alex have qualified for Region Orchestra/band. Alex is getting ready to attack the college music scene. Bryce is playing Saxophone and Tennis. They have all adapted to Friendswood High School, but with a wider perspective on the world.

### **Texas Remixed**

One of Denise's oldest friends, Pam, came down over Labor Day weekend for a surprise visit (carefully plotted with Donald). We enjoyed showing Pam and Bob around the NASA area, and spending time together. It was too short a visit!

In October our friend from Australia; Mabbs came to visit the U.S. for several weeks, she made Friendswood her base of operations. First she went on a cruise through the Caribbean while the Woods Tribe ran to Austin to escape Hurricane Rita, staying with our great friends Lisa and Les Newell. Mabb's then fulfilled a life long dream of visiting Nashville, the country music capital of the states. We took her around Houston: NASA, San Jacinto, the Renaissance festival and the downtown tunnels. We also visited the Alamo, San Antonio Riverwalk, and the Texas historical museum in Austin. We tagged up with our friends the Newells for BBQ. It was fun seeing so many things we hadn't seen in our own state for several years.



Tasmanian Friend Mabbs and Denise!

This was another one of those full circle experiences, Mabb's had shown us her home Tasmania in the Spring and we were able to show her our home during the Fall. It was great having her visit and help out for several weeks.

## East Coast Road Trip

Over Thanksgiving Denise, Bryce and Tasha went to Richmond Virginia to visit the Stewart/Huffman family, including her cousin Angie, Aunt Nancy, Jim and last but certainly not least their daughter Paige. Meanwhile Donald & Alex did a tour of musical conservatories on the East coast starting in Boston with the "New England Conservatory", moving down the coast to Philadelphia's "Curtis Institute", and finishing in Baltimore with "Peabody Conservatory". We stayed with Donald's sister Megan and her son Graham; they were great hosts. It was fun seeing the Fall colors again, and having a nice relaxing Thanksgiving. Aunt Nancy enjoyed hearing the girls play their musical duets. We saw the Confederate White House, and few other tourist things. We also saw Denise's Mom, sister Colleen and her new Baby. Angie did a fantastic job of putting up our crew of 5 for the Holidays!



Woods Kids with cousin Paige and Aunt Nancy

## New Arrivals

Lots of new babies this year. Aunt Colleen was first with baby Mikaila. Our friends Eric and Dot in Dallas had baby Max over the summer. Donald's sister Kerala had Artemesia in October. Denise was in heaven playing with Mikaila at Thanksgiving and again over Christmas when Colleen and Joel visited on Christmas day, flying in from Washington D.C.



Woods Gals with Baby Mikaila, Colleen and Joel

## Wake up! Its almost over...

There were so many fun and exciting things this year, I will try to finalize it with a bit of a core dump. We met an Aussie astronaut following a long awaited shuttle flight.



Aussie Astronaut with Bryce and Alex

In fact the Woods Tribe was flying back to the US while the Astronauts were flying around the world. Mom and Dad saw Norah Jones and Al Jareau in concert; while Alex and Dad enjoyed seeing Brisbane native and country music entertainer of the year Keith Urban. For Christmas we saw the Trans Siberian Orchestra and we didn't even have to go to Russia. We rode camels on the beach in Central Queensland; found wine in the Granite belt on a romantic get away (no kids allowed), met new friends who own an olive farm, visited General MacArthur's Australian headquarters, visited the rainforests of Lamington National park, and the list goes on. Australia is a fantastic country and should be on everyone's short list of places to visit this century.

Overall it will be hard to top this year. Especially with the impending departure of part of the Woods Tribe when Alex graduates this May 28th and goes to College next Fall. ☺☺

Pictures from many of these adventures are available online so let us know if you want to see them, and we can send you links. We hope all is well on your end of the world. We enjoyed the Holiday's in our "first home" for our first winter in about 2 years, but will be reminiscing about our "other home" for some time to come. Hugs to you all!

## Contact "Details"

Woods Tribe  
1606 White Wing  
Friendswood, TX 77546  
USA  
(+1) 281-992-2714  
<http://woodstribe.tripod.com>  
[WoodsTribe@hotmail.com](mailto:WoodsTribe@hotmail.com)