

North Cape May girl celebrates 12th birthday on 12/12/12

Written by Cindy Nevitt

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NORTH CAPE MAY – Nicole Parks is not a typical sixth grader. A student at Sandman Consolidated School in Lower Township, she enjoys bowling, king crab legs and eating at the buffet at the Borgata casino in Atlantic City.

But it's not her un-kidlike preferences that make her so atypical for someone her age. It's her birthday, for today, on 12/12/12, she turns 12. Nicole is one of approximately 220,000 Americans who were born on Dec. 12, 2000, and one of millions who are celebrating their birthday on a truly rare occasion as today is the last time this century the date – month, day and year -- will be represented by the same number.

"I feel amazing and special," the preteen said, sitting in the kitchen of the North Cape May home she shares with her mother, Tonya Fox, and step-father Rob, in addition to two talkative parrots, a rotund guinea pig named Cookie and a 70-pound pit bull named Buster. "I don't want the day to end."

On the eve of the momentous occasion, Nicole was looking forward to leaving school early today to join her grandmother, Linda Paulhamus of Villas, and her mom for lunch at the Lobster House in Lower Township.

"I love seafood," Nicole said. "Crab cakes, king crab legs, salmon. I love them all."

The afternoon will feature a visit from her grandparents Raymond and Carol Fox of Swainton. Raymond Fox, a retired math teacher who taught in Toms River, is the first one who realized Nicole's birthday this year would occur on an iconic date, his daughter-in-law said.

"He's been talking about it for a few years," Tonya Fox said. "The last time it happened was 1912 and the next time it will happen is 2112. As it was getting closer, we started talking about how exciting it is and how it really only happens once in a lifetime."

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To continue her special day, Nicole has plans to go to dinner with her father, Bob, of Rio Grande. Dad is the one who takes her bowling every other weekend in the winter, and treats her to the best macaroni and cheese in the world at the Borgata buffet.

Nicole said she had one birthday wish – a toy helicopter to replace the one she crashed last year – and that for the rest of her gifts, she would “let them surprise me.”

Her mother said a few relatives had 12-themed gifts planned, and that Nicole’s special day would end with chocolate ice cream cake. The 12/12/12 party will culminate on Dec. 15, when Nicole and a group of friends celebrate at the Montego Bay indoor water park in Wildwood.

“A lot of her friends have after-school activities,” Tonya Fox said. “It would have been nice to have her birthday on the actual day, but it’s hard when it falls on a Wednesday and there’s school the next day.”

And, no, mom said, there would be no excused absence from school for this birthday, even if it is on a date that won’t happen again for another century.