



DRIFTWOOD DAZE

Hello everyone! Well, all of us here have done something that we weren't sure we'd do: Survive til 98! But we've done it, and most of us aren't too much the worse for wear. Gina sill drools on leather occasionally, but it's not as bad as it was. Katie is a little ragged, but that comes from falling off her horse. I THINK! Andrea is leaving us for the banking world, and will be gone by the time you get this. She wishes everyone well, and says thanks for all the nice letters and cards and things. On the bright side (?) tho, sherry is coming back. She'll be starting in just a few days. Man, I hope I can stand it here! Those are the only changes at the moment.

Winter has hit, but it's been mild, and the lake level has dropped quite a bit. It's dropped so much that we're able to drive around the lake to a cove that I normally can only get to by boat. It's not a hot fishing spot, but there are normally quite a few bluegills there, and the lake has washed up enough driftwood there to build a bonfire the size of Ft. Leavenworth! Last December I took my wife down there, along with some friends, and you'd have thought they both were just released from the funny farm, the way they went after that driftwood. They did find some awfully nice stuff tho. And it does look nice around the house. The only problem was that my wife is very allergic to poison oak, and all the poison oak in the world grows there. Being December, it was all dead, and didn't look like poison oak anymore tho, and she got up in the brush (where all the really good driftwood grows y'know) and managed to get one of the worst cases of poison oak that I've ever seen! We're talking bad!! For some reason, that stuff goes thru her system quicker than a greased rat through a snake! Took several months to get rid of it, and boy was she miserable! Actually, I thought she learned her lesson.....

Anyway, since the lake dropped again this year, we went down there again, so she could play in her little driftwood heaven, and the kids and I fished for bluegills. The bluegills were very uncooperative. Must have caught only 10 or so, and most of those were only a couple of inches long. The unique thing about this trip was that my wife had begged and pleaded with me to hook up our trailer, and take it down there with us, but there was no way I could do it. Not and get out with it anyway. I've just got a voyager minivan, and there was no room to be fooling around with a trailer down there. I could just see getting stuck out in the middle of nowhere and having to walk out and find someone to pull us out. So she talked Andrea's fiancée into driving his little S-10 Chevy truck down there. He really had no idea what he was getting into. Personally, I thought that if we couldn't carry it back in or on top of the van, it didn't need to come home with us! How wrong I was! She even sneaked our chain saw into the van without me knowing it!

We got down there about 2 in the afternoon, and I reminded her about the poison oak of course. What's she do, but charge right up into the woods like there's no tomorrow, and start piling up little piles of "treasures" everywhere! The lakeshore is gravel and soft sand almost all the way to the cove, but after that it's all large chunk rock. I started climbing around the rocks just enjoying being outside, and looking for a good bluegill spot. It was a lousy day for fishing actually, cause it was half raining and half sleeting most of the time, but I can tell you, it sure didn't dampen her enthusiasm! It took me about 2 hours to figure out that we weren't going to catch anything, and I packed up, and headed back for the van. Figured I'd help her load up her little "treasures". As I was making my way back to the van, I noticed that the piles of "treasures" were getting larger and larger. When I got back to where the van and truck were parked, they had huge piles of driftwood there, and were just getting ready to start cutting some other stuff loose from the ground with the chain saw! I think the driftwood disease rubbed off on Andrea too, because she was just as bad as my wife! I figured the sooner we could get loaded, the sooner we could get out of there, so I started fitting driftwood into and on top of my van. Now keep in mind that this stuff is all cedar. Scraggedly, springy, spiky, tough, and not to mention dirty! I put most of the small stuff in the van, loaded some of the larger stuff on top, and watched as her and Andrea and Mike (Andrea's guy) began loading huge stumps, partial trees, worn planks, logs, and whatever else into the back of his truck. When they got done, that truck looked like a giant grey spider with 50 legs was sitting on it trying to eat it! Mike is good hillbilly, so took the 100 ft extension cord that was in the back of his truck, and tied all of it down the best he could, and we bounced our way back home. And when we got back guess where it all got unloaded! My Driveway! I guess I could be worse off..... (Guess who got poison oak tho!)