

## Something Fishy

*By Marilyn Reeves*

Ah, summer vacation at last! Finals passed with flying colors, scholarship and diploma received cum laude, and high school now a fond memory, Eric was looking forward to having a little fun before his summer job flipping burgers began next week.

Mom and Dad had taken off to Paris for a second honeymoon, so Eric had the place to himself. But when he dropped them off at the airport, Dad said, "Well, Eric, you're the man of the house while we're gone. I trust you to take care of the place and have everything in good order when we return."

"Will do, Dad. You two have a wonderful time!"

Back home, Eric immediately called Matt. "You guys ready to go? I've just got to load up my gear, then I'll swing by your place."

"All set, Eric. Tommy can ride with you and I'll ride with Kyle. He's taking the Beast." (The "Beast" was Kyle's dad's heavy-duty Dodge pickup with mag wheels. It was one rugged piece of machinery and could go darn near anywhere.)

So the boys piled into the two vehicles and set out for the high country. It was smooth sailing until they hit the dirt roads. The spring thaw had done some serious flooding a couple of weeks earlier and the back roads were still muddy, but they made it through to the turn-off and sort of slipped and slid their way down the steep hill to the creek.

It was so good to get out of the city and surround themselves with the clean, fresh, pine-scented air. After each of them had caught their limit, they built a fire and wrapped some of the little brookies in foil to broil over the open flame. Then they opened up a 6-pack and stuffed themselves with fresh-caught fish, saving back the nice 10" rainbow that Tommy left in his creel.

When they were done, they loaded all their stuff back into the vehicles and headed back up the muddy hill. Of course the jeep got stuck in a rut, so Kyle had to pull it out with the winch mounted on floor of the Beast. And what with all the bumping and swaying it took to get unstuck, somehow that nice rainbow managed to slip out of the creel, fall to the floor, and slither under the back seat of the jeep.

When they finally arrived back home, Eric said, "Guys, I have a problem. I could use some help cleaning up the jeep. I didn't exactly ask Dad for his permission to use it." So the boys all pitched in and hosed off all the mud, rubbed down the outside with Turtle Wax and cleaned the interior until it was spic and span.

When his parents returned from Paris the following week, his dad said, "I see you cleaned up the jeep, Eric – it's never looked so good. Thank you for doing that. There's just one little

problem, however ... it stinks to high heaven! Smells like dead fish. Any idea what could be causing that?"