

DOWN HOME: Who knew 28 is the ‘water’ anniversary?

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Well, that was a wedding anniversary we won’t forget.

Late Saturday afternoon, I hopped in the shower after a day of yardwork and other chores. A moment later, Joanna ran into our bathroom.

My wife is not known for ecstatic utterances or glossolalia, but I immediately guessed she had taken to speaking in tongues. Couldn’t understand what she was talking about.

She dashed away as quickly as she appeared. The look of fright and panic communicated the point of her message as I thought hard and translated three distinct words: “den,” “floor” and “water.”

Fortunately, I hadn’t lathered up yet, so I hopped back out of the shower and trailed water behind me as I ran to the front of the house, wrapped in a towel.

I skidded into the den in time to see water flowing past the bookcases and into the kitchen. Sloshing into the laundry room, I turned off the valves to the overflowing washing machine, saying a fervent—and I mean

fervent—prayer that every twist of the knobs was turning us away from a flood.

Joanna threw towels onto the floor as I sloshed to the kitchen and yanked the phone book out of the drawer. Scanning the “rentals” section, I called the first number I could find.

“Are you open now?” I asked the guy on the other end of the line.

“Well ... we’re open ‘til 5,” he drawled.

“What time is it?” I demanded. (Apparently, encountering a flood in your kitchen causes you to unlearn how to tell time.)

“‘Bout 4:30, give or take,” he replied.

“I need a wet-vac and a large fan,” I told him. “Will you hold them for me?”

“Well ... if you get here ‘fore 5,” he said. And hung up.

I decided to risk “wasting” about 51 seconds to pull on cutoffs and a T-shirt. Fortunately, I didn’t encounter any of Coppel’s Finest as I speeded to the rental place and raced back home.

Our friends Steve and Debbie showed up about the time I arrived with the wet-vac. By then, Jo had soaked two five-gallon buckets of water out of the kitchen, one hand-wrung towel at a time. Steve helped me carry the couch and loveseat out of the den. Thirty minutes later, we stood in the middle of a dry—and clean—floor.

Six days later, the washer repairman explained this happens all the time. A return hose vibrated off, so the washer didn’t know the tub was full. The water kept running.

The repairman told Jo about a woman who started a load of clothes, took a

sleeping pill and woke up to find eight inches of water throughout her house. So, things could've been worse.

But if two of every kind of animal had started showing up, I would've bought Jo a boat for our 28th anniversary. A very large boat.

—*Marv Knox*

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