

DOWN HOME: Crashing ceiling, many blessings

March 25, 2011

Joanna heard a “boom!” and knew it was an omen of misfortune.

She followed the sound into our living room, where she found the pest-control technician’s leg hanging down through the ceiling and dust, insulation and little bits of sheetrock strewn over the floor.

A couple minutes later, Jo stood face-to-face with a sheepish, embarrassed—and probably sore—bug killer.

“It’s all my fault,” he confessed, promising his company would take care of the damages to our home, then asking for a broom to clean up the mess.

“I really felt sorry for him,” Jo told me later. “He obviously felt just awful about knocking a hole in the ceiling. And from the sound of it, he fell hard. I bet he was hurting, too.”

My own feelings were mixed, and not really because our ceiling looked like a mini-tornado twisted through our attic.

On the one hand, I understand how a person could stick a leg through our ceiling. The first owner of our house apparently had an “in” with a carpenter or insulation company. The inside of our attic looks like a ski resort during a very good winter. We’ve got blown white insulation everywhere. And so finding the ceiling joists can be downright tricky. If you’ve got to move around up there, and you don’t take your time, you can put your foot down in the wrong place. The next step will be a doozy.

But on the other hand, I kinda feel like the guy was trying to up-sell us. He came to our house because it’s that time of year. In spring, tiny vermin go

on the prowl, and so we nearly always have the bug people out to ward off an infestation of earwigs, rolypolies, ants and other things that go zzzt in the night.

Anyway, this guy said earwigs are attracted to water, and Jo mentioned one of our hot-water heaters is in the attic. So, he volunteered to go up there and check it out. Then, he came back and said he saw “signs” of critters. Never mind we haven’t heard anything up in that part of the attic, and we’ve been here almost five years. I’ve heard critters of all kinds in attics. They sound like the Mongol horde riding over your head.

But this guy offered to set some traps, “just in case.” And the next thing you know, we’ve got new ventilation in our attic.

This year has provided lessons in perspective. We’ve witnessed turmoil and revolution across North Africa and the Middle East. We watched earthquake and tsunami shake and swamp Japan. Friends have faced illness and death.

So, an unexpected hole in our ceiling—even one that never should have been there—isn’t a big deal. We have a roof over our heads, food in the fridge, clean water to drink, passable air to breath and each other to kiss goodnight.

God’s blessings are abundant and pure.