

## VACATION, ANYONE?

The next time I go away on vacation, I'm going to be sure to make arrangements to stay. Forever. The last time we left to, "get away from it all," we ended up coming back to even more.

After being gone only a week, we were greeted upon our arrival home by tightly regi-mented battalions of swarming termites. They were so impressed with their show that they enlisted all of their cousins and close friends for several repeat performances. Apparently our wood is gourmet quality, so we were rewarded with more than the relatively minor, single colony infestation.

There is nothing quite like walking into your house with suitcases full of dirty laundry, exhausted kids, and no food in the refrigerator and being accosted by swarming masses of flying saddle oxfords to give you that true sense of not having been gone long enough. When I couldn't sleep at night, I swear, I could hear the multitude of larvae minions methodically chew-ing their way up through the hardwood floors in the bedroom and up into the bed frame until I was sure the entire bed was going to be reduced to a pile of sawdust right before my sleepy, startled eyes. But what was I going to do? Sleep on the *floor*?

It's impossible to describe their invasiveness. I would vacuum and vacuum their tiny saw dust bloated bodies for what seemed like days on end only to open a closet door and have more recently deceased carcasses shower down on me like so many handfuls of black and white confetti.

The worst thing about the little buggers is that there is no way of knowing exactly how long they've been happily munching away on your support beams, or how much damage they may have done in the process. Might the house accidentally blow away in the next high wind, or were we fortunate enough to stop them while they were still enjoying the hors d'oeuvres?

I suppose I could hope to find some sense of consolation in the fact that the majority of them may have drowned when our basement flooded. I must confess, however, that I saw no evidence to indicate such a fate. Actually, I pictured them treading water until their fiendish friends could throw them little tiny life preservers and haul them back up to dry wood.

Perhaps it's time to entertain the word "SELL!" I've decided to take all the money that's left over after repairs and book the longest cruise I can find. I don't even care where it's going. And the minute we come back into the home port I'm going to yell, "Sign me up! I'm goin' out again!"

When and if I run out of money I'll promptly apply for a job and settle down. On the ship, of course. I've even bought a barnacle scraper just in case. But before I get too carried away, does anyone know for sure if barnacles are less trouble than termites?