

ALABAMA TORNADOES 2012

Two-time storm survivors count their blessings again

By Hannah Wolfson
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It's scarier the second time around.

Just ask Ann and Jim Adams, whose home in Clay was damaged in Monday's tornado. They've only lived there a few months, as they moved in after their last house — the one in Pleasant Grove they'd had for 33 years — was flattened April 27.

So Ann had a special sense of dread when the storm sirens woke her at 3:30 a.m.

She checked the TV, then woke her husband. They

grabbed flashlights, a portable radio and Jim's hard hat and huddled together on the floor of their walk-in closet.

"To be truthful, I was more afraid this time because I knew what had happened the first time and it just made me nervous," said the 70-year-old woman. "We were holding on to each other and praying. I know from first-hand experience prayer works."

Back in April, Ann wore the same hard hat — one husband Jim wears as a contractor for Alabama Power — as she and Jim held each other in an interior hallway.

She was ripped out of his arms and sucked down the hallway, but stopped just short of the great room, where a massive stacked stone chimney was reduced to a pile of rubble. She broke her knee but was otherwise unhurt.

The house, though, was irreparable, as were their three cars. Friends and family picked through the rubble to recover a few pictures and personal items, but the couple decided to cut their losses. They wanted a home they could grow old in, one near their daughter and her family in Trussville.

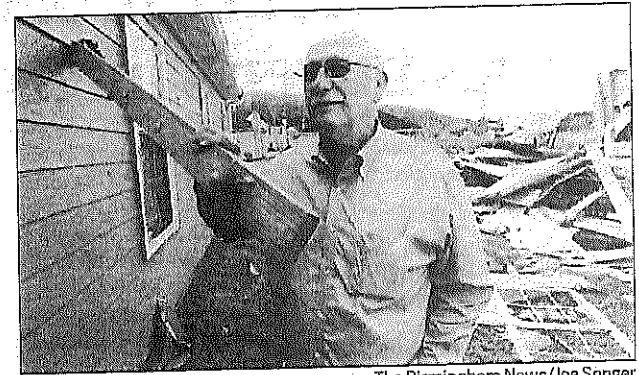
They settled on a garden

home on Marchester Circle in Clay, a place where they could make new memories, including celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary last month.

Their street once again bore the brunt of a tornado's destruction. Homes were leveled, and shards of lumber and other debris were scattered across the subdivision.

This time, the Adamses did better than some of their neighbors. Windows were broken and one car damaged, but everything can be fixed, said Jim, 71.

"This time we at least had



The Birmingham News/Joe Songer

Jim Adams' home in Clay was damaged by Monday's tornado. He and his wife, Ann, moved there after their Pleasant Grove home was destroyed in the April 27 storms. Adams stands next to a 2-by-4 protruding from his house.

a roof over our heads," said Ann, who again wore the hard hat through Monday's storm. "It was leaky but it was still there."

Jim had to break the news to their insurance agent, who didn't believe him at first. But this time, he said they're not going anywhere. They like their neighbors and the fact that one

knocked on their door just before the storm hit to make sure they were awake and ready to take shelter.

They want to repair their own home and help rebuild the neighborhood.

"We're just thankful to have made it through," said Jim, who has already promised to bring home a second hard hat — just in case.