

Opinions

Everybody has one...

Every smoke alarm has an expiration date: What's yours?

Does your home have a smoke alarm? According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the answer is likely yes:

NFPA research shows that most American homes have at least one. But do you know how old your smoke alarms are? If you're like most people, you're probably not so sure.

A recent survey conducted by NFPA revealed that only a small percentage of people know how old their smoke alarms are, or how often they need to be replaced. That lack of awareness is a concern for Union County Fire Department and NFPA, along with fire departments throughout the country, because smoke alarms don't last forever. Union County Fire Department urges all residents to know how old their smoke alarms are, and to replace them if needed.

NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm Code®, requires smoke alarms be replaced at least every 10 years, but because the public is generally unaware of this requirement, many homes have smoke alarms past their expiration date, putting people at increased risk.

As the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for more than 90 years, NFPA is promoting this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, "Don't Wait - Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years," to better educate the public about the critical importance of knowing how old their smoke alarms are and replacing them once they're 10 years old. Fire Prevention Week is October 9-15, 2016.

To find out how old your smoke alarm is and its expiration date, simply look on the back of the alarm where the date of manufacture is marked. The smoke alarm should be replaced 10 years from that date (not the date of purchase). Union County Fire Department also says smoke alarms should be tested monthly, and that batteries should be replaced once a year or when they begin to chirp, signaling that they're running low.

Union County Fire Department is committed to life safety. We offer free smoke alarms to residents of Union County. A person can request the department to come to their home and install the smoke alarms. In addition to smoke alarm installation, firefighters can check any existing smoke alarms and provide homeowners with home fire safety information to include: escape plans, smoke alarm testing, smoke alarm maintenance, and Firewise. If you wish to request smoke alarms for your home, complete the request on our web page at www.unioncountyga.gov, Departments, Fire Department/EMA, and select the Smoke Alarm Request link.

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Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief
David Dyer

The Ark

Noah was the Rodney Dangerfield of his day. He still doesn't get much respect. Even so, the tale of an ark, a flood, and a heroic man are no joke. In this epic story we find a reflection of our times, and truths for life.

Earlier this year, the Ark Encounter opened in Williamstown, Kentucky. Billed as "a life-sized Noah's Ark," the 510 ft long boat is a museum dedicated to the plausibility of the Genesis account. Even with Harvard-educated biologist Dr. Nathaniel Jeanson as advisor, Ken Ham's project to demonstrate the plausibility of the creation story has (not surprisingly) earned little respect from those who believe in evolution. But allow me to step away from this modern controversy to focus on the lessons from the life and times of Noah.

Things seemed to be going well when "the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took wives." But the romance didn't last. In time, "the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth" (Gen. 6). If wickedness is man calling good what God says is evil, and man calling evil what God says is good, then surely we, too, live in perverted and wicked times.

But we don't have to fall into self-destructive beliefs and behaviors according to Jesus' confidant Peter. He observed that if God knew how to preserve Noah even while not sparing the ancient world from the flood, then surely "the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation" (2 Pet. 2). Do you trust him to do that for you? If you fear of losing it, of giving in, remember Noah. God called him to act contrary to the culture of unbelief, and preserved him through it.

Noah was spared because of his righteousness, which we know comes by faith (Heb. 11:7). The prophet Ezekiel quoted God saying that even a righteous man like Noah couldn't help "if a country sins against Me by committing unfaithfulness." The good news is that God knows the believers in a nation even if He decides to "stretch out My hand against it" (Ez. 14:13-14).

Jesus spoke of Noah as real, not a myth. "Just as it was in the days of Noah" describes people oblivious about God, morality, and the promised end times. "It will be just the same on

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All Things New
Wayne Fowler

Commissioner's Questions

Q. If I do not want to vote for President, can I still vote for you in the election?

A. Yes. The Georgia General Election ballot allows you to vote for any candidate for either party. You can vote for all, part or none. Just for your information, there are 14 different positions on the ballot from the President of the United States to the Union County School Board. But only four are contested races which include the President, US Senate, Public Service Commissioner and Union County Commissioner. All the other elected officials in the county and state are unopposed and you can vote for all of them if you like but they are already elected by virtue of not having any opponents in this race. There is also a Write-In allowed with each elected position. There are also 4 Georgia Constitutional Amendments on the ballot to vote on.

Q. How do you feel about the different Constitutional Amendments?

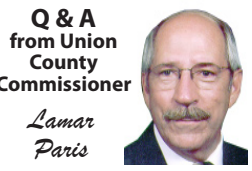
A. I do not get involved in those. In general, just like the US Constitution, I think anyone should think long and hard before voting for changing the Georgia Constitution. I recommend looking up the issues on the internet and become very educated on them. I try to only vote on issues that I have studied and understand or if someone else has studied it that I trust, I will rely on their opinion, otherwise, I leave them blank.

Q. I read where someone said that it would take millions of dollars to fix Union County roads. I thought they were in pretty good condition. What is your opinion?

A. Not only is this not true, it is not even close. In fact, it is almost laughable. We have an excellent road system that is maintained on a regular basis by an excellent Road Department that we are very proud of. Regular road repairs are always necessary and are prioritized to meet the needs for safety and ride-ability. We are saving millions of dollars by maintaining our roads in the proper manner. We do not tolerate pot holes and with any notification, they are immediately repaired.

Q. Is there a problem with the county patching some county roads instead of completely repaving and resurfacing them?

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Q & A from Union County Commissioner
Lamar Paris

Hometown Holiday Shopping

Christmas will be here before you know it! The Chamber would like to give you an opportunity to get a jump start on shopping through our Buy Local Program. We invite you to take part in our Hometown Holiday Shopping Event. In the past, we have held a buy local event in December, but we decided to change it up a little this year and move the dates to Thursday, November 17th through Saturday, November 19th. We would like to thank the sponsors for this event, Blue Ridge Mountain Outfitters, Michael's Italian Life Caffe and From Me 2 U.

If you are a Chamber Member and would like to be a part of the Hometown Holiday Shopping event, contact the Chamber office quickly

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Blairsville - Union County Chamber
Regina Allison

Letters to the Editor...

Does God Care?

Dear Editor,

Last week at the Thursday noon Awake America session at the Mayor's office in Blairsville, many folks prayed powerfully for our nation, our schools, our government leaders, Hurricane Matthew, and most of all what God's people have not been doing for decades. II Chronicles 7:14-16 God is speaking: If My people which are called by My name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. When God speaks, we need to listen closely for the promises that will follow if we trust and obey Him.

God says He will hear our prayers. He will forgive us and come and heal our land, but there are conditions with this verse. The church as a whole has failed to meet the requirements of God's commands. The church has set back in its nice pews and beautiful surroundings and said nothing when prayer was taken out of schools and the allegiance of our American flag was taken away. When the Ten Commandments were removed from all government buildings and others areas of interest, where was the church. Was it asleep or did it just slip into a coma? The church has not stood up against the abortion issues at the rate of 2 million babies being killed each year. Where was the church?

How can we as believers in Christ expect any good thing to come from the Lord, when we ignore the truth of God's Word. When we don't practice what we preach. When we don't walk the walk or talk the talk, but just sit still and do nothing of all the atrocities that are occurring each day in our beloved America. Is there hope for America, the land of the brave and free or has God written us off as another disappointment, like Israel was back in Solomon's day. Wake up churches and listen to God's declaration, before we find ourselves slaves in our own country with great persecution. It happened over two thousand years ago when God allowed the Israel nation to be overthrown, because of their sinful ways. God is patient to a point, then justice will prevail.

Frank F. Combs



"No, we've never met the folks affected by the hurricane, but whoever they are, they're family!"

Drought & Fire, a Dangerous Combination

Our Citizens Firewise Coalition and I have been preaching to you for several years that one day we would be in a severe drought with low humidity, winds, dry fuel on the ground, no rain in sight which is the perfect recipe for a big wildfire in our backyards. Well, that one day is here, right now!

All of these perfect storm conditions are on us now here in North Georgia and we are only one match strike away from a wildfire disaster that can be very destructive and hard to stop. The National Weather Service latest statement is... "Drought Intensity Worsens To Exceptional In Far Northwest Ga, Severe To Extreme Elsewhere Across North And West-Central Georgia" ...and the details are: "Temperatures were mixed in the region, with the eastern portions 4-6 degrees above normal while the east was 2-4 degrees below normal. Outside of the Florida peninsula and eastern North Carolina, dryness dominated the region. The drought impacting the region worsened as the combination of the dryness and above-normal temperatures allowed for degradation this week in Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, western South Carolina, western North Carolina and Mississippi. Generally speaking most of these areas had a full category degradation where the data supported it. Exceptional drought was expanded into more of north-west Georgia and into far northeastern Alabama. Moderate drought expanded over much of central Mississippi while pockets of severe drought were expanded over Alabama and Georgia and into Tennessee." Our local, state, and federal fire officials know that these dry conditions will cause wildfire intensities to increase. Fires are more difficult to control in these conditions and require a lot more mop up. With wildfires occurring this early we will also see leaf drop which could re-burn later. During the initial response it may be difficult to keep fires small especially during periods of low relative humidity and any wind. With the passage of Hurricane Matthew along the east coast relative humidity values are forecast to drop into the teens over this area. There will also be a high likelihood of gusty winds, especially along the western face of the Appalachian Mountains. Difference from normal conditions: The area of subsidence associated with Hurricane Matthew will exacerbate the already dry environment and move ERC values over a large area above the 97th percentile over the next 10 days.

Concerns to firefighters and the public: Any fire in this area will be very resistant to control efforts. Expect complete consumption of fuels down to mineral soil or rock, frequent torch-

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Frank Riley
Executive Director of RC&D

Clifford and the Deputy

My great grandfather on my daddy's side of the family was originally from Dawson County. Their farm was located in the Shoal Creek District. Clifford's father, Daniel, and Clifford's grandfather, Daniel, fought for the South during the "War Between the States". As a young man Clifford migrated down to the Alpharetta area. Unlike today Alpharetta was a small place. However, there was more for a young man in Alpharetta than in Dawsonville.

Clifford's vice was drinking and this vice soon landed him in trouble. We don't know the whole story, but, I know it involved drinking and a woman. Clifford and another man had an altercation over a woman after consuming too much store bought liquor. Clifford was never a big man. But, everyone knew you didn't want to cross him. Anyway, Clifford beat the other man rather severely and thought he had killed him. So, Clifford left Georgia sometime around 1900 and migrated to Phil Campbell, AL. Here in Alabama, Clifford met his wife and raised his family. You would think Clifford would have learned his lesson about too much drinking. But, he had a few problems later in life as well.

Let's move forward in time 50 years. By this time Clifford was in his 70s and he loved being around his grandsons. Each Saturday my dad would go to Clifford's house and take him to the barber shop. After a haircut and catching up on the latest news Clifford and his grandson would go to the diner for an early lunch and they would end their trip to town by playing a few rounds of pool at the Phil Campbell Pool Hall. The grandfather and grandson would usually meet the Chief of Police on their Saturday excursion. Chief Looney and Clifford were great friends and each Saturday the Chief would bring Clifford a flask of his latest moonshine bust.

One Saturday Clifford and his grandson (my dad) were in town for their usual Saturday entertainment. While at the barber shop the pair learned there was a new deputy in town.

Clifford was told the deputy was young and trying to make a name for himself. At the diner the word was the deputy wrote a lot of tickets. Chief Looney met Clifford and his grandson while they were walking down the street to the pool room. As usual the Chief gave Clifford a new flask of his latest moonshine.

Clifford and my dad walked into the pool room for a couple of games and while they were playing pool the new deputy walked in and bought himself a Coca Cola. After a round of pool Clifford pulled his flask from his pocket and took a swig of the moonshine. The new Deputy noticed and walked over to Clifford and pulled the flask from Clifford's hands. The deputy

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Around The Farm
Mickey Cummings

Brown Marmorated Stink Bugs

The cooler weather is going to send insects scrambling for warm, safe places to spend the winter. Unfortunately for us, our houses are exactly what these bugs are looking for. One of the pestiest invaders is the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB). This bug was introduced from Asia most likely in shipping crates. The first recorded sighting was in Allentown, Pennsylvania in 1998, but it probably arrived even before that. It has subsequently spread throughout much of the east coast, feeding on crops and becoming a nuisance in winter.

The adult BMSB is about 17 mm long and has a mottled brown pattern. It has light colored bands on its antenna and alternating light and dark brown bands on the edge of its body. Like many other stink bugs, it is shaped like a shield and as its name suggests, it has glands that produce an unpleasant odor when it is agitated. There are usually only one or two generations in Georgia, depending on how warm the weather is and the location. Adults emerge in May, mate and deposit eggs throughout the summer. The nymphs emerge from the eggs and go through five growth stages before finally developing wings and becoming adults. By this time, temperatures start to cool off, and the bugs search for places to overwinter until October.

In its native range in Asia, the BMSB feeds on a wide variety of fruit including apples, pears, peaches, figs, citrus, and many others. It can also be a pest of ornamental plants and important crops such as soybeans. In the Northeastern United States, this bug has caused massive damage to apple and berry orchards. In the Southeast, it can be a major pest of cotton and blueberries, two very important crops to Georgia.

Though you may find several of these insects in your house over the winter, they do not infest houses like cockroaches. You will typically find them squeezing through door jams and window frames as they follow the light they see coming from your house, and then sense the warm temperatures. The best way to make sure these smelly pests don't completely take over in the winter is to take action before they look for warm spaces. This means making sure all outdoor vents are covered with a fine mesh, adding weather stripping to door and window frames, and sealing up any other points of entry. Though you may still see some bugs in late fall and winter, having your house sealed up well will decrease the number of BMSB that make it in.

You may be tempted to spray insecticide if you see BMSB in your house, but once they make it inside, your best bet would be to try to locate where they came in. If you have a lot of



From the Ground Up
Melissa Mattee

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