



News from the Blue Ridge



Claire & Lorin Cranford

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Family Events:

A note to readers receiving the newsletter through the mail. In the envelope containing this edition of the newsletter you have discovered the August issue as well. At the end of July our old Dell computer crashed, taking down with it our e-mail lists and our address lists. I was about two weeks away from having all the files transferred from it to the new computer. Fortunately, recent versions of these files were backed up on an external SyQuest drive, but I'm still trying to get this older drive hooked up to the new computer. Mixing new and old equipment can be a real pain, but is sometimes necessary. In short, we were not able to do an August mail-out of the newsletter, so we have included a copy of it in the September mailing. If you talk with someone who has been receiving the mailing but is wondering why they haven't received the last month's mailing, pass this word along to them with the additional request to send us a note with their address in case we happen not to get their address on the new list.

This summer has been an absolutely wonderful time with Claire off from teaching responsibilities. She has had time to work on getting the new home set up and organized. She's far ahead of me in this. Everywhere you go in the house things are well arranged, except for my office, library room and the garage. I must say, however, that I did manage to get all the bookcases up in the library room and the shelves stacked full of books. Also, she has provided home-cooked meals daily all summer long; I have enjoyed this very much as the bathroom scales will testify to. Her cooking is hands down ahead of anything we would find eating out. Mostly importantly, we've had lots and lots of time together while working here at the house. In many ways I've dreaded this fall when the outside work schedule picks up for both of us.

Our yard was doing wonderfully well in the early part of the summer while we were getting lots of rain and the weather was cool. But in late July and through most of August we have been a part of the drought that is sweeping through the eastern part of the U.S. I've managed to keep the flowers in the beds and in the hanging pots at the front doing okay along with the grass in the front yard, but everything else has been brown and looking way too much like a Texas August! With hurricane Dennis we hopefully will begin receiving more rain so things will liven up again. The one really neat aspect of all this has been enjoying using the John Deere riding mower to take care of the grass in the yard. That has simplified and shortened this task unbelievably. I'm looking forward to the beautiful fall scenery here. The TV weather people are suggesting that the fall leaves in the mountains are going to be spectacular.



University Happen-

The faculty retreat, Aug 17-18, provided John Campbell, professor of church music, and me a delightful opportunity to lead the closing session in a creative worship service focused on the celebration of communion. With the planning committee's request to use innovative approaches of worship in keeping with this year's theme on youth culture, we incorporated wide variety of elements from differing denominational patterns of worship along with multimedia dimensions. A large number of faculty and staff willingly and enthusiastically contributed to different aspects of the service. We had a wonderful experience of celebrating the death and resurrection of Christ as the basis of hope for believers of all ages. The service came as the climatic session of the faculty retreat and hopefully set a positive tone of unity around a common Christian commitment for the upcoming academic year.

The new academic year has begun well. The president announced to the faculty at the retreat that we should have another record enrollment this fall over the 3,300+ previously. From the looks of the crowds on campus it certainly seems so. GWU is experiencing a period of steady growth along with increasingly higher academic skills of the incoming students. Our facilities are being expanded and new faculty is being added. These are wonderful days to be a part of the university.

My classes are off to a good start as well. The two Old Testament survey courses on Tues/Thurs are full and the students have shown an eagerness to get into the course materials. You can check out the course at Cranfordville under Religion 101.

This semester I'm teaching three levels of Greek courses: Greek 101, the beginning course; Greek 201, the third semester course, and Greek 301, an advanced exegesis course on the Sermon on the Mount. Especially satisfying is the use of the new elementary Greek grammar with the beginning students. All three classes have good quality students who are going to make the semester really satisfying. If you want to take a look at the course materials go to GWU classes at Cranfordville.

Additionally, the new experiment this semester is with the MDiv elective course on 1/2 Thessalonians. An really good group of GWU divinity students signed up for this Distanced Education online course and we're all learning how to navigate a course where we only meet in cyberspace. I'm excited about the potential this program has to offer. During the fall semester I'll be working on putting the Religion 305 New Testament survey course online for the spring semester G.O.A.L. (adult evening school) students.

Teaching is really fun these days at GWU!

For all kinds of info about us as well as a PDF copy of this newsletter, check out our homepage [Cranfordville at http://www.shelby.net/cranford](http://www.shelby.net/cranford)

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Claire's Musings:

I have had the most fantastic time this summer. At this point in my life, I gave up on working on a Masters in Elementary Education. The move to North Carolina made it necessary to almost begin at the beginning again. If I were younger it would be worth it, but not now. So I have had the entire summer to be at home and have enjoyed every second. For the first time in many years I had enough time off to clean and cook. The best part has been organizing my new home and myself. This is a first for me. I have gone through things that I have been collecting all my life (I am one of those who saves everything, because some day I may need it). I have either discarded it or organized it by some sort of filing system. This has been the most satisfying feeling. I have had to adjust to the fact that when I go to look for something, I can actually find it easily (most of the time, I am not perfect yet). I have almost been a hermit, because most days I never left the house. And I have never been happier.

Lorin has enjoyed all of this, because the house is neat and clean. But even better I have enjoyed having real time to cook. That's the part that Lorin liked the best. I have ventured out and tried new and healthier recipes. I have enjoyed cooking because I had the time. Even my recipes that I have been collecting for about the last 20 years are organized.

Needless to say, I have been so very happy just being able to be a real homemaker. I am already looking forward to retirement.

Between the Texas trip and several Sundays of driving to another city for Lorin preaching I have been able to crochet several baby blankets. For once I am ahead and ready for the future baby showers for my teacher friends. It is so exciting about Angie and Jennifer expecting in January. We all have a lot to look forward to.

I have been enjoying going with Lorin to hear him preach. I'm prejudiced, but he is very good and I continue to learn so much from him. The people at the church are just so very nice, and I already know that I will miss them when it's over. In particular, one couple has been fantastic. Since Lorin preaches the morning and evening services, that leaves the in between time sort of lost (it's too far to drive back and forth). They have not only invited us to have lunch with them, but a place to stay and even take a nap. They have been so gracious to give their Sunday afternoons to us.

God really has a sense of humor. You never know what might happen next. Last year I struggled with fourth graders (and just a tough situation in general). I did not even want to go back to the same school system, so I applied to three others in this area. I didn't even get a call for a position and was beginning to wonder when someone would call for substituting. Well Mon., Aug. 30, I will start a six-week sub job for – you guessed it – fourth grade. There are several factors which I believe will be much better this time. I had just had an interview for secretarial work at Gardner-Webb, which didn't work out. Sometimes I wonder what I am supposed to do with my life, and then something comes along, which I don't expect. It certainly makes life interesting and some times a little nerve racking.



Lorin's Musings:

The month of August has provided a wonderful experience of preaching and relating to a very warm, spiritual minded congregation in the northern part of our state. Rev. Lowell Askins pastors the Coggins Memorial Baptist Church at Lexington, about 50 miles north of Charlotte. The church graciously insisted that Lowell take an extended vacation for five weeks in order to rest after a long, successful battle with cancer. Lowell asked me to fill the pulpit for these Sundays in August and September.

The experience has been wonderfully satisfying. Rev. David Shaffer, the associate pastor, and his wife Karen have made our time there most delightful. The congregation reflects the spiritual vitality and warmth of a group of believers who genuinely love the Lord. The impact of Lowell's nine year ministry with them focusing on a strong preaching of God's word is quite evident. If more Baptist congregations were like this one, our denomination would be much, much healthier spiritually.

This fall has some exciting activities that I'm looking forward to. In October I'll be leading a revival meeting at a church in Spartanburg, SC; we're excited about my brother's visit in October; and in Nov. there's the national SBL meeting in Boston where many friends and former students will be present.

In addition to all this, there's the growing excitement about two new grandbabies due in early January. We already know that one is going to be a granddaughter. Angie and Brian learned in late August that Clay is going to have a new sister. That will help even the score with five grandsons and three granddaughters presently.

A woman was leaving a 7-11 with her morning coffee when she noticed a most unusual funeral procession approaching the nearby cemetery.

A long black hearse was followed by a second long black hearse about 50 feet behind. Behind the second hearse was a solitary woman walking a pit bull on a leash. Behind her were 200 women walking single file.

The woman couldn't stand her curiosity. She respectfully approached the woman walking the dog and said, "I am so sorry for your loss and I know now is a bad time to disturb you, but I've never seen a funeral like this. Whose funeral is it?"

The woman replied, "Well, the first hearse is for my husband."

"What happened to him?"

The woman replied, "My dog attacked and killed him."

She inquired further, "Well, who is in the second hearse?"

The woman answered, "My mother-in-law. She was trying to help my husband when the dog turned on her."

A poignant and thoughtful moment of silence passes between the two women.

"Could I borrow that dog?"

"Get in line."

Supplied to me by Mickey Teems