

News from the Blue Ridge Mts.

Claire & Lorin Cranford

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⌘Family Events:

December 29th! What a wonderful initiation into NC snow. Some four to five inches of crystal white snow fell in perfectly calm weather. The yards and trees were a winter wonderland, not to mention the mountains in the background. It reminded me of Heidelberg Germany in January 1990. Children in the yard behind us spent the better part of the afternoon rolling up huge snowballs to make snowmen. The grandkids would have loved this. From local people it seems that this is quite unusual for snow like this in December; perhaps in January or February.

December 25th. Although we missed the traditional family Christmas celebrations in Texas -- even though there were early Christmas celebrations before moving -- we had a most delightful time in Sterling, VA with Donald and Hallie. A late afternoon arrival on Christmas Eve enabled us to relax a bit before going to a Christmas Eve celebration at their church at 5:00 pm. Most wonderful was to watch Brittany especially on Christmas morning more than a little anxious to get breakfast finished so as to get at all those packages under the tree. Preston is walking and talking enough to make himself understood, so Christmas was a bewildering experience of package after package with colorful wrapping paper -- sometimes more interesting than the contents inside. It didn't take long however to get the hang of opening a package, quickly checking its contents, then turning around to see the next package to work on. Trevor just slept though most everything! Just wait till next year!

After lunch Christmas day, we drove around to see the beautiful area west of Washington D.C. where Sterling is located. Particularly enjoyable was the Grand Falls National Park on the Potomac River. The water falls were spectacular! Claire lingered for quite some time just contemplating the massive power clearly evident in the cascading tons of water coming over the huge rock falls.

The departure Friday morning for NC was a mixed feeling moment indeed. The eight hour drive is a bit challenging, more difficult this time because of massive traffic backups all the way down I-95 to Richmond, VA. Leaving family is never easy; yet the urge to get back home and get started on the unpacking process was intense.

New Year's Eve meant the traditional celebration for just Claire and me that we begun five years ago. We spend the evening together remembering events over the years, for it was that first New Year's Eve when we both begun to realize that we were falling in love with one another. Our special engraved champagne glasses with a toast and prayer for God's leadership provide our own personal beginning to each new year.

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"You can't buy a home any more than you can feel at house."

Thinker's Daily Ponderable by Alan Harris
<http://users.aol.com/alhinil/tdp.htm>

⌘University Happenings:

GARDNER-WEBB SHATTERS RECORDS, SURPASSES 3,000 IN ENROLLMENT. Gardner-Webb University officials joyfully announced a milestone in the institution's history this week [Sept 10], revealing that GWU has reached and exceeded the 3,000-student mark. The figure represents the sixth consecutive year in which Gardner-Webb has experienced an enrollment increase.

This year's total of 3,040 undergraduate and graduate students is a 10 percent increase from last year's fall enrollment of 2,760. Reaching the 3,000 plateau means the University has grown by approximately 50 percent since 1992. GWU enrolled slightly more than 2,000 students just five years ago. Numbers this semester indicated that there are 1,400 undergraduates in the regular day program on campus; nearly 1,100 GOAL (Greater Opportunities for Adult Learners) students completing their four-year degrees at night on 16 satellite campuses around North Carolina; and 550 graduate students enrolled on Gardner-Webb's Boiling Springs and Statesville campuses.

GWU President Dr. Chris White said skyrocketing enrollments have influenced virtually every aspect of campus life. A \$20 million capital campaign begun in 1994 for University enhancements is providing new scholarships for the growing number of students, implementing the most advanced computer network on campus of any university in the Southeast, and building and renovating facilities on campus in which to house and teach the record number of students. For example, Hamrick Hall, which featured a chapel, auditorium and classrooms prior to being closed in 1987 is currently being transformed into the home for the GWU School of Business. The completed facility will house multimedia classrooms and serve as a vital hub for technology on campus.

"After analyzing our growth in enrollment we made a conscious effort to prepare our campus physically and technologically to meet the increase in students," said White. "But to hit 3,000 after having 2,000 just five years ago has produced an excitement like never before. When you consider many of our sister schools are either struggling to maintain their enrollments or actually dropping in numbers, we are very proud to say that Gardner-Webb is a place where students want to grow and learn, now more than ever."

New on-campus apartments built this summer and opened in August were necessary to alleviate the housing needs of so many new and returning students. *And the hiring of nearly 20 new faculty members this fall has addressed the obvious growth in the number of class sessions needed as well.*

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☺ *Claire's Musings:*

The movers loaded our furniture and belongings on Tuesday and finished up that evening about 6:30 p.m. We signed the closing papers on our home about 5:30 that same evening. Talk about cutting it close. The next morning we began loading our cars with as much "stuff" as we thought was important to have during the time we would be without our furniture. And, of course, part of the important stuff was computer equipment. As we were loading, we began to realize that not everything would fit in our two cars. We left a few items, which Carrie picked up for us. We were truly a sight to behold, we looked like the Beverly Hillbillies. Both cars were packed to the ceiling. All the things I packed to use along the way such as audio cassettes and snacks were on the bottom.

It was about a 17 hour trip with one overnight stop in Alabama. I was nervous about driving that far and not getting lost. But, as it turned out, I didn't have to worry about that. I actually enjoyed the trip. The scenery was beautiful with lots of trees and good highways. Since I was driving by myself, I could sing along with the radio and no one could hear me. I enjoyed reading the different license plates from that part of the country. I even practiced fingerspelling and signed songs.

About 20 minutes before we drove into our driveway I just happened to notice an outlet mall with 60 stores. I will have to learn my way around here so I can get back to that mall. When we arrived here we thought it might be a couple of days before the movers delivered our furniture. We immediately had to learn how to slow down and relax. The closest bigger town is Shelby (25,000 plus) and we checked out the mall and even went to a movie (For Richer, Poorer).

As it turned out, the movers were not able to get here until Tuesday, which was a full week without our furniture. We had one-half day to start unpacking and then leave for Virginia on Wednesday to spend Christmas with Donald and Hallie and the kids (including one new grandbaby, Trevor). We had a wonderful Christmas with kids and grandkids. The hard part was that it was another long drive, eight hours each way.

This week of the New Year's holiday has given us a lot of time to continue our unpacking and finding many of our "lost" items. To get TV reception here we had to give in a order cable. We had been two weeks without TV (which was really quite nice). Then when we got it, there were so many stations, it was confusing and we turned it off and went back to unpacking.

We love it here already, especially the small town atmosphere. The North Carolina drawl is absolutely wonderful. I already had some of the Texas drawl, so I know that I fit in perfectly. We have already had one snowstorm, which was beautiful. It was easy for us to enjoy it, because we did not have to get out and go to work. Lorin, did go to his office to start setting up things, but it is only a few blocks.

I know we will be happy here, but I still miss my family and friends. My letter writing should improve now. HAPPY NEW YEAR to y'all !!!

News from the Blue Ridge Mts. will be published monthly or whenever the spirit-little 's'- moves!

☺ *Lorin's Musings:*

Moving! What a chore! Wow, what a challenge! To pack up belongings and move over a thousand miles has proven quite a task. But now that everything's here in the house and the university office, gradually it's getting unpacked and put up in a place where it can be found. Unpacking is mostly trying to decide what to do next; everything needs to be done now. First things first, though! The fax machine and the computer equipment. That meant a small work center desk for the computer room at the house so that this part could be up and going quickly. Gradually the rest of the house furniture is getting put in place. The installation of the phones, the TV's (with a cable system), stereos etc. calls for rethinking the setup here since it's radically different than back in Texas. Fitting a 2,600 plus sq.ft. household into a 1,400 plus sq.ft. apartment is a challenge; thank goodness for a garage storage area. Once we settle into a permanent house in about a year, this will reverse itself. The positive side is to force getting rid of unnecessary things, deciding what's essential and what's not.

Then a pesky letter of credit from TU Electric in Texas to Duke Power Company. TU said they faxed it twice to DPC in Charlotte; DPC said they never received it. With a \$125 deposit riding on this fax, I had TU send it to my fax machine and then I personally faxed it to DPC and then had the customer service fellow at DPC go pick up the fax from the machine and credit our account!

With Christmas activities out of the way, the business of getting ready for the spring semester is the top priority. GWU begins their semester early and runs it a week longer than SWBTS does. Now maybe I'll have a better shot at finishing the course content! New course handout materials along with detailed plans for the semester occupy my attention now. I'm looking forward to the first and second year Greek classes and the three NT survey sections.

Also there's already come an invitation to supply preach in another part of the state late in January from a former student who pastors in NC. I'm looking forward to doing a lot of this during 1998.

In visiting some local churches we've met some very lovely people who have offered to help us get settled into Boiling Springs any way we needed. Both Claire and I are already addicted to small town NC. The peacefulness and friendliness of the area grows on you very quickly. Going to the office, the post office, grocery store -- anywhere -- is a matter of a few minutes surrounded by gorgeous scenery! Virtually everything we need is right here in Boiling Springs; if not, then Shelby is ten minutes away, Charlotte forty-five with several other towns in between.

E-mail news came of Bill Tillman's departure from SWBTS to the Baptist General Convention of Texas. We wish Bill and Leta the very best. They will continue to live in Ft. Worth and he will commute to Dallas. At least they won't go through the packing and moving experience we've had. We pray for others seeking to leave the seminary that they will quickly find a new place of ministry as well.

I see I'm running out of space, so I'll wrap up my corner. Do stay in touch; we genuinely want to hear from you.