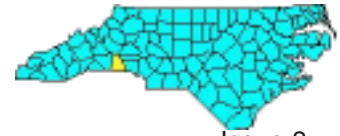




News from the Blue Ridge

Claire & Lorin Cranford

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Family Events:

The month of July just flew by way too quickly! For me it was a mixture of rain (we're over twenty inches ahead for the first seven months of 2003), rest, visits from family, and working in the home office. For Claire, however, it was mostly a matter of staying on top of two online courses at ECU that are a part of her MLS degree. She should be graduating next summer at the end of summer school.

The highlight of July was the visit of Donald, Hallie, and the kids. Don and the kids came down Wednesday evening



while Hallie was serving as a counselor at Ridgecrest Assembly with the youth group from their church in Reston VA. We swam in the river, went to Shelby's Alive After Five concert, checked out Linville caverns and falls, among other things. Brian, Angie and the kids came over some and the five grand-kids had a great time playing together. The four days were a noisy but wonderful time with lots of people in and out of the house.

I managed to get in some work in the flower beds, although there's lots more work that needs to be done. Now it's time to start thinking about fall planting for next spring's flowers. The outside yard has looked reasonably well this summer, largely because of the substantial rain that we've had. The front flower beds have turned out really nice with a combination of green plants and splashes of various colors with different flowers.

The last couple of weeks of July have been somewhat of a health challenge. The combination of high humidity (close to 100% most of the time) with high barometric pressure has given my diabetic feet fits, especially at night when trying to go to sleep. The arthritis hasn't adjusted well either to the unusual amount of rainy weather that we had during the latter part of July especially. But hopefully with August and dryer weather these problems will diminish.



University Happenings:

A lot of the office time during July was spent working on two projects: (1) Religion 311 materials for the fall semester; (2) a chapter in a Festschrift for a professor friend who teaches in Europe. With no summer school responsibilities, the opportunity to do quality research and writing has been wonderful.

Religion 311 The Synoptic Gospels

The Religion 311 course is a study of the life and ministry of Jesus as presented in the synoptic gospels. Working on this project has been enlightening as well as challenging.

The first unit of study deals with learning how to use basic tools for exegeting the scripture texts. Thus lecture manuscript notes are set up on how to use commentaries, English translations of the Greek text, and gospel synopses. Assignments related to these have been developed. The second unit of study is related to interpretative approaches to the study of the synoptic gospels. We will study both how it has been done and then develop an interpretative strategy for doing it now. The bulk of the semester will be devoted to exegeting Matt., Mark and Luke and to drawing theological understandings from these scripture texts. The course goal is to help each student be able to interpret these Bible documents effectively, using the best available tools. Check out the course at Cranfordville.com.

The second project of the summer has been the writing of a chapter in a Festschrift volume to be published this fall in Europe. A Festschrift is a dedicatory volume published to honor an individual who has made a contribution to the scholarly world. Usually, they are published at a professor's retirement or at pivotal birthdays such as one's 65th, 70th etc.

The title of my contribution is "Throwing Your Margaritas to the Pigs: A Rhetorical Reading of Matt. 7:6." For over two decades I've done intensive study of Matt. 5-7 and taught advanced level Greek course studies of this material. Gradually, over that time I've come to some conclusions about the most likely meaning of the very obscure passage in Mt. 7:6 regarding the command to not give holy things to dogs nor throw your pearls (in the Greek, *margaritas*) to the swine. Fascination with doing study like this is very high for me; I can spend hours without end working on such projects. Once the project is complete, the article will be posted at Cranfordville.com as well.

The fall semester begins at GWU on Aug. 20 with the first day of undergraduate classes. Although I'm not ready for school to begin, the starting time is almost here. Another new group of students lies just around the bend!

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Claire's Musings:

Continued from last Month:

Wednesday of our Texas trip became almost comical with three meetings at the nearby



Cracker Barrel. I think we would be a good advertisement for them. I met with some of my Deaf Ed teacher friends from Snow Heights Elementary at 8:00 a.m., Nancy, Cynthia, Anita, and her daughter

Brianna. We've kept in pretty close contact after all these years and that's the case where email helps. When we were together it almost seemed like we were never apart for a long period of time, except that we couldn't stop talking, because there was so much to catch up on. The poor waitress thought we were never going to order.

At 10:00 Lorin and I met with Dwayne and Eleanor Green, our former pastor at Birdville Baptist Church and he was the one who married Lorin and I. We had fun catching up on the latest happenings, and is the case in all of our meetings, it was a reminder of how much we miss them and wish we could get together more often.

Lorin and I ran back to the motel to freshen up and then back at 1:00 to meet with my sisters and their families. It's hard to describe what a wonderful time we had being together again. It renewed us as a family and reminded us of some wonderful memories over the years. After our meal we moved out onto the front porch where there are rocking chairs and talked until 5:00. It was hard to believe that it was cool enough to do that. I had been there for so long it almost seemed like I was at home as we were saying our goodbyes and waving to them. Being with family was very special and now I have more wonderful memories.



Later, Lorin and I went to the Wednesday evening service at Ridgecrest Baptist Church where Lorin was the interim pastor before we left Texas. We had a chance to talk with old friends and had an enjoyable evening.

Thursday morning we were scheduled to get together at Cracker Barrel with another couple, but she became sick. We were all sorry to miss each other, but thank goodness we still have email. Only that and one other friend were we unable to get together with planned meetings. Lorin and I felt pretty good about that. We both have so many special friends, that it's hard to see everyone in such a short time. That's not a bad problem to have. We have been blessed with a wonderful life with many friends.



Lorin's Musings:

To be continued next month.

We stopped by the Forth Worth Stock Yards area and even after spending most of my life in Fort Worth, I felt like a tourist, complete with buying a Texas T-shirt and postcards.

That evening we went to Greg and Jennifer's to see Andrew and newest grandbaby Annabeth. They were so precious and Andrew is a good big brother who is proud of his new sister. We had a chance to relax and just enjoy family time, which was perfect. One evening we went for a small picnic in the park. Andrew sure does have a lot of energy, there's no way I could keep up with him, but what a lot of fun.



Saturday we left for Lorin's brother, Bill and wife Beverly in Corpus Christi. The next day we went to the Aquarium and drove around sightseeing. We ate at the perfect place, Joe's Crab Shack with a view of the ocean. It was a perfect day of fun and then a relaxing evening. We had the best of both worlds.

We left Monday for Baton Rouge to spend one night and on to Jackson, Mississippi to meet with a former student of Lorin's. Guess where we ate – Cracker Barrel. I now have a new respect for that restaurant. They are everywhere and everyone knows where one is close to home.

We arrived home Wednesday (a full two weeks of driving) very tired. I'm sure Lorin had to be the tiredest because he did most all of the driving, I only drove a little. I finished 1 and 3/4 crocheted baby blankets, so at least I had something to show for my time. Meeting with family and friends was so special. Letters and email are wonderful, but being together in person helps rebuild relationships. The hardest part was the departures. It's hard leaving people that you care so much for when you know that it will be a long time before you see them again. But, that is something that everyone has to go through.

If you want to share in a few of **the pictures of the trip**, these can be found at [Cranfordville.com](http://cranfordville.com) under Photo Albums. Or just go to <http://cranfordville.com/PhotoAlbums/TexasTrip03.html>.

The day we got home we met with friends for supper to catch up on the latest news at different colleges. The next day I began washing clothes and at 2:30 we left for Charlotte for meetings of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and didn't get home until 11:00 p.m. The next day we met with Chris and Linda White for supper. They are moving to the northeastern part of North Carolina where he will be serving as the interim president at a Baptist college there. I am excited for them, but will miss them as friends.

We have been eating out for so long, I don't think I remember how to cook, or maybe just don't want to cook. I am exhausted and the day we came back my two master's classes began. I will just try to do the best I can and hope to do well with these classes. I still need to go back to school to finish up some work that I couldn't finish before, but I can't stay long.