

News from the Blue Ridge Mts.

Claire & Lorin Cranford

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Family Bits

The first weekend in April brought more family pleasure. Donald, Hallie and the three kids pulled in on Sunday afternoon on their way back home in VA from a trip to Texas.

We enjoyed a short visit with them as they spent the night with us before heading on home Monday morning. They are coming back Memorial Day weekend for a longer visit when we can show them the beautiful area around us.

Springtime in western NC is proving to be even more glorious than we had anticipated. With the blossoming of the flowers, shrubs etc. along with the trees and grass coming alive, one is surrounded by some of the most beautiful scenery imaginable. The GWU campus is especially pretty with the university taking great pains to maximize its appearance. The traditional 'old south' style of the buildings surrounded by dogwoods, pine trees, azaleas, tulips etc. create a blazing array of greens, reds, golds, yellows, whites et al. Claire and I both feel like we are privileged to live in a massive botanic garden that God has put together.

Also, we are beginning to realize we're in the ideal location for the weather patterns. Many of you have expressed concern for us when hearing weather reports on TV of severe weather in the Carolinas. What we have realized -- and had confirmed by some long-time residents -- is that Boiling Springs is in one of the best possible locations in the Carolinas. We are close enough to the mountains west of us that the severe weather blowing in across the central US plains from either the west or from the northwest out of Canada tends to hit the Blue Ridge Mts and go up and over us, coming back down east of us from about Charlotte eastward to the Atlantic coast. The warm, moist weather blowing up from the Gulf of Mexico usually meets the cold weather on the western side of the mountains, then skips over us on its way east. Or, frequently it splits off going either south of us in the area of Greenville, SC, or north of us through Hickory to Raleigh, NC. Most always when severe weather conditions are given on national TV for Charlotte, NC, we aren't included, or else we're on the very far western edge of them.

We continue our Friday evening exploration of area towns and restaurants. We have discovered some good places to eat steaks in Gastonia, NC. as well as some excellent Tex-Mex in Spartanburg, SC -- all within 20-30 minutes of our house. NC barbeque is different than Texas but quite good.



University Happenings:

This semester has been a real eye-opening experience for me in learning how to adjust to undergraduate students! Generally I think I've been reasonably successful. One of the insights that has become vividly clear is the dramatic difference between intro-students and majors. The academic skills difference are dramatic. That has been brought home to me with the grading of term papers in the freshman Bible classes and in the first year Greek class. The intro-students generally struggle with basic writing skills, along with very limited ability to do critical, analytical thinking. Our department is committed, however, to press every intro-student to begin this skill development by doing a short five page plus analytical paper on an assigned NT and OT passage. Even though it's a lot like pulling jaw-teeth at the dentist's, I've become convinced it's worthwhile to get these kids to start thinking about how to seriously interpret a scripture text using a well defined interpretative procedure. The excitement of several of them in the concluding commits of their paper about how much the study of their passage is impacting their thinking and living encourages me to believe this is a worthwhile project. One of my assignments for next fall is to lead in the development of deplved precise guidelines and procedures to be used by every student in the dozen or so sections of freshman Bible courses.

With the first and second year Greek students, I've not sensed a lot of difference between them and masters level seminary students. The one exception is the greater difficulty of the undergraduates to follow instructions. The second year Greek students generally have functioned every bit as well as their counterparts at the seminary. In this year's class a couple of the students reflect some of the greatest linguistic skills and interest of any student I've ever had the privilege of teaching in my entire career. They have an unlimited future ahead of them in Baptist life as superb interpreters of sacred scripture.

Another helpful aspect at GWU has been a slightly longer semester. I've been amazed at how much difference that extra few classperiods have made in covering the subject matter in the various courses. Also the uniform three hour course structure universally throughout the university curriculum has simplified things unbelievably.

THE SHORT STORY PAGE

For my short story "The Bridge" published on the internet, check out the Short Story Page at <http://www.accsyst.com/jhedge/story/fiction/fiction.htm>.

104 College Manor Drive
PO Box 1415
Boiling Springs, NC 28017-1415

"You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it"

---Margaret Thatcher

Ph: 704 434-5657
Fax: 704 434-5618
e-mail: cranford@shelby.net

☺ **Claire's Musings:**

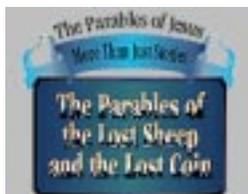
We just had the nicest visit with Donald, Hallie, and the kids. They stopped by on the way back from Texas. They did all of this in about four days and with three small children. I don't know how they managed it and still stayed so sane. I guess that's one advantage of youth. The time went by too fast, but we have the Memorial Day Weekend to look forward to. We will be getting together again, and that time have more time to spend together.

I have been so busy since we have moved here that I have not had much time to be too homesick. That has been to my advantage, because every time I start feeling homesick something always keeps me busy. It seems as though all I do is substitute teach, go to classes, and study. I feel as though if I don't graduate soon, I will be the only student who has to attend classes using a walker. College really is meant for the younger generation. I received a great compliment the other day in P.E. class, though, that made me feel a little younger. After we had learned some new dance steps to rap music, some of the students told me I did good and I "got down." I think that was a compliment!

When we first moved here, I was told that I would need to take more classes in order to teach elementary school in North Carolina. That is what I have been doing this semester, just as a beginning. As I began the substitute teaching, most of the time has been in middle school. To my surprise, I discovered that I enjoyed working with the older kids more than the younger ones. When I checked into that I found out that I could finish college faster if I went middle school instead of elementary. I talked to a new advisor and had my courses changed. Either way I would have to student teach again. Just when things seemed settled (or as much as can be under the circumstances), I got another surprise.

Twenty-one weeks after I had mailed in for my North Carolina licensure (that was done before we left Texas), I received notice that I am now licensed to teach elementary and I need to take a PRAXIS Test (comparable to EXCET), which I would have to do anyway. Now I have to make a decision on which route to take. But, for once, I have a choice. The nice part of this is that I would be happy either way. I think I will continue my middle school classes this summer. If someone wants to hire me for elementary that will be fine. If I don't get an offer that I would be interested in, then I will continue with my classes. There is a need for science teachers in middle school here, so I would be taking some very interesting classes. I am excited and curious about another new adventure in my life.

In about a week I will begin taking my finals, which I am ready to get it over with. I am looking forward to having two weeks off without studying. As soon as I finish with my finals I can substitute every day.



For the internet version of the Decision Magazine article published in February, check out Decision Online at <http://www.graham-assn.org/decision/DLibPage.htm> at February.

✌ **Lorin's Musings:**

One of the exciting developments gradually unfolding for me is the move -- ever so slowly -- toward electronic publishing. With the addition of Adobe Acrobat 3.01 and Pagemaker 6.01 to the university office computer system, I'm beginning to create PDF files which can be transmitted in tact electronically. One of the first experiments will be this newsletter going out to those who have computer systems and the willingness to set up the Adobe Acrobat Reader on their system in order to read the newsletter in the full color edition. Many of you have already responded to my proposal to send this via e-mail. I will be anxious to get your feedback on this. Some of you who receive the newsletter by 'snail mail' and have internet based e-mail connections. I would like to include you on the electronic mailing list as well. Hopefully, we will get the number of readers up to the 150 level. If you would be willing to set up the Adobe Acrobat Reader to view the PDF file on your Mac or PC based computer (Mac, Win 3.xx, Win95, Win NT, Unix, OS/2 versions are free for the downloading at <http://www.adobe.com>), send me an e-mail note at cranford@shelby.net so I can include you on the mailing list.

The next phase will be to release the new elementary Greek grammar in July in a CD-ROM format. Correlated to this will be a web home page supplementing the grammar. With the internet connections of the students at GWU in their dorm rooms etc. it will be possible to enhance their learning experience with a number of electronically based activities. Already this semester students have faxed in term papers or sent them via e-mail in an experimental effort to move toward electronic media in the classroom. The potential for educational enhancement of the student's learning is enormous.

A new phase of our spiritual life began on April 19 when Claire and I became members of the First Baptist Church, Shelby, NC. The church is slightly smaller than Birdville Baptist in Haltom City, and in worship style is somewhat like Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth. For the curious, check our church's web page at <http://www.shelby.net/mm144/FBC.htm>. Our pastor is Robert Canoy, a young man with a genuine pastor's heart and good pulpit skills -- we think of him as a young

Dwayne Greene! Robert also is an adjunct professor at GWU and we enjoy a real fellowship at the academic level as well. The church is very CBF oriented and we enjoy the leadership of women deacons and ministers in the church. Moving our membership from BBC in Texas was a really difficult emotional moment, but the time had come to take this action. Although our membership is no longer there, our hearts will always hold a special place for this wonderful congregation in Texas. This congregation ministered to us in the most genuine Christian way at a very crucial time in our lives, and we will forever be grateful to God!

School Schedule for Claire & Lorin:

Final exams for spring semester: **May 4-7**

First term of summer school: **May 21-June 23**

Second term of summer school: **June 25-July 29**