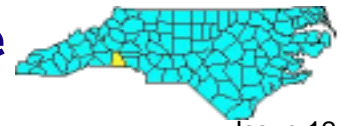




# News from the Blue Ridge

Claire & Lorin Cranford



Volume 1

December

Issue 12



## Family Events:

On Halloween Claire and I made our second pilgrimage into the mountains to take in the spectacular fall beauty of the changing foliage. We were not disappointed in the least. The preceding weekend the Blue Ridge Parkway just north of Asheville was breath-taking. This weekend the drive from Chimney Rock along state highway 9 to Black Mountain was indescribable! We got on the parkway at Grandfather Mountain near Marion, NC, and headed south to US 80 which took us back to Marion. Claire has taken four rolls of film, some 96 pictures, with her new camera of these beautiful scenes. These two weekend trips have been a highlight of the fall for us! To see several of them go to Cranfordville and Places of Interest and Information.



Our first Thanksgiving in NC was a wonderfully quiet and relaxing time together at home doing very little. Cracker Barrel restaurant in Gaffney, SC, provided us Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings -- an annual tradition we may be starting! A leisurely lunch combined with some Christmas shopping and followed with a long, relaxing nap -- that's about as good as Thanksgiving gets!

With the Christmas season quickly coming, we are especially looking forward to our first full Christmas holiday in NC. Angie, Brian, and Clay are coming out just before Christmas and will be here until shortly after Christmas. Donald, Hallie and the kids are planning to come through during that time on their way to Texas. So we are eagerly looking forward to Christmas. Hopefully we'll have some Christmas weather by then. So far this fall the weather has been unusually warm and dry, making it seem more like Texas weather than western NC. Last year we enjoyed a wonderful six inch snow right at Christmas; we would love to see something similar this year.



## University Happenings:

In the October general faculty meeting President White made an exciting announcement about the future of the university. GWU is moving toward purchasing an extension campus in the country of Nicaragua. A Baptist school in Alabama developed the university campus there over the past several years but now can no longer continue to operate the school. GWU will most likely purchase the school valued at over \$6 million from the University of Mobile for under one million dollars. The facilities there are top flight and the school, with an enrollment over 500 students, is operating in the black and is very stable economically and otherwise. This will immediately boost GWU's determined commitment to internationalize itself by creating a branch campus of GWU in this central american country. Students here will be able to take classes there as a part of their GWU degree program, as well as students from there coming to NC. Faculty exchanges will be commonplace as well. The campus there already enjoys the status in Nicaragua as one of the most sought after schools in the country for students. Daniel Ortega's daughter graduated from the school last May. The top governmental leaders of the country have been very supportive of the school which is located some 30 miles outside the capital city. It is an exciting possibility for GWU to extend its ministry world-wide.

The end of November signals the busy time of the fall semester with term papers coming due. I'm continually amazed by the anxiety created by a 10 page research paper. The Bible intro students have the assignment to do an interpretative analysis of an assigned passage following specific guidelines. For most, I'm discovering, this is the very first paper they have ever written. How one could go through four years of high school and not have numerous research papers assigned is beyond belief! It's no wonder the USA Today news report indicated that US high school students rank 25th among industrialized nations -- and are getting further behind each year! The American education system is woefully deficient in many, many areas. Even several so-called third world countries are catching up with and surpassing the US in educational standards and achievements. Our tendency to just throw money at a problem has already proven to worsen the situation rather than improve it. From what I've observed, the most dramatic actions would be to eliminate 90% of the paper trail required of teachers, require parents to be involved with their children's education or face legal penalties, and get administrators off the backs of teachers where they could devote full time to the children. These simple actions would produce dramatic improvements in the learning skills of our children!

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

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/index.htm](http://www.shelby.net/cranford/index.htm)

Ph: 704 434-5657  
Fax: 704 434-5618  
e-mail: [cranford@shelby.net](mailto:cranford@shelby.net)



## ☺ **Claire's Musings:**

November 28, 1998

I had a wonderful time in New York. At first I didn't think I wanted to go, because New York just seemed too huge. I'm glad I went, though, mostly because of some very nice people. Our hosts, Jim and Chris, and their daughter Elizabeth were wonderful. They made us feel at home and comfortable. They were excellent tour guides and showed us as many sights as we could possibly see in one short weekend.

After all these years of watching "Miracle on 34th Street" as the girls were growing up, I actually walked down 34th Street and even did a little Christmas shopping in Macy's. Angie and Carrie would have loved being there. We saw the Statue of Liberty from a distance, I didn't have the energy to do that kind of walking. I thought I was doing good just to keep up with our friends walking around the city. New York was a lot nicer than I thought it would be, just too many people. The traffic, though, was just as I had expected. Cars were going much too fast and weaving in and out. People honked at each other, although I'm not sure how much that accomplished. Jim was a fantastic driver, it seemed as if he had been driving there his whole life. It was nice to be with someone who knew what they were doing. If it were up to me, I would have had to take a bus.

The people in their church were very special and unique. Everyone was so nice and I felt very fortunate to have been a small part of that church. Someday I hope that Lorin and I will be able to go back and see how much they have grown.

The next weekend Lorin went to Florida for his annual meeting. I didn't dare take off time from my first-year teaching job. I spent the weekend recuperating and mostly just slept. I have been very tired from trying to keep up with everything, so it was a perfect weekend for me. I also tried to do a little catching up on school work.

This Thanksgiving holiday has been great, too, for catching up on behind work, which includes housework and school work. Most of the time, though, I unwound and relaxed.

Christmas season is here and it's a little sad for me. We will not be able to come home for the holidays, so I miss my family and friends. The wonderful part is that Angie, Brian, and Clay will be coming here for the week of Christmas. I'm so excited about it that it is hard to think about much of anything else right now. Hopefully, too, Donald and Hallie will be coming through on their trip to Texas. Wow! What a great Christmas after all!

---

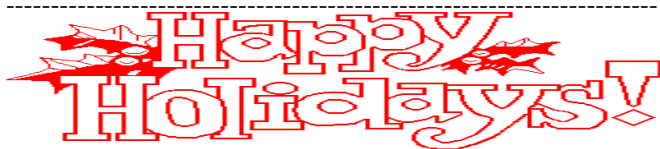
**When prophets turn to profits, wisdom turns within.**

--Alan Harris

THINKER'S DAILY PONDERABLE ON THE WEB

<http://users.aol.com/alhinil/tdp.htm>

---



## ✌ **Lorin's Musings:**

November has proven to be extra ordinarily busy but satisfying too. The weekend of Nov. 13-15 Claire and I flew to

New York City to lead in a revival effort at the Rockland Baptist Church in Monroe, NY -- about 20 miles north of the 'city' as the Big Apple is referred to. The weekend was one of the most enjoyable we've had in quite some time. Those preachers reading this will perhaps understand even clearer. For a revival preacher, there comes along every so often the opportunity to go into a church that is well prepared and hungry for a deep spiritual renewal. This weekend was one of those times for us. The people had prepared themselves both in planning and spiritually for a special time of worship and reaching out to the Lord. We were humbled to simply watch the Lord at work bringing new levels of excitement and spiritual commitment in the life of individual after individual in the congregation. This congregation of about 100 plus members is made up of believers from over ten nationalities, a wide range of occupation and educational backgrounds; and they work together wonderfully well. As I told them on Sunday morning, they exemplify what church was intended to be in the New Testament. It's easy to explain why the Lord is pouring out his blessings on them.

On Saturday Claire and I went with the pastor, his wife and daughter -- Jim, Chris and Elizabeth Starr -- on a sight-seeing/shopping visit to downtown NYC. We took in the sights and bought some Christmas presents at Macy's. A wonderful time in every respect.

The following weekend, Nov. 20-24, came a trip to Orlando, FL, to attend the national SBL (Society of Biblical Literature) meeting. Gerald Keown, OT prof in the divinity school, and I roomed together. We enjoyed getting better acquainted and doing some things together. The meeting was especially satisfying to me with the opportunity to see so many former students who are now professors around the country as well as former SWBTS colleagues and others whom I've gotten to know over the years. The largeness of the meeting (some 7,000 professors), coupled with the continuous presentation of hundreds of formal papers, enables one to attend the sessions that are most appealing and directly related to teaching and research interests. Additionally, the publishers' exhibits include virtually every scholarly religious publisher in N.America and Europe. Thus, one can examine first hand every new publication and computer software that has relevancy to teaching and writing. With deep discounts offered -- up to 70% -- the temptation to buy, buy, buy is enormous!

Most enjoyable, though, was to note the large number of former students presenting papers and/or presiding over sessions of the meeting. For a professor, this is the most satisfying aspect of one's work: to see these young men and women making a difference in religious studies all over the country!

The only negative aspect of the meeting was the location in the middle of Mickey Mouse world. The scatteredness of the hotels coupled with outrageous prices helped me understand why I have never had any desire to visit that part of the world -- not to mention 85 degree temp and 95% humidity!



## Reflections on 1998

*Happy Holidays!*

In reflecting back over 1998, the only words that come to mind are WOW and TRANSITION! Little did Claire and I realize what lay before us when we pulled into the driveway of the apartment last December to begin a brand new phase of our life as transplanted Texans in western North Carolina. The year has brought so many changes and surprises that it's impossible to describe

all of them. Besides you don't have time or interest in reading all the details. So, just a few of the high points.

One of the new experiences many of you have been sharing in all through the year, our monthly personal newsletter *News From The Blue Ridge*. An experiment to stay in touch, it has developed into a monthly journal for Claire and me to reflect back over the previous month and highlight the major events in our lives. An immense personal satisfaction has come from this experience. Many of you have communicated to us your personal enjoyment at reading the newsletter. We plan to continue sending it out in 1999.

Closely related to the newsletter has been the development of *Cranfordville*, our web page. The online version of the newsletter is posted on it each month, along with lots of information about us and our family. The GWU class materials are posted on it as well. I'm discovering the joys of electronic communication for personal and business reasons. This format enables some innovative actions not possible through printed media. I'm just a beginner with web development but am learning how to make more and more things available through this. Many discoveries have come about. For instance, I've discovered that when churches I'm preaching at need biographical information for their Sunday bulletin, the bio material on the web site is a wonderful means of providing a wealth of material that they can choose from. Gradually the students are learning to use the site to access information about their classes with me and discovering it's a handy tool they can access 24 hours a day. More and more material should come online during 1999, as well as some enhancements to make it easier to access and more visually appealing.

Most importantly 1999 has seen some major shifts in *my career*. Moving to teach undergraduate students after almost 24 years of working with graduate students has been the great change. The transition has come much easier than expected. The students taking required Bible intro classes have posed the greatest adjustment. I've worked hard to try to come down to their level, yet be challenging and stretch their thinking in order to grow intellectually. They have challenged me to work on teaching procedures in order to stimulate a 19-20 year old mind to want to learn. The majors have proven to be very much like the MDiv students with whom I worked at the seminary. The first and second year Greek classes have provided great satisfaction. This year the Greek grammar project for first year students is working me hard, but challenging me to develop some better tools for learning this ancient language. The theological German class with a divinity school student is keeping me on track with this skill and providing the opportunity to work at a more advanced level. I do miss the stimulation that came from leading the PhD seminars all those years at Southwestern. I had the privilege of working with some extraordinary doctoral students during those years who stretched me and taught me much more than I taught them.

For *Claire* 1999 has been a year of continuous pressure and adjustment. The delay in NC certification caused some high level pressure of going back to school while doing substitute teaching two days a week during the spring semester. She faced the challenge well and worked hard to accomplish some outstanding things managing a very full and pressure-filled schedule. Summer school the first term, then getting ready to begin her first teaching job in mainstream elementary school finished out a busy summer. This fall has seen the unusual pressure of first year teaching fourth grade in a new school combined with the state-wide implementation of a brand new reading program, Four Blocks, necessitating tons of additional paperwork. She has stayed with it unflinchingly even to the 1:00 and 2:00 am sessions getting materials ready for the next morning's classes. I'm proud of her; she's a wonderful teacher who cares genuinely for the kids and puts forth 110% effort in doing her very best to help them learn.

One of the *disadvantages* of living in NC is being so far away from family. Yet all of the kids except Chris and Charis were able to visit us at least once during the year. Friends from Texas came through a few times. This helped compensate somewhat. We hope in 1999 to have more come visit us, and possibly next summer make a trip back to Texas. New friends here have filled those gaps somewhat and we look forward to making more friends as time passes.

I must close out this *reflection on 1998*. It's been a good year for us because we're right where God wants us and are doing exactly what God wants us to be doing. No place on earth could be better than that! We pray the same for you and yours. Gottes Segen in 1999!