



Volume 2

# News from the Blue Ridge

Claire & Lorin Cranford

December 1999



Issue 12



## Family Events:

**1999** has been a most eventful year for Claire and me.

The most influential change has been moving into our new home on New Year's Eve and then spending this first year beginning to get things arranged and set up. Of course, such is a never ending task and we still have boxes unpacked, but gradually everything is coming together in a marvelous way that enables us to enjoy living here enormously. We are very grateful to live in such a nice home and with such wonderful neighbors.

One family highlight was the trip back to Texas this past summer with the opportunity to visit family and friends in Oklahoma and Texas. And following that was the trip to VA to see Donald, Hallie and the kids. Living this far away means we don't get to see them as often as we would like.

This Christmas we will travel again to VA to spend some time with Donald and Hallie. The enjoyment of Christmas by their three kids makes the holiday very, very special indeed. With two grandbabies due the first part of January we will be traveling to Texas for a fast trip to see them early into the new year.

Another memorable experience this past year has been to get the office at home up and running. Having the extremely nice office complex at home back in Haltom City in Texas really spoiled me. We have been very anxious to get a similar setup underway out here. Finally this fall the book shelves and desks are in place, along with the new computer equipment. The bulk of my library is now at home and accessible. Working in the afternoons and evenings here is so much more productive and pleasant. The quiet atmosphere along with the beautiful surroundings becomes a continual inspiration for getting the work done, hopefully with greater substance. As we move closer to retirement, this will become even more significant.

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University

Happenings:

The past year has brought about many, many new innovations career wise.

Attending the conference on Distance Education at the University of Central Florida last March signaled a major new thrust in my teaching. This laid the foundation for teaching the DivSchool online course this fall on 1/2 Thessalonians. This coming spring semester I will teach the New Testament survey course in the adult evening program as an online course. The future suggests that both the Old Testament and New Testament survey courses will now be offered as online courses, along with some others as time goes by. Additionally, all of my onground campus classes make extensive use of the internet as "web-enhanced" courses.

Though many challenges have arisen to bring this about, I'm finding a real satisfaction in teaching these classes online. The interaction with students in the class is much greater than in a traditional class room, and, as one student in another online course this semester remarked, you can't hide in this type of class setting. Every class member has to be actively participating in

the weekly activities.

The release this past summer of the beginning Greek grammar on CD-ROM has given me a very helpful tool for the teaching of biblical koine Greek to the students. A massive expansion of the grammar is now underway and a new edition will be released next summer making it more useful. The experiment here is laying the groundwork for gradually shifting all of my publications over to an electronic format.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A  
HAPPY NEW YEAR !



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<http://www.shelby.net/cranford/index.htm>



## *Claires' Musings:*

Nov99

For those of you who read the last letter and might be wondering - I now know what that creature is that sits next to the road close to our house that I named Harvey. While driving with some friends we all saw it, and now I know I'm not just seeing things. I have witnesses. That cute furry little animal is a groundhog. Later that same day we discovered that it is also called a woodchuck, and also known as a whistle pig (he makes a whistling sound when alarmed). I'm learning a number of interesting new things around here.

I am now employed as the Reading teacher at Cliffside Elementary. I teach reading to 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders during the morning and tutor various children in the afternoons. It's okay, but my heart is still at Harris Elementary where I did my 6-week sub at the beginning of this year. I have lost a lot of my joy and enthusiasm for teaching. I think I am a good "teacher", but now there is too much "teaching to the test", and little support from some principals or parents.

Lorin was going on a business trip to Boston a week before Thanksgiving, and I was able to go with him. One day we took a trolley tour and learned many interesting facts about Boston. We saw people make left turns from right lanes, right in front of other cars in the left lane. They acted like it was a normal thing. Red lights seemed to only be a *suggestion* rather than the law. Pedestrians cross anywhere at any time and it doesn't matter what the traffic light is, or how many cars are coming. Crazy, huh?

Everyone kept remarking that the Boston weather was unseasonably warm -- fortunate for us. The city is alive with people day and night. One evening while looking out a window I saw eleven limousines in a fifteen-minute time span. Every night we were there I saw several driving by. While Lorin was in some of his meetings, I spent a lot of time in the City Park. It was beautiful with the fall leaves and perfect weather. It was full of families, joggers, and even ice skaters on a special outside rink.

Right across the street was THE "Cheers". I walked through just to see what it was like. The front part was just like the TV show and it was exciting just to see it.

We were so close to Niagara Falls that we decided to drive over before we started back for home. We went up on a tower at night to see the colored lights on the falls and, of course, it was spectacular. Then the next day we took a tour. I could have never imagined anything so massive or powerful as the falls were. We went down under the falls (complete with raincoats) and it was even more awesome. I am so glad that we were able to add that to our mini-vacation.

On the way back, about two hours from home, we ate Thanksgiving lunch in Mount Airy, home of Andy Griffith and Barney. I want to go back sometime and see the whole town.

I hope that all of you (especially you teachers) enjoy the holidays.



## *Lorin's Musings:*

What a marvelous thing life is! In reflecting back on 1999 I'm reminded anew of just how wonderful God has been to us in giving us life with him and in his creation. Everything can be so easily taken for granted; it's times like Christmas that causes one to pause and reflect back a bit.

Claire and I have been wonderfully blessed! A beautiful home to live in, good jobs making a contribution in the lives of others, a fantastically beautiful countryside to enjoy year round -- the list goes on and on. God is truly good!

Not the least gift is that of humor and laughter. Below is some lines of humor especially amusing.

### **YOU MIGHT BE IN A TEXAS COUNTRY CHURCH IF....."**

- 1. The doors are never locked.**
- 2. The Call to Worship is "Y'all come on in!"**
- 3. People grumble about Noah letting coyotes on the Ark.**
- 4. The Preacher says, "I'd like to ask Bubba to help take up the offering" and five guys stand up**
- 5. The restrooms are outside.**
- 6. Opening day of deer hunting season is recognized as an official church holiday.**
- 7. A member requests to be buried in his four-wheel drive truck because, "I ain't ever been in a hole it couldn't get me out of."**
- 8. In the annual stewardship drive there is at least one pledge of "two calves."**
- 9. Never in its entire 100-year history has one of its pastors had to buy any meat or vegetables.**
- 10. When it rains, everybody's smiling.**
- 11. Prayers regarding the weather are a standard part of every worship service.**
- 12. A singing group is known as the "OK Chorale".**
- 13. The church directory doesn't have last names.**
- 14. The pastor wears boots.**
- 15. Four generations of one family sit together in worship every Sunday.**
- 16. The only time people lock their cars in the parking lot is during the summer and then only so their neighbors can't leave them a bag of squash.**
- 17. There is no such thing as a "secret" sin.**
- 18. Baptism is referred to as "branding."**
- 19. There is a special fund-raiser for a new septic tank.**
- 20. Finding and returning lost sheep is not just a parable.**
- 21. You miss worship one Sunday morning and by 2 o'clock that afternoon you have had a dozen calls inquiring about your health.**
- 22. High notes on the organ sets dogs in the parking lot to howling.**
- 23. People wonder when Jesus fed the 5,000 whether the two fish were bass or catfish.**
- 24. People think "Rapture" is what happens when you lift something too heavy.**

