



News from the Blue Ridge



Volume 3

Claire & Lorin Cranford

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Issue 3



Family Events:

February proved to be uneventful, just really busy. The visit by Bill and Sue Brown on Feb. 6 was one of the highlights. They were on vacation from Fort Worth visiting relatives in this part of the country. We had Sunday afternoon and evening to check out Chimney Rock and the Boiling Springs area, as well as to catch up on things going on in Fort Worth. They are wonderful friends going back to the 1960s and we enjoyed their visit very much.

During the fall and winter Claire and I have worked on completing the decorating of the interior of the house, as well as the upgrading of some of the electronic equipment. We have joined the ranks of cordless 900Mhz phone users which have substantially enhanced the phone usage around the house. Some drapes for the guest bedroom, office etc., although there's still some more to do. Additionally, we have added a number of indoor plants in the breakfast room, office and exercise rooms. One of the delightful aspects of a new home is the excitement of decorating it. For us, doing it a small piece at a time is proving to be the most joy since it gives us something new to look forward to each month.

With spring just around the corner the urge to get out in the yard grows each day. The flower beds in the front and sides will need reworking, along with plans for a new flower bed in the northeast corner of the front yard. Then there's the work room in the garage that's only just beginning to take shape. The dream is for a place where enough woodworking and power tools can be located to provide a place of diversion for working with the hands in creating things, instead of being locked constantly in front of the computer screen with academic responsibilities. The remodeling experience in Haltom City awakened an urge inside me which I had forgotten existed. Couple that with the growing need for diversion from academic stuff all the time and you can see where I'm headed: a hobby that is both rewarding and revitalizing.

Restroom Wall Wisdom

It's hard to make a comeback when you haven't been anywhere.

-Written in the dust on the back of a bus.
Wickenburg, Arizona

Beauty is only a light switch away.

-Perkins Library. Duke University. Durham, North Carolina

At the feast of ego, everyone leaves hungry.

-Bentley's House of Coffee and Tea, Tucson, Arizona

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For all kinds of info about us as well as a PDF copy of this newsletter, check out our homepage [Cranfordville](http://www.shelby.net/cranford) at <http://www.shelby.net/cranford>

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University Happenings:

One interesting expansion this semester to the academic toolbag has been the use of **MicroGrade** software that GWU has purchased. This is a gradebook software program from Chariot Software that enables the professor to set up an electronic gradebook for each class being taught. Check them out on the internet at <http://www.chariot.com/>. Since 1988 I have been using my 'homegrown' system combining a spreadsheet file with a DBF file and then generating reports from the database file. But, the MicroGrade system enables so much more to be done. The individualized method of calculating semester grades can be configured into each class with relative ease; data on grades, attendance, info about each student, even a seating chart can be set up for each class; comparisons of different sections of the same class can be easily made et als. But, for me, one of the niftiest features is the ability to generate individualized progress reports that can be printed out, faxed, or sent as e-mail to each student. The students are now receiving their grade reports via e-mail and it takes me only a fraction of the time to produce these in comparison to the old system. Eventually the university plans to link this software up to the GWU network so that class rosters will be automatically downloaded from the central AS400 computer. Chariot Software has introduced a web site service which will allow the class grades to be uploaded into a secure web site thus permitting each student with proper id and password to be able to check his or her grades in a given class any time by going into the internet. Neat stuff!! I've long advocated letting the computer take over the mechanical aspects of teaching so the professor can concentrate on teaching. This is a significant step in that direction.

The next step will be the addition of software such as Chariot Software's **Micro Test III** which allows the automatic generation of tests and exams from a databank of questions. These can be either printed out and administered in the traditional manner. Or, an electronic version can be created so that students can take the tests over the internet, or uploaded via a network to computers in a specified computer lab on campus. In either case, the objective questions are instantly graded and recorded by the software and the professor can manually go in and grade the essay questions. Most such programs allow for the electronic version of a test to generate a different set of questions over the specified range of topics for each student, thus reducing any inclination to try to copy from another student. I'm looking forward to getting this system in place.

For insight into the **Parables of Jesus** check out the DSNT401P materials in GWU Classes at Cranfordville. Some neat stuff is coming online there!



Claire's Musings:

Feb, 2000

It's been fun sharing grandbaby pictures with my friends at school. It's exciting getting pictures and phone calls from the kids and, of course, makes us feel more a part of all the excitement. My friends get tickled at me about how excited I have been. They also realize how hard it has been for me to be so far away from family.

The first weekend of February brought some friends here for a quick visit. Bill and Sue Brown from Fort Worth came by for a short, but fun visit. They were so much fun and we spent a lot of time catching up on the latest home news, and of course, there was lots of laughter.

One morning on the way to work I saw a deer preparing to cross the road, so I slowed down to avoid possibly hitting him. My car frightened him and instead of crossing the road he ran along beside my car for a couple of seconds, and then disappeared into the woods. Wow! What a wonderful way to start the day.

The only thing I can concentrate on now is our upcoming trip to Texas and seeing our kids and grandbabies. It will be wonderful! After the trip in the next newsletter I will have much more to say.

the trees under the water from the flood. Scoutmaster Webb isn't crabby like some scoutmasters. He didn't even get mad about the life jackets.

He has to spend a lot of time working on the car so we are trying not to cause him any trouble. Guess what? We have all passed our first aid merit badges. When Dave dove in the lake and cut his arm, we got to see how a tourniquet works. Also Wade and I threw up. Scoutmaster Webb said it probably was just food poisoning from the leftover chicken, he said they got sick that way with the food they ate in prison. I'm so glad he got out and become our scoutmaster. He said he sure figured out how to get things done better while he was doing his time.

I have to go now. We are going into town to mail our letters and buy bullets. Don't worry about anything. We are fine.

Love, Cole



Lorin's Musings:

Andrew finally arrived on Jan 30 -- safely and healthy. We rejoice in this newest addition to our clan. Greg and Jennifer are learning the joys of parenthood with their first child. They seem to be taking to parenthood quite well. We're quite excited and happy for them. We've put a photo album on Andrew at Cranfordville. To access it, go to Photo Albums on the homepage, then to Andrew's name. Once we get back from the trip to Texas, there will be a significant increase in the number of pictures of both Andrew and Taylor.

March 1-5 we're making a quick trip to Texas to visit Andrew and Taylor -- and, of course, their parents, at least a little. The hardest part of being so far away is not getting to see the little ones at birth, but a month later isn't all that bad. We're really excited about getting to see them. Wish it would be possible to see others, but first things first -- as you would understand.

Here's a story that will take on new meaning for the new parents:

Dear Mom,

Our scout master told us all write to our parents in case you saw the flood on TV and worried. We are OK. Only 1 of our tents and 2 sleeping bags got washed away. Luckily, none of us got drowned because we were all up on the mountain looking for Chad when it happened. Oh yes, please call Chad's mother and tell her he is OK. He can't write because of the cast. I got to ride in one of the search & rescue jeeps. It was neat. We never would have found him in the dark if it hadn't been for the lightning.

Scoutmaster Webb got mad at Chad for going on a hike alone without telling anyone. Chad said he did tell him, but it was during the fire so he probably didn't hear him. Did you know that if you put gas on a fire, the gas can will blow up? The wet wood still didn't burn, but one of our tents did. Also some of our clothes. John is going to look weird until his hair grows back.

We will be home on Saturday if Scoutmaster Webb gets the car fixed. It wasn't his fault about the wreck. The brakes worked OK when we left. Scoutmaster Webb said that a car that old you have to expect something to break down; that's probably why he can't get insurance on it. We think it's a neat car. He doesn't care if we get it dirty, and if it's hot, sometimes he lets us ride on the tailgate. It gets pretty hot with 10 people in a car. He let us take turns riding in the trailer until the highway patrolman stopped and talked to us.

Scoutmaster Webb is a neat guy. Don't worry, he is a good driver. In fact, he is teaching Terry how to drive. But he only lets him drive on the mountain roads where there isn't any traffic. All we ever see up there are logging trucks.

This morning all of the guys were diving off the rocks and swimming out in the lake. Scoutmaster Webb wouldn't let me because I can't swim and Chad was afraid he would sink because of his cast, so he let us take the canoe across the lake. It was great. You can still see some of

