



News from the Blue Ridge



Volume 3

Claire & Lovin Cranford
November 2000

Issue 11



Family Events:



Wow! Computers can be both a marvelous aid to getting work done better, and, at the same time, one of the greatest possible headaches imaginable! That has been my fate since the end of October. The devil known as Microsoft Windows 98 gradually clogged up and took the main computer down, necessitating a fresh start by eliminating almost a quarter of a million files from the hard drive. Add to that a cruddy monitor that went down and eventually had to be replaced. Fortunately backup systems were available with most of the programs and files, but were scattered over three other computers both at home and at the university office. Now, however, everything is virtually back up and running again. The challenge of the moment is to catch up on the backlog of things not done on schedule.

Thus this newsletter is running about two weeks behind schedule. One good thing that has occurred is the inquiries of several people about when the newsletter is going out. Sometimes we wonder how many are enjoying receiving the newsletter. Times like these give us some feedback confirming that it is worth the time and energy putting it together.

Of course, we can't resist sharing the latest pictures of grandkids that we have received:

Andrew is eight months in this picture, and one can tell he is showing 'personality' already. Greg and Jennifer are getting settled into their new home in Huntsville, Texas and Greg is busy with his teaching and coaching in the Conroe ISD. Jennifer is a stay-at-home mom now who is working out of their home in part-time work to help out on the finances. They are enjoying life as a busy family with lots to look forward to as Andrew grows up.



In this picture taken in September Clay is five and Taylor is eight months. They get along very well, although as Taylor crawls everywhere now she poses increasing challenges to Clay's toy box and room. Little sisters

can be a lot of fun, and a lot of pester as well. Clay continues to really enjoy kindergarden. Angie is also a stay-at-home mom and helps Brian with the carpet business part time. These two school teacher daughters are realizing their dreams of being full-time moms.

105 Twin Lake Drive
Shelby, NC 28152-0660



University Happenings:

As we move into the Thanksgiving season, the fall semester at GWU begins to wind down toward final exam week. 'Wind down' may not be the most accurate way of describing this time, since a rush of term papers begins coming due, exams etc. begin piling up. Both students and professors feel the increased pressure of this part of every semester.

For me this semester has been one of the more challenging ones since coming to GWU. Growing health problems coupled with age -- I hit the 59 year mark on Nov. 3 -- make it increasingly difficult to get work done as efficiently as in past years. The demands of a very heavy teaching load covering three sections of OT survey, three levels of Greek classes, theological German, an honors thesis supervision, committee responsibilities, and student advising have together consumed enormous amounts of time and energy.

Yet, as often happens, the busy work demands also become the source of more satisfying experiences of accomplishment. Watching students come alive with new, deeper insights into the meaning of scripture tops the list of satisfying experiences. This has happened in both the survey courses and the Greek courses. As one student shared with me, the OT topic covered in class became a real source of conviction bringing about a renewed determination to follow the Lord more faithfully. Several students have become aware of and deeply interested in the so-called SBC controversy as a result of class discussions and are now reading and studying the history of this in order to come to some personal convictions about who Baptists are and how to be a better Christian.

For the university this fall has seen another scattering of enrollment records with the fall enrollment topping 3,200 students. The move to NCAA division one status has brought our athletic programs to higher levels of involvement. The various teams, ranging from swimming to football -- over two dozen in all -- are traveling all the way from Maine to Florida and to Louisiana for their games. They are competing against much larger schools, some of whom broadcast their games on regional television. Consequently, GWU is becoming known much better all over the eastern part of the US. This will gradually turn into a fund raising and student recruitment bonanza.

Several new endowed scholarships have been announced already. For us, one of the most exciting ones is the divinity school's move toward several new complete degree, full tuition merit scholarships to be designated by religion departments all the way from Arkansas to the east coast for their top religion major undergraduate students. Our department will name one of our majors as the recipient beginning next fall.

GWU is moving rapidly toward becoming a significant center of higher education with a distinctly religious perspective.

For all kinds of info about us as well as a PDF copy and an expanded HTML version of this newsletter, check out our homepage Cranfordville at <http://Cranfordville.cjb.net>

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



Claires' Musings:

Nov., 2000

One of our most enjoyable times here is going to look at the autumn leaves in the nearby mountains. We made one trip on a Saturday in early October. As usual the colors of the leaves were breathtaking. We made another trip the last of October, but maybe due to the dry weather, it was not quite as beautiful.

On our first trip we had weather that was "made to order." The sky was clear and the air was crisp with just the right touch of cool air to match our perfect day. Slowly, at first, we began seeing a few trees that were putting on their autumn display. Then as we approached Mt. Mitchell more and more trees were bursting with multi-colored leaves, some already falling to the ground.

What a glorious sight! Everywhere various types of trees were bursting with colors like fireworks. Shades went from pale golden rod yellows to orange to fire engine reds. Some trees were shaded with just green and red, Christmas colors. The landscape was alive with intermingled autumn colors in not only the trees, but also wildflowers, bushes, and even the grass. On the ground the leaves would intermingle with thousands of others allowing even the forest floor to explode with color.

As we continued our journey we saw more and more beauty. Many times we thought we had already seen the best views. Then we would go around another bend in the road and be amazed, hardly believing our eyes. Rustic fences criss-crossed some spots, bringing thoughts of how it must have looked during the pioneer days.

Mt. Mitchell is 6,684 feet high, the highest peak east of the Mississippi River. We knew that at this time of the year (the first weekend in October) we would find the most colorful foliage at the highest elevations. How could I have realized what I was about to witness. Of course the trees were beautiful, but what I saw was disturbing. The closer we came to the mountain the more we became aware of barren trees. Trees that once were healthy were now dead, stripped of all beauty, looking like telephone poles. We learned that pollution caused this devastation. Many of the fallen trees were either broken or leaning on other trees. It was a hard vision to deal with.

All of the wonders of nature that we witnessed on that special day are almost in our backyard. Only about 30 minutes from our house we are in the mountains. Wow!

Around the middle of October I went to a cemetery in Shelby which was established in 1841. I took a whole role of pictures of the fall trees there. The fallen leaves so covered the ground that it was almost impossible to know where the road was. The ground was like an autumn wonderland compared to a winter wonderland, golden rather than white. I am so fortunate to be able to enjoy the beauty of God's creations.

If you would like to enjoy many of the photos with us, go to Cranfordville (<http://Cranfordville.cjb.net>), scroll down to Photo Albums and click on the camera icon. Then click on which ever page(s) you would like to see. We have been able to set up several internet albums for the different scenes and times for the fall foliage.



Lorin's Musings:

Last month's emphasis upon North Carolina Baptists covered the time up to the middle 1700's. The second segment of this mini lesson in church history will summarize growth and development from then up to the 1830's when the state convention was formed.

The three distinct groups of Baptists in the Carolinas -- the General Baptists, the Particular Baptists, and the Separate Baptists -- emerging in the 1700's gradually combined into a single group by the middle 1800's. This process developed first as individual congregations formed localized associations. By 1790 three Associations covered most of North Carolina: Kehukee in the east, Sandy Creek in the piedmont, and Yadkin in the foothills. A fourth was added in 1799, the Mountain Association. The purpose for these loosely defined organizations was for fellowship and worship, but not for missions. NC Baptists at this point were still heavily Calvinistic oriented and not interested in mission work.

Although after the American revolutionary war in the 1770's North Carolina was the third most populated state, it had little interest in the welfare of its citizens. Very few schools existed over the state and in the late 1700's, one third of the residents could not read and half could not write. Only 108 out of a population of 8,000 subscribed to a newspaper. The situation worsened into the early 1800's. Between 1815 and 1833 about one third of the population emigrated elsewhere, when land prices fell from \$2.04 to \$1.53 per acre. It was during this time that many North Carolinians moved from the Cleveland County area where Boiling Springs is located to east and central Texas to help form the new Republic of Texas.

When the British Baptist William Carey finally secured support to begin mission work in India in the late 1700's, that began a growing movement among Baptists worldwide to get more involved in mission work. Pastor Martin Ross, a leader in the Kehukee Association, caught this spirit and in 1803 lobbied the association to adopt a resolution supporting mission work. That led two years later to the formation of the Philanthropic Baptist Missionary Society for the promotion of missions among all the NC Baptist associations. But in 1808 its treasurer reported that only \$41.35 had been collected for mission work.

But Ross didn't give up. Out of his undying enthusiasm and commitment, several mission projects sprang up over the next 25 years. For example, Humphrey Posey was appointed missionary to the Cherokee Indian Nation in 1817.

But this movement was met with bitter opposition by other Baptists. Joshua Lawrence was a Baptist leader of the anti-missionary movement who spearheaded resolutions condemning mission activity in many associations across the state. Some association split over the issue. Those opposing missions came to call themselves 'Primitive Baptists' believing they were going back to the basics of the Bible in their opposition to missions.

Although this anti-missions movement became a powerful force in the state, the developing social and political sense of national thinking help create a more favorable climate for missions. Eventually, on March 26, 1840, fourteen men from across North Carolina met in Greenville, SC, and formed the North Carolina Benevolent Society, the beginning of the state convention for Baptists in North Carolina. This organization was explicitly formed to promote mission work and education.