



# News from the Blue Ridge



Volume 3

*Claire & Lovin Cranford*

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Issue 12



## *Family Events:*

November has come and gone before we realized it was hardly here. The fall season has been a mixture of unusually warm and cold days, with some snow just before Thanksgiving. Unfortunately, we were in Nashville when it fell and only saw traces.

Our yard has been somewhat decorated with winter flow-



ers and our straw cowboy, first dressed for Halloween then for Thanksgiving. The landscape lights have accented all of this in the evening hours. Several neighbors have commented on how much they have enjoyed this pleasant view as they turn into the West Lake edition where we live.

Now comes the challenge of Christmas lights. We will put up the massive lights across the front of the house as we did last year. But, some additions are planned for this year. A couple of lighted deer and Noel posts will go up on the top of the large flower bed on the north side of the yard. Claire began the inside decorations on Thanksgiving day. We do have a lot of enjoyment decorating the house for the various seasons of the year.

Be sure to check the Photo Album section of Cranfordville for pictures of all this. We will post photos as soon as they are developed. Also, some new pictures of grandkids, especially Clay, Taylor and Andrew are posted in the Photo Album section.

All of our photos of the fall foliage for this year are now posted in the Photo Album section. Claire really excelled with a photo shoot session at the Shelby Cemetery. This cemetery dating back to the 1840s became a wonderful backdrop for some wonder fall foliage pictures. Be sure to check them out!

With Thanksgiving over, our attention turns to the Christmas holidays. That means the religion dept party at our house and then kids with grandkids following at Christmas. The sounds of laughter and fun will fill this otherwise quiet place

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## *University Happenings:*

November is the time of the annual AAR/SBL meeting somewhere in North America during the weekend before Thanksgiving. The Society of Biblical Literature group, to which I belong, focuses on Old and New Testament studies along with biblical backgrounds. The combined meeting annually attracts some 7,000 plus attendees. Added to these two flagship groups are numerous other smaller professional groups. The National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion (NABPR) is one of those which I participate in. Meetings take place from Friday through Tuesday and offer the opportunity to set in on literally hundreds of paper presentations and discussions. Sessions typically begin around 8:30 am and continue until around 10:30 pm each day. Most of the group sessions will have from 25 to 150 in attendance in order to encourage vigorous discussion and debate of the issues. Virtually every existing theological viewpoint found in N. America will be represented in the different discussions. The meeting this year, Nov. 17-22, at the Opryland Convention Center and Hotel in Nashville was no exception to the usual pattern.

Since I have been attending this meeting since the middle 1970s, I have gravitated toward seeking three benefits from the meeting: (1) attending selected seminar sessions that are related to current research interests; (2) checking out the book and software releases in the exhibit hall where virtually every publisher dealing with religious topics has a booth; (3) reconnecting to the dozens of former students and colleagues that I have established friendships with over these 25 plus years.

Claire and I enjoyed dinner engagements with several friends most every evening. As we walked around during the meetings I enjoyed speaking with friends from all around the country, and even a colleague from Germany. Many of these people I don't get to see except at this meeting each year. The ecumenical atmosphere of this meeting and the opportunity to get personally acquainted with scholars all across different Protestant, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions provide invaluable insights from a wide variety of perspectives. It is an effective barrier to the Baptist tendency toward isolationism.

The exhibit hall provided overwhelming temptation with an array of hundreds of new publications available at discounts up to 70%. I was able to add a few titles to my library, as well as computer software upgrades, notably Gramcord and Nota Bene.

Seminar sessions on NT Rhetorical Interpretation, Luke-Acts, James, Computer Assisted Research and a few others provided helpful new insights into current interpretative trends in these areas of special interest. These kinds of seminars are critical for one to stay aware of contemporary trends in biblical studies.

All in all the meeting was absolutely delightful, and productive. Claire is sharing some impressions of the hotel where we stayed.

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### Claire's Musings:

Friday afternoon, Nov. 17, as soon as I got home from school Lorin and I headed for Nashville, Tennessee. We were going to the yearly SBL meetings and stay in the Opryland Hotel.

A friend had described what the hotel would be like, but it was beyond what I could comprehend. I was excited about just being able to take two days off from school and spend some time with Lorin.

When we walked into the hotel I let out a gasp, this was no ordinary hotel. It was a little like a jungle with trees and plants everywhere with a feeling of being outside, but the entire hotel is completely covered. Christmas lights were already being put up and it was spectacular.

The next morning I could not wait to go exploring while Lorin was attending his meetings. I do not have much of a sense of direction under normal circumstances, but this was not the normal everyday situation. Constantly I became lost, but never had becoming lost been so much fun. There was so much to explore that I continually made new discoveries.

I recently got a new cell phone so Lorin and I decided it would be a good way to keep in touch with each other. One problem, though, I did not know my own number and had left the number at home. I felt silly, but luckily Angie called me back from her phone. Now Lorin could call me if I were out wandering around.

Besides all the trees and plants there were several waterfalls. The waterfalls were as beautiful as they sounded. Sometimes I would just sit and crochet next to a waterfall and watch all the people strolling by. A small river ran through the hotel and I went on one of the boat tours. Shops were everywhere and each day more and more Christmas lights and decorations were being put up. The entire hotel was covered like a futuristic space dome, letting the daylight in. At night looking up at the dome the Christmas lights were reflected on the glass roof and almost resembled stars.

There was so much I wanted to see, but I was also tired. I spent some time just reading and sleeping. I explored every chance when I was not resting. What an absolutely perfect mini vacation. Lorin and I spent some lovely times visiting with friends and catching up on how they are doing now. I was so happy to meet Wiard Popkes from Germany. Lorin has told me some wonderful stories about the times they had together in Germany.

I thought about taking a tour of some of the sights in Nashville, but just couldn't get interested in much, especially the tour of seeing the stars' homes. I really don't care to see where they live, not to mention I don't know who most of them are anyway. As I was trying to decide what to do next a good friend came along. Elaine Williams and I wound up going the Opryland Mall (compare to Grapevine Mills with over 200 stores and within walking distance from the hotel). We had a delightful time just walking around and catching up on old news.

The last night I walked around until almost midnight trying to make the magic last as long as possible. I never felt afraid of being alone, because there were people everywhere. The only problem was that teenagers by the bus loads were descending on the hotel. They began roaming around in packs; acting obnoxious and being loud just like teenagers do (I remember being one a very long time ago). I just thought "don't look them in the eye and show no fear" (that's part of a quote from Kindergarten Cop).

**Continued in the next column:**



### Lorin's Musings:

The survey of NC Baptists will continue in next month's column. December is time for celebrating the immediate past. This year has brought many new experiences to Claire and me.

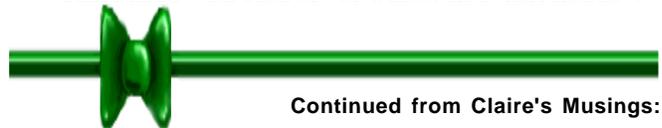
Teaching this year has produced numerous new opportunities. The online New Testament survey course was offered for the first time in the spring semester, and lots of new challenges. In spite of many unexpected challenges, the class proved very productive and resulted in a better coverage of the materials than possible in a traditional class room. The repeating of the course during a ten week summer term gave me opportunity to refine and adjust the course even more. With the course being offered this coming spring, I feel very confident about the possibilities for learning by the students.

The expansion of the web site consumed a lot of time, but has provided immense satisfaction. A surprising number of individuals come into some part of the web site each month to use some of the materials. Along with this has come greater skills with a variety of computer software to do web authoring and graphics design. Participation at an Adobe seminar in Charlotte this fall expanded my understanding of what can be done.

Claire has continued to teach reading and math at Cliffside Elementary School about seven miles west of Boiling Springs. Although she faces many challenges, many new friendships with fellow teachers have been established. This fall she discovered Creative Moments photo album creation which has become an enormously enjoyable to her. The friendships with the group of women who meet to work on photo albums is especially satisfying. This has become an outlet for a long held passion for preserving family experiences through pictures.

Of course, the highlight of the year has been visits by and with the kids and grandkids. The summer was most delightful with three families coming to Boiling Springs. We managed to fly to Texas in February to see the two new grandchildren. Other friends and relatives also passed through to visit.

Claire and I wish each of you a most enjoyable holiday!



**Continued from Claire's Musings:**

It was hard to leave the wonderland the next morning. That very night the official Christmas lights would be lit. Lorin and I had a special time and it turned out to be the best time I have ever had at one of Lorin's meetings. Somehow when I am with Lorin I have some of the best memories.

The Thanksgiving holidays brought the opportunity for extra time to decorate for the Christmas holidays. I am truly looking forward to Angie, Brian, Clay, and Taylor and Carrie and her almost new husband Daniel coming to spend Christmas with us. I have so much to look forward to and so much to be thankful for.

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and Claire and I couldn't be happier. We treasure our time together and separate, but also enjoy greatly being with other people, especially family. Mixed in are the pressures of end of semester activities, and some delightful activities at the university, in particular the Festival of Lights ceremony.