



News from the Blue Ridge



Volume 2

Claire & Lorin Cranford

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Family Events:

October brought a new lease car, a year 2000 Honda Accord LX, for me rather than the Honda Passport that we earlier thought we might get. And we couldn't be happier. The new model has several enhancements over the previous models: more comfortable front seats, a bit larger and heavier car but with comparable gas mileage to the older cars, a more powerful engine et als. This continues the Honda tradition in our family that extends back to the 1970s. Our family joke has often been that we could make a good commercial for Honda, since at one time not too long ago there were seven Hondas in the immediate family. These cars have provided safe, reliable transportation for our family for many, many years, as well as having retained their value quite well.

Oct. 22-24 brought a most wonderful time with my brother, Bill. He was in Charlotte during the week attending a national committee meeting of market representatives for electric utilities and other related industry reps that was hosted by Duke Power. Bill has chaired this committee over the years and played an important role in helping bring the various companies closer together in facing the new century and the immense changes taking place. On Friday he came to Boiling Springs and spent the week-end with us. We had a delightful time visiting and reliving our "growing up" years -- an opportunity we've had very few times in our adult life because of heavy job schedules and living far apart. Saturday we traveled on the Blue Ridge Parkway and through the Chimney Rock area enjoying the fall foliage. Although it wasn't as beautiful as last year, the beauty is still breath-taking and quite a sight to behold.

The **last weekend of October** brought another visit from Steve Harmon and his financé, Keresa. They both work at Campbell University in the northeastern part of the state. We had a most wonderful time together and immediately fell in love with Keresa. She and Claire share many things in common and found a warm friendship developing at once. Their wedding is Dec. 18 and we plan to be there to share in this very special time.



On Saturday we spent the entire day checking out the fall foliage at Chimney Rock and from there to the Blue Ridge Parkway up highway 9. The weather was georgous and the scenery breath-taking. Claire worked overtime with her camera getting one picture after another of the scenery. Also, we checked out several eating places along the way as well! We hated to see the kids leave Sunday morning as they headed home through Charlotte to visit Meyers Park Baptist Church where our common friend and former pastor, Steve Shoemaker, now serves.

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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>



University Happenings:

One very impressive event came at the end of September: the Senior Pinning Ceremony. A few years ago GWU established the tradition of having a special evening of activities for the graduating seniors. The focal point of the evening is a banquet with parents invited. The highlight of the program that follows is a pinning ceremony where each senior receives a very nice commemorative pin from the university signifying this important accomplishment in their educational journey. The seniors are to ask to choose whomever they want to do the actual pinning during the ceremony. It can be parents, friends, favorite professors etc. -- someone who has made an impact on their life. This year two graduating seniors asked me to assume this responsibility, which I felt very honored to do. A senior dance follows with the seniors in the spotlight of attention.

This is one of the ways GWU emphasizes values of respect and appreciation for individuals who have made a contribution in someone's life. It also helps create that sense of community as a graduating class that will go their own individual ways after completing their education at the university. I found it to be a very special experience that makes a real difference in the student's life.

Claire and I have been able to attend most of the home football games this season. Quite a large number of the players have been or are now enrolled in either the OT or the NT survey classes with me. One of the defensive linemen is a really good Greek student. Brian is faithful to the class, comes prepared, asks good questions, and works hard to master this very complex ancient language, as he prepares for Christian ministry. On top of that, he's a really good football player. The team is having a fairly good season so far. This is another of those very satisfying aspects about teaching in a university. We have qualified for membership in the GWU Bulldog Club and enjoy visiting with others at the games, as well as exciting athletics.

The classes this semester have gone quite satisfyingly. The three levels of Greek, advanced theological German, two sections of OT survey, and the MDiv online course on 1/2 Thesalonians have kept me busy, to say the least, but provided a wide range of learning experiences for me as well as the students. The students overall this semester have been the best group that I've worked with so far in two years. I'm learning better how to pace the undergraduate students in order to "stretch" them but not pop the rubber band. Their enthusiasm for learning is infectious and helps inspire me to help them. Teaching, while a lot of work, is for me a source of deep delight and fulfillment.

Claire and I are looking forward to seeing many of you in a couple of weeks in Boston at the national SBL meeting.

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Claire's Musings: Oct., 1999

Things have been very interesting lately. I finished up my six-week sub for the fourth grade. I absolutely loved that group of fourth graders and the school, including the teachers and the principal and assistant principal. It was very hard to leave. That would be my ideal school to teach at.

Right now I am waiting to hear about a possible Reading Teacher position at another school only six miles from home. I liked the asst. principal, but am not too sure about the principal. I think he just takes getting used to. Another possibility is a two-month sub job for fourth grade (again!) at another school. That will begin right after the Christmas holidays.

The last week of October I subbed the entire week for Crest Middle School, plus most of the week before. What a crazy way to make a living. I also had an offer of an interim there. Believe it or not, I enjoyed the middle school tremendously. Teaching eighth is best and sixth is the worst. I am certified through sixth grade and the assistant principal is very interested in me, if there is an opening there next year for the sixth grade. I subbed two days for eighth and then the day before Halloween subbed for sixth. If I could survive the day before Halloween with it being the last day of the six weeks, plus ghost movies, plus kids hyped up on candy and cokes, I believe I can almost do anything. After the horrendous year last year, I feel like a teacher again.

I have said for years that being a substitute must be about the worst job in the world. I have learned differently. I love it for many reasons. The principals love me because I am dependable and ready to go and teach anything. The hours are much shorter at the school and I don't have to take home lots of work. I love the variety; I never know what to expect from one day to the next. I love the kids for the same reason, what a variety. They come in all sizes and attitudes. Some of my favorites have the most freckles you have ever seen. I will miss it.

Many mornings or evenings as I am driving near our house I have seen a cute little furry animal that I thought might be a beaver. He is always just sitting near the road. I thought if I continued to see him I would have to name him and I decided on Harvey. I thought of Harvey because of the Jimmy Stewart movie where Stewart sees and talks to a giant rabbit that no one else sees. I have been telling Lorin about Harvey, but he has never seen it. It is becoming a joke around here about whether I am seeing things or not. Story continued in next issue . . . am I seeing things or not?

One of the interesting things about living in Boiling Springs, is the feeling of serenity. It is so quiet and safe. Up the street from us is an old topless car full of pumpkins for sale. They are so trusting that people will not just take a pumpkin, and that the people will leave the money on an honor system. We have not quite lived here two years, but the longer we are here; the more we love it. I wish my family and friends could all come out here to here.

This afternoon (Monday, Nov. 1) I just found out that I am now the new Reading Teacher at Cliffside Elementary. It's nice to be employed full time again, but I sure will miss middle school. Now I have to adjust all over again. Next newsletter I will know more and tell more.



Lorin's Musings:

October has been a busy month preaching. The first week of the month involved a Sunday through Wednesday revival effort at the Fairforest Baptist Church in Spartanburg, SC. Dr. James Hilton, the pastor and a former seminary student of mine from the middle 70s, has effectively led this church for almost two decades. The people, some 300 plus, were very attentive and involved in the worship services in large numbers. One could sense the quiet but powerful presence of the Holy Spirit in each service touching the lives of people present. I don't know when I've been in a congregation with as much musical talent as this church has. The music each evening was wonderful. Claire and I look forward to renewed friendship with Jimmy and Pam, since we live only about 30 minutes apart.

The next Sunday provided the opportunity to fill the pulpit for Keith Dixon at Flint Hill Baptist Church in Boiling Springs. Keith and Mary Ruth have gone through the loss of a father and surgery with the other father within a two week period. The deacons insisted that Keith take a couple of Sundays off while attending to these family concerns. The service went quite well and there was the opportunity to speak to a number of GWU students who are members or else were visiting the service.

The following Sunday brought a return to Covenant Baptist Church in Gastonia where Ron Williams is the interim pastor. Ron was preaching a revival back home in KY during the short fall break at GWU. This is the third or fourth time to preach at this fine congregation over the past several months. They are a wonderful group of people who have given substantial support to Gardner-Webb over the years with several members having served as trustee board members.

Amazingly the Lord opens up the opportunities to help people and churches through the spoken word at the appropriate time. Quite clearly teaching is my calling, but preaching is also very fulfilling. The chance to satisfy this urge by being in such delightful congregations is indeed a wonderful experience for me.

In the midst of all of the work responsibilities I have taken some time to work on a few items for pure pleasure. At the homepage, Cranfordville, is a link to a growing number of *short stories* and brief reflective essays that I have composed over the years and now am coming back to refine and then post on the web page. One of them was accepted sometime back for posting at the Short Story Page in a web site in New England. The three or four others now posted on my page are an addition to this and are placed there for everyone's enjoyment. They're not religious in nature; rather they reflect on experiences -- part fact and part fiction -- growing up in West Texas. You can access it by clicking on Short Stories at Cranfordville (<http://www.shelby.net/cranford>). I have about a dozen of these stories at various stages of completion and will gradually post them as they are finished. Many of you will be reminded of life in small town Texas in the 1950s and 1960s, both the good and the bad. For others, these can provide a peep hole into that world which may seem rather strange at times to outsiders.

Let me know how you enjoy them.