



Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Louisiana

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**In This Issue:**

1. Forum Speaker Announced
2. Thin Spaces with Dragonflies  
- Reid Doster
3. Congratulations Kenny Crump
4. Flipping Out in Lake Providence
5. Fall State Missions Emphasis?

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## Sarah Shelton To Speak at Stagg-Tolbert Forum for Biblical Studies Oct 5 - University Baptist, Baton Rouge

CBF-LA is pleased to announce Sarah Shelton will be the 2013 speaker at the Stagg-Tolbert Forum for Biblical Studies to be held October 5 at University Baptist Church in Baton Rouge. Shelton is the Pastor of Baptist Church of the Covenant in Birmingham. Among her parishioners there, is friend of CBF-LA, and former Forum Speaker, Fisher Humphries.

Shelton, who has pastored her Birmingham congregation for 11 years was featured in the January issue of *Baptists Today* earlier this year which noted her pioneering efforts as an outstanding female Pastor/Scholar in Baptist life.

A graduate of Southern Baptist Seminary where she won the coveted



Sarah Shelton

Clyde T. Francisco Preaching award, she has continued to be recognized for both her pastoral skills and gifted writing ability. Her published work includes: *Sessions with I and II Peter: Discovering God's Encouragement for the Christian Journey*, Smyth and Helwys Publishers, 2006 and *The Teaching Church* which is set for distribution in the fall of 2013.

Her topic for the Forum will be Finding Your Story in the Biblical Story. This marks a special 10th anniversary of the Forum, an event designed to make excellence in biblical scholarship accessible to the lay person. The Forum is named in honor of two renowned Louisiana Baptist biblical scholars, the late Dr. Frank Stagg and Dr. Malcolm Tolbert. Learn more about this event and **register now at [cbfla.org](http://cbfla.org)**.



## Flipping Out!!!

Joshua Charles from Church for the Highlands celebrates the conclusion of Bags of Hope in Lake Providence August 3, with a back flip off the pier into the lake. One thousand back packs were stuffed with school supplies for local students and an additional 200 packs for Tensas parish. Groups from Broadmoor Baptist Baton Rouge, Haynes Ave Baptist in Shreveport and Church for the Highlands traveled to Lake Providence to join with local teachers, churches and businesses in making the event a great success.

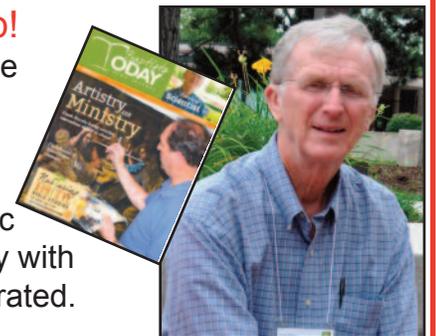
Churches across the state (and a church from Colorado made a major donation) provided financial, material and prayer support. Praise be to God! More info and pictures of the event are at [cbfla.org](http://cbfla.org).

### Is your church planning a fall mission emphasis?

Contact Kyle Kelley at [cbflouisiana@gmail.com](mailto:cbflouisiana@gmail.com) or 318-780-4127 to receive mission envelopes and prayer guide for CBF-LA Together for Hope work.

### Congrats to Kenny Crump!

Our CBF-LA treasurer is on the cover of the August issue of *Baptist Today* with a beautiful story of his servant's heart, his outstanding scientific work and his touching ministry with internationals and the incarcerated.



**more on back**

# Winds of the Spirit

Reid Doster, CBF-LA Coordinator

cancer hit her way too hard and fast. In what seemed like an instant, Barbara was gone.

Over the years, she and I had maintained a fragmentary conversation about being "visited" by people who died. We recalled our father describing an incident after Phil, his younger brother, had been shot down over Germany while piloting a B17. Dad was awakened in the middle of the night to see his younger brother standing at the foot of his bed in the Officer's Quarters. Unaware of the downed aircraft, Dad communicated with his brother, intuitively sensing Phil's earthly life had ended. Later, this was officially confirmed.

Barbara herself described two occasions after Mom died, when she was "visited" by Mom in Barbara's sewing room (Mom loved to sew) and they engaged in heartfelt conversation. Our sister, Suzanne, related to me a similar experience. However, nothing like that ever happened to me, probably due to my skepticism. When I last saw Barbara alive, she again promised to "visit" me, saying "I'm gonna really bug you." She then held me in such a way that I can still feel the squeeze.

Two days after she died, being all churned up inside and needing something to do, I ventured into the summer heat to cut grass. As soon as I cranked the mower, a bright red insect started buzzing around my head. Thinking it was a wasp or hornet, I stood very still, before realizing it was a dragonfly. I had never even seen a red dragonfly, much less had one land on my shoulder, where it attached itself quite firmly.

For forty-five minutes, the creature clung to me as I trudged behind the mower and, over the noise, seemingly whispered things into my right ear. Then, in the blink of an eye, it vanished, leaving me with a strong feeling that something or someone had communicated with me through this weird and wonderful encounter. The bug seemed to be telling a story, and I suddenly found myself in it.

## "Now, I'm Free!"

Beginning life as a brown nymph confined to murky waters, this dragonfly one day emerged toward the light, broke out of its shell, and was transformed into a neon skimmer. Dragonflies are the fastest and most maneuverable insects on earth. Hovering, darting and looping with ease, poise and elegance, they skim above the surface of this world and soar into the beyond. No more containment. Everything is possible. Dreams can be fulfilled, and the birthright claimed. I was prompted to recall Paul's marvelous question: "Death, where is your victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55)"

## "I Can See Clearly."

Unlike mere humans, with only two pupils for gathering

My sweet sister died recently, after an insulting ordeal with

light, dragonflies have complex eyes comprised of 30,000 light sensing organs called facets. They can see in 360 degrees, all at one time, with amazing situational awareness! Mesmerized by this big-eyed bug with a bright red body, I remembered reading: "If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light (Matthew 6:22)." In a way, death heals our eyes and we see everything differently!

## "And the Living is Easy."

Common houseflies, for example, beat their wings 345 times per second, while dragonflies need only 30 strokes per second to remain aloft, and can do it all day without resting, even consuming their meals while in flight. I thought of Jesus' invitation to come to Him, learn of Him, experience rest in Him, with assurance that His burden is easy and His yoke is light (See Matthew 11:28-30)

## "The Real Me Has Not Changed."

Dragonfly fossils have been found from 320,000,000 years ago, the Carboniferous Period, pre-dating dinosaurs and flowering plants. They've remained essentially the same, retaining their uniqueness throughout the ages, while nearly everything else around them has evolved. To me, the simple thought of something so unchanging hints at a life to come, when "this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53)."



## "I Love My New World."

Joni Eareckson Tada asked, "How can I miss a place I've never been? But I do. I miss heaven." When Barbara told me "I'm ready to go," I think she was missing heaven. St. Augustine wrote: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rests in You." Her last question to me was: "Do you really think there's a heaven?" Our eyes locked onto one another and I said: "Yes, I am sure." This moment seemed to reverberate with Romans 8:16: "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."

The Celtic people used the phrase "thin place" to describe moments of heightened spiritual awareness when seemingly only a thin veil separates this world from the one to come. My backyard has become a "thin place," where winds of the spirit sometimes call forth red "dragons" that neither bite nor sting but deliver messages filled with mystery and reassurance. I just need to find myself in that story.

Sarah Jackson Shelton has proposed a searching title for this Fall's Stag-Tolbert lectures: "Finding Yourself in the Biblical Story." You are cordially invited to join us in this "thin place," Saturday, October 5th, University Baptist Church, Baton Rouge. In the meantime, consider this --- even things that bug you might be delivering a message!



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