

## I now know who Mom talked about

He was my mother's first boyfriend, her first love, I'm told.

He was not my father; in fact, I never met him, but when mother died in June, I found the old newspaper clippings among her things. Apparently, they'd grown up together in the tiny town of Dardanelle, Ark., on the river west of Little Rock.

"Dardanelle Marine Killed in Pacific Area," the yellowed headline read. "Pfc. Charles McClure is Killed in Action." "Final Rites Tuesday For Dardanelle Hero."

Charles McClure. I'd heard that name all my life. Every time my mother would relate some story of her youth and growing up in that small Arkansas town, she would mention his name along with other friends.

He was a second brother to her in these stories. Charles, her brother Jeff Jr. and she would go fishing, climb trees, play hooky and generally take on the world together.

He had died in the war.

When we went through Mother's photo albums and invited Uncle Jeff and our cousins to take the photos they wanted, Jeff asked for the page that had the notices mother had saved about Charles. I said fine, but send me copies.

When the copies came, Jeff, who had served in the Navy during the war, wrote this:

"Cindy, here is the story of Charles McClure's death on Saipan. We later learned that Charles was killed during a mopping up operation during the invasion. He was shot by a Jap in a spider trap. A spider trap was a hole dug that a soldier could stand up in and had a camouflaged top to make it blend in with the environment. As Charles approached his position, he shot him just under his chin and the bullet came out the top of his head."

Love, Uncle Jeff.

P.S. "I forgot to tell you, Emma dated Charles a lot when they were in high school. He lived just two blocks down the street from us. I spent many a day in their home."

The copies I received were not complete - maybe the originals weren't. It doesn't make any difference. Here are some excerpts.

"Mr. and Mrs. W.H. McClure were notified Tuesday afternoon by the War Department that their youngest son, Pfc. Charles McClure, age 19, of the U.S. Marine Corps, had been killed in action in the Pacific area."

Another clipping contained a tribute to Charles.

"Remember the little tow-headed McClure boy you have seen around home so much - the one you watched grow up into such a pretty big guy at eighteen? Well, he gave his life for you people not long ago; gave his life trying to make this world a better place for you to live.

"I don't know if he really realized what he died for - he probably didn't - but that was it. He just knew he had another job to do - something that was required of him. That's about what they all think when they go into battle; just 'let's get this thing over with so we can go home - back to Arkansas Tech and home.'

"I don't know what he thought about when the Chaplain had him kneel down for that last prayer. The kid wasn't very religious, kind of took God for granted, like he did life. So I imagine instead of asking God to spare his life, he thought of the folks at home - wondered how his mother was, and if dad's crop was going to come out all right this year. He was really hoping the folks weren't worrying too much about him.

"He was always willing to do and to give more than his share, in his work, school, play or anything.

"There isn't a question in my mind but that he would have made one of the best citizens Dardanelle ever produced."

Charles was the first soldier from that tiny community to die in the war. He wouldn't be the last.

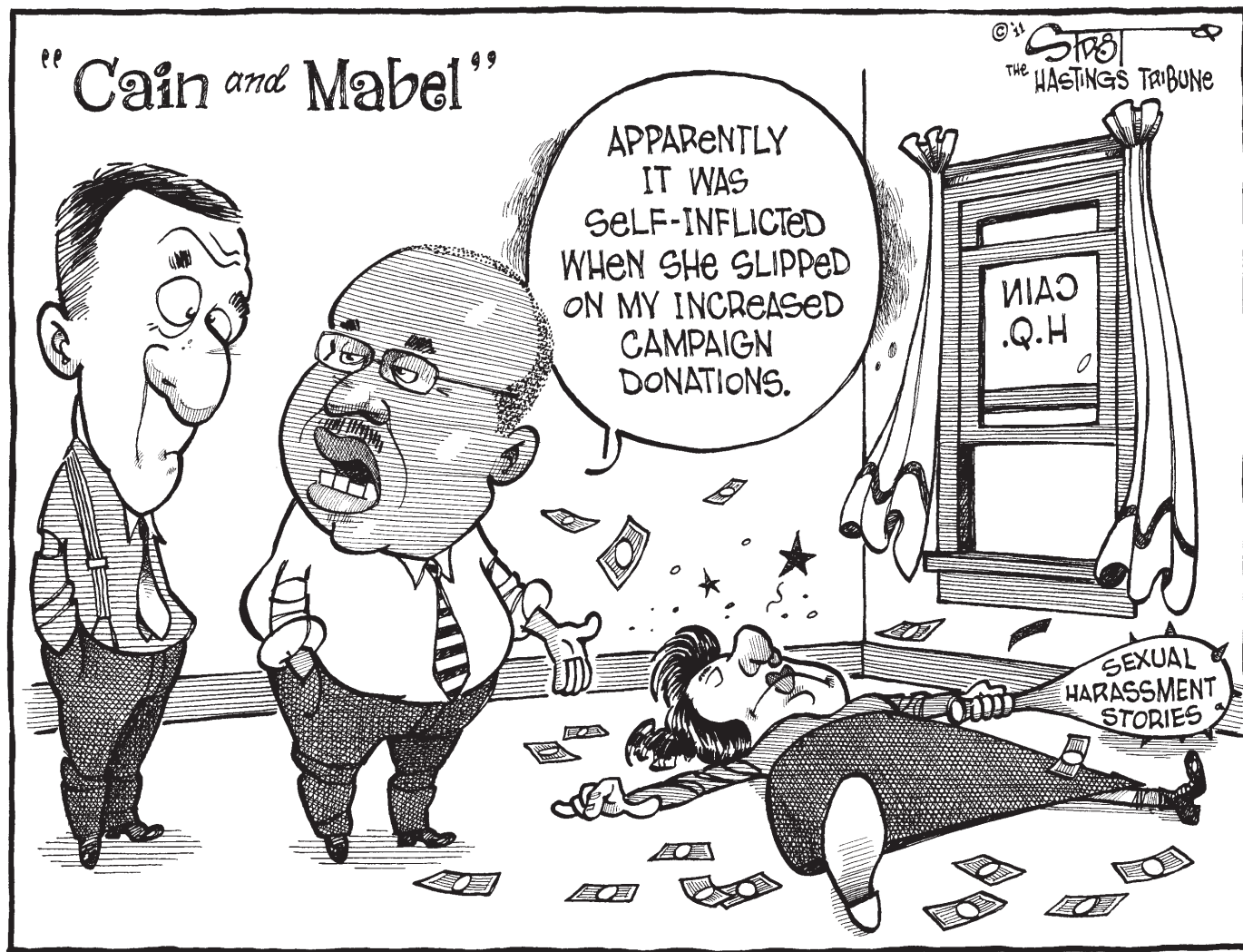
They brought him home and laid him to rest just after Christmas 1944 in the cemetery where my grandparents and mother's two sisters and their husbands are buried.

Apparently, Mom moved on. During college, she met a young soldier and married him right after the war. They went to live near his home in Kansas.

When Mom went home, though, we always visited the family plot and the McClure plot.

I never quiet understood why before now.

Open Season  
Cynthia Haynes



## Old man winter is knocking at our door

Perhaps it wasn't 'Ole Man Winter we met this week, but it certainly was his baby brother, Blustery Blizzard, who gave us cause to know that fall is over. Boy! Is it over.

Big, fat, fluffy snowflakes blew and swirled all one day. The only saving grace was the temperature wasn't low enough to let it accumulate. Everything melted almost immediately upon hitting the ground. So even though we had plenty of snow we didn't have anything left to show for it.

Bottom line is this: if you need to cut wood for winter, you better get it done; if you have outdoor yard work to finish, you have about two days to do it; and if you've been waiting for a really cold day to make that first batch of chili, the wait is about over. Another winter season is upon us. Love it or hate it, it's here.

### Out Back

Carolyn Plotts



-ob-

What is some of this stuff on television masquerading as entertainment? There's "Storage Wars", "Border Wars", "Swamp People", "Sister Wives", "American Hoggers", "Toddlers and Tiaras", and "Long Island Medium". Have I missed anything?

Now, I admit I've actually watched some of these shows. There is some sort of weird fascination in peeking into the lives of these people. But I can't understand how they keep coming

back, season after season. Unless, of course, it's "Hoarders: Buried Alive". Now, there's a show that has some relevance.

-ob-

My back is my Achilles heel. I can't pinpoint a single incident, but last week it went out and I have been hobbling around for days. I've had two chiropractic appointments and am walking much better now. It still pains me some, but I'm optimistic that it will be fine. My "ice bag" of frozen peas has become my closet companion.

-ob-

Heard this on the radio the other day. "Love does not make your marriage secure. Your marriage makes love secure." That should be a cross-stitch sampler hanging in every home.

## Farmers go through trial and error, "que sera sera"

### Insight

John Schlageck

this summer, the variety we planted was a short season and this probably contributed to our lack of success."

The Lloyds appreciate the crops they've been fortunate to harvest. Even with less moisture and continuous days of 100-degree heat this summer.

One production practice the Lloyds use is blending two varieties of milo. They plant a high yielding variety with a drought resistant variety.

"We never know what kind of year it will be and this helps spread our risk of a crop failure," Josh says. "During the last decade we've seen plenty of advantages with a blend of milo seeds."

The Lloyds are blending their wheat seed also. Here they combine three varieties and this has worked to their advantage.

While many producers in this region were planting more wheat acres, the Clay County grower planted fewer acres. He thought if he planted more acres of wheat he'd have to raise a more productive crop than his average yields to come out better than the production

Regardless of the location across Kansas, this fall has served up ideal harvest conditions. Many producers report they are ahead of schedule with the 2011 harvest. Seldom are the temperatures this mild, the humidity this low and the weather this dry during this time of year.

In Clay County, Josh Lloyd finished cutting his corn, most of his soybeans and he's putting the finishing touches on approximately 700 acres of milo. His milo crop has averaged 100 bushels per acre as did the dry-land corn.

Lloyd and his father are happy with this year's yields considering the hot and dry growing season this summer.

"We're still learning about corn in our cropping rotation," Josh says. "The feeling in this region of the state is that you can't grow corn and there've been years when 40-bushels-per-acre corn was a good crop."

Soybean yields weren't so good although they did match the Lloyds' average of 35-bushels-per-acre. Double crop soybeans did not fare as well. This seems to be the case with double-cropped beans in most of this region of the state, he says.

"We've saved the double-crop beans 'till last," the Clay County farmer says. "In addition to the hot, dry weather

levels for corn, milo and soybeans on their farm.

"It may work out for all those producers who've planted more wheat," Josh says. "I hope it does because right now the crop is looking good. Maybe I should have planted our entire farm to wheat."

The Lloyds would rather not put all of their eggs in one basket. They'd rather play the averages based on their many years of cropping history.

"I'm not sure wheat is any safer of a bet, even in a dry year," Josh says. "This year reinforced this thinking when we were able to make our average yields with our row crops."

Until next year and especially next summer, the young Clay County producer is looking forward to the approaching cooler weather. He knows rain comes slower this time of year and finds its way into the soil unlike the hard rains of summer that partially run off the land and cannot be utilized as efficiently.

"I can't say what's going to happen next year, next week or even the following day," Josh says. "All we can do is do our best - watch and learn from past experiences. The future will be what it will be."

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### A letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Because I believe in The Salvation Army's mission and community commitment, I voluntarily serve in The Salvation Army service unit in Norton County. Even though Norton does not have uniformed personnel or a SA community center, we do have local volunteers who are very giving and committed to our service unit. Without their support, this local service would not be available.

With the season of joy and happiness in full swing, our number one wish is for everyone who can, to share a gift of hope to those less fortunate in Norton County. The sight of Salvation Army kettles remind us to be thankful for what we have and to think of others who may not have as much. As a reminder, 88% of the money donated locally will stay in Norton County for vital community assistance.

We would like to send out a big thank you for your past donation and continued support. With your help, we are able to make a difference in our community.

Sincerely,

Penny Otter, Norton County Health Department, Pam Menagh, Treasurer and Sharon Leiker, Volunteer