We miss you, Chris

Pfc. Christopher Dale Mabry was one one 12 U.S. Marines killed in action in Ramadi, Iraq, on April 7, 2004 — the first serviceman from Lauderdale County to fall in the U.S. War on Terror.

Chris graduated from Clarkdale Attendance Center in May 2003, and left home for basic training two months later. He was deployed to Iraq on Feb. 17, 2004.

He was a scholar and an athlete, playing football and basketball, and running track, for Clarkdale. He loved sports, his family, his friends, traveling, fishing, hunting, shooting pool. He loved his jobs at Queen City Nursing Home and working for veterinarian Dr. Otis Seals.

Mabry

Chris made his commitment of faith to God in 2002, and enjoyed attending several churches with family members.

Hundreds of people attended Chris' funeral on April 15 and a permanent marker honoring his memory was placed at the Lauderdale County Courthouse in Meridian.

Here is how two of his classmates at Clarkdale Attendance Center remembered him in their submissions to "Profile 2005: A Letter from Home."

Lost chances

Ashley Lynn Frady is a freshman at Clarkdale Attendance Center. A self-professed redneck, Ashley enjoys friends, horses and hunting.

By Ashley Lynn Frady
special to The Star

Have you ever intended to get to know a person, but ran out of time and lost the chance?

About a year ago, I lost a chance I never knew I had. A young man named Chris Mabry died in the war in Iraq.

I saw Chris every so often on the bus, although we never really talked. He was a quiet and very relaxed person. He sat and listened to his CD player, but never really said anything to anybody.

One of the more exciting things about Chris is that every time he rode the bus, someone would ask him to flex his muscles. He always did it with a smile on his face. Chris seemed like a very happy person.

If I had a chance, I definitely would have sat with him. If I could go back in time, I would have gotten to know him beyond the wonderful person I saw. However, I will not get this chance ... He still has a positive effect on me, and I am eternally grateful for that.

Thank you, Chris.

Remembering you is something I will always do

Hellen Hill is a student at Clarkdale Attendance Center. She loves drawing and writing, and knew Chris Mabry for a long time. This is her poetic tribute to him.

You are such a sweet person inside and out.
I'll always remember you without a doubt.
You were a person full of great things.
Now the Heavenly Father has given
you a pair of wings.

Just look at the heavenly place you are in.
It is where your new life will begin.
No worry, the Heavenly Father will
keep you safe day and night.
Because he knows the choice you made was right.

You always had a smile on your
handsome little face.
A smile that will never be replaced.
Never once were you self-centered.
Now Heaven's gate is the place
that you have entered.

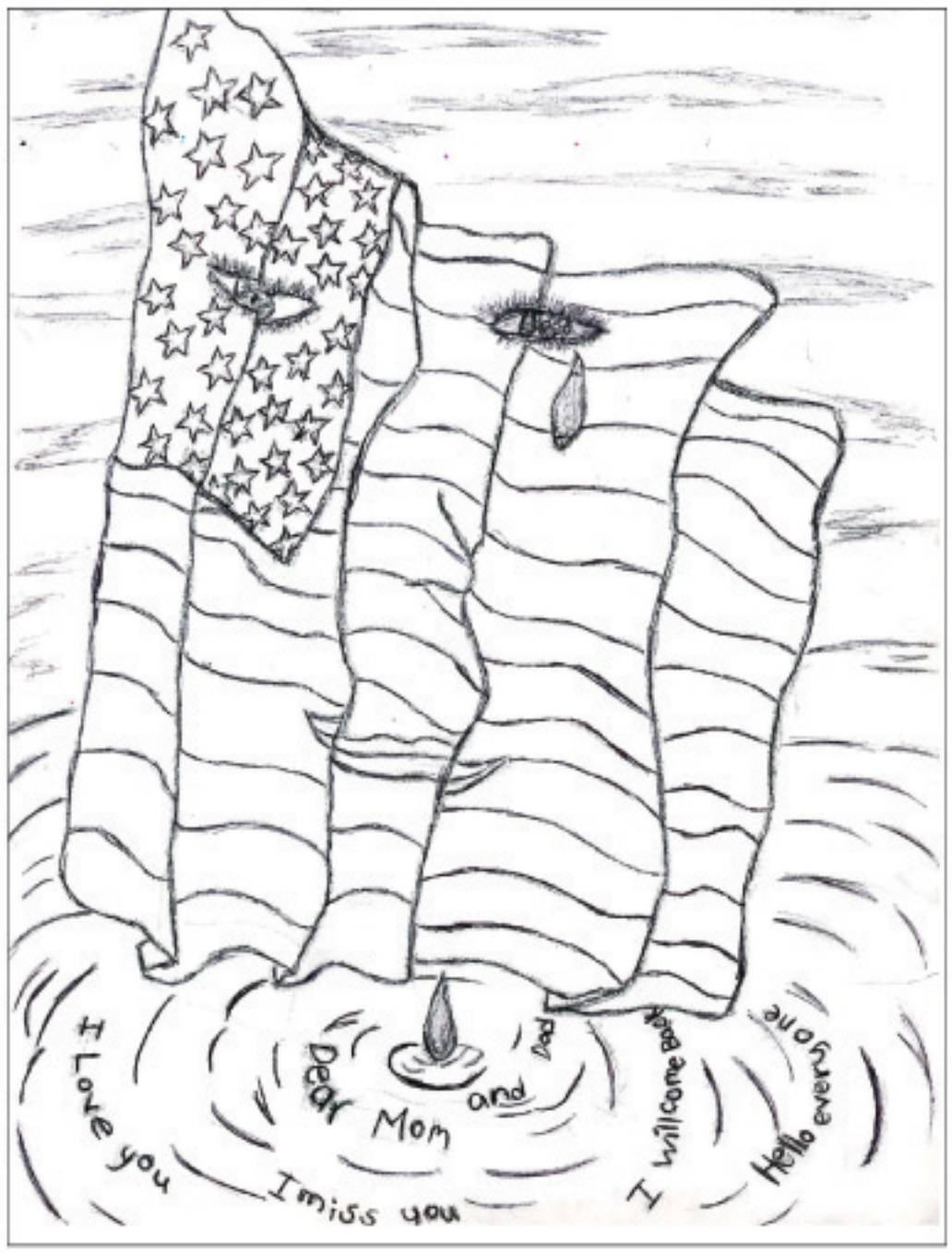
I bet being up there is nice.
Thing is, people think heaven has no price.
The price is washing away all your sins,
And that goes for you and your friends.

Chris Mabry was one of many who
tried to save mankind.
Men like that are very hard to find.
That is why I believe that Chris Mabry and every
other soldier should have a wall of fame
Because the cause of war is not their blame.

They are dying while they are trying
to save our God's creation.
In my eyes, I see everyone helping
to save our nation.
The bad thing is that no one sees it that way,
But, if you think about it ...

God said that we all stand together as one
Let me say something else before I am done.
Chris, I just want you to know there will always
be a spot in my heart just for you
Because remembering you is something
I will always do.

— Hellen Hill



Massey

TEARS OF HOME

Claire Massey is a sophomore at West Lauderdale High School and the daughter of Donnie and Charlotte Massey. She has a younger sister, Ashley. After she graduates from West Lauderdale in 2007, she hopes to attend a design or art school. Here's what Claire said about her drawing: "I was inspired to do this picture by the troops who work so hard in Iraq. It describes the letters that return home to the supporting families. When they read the letter, they cry out the happiness and sadness in their hearts into a river full of hope and dreams that they will come home safely."

ILLUSTRATION BY CLAIRE MASSEY

SPEAK UP

Brandi Scarbrough, a sophomore at Southeast Lauderdale High School, thought people who are required to wear uniforms might get a kick out of reading how Meridian residents answered this question: "There has been word that students at Lauderdale County schools might have to start wearing uniforms. What is your opinion on this matter?"

"I do not think I should have to wear a uniform because I go to a public school not a private school. Uniforms take away from my individuality. As long as I am following the dress code, what is the problem?"

Valerie Harper, 15
student

"I think they aren't such a good idea because people have the right to express themselves through the clothes they wear — but some people might agree with it so they won't have to worry about buying so many clothes."

Kellie Rushing, 15
student

"I think uniforms are hideous, and I think I should be able to express myself through the clothes I wear."

Brooke Scarbrough, 15
student

"I don't see where it accomplish anything myself."

Billy Scarbrough, 49
Kansas City Southern
Railroad employee

"Well, in my opinion, I think it can be a good thing but also have a negative side to it. I think the good thing about wearing uniforms is that everybody will be equal in what they wear, but the bad thing is that everyone won't be able to show their individuality."

Ashley McLelland, 16
student

"I think uniforms are an awful idea. I go to a public school, so I shouldn't have to worry about what I wear. School is about learning — not about judging outfits."

Trisha Rainer, 15
student

"I don't like it."

Stacie Scarbrough, 42
teacher

"Although there are some good and bad aspects of wearing uniforms, I wouldn't want to. I like to express my individuality by the type of clothes I wear."

Drew Edwards, 16
student

Brandi Scarbrough compiled this Speak Up question. She enjoys being part of the youth group at Coker's Chapel United Methodist Church, going to gymnastics and playing soccer. She wants to become a marine biologist.

Scarbrough