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## THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

### McEntee: Arguments about Snake Valley water turn to dust under local scrutiny

**Author(s):** Peg McEntee The Salt Lake Tribune **Date:** August 22, 2009 **Page:** Section: Breaking

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Callao » If you make the four-hour drive to the Snake Valley to meet cowman Cecil Garland, he'll invite you to lunch on the screened porch of his century-old house on Cattle Drive. On Friday, it's meatloaf made from his own beef, corn on the cob, tomatoes and summer squash from his garden, straight-from-the-cow sweet milk and unsweetened butter churned right here.

It's just about the most delicious meal I can remember. But lunch is just prelude: We're here to talk about water.

Garland, a tall, handsome man of 83, has spent the past four years fighting Nevada's plan to pump water from the Snake Valley aquifer to thirsty Las Vegas, and he's unrelenting.

At stake is Utah's share of the water beneath the 100-mile-long valley, which straddles the state line with Nevada. But there's more -- an environmental catastrophe that could transform an arid place into a dust bowl that would send huge amounts of airborne particles all the way to the already polluted Wasatch Front.

Garland was in Las Vegas on Thursday for a monthly meeting of the Southern Nevada Water Authority, which ended with a vote to pursue its plan for a 285-mile pipeline, which could cost billions of dollars, and which Garland thinks is utter folly.

"There's a big rush to get this agreement done," Garland said. "I think they can see the fire coming over the hill on this thing. Even in Las Vegas, the sentiment against this is growing rather rapidly."

Problem is, the water that Nevada wants just isn't there, Garland said. "We're one of the driest valleys in the driest area of the United

States. The springs are drying up or have dried up, the artesian wells have dried up or already have dried up, the water table is falling and the vegetation is already under stress and suffering.

"Now, somewhere those folks down there have got to pick up the thread of reason."

And, to prove his point, Garland took a Tribune photographer and me on a field trip.

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Dead wood » The three of us crowded in his Dodge pickup, Garland takes us out to a field he'd recently swapped with another rancher to show us a swimming hole that had dried up, collapsed in on itself and now is just a reed-filled depression. We bumped through another field to check out the greasewood, a native species that serves as a monitor for the land's condition. Here, there's dead wood among the living plants.

Garland tells us he grew up in the Great Smoky Mountains, and served as an aircraft mechanic in the Army Air Force in England during World War II. As a kid, he had dreamed of living in the West, and after the war, he landed in Las Vegas ("I was a shill at a gambling house for \$6 a day") and then Montana. In 1973, he came to Callao, population 40.

Once, Garland tells us, Lake Bonneville covered this valley, and the soil -- made up of "decayed vegetable matter and bird poop" -- is true peat that can burn for months if accidentally ignited.

To the west is the Deep Creek Range, with peaks of up to 12,000 feet; and its melting snow pack -- Garland calls it new water -- feeds the aquifer under Callao. But there also is old water, a relic of the Ice Age, Garland says, and the pressure between the two is what produces springs.

"It's a beautiful system," he says. "The only thing about it is you start tearing one piece of it apart, and it's like raveling out a sweater, it just keeps coming apart, and that's what we're talking about."

Bottom line, Garland said, the notion that Nevada can take this water, pump it to Las Vegas, and leave enough for the Snake Valley ranchers is nonsense.

Finally, he takes us to see his cattle grazing on a green field that produced the huge stack of hay bales near the fence. The cows are sturdy Red Angus, with auburn hides and faces that seem to have a quizzical look.

When I ask how many head he has, Garland gently tells me it's

impolite to ask. "To a cowman, it's like asking how much money he's got," he said, but he forgives me.

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Water grab not justified » So we stand in the late afternoon light and take in Deep Creek's granite flanks and peaks. The air is clean and dry, and there are bird songs in the wind.

"I'm only thankful the Lord let me live long enough to see this," Garland says. "Ain't that a deal?"

I think back to what he was telling me before, that the science isn't there to justify Nevada's water grab that could spell the end of the Snake Valley ranches. "They simply look at the small number of people here and say they just don't count."

Well, I've been to Las Vegas, seen the ugly sprawl now foundering in the recession, and now I've seen the Snake Valley.

Fold your cards, Nevada. The valley wins.

Peg **McEntee** is a columnist. Reach her at [pegmcentee@sltrib.com](mailto:pegmcentee@sltrib.com).

!-- Alt Heads:

Sorry, Vegas, fetch your water elsewhere

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## THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

### McEntee: End-of-life conversations with Dad

**Author(s):** Peg McEntee Tribune Columnist **Date:** September 16, 2009 **Page:** Section: News

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Columnists

Here's how I remember my dad: in a fishing boat, rods out for trolling, at a reservoir high in the Sierra Nevada. And driving through tule fog in the San Joaquin Valley at 4 in the morning during duck hunting season, the cracked window siphoning off his cigarette smoke. Those days are long past, so here are more recent memories: he has a bad back and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. He's in a hospital bed, on oxygen, a feeding tube in his belly, his face betraying confusion and anger. He's 84 years old.

He was a combat veteran of World War II, serving on a little tub of a ship that dropped soldiers onto the beach at Normandy. In his final years, he relied on Veterans Administration hospitals for most of his care.

I have his 2007 VA advance directive in front of me; he rejected life-sustaining treatment if unconscious or in a coma; if he had unrelievable pain; and if he were so sick he'd die even with treatment.

All that brings to mind the venomous national argument about "death panels," purportedly composed of health officials who would blithely decide who is to die and who is to live. A child with Down Syndrome? Sorry. An intensive care nurse with breast cancer needs a bone marrow transplant? Too expensive.

It's all fiction, despite Sarah Palin and Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff, who's running for the U.S. Senate. He took a shot at Republican incumbent Bob Bennett for applauding President Obama when he said last week that the death panel characterization is "a lie, plain and simple."

Under the proposal Obama discussed, Medicaid would pay for a consultation with health care providers about end-of-life options

such as hospice care.

Every family should seek such information. But many of us make our choices as injury or illness befalls us.

An alert man can make his wishes known at one point, then vacillate from hour to hour. And if he's in and out of various hospitals and nursing homes, he must declare his preference at each unless he has a portable document such as Utah offers.

Last winter, my dad had a stroke. As his impairment worsened, he ended up at a community hospital in California, tethered to the tube and oxygen and feeling miserable.

There was a singular event: mindful of his VA advance directive, my siblings and I asked his doctors if they'd ask Dad what his wishes were at that moment.

The attending physician explained to him that if he were about to die, the staff would intubate him and begin CPR. Dad said he wanted that.

Later, his pulmonary specialist made it plain: if he were intubated, he could never be free of it because of prior damage to his esophagus. Chest compressions would break his ribs and he would be in terrible pain for the rest of a very short life.

You can die peacefully and without pain, the doctor said, or you can choose CPR.

My dad chose door two. We siblings exchanged silent looks.

My niece, a physician, talked to our dad later and came away with the sense he was OK with not being resuscitated.

This was no death panel. These were physicians and family members who knew the old man would make his choice -- and change his mind -- as he wished.

Just before dawn on Aug. 23, my dad died in a retirement home. He was unconscious when the attendants started CPR and the EMTs arrived.

I don't know if he'd signed a do-not-resuscitate order there, but according to my niece, it likely wouldn't have mattered. The attendants were doing what they were trained to do.

Dad made his choices and we accepted them. Next June, on his birthday, we'll honor another of his choices and cast his ashes into that reservoir at the top of the Sierra.

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!-- Alt Heads:

End-of-life conversations with Dad

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## **THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE**

### **Utahn of the year: A profile in courage and faith**

**Author(s):** Peg McEntee The Salt Lake Tribune **Date:** December 26, 2009 **Page:** Section: Breaking

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Elizabeth Smart found her own way home. In California in 2003, Elizabeth -- kidnapped at age 14 -- realized that no one would find her there, that her chances would be better back in the Salt Lake Valley.

In her testimony against Brian David Mitchell in October, she described how she borrowed his tactic of using religion to justify everything he did. She had a "strong feeling" about returning to Utah.

Mitchell would claim it was his revelation that brought them back. But Elizabeth's father, Ed Smart, as well as U.S. Attorney for Utah Brett Tolman, see it as her ability to understand and countermanipulate her tormentor.

On the stand, she described in unflinching detail what she had endured during her captivity. She had wanted to confront Mitchell with her eyes and words, but, predictably, he sang his hymns and was removed from the courtroom.

When it was over, Elizabeth Smart strode, tall and straight, into the rest of her life.

For so many of us, her astonishing homecoming restored hope when there seemed to be none, and the knowledge that even terrible times can end, and end well.

And she taught us this: Faith, whatever its source, can make amazing things happen.

For that lesson, and for her intelligence, resilience and grace, The Salt Lake Tribune has named Elizabeth Smart its 2009 Utahn of the Year.

Earlier this month, Ed and Lois Smart talked about their daughter,

now 22 and at the LDS Church's Missionary Training Center preparing for a mission to Paris. It was important to them that all of us leave behind what their daughter endured for nine months. It's time to look forward, they said.

But there were reminiscences.

Even as a small child, her father said, "She's always been her own person," with a kindness underscored by a clear view of the people around her.

Elizabeth loved to hike and camp and ride horses with her grandfather. One day, they were riding in the mountains and her horse took off. A little panicked, she dismounted and knelt to ask God to "help her find her way home," her father said. "And she did.

"I believe she had a grounding faith that was really helpful to her, not only during the nine months but throughout her life."

That nine months, of course, was the time that Elizabeth was held captive, brutalized and taken from Utah to California and back. On March 11, 2003, passers-by in Sandy spotted her and Mitchell and Wanda Barzee.

That was the day Elizabeth came home to the big house in the hills above Salt Lake City. Ed Smart remembers many blessings bestowed upon her. One by the late LDS Church President Gordon B. Hinckley holds a particularly sacred place in the family's heart.

Lois Smart remembers the day, a few months after Elizabeth came home, when she led her parents to the crude camp in the hills north of the city, where she had been tethered by a steel cable.

"She marched up; she showed us the way," Lois said. "We said, 'How do you feel?' And she said, 'I feel triumphant.' "

Elizabeth would go on to East High School and Brigham Young University, where she studied music. And every now and then, she and her sister, Mary Katherine, would play their harps so sweetly that their mother's eyes brim with tears.

"Having a harp in the home has been like having angels in the home," Lois said.

Once home, Elizabeth gave her mother a lesson on compassion. Long before Elizabeth was taken, Lois had given \$5 and a few hours' work at her home to Mitchell, then a Main Street beggar in robes who called himself Immanuel.

After Elizabeth came home, she and her mother were driving and saw some panhandlers. Lois, plagued by her memory of once helping



Mitchell, told her daughter she couldn't give anymore.

"But, Mom," her daughter replied, "when you get to know these people, they are wonderful people just down on their luck. There's doctors and lawyers, professional people, that because of mental illness or something else that has gone amok in their lives, they have been out on the street."

Lois paused. "I thought that she would side with me. Not at all. She teaches me."

Elizabeth also has taught a few things to Tolman, who prosecuted Mitchell and Barzee. They had worked together for two years on her testimony, but a few days before she took the stand, Elizabeth grew uneasy.

"I think she was feeling nervous, a normal feeling. I told her she was more important than the case, than me, than this office, than Ed. I let her know sincerely that I was prepared at that point to dismiss the case, to deal with him on the psychiatric level, and get rid of the case."

No, Elizabeth told Tolman. "I want to testify."

"Elizabeth got control over what she wanted to share, and when, and to whom," Tolman said.

Lois Smart believes that Elizabeth belongs in a family pantheon of women whose forebears crossed the plains to come to Utah. "I don't know if it's genetic, but we have, on both sides, some very strong women."

Elizabeth and Mary Katherine, whose recognition of "Immanuel" ultimately led to those passers-by in Sandy to recognize him, inherited that strength, that will.

Today, Elizabeth owns her story and her future. The rest of us can remember her, smiling in the October sunlight, triumphant.

Peg **McEntee** is a Tribune columnist. Reach her at [pegmcentee@sltrib.com](mailto:pegmcentee@sltrib.com).

!-- Alt Heads:

Utahn of the year Elizabeth Smart

Why we named Elizabeth Smart

It was an amazing story back in 2003: Elizabeth Smart is found alive, nine months after vanishing from her home. Another remarkable chapter unfolded in October. Smart took the stand and, for the first

time, publicly provided details of her ordeal. In those 100 minutes, she revealed an inner strength and presence of mind that inspires us all.

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