



Elsa "Elsie" M. Ewalt

April 1, 1930 - January 12, 2008

Elsa "Elsie" M. Ewalt, age 77, of Glendive, passed away on Monday, January 7, 2008 at the Glendive Medical Center. A Life Tribute Service will be held at 2:00 P.M., Saturday, January 12, 2008 in the Chapel of the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home in Glendive with Celebrant Sandy Silha officiating. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Glendive is entrusted with arrangements. Elsa was born on April 1, 1930 in Stanton, North Dakota, the daughter of Fredrich and Charlothia (Link) Entzel. She was raised and educated in North Dakota. In 1942, Elsa moved with her family to the Buffalo Rapids area, located west of Glendive, Montana. Elsa was united in marriage to Jim Ewalt on April 20, 1947 in Glendive. They moved to Yakima, Washington and later to Pasco, Washington until returning to Glendive in 1948 where they made their home. Elsa worked as a housekeeper and as a meat wrapper. She enjoyed knitting and crocheting and made up many of her own patterns. Elsa was preceded in death by her parents; her husband Jim in 2002; a son, Frank; sisters, Caroline, Hertha, Hilda, Erma and Frieda; her brothers, Norman, Herbert and Eugene. Survivors include her daughter, Cynthia Montoya and her husband Arthur of Longview, Washington; her sons, Fred Ewalt and his wife Hermina of Fargo, North Dakota and Richard Ewalt of Spokane, Washington; her sisters, Elda Glaser of Sidney, Montana and Irene Dobson of Glendive; brother, Reuben Entzel of Glendive; 8 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews. Elsa "Elsie" M. Ewalt Life Tribute Service January 12, 2008 Master of Ceremonies: Welcome Song: "On Eagles Wings"

Celebrant: We gather together this afternoon to remember Elsa “Elsie” Ewalt and to honor the memories of a life that has touched us. Elsa was a unique, talented woman, who was strong-willed, intelligent, and independent. Born in 1930, Elsa grew up during the depression years in a large family of German heritage. She came to speak two languages, German and English, she was taught a strong work ethic, and experienced first hand those lean years, when you learned to make much out of little. Many of the skills Elsa learned, she learned from her mother or was self-taught. Elsa had special talents with sewing, crocheting and knitting, often creating her own patterns. The family has brought a sampling of Elsa’s creations to display today. One of the crocheted tablecloths belongs to Elsa’s daughter, Cindy Montoya, who tells of the tablecloth being entered in a county fair out in Washington State. The tablecloth took third, and Elsa expressed some dismay to Cindy about only getting third place honors. Cindy reminded Elsa she probably shouldn’t feel too badly, as the items that had taken first place and second place had been entered by family members of people on the county fair board. Along with the many tablecloths, doilies, and afghans Elsa created for family members, she also crocheted, knitted and sewed holiday items, such as Easter baskets, and Christmas ornaments, including crocheted bells and snowflakes. For special family events, Elsa might create clothing or accessories for a wedding, a baby afghan for a new addition to the family, or a christening shawl for a baptism. It made family members feel very special to receive one of these gifts from Elsa. Grandson, Monte Montoya, perhaps summed it up best when he was wearing a sweater Elsa had made for him. Monte was about nine years old at the time and the sweater was a knitted, zip-up sweater with a lot of design knitted into it. Someone commented to Monte about his wonderful sweater and his reply was, “that the best thing about it was, the sweater was made with love.” Elsa was a talented seamstress. She made all her own clothes for most of her life, and her children tell of never wearing store bought clothes as they were growing up. Elsa made everything, including, darning socks, and sewing jackets and coats. Her son, Fred, still has a corduroy jacket his mother made

for him. Clarice Barth, a niece of Elsa's, and several of Clarice's sister's would spend summers with Aunt Elsa and the family, and Elsa would make all their clothes also. Elsa also made many toys for the children, teddy bears, stuffed penguins, Raggedy Ann and Andy dolls, and Cabbage Patch Dolls. When Elsa and the family lived in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Elsa worked in a western clothing factory as a seamstress. She sewed leather jackets for a well-known label of the southwest called Pioneer, and she took great pride in this particular job. Of all the things Elsa did, sewing seemed to be her favorite and it probably was her failing eyesight in her later years that caused her to stop sewing and give her sewing machine to a granddaughter. All these skills Elsa possessed with her hands were shared with anyone who wanted to learn. Clarice tells of learning to crochet from Elsa, although Clarice never mastered all the stitches Elsa knew. Elsa's daughter-in-law, Fred's wife, Minnie, also learned to crochet from Elsa, although this turned out to be a bit of a tough go. As Minnie would crochet the stitches, Elsa would look at her work, tell Minnie that it wasn't right, and pull out the stitches for Minnie to try again. After several times of this, Minnie happened to hand over her work to Elsa and it flipped over. Elsa looked at it and commented that it finally looked the way the stitches should. It dawned on them that with Minnie being left-handed, Minnie's stitches were mirroring Elsa's. Minnie was just doing the left-handed version of crochet. Minnie also tells of another humorous left-handed conflict with Elsa. Elsa had spent a great deal of her time in the kitchen preparing food for the large family she always had around, and Elsa knew her way around a kitchen. Whenever she would visit Fred and Minnie, Minnie would return from her job to find her kitchen reorganized to suit Elsa's right-handedness. One thing about Elsa, it was her way or the highway! The Ewalt children remember moving around quite a bit because of their father's job. But Elsa always made every house a home, no matter what shape it was in when they got there or how long they stayed. Elsa would clean, paint, make curtains and drapes, landscape the yard, whatever it took to make it a good place to

live. Elsa's husband, Jim, was a person who liked neatness, and the children remember always living in a clean and neat home. Cindy noticed as her mother got older, that the house wasn't as neat as she, Cindy remembered it being when she was growing up and living there. She commented on this to her father on one of her visits. His response was, that everyone Elsa had delegated cleaning chores to, no longer lived there. And of course with Elsa being, as son Fred calls his mother, the consummate homemaker, we have to talk about food. Her granddaughter, Charlene Montoya, will always remember her grandmother's "world class potato salad". Elsa has given the recipe to many others to make, but it is one of those recipes that never tastes as good as when Elsa made it. Over the years, Elsa made a wide variety of German food. But when the Hispanic influences entered the family by way of daughter-in-law, Minnie and son-in-law, Art Montoya, Elsa and her husband Jim, came to love Mexican food. Elsa's favorite being taco salad. Elsa really enjoyed the spicy foods. Elsa always gardened and began to make salsa out of her tomatoes and peppers, the spicier the better. Clarice recalls a day spent with her aunt, with Elsa teaching Clarice to make salsa, and experimenting with the peppers for flavor and taste, testing all day with tortilla chips. Clarice says she had to rely on Elsa's taste for the peppers in the mix, as Clarice didn't really like it as spicy as Elsa. The other food Elsa was quite famous for that came from her garden were her dill pickles. Many in the family loved those pickles. Elsa was always baking too. Fred remembers all the cookies she would make at Christmas, and Cindy's favorite was Elsa's peanut brittle. Cindy has the recipe and made some this past Christmas. When she told Elsa about making the peanut brittle, Elsa asked Cindy to send some to her. Cindy did and relates with a smile, that when she talked to her mother after Elsa had tried the peanut brittle, Elsa commented that it was very good, but Cindy needed to get it a bit thinner. You know how moms are about their recipes. And you will have to ask Cindy about the Elsa's plum conserve recipe that Cindy relates is out of this world. Clarice recalls the wonderful desserts Elsa would make, especially her strawberry pies. Clarice says when she cooked and needed

help, she would call her aunt Elsa for advice. Clarice learned much from Elsa. We have talked about the handiwork, the sewing, the food that Elsa did. But why did she do all this...she did it for family. Family was her life. Elsa was born into a large family, eleven siblings, and when she married Jim Ewalt, she married into another large family. When Cindy brought her husband, Art Montoya, to Glendive for the first time, a family get-together was planned. Upon arriving in town, Cindy checked with an aunt to see where everyone was going to be, as one home just wouldn't accommodate the whole group. Her aunt told her everyone was meeting at the park by the river. As Cindy and Art drove over the river, Art looked down into the park and upon seeing all the people, Art wondered how on earth they would find Cindy's family in that crowd. Cindy replied, "That crowd is my family." Elsa's home was a bit like that too. It included not just her children but their cousins, and friends of all the kids. Some stayed summers, some came for shorter visits. All were treated as her own and included in the family's activities. Jim worked for Consolidated Trucking and was on the road much of the time. When Jim was home, Jim and Elsa did everything together and with the family. Elsa and Jim loved to dance and would travel to nearby towns just to go to a dance. They loved to play pinochle, "cutthroat pinochle," Cindy calls it. Elsa and Jim never played as partners but as adversaries. If you were playing as one of their pinochle partners, you better know how to play and bid or there was trouble. They took their cards seriously. And both Elsa and Jim were avid readers. Fred says if he needed to get up late at night to use the bathroom, both parents were very likely reading. Jim liked Louis L'Amour and Elsa enjoyed history and romance. When cable TV became available, both enjoyed the history channel and the Discovery channel. Education was very important to them. They had not finished high school and both were adamant that their children would be educated. Elsa was very strict about the way they used the English language. She insisted the language be spoken correctly by her children, no slang. They were encouraged to read the newspaper and keep up on current events. Both Elsa and Jim were very civic minded and passed this on to their children.

Everyone was expected to know the issues during elections and most certainly to vote. They were proud to use that privilege. Elsa and Jim both had a strong work ethic and independent spirit, you did not depend on others to look out for you. Fred talks of the hunting, game processing and sausage making the family did. Cindy talks of the fishing and camping trips that were favorites. While living in Washington, Elsa and Jim enjoyed the salmon runs. They had come up with their own brine recipe for the salmon and then would smoke the fish. They also used this technique for smelt, a small bait fish. In Washington, each person could collect a bucket of smelt. Elsa and Jim would smoke the whole smelt for eating. Son, Rick, had a tough time eating the fish with its head, tail and fins, so for Rick, they would skin the smelt and take those parts off. Elsa and Jim's smoked fish was delicious. When living in Montana, Fred says the river was a big part of their outdoor activities. Christmas was a special time. Not because of extravagant gifts, but for the Christmas tree, and the food and decorations Elsa would put out. Usually, the tree was decorated with popcorn and cranberry strings and homemade ornaments, which Jim and the kids loved. But one year, Elsa got a silver aluminum tree with the rotating disc of colored lights. Elsa put turquoise blue ornaments on the tree and loved it. Jim and the rest of family did not. The tree lasted a few years before Jim discarded it, and the family went back to a more traditional tree. Cindy recalls one Christmas when her brothers both got BB guns and she got a doll. Elsa wanted her daughter to be a girl, girl. Well, that doll just didn't cut it, and two days later the doll was traded back to the store for another BB gun. Clarice talks of Elsa's wonderful artistic endeavors for the holidays. When Elsa lived in Casitas Del Rio trailer park, she had the owner's permission to trim the evergreen tree branches and gather pinecones, which Elsa used to create centerpiece wreaths. Elsa would tie and glue the evergreens and decorate the greens with pinecones and small golden horns. She put a red candle with a hurricane glass over it in the center of the wreath, and gave these to family and friends as gifts. Elsa would make Clarice's

wreath a bit smaller, because Elsa knew Clarice used it on her dining room table. Elsa used her talents often to create many things, and these creations usually were gifts, gifts for family and friends. Another gift that Elsa gave to Clarice that holds a special place in Clarice's heart, was just after Clarice gave birth to her twins. Elsa heard about the twins and immediately sent a dozen red roses to Clarice at the hospital with a note saying, anyone as short as Clarice, who could carry and deliver twins, deserved roses. A small gift Elsa enjoyed receiving were the palms given by the Catholic Church at Easter. Clarice and her husband, Dan, would always get an extra palm for Elsa. Dan would braid the palms and give one to Elsa. They all kept the palms until they could be replaced the next Easter. It became a tradition for Elsa, Dan and Clarice. During Elsa's later years, there began to be regular family reunions and occasions to have all the family together. One such occasion was Elsa and Jim's 50th wedding anniversary. This was held at the Knights of Columbus Hall here in Glendive. One of the things Elsa requested was a balloon release and this was done with many gold balloons. It was a very special day. About four years ago, Elsa moved from her home to Grandview, a retirement home. This was a difficult change for Elsa, but she adjusted very well and really enjoyed her time there. A couple years ago, Elsa made the decision on her own to move into the nursing home. She always told her children about the good care she received from the staff at the home. This past holiday season, Clarice stopped in to visit Elsa and Elsa was telling Clarice about singing Christmas carols earlier that day. Elsa reported that she and her brother Reuben had sang "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" in German to the other residents. Clarice was a bit surprised and asked Elsa if she would sing it again, and Elsa sang the song again, in German, for Clarice. Because of her emphysema, Elsa ran out of breath a bit at the end, but Elsa really did do a remarkable job on the Christmas carol. One of the other things that Elsa did rather recently was to have Clarice bring her favorite, a taco salad, to enjoy for lunch. Elsa was not feeling very well before the holidays, and so these moments seem especially meaningful. In hindsight, simple

things such as these were a reflection of Elsa. The years of her life were of a simple, hardworking woman, who made the most of her talents and shared them with family and friends. Let us now remember Elsa as we listen to a favorite song of Elsa's that she requested be played today, "Lara's Theme." Song: "Lara's Theme" Celebrant: Elsa touched many lives and perhaps you have a favorite story or memory of Elsa that you would like to share. We will take time now for any who may wish to speak of Elsa. Please come to the microphone so all may hear your words. At this time, Elsa's son, Fred, wishes to address all of you here today. Celebrant: For Elsa, family was very important. Many of her closest friends are family members. Please take the opportunity view the pictures the family has displayed. Most are family pictures. One in particular that is an important family photo, is also in your memory card. It is the one taken in the mid 1940's, and pictured from left to right are Elsa's sisters, Elda and Irene; Elsa's mother, Charlothia; Elsa's brother Reuben; Elsa's father, Fred; and on the right, Elsa. These are the siblings Elsa was closest to in age and also in friendship. Displayed also, are photos of Elsa with her children and grandchildren. Please look closely at her fine workmanship in the handiwork displayed. If you are lucky enough to have something Elsa made, treasure it for the gift it is. Elsa requested that her service be simple. Elsa also requested that she be cremated and her cremated remains scattered in a place special to her. Her family has honored that request and the cremation and scattering has taken place. Elsa is free. As we say good-bye to Elsa, know that her life was significant and that she touched many lives. Remember Elsa and remember as you grieve the loss of Elsa, that "with every good-bye we learn." Appreciate the gifts Elsa has given you. It is an important day when we stop to bear witness to a person's life and times among us, the difference her living and dying made among family and community and to take time to express our grief, our hope and our memories. Thank you all for being here for this important time. If you know of someone who could not be at today's life tribute service for Elsa, the text of today's eulogy can be read on the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home website. The family

has requested that we conclude Elsa's life tribute service by joining together and saying "The Lord's Prayer."

Tribute Wall



“ *Elsa "Elsie" M. Ewalt*

December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM