



Frank Sir

October 14, 1917 - June 9, 2011

GLENDIVE, MONTANA: Frank Sir, age 93, died on Saturday, June 4, 2011 at the Glendive Medical Center in Glendive. Visitation will be held from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. on Wednesday, June 8, 2011 at the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home in Glendive. A Life Tribute Service will be held at 10:00 A.M. on Thursday, June 9, 2011 in the Chapel of the Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home in Glendive with Celebrant Sandy Silha officiating. Interment will be in the Dawson Memorial Cemetery in Glendive. Silvernale-Silha Funeral Home of Glendive has been entrusted with the arrangements. Frank was born on the family homestead in rural Prairie County on October 14th, 16th or 18th of 1917, depending on which record was accurate. In those days the postman, who often only delivered mail once a month, would deliver the birth announcement to the Prairie County Courthouse and therein was the discrepancy. However, his mother claimed it was the 14th of 1917. He arrived as the last child of Antonia and Anton Sir, immigrants of then Czechoslovakia who settled in the Lindsay, Montana area in 1910 with a group of Czechs, many of whom were relatives. Frank knew a life of toil and hardship, having started working at the age of three, standing on a barrel and turning the wheel for a forge, all day every day, for his father who worked as a blacksmith-farmer. He started school at a nearby school where a Miss Basta taught. He was a quiet, shy lad, but was excellent in mathematics and history. He told stories about the difficulties in walking to school in all kinds of weather and of the poor drinking water at the school. Before the school day, he and his

siblings would do all of the farm chores about 4:30 or 5:00 AM and again after school until dark. Frank and his brothers and sister, Lydia, farmed with their father and had very little travel or entertainment, except in the 1950's when they joined a square dancing group which he enjoyed very much. In any spare time from his hard work, Frank loved hunting for agates and other petrified objects found on the farm. He was also considered the areas most knowledgeable person regarding animal husbandry and was a crop specialist. He eventually attended Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana where he pursued a course that furthered his interest in native plants and new technology in crops. In later years, Frank moved into Glendive and lived with long-time friends, Jim and Carol Swanson and became part of their family. He traveled to the Czech Republic, Australia and many other places which he truly loved. Frank was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Jerry and Tony; sisters, Lydia Sir and Mary Veverka. Survivors include his friends and family, Jim and Carol Swanson of Glendive, Scott and Lisa Swanson and their children, Jena, Samantha and Tristan of Glendive, Larry and Roxie Veverka and their children of Richey, Montana and Nancy Brandt of Billings, Montana and her children. Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: www.silvernale-silhafuneralhome.com Eulogy: Today is an important day. Today we honor and celebrate the life of a special man, Frank Sir. In 93 years of life, Frank experienced a world that changed dramatically. From the horse and buggy to motorized vehicles, from tractors with iron wheels to four-wheelers, to planes and space travel and computers. It can be mind boggling if you think about all that he encountered in his lifetime. But for Frank, most of his life was spent on the farm and ranch homesteaded by his parents, and expanded by Frank and his brothers. The farm will be 101 years old this month. Frank physically worked it until just these past few years, but even then he knew everything about it and continued to make all the decisions concerning its operation. It was what he always did and it shaped who he was. As the fifth child and third son of Czechoslovakian immigrants, Frank had a tough family life. He loved his mother, but his father was a domineering and

controlling man, demanding that anyone capable of working, do so, with no time for fun, kind words, or any extras in life. Frank's father was a hard taskmaster. A cousin, George Heide, grew up with the Sir children and remembers someone making the comment that if the Sir boys had a middle name it would be "work" because that's all they did. Frank learned early that children were seen and not heard, and he developed a quiet, shyness that he carried with him throughout his life. Frank could tell many stories of the hardships and difficulties of growing up, living and working on the farm with his father. The children did attend school until about eighth grade. Frank was very intelligent, being especially brilliant at math and history. He became an avid reader, and continued to teach himself many things by doing and reading. But being good in school didn't make school easy for Frank. There were many chores before and after school and even getting to and from school could be challenging. Once a teacher put on a school Christmas play, and asked the parents to send a small gift so each child could get a present from Santa. The Sir children did not receive a gift. When Frank would hire out to earn money of his own, his father would spend it before he even got paid. Being the youngest of five children, the hand-me-downs were quite worn and tattered by the time he fit into them. Frank did love his mother though. He thought her a wonderful cook, and every once in awhile she would manage to get him down the road to her mother's, Frank's grandmother, to share some crescent rolls. This was in spite of the fact that Frank's father didn't allow any contact with his in-laws. A pleasure Frank discovered early on was agate hunting. The few free moments he had were spent scouring the landscape for agates that he loved to collect. It was a lifelong passion for Frank. As a young man, late into his teens, Frank fell in love. She was a neighbor girl, Czechoslovakian with long black hair. But Frank's shyness held him back a bit and before anything could really develop, her family moved about 50 miles away, which at that time was a great distance. Frank couldn't forget her and he decided to write to her, which he did. But there was no response. Years later, when she died, Frank

found out where she was buried and every year he would leave a dozen red roses on her grave. Her name was Rose. There was some speculation that Frank's father may have prevented the letters from getting to their destination. Despite the hardships and cruelties of his life, Frank never became bitter; the deprivations and abuses never broke his spirit. Instead he became a gentle, sweet, kind and giving man, who turned his intelligence, his work ethic, and his energy into becoming the best farmer and rancher he could be. And he was a great success. In 1947, Frank and his brothers ordered a house from Montgomery Wards and built it themselves. All they knew and all they did was farm and ranch. None of them married. Frank loved the animals, those they raised and the ones that came with the land. He raised a heifer that was injured by feeding it pellets by hand. He named it Peggy and they formed a bond. After he moved to town, Jim and Carol Swanson took him out to the farm, they needed to fix a well pump, and they were looking at the herd of black angus, when Peggy heard Frank's voice and came over to the car where Frank was sitting trying to get her head in. He petted her and talked to her. Frank had wild turkeys he fed and watered in his yard. After our hard winter this past year, Frank was amazed that there was still one hanging around. But one animal Frank didn't like was coons. He would set up traps for them and they would break the traps. Finally he had Willie Day remodel the traps, and Frank caught 325 coons with those traps. Frank was an expert at animal husbandry and a crop specialist. That and the work ethic of the Sir brothers reaped them many monetary rewards. The silver lining for Frank was that he truly loved the land. He probably would like us to remember him as a man of the earth. He felt that he could place his hands on the dirt and sense the heartbeat of the earth. His greatest pleasures came from the land. When Frank began to travel, and see more of the world, Ken Kubesh asked him why he didn't just retire and move to town. Frank responded that if he gave up farming and ranching, he would die. Farming and ranching were life. Frank was about 84, when age began to catch up with him a bit. He had met and become friends with Jim and Carol Swanson, through Jim being the insurance

agent for the farm for many years. They enjoyed visiting and Frank was Mr. Democrat so they had something in common. Frank began spending more time with them, staying overnight at times. When Frank had a health crisis and the medical person who he trusted recommended he needed more care than he could give himself, he wouldn't go into a nursing home. The decision was made that he live with Jim and Carol. Frank became part of a loving family, something he had never really experienced, and their friendship blossomed into a loving, caring relationship that was very heartfelt and enriching for Frank, for Jim and Carol, and for Jim and Carol's children and grandchildren. The Swanson's are a family of huggers. Frank was very receptive to that, he loved to be cuddled and kissed. He began to reach out and hold Jim and Carol's hand or arms when he was near them, just to have the touch of a loving family. His first Christmas with Swanson's was spent in Red Lodge. He got gifts from everyone in the family and he couldn't get over it. He told Carol the next day that he cried most of that night, he was so moved. Frank went everywhere with Jim and Carol, even to the grandkids' events. He enjoyed having coffee and visiting down at Jim's office. Jim took Frank to see President Clinton when he came through Montana, and Jim introduced Frank to Governor Schweitzer. Carol and Jim's house has one side that is all windows. It was Frank's favorite place to sit. He could see the river, and watch the birds and squirrels. He could watch Carol, who he called "Cookie", work in the kitchen. He called her "Cookie" because of all the wonderful, good smelling food she made. There was good light to read all his magazines and farm journals in the sunshine lit room. On his 90th birthday, Jim and Carol hosted a birthday party at the Coffee Den, with about a hundred people showing up to help Frank celebrate. The celebration was featured on local television and Frank got a big kick out of seeing himself on TV. Frank also began to travel and see the world. A first outing was to Bismarck. Carol found out he liked the Antique Roadshow and she got tickets for herself, Frank and his sister Mary, and Jim drove them all over to the show when it came to Bismarck, North Dakota. From there they traveled to the Black Hills, which

Frank and Mary had never been to. They viewed Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse, and Devils Tower, attended the Passion Play, and even played the poker machines. Mary had the idea to visit Czechoslovakia. She ended up not going, but Carol, Frank and Ken Kubesh traveled to Europe. A friend of Ken's who was Czech guided them around, and they found the town and house where Frank's mother and grandmother had been born. As they approached the house, a woman, who was a carbon copy of Frank's mother, came out. Frank was very emotional and cried at seeing all this. They also went to his father's address and found a niece who lived there and was able to give them some family history. That was the first of two trips to Europe and they traveled to other countries also while there. A trip was made to Australia, where they met up with Ken Kubesh and they all took a cruise from Australia to Viet Nam, and Thailand, where Ken and Frank rode a train over the Bridge on the River Kwai, and then they visited several more ports, before flying home. Ken tells of a trip he and Frank took to the west coast. They visited former neighbors of Franks, relatives of Ken's, toured the Boeing factory, and went up into Canada's mountains seeing Banff, Jasper, and incredible mountain scenery. Frank always loved landscapes. He developed a love of traveling, and was able to many places in the world. He had hoped to go Antarctica. But that plan never developed. His health became a concern. Home health delivered all his medications, and Frank would walk every day, and as he watched television with Jim, he would exercise his arms and legs. Frank passed his driving test last year with no restrictions on his sight. He was always clearheaded and in charge of making the decisions for his life and the farm. Yes, Frank was a unique man, even in his nineties. He still enjoyed his agates, and he taught Jim and Carol what a leverite rock was, "leave 'er right" there. Frank always wore blue shirts and jeans. He didn't like milk. He loved his teddy bears. Frank loved music and would sing himself to sleep at night. When he chuckled his shoulders shook, he had a deep hearty laugh, and someone noticed that the only thing stopping his smile was his ears. Frank did not judge others, and he

believed in “live and let live.” Frank’s last years were probably his best years. He was still able to be involved with the farm, he lived with a loving family, he began to travel, something he thoroughly enjoyed, his life became very social, and he loved that, and he could do something that was very important to him, give. Frank and his brothers had been into philanthropy, but Frank began in earnest to look for good places to share what he had earned while working so hard all his life for. Medical facilities and education were always very important to him, but he found other needs that he could help. We cannot count the number of people whose lives he has touched with his life, and his giving. It’s like throwing a stone into the pond, the ripples just keep on going, as will the effects of his giving, long after today. We live on in the lives of those we touch. Frank Sir, you will be greatly missed.

Tribute Wall



“ *Frank Sir*

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