

Brian's Memorial Service

Greeting

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Reciting of Poem

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Eulogy

Catherine Cruzan

Charles Tilley

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Song Presentation

Sarah Culver

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Speaker

Kim Laudermilk

•

Prayers

Charles Tilley

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Speaker

Michael Culver

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Pictorial Celebration

Chris Laudermilk

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Personal Tributes

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Closing

Eulogy

Written by Catherine Cruzan

Delivered by Catherine Cruzan & Charles Tilley

“Remembering a Life Well Lived”

Some people just can't help making a difference in our lives...

By simply being who they are.

They make the world a little brighter, a little warmer, a little gentler.

And when they're gone, we realize how lucky we are to have known them.

The world has lost a very special person.

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Brian vonKleinsmid was one of a kind.

He was always there for his friends and family, lending an ear when they needed a sounding board, or offering a helping hand with whatever needed to be done.

He started fixing computers as a young man. And if it was mechanical, he enjoyed taking it apart even more than putting it back together. By the time he was 14, he was installing home theater systems for mansions in Big Canyon, and exotic sound systems for expensive cars at Circuit City.

He was a sportsman, playing football at Corona Del Mar High School, and successfully wrestling above his weight class until he injured his shoulder.

He tagged along when his mom, Jean, went to work at Sam Carney's House on Balboa Island, so he could go fishing. And he always liked sailing on his Sabot. He loved the condo in Arrowhead where he would go sledding and snow-boarding in the winter, and fishing in the summer.

He loved cars, trucks and dirt bikes, and that passion remained a major facet of his life. As early as Anna's age, he was riding a Honda Trail 90 that his father, Ben, still has.

After high school, Brian worked full-time in the Circuit City road shop installing car stereos and alarm systems, while also carrying a full load of classes at Orange Coast College.

He met Karen Knaves in one of his architecture classes. They bonded over the teacher's shrubbery lesson, because they both got the Monty Python reference, and they laughed their way to a fast friendship.

It didn't take much for Karen to convince Brian to join Tribe Roman Morga, and the performing gypsy troupe fit him like a glove. His sharp wit and champion napping skills were divinely suited for gypsy life at camp.

Brian headed north to San Luis Obispo from there, to attend Cuesta College.

He soon met Rita Colliver, an architecture student at what would turn out to be his alma mater—California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo. On her advice, he transferred into their Construction Management program.

Though it was supposed to be his back door into the architecture program, Brian quickly realized he'd found his home in Construction Management. Rita joined him there a year later, and they roomed together in a little house in Los Osos during her last year of school.

Brian graduated with a BS in Construction Management in December, 2000. A fountain still stands on the SLO campus, which he built as part of his senior project.

During one of his school breaks, Brian helped Sandy Armstrong with an event she was putting together in Solvang. This was a turning point for him, because not only did he graduate from gypsy fringer to full-blown fair

manager/drummer extraordinaire, but he also managed to catch the eye of a lovely blond dancer named Juli.

Juli had given up her search for Mr. Right, only to discover he'd been right there in front of her the entire time. And of course, Brian already had his eye on Juli, having asked Denise Covell about her months prior to that, while helping Denise move.

So, the night before Sandy's event, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, beneath a sky full of fireworks at Santa Ynez, Brian and Juli started making some fireworks of their own.

For the next three years, they maintained a budding romance via emails and phone calls, and short visits when Brian came home from school.

He bought his first street bike about this time—the yellow and purple Honda CBR F3. Within hours of bringing it home, he learned a hard lesson about gravel on a roadway, and scraped up the fairing laying it down. Years later, when I ran to his house to show him my newly-acquired motorcycle license, he shared that experience with me as a cautionary tale.

He picked up Juli for their first date on that yellow and purple bike, and took her for a ride at the beach. When she got cold, they stopped at her house to pick up her jacket. They were inside barely 15 minutes, but when they came back outside the bike was gone—stolen.

After a police report and a ride from Juli's brother, Chris, they resumed their date in Brian's dad's Mitsubishi 3000GT.

Brian remained calm, cool and collected the entire time, which gave Juli a glimpse of his character which she quickly came to appreciate and love. Brian later told me he was just so happy to be on a date with Juli, he could hardly care less about losing that bike.

In 1999, Brian's graduation present to Juli was a trip to Hawaii, which turned out to be her first time on an airplane, her first major first-class vacation, her first of many things.

That was the kind of generous man Brian was. He wanted to give her everything.

They went a second time when Brian graduated, and again for their first wedding anniversary, where Anna became a glint in her father's eye. And then one more time, when Nico was just a bun in the oven.

Hawaii was Brian's escape from the rest of the world. He loved it there. It was his favorite vacation spot. And who could blame him, really? It was Hawaii!

August 25, 2001. Let's talk about this date. There was quite the to-do over this date, with trips to jewelers and covert plans to get gypsies to come early to the Long Beach Renaissance Faire (no small feat!). It was even the unveiling of the Tribe's new tents for their encampment.

While getting situated for a day of performances, surrounded by their gypsy friends, Brian said to Juli, "You look like you're missing something."

Juli thought he was about to gift her with a replacement tribal necklace she'd lost because her neck was bare. Instead, he got down on one knee, and there was much rejoicing in the realm of TRM.

That ring burned a hole in Brian's pocket long before the actual day, and he could hardly contain his excitement to give it to her. Rita had to remind him, "You put the date on the ring, Dummy. You can't propose early!"

You see, he had engraved the engagement date on the ring, and his romanticism didn't end there. Its diamond solitaire is the only diamond Juli ever tried on. Brian had the salesman remove the diamond from the ring she's tried on in the store, to have it installed on the band they'd chosen together. He wanted the ring to be truly special.

I have just two words for you, folks, here at our halfway mark. Many of you may guess what they are. Even more of will know what they mean...

—Monkey Run—

Let me set the scene...

Universal Studios, Halloween horror nights, Brian being Brian, decided to have fun with the flighty teenage girls, running at them like an orangutan with his arms swinging back and forth in the air. He sent those girls screaming for the hills, despite his lack of gory makeup or clothing.

Monkey Run spread like a fever through the Tribe, with many hit appearances, including the first dance at Brian and Juli's wedding. Brian ran at Juli with his Monkey Run, to scoop her up into a more traditional waltz—the result of dance lessons and a professional choreography to the song *It Had to be You* by Harry Connick Jr.

Juli's uncle performed the wedding ceremony at Hotel Laguna in Laguna Beach on Sept 6, 2003. It was a warm, beautiful day. Chris and Kim Laudermilk were the best man and maid of honor. And the bride & groom's friends and family were in full attendance. It was a great party.

Brian's wedding gift to Juli was a high-end D-100 digital camera. And she gave him a business card holder from Tiffany & Co. She recently found it amongst his daily items, still full of business cards.

Brian was a full participant in everything, which included the wedding planning. Juli never had to make a decision alone, and that aspect of his wonderful personality carried on throughout their marriage. They were true partners.

He always knew how to calm and soothe Juli too.

Not everything went as planned at the reception, for example. There was a "bad" table, girls in the men's room, and riotous party-goers climbing out windows onto the balcony despite requests to keep the celebrating inside

so as to adhere to city noise ordinances. Fines were threatened, and Juli was more than a little concerned.

Brian, in his infinite wisdom, had a quick conversation with the DJ. Did anyone notice how quickly we got to the cake cutting that night???

That's right. He always knew how to divert us from trouble.

During their honeymoon in Europe, they had to run top speed through the airport in Paris to make their connecting flights because Air France was SO late coming in from Florence. And even as Juli panicked and raged, Brian remained calm, saying over and over again, "we'll make our flight... we'll make our flight..." And they did. He was always so certain about the little things.

He got to indulge in his love for driving while they were in England. Of course, his first turn out of the parking lot had Juli screaming at the top of her lungs, "Wrong side of the street! Wrong side of the street!"

Once he had that sorted, they had an amazing day seeing the sights, taking in the Neolithic henge monuments of Avebury.

He was always adventurous, and it was important to him to help people face their fears. While they were in Europe, he took Juli to the top of the tallest structures in every city they visited—quite the accomplishment when you're as terrified of heights as Juli is. Brian kept her from hyperventilating to point of passing out with his calm, cool nature.

Shortly after they moved into their first house, they found themselves fighting over a sink full of dishes...

"Brian, I think I'm pregnant."

"No, no you're not..."

"Yes, I think I am."

“No, you’re not. You’re just skipping periods again because you’re stressed.”

<She does that sometimes>

Juli stomped out of the room to leave Brian alone with his denial.

A week later, he was shaken awake by a frantic Juli shoving a positive pregnancy stick under his nose. His response was sleepy and incoherent, but he didn’t shy from fatherhood in the years to follow.

He took to it like a fish to water, and everyone would agree he was amazing. He was there at all the parenting classes and La Maze, and he was in the delivery room for both Anna and Nico.

In fact, Nico decided to announce his presence to the world in the middle of a Build-a-Bear workshop.

Brian thought it was the funniest thing in the world to see the Build-a-Bear salesgirl’s eyes as wide as platters while Juli leaned against the display case in the midst of full contractions.

At Hoag Hospital, Brian didn’t really want to cut the umbilical cords, but he later said, “When a doctor hands you scissors and says ‘cut’, you cut.”

He cried when both newborns gripped their daddy’s finger with their tiny little hands.

Midnight feedings, crying fits and poopy diapers didn’t faze him. He loved his children more than anything. The only thing he couldn’t handle was the vomit. Juli had barf duty, because Brian was predisposed to sympathetic heaving.

Car Shows were a big part of the von Kleinsmid household. Cars, trucks and bikes were some of Brian’s biggest passions, and he always wanted the kids with him to share in these moments. Many of the car photos include Nico sacked out on Brian’s lap.

The day Frankenpinto came home, Brian and Juli were newly engaged. Brian told Juli he'd bought a roll cage with a pinto attached, because he and Chris wanted to do the Grass Roots Motorsports Challenge—an annual event where teams are challenged to build and race a car without exceeding the budget cap which is equal to the year of the race. This year's cap is \$2014.

Brian slapped a license plate on it which read "MYTXPLD". And the new car toy became the focal point of all garage-based guy-chats, family & friend barbeques, and holiday parties. Folks lined up to have Brian whisk them around the block in the grumbly monster sporting a paint job with more than enough teeth.

Brian was the most eclectic music aficionado alive. His iTunes library spans over 40,000 songs!

He spent 20 minutes talking to any DJ he came across, making the most outrageous requests. He loved the strangest mix of things, from 80's New-Wave to One Hit Wonders to Bluegrass, from Hard Rock to Country to Rap. At Anna's school dance he even requested *Forget You* by Camilla and the Chickens from the Muppets. He had it on his iPod ready to go.

He loved what he called gypsy torture music, purposely seeking out the most bizarre covers which lead to the most bizarre music to share with his Tribe of friends. The only thing he did do, out of courtesy to Juli, was not play Richard Cheese when she was around.

Everyone talks about what a great guy Brian was. Everyone loves how he made them laugh. In his truest essence, he made us want to be better people, to treat each other with kindness and respect. He set the example for fatherhood. There was no better friend.

He shared in our triumphs, picked us up when we fell down, brain-stormed ideas with us, reeled us in when we got too wild, turned our little projects into gigantic accomplishments, drove us to the races, drank espressos then drummed until we were too tired to dance, substituted as a pillow on the

couch, put band-aides on boo-boos & tucked kids into bed, grilled hot dogs & pushed swings, choked down veggie burgers with a smile on his face, taught us how to change the oil on our bikes, rescued us when our cars broke down—no matter how far away.

He kept us sane when we needed to be, he drove us insane just for fun.

He was the best person anyone could ever hope to be.