



Kenneth "Smokey" E. Birschbach

August 7, 1936 - January 9, 2011

Kenneth E. "Smokey" Birschbach, 74, of Lamartine, surrounded by his family, passed away on Sunday, January 9, 2011, after losing his battle with leukemia. He was born on August 7, 1936, in Fond du Lac, the sixth son of Francis Anton and Olivia Katherine Michels Birschbach. He acquired his nickname at age 14 while helping to grill brats at a Woodhull picnic. He graduated from Rosendale Union Free High School. Smokey served in the United States Army from 1955-1961, and attended military academy in Schambach, Germany. He was very proud of his service to his country. On June 21, 1958, Kenny and Karen Mary Zamzow were married at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Fond du Lac, with Rev. Henry A Maurer officiating. They raised their six children together until her death in 2002. On August 16, 2003, he married Sharleen K. Ziehm Lauanders at First Presbyterian Church, Fond du Lac, with Rev. Barbara Carmichael and Fr. John Simon officiating. Even though their time was too short, they made many memories together. Smokey worked as a field man, maintenance man, and a forklift driver at Friday Canning Company for 35 years until retiring in 1999. He was an honorary member of the Lamartine Volunteer Fire Department, a member of the Knights of Columbus, a lifetime member of VFW Post 8092 Oakfield, a member of Our Risen Savior Catholic Church, Woodhull, and the unofficial mayor of Lamartine. Smokey had the ability to see other uses for the most ordinary of things. He could, and often did, make something out of anything. Beer bottles became wind chimes; bicycle wheels became windmills; old tires became

greenhouses. He had a garden wherever he lived, and took great pride in his yard, which served as a display area for his “art”. Smokey loved all jokes. Some were really funny, some not so much, but he knew them all. He is probably standing at the pearly gates saying, “Hey, St. Peter. Did you hear the one about ...?”. Smokey’s greatest pride was his family and many friends. He was especially proud of his grandchildren, and was able to see them all grow to adulthood. His friendships stretched far and wide. He probably didn’t know everyone, but it sure seemed that way. He is survived by his wife, Sharleen Birschbach; six children: Clifford Birschbach of Zachow, Gloria (Ken) Kissinger of Fond du Lac, Gail (Mike) Havey of Beaver Dam, Grace (Rick) Glaunert of Trempealeau, Ginger (Mark) Hintz of Columbus, and Gwyn (Travis) Leu of Weston; four stepchildren: David Launders of Arizona, Susan Launders of Wheaton, Illinois, Donald Launders, and Sandy Launders, both of Lamartine; 10 grandchildren; Catrina (fiancée Scott), Cyle, and Chad Birschbach, Miranda Kissinger, Christopher and Michelle Havey, Michael and Thomas (Jenna) Hintz and Jesse and Mitchell Leu; one step-grandchild; Jason (Erin) Kissinger; three great-grandchildren: Tyler, Katelyn and Myana. He is further survived by five brothers: Melvin (Janet) Birschbach of Fond du Lac, Donald Birschbach (special friend Janice Halbach) of Lamartine, Harold (Linda) Birschbach of Lamartine, Stanley (Edith) Birschbach, and Lyle (Carol) Birschbach, both of Fond du Lac; five sisters-in-law: Catherine Birschbach of Fond du Lac, Faye Vossekuil of Hilbert, Fern Zamzow of Fond du Lac, Edie Schneider of Fond du Lac, Sherry (Woody) Schmutzler of Spencer; many nieces and nephews, and numerous long time friends, especially Ivan and Betty Reetz of Fond du Lac. He was preceded in death by his parents; stepmother, Frances Birschbach; his first wife, Karen Birschbach, and her parents, Earl and Mildred Zamzow; three brothers: Charles (Margaret) Birschbach, Franklin Birschbach, and Joseph Birschbach; a sister-in-law: Rosemary Birschbach; his first wife’s two brothers: Ervin Zamzow and Harvey Zamzow; his first wife’s sister, Gerry (Robert) Schneider; his first wife’s brother-in-law, Jack Vossekuil. He was further preceded in death by two

stepbrothers: Jerome (Madeline) Landreman and Robert (Helen) Landreman; and a stepsister: Jane (Joe) Losh. Smokey and his family would like to thank the Wisconsin Cancer Center, the Ambulatory Infusion Clinic, St. Agnes Hospice Hope, and the 5th floor nurses at St. Agnes hospital for all of their care, kind words, comfort and support. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 15, 2011, at Our Risen Savior Catholic Church, N6499 County Road Y, Woodhull, with Fr. John Simon officiating. Burial and military rites will take place at Woodhull Cemetery. The visitation will be at church on Friday, January 14, 2011, from 4:00 – 8:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 9:00 a.m. until the time of service. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to the Lamartine Volunteer Fire Department and Our Risen Savior Church. For his family and friends, we mourn our loss. There is pain and there are tears, but also great joy that we were a part of the life of a very special man. We are his legacy, greater than any monument ever erected. We will carry him in our hearts forever.

Tribute Wall

RP

“ *My thoughts are will you after your loss. Bob*

Robert Pinch - February 12, 2011 at 06:15 PM

RR

“ *My thoughts are will you after your loss. Bob*

Robert Pinch of Rosendale - February 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

LD

“ *Our family is sorry for the grief of all Kenny's friends and family members surrounding his death. Knew him lots of years . . . always the same, with his fun-loving personality! Appreciate being able to spend time with him in the later years, and will keep the perfect words of his obituary close at hand, as remembering him puts a smile in my heart.*

Linda Canham Daniels - January 31, 2011 at 12:21 PM

LA

“ *Our family is sorry for the grief of all Kenny's friends and family members surrounding his death. Knew him lots of years . . . always the same, with his fun-loving personality! Appreciate being able to spend time with him in the later years, and will keep the perfect words of his obituary close at hand, as remembering him puts a smile in my heart.*

Linda Canham Daniels of Hot Springs Village, AR - January 31, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CM

“ *Uncle Kenny was a great man! I cannot remember a time that I ever saw him without a gleaming smile. My thoughts are with all who Loved him. He will forever be missed!*

Carla (Birschbach) Marquardt - January 16, 2011 at 06:39 PM

BE

“ *Our Blessings and prayers are with you.*

Bob & Rosalie (Zamzow) Emmer - January 16, 2011 at 01:04 PM

CW

“ *Uncle Kenny was a great man! I cannot remember a time that I ever saw him without a gleaming smile. My thoughts are with all who Loved him. He will forever be missed!*

Carla (Birschbach) Marquardt of Oshkosh, WI - January 16, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ *Both Mike and I send our sympathy on the loss of your Dad. We have fond, fond memories of the Birschbachs. Even though the years have passed, your bright smiles are fresh in our minds!*

Mary Thompson and Mike Fingerhut - January 15, 2011 at 07:29 PM

CG

“ *GWYN AND FAMILY... I'M SO SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS. YOUR IN MY THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS*

CARA GESTNER - January 15, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DD

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. Smokey was a very special person and will be deeply missed.*

Dave, Andy & Al Dinse - January 14, 2011 at 07:35 PM

JK

“ Our deepest sympathy to the entire family. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all at this difficult time. Smokey was a very special person and will be deeply missed.

JEAN KAUFMAN - January 14, 2011 at 07:34 PM

PF

“ To the Birschbach Family -- Kenny was a great man and will be missed. My children really liked to go to the farm house when Karen used to babysit for them. Kenny would take them outside to see the animals. They always enjoyed that. When I asked the kids who was their favorite babysitter when they were little, they said Karen and Kenny's house. He is in heaven now.
You have our deepest sympathy, Pete and Denise Haase and family.

Pete and Denise Haase and family - January 14, 2011 at 05:51 PM

MC

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with your family during this difficult time. We hope you find peace in your faith and your memories. Smokey always found a way to make you smile. Smile for him now, as he is in the hands of God.

Matt & Bobbie Collies - January 14, 2011 at 11:36 AM

PW

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Pete and Denise Haase and family of Oakfield, WI - January 14, 2011 at 12:00 AM

ML

“ Kenneth "Smokey" E. Birschbach

Matt & Bobbie Collies of Lamartine - January 14, 2011 at 12:00 AM

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“ Our thoughts and prayers are with your family during this difficult time. We hope you find peace in your faith and your memories. Smokey always found a way to make you smile. Smile for him now, as he is in the hands of God.

Matt & Bobbie Collies of Lamartine - January 14, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CM

“ Our thoughts are with you. God has a special place for guys like him.

Cliff & Joan Curtis McCoy - January 13, 2011 at 03:40 PM

G(

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you during this difficult time. I will always remember seeing him at the Eldorado's parade every year... And will miss seeing him sitting in my mom's yard watching with a smile on his face
God Bless Uncle Kenny and all of the family! Love Gwyn, Kevin and Family

Gwyn Ditter (Birschbach) - January 13, 2011 at 10:43 AM

GW

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you during this difficult time. I will always remember seeing him at the Eldorado's parade every year... And will miss seeing him sitting in my mom's yard watching with a smile on his faceGod Bless Uncle Kenny and all of the family!Love Gwyn, Kevin and Family

Gwyn Ditter (Birschbach) of Calumetville, Wi - January 13, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CW

“ Our thoughts are with you. God has a special place for guys like him.

Cliff & Joan Curtis McCoy of Neenah, WI - January 13, 2011 at 12:00 AM

PA

“ Smokey was married to my cousin Karen, got to know him from Oakfield it is a small world. I enjoyed talking with him at the gas station in Oakfield. He told me about the doctor he was hoping for the best. Well maybe he is with the best..... I will miss him he was a great person...and still is.

pam allender - January 12, 2011 at 09:25 PM

DB

“ Shar, we will surely miss you and Smokey visiting us in Oklahoma, and we are so glad we were able to visit with you both at your home just a few months ago. His humor and jokes were the best! As we can't be there in person, know that you are in our thoughts and prayers.

Dick & Terry Burns - January 12, 2011 at 07:07 PM

SK

“ Our greatest sympathies go out to the whole family. I'm honored to have had Smokey as a step-uncle. He was a fantastic man, and made Sharleen so happy for the few short years they were together. He will be missed. Love, Sara & Chad Krieger

Sara Krieger - January 12, 2011 at 05:50 PM

SG

“ My deepest sympathy to the entire family. I had the pleasure of knowing Smokey through his many visits to our shop in FDL. Before he left he always said "I'm glad you got to see me today". How true that was! He was a very kind and enjoyable man. Knowing Smokey, St. Peter did not get the last word.

Sue Guelig - January 12, 2011 at 04:55 PM

AP

“ So sorry to here of Ken's passing, may you be comforted in your wonderful memories always.

Al & Nancy Pahnke - January 12, 2011 at 04:54 PM

WF

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you all. He was a very caring and wonderful man.

Wayne Kuslits Family - January 12, 2011 at 02:42 PM

BB

“ Ken, Gloria and Miranda, we are so sorry to hear of the passing of your father/grandfather, may you know we are thinking and praying for you at this difficult time and may God bless you and your family to give you strenght and peace.

Brian & Linda Billman - January 12, 2011 at 02:25 PM

KS

“ My deepest sympathy to the entire family and extended family. I knew Smokey many years and always enjoyed my conversations with him. He always had a new joke to tell me! I am so sad to hear of his passing. May God Bless and keep him.

Karen Sobotta - January 12, 2011 at 01:06 PM

RC

“ Our sympathy to the family. He will be deeply missed.

Robert & Dianne Chase - January 12, 2011 at 12:41 PM

BH

“ Our deepest sympathy goes out to your family.

Brian and Janice Hau - January 12, 2011 at 10:51 AM

LM

“ Our deepest sympathies go out to all Smokey's relatives and friends. He will be greatly missed.

Leonard and Judith Michels - January 12, 2011 at 10:41 AM

BF

“ Our thoughts go out to friends & family of Smokey.

Bob Ellis & Amy Fischer - January 12, 2011 at 10:25 AM

MP

“ Please except our deepest sympathy. Smokey will be dearly missed. I always enjoyed running in to him and working with him for many years. Our condolences.

Michael and Linda Perry - January 12, 2011 at 08:58 AM

PW

“ Smokey was married to my cousin Karen, got to know him from Oakfield it is a small world. I enjoyed talking with him at the gas station in Oakfield. He told me about the doctor he was hoping for the best. Well maybe he is with the best..... I will miss him he was a great person...and still is.

pam allender of oakfield wisconsin - January 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SM

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Sara Krieger of Minneapolis, MN - January 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SL

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Sue Guelig of Fond du Lac - January 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TH

“ Gwyn...and family, our thoughts and prayers are with you! Be thankful for all of the wonderful memories you have and the quality time that you really got to spend with him at the end!

Terry & Trisha Holz - January 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

WW

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you all. He was a very caring and wonderful man.

Wayne Kuslits Family of Fond du Lac WI - January 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BL

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Brian & Linda Billman of North Fond du Lac - January 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

KL

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Karen Sobotta of Fond du Lac,WI - January 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

RM

“ Our sympathy to the family.He will be deeply missed.

Robert & Dianne Chase of Malone,WI - January 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

LA

“ Our deepest sympathies go out to all Smokey's relatives and friends. He will be greatly missed.

Leonard and Judith Michels of Woodhull area - January 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

PF

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. May you find comfort in all the wonderful memories Smokey has brought you.

Paul and Laura Reetz family - January 12, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CE

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time.

Carol & Ron Entringer - January 11, 2011 at 09:07 PM

TG

“ Ginger.....and family,
So sorry to hear about the loss of this special man. Our prayers are with you during this difficult time.

Terri and Mike Gill - January 11, 2011 at 11:01 AM

KH

“ A very special man has passed to a better place. You have my deepest sympathies. Enjoy your special memories and know he will always be in your heart.

Karen Haut - January 11, 2011 at 08:14 AM

TW

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Terri and Mike Gill of Sun Prairie, WI - January 11, 2011 at 12:00 AM

KL

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Karen Haut of Fond du Lac - January 11, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MW

“ My prayers are with the family during this time of sorrow.

Mabel Wilke - January 10, 2011 at 03:04 PM

TH

“ Gwyn...and family, our thoughts and prayers are with you! Be thankful for all of the wonderful memories you have and the quality time that you really got to spend with him at the end!

Terry & Trisha Holz - January 01, 1753 at 04:05 PM

CG

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CARA GESTNER - January 01, 1753 at 12:07 PM

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Paul and Laura Reetz family - January 01, 1753 at 08:14 AM