

Daily Herald

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Thank goodness these Angels keep it up

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Roger Clemens. Joe Paterno. Mick Jagger.

Larry and Patty Mix.

Some people just can't ride off into the sunset, waving goodbye.

"You guys are like the Rolling Stones," a co-worker and good friend of Larry Mix said so perfectly nearly a year ago.

"Every year's your last year. You'll be back."

So there I was last Friday. Me and about 400 or so other people, including that friend of Larry Mix. Lamenting about the birdie putts our group lipped out. Hoping — just hoping, with fingers crossed — that I'd be the one to win that Harley-Davidson raffle.

Getting teary-eyed watching home movies on a big screen of little Joey Mix. Tuesday marks 11 years since Larry and Patty's little guy lost his battle with leukemia, at age 3".

The Angels in the Fairway golf outing went spectacularly. It has for 11 straight years, always under sunny skies, always with dozens of volunteers working relentlessly.

I'll speak for everyone: It was great to be back at the Grand Geneva Resort in Lake Geneva, Wis.

Especially considering last year's Mix-er looked like it might be the last one. Larry and Patty, a Buffalo Grove couple who founded the Joey's Angels chapter of the Leukemia Research Foundation after their son's passing, said so themselves.

"I feel a little funny, maybe even a little guilty, standing here tonight after last year's thank-you speech," Larry told the couple hundred or so who stuck around for dinner, the live and silent auctions, and the tear-jerking home movie last Friday night.

"I really thought we were done — not going to happen again. At least take one year off and see what everybody thought, see what would really happen, see if anybody would really miss it or not."

Joey's Angels has raised more than \$1.5 million for leukemia research.

Sure, people are still succumbing to leukemia, but fewer and fewer are every year.

You can thank Team Mix.

So could Larry and Patty really say goodbye to something so powerful, something that has touched so many people, made them laugh, made them cry, made them appreciate every good thing in their life?

Fortunately, the answer was no.

"As usual, Patty changed her mind again," Larry joked.

"I really had a hard time," Patty said, "when I realized what I was giving up and what everybody looks forward to doing every first Friday in August. I couldn't believe how many people told me they would take the outing over.

"So we couldn't give it up. We had 70 people that said they were coming out here with or without us and were going to do it themselves."

Angels in the Fairway wouldn't be the same without Larry and Patty. Fortunately, they realize that too.

Everyone does.

"We'll probably see you next year," Patty conceded, "if you'll all come again."

People stood and cheered.

Maybe someday it will end, and Patty and Larry will ride off into the sunset, on Harleys.

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