

Every year, right around springtime, Tom Loncar '96 dusts off his Fender Stratocaster, tightens the strings and plays a few notes. Muscle memory kicks in and Loncar, a father of three, brushes up on basic chords.

Loncar is one-sixth of Hellcat Maggie, one-seventh if you count the newest and youngest member of the band, Owen Faulhaber, the tween-age son of Loncar's college roommate, Mark Faulhaber '96. Paul Brown '96 plays guitar, John Rovnan '97 is on bass. Drummer Rex Bacon '97 and singers Dan Volz '96 and Jessica Dixon Lyke '96 round out the group that played its first concert on a makeshift back porch of a house on the 400 block of Kiefaber Street two decades ago.

"I think that qualifies us for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame," jokes Loncar.

During their heyday, Hellcat Maggie — named after a gangster Volz and Steve Sanpietro '96, the band's original drummer, read about in their organized crime class — was a perennial at Tim's and The Pub. Heavy on mid-1990s cover songs from the likes of U2, Screaming Trees, Lenny Kravitz and Pearl Jam, Hellcat Maggie's modicum of fame wound through the Chetto like a homecoming parade.

"Although, we were really the only band around that year," concedes Brown.

After graduation, there was a half-baked attempt at stardom that fizzled after a few muddy performances, and Hellcat Maggie members peacefully disbanded. But behind stage, the members were still friends who

managed to meet once a year to crank out a few oldies. Then, in 2009 just before a scheduled weekend of basement fame, Tom's older brother, Lou Loncar '90, died suddenly.

"Lou was Tom's north star," says Volz quietly.

After the shock wore off, Brown knew Lou's suburban Cleveland community would be looking for ways to help his widow and three children. Hellcat, he hoped, could still draw a crowd, and so why not marry the two? After a few phone calls, the gig was on. Door prizes and auction items were gathered and word about the newly minted Lou Loncar Children's Fund benefit concert spread quickly, partly because of social media, but mostly because of Lou.

A 1989 Division III National Defensive Player of the Year, a UD Hall of Famer and a defensive tackle for the last national championship football team at UD, Lou was nothing short of a legend. And having known Lou since he was 14, Brown says, off the field "he was a big brother to all of us."

So it came as no surprise that friends, family, neighbors, classmates and Flyer fans showed up in droves for the emotional show that Loncar says, "ended up being a healing thing for myself and my family." A second show in 2010 was equally as successful. When the third, in the spring of 2011, was in the works, Lou's widow suggested they donate the funds to a local child

battling leukemia. The next year, the money went to a woman facing breast cancer. Players who suited up with Lou, or know his son Ryan, a Kirtland High School football standout, show up to the concerts year after year. In fact, the 2012 event benefited the Kirtland football program — a gesture not lost on anyone.

The amount raised isn't staggering — about \$20,000 — but the serendipitous way the concerts evolved has the most meaning for Loncar and his bandmates.

"There's a common fiber to the people that go to UD, and I like to think that events like this are a representation of Dayton people and what they stand for," says Brown.

It's not all serious, however. Brown is known to, with great ceremony, don ski goggles for a particular solo, and off-the-wall onstage guest appearances are not uncommon.

"Do we play 'Betterman?' Absolutely," says Volz, laughing about an oft-requested song popular during Maggie's zenith. "But with Owen [Faulhaber] on stage, we can freshen it up."

When Hellcat performed in college, it was about having fun. Today, the music has been resurrected into a new reality — a new narrative that honors a guy still talked about in unambiguous, bigger-than-life terms.

For more information on their next gig, contact Tom at tomloncar@att.net.

—Molly Blake '96



Lou Loncar '90



This time, with feeling

Hellcat Maggie (inset) in the 1990s — and today with (from left) Owen Faulhaber, Tom Loncar '96, Paul Brown '96, Jessica Dixon Lyke '96, John Rovnan '97, Dan Volz '96 and Rex Bacon '97.

