

Lost & Found at the All Charities Gala

By Joan Birsh

My ring, a lovely emerald-cut diamond, was given to me by my late husband Arthur, not only to celebrate our marriage but to celebrate our great and ever-growing love for one another.

Since Arthur's death last April, it had become increasingly important to me.

I never worried about losing my ring. Because I couldn't get it past my knuckle, I was convinced it would stay on my hand forever.

But on the night of the All Charities Gala, as I was reaching for a delicious little dessert pastry, I looked down and discovered my ring was there but the diamond was missing. I was devastated.

Then just as I was beginning to feel the full impact of what that loss would mean to me, Maureen Lampert, who – as the wife of celebrated Chicago jeweler Lester Lampert – has probably spotted many a diamond (though seldom on the floor), began an immediate search beneath our table and in minutes she announced, "Here it is!"

So, there I was, ever so grateful to be cupping a lonesome diamond in my hand but perplexed about what to do about the silver band on my ring finger with its gaping hole, like an overlooked bomb site. I feared that ring would be attached to my left hand for life.

Then Lester Lampert, who is a major contributor to All Charities (for the Silent Auction at Carysfort Hall, Lester Lampert Jewelers had several counters of opulent pieces with 20 percent of every purchase going the All Charities) stepped in and extended his charity to me.

"I can take care of your ring and I won't charge you for it."

He then escorted me out of Town Hall and into Carysfort, where several of his employees and guards were minding his temporary jewelry store. He instructed one employee to find the proper piers and cut off what was left of my sad little ring. Someone else inspected my diamond and declared it to be unscratched. After having measured my finger for a proper ring size, he took my name and address and promised I'd have my ring back in a week.

Lester Lampert is not only into good diamonds, he's also into good deeds.

Now that I'm assured of a happy ending, it's my pleasure to report that All Charities is a night at The Reef that is Not to Be Missed.

The collection of "biddables" was amazing, as was the friendly competition. The food, the wine, the band and the flowers were perfection. And so were the ladies' fashions. Short and long, lots of black and sequins. Everything tasteful and in keeping with the highlight event of the season.

I am sorry I must wait a whole year for the next All Charities Gala.