

There's something good here . . .

Written by By TERRY MATHEWS, News-Telegram Arts Editor
Friday, 17 June 2011 11:32

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In the photo at right (first row, left to right) Honesty Bridges, Molly O'Dell, Maddie O'Dell, Jessica Pazin, Kiara Stowater and (second row, left to right) Montana Clark and Chloe Anderson sold cookies, brownies and lemonade at 724 Davis St. Thursday. The girls raised money for Nothing But Nets, and organization committed to providing Africans with bed nets to protect against malaria-infected mosquitos. "We do a lemonade stand every summer," said Aldona Pazin, Jessica Pazin's mother and organizer of the event. "It's to teach Jessica and her friends that other people need things, and we need to do our part." Kudos to the kids and Aldona for teaching them the importance of giving back. (Thanks to Autumn Keiss for sending the photo.)

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Is there anything more comforting or fun as a family reunion? On Saturday the Hargraves and the Jobes met at the Sulphur Bluff Community Center. Attendance was down a little this year, but those who made the trip had a ball catching up and remembering. We welcomed two new distant cousins from Dallas. And, of course, along with the great food and warm laughter, there were a few tears.

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Speaking of heroes, aren't we lucky that Dr. Fred Tarpley is out there promoting language, books and the fine art of creative writing? Even in retirement, the good professor is still teaching us the importance of communication.

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I had a brief chat with John Sellers this week. The new city councilman says he's still in the "honeymoon" period but he's learning a lot. In most small towns, city councils and other civic boards are run by volunteers and during tough economic times they're called on to make some hard decisions. So, the next time you run into someone on the council, school board, hospital board or your church's council, thank them for their time and talents.

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Did you see the Monday, June 6, edition of the paper? Eight lovely women graced the front page. Seven were contestants in the Ms. Hopkins County Senior pageant and the other lovely lady was Stella Bagley, last year's queen. Betty Caudle won the title, and we hope she has half as much fun as Ms. Bagley did during her reign. If you see Betty, wish her luck at the state

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pageant in August.

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I lost an uncle and a father in service to this country, so I have a soft spot in my heart for those who serve. Reading Tuesday's story about the statue honoring Matt and Chance Ringler really moved me. While we can't bring our fallen heroes back, memorials like these ensure they're never forgotten.

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One of the great things about my job is seeing live performances in small listening rooms.

On Sunday, my practically perfect spouse and I drove into the city to see Willis Alan Ramsey at the Kessler in Oak Cliff. My mother's parents lived in Oak Cliff, so I was back in familiar territory. The people who restored the old movie theater have done a great job, taking it back to a mid-century modern look.

Willis Alan and his wife, Alison, spent Friday and Saturday at the Rockport Music Festival with Guy Clark, Jerry Jeff Walker, Gary P. Nunn and several other musicians.

The Kessler has sponsored a "storyteller series" and asked Willis Alan to be part of it. It was good to see him and hear the songs that have been so important in my life.

I went back to Dallas in the middle of the week. Guy Clark, the dean of Texas songwriters, and Verlon Thompson, his long-time touring partner, were at Poor David's Pub Wednesday and Thursday as part of a mini-Texas tour that included the Rockport gig, a night at Gruene Hall and a performance Saturday night in Conroe.

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Clark, who will be 70 in November, wrote "L.A. Freeway," a hit for Jerry Jeff Walker, "Out in the Parking Lot" for Brad Paisley and most recently, "Hemingway's Whiskey" for Kenny Chesney.

To me, Clark is one of the two best songwriters Texas has ever produced (the other being the late Townes Van Zandt), and the sold-out crowd at Poor David's seemed to agree, calling out song after song for the troubador and his friend to perform.

Clark and Thompson have new CDs coming out in August. Watch the paper for interviews with both. I do love my job.

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Speaking of songwriters, Christopher Edwards, a youngster from Nacogdoches, is booked tonight at BreHaHa's at 208 W. Broad in Mineola and tomorrow night at Lou Viney's. Chris is part of an exciting group of up and coming musicians who honor the style of Willis Alan, Guy, Steve Earle and Townes Van Zandt. Watch for a feature on Chris in my Songwriter's Sojourn series. He's just released a new CD full of heartfelt songs that certainly have a story to tell.