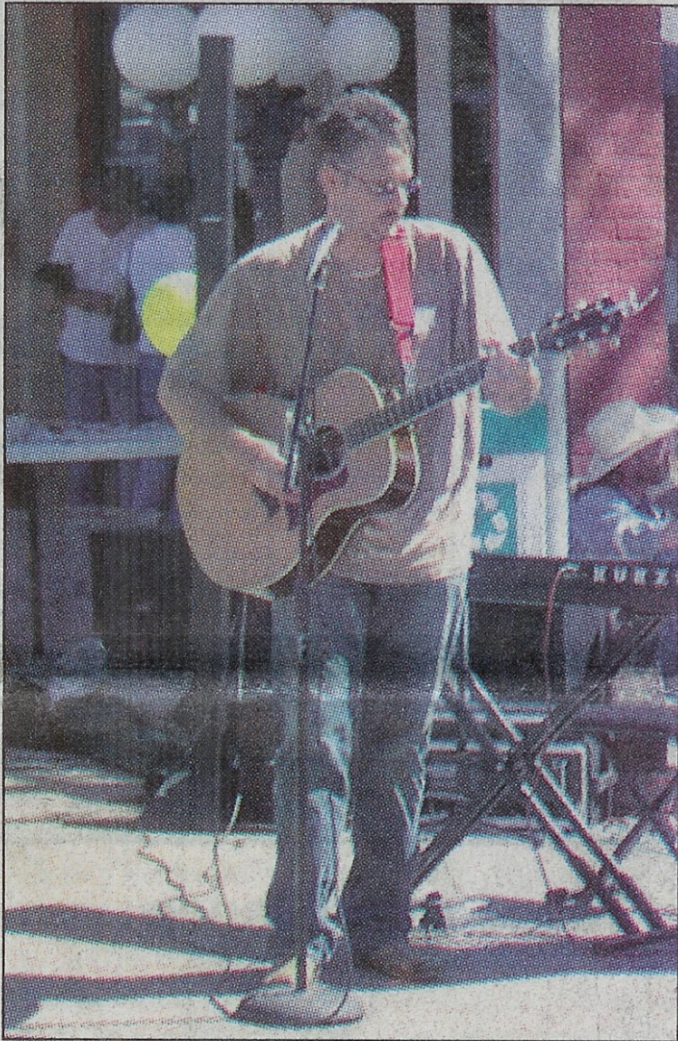


Local musician turned political activist works for Ron Paul



COURTESY PHOTO

Parker County musician Billy "Blaze" Raburn plays for the crowd at the Texas Mushroom Festival in Madisonville earlier this year. Raburn, a political conservative, works with a local group to get Texas Congressman Ron Paul elected president.

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It's not uncommon in today's political environment for entertainers to endorse and work for their own candidates.

Parker County musician Billy "Blaze" Raburn is simply working for his chosen candidate for president of the United States.

"When I'm playing somewhere, I don't get up onstage and talk politics," he said. "But if they want to ask me a question, that gives me the opportunity to tell them about my involvement with meet-up.com."

Raburn and about three dozen members of what he calls a meet-up group, gather two or three times a month to seek support for Texas Congressman Ron Paul's presidential bid. Their last gathering sent them into howling, freezing wind a couple of Saturdays ago.

"There were 36 of us out near the Farmers' Market and Uncle Joe's Pawn Shop. Wavin' our blue and white signs" Raburn said. "The folks at those businesses are supporters, too. They let us wave our signs there."

The Vidalia, La., native has lived in Hudson Oaks for about five years while trying to jump start a solo music career. He is almost evangelical in his zeal for Paul.

"I'm a strong supporter of the constitution and he's a strong supporter of the constitution," Raburn said. "He's concerned about our rights and liberties, about the way things are going now."

He said the members of his group are also very ardent in their support of the dark horse Republican.

"We talk about plans for getting Ron Paul's message out," he said. "Whether it's sign waving or traveling somewhere. The more coverage we can get, the more people we can reach."

He said he and his compatriots look for high-traffic areas to solicit voter registration as well as support for Paul.

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"We're going to the Parks Mall in Arlington," he said of the organization's plans for last weekend. "Going to the Parks the weekend before Christmas, there's a high-traffic area."

Raburn is not convinced the media's coverage of Paul has been fair in predicting the Republican presidential hopeful's campaign is doomed to failure.

"I don't believe the polls are accurately describing Dr. Paul's support," he said. "Some of the polls don't even list him as a candidate. It's hard to be voted for when your name isn't on the ballot."

The Parker County musician/political activist claims Paul has a lot of support in cyberspace.

A Dec. 18 report on CNN showed Raburn may be right. Paul raised about \$6 million in a 24-hour Internet-based fund drive, about a third of what he's raised for campaign expenses, so far.



COURTESY PHOTO

Members of Weatherford's Ron Paul "meet-up" group flash the signs of its candidate in a recent Parker County outing.

"He has very strong support on the Internet and the Internet is one thing that can't be controlled, at least at this time," Raburn said.

The group's ultimate goal is to get Paul elected, according to

Billy Blaze, but just presenting the candidate's platform to potential voters is a moral victory in itself.

"We want to see him elected president," he said. "But, what we're doing is waking voters up.

The fire is started and it's not going out."

For more information about Raburn's group, go to www.meet-up.com and type in Ron Paul, Weatherford.