

Music with a meaning

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BRUNSWICK -- A few dozen people came out to Beans in the Belfry on Saturday evening to eat, listen to music, and support an Alabama man in his fight with cancer. Jefferson singer-songwriter Tomy Wright organized "A Benefit for Adam," to help raise funds for his brother-in-law Adam Messer, who is undergoing treatment for stage 4 lung cancer. Wright's sister, Donna Messer, asked him to put the event together.

He's taken part in benefit performances before, starting with tsunami relief efforts a few years ago, but this is the first one he's organized, Wright said.

"This isn't foreign to me, but I've never been in the position of rallying my folks around and saying, 'Hey, I want to do this,'" he said.

Wright and seven other performers from Maryland and West Virginia -- Don Olhsson, David Horch, Pink Latimer, Todd C. Walker, Brooke Robbins, David Mays and Rod Deacey, were in Saturday's lineup.

"And whoever else passes by," Wright said at the start of the show.

It was an enjoyable show, Mari Davis, a student at Patrick Henry College in Purcellville, Va., said about 45 minutes into the program.

Messer, who lives in Alabama, but receives treatment in Mississippi, was not able to attend Saturday's concert. He said he's known about his cancer for three years. It started as lung cancer, but has since spread to his neck, brain and spinal cord.

"I think we've stopped the spread now, but it's moved around quite a bit," he said in a phone interview last week.

He underwent radiation treatments at first, but is now on chemotherapy.

Six weeks ago, Messer a software engineer, and several co-workers were laid off, he



Photo by Sam Yu

Local musician Tomy Wright, far left, organized a musical fundraiser, "A Benefit for Adam," for his sick brother-in-law Saturday evening at Beans in the Belfry in Brunswick. On stage with Wright are, from left, Pink Latimer, David Horch, and Don Olhsson.

said. His wife has been trying to find work.

It's difficult to say what the prognosis is at this point, he said.

"My numbers keep getting better, but they're not where we want to be yet," Messer said.

When Messer's doctors first diagnosed his cancer a few years ago, they didn't give him a lot of time, but that he's been able to continue on for this long is good, Wright said.

"The will's there to keep going and everyone's pulling for him and he's fighting this thing," he said.

Additional information is available at www.tomywright.com, and if the performers give permission, there may be a CD of the performance available. Proceeds from the CD would help support Messer's treatment, according to the show's program.

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