I'm think I just got lucky testing out a bunch of things.  Saw that the X manager was going crazy using top after thousands of passes to the children.  destroying the bridge objects didn't seem to work, so looked at the stuff the xmanager was dealing with and there were thousands of the idlbridge timers.  Deleted them and my programs been doing well since.  I also threw an empty command in there, though don't know if it does anything, and also periodically destroy the bridge objects too, plus explicitly delete and passed variables in the children.  No memory issues since :)