

From the Editor ‘Country Christmas Show’ to benefit 100 Club

By **Todd Hoover**
 Independent Newspapers

The Missouri Opry will perform a “Country Christmas Show” 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 13 at the Farnsworth Hall Community Theatre, 6159 E. University Drive in an unincorporated part of northeast Mesa, according to the musical group’s Web site.

A percentage of Missouri Opry’s fees and Farnsworth Hall’s net proceeds will be donated to the 100 Club of Arizona, which provides financial assistance and welfare resources to families of public safety officers and firefighters who were seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, according to the Web site.

The Missouri Opry began in 1982 after building a theater in Osage Beach, Mo., where they played for 18 years.

Band leader Jerry Prunty said the group primarily plays country music but puts on a “very variety-oriented” show that also includes 1940s swing, 1950s rock and roll and comedy.

“The clientele that we performed for every night at the theater – the vacationers could range anywhere from kids to grandma and grandpa and everywhere in between,” he explained. “So we had to develop a show that would try to appeal to everybody.”

He said the band has “hundreds upon hundreds” of songs in its repertoire.

“Sort of like our country music show isn’t all country music – it’s really a variety show – our ‘Country Christmas’ show isn’t all Christmas music, either,” he said.

Mr. Prunty – a professional en-

tertainer for 40 years – sings and plays lead guitar, fiddle, five-string banjo, percussion and trumpet in the band.

“I can play more instruments than that ... I play about

10 or 12 instruments altogether,” he explained.

The band also includes singer and multi-instrumentalist Buddy Evans; Mr. Prunty’s wife, Judy, on keyboards; and their youngest daughter, Jessica, on drums and vocals.

“Jessica, when she was little when we traveled years ago and we had the theater in the Ozarks, we used to take her and put her up in the luggage rack in the bus with a blanket and let her sleep up there on the way to shows,” he said.

Tickets for the “Country Christ-



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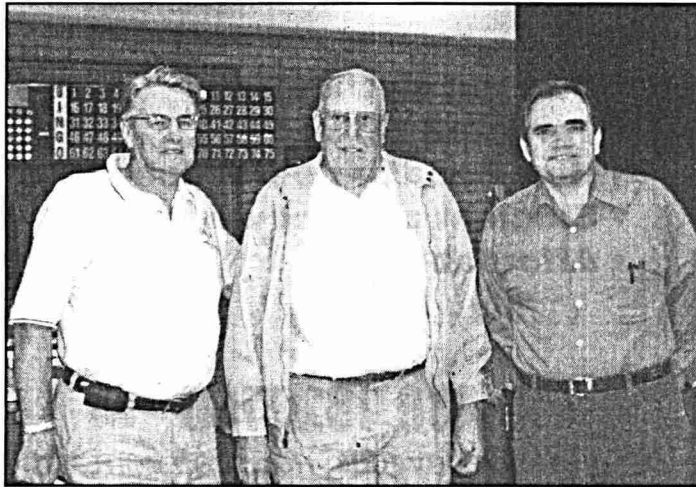
mas Show” at Farnsworth are \$9 in advance at the business office, 320 N. 55th Place in unincorporated northeast Mesa, or \$10 at the door on the night of the event, according to the Web site.

After this show, the Missouri Opry are scheduled to play six other Mesa communities. Mr. Prunty thinks Mesa’s large number of winter visitors make for “great audiences.”

“Because we’ve been around for longer than I’d like to admit, a lot of people that come to our show are people that came to our show in the Ozarks over the years,” he explained.

Call Mr. Prunty at 480-982-2539 or e-mail jerryprunty@gmail.com, or visit missouriopry.com/index.html.

Editor’s Note: Todd Hoover is the news editor for the Mesa Independent. He can be reached at 480-982-7799 or thoover@newszap.com.



Independent Newspapers/Todd Hoover
 From left, Harry Cole and Jim Cook – chairperson and vice chairperson of the Farnsworth Hall Community Theatre’s entertainment committee, respectively – stand in front of the theater’s stage with Jerry Prunty, the Missouri Opry’s band-leader.



Music in Mesa

The Missouri Opry's upcoming shows in Mesa are as follows:

- Saturday, Dec. 13, Farnsworth Hall Community Theatre (Dreamland Villa), 6159 E. University Drive in northeast Mesa, 7 p.m., 480-832-3461.
- Monday, Dec. 15, Monte Vista Village Resort, 8865 E. Baseline Road in southeast Mesa, 7 p.m., 480-380-3412.
- Tuesday, Dec. 16, Sun Life RV Resort, 5055 E. University Drive in northeast Mesa, 3 p.m.; Sun Life residents only.
- Tuesday, Jan. 20, Las Palmas Grand, 2550 S. Ellsworth Road in southeast Mesa, 7 p.m., 480-357-1148.
- Friday, Feb. 6, Towerpoint RV Resort, 4860 E. Main St. in northeast Mesa, 7 p.m., 480-854-8180.
- Tuesday, Feb. 10, View Point RV and Golf Resort, 650 N. Hawes Road in northeast Mesa, 7 p.m., 480-373-8710.
- Saturday, March 7, Mountain View Estates, 8600 E. Broadway Road in southeast Mesa, 7 p.m., 480-986-2622.