

SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Singer and songwriter Mark Bishop poses in front of Tom Rusk's cruiser during a visit to the Westminster Music Hall in 2013.

'A Mayberry Christmas' set for tonight in Westminster

BY CHRISTOPHER HALL
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WESTMINSTER — National singer and songwriter Mark Bishop will headline "A Mayberry Christmas" at Westminster Music Hall at 6 p.m. tonight.

The show will also include a performance from Golden Corner Gospel co-host and former Walhalla postman Buddy Byars, as well as a viewing of "A Christmas Story," a special holiday episode of "The Andy Griffith Show."

Bishop is a popular gospel artist who began his career in his home state of Kentucky as a member his family's singing group. "The Bishops" traveled the United States and Canada and received numerous accolades, including three No. 1 hits.

Now focusing on his solo career, Bishop has been performing on stages at various venues and events for more than 30 years. Bishop is a big Mayberry fan and enjoys spending his free time watching his all-time favorite TV show, which made him the perfect performer to headline the event.

"(Bishop) is a very unique individual and writes all of his own music," event organizer Tom Rusk said. "He's just a real down-to-earth guy, and we're excited about having him back again to perform."

Byars has been a church music director in the area for nearly 50 years and is well known around the community.

"Everybody loves Buddy, and he has a beautiful voice," Rusk said. "If you have ever been to a church senior function, you've probably heard him sing."

Byars is also credited with starting the Zion Quartet, which performs every holiday season at Seneca Baptist Church.

"A lot of people like Mayberry, and a lot of people like gospel music," Rusk said. "So I thought it would be great to keep the Mayberry theme alive and bring in Mark and Buddy to sing for us."

The Felkers, a husband-and-wife Andy Griffith reenactment team, will take the stage at 6:15 p.m., followed by Byars. After Byars' performance, the Christmas episode of "The Andy Griffith Show" will be shown. Bishop will close out the evening with popular Christmas tunes, as well as some of his own gospel hits.

"We're hoping we can draw interest from both Mayberry fans and gospel listeners," Rusk said. "We are optimistic for a large crowd to fill up this great venue."

Tickets are $15 per person and include admission to the show and hors d'oeuvres. Groups of 10 or more can receive a discounted price of $12. In addition to Westminster Music Hall, tickets can be purchased at Dad's and Lad's in Westminster, Powell Real Estate in Walhalla and Family Book Store of Seneca. For more information, contact the Westminster Music Hall box office at (864) 647-2777 or visit westminstermusichall.com.