

Blackwood Show's Hamills win top ventriloquist award

Submitted Report

FORT MITHCELL, Ky. — Bob and Marty Hamill, who entertain six mornings a week at the Blackwood Breakfast Variety Show in Pigeon Forge, got a very pleasant surprise when they attended the 34th International Vent Haven Ventriloquist Convention.

The Hamills were presented with the highest honor a ventriloquist can receive, The W.S. Berger Distinguished Service Award. There were more 450 ventriloquists from 12 countries attending the convention.

"There are very few people who are even nominated for this award. It is given to ventriloquists who have excelled not only in the art of ventriloquism but in the way it is presented," said Executive Director Mark Wade. "Bob and Marty Hamill are overdue for this

presentation. Bob has long been a goodwill ambassador for the art of ventriloquism."

Bob met Marty on a cruise ship where he was an entertainer and she was the ship's nurse. He recognized talent and made her a part of the act. Since then they have performed all over the world. Many times when they visited ports of call, they would bring their puppets into the country and entertain orphanages or hospitals in the area.

The Hammills have been part of the Fee/Hedrick Family Entertainment Group since 1998. They started at the Comedy Barn and joined the Blackwoods five years ago.

"We are living the dream," said Bob. "We are with one of the most inspirational groups of all time, we have the greatest audiences and



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we're finished at noon."

Bob is about to launch the Pigeon Forge version of the Bob Hamill Variety Show.

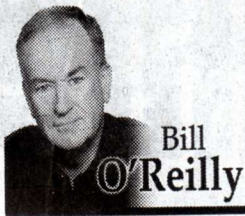
"It will be a show of entertainers who need a place to hone their art," he said. "It was so important in my early career to have a place to perform,

we played anywhere people needed entertainment. Entertainers need a place to be bad before they get good. I want to give young and older performers the chance to be in front of the microphone. Details of the Variety Show will be announced in a week or two."

Mountain Views

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COMMENTARY



Bill
O'Reilly

Oprah takes big chance with Rosie

Oprah Winfrey is a savvy businesswoman whose perspicacity in presenting herself to the public has earned her hundreds of millions of dollars.

Recently, Winfrey announced she is getting out of broadcast television and into cable with the startup of her own channel, fittingly entitled the Oprah Winfrey Network, or OWN. Yes, she owns much of it.

One of Oprah's first moves was to hire Rosie O'Donnell to do a daily afternoon talk show.

As you may know, Rosie flamed

THREE O

Award speaks highly of entertainers

In the case of Bob or Marty Hamill, if someone accused them of talking out of the side of their mouths, that would be a good thing. You see, the couple perform six days a week at the Blackwood Breakfast Variety Show — and they are both ventriloquists. The Hamills, you see, are among the best in the world.

At the 34th annual International Vent Haven Ventriloquist Convention in Kentucky recently, the Hamills were presented with the W.S. Berger Distinguished Service Award. It is the highest honor a ventriloquist can receive. After performing all over the world, the Hamills settled in Pigeon Forge, working for the Fee-Hedrick Family Entertainment Group.

Very few are ever even nominated for the award that is given to those who have not only excelled in the art of ventriloquism, but also in the way it is presented. "Bob and Marty are overdue for this presentation," said Executive Director Mark Wade.

Listen to him, folks. That's no dummy talking.

Clinic gives help to people needing

The staff at Mour Shepherd Clinic this should get physical distinctly, more people physicals. Problem can't afford the exam this week, as part of County Partnership were given at the cli

Some 60 people Tuesday, the first day event, and another ruled on Wednesday way for new patient get acquainted with good experience for cal students, so it's tion," said Mountain Director Mary Van

Ten ETSU medic and physician facul the clinic and health addition to the den dents who travel to each week to provic This was the fourth nership. Appropria appears to be physi