

Sometimes There's Magic

By Marilyn Reeves

Every so often a new sitcom comes along that rises head and shoulders above the rest. I'm thinking of shows like *Carol Burnette*, *Seinfeld*, *I Love Lucy*, and *All In The Family*. And back in the mid-1960s, the creative genius of Carl Reiner gave us *The Dick VanDyke Show*. With a staff of brilliant writers and a cast that included Dick VanDyke, Mary Tyler Moore, Morey Amsterdam, Rose Marie, as well as Reiner himself playing the roll of the producer of the *Alan Brady Show* – suddenly, there was magic in the air!

Rob, the bumbling television writer (VanDyke) was always tripping over himself and getting into hot water with his boss Alan Brady. The same was true on the home front. I can still hear Mary Tyler Moore's Laura, crying out in her sweet but strident voice, "Oh, R-o-o-o-b!" Later, she starred in her own sitcom, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* – another of my all-time favorites. The only thing lacking in her show was ... Dick VanDyke!

Another sitcom I loved that came out of the 60's was *The Andy Griffith Show*. Andy, the sheriff of Mayberry RFD, always played the straight-man to his hilariously incompetent deputy, Barney Fife (Don Knotts). The show had a wholesome, home-town feel, with Aunt Bea (Frances Bavier), always fluttering about, fussing over Andy and his son Opie, portrayed by Ron Howard. (Later, after starring in *Happy Days*, Howard went behind the camera and directed such notable films as *Apollo 13*, *A Beautiful Mind*, and *The Da Vinci Code*.) But what a cute, red-headed kid little Ronnie Howard was! Somehow, his character Opie was always getting into mischief, but that only presented an opportunity for Andy to give him a wise and drawn-out lecture about how he could do better next time. And Opie always did!

And then there was Jim Nabors, who played Gomer Pyle. His broad, 'down-home' Southern accent always made me smile. But the first time I heard him sing, I was astounded! Jim Nabors had a beautiful baritone voice that could have rivaled Robert Goulet.

A few years later, I watched the re-runs of *The Andy Griffith Show* over and over again, until I nearly had all the scenes memorized. But today as I look back on *Andy Griffith* and *The Dick VanDyke Show*, I can't recall the details of a single episode. I do remember how much I enjoyed them, however. I will always remember the magic!