



WALTER BURRELL

## Hollywood Happenings

If you've wondered about the scarcity of dark faces on the "Andy Griffith Show," you're not alone. The NAACP brought the fact to the attention of CBS last year and the problem was aired in calm and intelligent tones at that time. But not until recently has anything tangible been done about it.

IN A MOST cordial interview with the show's star, Andy Griffith, I gained an insight into the problems and attitudes of the actors and executives associated with the popular show--and how they've wrestled with the tricky problems of race.

"I don't think I've ever made a statement on this subject before," admitted Andy. "I'll have to be very honest and I hope you'll quote me that way. The problem we face is simple: we have to remain honest to the types of people depicted in the small, rural town of Mayberry (the fictional locale of the story), North Carolina.

"In a series like 'Dr. Kildare', for instance, you can have any number of Negro doctors. It's logical; it's a big hospital in a big city. But put a Negro doctor in a town like Mayberry and the people most probably wouldn't go to him.

"A STORY like ours, which is set in a small Southern town, just naturally leaves itself open for problems--especially when the show is a comedy. We wanted to do a story centered around a Jewish family, but it just didn't work because it turned out to be drama; it wasn't funny at all.

"We're not trying to avoid anything. It's just that the show has to remain honest. If we stretch the point just to accommodate certain groups, then things could easily become ridiculous. It goes without saying that all of us on the show would like it just fine if we could use people of all races on the show regularly."

In recent months Andy, his fellow cast members and the show's producers have kept their heads together constantly in an effort to come up with an honest script involving a Negro. Story ideas were discussed in detail and then discarded--until finally they hit upon the right idea.

A SEGMENT titled "Opie's Piano Lesson," which completed production only a week before this interview, is centered around Flip Conroy (played by Rockney Tarkington), a Negro and former end for the New York Giants who has returned to Mayberry to help his father with his business and agrees to help the kids form a team.

According to the script, Opie (Andy's teenage son on the show) is torn between spending his afternoons practicing the piano or playing on the coach's football team. Like any good father, Andy tells the youngster he can't do both if he plans to do either one well.

When Tarkington finds out about Opie's problem, he visits the boy and his father, tells Opie that if he juggles his free time right he can pursue many interests, then sits down to the family's piano and proceeds to play the hell out of it.

"With a show like this," says Griffith, "we can remain honest and yet make a point I think Negroes want to see made once in a while; that here is a man who's not only the white man's equal, but in many ways his better. I think this show is going to be very well received.

"There's no reason," Andy concluded, "why we can't continue to work Negroes into our story lines and keep it realistic. That's certainly our honest intention."

## 2nd Baptist Church Presents Musicale Sunday



Members and friends of the Second Baptist Church are eagerly anticipating the "Musicale" (a quarterly presentation of the Church pastored by Rev. V. C. L. Coleman) to be presented Sunday at 7:30 p.m.--Shown here are members of the famed 2nd Baptist Choir.

## NLV Advisory Bd. Member Wins "Priority" Battle

Raymond Blankes, a member of the North Las Vegas Jaycees and the Citizens' Advisory Board informed the Las Vegas VOICE of a federal project, The Model Cities Program, which was recommended to the NLV City Council by the Citizens' Advisory Board at a recent council meeting.

THE PROGRAM consists of identifying and listing a city's major problems in a report to be submitted to the federal government. The major problems of North Las Vegas were categorized, and the committee from the Citizens' Advisory Board then established a list of priorities beginning with the first ten as follows: 1. Lack of Civic Pride, 2. Need for Community Centers, 3. Not enough Firemen, Police and Police Protection, 4. Discrimination, 5. Unwed Mothers, 6. Juvenile Delinquency, 7. Need for Improved Street Conditions, 8. Inadequate Fire Exits, 9. No Standard Trailer Park in City, and 10. Inadequate Reporting of City Projects.

Mr. Blankes reported that he believes the major problem in NLV is Discrimination, however, his fellow members on the Advisory Board felt that discrimination was not a major issue, and in some cases, members felt discrimination was not worthy or important enough to appear on the list, Basing my opinion on the fact, Mr. Blankes continued, that there are only two Negroes working for the City of North Las Vegas, which boasts a total population of 35,000 of which 2,000 are Negroes, is a very poor representation of equal opportunity in employment for any city. He also stated that it was an insult to the citizens' intelligence that with such a condition existing any responsible man could overlook or attempt to dismiss the importance of this issue.

After a persistent battle of opinions with his fellow Board members, Mr. Blankes was successful in having Discrimination placed on the list of priorities.

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