

A radio-TV favorite, whose book about kids was a best seller, tells about the high jinks of his own crew of five

SPEAKING OF CHILDREN, HERE ARE MINE!

by ART LINKLETTER



(Art Linkletter's newest book about children, "The Secret World of Kids," will be published in a few days. If it does anywhere near as well as his first, "Kids Say the Darndest Things," it's bound to be another best seller. In both, Art speaks primarily about youngsters appearing on his television show. We thought readers would enjoy having Art tell about his own kids, and here's what he wrote.)

SOMEONE once said, "Kids are the same all over the world."

I don't think that person knew what he was talking about! The most wonderful thing about children is that they are so different from one another. To me, there's no better proof than my own family.

My wife Lois and I have five offspring—Jack is 22, has his own network show, is married, and has already made me a grandfather; Dawn, 19, is also married; Robert, 15; Sharon, 13; and Diane, who'll be 11 next Saturday.

Like all parents, my wife Lois and I once had the naive conviction that since our children had the same mother and father they were bound to have a few things in common.

We were wrong.

For example, they didn't all walk or talk or say the same things at the same times in their lives. Jack's first word was "Mommy," which is understandable. Robert started out with "Duck," probably the influence of a Walt Disney short. Sharon burst out with "Station break."

Probably the only trait they have in common is a kind of crass commercialism—for which I get blamed!

I first noticed it in Jack when he was five. One morning I saw him out on the front lawn, crouched in an orange crate beside the hedge. Every time a stranger came by, he'd jump out, whisper something that brought about a wide-eyed reaction, then disappear into the garage. When he returned a few seconds later, some sort of exchange took place, then the stranger patted him on the head and took off.

My curiosity aroused, I crept up behind Jack, Indian-style, to watch the proceedings which promptly began when Jack blocked another stranger's way. "I bet you didn't know I'm Art Linkletter's son!"

She didn't.

"I can get you a picture of my Dad for a nickel," he informed her. "If you pay a dime, I can get it autographed."

The answer being in the affirmative, he dashed into the garage where my publicity pictures were stacked. Then he scribbled something on it, hurried back and collected his ransom!

I stopped that—with him anyway.

Sharon, Robert, and Diane improved on Jack's idea by forming an assembly line. Their gimmick



Family gathering brings together nine Linkletters. At top are Art, his wife Lois, Sharon, 13, Robert, 15. Seated below are Diane, 11, Jack's wife Barbara, Jack, 22, holding their young son Michael, and Dawn, 19.

was simple enough. With the help of maps sold along Sunset Boulevard, it's easy to locate show people. Just in case anyone should miss our house, Diane was dispatched a block or so up the street with a big poster. It had LINKLETTER crudely painted on it, and an arrow pointing in the direction of the house.

When the fans arrived at the house, Robert and Sharon took over. They knew that tourists enjoy taking pictures of movie and television people's homes, and like it even better if they can get a member of the family into the shot. That could be easily arranged—for the price of a geranium which they plucked from our front yard and sold for 5 to 25 cents apiece, depending on what the market would bear.

When they ran out of geraniums, they organized an artificial flower factory with odds and ends liberated from their mother's knitting basket. I was

(Continued)

COVER:

Pictured on the cover are the new compact cars, Corvair, Falcon, and Valiant, which join the Lark and Rambler to give America a new concept in motoring. For the story on these and the other 1960 models, see "Revolution in the Auto Industry" on page 6.

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