

Broadcasting is All In The Family For Gardner Bros.

■ BY CARRIE BORZILLO

LOS ANGELES—The Gardner brothers give new meaning to the concept of brotherly love. Not only do Andre, Bill, and Al claim to feel no sibling rivalry, even though all three work in the fiercely competitive radio world, each says he looks to the others as a source of inspiration.



AL GARDNER

Hailing from Philadelphia, the three brothers are now on the airwaves in far-flung areas of the country. Youngest brother, Andre, 22, recently landed the APD job at classic rocker WXRK (K-Rock) New York. Bill, 48, is handling mornings at country KFMS Las Vegas. Al, 46, hosts the morning show at N/T WFLA Tampa, Fla.

According to Bill, he and his brothers were all No. 1 in their respective dayparts at some point in his year.

Each brother got into radio in a completely different, and somewhat unusual way.

The youngest Gardner chose a radio career because he "was the little brother looking up to the older brother."

Andre explains, "I was nine and Bill took me to the old WIBG [Philadelphia], which was top 40. When I got there it was like a magical, beautiful place with a spiral staircase and chandeliers. I sat silently in the back while he did his breaks. From that time on, I wanted to do what he did."

Bill even made his little brother a radio console for his bedroom and hooked up a Mr. Microphone toy. That was where Andre's first "broadcasts" took place.

"That was really my training ground. It helped me prepare for my first tape," says Andre. "I was broadcasting around the neighborhood for years with that set-up."

Bill remembers giving Andre his old records and promotional items from work for his bedroom station.

ACAPULCO ODDS?

Recalls Bill, "Andre said I used to tell him it was a competitive business and that the odds were stacked against him. But he'd say I told him that on the back of a post-

card from Acapulco."

Middle brother Al was the last of the trio to get into radio.

Once a musician, Al was "discovered" at one of his gigs that Bill attended with his fellow WIBG cronies. "I did this sound-of-Philly medley and during the instrumental breaks I would be doing this comedy bit and one of the guys from the station came over and said I had a good voice for radio."

EARLY GIGS

All three landed major-market gigs early in their careers.

Al landed at WIBG and worked with Bill at a time when he thought "only gods do radio." He went on to work as ND at WBJW Orlando, Fla., which ended up bringing Bill in as PD in an attempt to boost the station's ratings.

Al and Bill also worked mornings together at the station, although Al went by the name Lee Simpson at the time. The two later did the same thing at KLLS San Antonio, where Bill was VP and Al was morning co-host, again as Lee Simpson.

In a roundabout way, Bill got into radio by following in his father's footsteps. Bill Gardner Sr. dabbled in radio and worked at KYW-TV in Philadelphia for more than 40 years. Bill Jr. also started in television before making his way to KLZ Denver as PD/afternoon host in 1965. He went on to work at KCBQ San Diego and KVIL Dallas and to own KRVZ/KQAZ Springerville, Ariz.

Bill's credits also include a 1974 Billboard Radio Award for major market top 40 air personality of the year.

After his bedroom broadcasting days, Andre's first radio job was at age 16 at WPST Trenton, N.J., where he worked overnights and weekends until he says he had to stop doing overnights because he was too young. Andre went on to WZZD Philadelphia for overnights and weekends before landing at his childhood dream station, WFIL,

also in Philadelphia. Before joining K-Rock New York last week, Andre was MD/late night host at sister WYSP Philadelphia.

Andre and Bill also worked in the same market, but at different stations—Andre was as KEGL Dallas while Bill was at KVIL.

And, believe it or not, the three relish each other's achievements.

Al says, "I idolize my brother Bill in radio. I learned so much



From left, Bill and Andre Gardner.

from him, and I still do what he told me to do [when he was the PD and I was the ND at WIBG]. He was the pioneer, and now Andre, my lord, he's doing great. I'm just a musician who lucked out."

Describing their relationship, Al likens the Gardner brothers to "the brothers Gibb. We obediently followed our older brother Bill. I read a lot about the old Bee Gees, and there was almost a reverence for the first brother. None of us will ever challenge him. He was always the teacher."

Al's goal is for the three of them to work together one day.

"We want to be the biggest brothers to hit showbiz since Mo, Shemp, and Curly," quips Bill.

If the Gardner brothers don't go down in history that way, Al's son Jonathan will at least have the distinction of being one of the youngest broadcasters in history. At age 6, Jonathan hosts a 10-minute Sunday pregame sports show called "Pint-Sized Picks," on his father's station.



ing Moore. Ian Moore and his band, out supporting their new Capricorn rock single, "Nothing," dropped by WLWQ Columbus, Ohio. Pictured, from left, are band members Chris White and Bukka Allen; Moore; WLWQ MD Jonathon; PD Bob Neumann; and band member Michael Villegas.