



Photo illustration by Monte Bach/San Antonio Express-News

Sonny Melendrez spins his perfect day

Radio legend puts helping others, meeting Sir Paul and a surprise reunion on his playlist

By Richard A. Marini

STAFF WRITER

For those of a certain age, radio DJ Sonny Melendrez will always be *the voice* of San Antonio. Over the years, his enthusiastically optimistic take on life has been heard on a Wordle's worth of radio stations, including KTSA, KTFM, KLUP, KAHL and Magic 105.

These days, Melendrez also does a show he describes as a mix of entertainment and inspiration on Boerne Radio, 103.9 FM. Airing Saturdays at noon, it also streams at SonnyRadio.com.

As if that's not enough, he also hosts "The Centennial Voices Project" for San Antonio College and, for KLRN-TV, "The San Antonio Files" and "100 Years of San Antonio Radio."

Over the years, Melendrez has been named Billboard Magazine's Air Personality of the Year two years in a row, was included in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame's list of the Top 100 radio personalities and has been inducted into both the Texas and San Antonio radio halls of fame.

At 79, Melendrez isn't slowing down. That's why his imaginary Best Day Ever starts early and he stays busy throughout.

"When I lived in Los Angeles, traffic was so bad I was able to do only two, maybe three things a day," he said. "Here in San Antonio, you're never more than 30, 45 minutes from anywhere. So I can get a lot more done."

Here's what he'd do:

4:45 a.m.: Wakey-wakey

The first thing I do after getting up is pray and read or listen to a source of inspiration. I find the first 30 minutes of your morning can set the stage for a positive day ahead. Right now, I'm listening to "Meditations" by Marcus Aurelius. What's incredible about the Stoics is that if you didn't know these writings date from that Greco-Roman period, you could



Courtesy of Sonny Melendrez

For Sonny Melendrez, a family gathering is the perfect way to end his best day ever.

easily think they're from Tony Robbins. The advice, encouragement and inspiration they contain is timeless.

5:15 a.m.: Gonna fly now

I exercise for 30 minutes, listening to inspiring songs like the theme from "Rocky," "Eye of the Tiger" or "I Saw the Light" by Todd Rundgren. I have a whole playlist. I'll do two reps of 10 push-ups, various stretching exercises and then two reps of 10 pull-ups.

After showering and getting dressed, I have breakfast. Three eggs, sunny side up (no surprise there), avocado, coffee and, because I read somewhere that's it's good first thing in the morning, some warm lemon water.

(Editor's note: Warm lemon water is said to be a gentle way to rehydrate and prepare the body for the coming day.)

Finally, I get out my journal and have my second morning prayer, which I actually write out, sign and date. This is kind of like my

letter to the universe or to God. It's a way of solidifying what I'm grateful for, including my family and the abundance we all have.

7 a.m.: Inspiring others

On my best day ever, I'm scheduled to give a keynote address to a major conference. Depending on the conference, I can either use the same speech I've given before or write something completely new.

9 a.m.: It's showtime

I take to the stage and do a one-hour keynote.

That might seem long, but I love it. My first job, at the No. 1 radio station in El Paso, was on Sundays from 5 a.m. to noon. That's seven hours. But I'd find myself looking at the clock and saying, oh, good, I still have four more hours to go, or three more hours to go. I didn't want it to end. That's the way it is when I'm on stage.

People ask if I ever have butterflies before I make a speech and I tell them, yes

but now they fly in formation.

10 a.m.: Signing, chatting

Following the speech, I usually do a signing of my book "The Art of Living with Enthusiasm!" which has 17 stories of enthusiasm, comfort and joy. I love selling the books, but what I really love about book signing is these 30-second conversations I have with attendees. There's nothing like seeing and talking to them in person.

Noon: Working lunch

Next, I go to San Antonio College for a working lunch where we're planning an event for the school's upcoming centennial celebration. SAC was really the launching pad for my career, and today, I'm the school's community engagement consultant, which means I help connect SAC students with opportunities in the private sector.

2 p.m.: Distributing food

I make my way over to the

Melendrez Community Center on the West Side where we're giving away food boxes to about 350 families served by the center.

I'll be there carrying boxes and talking to people in their cars. Many of them were my listeners, so it's like having all these wonderful mini reunions.

3:30 p.m.: Welcome, Sir Paul

By now, I'm in my home studio to do my radio show podcast, and on this, my Best Day Ever, I get to do the interview that has eluded me my entire life.

I'm finally getting to interview Sir Paul McCartney.

That would be a thrill of a lifetime, especially when I find out he's truly a down-to-earth, easygoing guy.

5 p.m.: Surprise visitors

I'm still walking on cloud nine after the McCartney interview when my wife, Linda, and I head out for a quiet meal at our favorite restaurant, Ruth's Chris Steak House at La Cantera.

Once we're seated, our server walks up behind Linda and says, "Welcome back to Ruth's Chris."

Only it's not our server, it's our son, Joe, who's come in from Los Angeles.

We all hug, and I say to Joe, "Since you work here, can we get some water?"

Then Linda hears another voice, "Did somebody ask for water?"

And that's our youngest son, Bono, who also flew from L.A.

Water works.

But wait! There's more!

In walks Joe's wife, Noelle, Bono's wife, Meghann, and our three grandchildren, Antoinette, Anthony and Georgette.

We all celebrate our reunion with a great meal.

9 p.m.: Everyone's in

Back home, we have a very happy, very full house.

9:30 p.m.: 'night all

Bedtime and sweet dreams of my best day ever!