

On the Job

JERRY KING

By Loraine Fick

Photos: Robert Matta

On-air personality Jerry King is halfway through his day before most of us have finished breakfast. He hosts San Antonio's KKYX 680 AM weekday morning show, a blend of classic country music and morning drive-time staples—traffic, news and weather.

King has had a long and close connection to country music; he started in country radio in the 1960s and joined KKYX-AM in 1975. Over the years, he has watched country music evolve, with artists like Alan Jackson and Clint Black bringing in younger audiences. “The sound changes over time,” he explains, “but it always comes back to the basics.”

Thousands of listeners in KKYX-AM's south Texas coverage area start their day listening to King, a recent inductee into the Country Music DJ Hall of Fame. *InSide Cox* caught up with King to find out how he spends his day. ➔

After his show, KKYX-AM DJ Jerry King jams with a local band at a nearby watering hole.



➤ The Morning Show

The alarm goes off at 3:45 a.m. King has a cup of coffee and starts to plan the day ahead. He's not the earliest one up in his house—his wife Carylton starts the coffee around 3:30.

He leaves home at 5 a.m. to get to the studio by 5:15—in 10 years as a morning DJ, he has only been late twice. One big advantage of getting to work so early—he gets his pick of parking spaces.

From 5:15 to 5:30, King checks email, then grabs his headphones on his way to the control room. All radio personalities have their own headphones, though King's are a little different—a left-ear-only headphone instead of the usual headset. He needs to keep an ear out because he runs the entire show, from cueing up music to making public service announcements to airing six traffic reports an hour and much more.

Can't Miss a Beat

Then comes the busiest part of Jerry's day—his 5:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. show. Morning listeners are on the go and want helpful information fast. To give them what they need, King's show has a rhythm: At 10 minutes past the hour, there's traffic. At 20 past the hour, traffic and weather. He announces a half-dozen birthdays and anniversaries throughout the show, and there's a "This Day in History" spot. Winding throughout are classic country hits. It's a one-man show that takes his full concentration.

Always on His Mind

King loves meeting and promoting musicians. Years ago he interviewed George Strait on the air at the beginning of his

solo career. "After we talked, I got ready to play George's new song," King recalls. "Then George jumped up, ran out of the studio and took off in his truck. I was worried he was angry, but it turned out he just wanted to hear himself on the radio for the first time."

The Farm Show

King also produces "Down on the Farm Radio" for program host and owner Larry Marble, who began the farm and ranch news program in 1995. The show covers livestock, crops, futures, weather and industry news and airs weekdays from 12:10 p.m. to 1 p.m., as well as Saturdays from 7:30 a.m. to 8 a.m. King has been producing it for two years and sees it as a continuous learning opportunity.

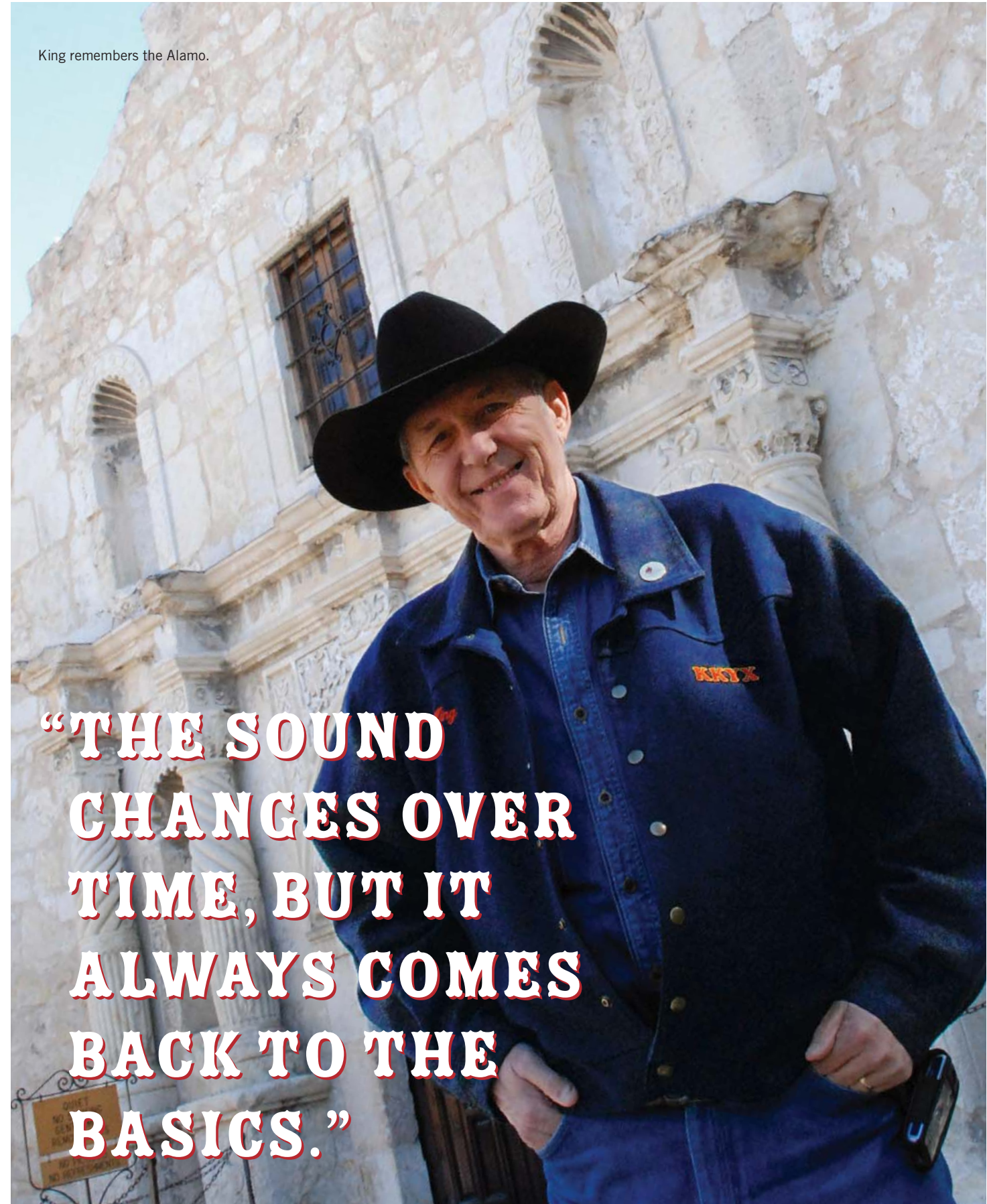
The Show's Never Over

King wears yet another hat at KKYX-AM. He helps out as emcee, judge, consultant and participant in parades, festivals, fundraisers and contests throughout the station's listening area, and he loves every bit of it. He covers the region in family members too—a former DJ at the station said he couldn't go anywhere in south Texas without running into one of King's cousins. In fact, many people know him as "Cousin" Jerry King.

Except When It's Over

How does he keep up with his busy schedule? "By getting to sleep by 9:30 p.m.," says King. When not working or catching up on sleep, King and Carylton enjoy spending time with their son, Gaylon King, also a country DJ, and three grandchildren. ●

King remembers the Alamo.



**"THE SOUND
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THE JOB ACCORDING TO JERRY

The best part of my job

The people—the audience, the people I meet every day. I make so many friends. I'm lucky to be doing what I do.

The most challenging part

Keeping on top of technology. Just when you get comfortable, it changes. And you have to learn new technology right away because you'll use it during the show. You sure know when you've hit the wrong button.

The careful part

I'll have a cup of coffee while I'm on the air, but I won't eat in the control room. Something could lodge in my throat right when it's time to talk.

