The Brits And Yanks Invade Winnipeg.

Attending the CKY reunion in Winnipeg recently seems to have turned my memory button to on. I well remember being a rookie board op when CKY was being invaded by both the Americans and the British. What an exciting time it was for a young guy like me to be starting his Radio career.

Neither the British nor the Americans were being welcomed with open arms at the station but in a short period of time I was able to absorb enough from both of them to use for my whole career which produced a pretty decent life for me and my family.
The British showed me a new kind of rock which my band The Jury emulated well enough to get a recording contract with London Records and release a few hits. The Americans convinced me to stop trying to get on Bandstand because Ratings were the thing I should be chasing.
The Jury records still proudly hang on my wall(pictured) and serve as permanent reminders of one of my biggest thrills which was hearing them on the radio.
www.GeorgeJohns.com/audio/JimmyDarin-CKYWinnepeg.mp3 The problem I found out over the years with chasing Ratings is there is definitely nothing permanent about them and your only as good as your last book. Unlike the pursuit of happiness being happiness chasing ratings does not always produce ratings. You get an incredible 24 hour high when some good ones roll in but then the chase is on again leading you to believe you must be only one great rating book away from true happiness. Unfortunately no matter how many good ones you get you just end up feeling like Don Quixote.

In an earlier Blog I had written about how the PD/Afternoon drive guy Jimmy Darin (pictured) had awarded me the Sunday night gig at CKY where I got to roll all the religious tapes and even read some short announcements can you say announcer. Hey hand me my KY Good Guy jacket boy I'm about to go on. It was during one of my Sunday night shifts that music and radio changed forever.
During the day I was being mentored and taught by Chuck Dann (Riley) how to do production. At night I was the board op for Daryl "B" who did a remote from an outdoor eatery called Champs. During this time we were all aware that something was getting stirred up in England by a group called the Beatles mainly because Deno Corrie had turned us on to them by playing them on his Sunday morning show called "Music Around The World" I remember thinking they sounded like the 4 Freshman singing with Chuck Berry's band. Daryl and I used to pester Jim about letting us play more Beatle music at night but he was reluctant to do so yet.
On February 9th,1964, the Beatles arrived in America to play on the Ed Sullivan show and a bunch of us gathered together to watch that historic broadcast a the CKY studios.
There we were all cramped together in the on air studio watching a couple of small black and white TVs that we had all hooked up and ready to go. Behind us the religious program was rolling and the new one cued up so I had an hour before I had to read any more announcements. It seemed like forever until Ed Sullivan finally said the words we were waiting for. "LADIES AND GENTLEMEN THE BEATLES" One ... One Two Three Four "Close Your Eyes And I'll Kiss You Tomorrow I'll Miss You"..... They blew us and all of North America away.

There was a regular Jock meeting scheduled in Jim's office the next day and it was the first one I had been invited to so I felt very honored. Jim opened the meeting by pointing out that even though I wasn't a Jock I was one of the guys so I deserved to be there. The guys all nodded

their heads in agreement and I was feeling pretty good until I heard Jim say ... What the hell is that FM kid jumping up and down outside my window for. Johns is he looking for you are you supposed to be doing something for him you better go out there and see what he wants. Just ignore him Jim he's kind of a weird guy I said knowing full well it was Jack Stewart Jr and he was looking for me to relieve him for his lunch break. Nothing was getting me out of my first Jock meeting.

Jim started with all the usual housekeeping stuff like clean up the studio after your shift, sign the log, put the records away etc.etc. then finally got to the real reason for today's meeting. He informed us he was adding some more major newscasts plus starting a new talk show mid day with a guy called Joe Pyne. He finished up with a lot of the details and asked if anybody had any questions. Up went my hand and Jim looked a little surprised but he said ... What do you want squirrel do you need to use the restroom or something. I told him I didn't think the changes he was making were going to work. His office got very very quiet and the only sound was Chuck Dann's sarcastic laugh. Jim looked at me with astonishment but quietly asked why I thought that. I confidently told him like I had some secret inside information that me and all my friends didn't like talk, we just wanted to hear the Beatles and the Beach Boys. I waited for the cheers from the rest of the jocks because they just stood around all day bitching about the music instead of telling Jim like I had just done. There was only silence except for another chortle from Chuck and Jim looked up at the ceiling for a moment or two (probably counting) then finally said ... Johns you were invited to this meeting so you could learn about Radio but see here's where you have gone wrong already. The only way you learn is if you listen you don't learn anything when you talk so if you ever want to come to one of these meetings again you'll keep your mouth shut. Am I clear! Yes Sir I said and almost saluted. The rest of the meeting continued about the usual engineering screw ups and some details about an upcoming promotion and Jim concluded the meeting by telling Daryl that starting tonight we will play The Beatles every half hour.

Then he said ... Gentlemen what happened last night on the Ed Sullivan show was very exciting but it is going to change radio as we know it. Before this all settles down there will only be one top 40 station in the market and we better be that station or none of us will be working here any longer. Welcome to the generation gap. The only thing that can save top 40 radio now is if The Beatles plane goes down on their flight back to England. We would then do a big tribute weekend and be back to regular music by Monday.