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Columnist Spencer Patterson: New station knows 'JACK,' but not John

Spencer Patterson covers music for the Sun. His music notes column appears Fridays. Reach him at spencer@lasvegassun.com or (702) 259-2309.

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"The John Tesh Radio Show" was No. 1 in Las Vegas among women ages 25 to 54 in the latest Arbitron ratings guide.

So imagine Tesh's surprise when he recently received word that his syndicated show was off the air in Southern Nevada, the result of KMZQ 100.5-FM's sudden switch from lite-rock to the DJ-less, free-form rock format, "JACK."

"It knocked the wind out of me," Tesh said Wednesday, calling from a hotel room in Dallas. "It's not like (format changes) are something that doesn't happen, but our show was No. 1 in the (Vegas) market."

In fact, Tesh's success in Southern Nevada had been so strong, he chose the area for his first "Music and Intelligence for Your Life" conference, held in the Suncoast's Grand Ballroom in April.

"It was one of our biggest markets," Tesh said.

Since KMZQ flipped formats on June 24, Tesh says he has been inundated with e-mails from area fans of the show -- which blends music with Tesh's "Intelligence Minutes For Your Life" advice tidbits.



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An excerpt from one e-mail: "My wife and I have enjoyed your show day and night. We recently found out you are not on the air. We are upset since your show suits our listening together. It is the only show we agreed on. Otherwise, the radio is off!!!"

And this, from a young Tesh listener: "I am 10 years old and loved listening to all your tips. I could fall asleep listening to it, but would always remember what you had to say. Please come back to Vegas."

Tesh said his staff is already on the lookout for a new partner station in Southern Nevada, with KOAS 105.7-FM (smooth jazz) and KOOL 93.1-FM (oldies) two possible new outlets for the show.

"We're hoping to get on somewhere else in Vegas," Tesh said. "We've had quite a few feelers."

Tesh said his show would work with a variety of music formats, since stations can opt to include his song selections or fill time between his spoken segments with their own programming.

"You can take our content or marry it with your own music," Tesh said. "In Dallas I'm visiting a 'Hot AC' (adult contemporary) station. In Bakersfield (Calif.), we're on a smooth-jazz station. And in Hartford (Conn.) we're on a rock station."

As for the new JACK format, KMZQ listeners can now hear songs by Bruce Springsteen, Donna Summer and Matchbox Twenty all on the same station.

Las Vegas joins Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Dallas, Baltimore, Minneapolis and Seattle among cities with the format, launched by Infinity Broadcasting last summer.

KMZQ Program Director Craig Powers, who remains on staff at the station, did not return a call seeking comment.

Music notes

Red hot stuff: A few final thoughts on last Saturday's centennial rock concert featuring the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Weezer and the Adolescents:

Since the show, I've heard from a few attendees that it got pretty rough behind the barricade partitioning off the area closest to the stage.

Though organizers were wise to prevent the crowd of more than 47,000 from crushing forward, a second fence separating off another chunk of the Silver Bowl Sports Complex soccer fields, keeping fans from getting pushed against the first fence, might have made sense.

It also would have been helpful for ticket holders to know that only about 10,000 people would be allowed near the stage, so that the diehards would have made sure to arrive extra early.

Then again, it's easy to understand why we weren't told. No one wanted a massive line forming early in the day, especially given hot temperatures and the dusty condition of surrounding lots.

Placing all the portable toilets near one end of the massive field wasn't the most thought-out decision, either. At California's annual Coachella Music & Arts Festival, for example, such facilities are quite spread out, preventing masses of foot traffic in one particular direction or another.

But as I noted in Tuesday's review, the concert was a greater logistical success than I ever would have guessed. Any event can be improved upon, but for a first time out, the centennial committee deserves high praise for getting most everything right.

Eight isn't enough: Speaking of free, live concerts, who else thought TV coverage of last Saturday's Live 8 shows was pathetic at best?

Not only did MTV and VH1 show the exact same feed as one another, all day long, but that feed was rife with examples of those networks' total indifference to music (as if we needed further proof of that).

Again and again, MTV's vacuous cast of "reporters" interrupted poignant musical moments to blather about some inane point or another. The Killers' "All These Things I've Done," for example, was left behind just as a choir

appeared to join the Vegas band on the London stage to sing the final stretch.

ABC was no better. Its coverage of Pink Floyd's much-anticipated reunion with one-time mate Roger Waters consisted of exactly one song ("Money"), which was cut off early when the network went to commercial.

It's sad to think that we got to see more of the original Live Aid concerts, fully 20 years ago, than we did in an era with hundreds more channels and vastly improved satellite hookup capabilities.

How can Live 8 really expect to raise awareness of global poverty when most of the world doesn't even seem to know the event even happened?

On sale

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Papa Roach plays The Joint at the Hard Rock Hotel on Aug. 5, with opening act **Alien Ant Farm**. Tickets are \$20.50 and go on sale at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Hard Rock box office and through Ticketmaster.

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Jet lands at The Joint on Sept. 16. Tickets are \$30 and go on sale at noon Saturday through the Hard Rock box office and Ticketmaster.

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