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Tim Dunn (L) and Ken Kiunke (Center right, seated) at the 2010 Bottling Party at the Bianchini Vineyards in Shingle Springs.

Bottling Party - Tim Dunn is one of a crew of volunteers who each year gather to harvest vintage grapes and bottle the bounty at Bianchini's vineyard in Shingle Springs, just as many others do at private vineyards throughout the gold country. Many wineries will be finishing up their bottling of 2009 vintage wines as well. In late September 2011, the Bianchini's 2009 vintage will be bottled, tanks emptied, equipment cleaned and serviced in preparation for this year's crush. It will be celebrated with a dinner and lots of wine. At Frog's Tooth, Gary and Sue are beginning to see color in their Grenache and Petite Sirah. The Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier are swelling and softening up. Gary says they may be harvesting Sauvignon Blanc in another 3-4 weeks. *See page 9 for updates.*

With the growth of Comic-Con, new talented Artists Emerge

By Jennifer Benton
Staff Writer

In its dawning, Comic-Con was a small gathering of comic book enthusiasts in a room at the convention hall. Since 1970 and more so over the last 10 years, Comic-Con, also known as San Diego Comic Con and San Diego Comic Con International, has grown into a completely different animal. What was once an opportunity for fans to meet the artists of their favorite comics has become quite the celebrity hunt. With the sci-fi and comic genre of film breaking out this past decade, new fans emerge strolling blissfully ignorant past Peter Mayhew, David Prowse and, heaven forbid, Stan Lee himself.

While some of us who have been in attendance since the first Tomb Raider film drew attention to Comic-Con feel that the women with body glitter hunting down vampires and the audacious DC and Marvel booths have, in a sense, ruined our oasis, there are some formerly struggling artists who have had their lives transformed to a state of success that may not have been possible without the crowds and craziness that now reflect a weekend at Comic-Con. While success stories abound, one particular artist's story is close to my heart. He is the reason I first attended Con and put on my patent leather skirt in an effort to pedal his comics.

His name is Daniel Cooney and his love is a series of self-published comics, now a graphic novel, called Valentine. The birth of Valentine came with long drives to San Diego sharing small inexpensive hotel rooms with several attendees hoping to at least sell enough books to break even for the gas and cost of their booths at the convention. When I first saw Dan's art, I remember thinking he was

going to really make it, it was as bold and exciting as his passion. Back then, the most famous person you could hope to see at Con was Lou Ferrigno (which was really exciting!) along with perhaps an X-files character. Kevin Smith had the longest line and EVERYONE knew who Stan Lee was. The attention for the small artists was minimal and any possible interest seemed to dissipate mere weeks after Con ended, leaving the artists feeling hopeless at times.

Well, with more exposure and the making or remaking of so many comic book movies this past decade, bigger stars were pulled, and made. The small gathering of comic enthusiasts was a thing of the past and the industry literally (from a film perspective) exploded. Comic-Con was now a plethora of international artists,

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Greg Jacobus Named August 2011 Mentor of the Month

Calaveras County – Murphys resident Greg Jacobus has been named August Mentor of the Month by the Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program. "One of the qualities I admire most in Greg is his authentic, unconditional regard for his mentees, and for people in general," said Kathryn Eustis, Director of Youth Development and Prevention Programs with the Calaveras County Office of Education. Jacobus has been with the program for six years and has enjoyed mentoring two young men. "Logan wanted to learn how to climb, so we joined the Yosemite Climbing Team at the climbing wall in Sonora," he shared. "We went to competitions all over the Bay Area and Sacramento, and he was exposed to kids that were very motivated and focused. The support he received and the experience in the sport really helped him to become more grounded. His teammates awarded him 'most valuable team member' his first year."

"My current mentee, Austin, loves the great outdoors," he added. "We've floated through Natural Bridges, climbed Table Mountain, and anything we do turns into a real adventure." When asked how his mentees have changed over the years, Jacobus said, "Like many 15 year-olds, Logan hadn't found his groove yet, but now he is a natural leader and an excellent ambassador for the mentoring program. Austin is more confident now and more relaxed. And I've changed, too. Mentoring is an important part of my life." "What I enjoy is the openness of the relationship. My mentees look to me for advice and life lessons, but I don't have to be the disciplinarian. Both of them have become a part of my own family," he said. "These kids listen, and that's been rewarding to me. I joke



that the mentoring program is actually for adults, us aging adults who need to be kids again. To the kids, it's like having an adult friend in their lives." Jacobus took an early retirement at age 50 after a 23-year tenure at Hewlett Packard. He is actively involved in Calaveras County Search and Rescue. "The mentoring program builds strong communities in the truest sense of the word," he said. "Kathryn is a master of matching children with adults."

The mentoring program is always seeking volunteers, and particularly needs mentors for boys in Valley Springs, San Andreas, and Mokelumne Hill. "There are a number of ways to support the program," said Eustis, "such as suggesting a possible mentor, helping with fundraising, and getting the word out to the community." For more information, visit calaverasmentoring.org

Amador County Concert Band

The 45-member Amador County Concert Band, under the direction of Steve Chambers and Irv Gidding, has just received notice that the Amador Community Foundation intends to award the band \$500 from the mini-grant program established by the Foundation.

"We are excited to have been approved for the grant" said Chambers...and the funds will be used for new music and concert expenses...we are privileged to have such a wonderful organization as this in our community that supports so many good causes". The grant will help the band achieve its goal of providing the community with 5 free concerts per season.

The Foundation may be contacted by phone at 223-2148 for information on grant applications or those who wish to donate to these needed programs. The Amador Community Foundation, a nonprofit organization since 2000. Visit us online at: www.amadorcommunityfoundation.org

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