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THE CALIFORNIAN

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Apples are Julian's gold

By CHARLES CARR

Welcome. Hop in, buckle up. This week we're heading out and up Highway 78 to the historic gold-mining town of Julian, where I learned about this weekend's Apple Days Festival and a thing or two about what makes a good apple a great apple.

The festival offers music and dancing, food and drink (including a beer and wine garden), dancing, antique tractors, and children's games and activities, contests and, hey, it's Julian, so lots of apple pie.

Last year's event attracted more than 3,000 visitors.

Julian is certainly not the Big Apple, and neither are its apples ---- er, big, that is. Festival co-organizer Gina Petrone says that's a big reason Julian apples have won countless awards from all over the world for more than a century.

"They're smaller than most," she explained. "Apples generally have the same sugar content regardless of size, so smaller ones taste better. Washington apples, for example, are larger and, as a result, are not as sweet."

In 1907, Julian won the Wilder Medal, the highest award given to apples in North America.

"We can't find the actual bronze medallion anymore," Gina said with a laugh. "Everyone's looking for it in closets and shoeboxes and places like that."

The Apple Days Festival runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at Menghini Winery about two miles from downtown Julian out Farmer's Road. Just follow the signs. Admission is \$5 for adults, children 12 and under get in free of charge. Parking is also free. More info at www.julianappledays.com.

Scholarship kudos: Congratulations to Jenna Kathleen Jauregui, a Ramona High School 2008 grad currently attending college with the help of a \$1,000 Don Diego Fund scholarship. She earned the scholarship when her design exhibit, "Historical Hotel Room Suite," captured both

First Place and Best of Class awards at this past summer's San Diego County Fair.

Jenna says she is using the money to pursue a career in "green" interior design. She is enrolled at Palomar College and plans to transfer to a four-year university.

Food fight! Jonathan Reinbold is the event planner for Tierra Miguel Foundation's La Tomatina de San Diego taking place from noon to 5 p.m. Oct. 11.

"It's not your normal fundraiser," he told me. "We came up with what we think is a great idea to raise awareness for local farming and have some fun at the same time ---- throwing red, juicy tomatoes at your friends and neighbors."

The event is patterned after a Spanish tradition called La Tomatina de Bunol (Bunol is the name of the town in Spain where the annual massacre takes place).

"Theirs just happened about a month ago. They dump truckloads of inedible but perfectly throwable tomatoes in the town center and let the battle begin. "Ours will be a little different because we'll be right out in the fields," said Jonathan. "There are 125 spots available priced at \$5 each."

Jonathan says Tierra Miguel will implement the same rule used in Bunol: Participants must first smooch the tomatoes in their hands so no one gets hit too hard. It's good, messy fun," he adds. "We're setting up a showering station for cleanup afterward. BYOG ---- bring your own goggles."

There will also be area artists, live music, authentic Spanish food and wine tastings. Tierra Miguel Farm is at 14910 Pauma Valley Drive in Pauma Valley, adjacent to the Pauma Valley Country Club.

Call (760) 742-8754 to learn more.

That's all he wrote. See you next time.

Charles Carr is a columnist for the North County Times. Contact him at charles@carrfamily.com or (760) 749-0409 with your comments or column items.

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