LAMORINDA WEEKLY



**Published September 3, 2008**

# Stanley 8th Graders Own Local DJ Company

*By Jean Follmer*

Tucker O'Neill (left) and John Cornell Photo provided

As 7th grade drew to a close, longtime friends John Cornell and Tucker O'Neill were wrapping up plans to launch a DJ company. Cornell said "We're both really into music and videography", so it was a natural pursuit for them. They began by researching various types of DJ equipment online to determine how much capital they needed to raise. They also turned to Ken Maas of DJK Productions for advice. As the lunch period DJ at Stanley, Cornell and O'Neill found Maas both approachable and helpful. After researching their options, they determined they needed to raise about $400 to purchase the equipment they needed. Maas said "Quite frankly, I'm envious that they'd be so industrious at such a young age." John contributed proceeds from babysitting and carwashes and Tucker's financial contributions came from the video production editing he did for Stanley Middle School and for his father, Brian O'Neill. They combined this with small contributions from their parents and went shopping for equipment. They purchased a mixer, lights and a DJ software program by mid-summer. John's father, Kurt Cornell, commented on their determination and organization saying "I'm pretty amazed about it myself.they're very serious.I'm very proud of them." Mr. Cornell feels the boys "make a good partnership because John is very technical and Tucker is very musical." After securing their equipment, they immediately began getting the word out. As the owners of JT Productions, they secured their first gig after a swim meet at the Meadow Swim and Tennis Club in Orinda. John said it was an 80's theme and they played lots of disco music. These DJ's aren't spinning records or popping in CD's, they're modern DJ's. John said their software program enables them to

"use the iTunes library and mix (the music) digitally." Ken Maas said "It's such an interesting time to get into the DJ business; back when I started, DJs were judged almost entirely on the size of their music (CD and record) collection. Now, because songs can be easily downloaded, anyone at all can have an unlimited amount of music, so it's not really a selling point at all." He continued, "John and Tucker already recognize this, and they seem eager to focus on the service they can offer a client as much as the "stuff" they can provide. That's huge, and will take them far." They made $200 at their first gig and decided to use those profits for advertising. They are now trying to secure a booth at the Lafayette Art & Wine Festival to get the community more familiar with their company. John and Tucker plan to donate a portion of future proceeds to the Town Hall Theatre. John has done some technical work for the theatre and Tucker has appeared in some of their productions, so they felt it was a natural place to turn to. Kurt Cornell said "They're both Boy Scouts (Troop #224) and they are very integrated into the community. They're great kids." To contact John and Tucker, visit www.jtproductions.zoomshare.com or e-mail them at jtproductions10@yahoo.com.

Reach the reporter at: jean@lamorindaweekly.com



Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA