

“We’ll just have to wait and see,” said Matt Edwards. The executive director of Mount Airy Museum of Regional History speaking about the possibility of big changes in store for Mount Airy’s fourth New Year’s Eve badge drop in the museum courtyard. Edwards was less cagey about fundraising events planned for the early part of the evening. A three-tiered menu of events is planned, available as a package or à la carte.

The top-tier full package starts with a three-course dinner at Old North State Winery, with a special New Year’s Eve menu by chef Chris Wishart with seatings at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., followed by special activities at the museum, culminating with a champagne toast for the midnight badge drop. The middle-tier foregoes the dinner, allowing guests to enjoy the museum activities at a reduced cost, and the final tier is the badge drop which is offered to the community free of charge. “We’re excited to have activities in our space,” said Edwards of the museum plans, which are a departure from past years, when dinner and the badge drop book-ended the evening, but left a hole in the center. This year activities are planned for both children and adults. “It will be an enjoyable way to fill the time between dinner service and midnight for people who are not necessarily looking for a super-raucous party night,” said Edwards. “And folks who are unfamiliar with our facility can experience it in a fun way.”

“Kids New Year” is from 6 to 8 p.m. and will offer a fun place for the kids while their adults enjoy the early seating at Old North State, or dinner elsewhere if they go à la carte. The two hours of fun will count down to a mock-midnight at 8 p.m. “We’re thinking along ‘It’s 5 o’clock somewhere’ lines,” said Edwards. “And at 8 p.m., it’s midnight in the Azores, so the kids will celebrate New Year’s Eve in the Azores. It will let kids who don’t stay up until midnight have a chance to be part of the fun.”

“21+ New Years at the Museum” is from 9 p.m. until midnight will give adults time for some fun stuff while waiting to ring in the new year. There will be live music with Brian Gray and Raven Drums on the third floor of the museum. Along with a cash bar, there will be a trivia night station, an adult craft station, a storytelling station, custom wine glasses and champagne toast at midnight.

Live music will begin in the museum’s courtyard at 11 p.m. with “Going Dutch,” who will play until the midnight badge drop. “Going Dutch” is a local band which played often in the area while in high school, according to Edwards, but after going away to college, get together during their Christmas break to play.

As far as possible changes, upgrades and technological improvements to the badge drop itself, Edwards said that is totally in the hands of Mark Brown, who has complete creative license over the event. “He’s been dabbling with some things,” said Edwards, still being cagey. Finally Edwards came clean and spilled, “Mark wants to completely lighten the weight of the badge, so he can lift it with a drone. But it probably won’t be this year.”

Mayberry could be barreling headlong toward a collision with 21st-century technology in 2018.

Tickets for the full evening are \$75 each and include dinner, admission for one for activities at the museum and a champagne toast at midnight. “Kids New Year” is 6-8 p.m. and “21+ New Years at the Museum” is 9 p.m.-midnight. Tickets for both are \$25 each. Badge drop in the courtyard is free to the public.

The Mount Airy Museum of Regional History is located at 301 N. Main St., Mount Airy, NC. Old North State Winery is across the roadway at 308 N. Main St. Tickets can be purchased at the museum or by calling 336-789-9463.