

Corte Madera ready to celebrate centennial all year



Bob Bundy chats with a guest Thursday at the New Year's Eve Gala at the Corte Madera Community Center. The ball was the first event in a year of centennial celebrations for the town. (Alan Dep/Marin Independent Journal)

By [Adrian Rodriguez](#), Marin Independent Journal

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For some Corte Madera residents, 2016 couldn't come soon enough.

That's because this year the town turns 100. A centennial steering committee has prepared a year's worth of celebrations that started with the New Year's Eve party last week.

More than 250 people attended the ball Thursday night at the Corte Madera Community Center, where celebrants wore vintage attire and enjoyed a catered dinner and live music.

"It went fabulously," said Bob Bundy, of the Corte Madera Lions Club, which produced the gala. "We chose to kick off the centennial with this event to bring awareness to everyone in Corte Madera."

With more than a dozen events planned for the year, the steering committee is hoping to bring a whole lot more people in on the celebrations.

"We are a small town," said Becky Reed, committee coordinator. "And already, for so many people to come together like this, we are very excited."

The committee also commissioned songwriter Scott DeTurk of San Rafael to compose Corte Madera's own town song to commemorate the centennial.

"As soon as I got on the committee I was certain that the centennial needed a song," said Dorsey McTaggart.

DeTurk said it was a fun challenge for him.

“It was really easy to just close my eyes and imagine myself on a bike path, taking a walk, a drive,” DeTurk said of the songwriting process.

Local musical theater performer Susan Zelinsky and musician Drew Youngs recorded the song, which is titled “When I Think Corte Madera.”

The committee said the song couldn’t have turned out better.

“Being able to come up with song that everyone could agree on was a gargantuan task,” Reed said.

Talks on the centennial started nearly five years ago, and a committee was officially put together about two years ago made up of members of the Corte Madera Community Foundation, the Corte Madera Women’s Club, the Town Council and other community groups and leaders.

The goal was to create a calendar of events that would appeal to all ages in honoring the town’s history and birthday.

On Jan. 30, there will be a ragtime concert at the Corte Madera Community Center, arranged by Bob Gonzalez, with ragtime pianist Frederick Hodges and vocalist Sean Sharp.

“It’s such a unique thing,” said Pati Stoliar, a committee member. “There’s never been anything like it before.”

The centennial weekend starting June 10, the day the town was incorporated, will be the highlight celebration, which will include a revealing of a time capsule from 25 years ago, a birthday cake, games and entertainment spanning three days, Reed said.

Mayor Sloan Bailey said there will be at least one centennial event per month.

“I couldn’t be prouder to be the mayor this year,” Bailey said. “It’s an opportunity to start looking at the next 100 years.”