

ASTORIA BICENTENNIAL REVUE

Seriously in need of a large scale annual fundraising event, Astoria Downtown Historic District Association board members brought back the idea for a unique fundraiser from the 2010 Oregon Main Street conference. Tying in to Astoria's Bicentennial activities, the program featured a topsy turvy (men dressed as women and women dressed as men) fashion show and dance.

The event was an evening of frivolity at the expense of Astoria's generous male volunteers, including city officials, chamber execs, and business owners, who dressed up as Jane Barnes through the ages (Jane Barnes was the first white woman to set foot in Astoria). Working with a budget of essentially zero, the event depended on both in-kind and cash sponsorships. Local businesses donated clothing, jewelry, and other accessories, and the venue was donated by a local theater. Volunteers adopted a "Jane" and helped them prepare. Following the fashion show, there was a dance featuring a local band.



Astoria Bicentennial Revue and Jane Barnes Cat Dance 2011

A "drag" fashion show is not an event every community would eagerly embrace, but it worked in quirky Astoria. Approximately 30 volunteers donated over 200 hours to plan this event, not to mention the 18 "Janets" that volunteered a total of 100 hours. The event sold out (approximately 150 tickets) and netted over \$4,000 for ADHDA.

The goodwill and camaraderie generated by this event within the whole community, not just the historic downtown, was phenomenal. Almost before the event was over, people were asking to participate and sponsor the event next year. While the money raised will allow the ADHDA to promote downtown Astoria, the goodwill and memories generated are priceless.

