

BEST LOCAL SPORTS TEAM**Astoria High School
Fishermen, Football**

Astoria, Oregon

Runner-up: Ilwaco High School Fishermen, Football**Honorable Mention:** AHS Fishermen, Baseball

PHOTO BY DANNY MILLER

Astoria High School's Tyler Ranta is tackled making a run during the 4A state quarterfinal game Nov. 12 against Cottage Grove at CMH Field in Astoria. After an eight-game winning streak last fall, Astoria made it to the 2016 4A state playoffs in its best effort since the 2008 football season, but Cottage Grove defeated Astoria 25-21 in the quarterfinals. The Fishermen finished the season 8-2. Cottage Grove lost to North Bend 35-21 in the 4A state championship game.

BEST TOURIST ATTRACTION**Astoria Column**

Astoria, Oregon

Runner-up: The Beach**Honorable Mention:** Breweries in Astoria

By PATRICK WEBB

The view is worth it. Ascend 125 feet into the blustery sky above Coxcomb Hill and, as you emerge onto the viewing deck, you can enjoy a panorama of Clatsop County, the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean. (Weather permitting, of course.)

It's a toss-up whether the magnificent view or the spiraling historical murals that adorn the Astoria Column are more interesting.

The impressive monument, once again the Readers' Choice for Best Tourist Attraction on the North Coast, was built in 1926. It has undergone renovations in 1995, 2005 and 2015, with workers either sprucing up the exterior or adding enhancements each time.

Originally envisioned as merely a flagpole, the Astoria edifice has been described as the "crown-

ing monument" in a series of 12 historical markers constructed between St. Paul, Minnesota, and the West Coast. These markers were dreamed up by Ralph Budd, president of the Great Northern Railroad, to celebrate the early settlers' roles in expanding the United States west to the Pacific Coast.

Italian artist Attilio Pusterla employed a technique called sgraffito, which used wet plaster and colored powder to portray scenes from the history of the Western states. New York philanthropist Vincent Astor, great-grandson of businessman John Jacob Astor, whose Pacific Fur Company settled Astoria in the early 1800s, helped bankroll the original. The Astor family has continued to support it to this day.

For Astoria Mayor Arline LaMear, the Column is "the symbol of Astoria."



PHOTO BY PATRICK WEBB

If you have ever wondered at the true scale of the Astoria Column here is a closer look at the top, with its narrow gallery allowing people who have climbed all the steps to admire the most stunning view in Oregon.

"To me, it's the must-see sight that visitors should visit," she said. "They can see all the way across our wonderful river to the Washington side, Saddle Mountain and where Lewis and Clark stayed. I think it's just a wonderful historical record — and it's unique."

In operating the Column, the city of Astoria is assisted considerably by the generos-

ity of the nonprofit Friends of Astoria Column, whose members and supporters have contributed significant dollars over the years to keep the treasured monument in excellent condition.

Admission to the Astoria Column is free, but visitors who drive up the hill must purchase a \$5 car parking pass, valid for a full year.

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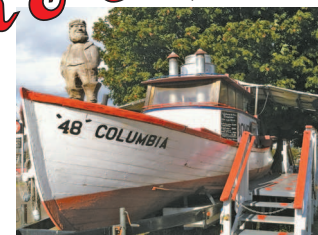
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