

ALE — OWN THE NIGHT

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“And, in this sense, I *was* a different person — because I was a woman,” he said. “I was Katy Perry, and so I completely transformed myself into Katy Perry and performed ‘Roar.’”

Cronin refused to reveal which pop star he intends to channel Saturday. “That is top secret.”

CROSS-DRESSING CHARACTERS

Making his Jane Barnes debut is Clatsop Community College President Chris Breitmeyer, who, like Cronin, has limited experience dragging out: “I am a rookie at this,” he admitted. And, like Cronin, Breitmeyer accepted the invitation as a way to become involved in the community he had recently joined.

Now that showtime draws neigh, Breitmeyer is steeling himself to become a convincing cheerleader, equipped with

pom-poms, and sing Gwen Stefani’s modern classic “Hollaback Girl.”

“There may be attempts at a split; I don’t think anyone will recognize it as a split,” he said with a laugh.

He hasn’t named his cheerleader yet, but, as it happens, he had a Collie named “Cheyenne” growing up ...

The cross-dressing newbs, unused to people screaming and clapping at them and showering them with singles, share the spotlight with veteran performers.

Joshua Conklin, an experienced local drag entertainer, is performing as his alter ego “Ginger Vitis,” a persona he created through Dragalution.

The Jane Barnes Revue, he said, “gets people out of their comfort zones, which I think is extremely important.”

Conklin, who has struggled with anxiety, said drag has helped his confidence. On Saturday, he will perform a burlesque-inspired number in a rain-themed outfit, he said.

Asked why someone should participate in something like Jane Barnes, Davis said, “We get to do something that, as a male, we’re not really taught: to embrace our vulnerability, or our softer side — not to say that femininity is softer, but oftentimes we portray it that way.”

“It’s a good experience to walk in somebody else’s shoes and understand how somebody else is seen in the world,” he added.

‘THE LOVE OF DOWNTOWN’

Dulcye Taylor, the organizer and co-emcee (with Norma Hernandez), founded the Jane Barnes Revue during Astoria’s Bicentennial with Tiffany Butler. They were at an Oregon Main Street conference discussing fundraising.

“And this little old lady from Iowa said, ‘We put some of our men onstage for a fashion show in dresses, and it was really popular,’” Taylor remembered. “And Tiffany and I looked at each other and said, ‘Oh

yeah — we could do that in Astoria.’”

The show has since introduced female cross-dressers.

The revue is the downtown association’s second-biggest annual fundraiser (behind the Pacific Northwest Brew Cup). Last year, the event raised about \$17,000 — revenue spent on the association’s operations, downtown beautification projects (such as Christmas lightings) and promotional events to draw visitors during the slow season, Heath said.

This year, a prize goes to the Jane that brings in the most money (whether tossed onto the stage or stuffed into their brasieres).

The story of the Jane Barnes Revue, Heath said, is “the love of downtown that all of these guys share and are willing to embarrass themselves for.”

“Not everybody is willing to get up and go crazy and let people take pictures of them in drag,” she said. “And I think that that’s pretty cool.”



An audience member reaches to clear a boa feather from the stage as “Scooter Yorktown,” performed by Jade Kiosse, dances.



Audience members stuff money into Chad Hartley’s dress as he performed as “Cedar Patch,” in 2015



Jorge Gutierrez, performing as “Danessa Rosewood,” dances in a wedding dress during the Jane Barnes Revue at the Astoria Event Center in 2015.



Rodney Merrill, performing as “Taffy Ammonoosuc,” dances down the stage during the Jane Barnes Revue at the Astoria Event Center in 2015. The money from the event went to the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association.