

cocktail party for 15 with storytelling by ADHDDA Vice President Patsy Oser and the opportunity to “Get YOUR Jane On” and stroll the catwalk yourself. Make sure to bring plenty of dollar bills — there’s a prize awaiting the Jane who gets the most tips stuffed into his/her garters by the end of the night.

Cat Dance

Inspiration for the Revue came to association President Dulcye Taylor at a 2010 Main Street America conference.

“This little lady from Iowa got up on the stage and said, ‘You know what we did in our town? We put our men in dresses and had a fashion show — it was funny, it was good, and we raised a lot of money.’ And I looked at the person I was with and said, ‘That would totally work in Astoria.’”

Taylor returned home and immediately set to recruiting, and the following April, Astoria’s 200th-birthday celebration kicked off with the 2011 Bicentennial Revue and Jane Barnes Cat Dance, named in honor of the first European woman to set foot in Oregon Country.

Barnes, a “flaxen-haired, blue-eyed daughter of Albion,” was reputed to have caused quite a stir among the denizens of Fort George in the early 1800s, and so, too, did the event that bore her name. The first Revue proved a surprise hit, and from there, the crowds grew larger, the catwalks grew longer, and the participants grew more brazen and uninhibited. And underneath the makeup and the padding just may be someone you know.

“We don’t generally release the full names of everybody that’s walking,” Heath said — most of the Gentleman Janes appear under their “stripper names,” which is to say the names of their first pet and the street they grew up on — “but you might recognize a librarian, a driver, a barista, a real estate agent, a police officer ... Everybody will recognize somebody.”

New wrinkles

The eighth Revue adds a few new wrinkles to the event.

For the first time, a house band will provide musical backing, not to mention the opportunity for some of the Janes to exercise their pipes, as well as their stems. The band, Plaid Spandex, consists of Brian Bovenizer and The New Old Stock and Friends, featuring Luke Ydstie, Olaf Ydstie, Jeff Munger, Jamie Greenan and Kati Claborn.

And after successful runs at the Astor Street Opry Company and the Astoria Events Center, the Revue has found a new venue — a highly appropriate spot,




COLIN MURPHEY PHOTOS

Bill Jablonski, left, and Jimmy Pearson, right, get fitted by Sarah Lu, center, for their Jane Barnes Revue outfits.

symbolic of the ADHDDA’s mission to “preserve the character of historic downtown Astoria while promoting its health and future.”

The Ruins at the Astor is located in the lobby of The Astor Building, formerly the Astor Hotel, built in 1921 but beset by decades of natural and economic disasters. Once thought beyond renovation, it has experienced a resurgence under current owner Paul Caruana, and the restored opulence of the Astor’s expansive lobby both offsets the delicious decadence on display at the Jane Barnes Revue and reflects the moxie of the woman for whom it’s named.

“It’s a celebration of the grit and determination and humor it must have taken for Jane Barnes to be the first non-native woman to make it out to Astoria,” said Heath. “It’s a fashion show, it’s performance art, it’s all of those things.” And besides that, she added: “It’s just a lot of fun.”

Leave it to the people of Astoria to really put the “fun” into “fundraiser.” 



Bill Jablonski tries on a wig to go with his outfit.