

The Astoria Column *Friends of Astoria Column*

- **HOME**
- **PLAN A TRIP**
- **NORTHWEST EXPLORATION**
- **SCENES ON THE ASTORIA COLUMN**
- **CREATING THE MONUMENT**
- **FRIENDS OF ASTORIA COLUMN**
- **ENGRAVE YOUR NAME**
- **PDF VERSION**
- **EMAIL: ASTORIA COLUMN**

FRIENDS SAVE THE COLUMN

By 1988, only four years after the fortuitous meeting between Jordan Schnitzer and Astoria's then Mayor Henningsgaard, a Column rescue plan had been created and a new non-profit had been organized to lead the charge. The first act of the Friends of Astoria Column, Inc. was to identify experts with experience in monuments and art works. In 1989, Myrna Saxe Conservators, Art and Architecture cleaned the exterior of the Column by removing tung oil, lichens, and dirt. The toothbrush level of care given to this delicate task was helpful, but the murals had been so dimmed by the ravages of weather and time that Pusterla's sgraffito artistry seemed doomed.

Recognizing the continued jeopardy, Friends of Astoria Column set about raising more than \$1,000,000 for a full art restoration. Their efforts culminated in 1994-95 when the J. Paul Getty Museum, in Los Angeles, suggested retaining the services of Frank Preusser. A world renowned art conservator who had worked on the Sphinx in Egypt and the Angkor Wat temples in Cambodia, among other projects, Preusser enjoyed a challenge. Both he and Jordan Schnitzer, President of Friends of Astoria Column, were convinced that the Column was worthy of preservation. During 1995, Preusser worked on the Column with local crews on scaffolding that was encased in plastic to protect the conservators from the weather. His team, including student interns, used historical photographs and Pusterla's original scratch lines to restore the murals. Preusser estimated that only 20% of the art remained when they began the project. When the work was completed, the crew treated the column with siloxane-based water repellent. If the Column is to be maintained, reapplications must be done every 8 to 15 years.

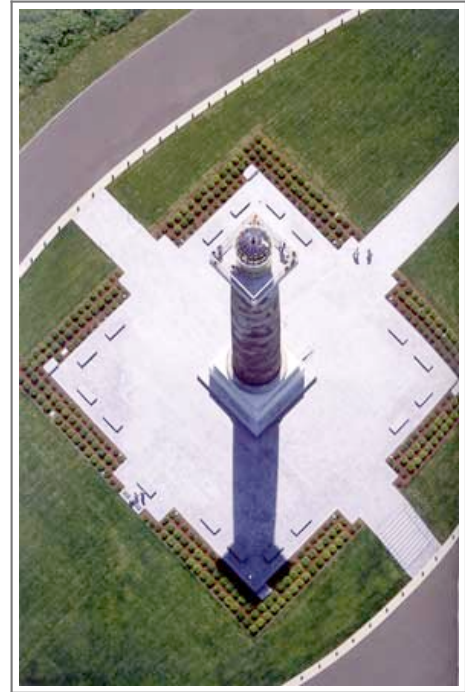


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FRIENDS WELCOME 2005 BICENTENNIAL



The dramatic art restoration phase was completed in November 1995 but the work for Friends of the Astoria Column was far from over. Building on their initial success, the City of Astoria and the Friends of Astoria Column launched phase two to welcome the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial in 2005. The Friends raised nearly \$2 million to develop a long list of improvements including a new ADA accessible granite plaza with benches, landscaping, night lighting and bollards to protect the circular mound.



The final stunning act was the addition of lighting and at night, the Column is a dramatic lamp on the hill overlooking the City of Astoria.

By 2004, when the Plaza and other new additions were dedicated, the Friends had raised over \$3,000,000 and completed ten dedicated years of leadership. Central to their success were thousands of small and large contributions. Column

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lovers purchased hundreds of granite pavers, markers and benches which are engraved to honor family members, friends and neighbors. People interested in engraving opportunities are more than welcome.

[Click Here to Engrave Your Name](#)

Friends of Astoria Column, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. We are dedicated to preservation, stewardship and public education. Contributions to special projects or our \$300,000 annual operating budget are tax deductible and accepted with gratitude.

We earn income by operating a small gift shop at the site. Other funds come from contributions and sale of permanently installed markers and pavers on the site.

Inquiries about merchandise, memorabilia and engraving your name in stone, can be made through the following contact information.

Friends of Astoria Column, Inc.
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