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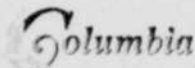


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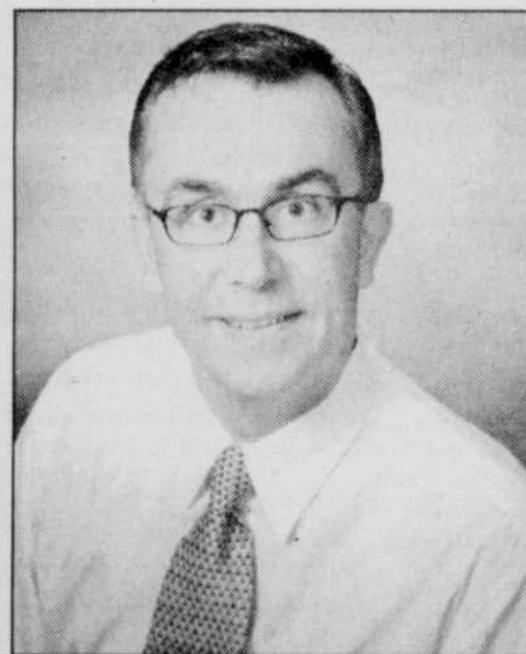
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PHOTOS BY MARTY DAVIS

Women of the Rivers and their bikes (from left): Lynne Shoemaker and "Perla," Laura "Garbot" Mosier and "Bronte," Lori Magers and "Cruella," Jennifer York and "Trumpet"

If you're a woman who rides or wants to ride motorcycles, you're in luck. Portland Women Riders and Women of the Rivers invite you to head out on the highway.

Portland Women Riders is a casual group that formed after last year's Pride festival. Some of the Dykes on Bikes enjoyed the parade ride so much, they decided they should get together and do it again.

Co-coordinator Carla Smith says they didn't want to be a formal club with dues and lots of rules. "We wanted it to be any woman who wants to ride. We wanted the female solidarity," she comments.

Portland Women Riders is open to all queer and queer-friendly females. They have only one major rule: Women agree to ride sober.

Smith, a health educator working with youth tobacco prevention, grew up bicycling and always liked motorcycles. In 1995 she bought her first bike. "As soon as I got my motorcycle, my first impulse was: 'Where are the other women riders? How can I find other women to ride with?'"

Members gather at Northeast Portland's Touchstone Coffee House, where they plan the day's destination. The first meeting turned into

a 200-mile ride to the coast. The group has ridden to Bagby Hot Springs and Mount St. Helens—basically wherever people want to go to see the scenery.

Portland Women Riders is made up of experienced riders, beginning riders and everyone in between. More experienced women make sure newbies know how to communicate while in transit. Smith says communication is key.

"We talk about riding side by side vs. staggered and how much stopping distance you need," she explains. "We make sure people know the hand signals—if you have to go to the bathroom, need gas, need to stop.... We talk a lot."

Members ride an eclectic mix of bikes—whether dirt bikes, old bikes or brand new Harley Davidsons, all are welcome. Smith, who rides a 1981 Yamaha Virago, says: "I like the freedom. It makes me feel strong and in control."

Although the group is quiet in the winter, Portland Women Riders has about 20 members who stay in touch through a listserv on the Internet.

A bit on the larger scale is Women of the Rivers, the Portland/Vancouver chapter of Women on Wheels. An international



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