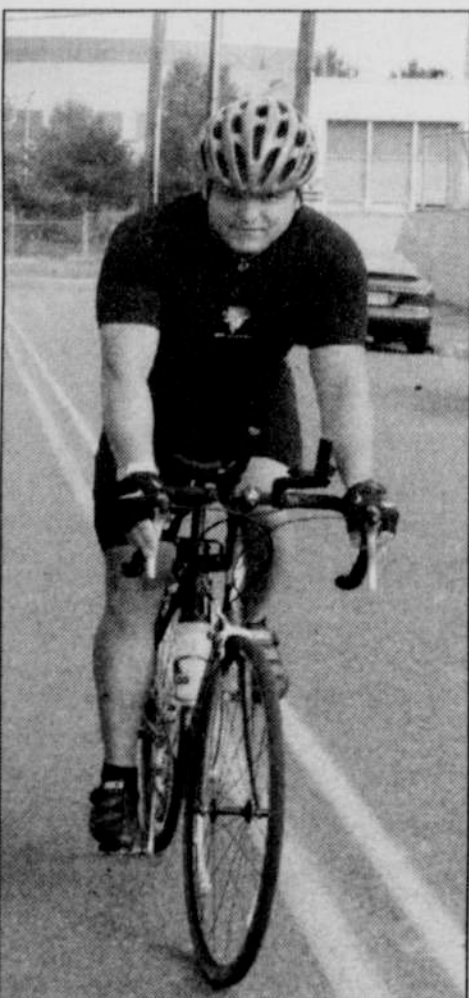


Feel the Love

Queer bicyclists roam the roads,
trails and tracks of Portland and beyond
by Rebecca Ragain • Photos by Marty Davis



Jim Lagowski (above) and Reid Decker both joined bike groups to train for more challenging rides.

Ayla Holland is passionate about bikes and bicycling. In fact, the self-professed tranny bike punk goes so far as to say that she has an ongoing "secret love affair" with her bike.

Bike love is a common emotion in Portland, a city well known for its bike-friendliness. When *Bicycling* magazine published its article "The Best Cycling Cities," Portland was selected as No. 1 overall.

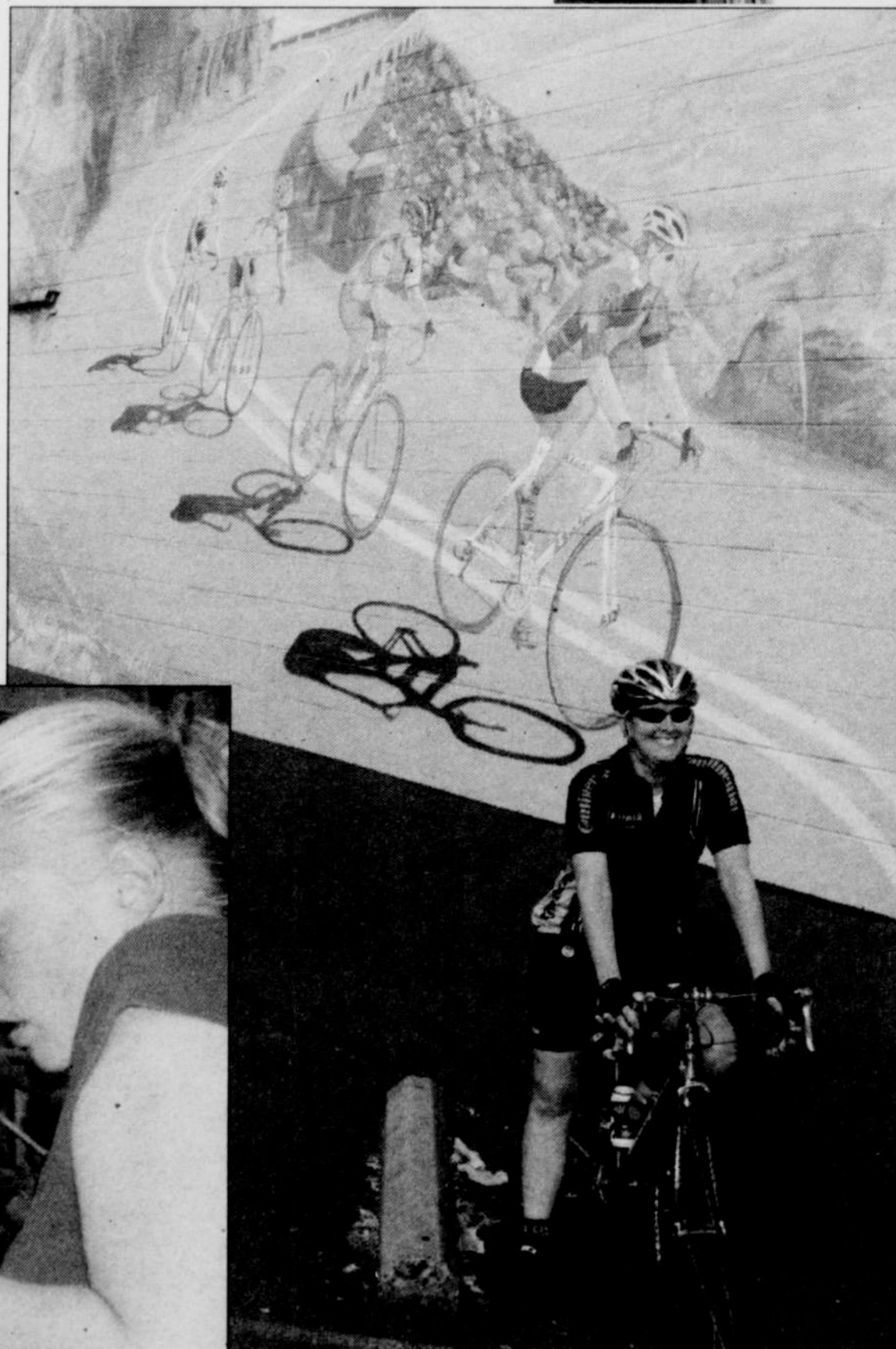
Linda Watts moved to Portland largely because of its bike-friendly reputation.

"The biggest appeal [of Portland] was that it's such a big cycling town, and gay-friendly.... It was a no-brainer for me," says Watts, who is now one of several lesbians working at the Bike Gallery.

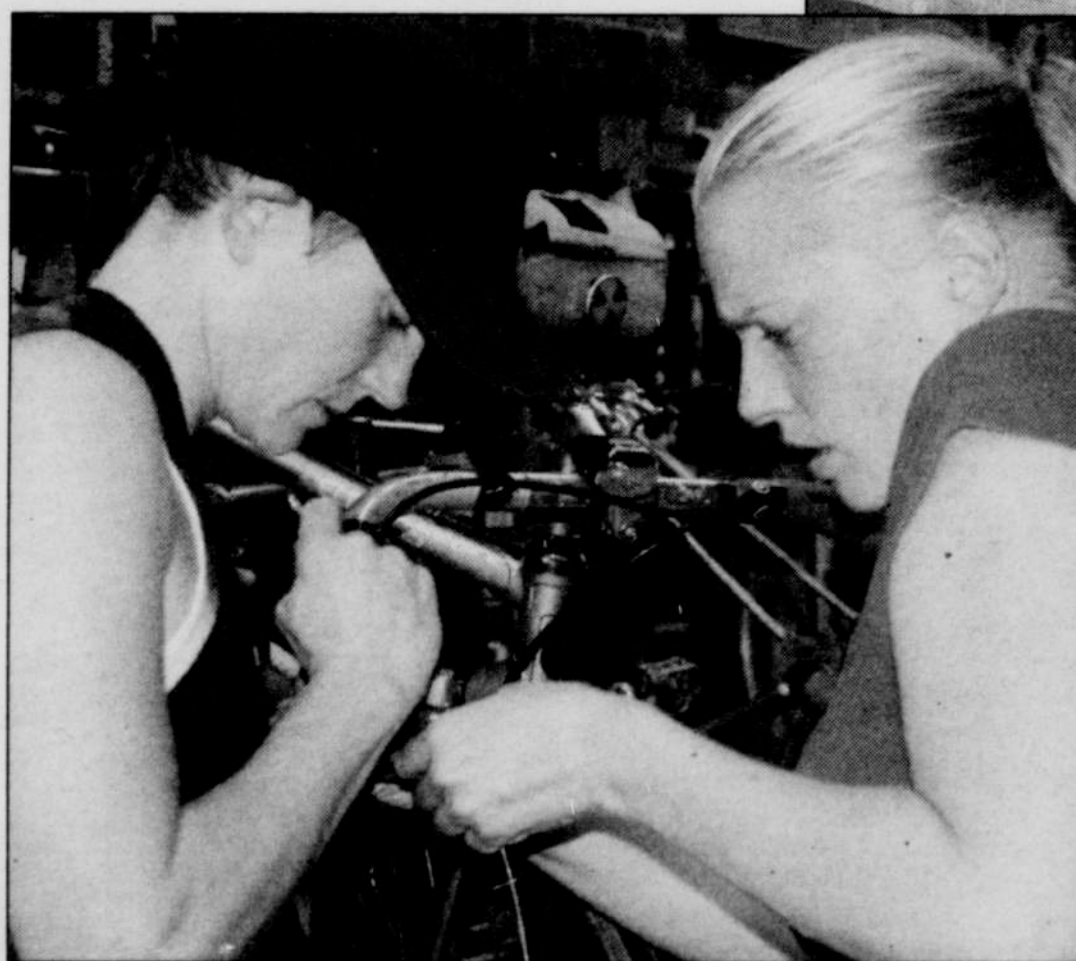
Cyclists support more than 140 bicycle-related businesses in the greater Portland area, according to the phone book. That nears the number of bike listings for Chicago, a city with nearly six times the population of Portland.

Portland cyclists turn out in full force for events like the Bridge Pedal, which drew a record 20,000 riders this year. And they don't just pull out their rides for special occasions; *The Oregonian* recently reported that daily bike traffic on the Hawthorne, Steel, Broadway and Burnside bridges has nearly doubled since 1996.

Bike groups flourish in such a climate. The Bicycle Transportation Alliance has been advocating for bicycle transportation since 1990. The Portland Wheelman Touring Club, which has more than 800 members, was founded in 1971.



Linda Watts gets ready for a ride outside the Bike Gallery.



Women and trans bike repair night at North Portland Bike Works regularly draws a crowd.