

# SPORTS & RECREATION



STAFF PHOTOS/ROB ALARY

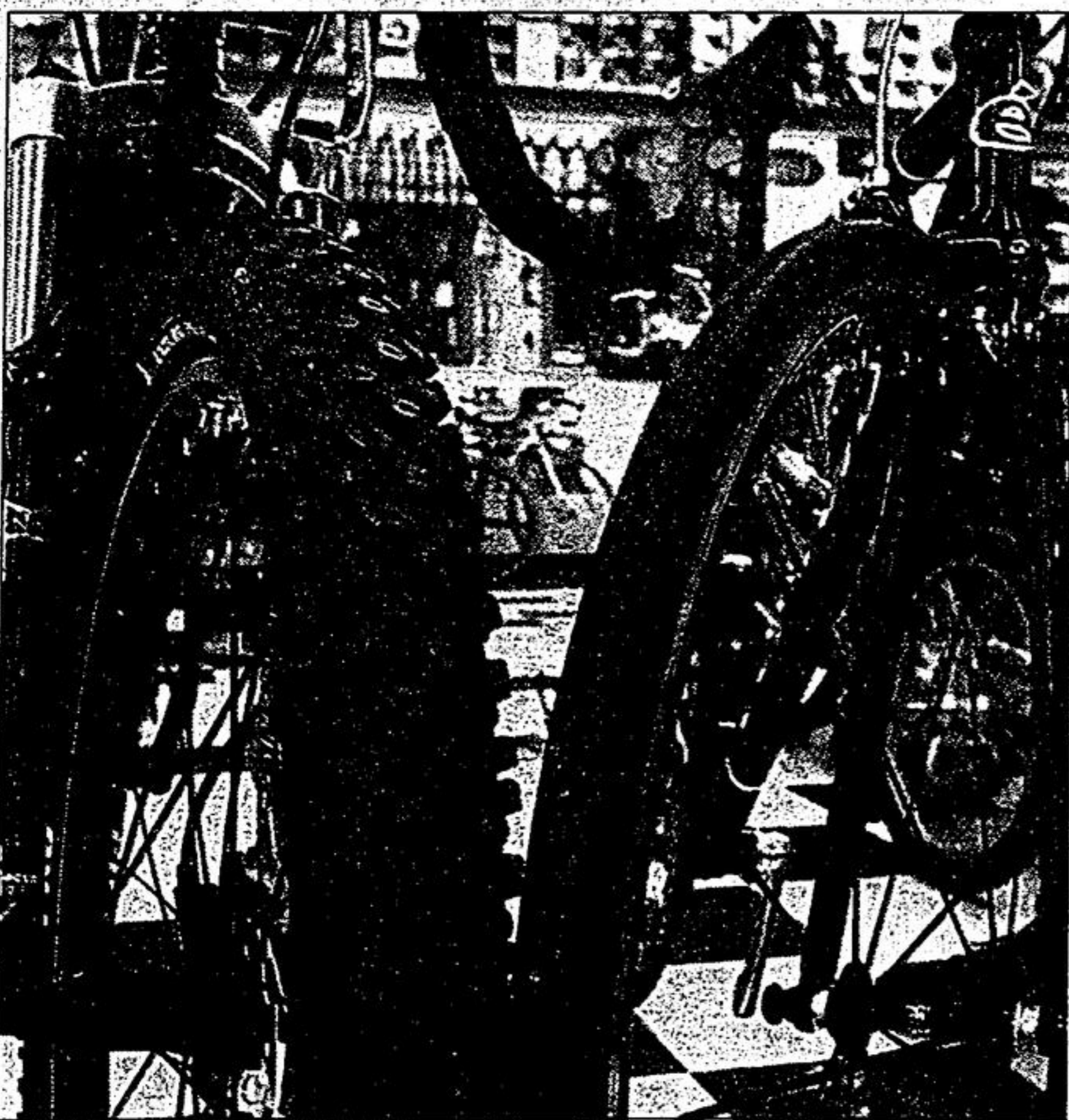
Ian Boyd of Boyd's Source for Sports remembers childhood days spent biking.

## ROLLING ALONG

Cycling continues to gain momentum as a popular recreational and competitive sport



Zac Wheeler is a cycling specialist.



BY MICHAEL LAUGHLIN  
*Special*

If you haven't seen them riding along city streets and country back roads, it's likely you soon will. They are cyclists and they are a growing phenomenon in York Region.

It's not a new fad by any means, but this recreational activity has been gathering momentum over the past few years.

Why people are so enthused about taking their two-wheeled machines along paved streets or woodland trails can't easily be explained. There are several factors that might weigh into the final equation.

For starters, cycling is an activity with few limitations. It's something that can be enjoyed by young and old. Families have also been known to take excursions.

Cycling is also an ideal way to enhance cardiovascular health and strengthen leg muscles. Even better, it's

an opportunity to shake off the winter doldrums and cabin fever.

For some adults, cycling allows them to turn back the hands of time to the days when they took their first two-wheeler out for a spin.

*'Cycling used to be just a way of getting back and forth from a buddy's house.'*

"Cycling used to be just a way of getting back and forth from a buddy's house," recalled Ian Boyd, owner of Boyd's Source for Sports in Stouffville and president of the Markham-Stouffville Cycling Club. "But not anymore."

In York Region, cycling has flourished, as evidenced by sales of bicycles and accessories at retail outlets.

George Varela, owner of Cycle Path, said sales of bicycles and other related

equipment at his Markham-based outlet have been brisk over the past few years.

James Bongard, spokesperson for Aurora-based bicycle supplier KHS Bicycles, said sales began to escalate two years ago, especially for road bikes. This, he speculated, could be attributed to the exploits of American rider Lance Armstrong, who overcame cancer to capture the prestigious Tour de France three consecutive times.

Cyclists can enjoy the sport solo, however, cycling clubs can make an individual's introduction to the sport smoother.

"Generally, people are joining clubs because it is safer and it is more fun," Mr. Varela said.

"There is a lot of talking going on when riders are on the roads."

As well, there's the social aspect, where riders can meet fellow participants and make new friends while shar-

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