

Tour of the Lakes Century Ride

by Carl Gridley, ed.
Mid-American Cyclist

In less than a month the Mt. Oread Bicycle Club's Tour of the Lakes Century rolls out onto the asphalt of Douglas County. On May 17, riders from Wichita, Topeka, Kansas City and Lawrence will meet at Broken Arrow Park to tackle this year's one hundred mile course. The route will take the cyclists to the three major lakes in the area—Clinton Reservoir, Lone Star and Douglas County State—through some fine Eastern Kansas scenery in between.

The Tour of the Lakes, though 20 miles longer, is considered to be the little sister of the Octoginta, an 80-mile ride held each fall since 1969. It's the largest organized cycling event in the state of Kansas—attracting well over 300 riders last year.

The Tour of the Lakes offers fewer leg-killer hills than its older sister, though, and the club expects a less massive turnout. Bruce Epperson, TOL Tour Director says, "We'll have about the same number of club volunteers working on this project as the Octoginta, but we expect less than a third of the riders, so we should be able to take care of everyone pretty well. There will be five stops along the way where riders can get cool water and fruit, as well as roving sag wagons to patrol the route for mishaps or mechanical breakdowns."

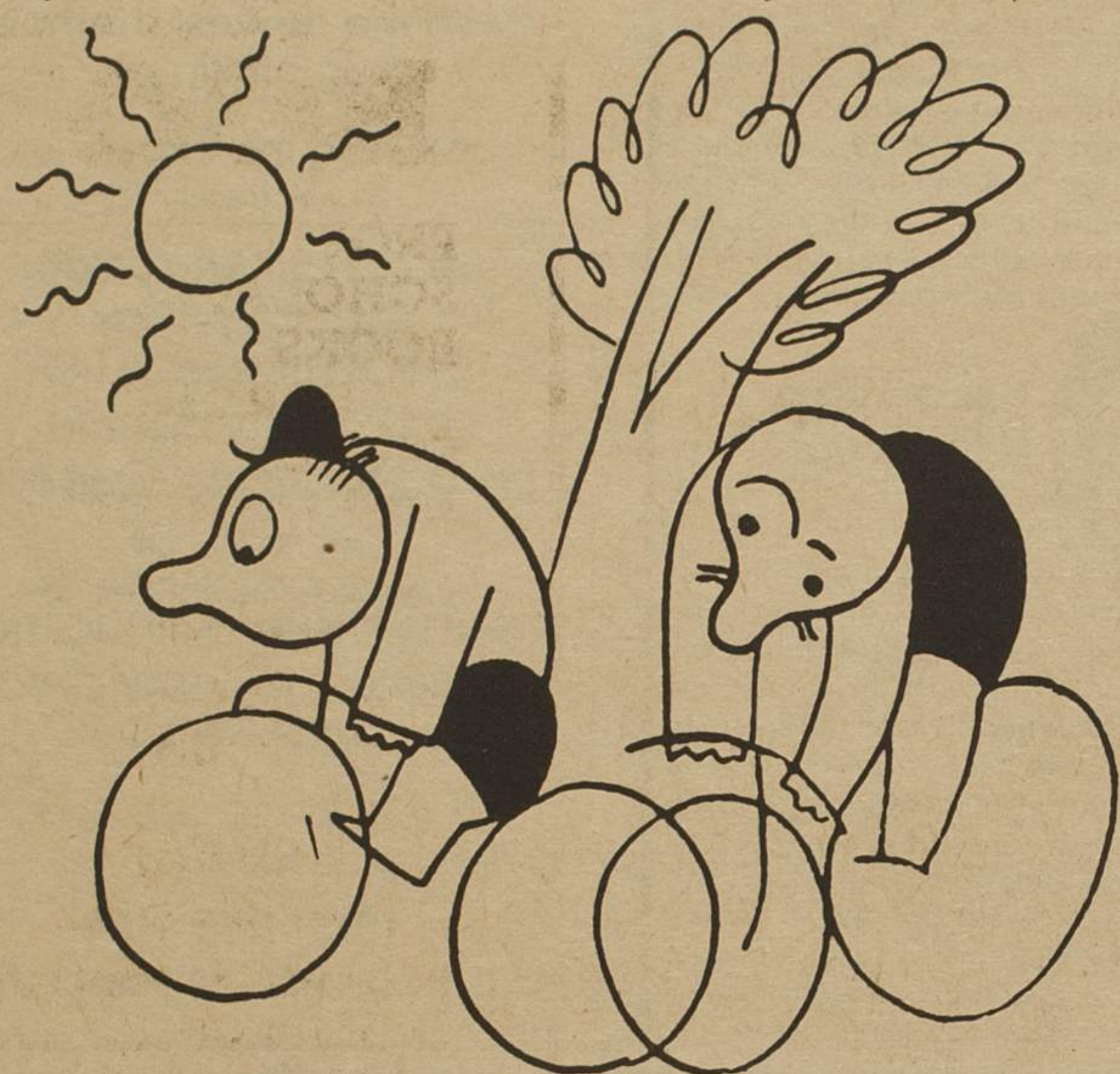
For those whose thoughts of riding 100 miles on a hot and steamy May day are not comforted by the thought of cold water and fruit, the ride actually offers built-in options. As the Century will be run in three consecutive

loops (each loop visiting a different body of water), riders will have the option of doing 25, 65 or 100 miles. Says Epperson, "With it still being early in the season, the idea of running the tour in loops and not linearly makes a lot of sense. People who discover that they really aren't in good enough shape to ride the full century won't be caught completely bonked 25 miles from town."

Century rides have long been the obsession of American cyclists. In the early days of the bicycle when hardy men with handlebar moustaches rode penny farthings on the rough back roads, riding 100 miles in at least ten hours was considered a monumental achievement. Today with fast blacktop and light, shiny ten-speeds the average rider can complete a century within six or seven hours. With the current bicycling renaissance taking place in this country, it is not uncommon to find clubs sponsoring double and even triple centuries.

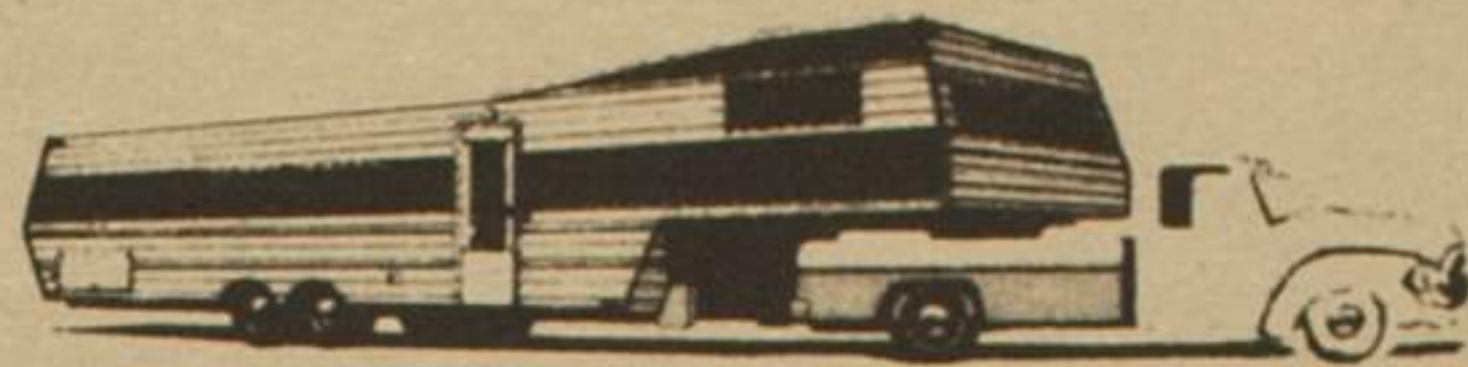
The Tour of the Lakes is not meant to be a strenuous ride or a race: more like a Big Eat on Wheels. Bicycling is on its way to becoming the Sport of the Eighties—and when bikers get together they can't help but have a good time. The Tour of the Lakes is guaranteed to be one of the best two-wheeling parties of this spring.

Registration for the Tour starts at 7:30 a.m. May 17, and the ride will leave at 8:00 a.m. For more information and an entry form, stop by the SUA Office in the Kansas Union or any local bike shop.



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Taking a long-term view of the planned parking lot points up the folly of the undertaking even more. Every indication of the past ten years points to the impending demise of the automobile, as we know it. It makes no sense to build a new facility to support a mode of transportation that already may be on its way out.



The economics of the project have reached the ridiculous stage. The study projects a generous rate of usage of 100 cars per day. At the current meter rate, this is a gross weekly take of \$50, assuming an average stay of one hour. Even at a meter rate of 25¢ per hour, income from the lot probably would not pay the interest on the bonds, let alone make any inroad into the principle.

Add in the costs of maintenance and monitoring, and you have a facility that can only be a drain on the city budget for decades to come. And to what purpose?

Before the handful of supporters of the lot start wailing about the waste and the shame in abandoning the parking lot idea, it should be pointed out to them that the shame was consummated last December when Bryan Anderson's came down.

The real shame is that the rush to push the parking lot through has forced the current commission to find some suitable use for the site, without the benefit of the time to find the best use for the site in accordance with a comprehensive plan.

The City Commission has a tough decision to make: allow this monument to stupidity to be built, or find a better use for the site and endure the sneering and sniping of a hostile press and vain and vitriolic commissioners.

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Mayor Marci Francisco opined, "There should be a way for the public to initiate action. I believe the legislature intended for people to have that right. Most people are interested in the particulars of a petition before they sign it. It isn't something just anyone will do in front of a grocery store. It takes very real energy from people to circulate a petition and put it on the ballot. It is a waste of people's time to tell them they have that option, then when they choose to use it, tell them they can't use it. It's rude. The legislature should take this ruling as a sign that it needs to be more specific about that option. If it is a law, they intended some use. The point of having a law on the books is not so the courts can say it is useless."

Kaplan concurred. "To spend any more time with the courts is a waste of time and money. It is better to change the law so it will not thwart people's efforts."

According to State Rep. Betty Jo Charlton (D.-Lawrence), "Mark suggested we sit down to look at the statute and possibly tighten it, instead of leaving it to the capriciousness of the bench. I am very willing to look over the statute. If we start to work on it this summer, we should have something ready to go for next session." State Sen. Jane Eldredge (R.-Lawrence) also expressed a willingness to study the matter. She expressed concern that if any amendments are to happen, there must be support from around the state outside of the Lawrence area. She could not gauge whether that necessary support might be there.

On the local level, Francisco said, "I don't think the court's decision prohibits the city commission from reviewing this ordinance and deciding that it is appropriate for them to adopt it."

Newly elected City Commissioner Nancy Shontz said, "I'd want to think about the ramifications of it carefully. I want to protect the integrity of downtown. I want to protect the taxpayers. I want the City to make wise decisions. This ordinance might be the route to go in order to do these things. We are dealing with a tight downtown situation. We don't have space to make mistakes. Our options are very limited. We have to see that every piece of the puzzle fits."

In addition to the three options open to the petitioners, Clark proposed a "fourth alternative. That is to recognize that we've got a new commission that people who were passing the petition would feel more comfortable with than the prior commission."

Kaplan disagreed: "We need to institutionalize a fair means for people to participate in the process and not put up with this secret meeting crap no matter who's on the commission. People should not be expected to trust any entity."



According to Clark, the various financing tools the City would use in downtown redevelopment, such as the tax increment financing law and others, "have their own internal protections. That would be enough under the current commission. Relocation assistance can make projects impossible. Scope and breadth are a problem. It has possibilities if it is done in a careful manner. Relocation assistance is the main policy question I would be willing to look at on its own merits. If we make things too restrictive and tie the City's hands too much, it will make it difficult to do anything downtown and we'll be faced with the cornfield mall again. We need to have tools and keep them sharp enough."

Kaplan sees a need to "protect ourselves from a land grab by major owners of property and protect the diversity of ownership of property downtown. The proper response to the threat of a mall is not to mimic a mall's economic process of taking property from small shop owners by eminent domain to turn it over to large developers. We need open public interplay between all interest groups."

Francisco said, "I'm concerned that property owners be treated equitably. Treatment shouldn't be based on the legislation under which we act. People deserve to be treated fairly whether we use industrial revenue bonds, parking bonds, tax increment financing or whatever. Without an ordinance, we do only what the law requires. We may need to place more requirements on ourselves than the legislature does."

"Public benefit should be great enough to cover private costs. If we cannot afford to treat people equitably, then the benefit is not great enough for us to proceed with the project. I don't think it should be easy for us to acquire property. We should have to go through strict procedures, but we should be able to do it if we need to. Strict requirements force us to make better decisions."

Francisco praised the petition effort. "At least it got us moving on developing a downtown plan."



Everyone interviewed by PUBLIC NOTICE agreed that the petitioners have three options: appeal, go to the legislature to push for amendments to the statute which would tell the courts to construe petitions less rigidly, or go to the new City Commission with a similar ordinance.

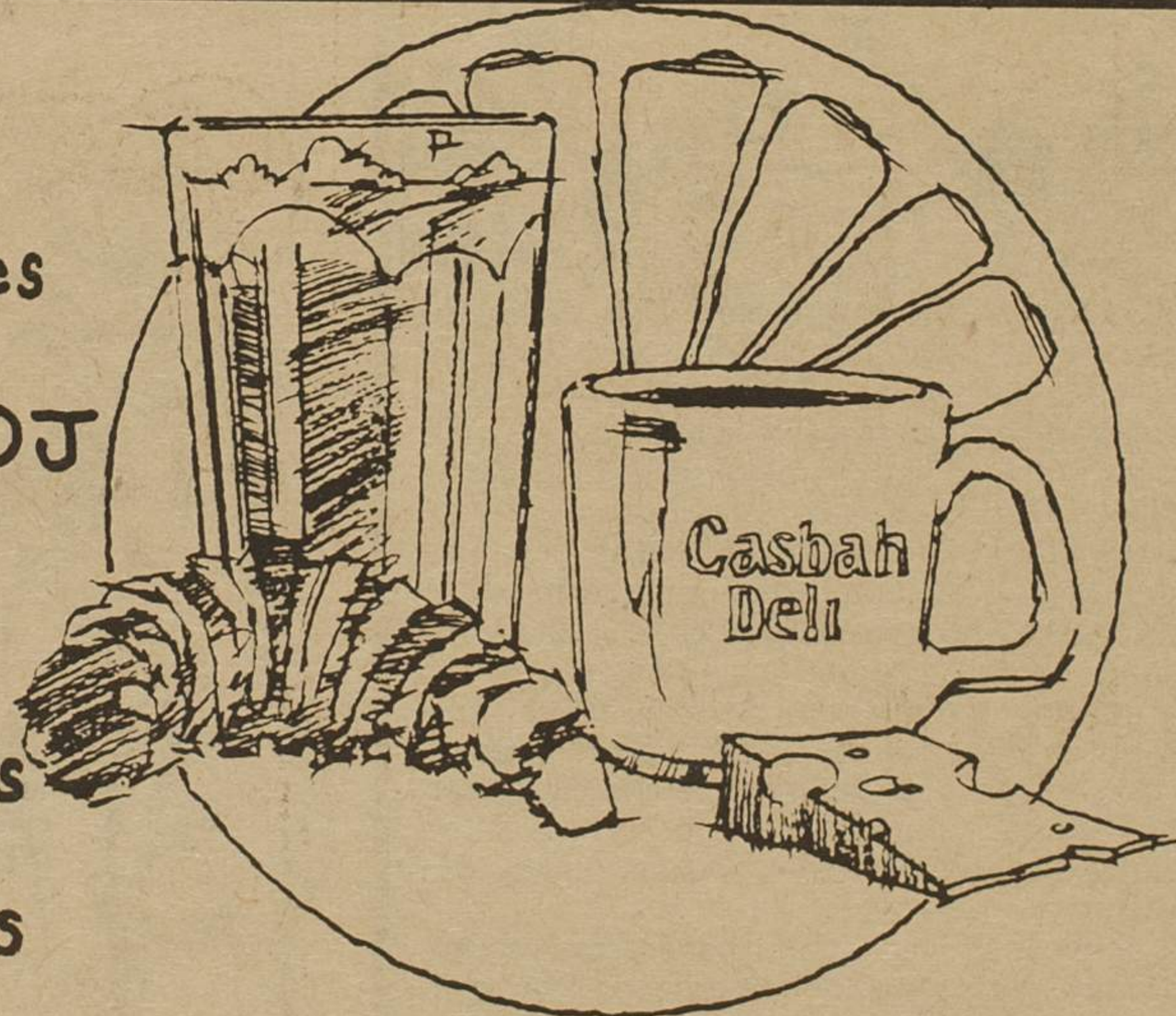
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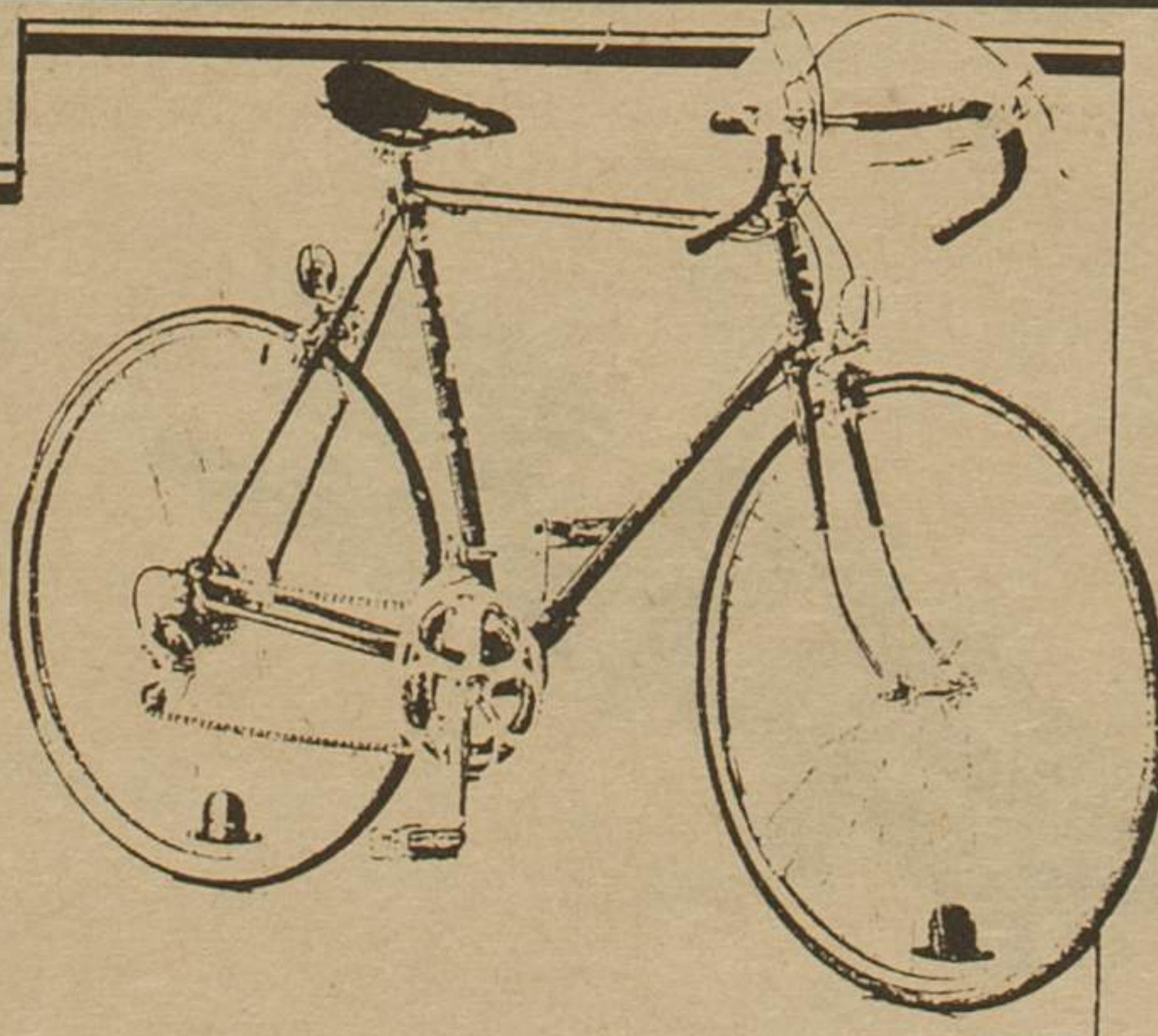


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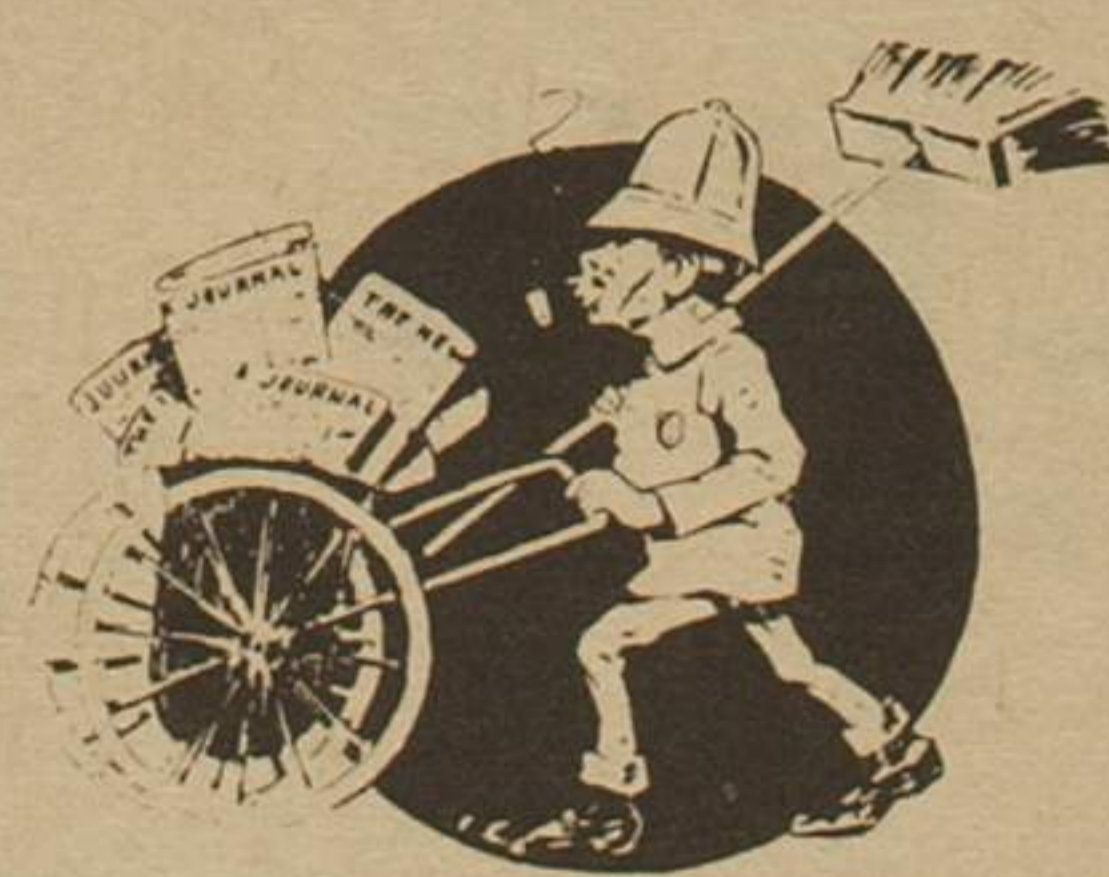
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