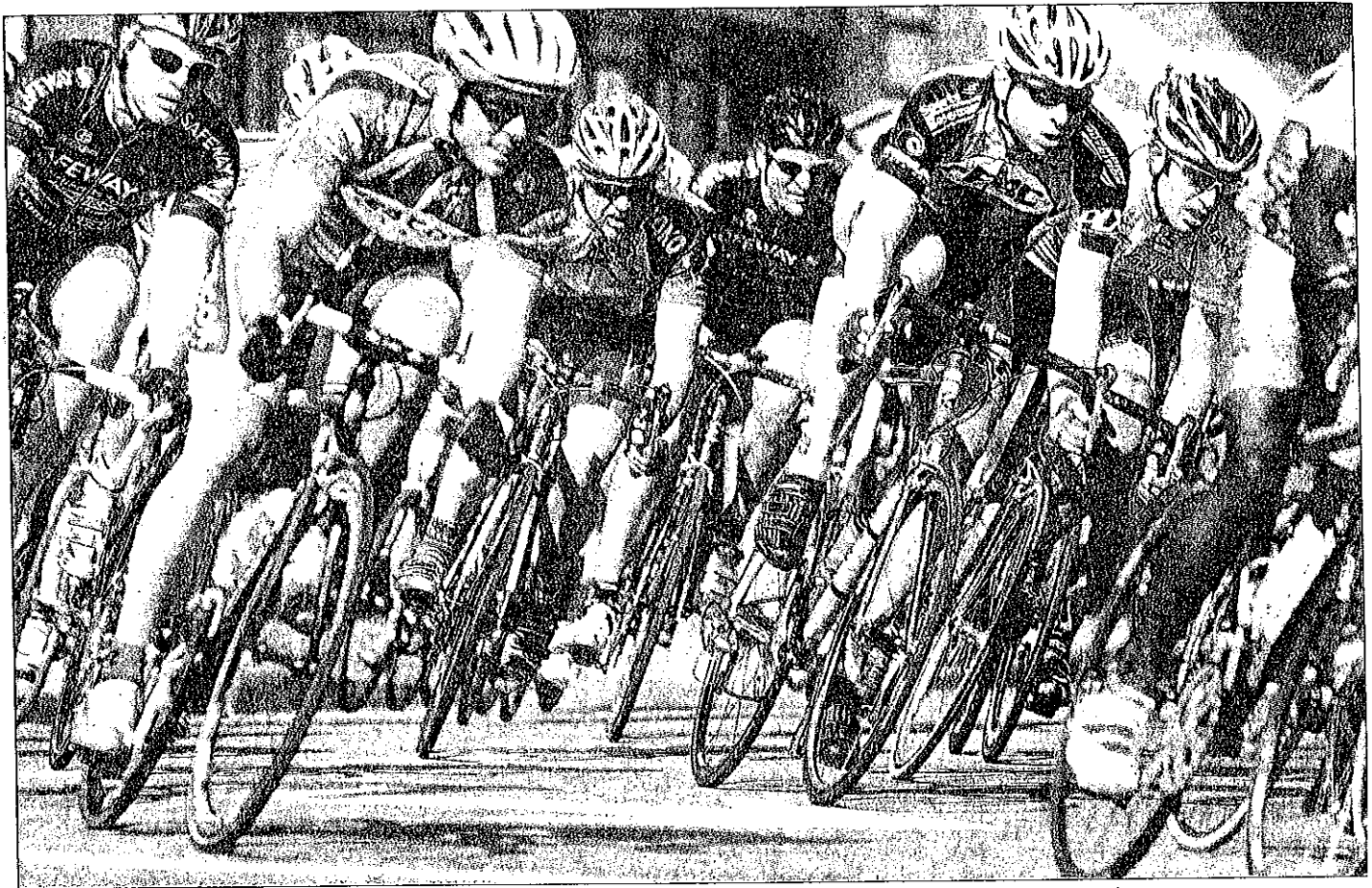


RECREATION

Bikers hit Salinas streets



SCOTT MACDONALD/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

Professional racers make the turn from Gabilan to Salinas streets Sunday in the Steinbeck Country Oldtown Criterium.

Criterium offers races for all levels

By **SUNITA VIJAYAN**
The Salinas Californian

Swish. Whoosh. Swish.
For more than nine hours on Sunday, Oldtown Salinas was the scene of a high-speed bicycling competition that included all ages and levels of expertise.
Organized by the Salinas-based VOS Racing Team — part of the Northern California-Nevada Cycling Association — the Steinbeck Country Oldtown Criterium held 10 different races that included categories for men, women and children.

ONLINE PHOTOS



GALLERY: See more photos from the event at www.thecalifornian.com.

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With starting and finish lines at the corner of Salinas and Alisal streets, the race course encompassed John, Main and Gabilan streets.
Shannon Pike, a volunteer with VOS Racing Team, said organizers chose Oldtown Salinas for the event as a way to promote the downtown.
"The Oldtown Association has wanted to improve their

public exposure for a while, so we thought this would be a good event to help with that," Pike said.
More than 200 cyclists competed for a chance to win \$5,000 in cash prizes.
"Cycling is a growing sport," said Steven Gile, the vice president of VOS Racing Team. "I love everything about it — the speed, the adrenaline, the crowd's participation."
Net proceeds from the races will be donated to the National Steinbeck Center and Kinship Center in Salinas, Gile said.
Spectators throughout the downtown area, some sitting in lawn chairs, cheered and hollered words of encouragement as bicyclists sped past.



SCOTT MACDONALD/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

Steven Reaney, left, receives congratulations from Patrick Briggs after Sunday's Steinbeck Country Oldtown Criterium.