

## All Good Things

Before describing the ride, let me describe the morning. It was beautiful!!! Yes, it's December, so yes, it's a bit on the cooler side (39 degrees from one end of Skyline to the other), but after hearing the weather people describe 40 days & 40 nights of intense rain, well, when you do see the sun you become an instant skeptic of the "science" of weather forecasting, and if it takes a bit of rain now & then to clean up the air and give us such spectacular vistas, maybe it's worth it.

Last Thursday & Tuesday's rides went unexpectedly-well for me, as I seemed to ride more strongly than I should have, holding wheels that I normally wouldn't be able to. Given that there was no good reason for that to have happened, it was no big surprise that this morning I felt mortal. That twisting-the-throttle feeling was a thing of the past, nowhere more apparent than when we hit the steeper sections through Huddart Park.

The "we" this time included Karl, making his first appearance in several months. It could be that the last time he rode with us was when he crashed coming down 84 and broke his collarbone, and since then he's been in serious cyclo-cross mode, training in Arastradero & elsewhere. But this morning, our ride's steadiest wheel returned! We also had Karen, Eric, Marcos, John & Todd. Of course, I "lost" that wheel pretty quickly through Huddart Park, but after the regroup I started feeling a bit better.

By the time we got to west-side Old LaHonda, I was determined not to lose sight of the wheel in front of me again, and with Karl here, I knew which wheel to keep track of! I wasn't paying attention to what was going on behind; all that mattered was that wheel in front of me, and I held it all the way to the end of the section with the great view of the coast. Karen and Karl dropped me quickly there, and I'm thinking they could have done so at anytime during the previous mile. The only thing that allowed me to close the gap a bit was all the debris on the upper stretches of west-side Old LaHonda, which limits the speed of a pair of riders more than it does for just one.

The only sprint that was contested was the final one on Albion; we just didn't feel comfortable on the slick pavement we'd had prior to that. Of course, about halfway through, on what I thought was dry pavement, my rear wheel slides out maybe half a foot or so! Doesn't matter, we're sprinting and once you start, you've got to have a darned good reason for pulling up lame, and feeling like you almost went down isn't good enough, at least not once you're into it. I'm at about 100% when I notice a rider's shadow on the road to my left, and force myself to 110%, not knowing if that's going to be enough. Had I know the rider was Todd, I would have been tempted to give up, but I didn't, and if I did, I wouldn't have known that Todd was behind a bit in his conditioning right now, creating one of those rare chances to beat him. This, too, shall pass.