

Why we ride #333- Watching the donkeys play

I like to try and find something new to see on each and every ride, even when it's the same route I might have done many, many times. Like today's ride, a classic Woodside/Pescadero loop with the added kicker of West Alpine thrown in for good measure. This was Brian's birthday ride; not sure how old he is (was he 42 before so now he's 43, or is he now 42?), but it was an all Chain Reaction cast, with Kevin, Mike, Mike (me), Andrew and, of course, Brian. What was new? On West Alpine, passing the big ranch towards the middle of the climb, there was a pair of donkeys playing around like puppies. Not sure why it seemed so surprising; maybe that's normal for donkeys, but it wasn't anything I'd seen before.

Winter is beginning to seem more real with each passing day; the lower temperatures (low 40s everywhere but the coast) and winds remind us that there's more to winter than just rain. The mental quandry is due to end shortly; rain by Thursday, or so they tell us.

Today's route took us up Old LaHonda and down the other side, then out to San Gregorio where it finally warmed up to the mid-50s. Then it was south on Stage Road to Pescadero for lunch, followed by, for Kevin & Mike, a very fast run up Haskins Grade. Smokin' fast, as in so fast I could only watch as they rode off. So fast that Kevin now "owns" the fastest time for the Haskins Grade climb (from the Pescadero side) for his weight class (180-199) and 4th fastest for his age (24 & under). Details [here](#). The kid is getting way too fast!

An even-bigger accomplishment than Kevin's was scored by Karen Brems, a fairly-regular member of our Tuesday/Thursday-morning rides, who today won the Masters UCI World Cycling Championship in the 50-54 age category! Obviously, if Kevin races Cyclocross next year, we know someone who can give him some pointers.