

Caltrans isn't doing San Mateo County cyclists any favors

Sunday it was time for another edition of the "ugly" ride, but more than just "ugly" but also with a twist... I wanted a variation I'd not ridden previously. When you've been riding in the area for over 45 years, that's not so easy to do!

But first, why an "ugly" ride? Why a ride that's not something you normally do because it's a routine you enjoy? Why look for the sort of terrain where you can never quite get into the rhythm? Because that time off the bike for the trade show a week or two ago killed me. It took me out of my normal routine (5 days without riding), got me into eating too much while away, and when I came back, I just couldn't quite shake it off. I gained 4 pounds and kept on eating too much, even though I got back into the regular riding routine. The only way I can get out of such ruts is to do something desperate, something uncomfortable. An ugly ride.

Easy to do something different, since Becky and Kevin had left for Disneyworld. So... instead of heading out to the coast, I rode the foothills south to Los Altos, stopped into our store for a bit (Steve knew I was coming, since I'd enabled live tracking on my Garmin and sent him the link, so he could see where I was in real-time), then headed out Stevens Creek Canyon. OK, you're thinking, another ride up Redwood Gulch. That's ugly, isn't it? Not really. There's a certain amount of "cred" you get for doing stupid-steep climbs. So, instead of going right at the junction with Mt Eden, I went up... Mt Eden. Not too much of a hill, but Pierce follows. Still not too much of a hill, but, as predicted, couldn't really get into the climb. Consider what follows and you've got a potential mental meltdown- the long slog up Highway 9!



Mr. Mustard to the rescue!

But maybe the ride has to be disqualified from the "ugly" category when you've got Mr. Mustard waiting at the top? No hot dog today (that would have seemed a bit silly, when I'm trying to shed some pounds), but it had been a pretty warm climb so I bought both a Coke (which I downed on the spot) and an Orange Crush, which I put into my back jersey pocket "just in case" (it's sitting in the fridge).

One unexpectedly-ugly addition was getting to experience the transition on Highway 35 from Santa Clara Caltrans' very smooth resurfacing to San Mateo Caltrans' bicycle-hating rasp-file-imitating chip seal. That's what's in the video above, although I made the mistake of letting youtube "fix" it, so it might take a lot of the vibration out.

Today (Monday evening) I finally feel like I'm getting back to "normal." We'll see how tomorrow morning's ride goes. I'm almost looking forward to it!