

Coldest Winter Ever? Probably!

Back in the day, we'd get 3, maybe 4 of the regular Tuesday/Thursday-morning rides where the temps would drop not just below freezing, but hit the always-impressive 20-something. And, truth is, there's a whole lot more credibility to saying it was 20-something when you were riding than 30-something. With 30-something, the only thing that matters is... above freezing, or below? And, while we might have had 3 or 4 such rides in a year, they were rarely back-to-back. When those really cold days hit, they were special.

But 4 or 5 years ago, we hit a warming spell, such that we didn't see anything below 30, ever. In fact, a couple years we never saw the temp go below 33. That was then. This is now. The past 4 rides in a row (or is it 5?) have each seen lows of 28 or 29 degrees at some point. This is without precedent. Stranger still is that the media isn't making a big deal of this. Are people just getting used to it?

And even stranger is that I'm tolerating the cold temps much better than I have in decades, as it seems my Raynauds Syndrome (ice-cold hands & toes, triggered by an involuntary vascular reflex that shuts down blood flow to the extremities) is finally under control. Used to be the case that, by now, I would have had blisters on my fingers and suffered badly during post-ride showers at this time of year, even without the extreme lows we've been seeing. If you suffer from Raynauds, send me an email (mikej@chainreaction.com) and I'll fill you in on an off-label use of a popular medication that might work wonders for you.

So maybe now it's time to talk about the ride? It's just hard to talk about riding in the morning these days without the cold being the biggest part of the story. This morning, it found a new way to hit me. The first mile or so out of the door, I was coughing so badly Kevin thought maybe I shouldn't be out riding. That's what happens sometimes when you have bronchitis and you go from the nice warm house into the cold. Fortunately I worked through it and felt OK the rest of the ride.

Both Kevins, JR, Eric and Lesley (pilot-Kevin's friend) were out this morning. I tried to keep up, managing to stay pretty close all the way up to the wide clearing, and then circled back a bit to find Lesley and make sure she was OK. I don't like people off the back by themselves, and it gave me an excuse to take it easier. At the top JR & Eric has already gone on ahead; at Sky Londa Kevin and I rode the West Old LaHonda section in reverse to catch back up to them (the other Kevin and Lesley rode the regular way).

Overall, it felt like a nicer ride than the 35-degree average would imply. Not to say I wouldn't appreciate it about 20 degrees warmer!
--Mike--