

This Scotty guy, how does he ride so fast? Should that give me hope or make me depressed?



By this point on our ride, heading into the forest on West Old LaHonda, I'm finally warmed up and ready to go. Too bad it takes a good hour to get to this point! It's pretty amazing when you think about it, a bunch of guys in their 60s riding without limits, or at least doing a good job of keeping denial going by continuing to do what they've been doing for 20, 30, 40, close to 50 years. I don't even know when Scotty, who claims to be closer to 70 than 60, started.

Is 60 the new 40? I hope so. It helps to keep that mortality stuff at bay, not to mention thoughts of retirement. My brother and I have owned Chain Reaction for 37 years... if you'd asked me 25 years ago if I'd still be doing this when I'm 60, I would have said (and in fact recall that I did say) yes, I figured maybe 65 or so. If you'd asked me then, if a 60 year old should be happy being able to get up Kings in 28 minutes, yeah, I would have thought that would have been darned fast for someone that age. But this group of people I ride with, not all of them guys (Karen's in her 50s, which at least makes her a lot younger than me, right?), they still seem to be able to go from the gun, while it takes me a good hour or so of riding before I'm up to full speed. Which means they're climbing Kings, the first climb of the day, about 20 minutes after I first clip in, quite a bit faster.

But I do get there, and I know I'll feel better as I go. By the end of the ride I'm feeling really good; back in the day I'd start out feeling really good and be dragging my butt at the end. Thought of in that context, the current version of me seems not quite so bad. Scotty can whip me good on Kings, but slows down later on. Everybody's different. It's interesting thinking about how I'll be at 70. Will endurance still be my biggest strength? How will I fare against other 70 year old cyclists? And, of course, will I have a miniature motor providing a limited degree of assistance so I can keep up with younger hot shots?

Time will tell. It always does.