

## Normally I'd be writing about not writing, rides done, rides missed

It's tough finding "normal" these days. A week ago Sunday wasn't "normal." I rode with Kevin & Colin up Redwood Gulch and let's just say Redwood Gulch won. I lost. I did recover after, and rode fairly strongly up the rest of 9 though.

Tuesday and Thursday were seasonally-slow rides up Kings. Thursday was actually slower than seasonal; Kevin had nothing in his legs, and ended up with one of those dreadfully-slow times that you'd normally see when you're on your rain bike.

Sunday? No ride. Drove past San Luis Obispo to pick up a new puppy, a 12-week-old cutie named Blue, for her non-standard coloring (the Corgi standard doesn't allow for "blue" tinting to the normally-black areas). Long day in the car, and any other time I'd be posting cute puppy photos. And if I'd gotten around to it yesterday, I would have. But I didn't, and now, it feels a bit inappropriate.

Why? Because this afternoon I saw a couple cryptic references to somebody I knew from the way-back bike racing days in an awkward sort of past-tense. Oblique references to missing someone, that sort of thing. Peter Johnson. From my days in Pedali Alpini, early-70s, when everything revolved around by bike (so nothing's changed?). Peter was my age, probably 15 or 16 when I joined, but he was already one of the "old guard" that didn't have too much regard for us new guys.

Peter went the trade route, sort of, becoming a well-known young framebuilder, and later, machinist. I did the more traditional college gig and, well, you know where I ended up. Even though Peter hung with a different crowd (even when racing, maybe especially so), he was always friendly, and remained so through the years. Think he last dropped by the shop maybe 6 months ago. He still enjoyed cycling, but had no pretenses of trying to push himself as hard as he could, as long as he could. So, a bit different than me.

Apparently, he died after having a stroke in Switzerland, where he was on vacation with his wife, Jan.

It's not like people my age are dropping like flies, nor that I've not been prepared to hear about such things. It's around 40 where you first realize hey, nobody really prepared you for how to deal with mortality stuff (which, at that time, is other people dying, not you). At 65, sure, there's some sense of your own mortality, how many years you've got left vs what's behind, but in a very strange way, knowing that I have a mild chronic cancer (Essential Thrombocythemia) takes some of the fear and mystery away from such thoughts. Makes no sense. I get that.