

## Did I encounter the dikironium cloud creature from Star Trek on Sunday's ride?

By now Kevin was supposed to be riding with me again, knee recovered from his platelet procedure, quickly going out-of-shape to leaving Dad in the dust. That was the plan. But Sunday morning he texts that it isn't happening, he's not going to ride because he's not feeling well (cold). And then this morning (Tuesday), he texts me at 5am that his knee is hurting really bad so, no ride. Again. On the one hand, it's giving me time to slowly come up to speed as the weather warms up. On the other, what's it gonna take to get him fixed up?

OK, Sunday's ride first. Yet another loop through the foothills, over Pierce and back, with a coffee & food stop at Peets, adjacent to our former shop location. It's become such a normal thing for me that one of the barristas remembers my name. That's way too regular, way too many Sunday rides I haven't made it over the hill, way too long since I've had one of the oversized cookies in Pescadero. It. Will. Come.

And speaking of fantasies (which I really haven't been), there's this part of me that really, REALLY wants to push myself, ride myself into the ground, and do the Santa Cruz loop. How bad can 114 miles with 8900ft of climbing be? I \*think\* I can do it. It wouldn't be pretty, but it would certainly clean out the cylinders and purge whatever's in my system that's got to go. I haven't had a good post-ride after-sweat in way too long a time!

That's the dream. But for Sunday, I put in a good effort, didn't allow myself much time to slack off, and enjoyed the new normal. Oh, and that cloud I mentioned? While riding past the golf course in Los Altos, a slight breeze hit and a couple of massive trees unleashed a massive cloud of pollen. Way too big for me to hold my breath through. And no, my camera wasn't on at the time. Darn.

This morning, wasn't sure if I'd be riding solo, even though I knew younger Kevin wouldn't be riding. Maybe ex-pilot Kevin would show up? I saw on Strava that he'd gotten back from New Zealand. But no, just me this morning. I did what I could, and amused myself, while climbing Kings, with the idea of doing a video showing each of the "turn back" places I've thought about turning back. Think there have only been two or three rides where I actually did decide enough is enough, it just wasn't working that day.

It was under 38 minutes to the top; I remember when an "easy" ride was just under 28. Hate that. That was then, this is now. Today, I take some solace in Strava telling me I'm "trending faster" on the Tuesday/Thursday ride.