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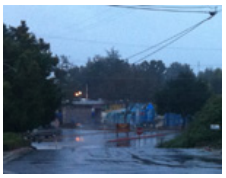
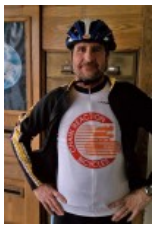
Mt Hamilton New Year's ride better than expected!



I'll admit it's no fun to wake up to wet streets and rain and have to motivate yourself to get everything together and drive to the start of a ride. Even less fun when you've got to movitate your kid to go with you. But it's January 1st, and climbing Mount Hamilton is simply what's done on January 1st!

Thankfully, the skies started to look not-quite-so-bad on the drive down, but it was dark, it was cold, and Kevin (my son) was not in the mood to get out on a bike until we found a Starbucks so he could get some coffee first. This was an interesting development; I really didn't know he was into coffee that much. Whatever, it doesn't take much to convince me to stop for coffee, and besides, we were a bit short on food (didn't find any powerbars to bring along, just some ClifShots) so I figured it would be a good thing to pick up a couple scones to bring along too.



Millo provided proof in an email that he'd been to the top!

That 9am start? Yeah, well it was a good thought. We didn't get there until 9:15am, 15 minutes too late to catch Millo, who'd likely assumed that, if I said I'd be there at 9am, I would. After all, the Tuesday/Thursday-morning ride leaves promptly at 7:45am, as determined by GPS satellites (literally; when the clock says 7:45am on my Garmin Edge 705, we are gone!).Â I only found out after getting home that Millo had been ahead of us, and had passed us on his way down as we neared the top.

The rain? I don't think we felt more than a few drops the entire ride. The roads weren't going to dry out though; it was too cold and not enough wind for that! But we were able to comfortably climb the hill, although no records were in danger of being broken. This was Kevin's most-challenging ride since his kidney-caused hiatus, so the sub-30 minutes that would be normal for the climb up to the Grandview Restaurant took 33, and the overall climb to the top was about 2 hours, fifteen minutes instead of something under 2. But he hung in there, keeping a pretty consistent pace all the way to the top.

Did I mention how few were out on the mountain this year? Maybe 15 total! I figure most had been scared off by the ominous-looking clouds and forecast of rain. Too bad for them; Kevin and I are one ride ahead!

Preparing the leave the nice, warm entry to the Observatory

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Not too many bikes at the top this year

On the way up we did get passed by two local riders, one of whom, David, knew all about Kevin from reading this blog. He also knew all about "pilot" Kevin who had threatened to show up but didn't.

The top held no surprises; the usual warm entrance to the observatory, the candy & coke machines that take only dry dollar bills, the bathroom that only dispenses cold water at a time you'd really like something warm to thaw out your hands. Well, there was one new addition, a very nice older woman (I'm using "older" to reference anyone over 35, but she was probably in her

Heading home

50s-60s in that very nice grandmother type of way) who said she could offer us hot water if we wanted, and mentioned how on a different (but similarly-cold) day some guy had ridden up without anything on his legs or even a jacket and she had to get all sorts of stuff to wrap him up in). She also mentioned that if we wanted, we could head into this other section which was even warmer. No thanks; if we got used to that, we'd never make it back outside!

But of course you must head back, so you put on everything you've got for the worst part of the ride- the long, cold & damp descent, punctuated this time by a brief stop to help Jeff, a friend of ours we assumed was going to catch us on the way up, with a flat tire (he'd run out of tubes).

It was far from a perfect day, but it may in fact have been the perfect ride to start out the new year.