

Why I like my job

Faithful readers will recall that, in last Tuesday's entry, when our morning ride was enjoying yet another incredible day to ride and regretting that they had to get to work, I mentioned my job involves getting others to enjoy the same sort of thing we were. And today, at the top of Old LaHonda, I came across someone we had sold a new bike to just a couple days ago, on his very first ride up to Skyline. How cool is that?

Obviously lots of people out riding today, most of them a bit earlier than I got out, trying to get back before the Superbowl. I would have been in that earlier crowd, except that Kevin (my son, not the pilot) got out of bed limping pretty badly and had to make a trip to Kaiser (something he's rather used to by now). Turns out he'd messed up a tendon at LaCrosse practice on Friday, so no riding or LaCrosse for a week. So instead of getting out at 9:30, it was shortly after 12 that I got going, something you wouldn't do in the summer because you'd be facing the climbs in the heat of the day. Well guess what? February 6, 2011, which is technically the middle of winter, and it was in the mid-70s and I'm even feeling like I got too much sun.

My original plan, or the slightly-modified version without Kevin, was to do a speed run, no stopping for rest anywhere, just get out, do the Old LaHonda/Pescadero/Tunitas loop and return. It didn't quite work out that way though, as my legs and mind just didn't initially seem wired for speed. I took a bit of time at the top of Old LaHonda, where I came across Hugh (the guy who'd just picked up a bike from us) and a number of others enjoying their bikes. Then down to LaHonda, loop through the back roads to Pescadero Road, up Haskins Grade and wondering when I was really going to get in the groove on this ride. I stopped in at the Pescadero Bakery for an Ollalieberry Scone and then headed across Stage Road. Curiously, I came across quite a few cyclists I know, all heading in the opposite direction (doing the loop counter-clockwise). Did they know something I didn't? Struggling north against strong winds on Stage Road, the answer was yes! But headwinds have been less of an issue for me these past few years, whether because I have more patience now or see it as a challenge, not sure. Just know that I don't mind putting my head down and driving into them, at least for a little bit.

It was on Tunitas that I started feeling really good. It took 3/4s of the ride to get that feeling, but there's no better way to finish a ride than feeling good on a climb. Nothing earth-shattering; from the coast to the top took 51 minutes, 17 seconds (not that I keep track of such things!), but the warmer weather opened up my lungs and I could breathe! For once I wasn't limited by my usual winter lungs so I was able to breathe easily and slowly, limited instead by whatever my legs could deliver. Of course, I'll claim that I could have made it up significantly faster if I hadn't been fighting the strong offshore flow at the bottom, and perhaps that's even true. Whatever, it felt like I was putting in a good effort, and my bike was doing a fantastic job converting that effort into speed up the hill.

And Burt, yes, you should have ridden with me today. You would have liked it. --Mike--