This page was exported from - Almost-Daily Diary
Export date: Sat Jul 30 17:36:07 2016 / +0000 GMT

Thank you, Eric! (Just another day in the life of a cyclist with epilepsy)

It was perhaps the final non-legwarmer morning rideÂ of the year, as the weather report wants us to believe it's not only going to start getting colder soon, but perhaps even rain early next week. Our brief fling with summer weather (which didn't start until summer ended) appears to be over. If only Kevin's fling with epilepsy could end so quickly!

A smaller group today; just Eric, John, Chris, Mike (our new employee in Redwood City), Kevin (my son, not the pilot). I suggested to Kevin that maybe he take it a bit easier today, thinking that might prevent his all-too-often-lately seizure on Kings Mtn, but he just looked at me and asked "Why?" in that manner that's not asking for a response but instead ridiculing the question. There was only one thing on Kevin's mind this morning. Let's see if we can drop dad.

Approaching the closed gate at the bottom of Huddart Park

Mission accomplished for Kevin. I got dropped on the ride through the park, and, after the regroup, I got dropped again hal a mile or so later. Chris was charging up the hill, with Mike (not me Mike)Â and Kevin in tow. They were completely out of sight pretty soon, and remained that way until... I'm coming up to the final straight stretch to the top, with Eric close behind, and up ahead, in the middle of the road, is Kevin. Well OK, my eyes aren't so good that I can nail the details, but he's the only in the group with a green helmet, so that's obviously him, and why would anyone else be on the ground in the middle of the road?

Kevin lying in the road ahead, having a seizure

Chris is trying to keep him from moving around too much, with Mike helping out as soon as he got there (Chris and Kevin had apparently dropped Mike shortly before). I arrived just after Kevin went through the mild initial part of his seizure, responded to Mike "I'm good" and then did the heavy convulsing thing for a couple minutes before settling down. It might be disturbing to read this, but it really isn't shocking at all, just a day in the life of someone with epilepsy who wishes to live as normal as possible. It's really pretty amazing that, knowing a seizure is reasonably likely, he still goes all-in on the climbs, working to become ever-stronger and lighter and generally excel at cycling.

But we still had a bit more to work through after he recovered. As always, we got him back on the bike as quickly as possible (which dramatically reduces the likelihood of post-seizure headaches, lethargy and depression) and, after a couple of wobbly pedal strokes, off he went, covering the final 100ft of the climb.

But we weren't done yet. At the top, instead of heading directly across Skyline to the wide paved area where we usually stop and regroup, or headingÂ left (south)Â on Skyline to gradually cool down, Kevin turns right. North. Towards 92. OK, sometimes we do that, head north a hundred meters or so and then turn around. Gives us time to make sure it's safe to get across the street. So I follow Kevin... who just keeps going. I catch up to him, tell him we need to turn around, he says OK, I turn around... and he just keeps going. There was a car or two, so maybe he's just looking or a safe place to turn across the road. I wait a bit. Still no Kevin. This isn't

right. So I head out after him, with Eric coming with me, to bring him back. We get around the corner, and there's no sign. Huh? It occurs to me that he might still be a bit disoriented (which normally passes very quickly after a seizure), and not realize he's going the wrong way. It also occurs to me that he might have ridden off the road somewhere, so I'm thankful we have two sets of eyes looking for him.

We keep going, and going, and going... and I'm beginning to fade a bit but fortunately Eric's riding strongly, and we eventually see him up ahead, going very strongly, riding normally (smoothly, safely towards the side of the road, nothing out of the ordinary). When we get up to him and he actually sees us, it's clear he's unaware that anything's out of the ordinary, but he quickly accepts what we tell him and within moments is grounded again in reality. Where he was prior to that we'll never know; he has no recollection whatsoever of that part of the ride.

So we turned around (all three of us!) and headed back south on Skyline. The rest of the group had already ridden on, so we rode the rest of the loop backward, catching back up to the remains (just Mike and John) on west-side Old LaHonda. We also passed Millo, who said something about being confused (guess he was surprised to see us coming the wrong direction) but never saw him again. Strange morning, to be sure! Thankfully uneventful the rest of the way, with Kevin becoming completely "normal" (well, he is 18) and descending 84 with his usual reckless abandon.

Just another day in the life of a cyclist with epilepsy. And thank you, Eric, for helping with Kevin. It was greatly appreciated.