

Annual Mount Hamilton New Year's Day ride

67 degrees for the forecast high on Mount Hamilton this coming Sunday! If that holds true, it will be the second-nicest day yet for a ritual I've been doing for over 20 years now.

This is not an organized ride in any way, shape or form (in other words, there's no mechanical support, no food or water along the way). It's just something that people do to start the new year out in the right way... on a bike, climbing a hill! My son and I will be starting at 9am from the base of the hill (Alum Rock & Mount Hamilton). Unfortunately, CalTrain service doesn't start early enough on holidays, with the first train not arriving in San Jose until 9:51am.

We'll be riding a 1 hour, 45 minute pace to the top, which would be equivalent to riding up Kings in about 30 minutes or so. The views of the not-snow-covered Sierras should be great, and if it's really clear, you'll see Mount Lassen.

There's a coke and food machine ("food" being candy and energy bars) at the top, but it only takes dry dollar bills. That means putting them into a plastic bag; anything even slightly damp won't work in their machines.

If you haven't been up Mount Hamilton before, it's mainly... long. Really long! The grade is never steep (it averages out less than Kings Mtn), and it's got two short descents on the way up. Make sure you've got two bottles of Cytomax (or whatever your drink of choice is) and some energy bars for the trip up. And the ride back down? Mount Hamilton, for most of us, is not a descent we look forward to. Random gravel in the turns and invisible potholes keep your speed down so much that you actually look forward to the two short climbs on the way back!

And when will you be back? Leaving at 9am, assume you'll be back around 1pm, still time to catch one of the New Year's Day football games, and feel guilt-free about nachos & cokes & whatever else you might be tempted to eat because everybody else is. Everybody else who didn't ride to the top of the Bay Area's highest peak!