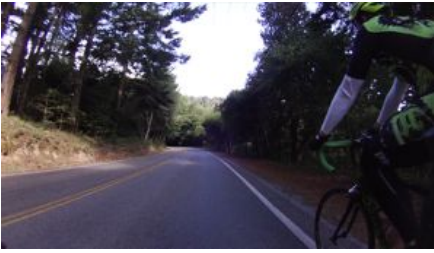


We were late to the party; who showed up?

It started last night actually; Kevin changed out his front tire, which had been heavily damaged in Sunday's ride on the dirt part of Monte Bello, and it's not like he hasn't changed tires before. But this morning, after topping them off, we hear a "pop" sound in the garage, and look around, trying to figure out which of many bikes just blew a tire (first suspecting it was either of our bikes, but they both seemed to be holding air just fine). OK, must have been the hybrid which had a totally-flat tire, never mind, as Kevin pointed out, the other tire was flat too. So we set off, with Kevin noticing as we approached an intersection that his brake was making quite a bit of noise. We go on a bit further before I decide we'd better stop and take a look. Yep. Front tire lifting up off the rim, due to a tube pinch. And not just an ordinary tube pinch; this one had torn a hole in the tube and then the tire settled back on top of it, sealing off the hole! First time for everything.



Kevin and I had the world to ourselves this morning

Unfortunately, the 10 minutes it took to change out the tube meant we were 8 minutes late to the start of the ride, and this ride starts punctually, with or without me. Or at least I assume it does; I haven't missed more than a handful of rides over the last 30 years, but today was one of them. What to do? Ride the route backward to find them, of course! Not such a bad thing doing something entirely different for a change, and the run up 84 to Skyline was actually fun, especially since the relatively-shallow grade is well suited for my (lack of) style these days, allowing me to actually put Kevin in a bit of difficulty. This even continued as we headed north on Skyline to our inevitable intercept.

Except that we never did intercept anyone from the ride. We passed the first sprint point, just north of Sky Londa, about 4 minutes earlier than we normally would (coming from the other direction), so there was no question we'd connect sometime during the 10+ minutes it would take to climb up to Skeggs. Thinking that perhaps they'd headed down the other side to one of the dead-end roads (Native Sons or Star Hill) we headed down Swett and, upon reaching Star Hill, looked for any bike tracks in the damp pavement, but none were to be seen. We continue on, riding the section of Tunitas from Star Hill to Skyline at a pretty fast clip, and then down Kings into Woodside and back home.

Hopefully I'll get some emails letting me know if anyone did, or didn't, show up... and where they did, or did not, ride. In the meantime, we had a pretty good ride on our own, and one of those times where I was feeling pretty darned good... a good feeling to have, with just over a month to go before heading over to France. --Mike--