

Strava says 19 "accomplishments" but this guy did better!



I'm struggling a bit on my return, heading over Sand Hill, and catch a glimpse of this guy, probably in his 70s. He didn't have a great bike, he'd just come up over the opposite side, and his broad smile showed satisfaction, relief, and more sense of accomplishment than anything Strava has given me. Sometimes we get so caught up in our goals, measured in minutes & seconds & kilometers & timing points, that we forget about the things that brought us to cycling in the first place. The first time we made it to Skyline. Making it to the coast. Discovering new bakeries along the way.

When I was 11 years old, I remember having a AAA Bay & River map laid out on the kitchen table, looking at new towns to explore, like Portola Valley, which was out there past Woodside. A year later I'd go to the US Geological Survey center in Menlo Park with my friend Bob Kriesle, to buy maps preparing us for the New World (the mountains between us and the coast), and noticing they had markings for oil wells (oil wells on 84? Who knew?). Every ride was an adventure, not a competition. We'd seek out the tough climbs not for speed, but just to say we'd been there. I had a rack on the back of my bike that we'd carry a couple of quart bottles of Coke for fuel (no water bottles on a Schwinn Varsity). I'm not sure if I've found a different path, a type of cycling that's compatible with who and what I am these days, or if I've lost my way. But I do know it's been a very long time since I've crested a hill and had a smile like I saw on the old guy coming over the top of Sand Hill today!

Maybe the day is coming where my time up hills won't be so important to me, but that day's not here yet. But I am very aware, and thankful, that there are a great many ways to enjoy cycling.



Until they get Junipero Serra fixed up, you might want to choose a different route. It's worse than it looks, and it looks pretty bad!

What about my ride? It wasn't what was planned, that's for sure. Kevin (my son) and I were going to head out to the coast, but he's developed another kidney stone, and after waiting it out for too many hours, it was clear he wasn't going to be riding and I wouldn't be heading out to the coast. 2:15pm and there's just not that much daylight left! So I headed out into the foothills, pushing myself pretty hard since I wouldn't be getting in many miles, and tossed in the "walking" Joaquin loop off Portola Road to make things even tougher. Eventually I ended up at our Los Altos store, and then headed back on a more direct, less adventurous route, partly because I was feeling a bit spent, and partly because I thought it would be shorter. Uh, no, I must have hit every red light on Foothill! That plus the slow riding on the section of Foothill (maybe Junipero Serra when north of Page Mill?) where they've torn up the road and have uneven steel plates that you don't want to ride over. What a mess they're making of our roads these days.

As spent as I was, I had been inspired seeing that old guy on Sand Hill so instead of the "easy" ride over Jefferson, I took the

Godetia "shortcut" to add one more insanely-steep piece of road. In the end, a very nice ride. Wish I could have been out there longer, but I made the best of the time I had.