I'm looking forward to next year

There are two significant (to me) things about my cycling that have me hopeful for becoming faster next year. First, my new breathing routine. Forcing myself to exhale more-deeply every other breath has really helped extend my capabilities. I still sound like a steam engine on a steep climb, but I'm a faster steam engine. Second is my new power meter. It's really helping me learn what I can do, what I might be leaving on the table at any given time vs my full potential.

Of course, winter is coming, days are getting shorter and colder, and inevitably I'll be getting a bit heavier for a few months, and slower. This winter is going to be tougher than most, because I've made some real progress over the past few months, posting my fastest time on Kings and Old LaHonda since I started logging them on Strava (which goes back to 2008, or 5 years). I'm going to watch those times head in the wrong direction for a few months. I'm going to have to pay more attention to my weight. And I'll turn 58 too soon, in March, before it gets much warmer, before I lose my winter weight, before I really start trending upward again. This is the first time I've really thought about the fact that my birthday comes at the wrong time of year; it will give unwarranted credence to the idea that I'm slowing down as I get older. I don't think that's going to happen. I think I'm going to be faster next year than I was this.

Or not. But today's ride was another in a series where I wasn't the slowest and felt like I had quite a bit more in the tank than I was required to use. Chris (younger guy who works with Karl at REI, as opposed to slightly-older Chris who's faster than anybody should be for as little time as he has to ride), Eric, JR & Kevin (my son, who's now gone 48 hours without a seizure, a major accomplishment at the moment!) were on the ride. Nobody seemed to want to ride really fast, but JR and I played with each other a little bit and my legs held up. Right now, I'm feeling pretty good about my riding. --MIke--