

That was some ride! Old LaHonda, Pescadero, Tunitas, with the ultimate "rabbit"

What a great day to be out riding... finally! Unlike last Sunday's ride in the rain, which included just one small climb (Old LaHonda) and the loop, today's beautifully-clear skies reminded me of why it's so great to be a cyclist in Northern California during the winter (even though this is actually Fall). And such nice skies and bright sun also meant this would be a good time to try and get some more video shot from my Contour HD camera I've got mounted under the handlebars.



But first, who is this older guy, stretched way, way, way out, on a single-speed bike, no helmet, who kept playing leap frog with me on Canada and Mountain Home Road? I was doing a pretty steady pace, and, with gears, definitely had an advantage at times, and would pass him... but it wouldn't be too long before he'd be back, passing me. The general rule is never pass someone you can't stay in front of, the main point being don't push yourself in a way that you can't maintain the effort. Eventually my steady pace saw him fall behind at the far end of Mountain Home Road, not to be seen again.

From there it was up Old LaHonda, with the plan (remember, I always have a plan) being to try and stay seated to get better video. Well yeah, that sounds good, but it's really tough for me to stay seated on steep sections, but I did try, and if I figure out how to work with Adobe Premiere Elements 9, I may even have a finished product to show. It definitely took its toll on me though, and of course I'll claim that it took a couple minutes longer just because I was fiddling with the camera from time to time.

I didn't feel that good climbing Old LaHonda, but y'know, I really can count on the idea that I'm going to feel better later on, and this was yet one more example of that. I was riding tempo, dressed perfectly (leg warmers and light base layer) and happy that I could see my shadow. A high-contrast day, none of that gray stuff! Even the ride up Haskins went pretty easy, and the run into Pescadero didn't find me bothered by the gluteal muscle soreness that I usually get for about 5 minutes or so as I'm heading into the wind.

At Pescadero I met up with a couple of guys I've seen out on the road before, asking where Kevin was. Seems I can't escape from thinking about what's going on with my son and his Kidney issues no matter what. Not that it would really be possible anyway, but it's interesting that Kevin is now known as a cyclist almost as much as I am. It was at the Pescadero Bakery that I tried to post on-the-road from my iPhone, taking a photo of the costumed girl at the register and trying to send it. It sorta worked, still gotta take care of figuring a few things out. The story of my life.



Bill and his super-recumbentOne thing I did get figured out is that I'm no match for a strong rider on a motor-assisted recumbent. Notable Western Wheelers member Bill Bushnell had left Pescadero just ahead of me and somehow I caught up to him. What had been a good ride up to that point, suddenly became a very challenging ride! Bill is known for the infamous "Mr. Bill's Nightmare" series of Sequoia Centuries back in the day; a medical condition has caused him to have to limit his maximal efforts (good for the rest of us), but his love for riding caused him to find a workaround... a recumbent that's power-assisted (bad for the rest of us!). Trying to stay with him was difficult, and I think he was being kind and not taking advantage of the combination of his basic strength and the power-assist. Thankfully it was warm enough that I could actually breathe and almost carry on conversations, and accompanied him on the three Stage Road climbs and the bottom part of Tunitas before it was time to bid him adieu and watch him rocket up ahead.

By the time I got home I was toast. I'd pushed as hard as I could up the rest of the Tunitas climb and even felt leg cramps beginning to make an appearance in my left leg, something I haven't experienced in maybe 20 years (since I first discovered Cytomax). I was actually quite relieved tht my wife had already been out on her ride, because I didn't know if I was up to accompanying yet-another power-assisted bicycle on the road. In the end it was only 58 miles, but it was a better quality 58 miles than I've ridden in a very long time. Now I just have to get the video stuff figured out. --Mike--