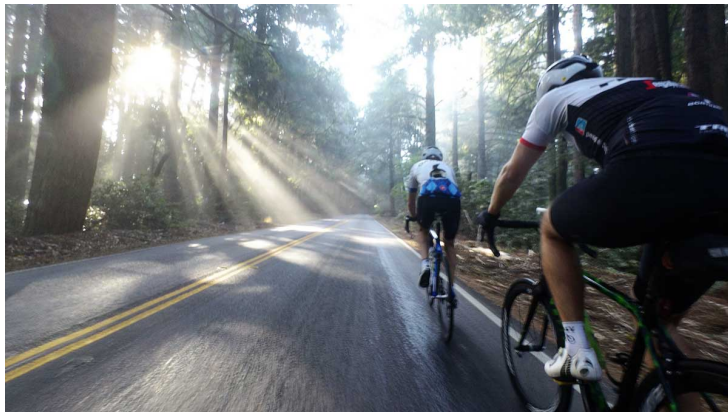


I was feeling too good to stop, but I did



Glad I didn't clean my bike recently! It was an interesting morning. For reasons unknown, I felt better than normal. It wasn't like I was able to breathe; I still sounded like a steam engine. But maybe a more-efficient steam engine?

We had the two Kevins & Tom. Pilot Kevin was slow from being worn out (not just the "worn out by life" thing but probably a really hard ride Sunday and yesterday too, I'm guessing). Younger Kevin was trying to take it easy, allowing his knee to recover. That left... me & Tom. That's where things got weird. Pilot Kevin dropped off very quickly, and by the time we got to the park, Tom and I had gapped younger Kevin quite a bit too. I just kept going, wondering when he was going to turn the screws a bit too hard for me, but he never did. Seemed like he had a good sense of exactly what I could do this morning, and was helping me put it on the road. At least until about 2/3rds of the way up, just prior to the wide open clearing section, when we pass two women and one of them yells "Mike" to me. Oh. Darn. I mean right, what's up? Who's that?

Turns out to be local bike lady Kim who, along with a friend of hers, is in the process of riding up Kings... TEN TIMES TODAY! And she's not even on Strava. I mean, if it's not on Strava, it didn't really happen, right? Anyway, I spent some time talking with them while Tom rode on, knowing full well I was blowing my chance at a pretty decent (for me) time up Kings. I'm going to check the comparison stuff Strava does, and see how I was actually doing up to the point we crossed paths. OK, just checked, I was 8 seconds ahead of my best time this year when I throttled down. Well darn!

Kevin (younger Kevin) rejoined me during the throttled-down section and we rode easily the rest of the way to the top. Old-guy Kevin brought up the rear, several minutes later.

Skyline? What a mess. Might as well have been raining, not to mention that it was pretty cold, upper-40s, and we weren't really dressed for it. Descending towards Sky Londa we hit a traffic stop where they're rebuilding the side of the mountain that has been trying to fall into the roadway since the big rains two years ago. After waiting about 10 minutes to be let through, we decided it was time to reverse course and head back the way we came. Probably a good decision because it was quite a few minutes before cars finally came up behind us. Tom was pushing the pace, hard, for the latter part of the climb, but I decided I wasn't going to let his wheel go. Neither for that matter did younger Kevin; guess his knee must be doing better!