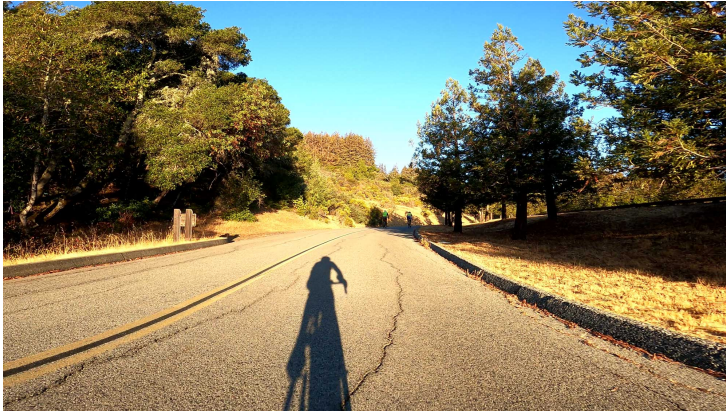


The Big 5- Rabbit, Coyote, Fox, Bobcat, Mtn Lion. Collect 'em all! Too bad I was emulating a slug.



I'd thought, with Kevin being off the bike for a week, this would be my day. But it wasn't. Instead I got to watch Kevin and Karen easily ride away from me, and it wasn't even a breathing issue. I'd thought it was going to be another very cold morning, and with the circulation issues I've been having in my hands, thought maybe I should try something that didn't work out 10 years ago- Amlodipine, a calcium-blocker that has benefitted others with Raynauds. The reason I didn't stick with it way back when was because it had terrible side effects; it kept my heart rate from increasing with effort, and another issue I wouldn't discuss in polite company. But that was then, this is now, and I'd already had to have a visit with a vascular surgeon earlier in the year due to some blisters that turned to wounds that didn't want to heal. I figured I'd give it another try. I figured wrong.

I knew things weren't going well heading over Jefferson to the start of the ride; my Garmin was thinking I was in great shape because my heart rate was low compared to effort. I got a +6 (about as high as you can get) when I felt like a -10. Kevin and I met up with Karen at the start, and I was fine until we started climbing through the park. I should first mention this might be the last time through the park for a week or two; they had signs saying "no cyclists" and "road closed" but Karen said she'd heard that was from 8am-4pm. We got through but they were already setting up to clear away vegetation and any later, we would have been in their way.

Halfway through the park, right at that first steep pitch, Kevin and Karen were gone. They nicely waited for me at the park exit onto Kings, probably thinking I'd regroup and do my usual thing of picking up speed on the middle of the climb, but... not today. That heart rate just wasn't going anywhere. Thoughts of turning around were never too far away, but I kept plugging away, seeing Kevin & Karen for the last time as I started the long open section (1.41 miles to go) just as they were exiting the top. They likely finished 5 minutes ahead of me, or at least Kevin would have, but at some point he turned back to see where I was.

Once up on Skyline I felt a little bit better, maybe a little bit more better as we got onto West Old LaHonda. High point of the ride had to be seeing a bobcat race across West Old LaHonda, right in front of Kevin! It's been literally decades since I last saw a bobcat (that was on Kings), and the first-ever sighting for Kevin.

In the end, it was another ride where, when I got home, I was glad I rode... but it would be tough to claim I felt that way for most of the ride.