

Back to Mount Hamilton, and a visit from my peeps!

Kevin and I needed to do something a bit different, but not radical. We're not yet ready again for a Santa Cruz run, but I was thinking Kevin missed out on this year's New Years Day Mount Hamilton event, so maybe that? He bit. So we got on the 9:21 train from Redwood City to San Jose, rode through the gauntlet of stop lights that makes a few miles seem like many more, and climbed the Bay Area's biggest mountain.

Proper clothing was tough; the weather report made it sound like it was going to be much cooler than it ended up being, so we had base layers and leg warmers. Kevin ditched everything at the base of the climb; I kept on the base layer but removed the leg warmers. And yes, as the temps stayed in the upper-70s, I wondered if that base layer was a bad idea! Fortunately (for climbing), the temps did drop quite a bit as we rode up the hill.

About my peeps. Yes, those are turkeys we saw, on the first descent (into Grant Ranch). Lots and lots of turkeys. Pretty big turkeys. We also saw very large feral hogs too. And huge vultures. And a tarantula. But no bobcats, no mountain lions, no coyotes.

I managed to keep a pretty steady pace all the way up, staying on Kevin's wheel. Our 1 hr 44 minute time was pretty decent, all things considered. And this time, the top was open! We were able to ride all the way up to the observatory, which was pretty much deserted... just a few other cyclists, one or two cars, that's it. The coke machine is now \$1.50, but we had enough. The views were ok but not spectacular; a bit too cloudy. But nice enough to appreciate that the only way you'd get a view like that was after a lot of hard work.

The descent? Not fun. It got colder in the brief time we spent at the top, so even putting on all the colder-weather gear, we still were pretty chilled for the first descent. It finally got pretty nice around Grant Ranch, but the changing winds made the descent less than fun. And getting back to the train station? It seemed like every light was red. I joked with Kevin that it would be a good route to bed in disc brakes.