

## Hydrocarbon loading and missing France



Just a couple weeks ago I couldn't imagine a scene like you see above; partly because you don't see large trucks like the White Ram 350, license plate# 819 1689, in France. And partly because, if you did, they'd likely be friendlier towards cyclists! Fortunately he wasn't driving erratically so we were never fearful he was going to do something stupid and reckless.

Nice morning, as usual, and without the fog up on Skyline that we had on Tuesday's ride. No leg warmers needed! Both Kevins showed up, along with Karen, Eric, Karl and, for the Kings segment, there was somebody waiting at the base of Huddart whom I didn't see again, and mistakenly thought it was Marcus (because it would often be the case that I'd see Marcus only briefly at the start of a climb, and never again, as there's no way I can come close to his speed on a climb). The climb up Kings was steady but unspectacular, punctuated by a stop to see if we could fix Eric's loose crank arm (we couldn't because we hadn't yet transferred the multi tools from our travel bikes to our regular bikes).

I do miss France. It would be really nice if France were in the Southern Hemisphere, so during our slower (and colder) winter months, I could spend a bit more time there, without feeling like I'm abandoning the business. But that's not the case; the reality is that the weather in France, in the areas I enjoy riding, closely mirrors our weather here (with the exception that the higher altitudes would be getting snow).

If I was a person of means, no question I'd have a place in southern France, likely in the Pyrenees. I'd want to spend about half the summer there, riding the familiar and exploring the unfamiliar. An interesting thing to think about, because such dreams have a definitive timeframe in which they could evolve into something real; at what age would I no longer be able to climb the big mountains I enjoy so much? So far, I can still ride pretty much wherever I want without thinking my body will break in half. How much longer? My plan is to just keep moving, let momentum keep me going, for as long as I can. Perhaps the most-tangible aspect of approaching a time where I can't ride like I'd like to is found in my continuing annual trips to France. Who knows how much longer I'll be strong enough, and thus incentive to keep going while I can. --Mike--