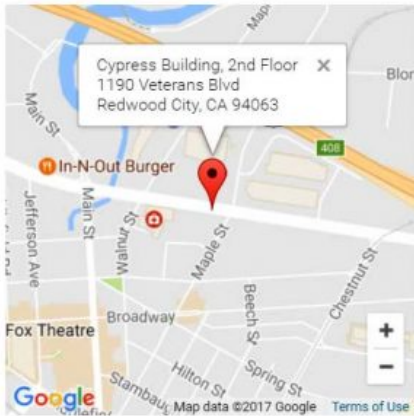


There comes a time when you gotta do something; Kings can't be getting this much steeper this fast.



Interesting that Kaiser's map identified only one other local business, something not always associated with healthy habits. But hey, at least it's not the infamous "Heart Attack Grill!"

Yesterday I wrote about the potential road closure of Highway 84, where Kevin and I came across a new chunk of freshly-disappeared asphalt. We I didn't write about was the ordeal of getting to that point in the ride.

It was wet enough that we had to ride the rain bikes, and cold enough to have to dress up a bit. Add Kings Mtn through the park to the mix, and it seemed the perfect combination to destroy me. Kevin, the other Kevin, and Karen just rode away from me through the park, and even though they waited and moderated their pace for a while up Kings, I was dying. There's an expression that applies when you're totally dead; you're said to be "sucking air." I wish. Air was the one thing I wasn't managing to suck. Felt like I needed to be carrying an oxygen tank with me, set on turbo mode to force-feed me pure oxygen. Maybe that would help.

About halfway up I had thoughts I almost never have. Maybe just a couple times in my cycling life. Thoughts of just giving up, or maybe walking for a bit. The reality is that my speed wasn't that bad, but for just over 800 vertical meters/hour, I should have felt relaxed, not stressed. But I kept on, picking up a bit of speed where Kings levels off, and slowing down ridiculously on the steep hairpins. But I made it, and like every other time I've really felt awful, I began to feel better. Better enough that, by the time we got to Sky Londa, thoughts of shortening the ride had disappeared, and I was looking forward to the views on West Old LaHonda. We even arrived home not too much later than usual.

But that ride up Kings... how many more rides like that do I have to endure? Legs and heart working fine, but lungs holding me back? Making things really frustrating is that the only time I have these issues is when I'm trying to go, as they say, full gas. If I could be content to ride casually up nasty climbs, I'd be fine. But that's not me. I want to push. I want to finish a climb on the same day as the fast folk do.

One year of treatment with albuterol, Qvar and Singulair seems to have put me no closer to that goal. Yesterday's ride finally drove me to take action, talking with my doctor again and getting a new appointment with a pulmonologist as Kaiser next week. I know I don't have anything really nasty; I'm not going to drop over dead and there are many, many people who are in danger of doing just that and need serious help seriously fast. Part me of feels a bit guilty that I'm wanting to have something "optional" (not life-threatening) taken care of. But the other part of me believes there's more to life than just being fine, and that not being able to push my limits is killing my soul. Not the immortal part, but rather the part that keeps you happy and moving forward.

Hopefully, on Tuesday, Kaiser will help me to "Thrive" like they say in their advertisements.