

How **should** I feel about the air?



You couldn't get away from the smoke today. Up, down, east, west, wherever you went, it was there. We really should spend more time being thankful that all we get to deal with is the smoke. Not the flames, not the wondering if our friends made it out, not having to think about rebuilding our lives. All we get is the smoke, and just that smoke is enough, by now, to make me feel angry. Like, why can't something be done about this. Right. As if. How quickly I can go from thinking how fortunate I am, everyone here is, back to a more selfish, shallower version of myself that is so selfish, so shallow, I don't even recognize that version of me from what should be.

People talk about the dangers of breathing the air, thinking it's nuts to be outside in this muck, and wondering if it's responsible of me to mention that I'd actually emailed my pulmonologist (lung doctor) who said there's likely no long-term health issues from riding my bike in this stuff. But after this has gone on for day after day after day, I've given up on the idea that waiting makes any sense. I can't put my life on hold waiting for the air to clear up. So I set forth on my bike, hoping I can get above it, or below it, or east or west of it. Maybe find a pocket of nice, clean air.

Thursday morning there were three of us, myself, Kevin & Kevin. And nobody else to speak of on the roads, certainly not on a bike anyway. We didn't kill ourselves climbing Kings, riding casually enough I could actually carry on a conversation. To tell you the truth, I really haven't noticed much breathing issues at all, but as the days wear on, my eyes are making their displeasure known to me. Thursday night I accepted a ride home from work with my daughter, and today, Friday, I hitched a ride both to & from work. That's not normal.

I'm ready for normal. Hoping that Sunday sees a bit of a change. Not asking for much, just "better." And still, I have to remember it's not all about me, it's not all about the SF Bay Area whose magnificent views have become, quite literally, a hazy memory. It should be about the many lives lost and many more that will need to be rebuilt hundreds of miles away.