

## Oh my it's been a long long time!

Yikes. It's been how long since I've written anything? How much of life has gotten in the way of writing about life?

We'll start with the age/mortality stuff. New show on Amazon, Night Sky. JK Simmons and Sissy Spacek playing an older retired couple, both kind of worn out by life. My does JK Simmons look old. Sissy Spacek too. I looked up their ages to see just how old they were. Sissy Spacek is 73 and, well, she looks like you'd imagine many 73 year olds would look. And JK Simmons looks similarly aged, only... JK Simmons is 67. That's just a year older than me! Do I look like that? Do I act like that?

And then I'm playing around with creating videos to upload, like one from Thursday's ride, when 4 large deer, all bucks, jumped over a fence and ran across the street in front of us (ex-pilot and myself) on Thursday's Tuesday/Thursday-morning ride. And in doing so, I came across a video, from 2018 I think, showing us all riding the second half of West Old LaHonda at what looked like a really fast pace. I'm thinking, maybe the video just made us look fast. But it also had a dashboard thing embedded in the video, showing speed and power. And it was a LOT of power. I was creating power on demand. 280 watts cruising, getting up into 340-400 watts for a while when needed. Ohmygosh. Just 4 years ago. And today I'm probably 50-60 watts down on those numbers. Some of it I expect to recover, if I can get my lung issue straightened out. But a lot of it is just simply gone. A type of riding I'm just not going to be able to do anymore. And that brings us up to today's ride.

First, what's with the weather! Would have been nice to get out at a reasonable time, but it was almost noon before the threat of more rain was gone and the roads were drying. As this was the day of the Sequoia Century, it should have been expected; there's been a weather curse on the Sequoia since the beginning of time. Heading west wouldn't be a good idea; that's where the nasty clouds were still hanging out. So no Pescadero/Tunitas ride. Which leaves what? Well, if it's going to be tough, then you're talking Redwood Gulch again. And as Kevin hadn't ridden last Sunday or this past Thursday, I figured maybe I'd have a chance of keeping up with him on the climbs, even though I'm just getting over a nasty week-long cold (not Covid; I did take a test).

What I've noticed about really steep climbs is an inability to control my breathing when the cadence gets below 50 or so. And on really steep stuff, yeah, the cadence gets below 50! So I tried an experiment today, putting some music over my earpiece while climbing Redwood Gulch. And it worked! I basically used the beat of the music like a metronome, breathing to the "cadence" of the music. I suppose I could also put a metronome on my handlebar, right? And for this one ride, I was doing a bit better up Redwood Gulch than Kevin. This too shall pass.

Shortly after we turned onto Highway 9 for the rest of the climb up to Skyline, we were passed by somebody moving not that much faster than we were. On any other day, that guy would have made a mistake, violating Rule #1. Don't pass someone you're not certain you can stay ahead of. But today wasn't any other day; Kevin was just not feeling it the rest of the way up 9. We did keep him in sight the whole way up, and even started to close the gap as we neared the top.

Skyline was what made the ride worthwhile. Huge flock of male turkeys strutting their stuff, a bunch of bucks crossing the highway near Page Mill and... at about 30mph, a bird flew into Kevin! Yes, flew right into his chest, fluttered around a bit, made a noise like an annoyed cat, and then flew off. No, my camera wasn't on at the time. Darn!

We started the ride feeling really awful, slow, what-the-heck-are-we-doing mode. But we finished with good stories and feeling much better than we started. Can't ask for much more than that.