

At least Kevin had someone to play with

Three of us this morning; me, younger Kevin and Karen. Older Kevin decided to rest up after a long-ish ride yesterday. Apparently the fate of being retired is longer rides and complaining you're too worn out to ride the next day. Doesn't sound so bad to me! I wasn't feeling particularly peppy, so Kevin and Karen rode on ahead; I finished about 5 minutes behind. 33-something. That shouldn't feel like an accomplishment, but some days, you take what you can get.

It's not fun when you're thinking about your next bike, and wondering when it will be an electric-assist. It would be relatively easy to rationalize because the new long-range lightweight lower-power models allow you to keep track of how many watts you're putting in, vs the bike. And they hardly even look like an ebike too. And quiet. Very, very quiet. What's not to like?

Well, for one thing, there's pride. I have no qualms at all about mountain bike ebikes, but for road, there's something cool about being able to ride 114 miles entirely under your own power, fueled by burritos and pastry and mountain dew. Hopefully this year is a weird anomaly, since Kevin and I didn't do a Santa Cruz loop; our longest ride was probably around 75 miles. Last year, we did several 114 mile Santa Cruz loops! When do I look forward, sideways, then back, and realize, there might not be another Santa Cruz loop in the system? Not yet. For now, the endurance remains, just the climbing speed is an issue.

I guess the real issue would be, to what extent would I be accelerating my decline (if at all) with an electric-assist road bike? I don't think it's a chance I can take. I've got one more 100% human powered road bike left in me. The current Trek Madone has served me amazingly well for 7 years. The carbon wheels, at 50,000 miles, are beginning to show signs of wear on the brake tracks, so the end is probably near (even though the bike still performs great!).

So that next bike. Another Emonda, another Shimano DuraAce bike, this time with 12 speeds instead of 11, and definitely with some lower gears for the likes of Redwood Gulch. Maybe my last non-electric road bike? Where will I be in 5 years, at 71 years old? I can see some of my peers gradually, gracefully even, slowing down. Slipping into new groups doing rides later in the day, at an easier pace. Stopping for coffee and not caring about how fast (or slow) they are up Kings. That's definitely not me, not yet. But 5 years from now, will I want to do slower rides completely under my own power, or try to keep up with (younger) Kevin with some assist?