

## Almost as reliable as we are



It's that usual odd thing- it's raining, who would be out there riding in the rain, but you know if it's a Tuesday or Thursday morning, or a Sunday, it's going to be me, and probably Kevin too. And the strangest thing about that happens the night before. Looking over the weather forecast, and hoping for something "real", as in, heavy rain, maybe a bit of wind. Not the drizzly stuff you don't get credit for riding in. You actually hope to wake up in the middle of the night to the sound of rain pounding against the window. Who does that?

You could see it as training for our regular trip to France for 11 days each July, following the Tour de France. We don't have a choice whether to ride or not; we've traveled 6000 miles, and the show goes on, rain or shine. I'll never forget one of Kevin's earliest trips, we're staying at our regular place in Lourdes, overlooking the Pyrenees, it's 10pm, the next morning we're riding up the Tourmalet and there's an epic thunderstorm. And it's like, ok, we're down with that! Let it rain! We can handle it.

But back home, there is no Tour de France to intercept, so sure, we could just put our bikes on trainers and do the Zwift thing. Don't think so. Where do you draw the line, and start slacking off entirely? Besides, there are people who depend upon us to be out there in the rain! It makes them feel better about themselves. Fits into the category of, the purpose of my life is to serve as a warning to others.

But there are some things almost as dependable as us riding in the rain. Like Cigarette Smoking Man. Straight from the X-Files! We see him almost every ride, same place, standing outside his car, smoking. Rain or shine.

As we approached the climb, I was mentioning to Kevin how different things were in the old days, not that long ago, 6 or so years maybe? Back then there'd be others out there in the wet, sometimes even showing up for our rides. We'd look for the tire tracks cutting through the oil slicks on the road, like a tracker surveys the ground to follow his prey. But these days, far fewer cyclists on "fun" days, undoubtedly due to Zwift.

Zwift. Something I will need to start embracing soon, as I'm just not strong enough to get the workout I really need, riding just Tuesdays and Thursdays. Trying to keep up with Kevin in France this summer, I'm going to need a LOT more fitness than I'm showing now. I'd love to believe it's just the off-season routine slowdown, but think there's more to it than that. And I'm not ready to give up trying. Ah yes, the ebike question. We'll get to that another day.

The plan (remember, there's always a plan) was to revisit the "waterfall" on Skyline, on the descent from Kings to Sky Londa. But we just did an out and back up Kings instead, concerned that falling trees might trap us up on Skyline, and it's not much fun when you're stuck in the rain. There will be more rain. We'll get to that waterfall soon.