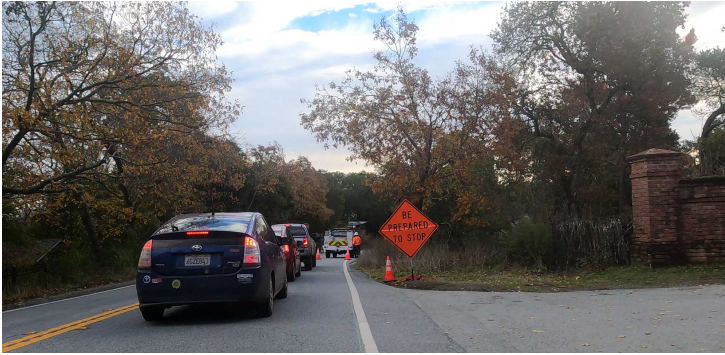


Surprisingly, able to ride hard enough my legs are a bit sore. A good thing!



I wasn't sure what it was going to be like, getting back on the bike for my first ride in, what, almost three weeks? That two-week vacation started on a Sunday, so missed a "good" ride (Sunday rides are longer and usually more challenging than the regular Tuesday/Thursday-morning rides), so my final ride pre-vacation was on a Thursday, and when I got back, late Monday, I was out on the "regular" ride the next morning, jet-lag & all.

While off the bike, I wasn't looking forward to getting back on it, approaching it with some degree of fear & trepidation. How much weight would I have gained (A lot; I left at 161 pounds and came back at 169) and how long would it take to lose it (not too long; I typically lose the gained weight almost as fast as I gained it). Would I willingly head out into the cold? How slow would I be? Would it be a matter of just surviving the ride?

That first ride back, a few days ago, was much nicer than I thought it would be. Ex-Pilot showed up and the ride over Jefferson to the start seemed surprisingly normal (even though my Garmin reassured me that my fitness was at negative 8, lowest I'd ever seen) and I was seeing pretty normal power numbers. The ride up Kings was slow but not dreadful, never that feeling of why am I doing this, why not turn back and do something more practical. It's possible the number of stairs my wife and I had to ascend and descend helped maintain some level of fitness (so I could have been even worse than negative 8?).

The temps were cool but not cold, getting down to 49F I think? And dry, 100% dry. Had it been wet, I might have likely gotten on the trainer, or perhaps nothing at all. Thank goodness for the unusual completely dry spell Northern California is seeing right now.

Kevin (ex-pilot) had to get back early so we didn't do the full version of the ride, choosing instead to loop back from the Skegg's parking lot and do the Swett/Tunitas loop and then back down Kings. It was enough that my legs started feeling a bit sore later in the day, and the next, and even through Thursday morning. That was a surprise, a surprise that I was able to ride hard enough to make my legs sore. That's hope!

Thursday ex-Pilot showed up again and this time we did the full ride, including West Old LaHonda. Beautiful up on top, hitting 60F, 10 degrees warmer than down below! Completely clear at the coast. Only negative is a LOT of road construction right now, including the descent from Sky Londa into Woodside, where you head around a corner and BOOM there's the guy with the stop sign and the construction work. When you encounter something like that, assuming you were able to stop in time and not hit the car that suddenly presented itself in front of you as you rounded that corner, very good idea to pull off to the side of the road. Why? Because you want to be a witness to the car coming up from behind, skidding into the stopped car in front... not part of a car/bike/car sandwich.

So I'm far more resilient than I'd thought, and at times during the ride I was even thinking that my year of turning 68 wasn't all that bad. My loss of power, ability to climb, wasn't nearly as bad as the year I turned 67. Or, perhaps I've just come to terms with it and not being so hard on myself. Don't think that's really it though; I did much better this past July, in France, than I thought I would.

Having said all that, I'd trade away my relative strength and durability for better health for my wife in an instant. Very relieved that

she goes back on her Immunotherapy/Chemo treatments today.