

From: Earl Magpiong
Subject: PCHR May 17, 2008 The redundant 600K ride report

Tom's report got it exactly right. At the risk of being tedious I will only add my personal observations and anecdotes to his well-written narrative.

"Great deeds are usually wrought at great risks."
Herodotus

Karma: ...the totality of a person's actions in one of the successive states of his existence, thought of as determining his fate in the next; fate, destiny.

The easiest thing to do in any organized ride is the pedaling. Susan got me everything I needed, even suggesting I take cold weather gear. Nah, we're having a heat wave; I don't need it. I finally tested my night riding light at 2:30 Saturday morning. Of course it was broken; a back-up lighting system was jury-rigged, I met Tom at the start, and we were off to ride (except that Tom's front tire had no air. Why was that? It is called a "flat tire").

Correction to Tom's report: We were on state route 166 not 162. But I digress.

I carried my trusty goat-skin bota as an extra water container. As a group of Sea-to-Summit cyclers rode by one of them asked me what was in the bota bag: I replied, "It is a quantity of 1947 Chateau Laffite Rothschild". (Where's the party? At the next rest stop; we'll be there.). Another rider was disappointed that it was not a '59 Chateau Latour, second picking. There is no pleasing some people.

There is a section of 166, stretching 10 miles from Cuyama to a few miles beyond New Cuyama, where the road surface is pitted with pot-holes, broken pavement, and a white line marking the shoulder at one or no feet from the edge of the road. Very bumpy surface; lots of traffic, including many rather large semis, flatulent Harleys, and people testing the speed limit of their new Porsches.

12:30 PM., 81 miles. When we got to the control point, a market in New Cuyama, two half-full water bottles awaited us against the outside wall. This is a courtesy that brevet riders do after buying the water and filling their bottles: Leave the unused water for the next batch of riders. Great camaraderie.

Any long distance event affords each rider the opportunity to "sort things out", meditate, sing the songs in his/her head that keep the "rhythm" of pedaling going, (when not conversing with others), eye-ball the scenery, and to just kind of pedal and not think too much. It is at this time that you hear the clicking, whirring, clanking, and rubbing noise you never heard before. Now what? Is something wrong? Maybe if I just keep pedaling it'll go away. Does it go away? Sometimes. Riding a bike is not for sissies.

We got "props" from the two guys that met us w/ice and water on 166. "You guys look great. Any problems with heat or...? Keep on doin' what you're doin'".

7:45 PM 150 miles. The gods have decided that I needed to be made aware of their presence: I got a flat and the tube I selected had a short valve stem. (That's what she said at the picnic.) Fortunately, the second tube in my arsenal was the proper length.

What clothing I had for the night ride was not enough (the early morning start from Ventura was ridden in 60 degree weather). Susan has a right to say I told you so. Again, my hubris was pointed out to me by the gods as I shivered in the cold night air. Fortunately my spirits were lifted by the intensity of the full moon lighting our way and casting our shadows on the pavement. Where there was no ambient light, we could see myriads of stars across the entire night sky. The moon glimmering on the ocean's rippling surface reminded Tom of similar nights on his sailboat. I came back to reality when I fell. Was this an "accident"? Or was this a continuation of "Bad Karma"? Returning on Highway 1, we rode through a fog bank, near Harmony, which increased my uncomfortable-ness, both physically and spiritually. Shortly before reaching Cambria, my jury-rigged light went out. Naturally (or not) the replacement batteries were at the bottom of back bag and I had no duct tape to replace what I had torn off to get to the light's battery pack. Randy had masking tape, which, I hoped, had not mocked the gods.

8:00 AM 232 miles. I was tired, sleepy, and cold on the ride back to Shell Beach. The sun made it's appearance, now, and we stopped at a bus bench on Los Osos Rd. I sat down; the sun was directly on me, and the next thing I knew, Tom was prompting me to continue to ride "home". With the grains of sand gone from my eyes and the shivering stopped, I knew we would make every effort to get to Ventura, not necessarily in time, but make it back, nonetheless. As fate would have it, it was not to be.

As Tom reported, we were sagged back to Ventura from our stopping place a few miles south of Lompoc, on Highway One. Our "sag" was a Toyota "bob-tail", with bucket seats in front, for two people (only), stick shift, and an open bed in back. (Special thanks to David Nakai for going waaaaay out of his way to help us out!) Our bikes were laid on the bed, bungeed down (there was a huge wind at Gaviota Beach which almost blew my bike out of the bed) and off we went, 75 miles to Ventura. As a fitting tribute to Bad Karma and vengeful gods, I sat in between the bucket seats with David driving and Tom up against the door. Even though David drove at a speed that was over and above the call of duty, I came out of that position feeling like I was a prisoner at Guantanamo.

All of the above is not to say that the ride was awful or that we were foolish or that we will "never" do this again. It is simply one Easy (bicycle) Rider's meager attempt to illuminate and describe what goes on in between the lines of: "Started at" to "Finished at".

*"What fates impose, that men must needs abide;
It boots not to resist both wind and tide."
W. Shakespeare*

I need a new derailleur.

Thanks for listening. *"And the last shall be first".*

Olaf.