

Several years ago our daughter went off to Australia and left me with one of her old bicycles. She had gotten a new one and bequeathed the old road bike to her Dad. Many of the spokes broke, the tires were old, etc, etc. Finally, ^{get tired of broken bike going, and...} I put enough money into the bike that it became suitable for me to ride around the roads, through the hills and dales of Humboldt.

Two weeks ago I set out with my redeemed bike and 18 older Presbyterians (which is a bit redundant because the Greek word Presbyterian means 'elder'). Day One, we rode from Bayside to conquer the Wildcat. The following day we ride over Panther Gap and back to Fortuna. Day Three, up Kneeland and around Fickle Hill Road, into Arcata. Day Four up to Orick, Day Five, down 101 from Orick back to Bayside, and finally, Day 6, up to Dows Prairie. ^{and back} Why were a group of aging Presbyterians riding up and down the surrounding hills some 260 miles and 20,000 vertical feet ^{for} a week? We were riding for the camaraderie and challenge; many were seasoned cyclists. But ultimately, we were riding to fight hunger. The Ride was named Pedal for Protein. This moniker is derived from the fact that the money raised during the trip goes to provide protein for food banks in ~~coastal~~ northern California. It proved to be one of the hardest things I've done and one of the most rewarding.

Reflecting on my ride I was struck by three things:

1. A bunch of middle aged and older folks can make a difference when they put their mind to it, and keep going. We have raised close to \$40,000 dollars to help stock food banks in our area, while doing what we love ~~to do~~.
2. The beauty of the north coast is on special display when you walk or ride a bicycle rather than ~~ride~~ inside a car... Many of the riders on Pedal for Protein were from Marin County. ^{Now} Marin's a lovely place, but they were astounded at the dramatic beauty of our forests, beaches and rivers.
3. We should all get on a bicycle more often: especially in light of the health benefits of the exercise combined with the incomparable aesthetics of our North coast.

Three wishes:

1. I wish. Local and state governments would build many more bike paths.
2. I wish I rode my bike more and drove my car less. I wish we all did. Perhaps our state, federal and local governments can provide incentives for saving fuel by encouraging us to ride with leg power, rather than burning up dirty old fossil fuels.
3. I wish to thank Revolution bicycle shop for fixing my broken derailleur hangar on day 3. I brought it in, explained the purpose and my enthusiasm for the ride, and they had it expertly fixed in 25 minutes. Thanks guys!

Don't you want to go out and ride a bike through beautiful Humboldt? Do it today.... er, at least, soon!

This has been Dan Price for Community comment