

Ride Report – 3/10/2019 by David Nakai

Good evening all. Hard to write that with daylight. Some may hate it but I like it, the contrarian that I am. Finally completed my dental work today, teeth can be expensive which explains why I'm not riding in the wind.

So there was this big turnout of riders on Sunday, most came from Meet Up. Lots of cute pretty women and some hot looking young guys. Many in need for some experienced riders to show them things. The cute gals went off with the buff dudes to someplace more happening. OK, there's more than two weeks to April first. But you wouldn't know since you weren't there. Well one other Wheelmen showed up which I shall reveal later in this article. And it is a she, who could it be.

So I'm figuring what was going on that day. Could everyone gone to the Redondo Beach Kite Festival or they are tailgating for that Kings versus Ducks game. Can't be the weather as it was partly cloudy at the start which later got less cloudier. Not a drop of precipitation the whole day. Tried to post a photo from the ride coming down Malibu Canyon Road looking out at the blue Pacific and equally blue skies. Wish the day was worse as it would have kept the beach people at home. BTW, checking the holiday schedule, today is National Napping Day, so have a great nap. Later on Friday, it's World Sleep Day. Looks as if nothing gets done this week.

Wrote earlier have a couple of 400 K weekends due, and with a fast riding partner, need to do at least 200 miles to be in some kind of shape. With this LAW's Century, just need to add a century beforehand. Leave home at 11 PM, Saturday, thus giving me a century for that day. With the time change, it'd be midnight. As Rod wrote, we will get an extra hour of daylight, to me it's one less hour of daylight. So if I'm going to ride I'll need a destination. Googling a 24 hours restaurant not named Dennys heading south, find Westminster Café. If you've driven the 405, you can see the place off the freeway.

Just in case you wish to use my route, Hawthorne South, Manhattan Beach East to the end, right on Van Ness. 190th East, right on Avalon and left on Del Amo. About third of the route does have bike lane. Take the San Gabriel River trail toward the beach, exit Westminster and east to my destination. BTW, the last time I rode this bike was the La Tuna when I did not have brakes. New brakes, though with the configuration of back could not put on desired ones. So now I can stop though the rear does make rubbing noise when in use. Good that I mostly use the front.

Westminster Café obviously in Westminster is a small diner, nothing fancy eclectic about it, something I imagine while rolling through the Midwest. Park bike inside a white picket fence next to a water fountain making sure not to squash the newly planted flower below. Inside a sign that reads seat yourself, place myself in booth. Quart to 2 AM, more people dining then expect and elderly. Next door is In and Out with younger folks making themselves noticed. Behind me is a TV, can see it in the reflection off the window. Don't know the program, watching ads, and with Trubeck ill, could replace him with Snoop Dog who hosts the Joker's Wild. For you game show watchers, both shows probably interchangeable. The sole waiter hands me a menu, having already seen it on line, order the Midnight Special though don't know what it is, what the heck, let me be surprised. People came in, one guy orders the same thing. It is chicken fried steak covered in gravy on top of some really dry biscuits with eggs and hash browns. The meat too well done for me and the potatoes not crispy enough and gravy as I like gravy, love biscuits and gravy, gravy on potatoes, stuffing, rice everything, was not enough. The food was filling and should tide me over till the morning.

Continue on Westminster, zig zagging to Beach heading west, all roads having bike lane. BTW, one road is Heil but in the dark reads like Hell. Thinking I always seem to be riding down the road to Hell. Beach is a major thoroughfare, tonight it is yellow taped with flashing lights on police cars. Forces cars and me to either U turn back or take the road on the left which we all find is a dead-end except for a bike which can go on the sidewalk and through an opening in the wall. Work myself to the next major street and on toward the coast. I'm not too far from getting on the Santa Ana River trail from here but that would take me the wrong direction. Take PCH homeward. On these rides by myself reminisce and on Hugh Murphy 400 K which was to go over Julian and down to Borrego Springs and up Montezuma Grade which I was telling Chuck Bramwell, a lot of riders will not be able to complete this.

Luckily for those, snow storm hit and the route was changed to a flatter course to Seal Beach using SART which is my first time. The ride started 4 AM, on PCH we rode middle of the lane since no cars and surprisingly Hugh bought breakfast at the turnaround, and me being a slow eater is one of the last to leave as Hugh tells me there's a lot of riding to do, I believe Kermit finished eating before me.

Got on the San Gabriel River Trail but rather than overlap what I've ridden, exit Westminster, head toward Long Beach. After the bridge, kind of go auto-pilot, down to Appian and across to the LB bike trail. What in the daytime can be crowded, barely a soul.

When I pass the ride meter, am the fifth rider today. 5 in 4 hours, well I did not see another biker. Saw grand stands so have to check out the race track for the car race in April. Has the concrete barrier around and all. Join the start of the Los Angeles River Bike Trail. Oddly on the SGRT, did not see any camps, now the path is lined with tents. Make sure I ride quietly so not to wake them as these people may have to get up early to go to work or something. Finally find some other bicyclists as I get closer to Vernon and the end of the lower LA Bike trail. I am sure there is a LAW ride that uses this and have not ridden it, but this is the most decorated bike trail with every available space occupied with graffiti.

End on Slauson, continue on District which turns into Lanoris ends, left on Vernon, right on Broadway and left on King, pass the Coliseum where construction going on building something big. I'm getting hungry, normally don't eat at night but normally don't ride all night. I'll stop if I find someplace, the area does not look like the safest but I come up to Crenshaw, lo behold next to me is Krispy Kreme and the sign lit, hot and ready. I'm in. Purchased maple bar, sugar and of course the glazed along with a bottle of orange juice. The maple bar is OK, the sugar seemed old but the glaze is warm melts in your mouth. As I enjoy my treat, a guy comes in takes napkins to blow his nose and comes over to me as I'm the only one eating there, asks if I have a dollar. Yes I did but I simply shrugged my shoulder and he goes to the restroom. The doors are locked and he then proceeds back out. At that time looked out the window to make sure my bike is there.

As I do not wear a time piece, the clock on the wall shows a quarter to 7. Yikes I got to get going. With the time change, it is still dark out. Find my front light is out, switch a new one and I'm into semi race mode. Can't really go fast with all the traffic lights. It's

'how well do I know the streets of LA'. King to Buckingham to Jefferson to Adams to Washington to Helms to Venice to Westwood to Santa Monica to Sepulveda. Needed the restroom find the baseball field is open. There are two vehicles in the lot, one being the guy who opens up the place and down the other end is a woman sitting in her car. I take a seat under the tree, it's a quarter to start time, call the wife to tell her I survived the night. Cars start showing up as there must be a little league game going to take place. Then a bicyclist shows up, first parks near me then decides to park over where the others are. Did not see who it was and from the distance could not tell, so I'm telling the wife that a woman rider has come and I better go over there, be friendly and get to know her. She responds, "You behave yourself".

It is Sheila. And if you know her, she is not the patient type. So nobody else shows up, not even Rod to check who came and take a photo. She tells me she has not been riding, will be slow and I could go race ahead. I've just ridden over 100 miles without sleep, could use company to keep me awake. So the two of us take our time up Sepulveda, the longest climb from Rod's description but not the toughest. I and most of you have ridden this many many times but it seemed to be faster as I'm enthralled by Sheila's stories, all being much more thrilling than mine. Her stories of wind, rain and snow, touring all over, camping which I'd never do, sleep on the ground with bugs.. She must really like riding Colorado as she's registered for June and needs some long rides to train for. She is doing the metric today. Says it is going to rain at 3, she wants to be done before then. Insist I ride ahead as I have longer way to go, but have no problem with rain, got a jacket in my pack. It is cool in the morning but later on in the day was getting warm, even Sheila has to open her jacket.

Mulholland is always fun with its ups and downs. A bicycling club going the other way is enjoying this too, how come they have so many member riding. I say good morning to walkers and wave to the tourists in the tour bus. Maybe they think I'm a celebrity. And with new brakes I am confident, not that far behind Sheila descending down. The little bypass to Barham is great, a bit steep but Sheila has never been on it and liked it. More downhill rush to Glendale.

Here I witness her competitive side as a group of riders appear before us, she picks up the pace to join them. We greeted each other but it is short lived as they make a turn. We go up to Kenneth to ride the route I rode a couple of weeks ago on La Tuna Melt. On to Glen Oaks is a slight climb. To this point I've been riding behind her but somehow got in front. Without a mirror or her saying anything, I'm just cruising along to a stop, look back, she is not there. Wait a while till she catches up, she again tells me that I do not need to wait, she can ride alone. I have no problem with whatever pace we go. She has one of those Garmin thing which every bikes seems to have except for me yet I seem to know where to turn as she says her's does not beep. A climb up to Hanson Dam, I need to pee. She hasn't and does not and was not going to have lunch, the woman doesn't eat or pee. Told her I'll catch up. The restroom are across the lawn which I ride the bike over. I've been seeing these banners with dogs and there is some exhibit, I like dogs and was interested.

On to Foothill and more climbing. There has been quite a bit of that in the ride, with 7,000 feet, not exactly an easy one. I'm in chase mode. Then come up to where a sign reads road closed. Decision, do I go across to find it is bike passable. Do I go up and across then down. No, I follow the detour sign going down, back to Glen Oaks which could take straight across but don't want to miss out on any good parts of the ride, go back up to Foothill. By this time I'm feeling the need for something. Many places to stop to eat but my sights are set for that Thai restaurant at the second lunch. Stop at a gas station for wafers, Rice Krispie bar and juice. Sat to consume my meal.

Foothill does pass Glen Oaks, continue to Balboa where water is coming down the staircase fall. Quite impressive, a tourist sight with so many portapotties. A bit more climbing then the long downhill. Can't get too complacent, a right on Rinaldi and it's back to climbing again. Swore I saw Sheila cresting the top as I stand on the pedals to try catch up but alas, I've come to where the medium turns with a big descent. I reach this area just as the big church is letting out with a pair of safety officers directing traffic. Goes show you how religious the valley people are. But they are not bicycle conscious as I can't count how many times a vehicle makes a right to cut me off, especially this road with the shopping center and they are constructing a new bigger fancy looking mega mall, got to serve all these Porter Ranchers.

A drop down into the valley and a right on Lassen. I'll remember this road as it was the worst on the ride, not the surface though were some bad pavement on the route, had the most unfriendly drivers, got honked at because I guess he did not think I should be on his road. Upset, misread the street sign, make a wrong turn. Rather than correct it, continue finding the road curves the wrong direction. Rather not complicate things, go back to the original. Find my turn obviously at the end of the road in territory I've never ridden before, so this is special and exciting. Takes me to Valley Circle, pass Box Canyon, Chatsworth reservoir which don't think has water and pass Woolly Canyon which I've been on only once, a fun one. I'm feeling hungry again, from the route sheet, lunch is not that far away, will be there soon. There is a market with a barbeque that might have made me stop except did not see their pits smoking. Then comes another road I've not been on, Staggs and it goes up. Go through all my gears to get up this one but my fear is the descent which is written as being steep. While climbing, my mind is concerned with the coming down part. Stopped to take a photo with the green fields in the hills and dark clouds in background which looks ominous but where I am, spotty covering. The descent was not bad, not like Crownview or Mountaingate or Portrero, maybe because I have my screeching brakes screaming. Another fortune, got to see what Bell Canyon is like.

Back to Valley Circle, find did not have to even do that climb but worth it, a short up and downhill to lunch with a pit stop at a park before I get there. I've scouted my eats beforehand, not McD, not Carls, not Crazy Chicken, Thai Fusion Bistro, now if that is not pretentious and expensive sounding. Small place, assume it's the owner, elderly woman greets me, hands me their fancy looking menu. Ask her what I should get. What do I want. How about a noodle dish. Do you like spicy. No. Are you vegetarian. Assume since I'm a bicyclists which she asks if I was, how did she not know from what I am wearing. She suggest something, I point at another and tells me good choice. Don't know what it's called but it's like a chow mein using what she called glass noodles, fine transparent. It is good, a subtle taste. Offered me soy sauce but my belief is you eat the way the chef prepares it as that's how they think it should taste. Unlike my wife who puts pepper on everything even without tasting which I always comment on which is

always answers, I like pepper. And when I have to finish her dish, it's too peppery. Anyway this plate had lots of vegetables and chicken, it is good except for one thing, I've never eaten something like this with little tomatoes cooked in it, kind of tasted out of place. I like tomatoes in salads, burgers, recently had chopped tomatoes on a hot dog, but did not work for me here. Another critique, thought they kept asking me how the meal and all but did not refill my ice tea till I asked. And their cups are unusual, they are like mason jars with handle. Like their green chop sticks, almost tempted to ask if I could take them home. The food is filling and might try another selection another time. And being a bicyclist, I tip well as I want them to think highly of bicyclists and be courteous of us on the road.

Now on to the Santa Monica Mountain. Kind of late in a ride to be doing much more climbing. And it's into the wind. The road takes me out to Calabasas where there are more food options. On to Mulholland. Now my legs are not feeling so fresh as I'm taking on 7 minute hill which I'm not sure in which direction you are supposed to be timed. Just know how slow I'm ascending as a group of riders pass me with each with a friendly greeting. I'm up out of the saddle to match them alas I'm just wasting energy. They must have taken Cool Creek which is on the route but I stay on Mulholland making up ground on them, again up on the pedal and again can't muster anything. On to Cold Canyon, a nice quiet road with lot of descending, believe this is the first time coming in this direction. So few cars, a family is walking in the middle of the road. Come up to Piuma and a rider goes by up the climb, almost thinking of joining, almost.

Come out onto where Virgenes turns to Malibu Canyon, onward to Malibu. The road has wide enough shoulder for the traffic, just watch the rocks. And the tunnel as I stop, look back till no cars then make a run through it before the next car comes, not that I had to but the shoulder has water and toward the end a large puddle, On the road, police cars looking down at a car down the embankment, why they want to park down there. And I come to a view worth riding out for, blue skies behind a blue ocean and it's below me. Rather than take the road to PCH, turned on the road to old Grand Tour headquarters, to town to use the restroom. Busy time as I have to wait in line.

On to a busy PCH and thank goodness, a nice tailwind push. The riding Gods are with me.. An elderly rider is also enjoying the day, but he is not pedaling all the time, stays closer to the moving cars than the parked ones, so I cannot pass. Being a passive rider, wait, keep checking behind, an opening, call out on your left which he does not seem to hear, out into lane and I'm off to the races, passing as many cars as my legs can. Back in Malibu was thinking of that ice cream place which Mel treated me to, then after passing Gladstone, smelled clam chowder, that would hit the spot. But where to go. Take the bike path, go through the Roosevelt tunnel to do the switch backs to Ocean. Rather than head back to the finish, will go home. But along the way, will check out my food options.

What I see are on the other side and pricey. Now here is this gal on a red bike, thought it was a rental but it is her own. She's got on a helmet and she's moving at a decent pace thanks to the tailwind. Pass, come up to a red and stop. This gal goes around in front of me. So I ask, since I'm faster than you, why do you go in front of me. She does not answer. I let her go first, pass her again till another red. This has no traffic from the right, so she goes around me and continues on. So when I get green, though I am a gentleman, blow by her so fast until the pier where it's red with whole bunch of touristy people. Then there are those on the scooters. I don't know about you but I have a distaste for those people. So with renewed energy I'm racing along, going by slow moving cars, every single speed messenger wannabe. Out on the road, cars are safer than bikes, finally come to rest in Marian Del Rey harbor section expecting to find seafood but the only place look too fancy and expensive. Maybe Playa del Rey. Was tempted by that Italian place which has been there for some time, up to Pershing and the Indian restaurant. There is one on the other side but the one on my side is now Mexican. If I did not have miles to go, would have stopped.

Going to try El Segundo but then my eyes catch Playa Pita. Have never had Lebanese food. Let's go for it. A small place, few tables, no one eating. I am welcomed, ask what should I get. Again the vegetarian question. Beef, chicken, lamb. I'll have that, how many times do you get to eat lamb. Had to tell the wife as she hates lamb, hates sheep as she grew up on a farm raising sheep and she says they are the stupidest, dirtiest animals, tell me about maggot in their butts. Tease her that when if ever I retire, we should have some farm animals around. Why do you think I left home to California. People did come in, most were take out, most are regulars. I'm first served a salad looks like coleslaw, I like coleslaw but not this kind as it is sour tasting. As I do not waste food, begrudgingly eat it, then the main plate. So I'm on the phone and she asks me what does the lamb taste like. So I take a cube and chew it. Does not taste like chicken, taste like mild beef flavor. It is OK, kind of overcooked and could use a bit of seasoning. There is no sauce for this. Now you got to know me. My Mom is a good cook, she had to feed four guys. But I am the only one who complains, so much my Mom tells me to cook my own meal which I do. So when my Mom makes burgers for my Dad and brothers, I prepare my own as I methodically add A-i and Wortherrshire sauce along with mayo, seasoning salt, fry it in butter with onions and where my Mom would complain that I do not cook it enough, it's ready when the blood starts to come out, the meat needs to be pink inside. Now back to my meal, rice is OK, not too flavorful and kind of dry so I pour my sour salad, mix it in. Hope the chef does not see that and get mad at me. There is some pinkish sticks, what is this. I taste it, it's pickled radish, I don't like pickled food. It's sour. I eat this with the lamb. Now what is this that looks like jalapeno, don't want anything spicy, would have gone Mexican then. No it's pickles, dill. I don't care for them. So this too I eat along with the lamb. The food was not to my liking but perhaps it is to others as the place did get high ratings on Yelp.

Now I'm not too far from home. Plenty of daylight left. Was thinking of adding more distance, maybe for ice cream as I have lights. No I need sleep. So around the airport via Imperial and still wind aided, get home with plenty of sunshine still left. Took the bike in the house as I may get in an early morning trip. With the time change, it is still dark out till I see the clock, it's past 6. Got to shower and get ready for work. Toast bread, spread on peanut butter and lead my bike to the garage. Fetch the paper, open the gate, take the truck out, ready to start my day. Then later yesterday, back at home. A couple of turkey sandwiches, read the paper, check e-mails and eyes start to shut. Off to bed.

Now today I'm awake and refreshed and ready to type. And type I have way beyond my sleep hour. As written next couple weekends are Brevets and the final Sunday is my birthday. Seeing the LAW's ride is Fargo and the last time I went up it swore I'd never show

my face again, last time being when Howser did his show, had to see him as I enjoy his program. So maybe you'll see me in April though the club's offering is kind of weak. I reckon I'll see you all when I see you. Happy bicycling, David