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Editor's Column

By Larry Best

So, there I was, minding my own business as usual when, all of a sudden, I realized that my computer was taken over by aliens. Sometimes when I type the text is blue. Other times it's black. The font indicates it's the same, but it looks different. I called my computer gurus, but even they couldn't figure out what was wrong. So, please excuse the slightly jumbled up look.

Our Dog Day's ride was a great success. Thankfully, the weather that was threatening held off until late afternoon and over 300 riders participated. There were a number of no shows, probably because of the pending thunderstorms in the forecast.

I happened to read this piece about "Old Cyclists" It's so well written that it triggered a lot of memories and emotions for me, so I've included it later in this newsletter.

NEW MEMBERS



Look for these new members on a ride, club meeting, post office wall wanted posters, etc. Please welcome them & make them feel like they're one of us.

Doug Hutsenpiller
Paul Hoffman
Paul Eachus
Ken Robinson

Jerome Doherty
Keefa Parker
Richard Kemp
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Caitlen Cameron

OLD CYCLISTS



Story of the Week, July 2nd, 2023

When I wrote this, I was becoming an old guy bike rider, but now I am certainly one of them. And proud of it...

As I post this, Neilson Powless is one of a three-man break with four minutes in hand in Stage Two at the Tour. Go Neilson!

Tested, Found Sufficient

Sunday's crit was the last race at the collegiate nationals in San Luis Obispo, on California's Central Coast. There'd been a team time trial Saturday

morning, then hard, hot, hilly road races in the afternoon, a 60-miler for the women, 90 miles for the guys. Hard day.

I leaned against a storefront on the shady side of Higuera Street watching the racers fly by. I tried to read the school names on their jerseys, playing "where's that college?" Baylor, Rice, Tufts? Football fans know, I thought.

Across Higuera, a couple of old guys stood with their bikes behind a sawhorse barrier. Locals, they'd evidently done their morning training ride, electing to end it here in downtown San Luis at the bike race.

Hey, we'll go to the juice bar, get a smoothie, watch the kids go.

Suited up as they were, they looked like racers waiting for their event to start. They were not. They were old guy bike riders. You see 'em everywhere: in Norman, in Seattle, in Boise, Philly, Atlanta, Austin, and in San Luis Obispo, California.

Old guys will tell you: they are not as fast as they used to be, not quite, and not nearly as skinny. They can't climb like they did back when, either, but none of that matters. They're just as dedicated as they were when they were bike bums. And now, they have better equipment.

Both these old guys wore salt-stained black Pearl shorts and clean white Pearl socks. A Giro and a Sub-6. Each wore a Euro team jersey, not the same one, both colorful, current, dense with logos. One guy had an Eye-talian bicycle, the

other a steel Eddy Merckx: fine, gleaming bicycles with fine, gleaming bike parts screwed onto them. Nice bikes, nice clothes. Couple of finely turned-out old guys.

I imagined their conversation. I imagined them talking about how young all these college riders are, how many there are of them, how road cycling's finally supposed to be coming back, and how cute the girl racers are, especially that one from U-Mass over there, oh my.

Old guy bike riders: still guys.

Maybe they talked about Indurain, Jalabert and Rominger, and how it'll shake out in July, over in France.

One of them, looking off into the distance, might've said: "I'll go back and ride there again," while he sipped his smoothie and waited for the one from U-Mass to complete another half-mile, six-corner lap.

Maybe they talked about Lance at the DuPont, one guy saying he loved that Lance just owned the race, five stage wins mygawd; the other saying yeah but where's the drama in a one-horse bike race?

Old guy bike riders: never satisfied.

You look at guys like those two (you know some yourself). You look at their salt-and-pepper hair and beards, at their furry legs, at their slick bikes and their round bellies stretching their pro jerseys.

They're not racers, certainly not for years, maybe never. But today they're rolling celebrations of bike racing: the glory, the suffering, the camaraderie, the trick equipment, the eating whatever you want.

Old guy bike riders: rolling celebrations. Yes!

All right, you think, there's a couple of Old Guy Bike Riders. You feel you should walk right up, introduce yourself and say: what a pleasure it is to meetcha. Give credit where credit's due.

'Cause credit IS due. It's easy to quit, to become an ex-bike rider. You meet them all the time. It's not easy getting to be an old bike rider, man or woman. Takes years. Years in the saddle.

Imagine how many times life tried, over those years, to yank 'em off those saddles, off their bikes. Get offa there, life said, grow up.

"Don't have time to grow up," the old bike riders said, "today's our long day. Have to grow up tomorrow. Tomorrow evening, maybe, after the training crit."

Imagine the obstacles you'd encounter over years of cycling: work pressure, family responsibilities, injuries, illness, cluttered lives.

Cluttered lives: that's a given. There's never enough time for anything. We go about our lives preoccupied, never in the moment, never feeling we can spare time for important stuff like bike riding.

Old bike riders have had to overcome.

Some old bike riders have had to get along without domestic support: Not everyone who shares a cyclist's life shares his or her feeling that cycling is important stuff.

I looked at those guys and could sense how much they love cycling, and how often that love had been tested. They'd been tested.

Tested, and found sufficient: After all, there they were at the collegiate crit. Their own ride done, they were standing in their clipless shoes on the sunny side of Higuera Street, flashing big smiles, bright jerseys, and bikes like Tour stars ride.

Old guy bike riders: survivors in \$150 Oakleys. What the hell, they earned 'em. Their dues are paid.

Old cyclists had and have the grit to look life in the eye and say: "See ya later. I'm goin' for a bike ride. Oh, yeah..."

"I wouldn't just hang around waiting, okay? Today's my long day."



LAST PAGE

It has come to my attention that more than a few SWCC members think that I'm bald.

This is not true! Actually, I have hair like Jon Bon Jovi. I enjoy cycling so much that I always wear my helmet so people can easily identify me as a cyclist.

Scroll down to see the truth.

