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Cycling Lamorinda

By Cathy Dausman



Cyclists gather for the ladies' no-drop ride through Lamorinda. Photos Cathy Dausman

take up when they want to return to an exercise routine," post-children, Lack said. My children are grown; I was definitely an anomaly.

Lack cautioned us to ride single file and pushed off for Orinda. Moraga Way looks flat, but my legs told me otherwise. Switching to a lower gear, I got into a routine - gasp, gasp, stroke; gasp, gasp, stroke.

"Eight miles an hour!" the sweep called out happily.

"You're riding an electric bike," I wanted to snarl.

Lack circled back to check on me. She makes this ride regularly, cycling in to Orinda BART to start her work commute. The group promised if I made it to Hall Drive, the road would flatten out, and at last it did. Gearing up for the downhill portion my rhythm switched to an enjoyable stroke, stroke, breathe. At Theatre Square I took stock of the competition by asking how many gears each bike had.

Some riders seemed not to know. Maybe they didn't want to hurt my feelings; my Fuji has a measly seven gears. An all-too-brief rest, and we headed east to Lafayette along roads bordering Highway 24. Sweeping under the highway we headed into town, single file, on Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Thankfully my worst fear - not about running out of steam, but of running into a parked car - didn't materialize.

We stopped a second time to count noses at Lafayette Plaza Park. All of me was still "here," if slightly winded. The Lafayette-Moraga trail beckoned; I heard its siren call even when the others dutifully pushed on to Pleasant Hill and Olympic Boulevard.

I cut the corner, grabbed an all-too-short rest and saddled up again when the others flew past. We were on the final leg (some more literally than others) of an 18-mile loop, closing in on our Moraga Commons destination.

I shared with Lack my love of the wind in your face feeling and worry-free exhilaration that comes with cycling, and even compared war wounds. Mine I earned coasting downhill years ago; Lack got hers from cycling a Peter Sagan Fondo dirt ride.

Our group rode an easy 18 miles in 90 minutes. It's farther, and faster, than I usually ride by half again. But I'd do it over - both the gasp, gasp, stroke and the stroke, stroke breathe portions - in a heartbeat if they'll have me.

Especially if I'm allowed to cut corners.

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