

Aides Ride - Central California - June 2004

By: Nancy Lindler

I was unable to email you about my trip in route due to some password difficulty...duh..oh well. I had an amazing time. I have now completed not one, but two centuries...total mileage was 585. (lookout Kent...here I come) We had a really great time and I have some great stories. The first day we rode 87 miles, next day 100. day 3-78 or so...day 4, 100.3miles, last two days were 88 then 81 miles. We rode through the heartland of California, strawberry and artichoke fields, then to the coast and through some of the most amazing neighborhoods. When we started the ride in San Francisco there were hundreds of people cheering throughout the route of the city. It was an amazing experience. I will never drink Gatorade again for any reason. Did I forget the hills? There were plenty of those all along the way. Quadbuster and the Evil Twins were appropriately named. Thanks to Kent and Bobbi for suggesting and changing the rear cluster for greater ease with climbing...it was soooooo...helpful. I was very pleased to be strong on all the climbs.....I never walked...many people did...and I even passed a few hot shots on the way! There were 1203 total riders and together we raised 4.9 million.

I also learned that the San Francisco Aids foundation has been instrumental in helping increase the availability of necessary medical care and medications for people in Africa. The reality in Africa is that meds are not available and if, that is a big if, they do become available....then a decision as to who in the family will receive them....there is not enough to go around and often times every family member is infected. All to say that your support is helping people in California help people around the world as well. Thanks to everyone for the support. I was also reminded that I really appreciate my Saturday morning rides with people who are considerate and conscious of safety.....out of 1203 riders you can imagine there were a few who have much to learn about being safe on a bicycle.

On the very first day of the ride there was an accident that was really crazy. Some guy was just riding along when a car passed him and something on the car....who knows what, attached to his front wheel and the next thing he knows he is going about 60mph, lands on the asphalt with most of his shorts missing along with random parts of skin....freaky. He sagged that day and got some medical attention and then was right back in the saddle. I think I would have definitely come home. The oldest rider was 76 years old, youngest 18yo, and one man did the whole ride in a modified tricycle because he uses his arms to pedal. Inspiring. Last year a rider hit a cow...and really hurt his bike. This year a rest stop crew, all volunteers, found a cow in distress, they proceeded to deliver two still born calves and saved the cow.....so everything is even steven. Alec crashed on day 3, went over the bars after failing to negotiate this nasty section of uneven pavement...others had crashed also and the paramedics and fire dept were on the scene. After Alec went down and got out of the way another rider was coming down the hill, hit the same spot, and tumbled out into moving traffic, a truck veered, missed the rider by a few inches and ran the bike over square...broke it in half. And just think.....I still had people using the travel lane to pass me in heavy traffic.

I am also now the queen of quick flat repairs. I already had some skills but now....they are fine tuned. On the last day we needed to race the clock to make our flight in LA, got up at 4am to be riding at 6am. I had a front flat in first ten miles, switched to a demo bike from TREK because my tire was sliced and they could fit me on the demo just as quick....(very nice ride by the way) 2 front flats on the demo, then a rear flat for Alec, all in about 3 hours. (at least it was all on the coast) The singer, Tracy Chapman was also a participant...she did the total ride. She also performed live for us on day 4, after riding 100miles. She is incredibly talented. There are webcasts available to view at www.aidslifecycle.org that do a really good job of capturing the feeling of the group and show some of the craziness also. Just a note to let you know some of the highlights. Also, really big thanks to everyone for all of your support both in donations and in just being good people to ride with.

Nancy