

San Francisco Scenic Ride Report – September 28th

The First Annual (?) SF 49-mile Scenic Ride took place over the weekend, and was generally enjoyed by the Veloraptors who were able to attend: Ride Leaders Dale Perkins and Kevin McTighe, along with Susie Larson, Steve Spickard, Phil Garrison, Glenn Kirby, Ron and Chris Scrivani, Mary Prisco, Steve Linden, Russ Montello, and Rob Merker. The first six riders listed made the whole ride, with the other six having to leave at points part-way through due to other commitments. This was more of a scenic sightseeing tour of the many of the City's iconic sights, connected by bicycling, rather than a traditional bike RIDE. If the normal relaxed pace and multiple stops of a Veloraptor ride is too slow for you, this ride would have driven you CRAZY!

In addition to the planned stops at City Hall, Coit Tower, Cable Car Museum/Powerhouse/Car Barn, Musee Mechanique, Fort Point, Golden Gate Bridge, Palace of Legion of Honor, Polo Fields, Conservatory of Flowers, Twin Peaks, painted ladies of Alamo Square, Mission Dolores and AT&T Park, etc., highlights included:

- A tour of the Dolphin Club at Aquatic Park, thanks to member Steve Spickard. This venerable club is home to an amazing collection of vintage rowboats and many brave Bay swimmers.

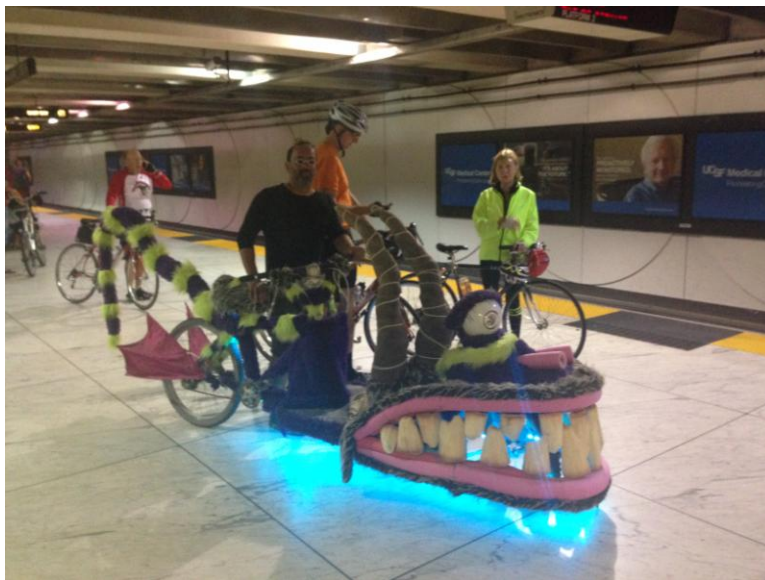


- A stop at Spreckel's Lake to watch the model sailboat regatta and the high-speed hydroplanes
- Over-priced but outstanding ice cream at Ben & Jerry's at the corner of Haight and Ashbury
- A ride UP (vs. one-way *down*) the "crookedest street in the City" (Vermont St., *not* Lombard St.). We would have ridden the correct way down it if we were confident we could have navigated to the top, it wasn't so late in the day, and if there was any traffic to contend with, but it worked out fine.
- Good beer and garlic fries at the Hi Dive Club on the Embarcadero to conclude the event, after we were turned away from four closed/closing waterfront joints.
- Dale droning on with various "factoids" at many of the stops: e.g. "Twin Peaks were known as *Los Pechos de la Chola* by early Spanish explorers, which translates as *The Breasts of the Indian Maiden*"

- Steve Spickard popping up with many interesting “tid-bits” from his work on urban planning and economic feasibility studies on many of the sights, including AT&T Park, Lands End Visitor Center, the Embarcadero waterfront renovations, etc. He made a great “color commentator”.

The ride covered closer to 40 miles than the advertised 49, since we cut out the ride down the Great Highway, around Lake Merced, and back up Sunset Blvd., as well as a non-scenic loop down to India Basin. Even so, the tour lasted from 9:30 a.m. until close to 7:00 p.m. by the time the beer was consumed! Conclusions from this first trial include:

- Reconfirmation that the City is, in fact, a world-class destination, with a remarkable combination of breathtaking scenery, monumental sights, quirky attractions, tremendous diversity, and too many things to do in a day, although we made a noble try.



This unique art-cycle has been to Burning Man! I’m afraid, however, it’s only a matter of time before he gets banned from BART, as this thing is WAY bigger than a tandem, which I understand are not allowed! He took it down the escalator!



Contrary to the commentary during the ride by Phil and Dale, the “Dutch” windmill was not a gift from Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, but was built by the Park District to pump irrigation water!

- Doing this ride on a Sunday is the way to go, as it enables working folks to attend and has much less traffic than Kevin and I encountered on a weekday trial ride earlier this month.
- Navigation is TRICKY in some locales (especially in the Coit Tower/Cable Car Museum areas)!! Due to street closures and inadequate detailed local knowledge, we walked up the sidewalk on a couple one-way streets and resorted to carrying bikes up stairways part of the way up to Coit Tower!



- Late September is a choice month for this ride, as the weather was lovely. It is no coincidence that such events as Fleet Week and the Barely Strictly Bluegrass Festival choose this time of year!