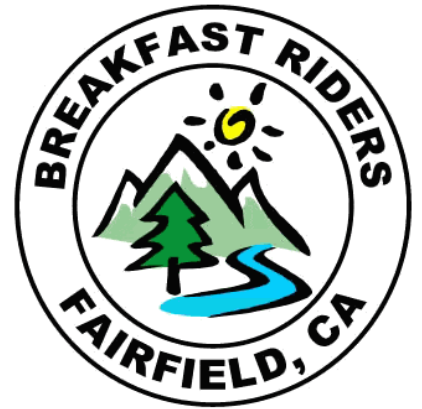


# BREAKFAST RIDERS

**Lucerne:** Nice weather forced me to call an extra ride for 2009.

The weather gods were trying to make up for their bad behavior earlier this year. The sky was lightly spotted with wispy clouds. The air was fantastically clear. I was able to count the ants crawling on a tree 12 miles away...maybe it was a bit closer than that. I was amazed at how many bikes showed up, given that I sent the email out suggesting the ride on Saturday at 9 a.m. We had a total of five bike show up: Greg Leopold, Frank White, George Schjelderup, Gary and Beth Helm (who were my tail gunners for the day -- thank you), and me. The first order of business was to decide what route. We were all so adamant about our choices (I don't care. Anything works for me. Huh?) Finally we chose Lucerne. We went up Hwy 80 and got to Pleasants Vly Rd. I quickly found out I was not up to my usual smooth sparky form. I was a big bit rusty as I have not ran any twisties for a while (It was Middletown in Aug. Never got dry road for Goat Rock). I was breaking too hard, too soon, not accelerating out of the turns hard enough, and not leaning with proper technique. I was generally mucking up the works. The good news is that this kept the group together. I had to come to almost a full stop to avoid running through a parade of peacocks that were waddling across their road. One or two barely acknowledged us with a casual glance. I also had a small bird bounce off the side of my front tire. I barely saw it as a pale flutter down low -- it flew away unharmed. I did a little better with my riding on Hwy 128, until we ran into the usual slow car that had to be persuaded to let us by. I had to work myself back into form. I was forced into thinking my actions. I wasn't one with the bike. No zen master. We took the usual break at The Corners where we met Scott St Aubin. He said he was going to shoot home and cover some business and try to catch up with us at the Berryessa rest stop or on Knoxville Rd. We got on 128 again and made the turn at Turtle Rock. My riding was getting better, but George may have disagreed. He was right close behind me more than once as I

still hit the brakes too hard for some turns. We took another break at the Berryessa rest stop. The lake is very low. We left there and headed onto Knoxville -- that steep above a glorified goat trail of a road. It was somewhat repaved in parts a while back and the underwater bridges (dry this day, thank you) were repoured. It still retains its not-smooth charm that requires you to place more pressure on the pegs and handlebars (dirt bike style) so you can stand up in the seat for the bigger whoops. If I had a gallon of paint in my trunk, it would have been very well mixed. We all got hit by the one big dip early on -- ooof! Amazingly it was on this road that I got some of my mojo working. I was moving at a good clip. I was hitting the right lines. I was avoiding most of the pot holes, wrinkles, and road debris. We pulled over where Knoxville Rd becomes Morgan Vly Rd. To say we all enjoyed the rough road would be an small understatement. Smiles abounded and stories of daring-do flowed. George bounced his frame or kick stand in one whoop. I touched pegs and fully compressed my suspension more than once. Gary was hitting his floor boards often, but Beth was still able to hang on the bike. As we rested and took off some of the layers to cool off, Scott caught up and joined us. He was in time for the silky smooth ride on Morgan Vly Rd into Clearlake. There is one big furrow in this stretch of road that caught a few of us unawares...I saw it in time...just...neener neener. After the gas stop, we aimed for food! Hungry... We ate at Kapitans Kafe. It is a modest hole in the wall that serves breakfast, burgers, sandwiches, along with Mexican fare. So what if the parking lot is mostly smooth dirt...the food is greasy, tasty, reasonably priced, and the service was passable. After lunch, the group split in two with Gary and Beth, Greg, and Scott aiming for home more directly, while Frank, George, and myself aimed for the top of the lake...and Hwy 175 on the west side. It was on Hwy 175 that I finally felt my form kick in. Whew! Took long enough. This is a sweet, tight, twisty, roller coaster of a road that almost feels like you are riding in a state park. After just a few miles,



the temperature dropped and I was starting to shiver. I pulled us over and got those layers of clothing back on, along with my cold weather gloves... much better. Just out of Middletown, we ran into yet another slow car that didn't know how to courteously move out of the way. Hwy 29 up in Middletown is mellow, but soon we were into the corkscrews of the downhill. I normally suck on this stretch of road, but I think I did it better than I ever had. I passed a few cars in the passing lanes and soon lost sight of Frank and George. Back on flat land, we cruised into Calistoga for gas, candy, and rest. Leaving, we agreed to ride straight on to home. No stopping for an egg roll at Turtle Rock. Silverado Trail was its usual traffic globbed road. As we got to Hwy 128, I was able to make the left just before a car heading north turned behind me...clogging the road for Frank and George. I was not wanting to break my mojo and wait for them, but I did. They eventually got around the rude idiot and were able to join in the fun. We again caught a slow car on Hwy 121, but they moved over quickly enough at a safe place -- thank you. Then it was Wooden Vly Rd and a few more slow cars in the way of us getting home. We missed squirrels a plenty, along with a cat, a pheasant, and the various road kills.