I just returned from a beautiful Sunday morning solo ride. During the ride, I had many thoughts running through my mind. There are several benefits of riding alone. Let’s start at the beginning—when does the ride begin? I started a 0615 dawn patrol and was rewarded with an inspirational sunrise. While riding alone, I can start (and end) any time I desire, and any day I desire. (Side note: I have clipped in at 0530 on many hot July mornings. In winter, my solo rides are from noon till ? to take advantage of the toastiest period of the day)

Where to ride? My adventure commenced at my house (no need to load up the car) and traversed many roads that club rides almost never hit. The highlight was a perfect exhilarating decent of HW 49 Moke River canyon south to north, with not a vehicle in sight. I then made a quick side trip up Electra Rd and stopped to gorge on blackberries and wild grapes. After the climb to Jackson, I gave a clerk some money and they rewarded me with a cold beverage in an establishment never patronized on club rides. Yes, another solo rider advantage: I can stop anywhere I want, for as long as I want.

How fast or slow do I pedal? On most club rides I am doing a consistent 60-80% effort. Riding alone, I may slow way down to enjoy watch that red tail hawk soaring just above. Or I might lay down a punishing 99% on some climb for 15 minutes straight. That is up to me, not the collective call of the club peloton. As mentioned earlier, I can end the ride at my own call too. I may just get out and do a quick 20 mile local ride where I have met every resident dog, cat, cow, horse, and goat, hundreds of times. Or I may "pull a Lonerider" and go out on an all-day adventure, where (for me) the only limiting factor would be sunset and that thing called night.

Are there disadvantages to riding alone? YES, and riding with a group solves most of them. The most obvious, riding alone can be Lonely. With club rides I can talk baseball with G-Man, investing with Benny, fishing with Ken, etc. During rest stops, we all may discuss favorite tires, current events, upcoming vacations, and new restaurants to try out, etc. SBC banter is rarely boring!

For some, riding with others pushes them farther and faster than they may partake solo. For others, it is a way to prove their hierarchy in the pack by the use of calculated breakaway hill climbs or county line sprints. How about the benefit of tight drafting with a nasty headwind after hours of pedaling? That certainly cannot be performed solo.

Then there is the safety factor of a group. Some snaggletoothed, knuckle dragging redneck (no offense if we have any STKD Rednecks on the club roster) may think twice before he/she confronts a pack of us bikers, several equipped with mounted video cameras. On group rides there are other riders for immediate
assistance in medical emergencies, which we have had a lot of over the years. A more common safety factor is help from fellow cyclists. I remember doing a 103 mile Mammoth Lakes ride years ago. There was a 60 mile gap between liquid refills, and I ran dry at mile 50. (You do NOT want to be out of water in the treeless high desert) Unlike myself, Chuck was prepared and graciously offered me his extra H2O. On another ride, I remembered when my CO2 failed after a flat. Once again fellow club members got me back on the road. (Side note #2 When I returned home, I smashed the sh*t out of that device with a giant hammer in disgust!) Would I want to be alone in these situations, NOPE!!!

Finally, at rides end, if I am solo, I can only tell my cat (or wife if she is home) what an incredible ride that I just got to enjoy. With a club ride, we can all discuss in the parking lot how great that ride was. Who had the max downhill speed, total feet climbed, max power, etc. Or we might even expand on the just finished endeavor over a post ride recovery meal and cold beverage or two. Can’t do that alone.

So in summary, there are many advantages to riding solo AND riding with other club members. Guess it comes down to what mood I am in. See you out on the road (or not)

(Editor’s Note: Many thanks to Dave for his entertaining article comparing solo rides to club rides. For myself, I much prefer group rides, although I have been doing lots of solo riding during the pandemic lockdown. And here is a relevant query: is a ride with Stoker and no one else a solo ride?

For the last 5 months, club rides have not been an option, but that ends now: The Ride Schedule is back! It will be very interesting to see who returns to club riding. Five months is a long time.

Of course, the return of the ride schedule coincides with some really smoky air. We are all looking at our phones with apps and maps showing lots of red and purple representing really unhealthy air. 2020 deals Californians another blow. But when the air clears SBC will ride again!)
RIDE SCHEDULE – September 2020

Helmets required.
Rain or ‘serious’ threat of rain cancels. Follow Stockton Bicycle Club Facebook page for updates on ride status.
Rides may be amended and additional rides may be scheduled via the Stockton Bicycle Club Yahoo! Group. (details below).
A ride: 20+ mph, paceline riding, few if any regroups.  B ride:16-20 mph, experienced rider, regroups at major intersections, turns.
C ride: 12-15mph, regroups, no drop ride. MPH is based on a flat ride

For questions or to list a ride of your choice, please call or email Roberta Hoffman at robertahoffman10@gmail.com or 763-2807

New Riders Note: There is a rest/refuel break about the middle of the ride. Unless otherwise stated, all rides are recreational in nature and intended for the enjoyment of all. Terrain: F=flat, R=rolling, H=Hilly, VH=very hilly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Miles/Terrain</th>
<th>Start Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>35-45 F/R</td>
<td>Lockeford Jack Tone &amp; Hwy 88 Payless Mkt</td>
<td>Show and go or meet us along the way! This month’s route, destination is the Fruit Bowl. <a href="https://ridewithgps.com/routes/30427662">https://ridewithgps.com/routes/30427662</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>35-45 R/H</td>
<td>Tri-Lakes Church 8021 Wards Ave.</td>
<td>Show and go Ione, or Valley Springs Bring 2 water bottles and nutrition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sat  | 7:30-B 8:00-A | 42 H | Ione Howard Park. | Michigan Bar, Carbondale, Forest Home, Old Sac, break Plymouth, return Irish Hill (2055’)
| Mon  | 7:30-B 8:00-A | 27/48 H/VH | Ione Howard Park | 45: Volcano (3400’)
|      |       |               |                | 48: Ram's Horn, Shake Ridge (4300’)
| Sat  | 7:30 B 8:00 A | 38/51 H | Starbucks (ValleySprings) Mar-Val Shopping Ctr | 38: Pardee-Stoney- Jackson Break - out and back (3900’) 51: Loop up Butte Mtn and down Clinton Rd. |
| Sun  | 8:00  | 45 F          | Thornton Library 26341 Thornton Rd. | https://ridewithgps.com/routes/23715017 Thornton, Walnut Grove, to Clarksburg |
| Sat  | 7:45-B 8:00-A | 45/48 H/VH | Ione Howard Park | 45: Volcano (3400’)
|      |       |               |                | 48: Ram's Horn, Shake Ridge (4300’)
| Sun  | 8:00  | 38-42 F      | Woodbridge Meet Lower Sac and Augusta St. | Acampo, Elliott, Tully to the Fruit Bowl! Join us on the way! Meet us there! |
| Sat  | 7:45-B 8:00-A | 26/42 R/H | Wallace Tri-Lakes Church | 26: S. Camanche, Campo, VS 40: Hogan, Silver Rapids, Hartvickson, Olive Orchard |
| Sun  | 8:00  | 40-45 F      | Woodbridge Lower Sac and Augusta St. | Thornton, Walnut Grove |

For changes/additions to the ride schedule, participate in online discussions or for other club news, join our Yahoo! Group at groups.yahoo.com/group/Stockton_Bicycle_Club or send an e mail to Stockton_Bicycle_Club-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Also, see our Stockton Bicycle Club Facebook page for ride changes, and comments.