

Riding in the New Year

I woke up to a somber and sober economic New Year's Day. I thought to myself, "What do I want to do on the first day of 2009?" So I turned on the one-eyed monster to watch the news while I exercised. The news was all about the economy. I wondered if this was going to be a pin-the-tail-on-the-Eeyore-donkey doom and gloom year, or if it would be a Warren Buffet and Charles Dickens "It Was the Best of Times, It Was the Worst of Times" type of year. It's really hard to tell at this time. We shall see as the months go on what type of year it is.

I take a shower, get dressed and think about taking a ride on my Greenline cycle to the bike trail. I decide to leave all my electronic peripheral shadows behind me and go unplugged. I grab my bike and, living downtown, ride just a few blocks to reach Montgomery Street. I pedal my way east passing Myers Street and stop to admire the newest bounty of Oroville – a mural commissioned by Monique Gurr and painted by Christine Henry. It warms my somber mood and I zip up Montgomery and around the roundabout and enter the road to the Nature Center Bath House (built circa 1935). I climb all the way to the Sewim-Bo Trail just above the Fish Hatchery Dam. I continue to climb to the top of the Diversion Dam. My plan today was to turn around and not pedal along the 41-mile Brad Freeman Trail. I want to cruise and savor my downtown unplugged day, and my intention is to ride along the bike trail all the way back to Riverbend Park. But before I do I think of the past year as well as the year ahead. I think of how to approach this new year, and that is with a positive affirmative action and visualizing really good things for the District and the community. These are hard economic times, but it's all in how you think about it and how you visualize the positive steps to make things better. Monique's mural is a milestone of positive faith in Oroville during tough times and good times.

For me, the best thing about New Year's Day every year is the fishermen and women in the river on the first day of steelhead fishing. I trek back down the hill. I will see many people who have come to Oroville to enjoy a town that has a river running through it. As I pass back by the Nature Center Bath House, I look at the old ferry rock and think of all the history in Oroville at every corner and crack and rock along the river. I trek by the old Briggs home, pass under the green bridge, and continue down below the Veterans' Memorial Hall and future park and Pioneer Museum. I start to see the fishermen and women. It's as cold as can be and they're dressed in their hip waders and equipment specially set up for serious fishing. I keep cruising and there are a number of them on the levee getting dressed, getting their fishing gear ready to catch and release those treasured trout.

I continue down the bike trail past the Municipal Auditorium, Centennial Park, the Bolt Antique Tool Museum, the Chinese Temple, Rotary Park, and back up again

towards Bedrock Park. All I can think of is how fortunate those of us who live in Oroville are to be able to have an asset like the pedestrian and bike trail meandering along the river. I speed through Bedrock Park, past the lagoon and up to the Highway 70 bridge where I admire Sheree's colorful mural that now covers the graffiti that was there just a few months ago. I enter Riverbend Park (West Park) and follow the trail that has been there since 1979. Yes, the trail is now 30 years old. It was built as part of the DWR Feather River Enhancement Project.

I'm cruising now and fast approaching the boat launch area (built circa 1955), the Sacramento Northern Railroad bridge abutments (built circa 1935), and the new portion of the trail that takes me to the Wildlife Fishing Ponds and the gravel path to Matthews Ready Mix. I get to the gate at Matthews and stop, lay the bike down and look out at the river. I look farther down the river and can see the historic Matthews Riffle and another small boat launch adjacent to it. It was built by the Oroville Boat Club in 1955, the same year as the Riverbend boat launch. Farther down are the remnants of the PG&E flashboard dam that was blown up circa 1977. The dam raised the level of the Feather River, allowing people to water ski in the river for many years. I just enjoy the time that I'm spending there and am feel fortunate that I was among those who fought so long and hard to protect this portion of the river for public use.

The whole time I've been riding I've been pondering the year ahead. I guess the most important thing, even with the economy the way it is, is we should push on with those projects that were initiated by the WPA and complete what we can in the years to come. The bike and pedestrian trail should continue in the spirit of the WPA work projects, much like what President-elect Obama proposes to accomplish with infrastructure projects, a major part of his stimulus package. We could even continue the pedestrian bike trail from Matthews Ready Mix along Pacific Heights Road to create and extend our river trail all the way to Gridley someday.

Quote

"If you visualize the dream, it will happen." ~ the Park Shark

Question

What project was built by the Red Cross for swimming lessons at Bedrock Park? E-mail your answer to bob@frrpd.com. The first person to respond with the correct answer will win \$10!

Fun Facts

The Work Projects Administration (WPA) was created by FDR. During the Great Depression between 1935 and 1943, the WPA provided almost 8 million jobs. The program built many public buildings, projects and roads and operated large arts, drama, media and literacy projects. It fed children and redistributed food, clothing and

housing. The WPA affected most every locality in the U.S., especially rural and western mountain populations. Almost every community in America has a park, bridge or school constructed by the agency. *(from Wikipedia)*

A fishing license and Steelhead Report Card is required for taking steelhead in inland waters. To view a copy of California's 2008-09 Freshwater Sport Fishing Regulations, visit www.dfg.ca.gov/regulations/08-09-inland-fish-regs.pdf, or contact the DFG Region 2 office at (916) 358-2900.

See you in the parks!