



Changes comin' round real soon . . .

The photo to the left is of the garden surrounding the tasting room at Navarro Vineyards in the Anderson Valley of California--one of my favorite wineries. It was taken this week and, as you can see, spring has definitely "sprung" in northern California. A [news item in this morning's Denver Post](#) pointed out that the cherry blossoms were on their way in Washington DC despite the record (and recent) snowfalls in the capitol. As I go out to

pick up the morning paper, I'm hearing robins calling. And, in my backyard, the snow is starting to retreat and our "lawn bunnies" (i.e., resident rabbits) are beginning to be "frisky" again.

We are clearly in the midst of changing seasons, from that time of darkness to the hope that increasingly long days bring. And while I enjoy all the seasonal changes throughout the year, this shift from winter to spring holds the most promise. It seems as if the whole creation is awakening and stretching. As a cyclist, I'm SO appreciative of the opportunity to get off the stationary bikes and out onto the road. Gardening (and mowing the lawn -- ah well) is just around the corner. The promise is there.

But that doesn't mean we can go from "zero to sixty" immediately. There is a lot of dead stuff to clear out in the garden. Legs (as well as that portion of the anatomy that comes into contact with the bike seat) unaccustomed to long rides need conditioning. Preparation -- taking into account where we are, as well as where we want to be -- is critical. Sure, I can clean out the garden, but if I don't have a plan as to what I want to put in, all I'll have are beds of plain dirt, just waiting for weeds. Sure, I can start riding A LOT, but without some specific goals, the training may not be very useful and, indeed, counterproductive. Some focused thought is helpful indeed!

This time of the year is observed in many traditions. The Spring Equinox (3/20) is celebrated as New Year's Day by some religions. For pagans/Wiccans, Ostara (observed on the Equinox), celebrates the reawakening of the seeds in the earth. Shortly after the equinox, Christianity celebrates Easter--a festival of hope and renewal. Judaism observes Passover--a celebration of freedom. Many of these observations offer the opportunity for reflection, as well as planning or looking ahead. Where we've been . . . Where we're going.

So, let's take advantage of the seasonal changes to clear out some of the dead stuff and plan for what shall take its place. And let's enjoy these "stretches" that creation is showing us. In the midst of all our busy-ness, preparation for finals, applying for internships and summer jobs, and writing articles, let's appreciate the simple no-cost pleasures: Bird song. Budding trees. Frisky bunnies.

Changes are comin' round real soon . . .*

Blessings,

Gary

(*with apologies to John Mellencamp)

PS: Several weeks ago I wrote about forgiveness, with particular reference to the Haggard and Edwards stories. I just heard a webcast with interviews with Jenny Sanford (the wife of South Carolina governor Mark Sanford -- another high profile infidelity case) and Gayle Haggard. If you interested in hearing some of the thinking of the women involved (as well as an very interesting interview with Ted Haggard), you might want to check it out: <http://interfaithradio.org/node/1247>