

It's been nuts. That's pretty much it. Just nuts. And I need to feel grateful about it.



Hopefully our "new look" will be gone shortly!

I'm still riding, still doing the Tuesday & Thursday-morning rides, still riding to work, still doing the Sunday ride. But the rides home from work are long and slow and it's a struggle to get up the hill. The shower I'd normally look forward to at the end, I feel like I need by maybe 4pm while still at work. And what's worst, things have been so exhausting that I've not have the time or desire to engage in my primary stress-relieving coping mechanism, which is what you see here. Writing.

Things are simply crazy at the shop. Off the charts crazy. The phone never stops ringing. Line one, line two, line three all at the same time. We've set up a recording that is never turned off; if we can't get to the phone by the 4th ring, you hear a message saying we're too busy to get to the phone, that our priority has to be to the sometimes-long line of customers waiting outside our door to come in and get something for their bike. Or ask if we have a kid's bike, a hybrid, or a mountain bike... and if it's under \$1500, we have to tell them the answer is no. If they need significant repairs to their bike, we tell them it's going to be six weeks. We have no acceptable answers,

And yet. And yet they just keep coming. From opening (11am weekdays) until our now-earlier closing time of 5:30pm, it is hard to even find a chance to get to the bathroom, much less eat. And for me, even talking through a mask is exasperating as I rapidly run out of breath.

And then there's the boarded-up front of the shop, a precaution we took during the Black Lives Matter protest, a precaution that turned out to not be necessary because the local protest was peaceful, as had been planned. Redwood City didn't attract the outside looters that hit Oakland and Emeryville and Walnut Creek.

And yet. I am one of the fortunate ones. Our shop, our employees, are among the fortunate. Because we have been able to keep busy during the Covid-19 lockdown. We've been considered essential, and from the people coming through our doors (or trying to), we have reason to believe it's true. I have to keep that in mind when it seems like each day brings more moving pieces than the day before.

Going forward, it's possible we might steal something from the French playbook, and consider closing for an hour during the day, so staff can get a chance to eat and catch up on things like phone calls to customers letting them know their bikes are ready.

France. That's another thing. The Tour de France moved from its usual July dates to September. Trying to guess when Covid-19 might become a minor issue and allow some semblance of normalcy. So guess what. When times are abnormal, what do we most seek? The normal. The routine. And so, yes, Kevin (my son) and I have booked tickets to see the final week of the Tour de France, again, the usual gig. Air fare got really cheap for a short amount of time, so what the heck. And if things go south, the fare can be used for any other flights without penalty. The hotels and apartments we'll use require no deposit and can be cancelled just days ahead of time. No real downside.

So that's where things are. I need, I desperately need, to keep my mind on the positive, how grateful I am that Covid-19 hasn't destroyed my livelihood, like it has so many others. It hasn't negatively affected the lives of anyone in my family or friends. I just

need to keep putting one foot in front of the other and keep on going until normalcy returns. --Mike--