

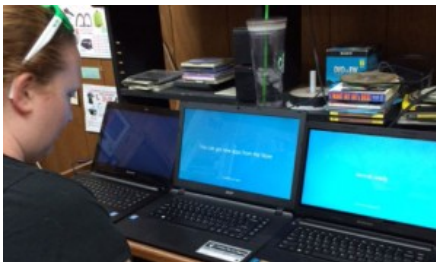
A really, really good day



Oh sure, the day started with a nice ride, myself, Kevin, Kevin, & JeffZ, with me pulling up the rear, JeffZ nailing the climb, and younger Kevin going after older Kevin and passing him shortly before the top. Really good days usually start out with a bike ride.

From then on the day had the potential to go south in a big way. Day before July 4th, and things were hopping at the shop, lots of people coming in with interesting bike issues for us to deal with (and who knew a customer could so badly botch up assembling an on-line-purchased fixie... I mean there are no gears, one brake that wouldn't be functional if it was set up right... guess bike shops do have their purpose after all!), and a side trip to Fry's to deal with all manner of computer issues, partly caused by a big upgrade to our point-of-sale software that renders our older XP machines useless, and partly due to a complete meltdown of our database in our Los Altos store caused by a failed hard drive and a two-week-old backup.

I thought I had Fry's handled, ordering the stuff ahead of time so it could be ready for pickup when I arrived. Um... yeah. Let's see, it took 15 minutes for the clerk to figure out it was all there, and another 10-15 minutes to figure out how to refund me \$20 because they screwed up and the numbers didn't match. Ohmygosh. I haven't had a good Fry's horror story in a while, but today, yes, they're back at it again.



Becky at our Command Center, running tests on three new laptops

And Best Buy. They had a pair of SSD drives I needed, so I ordered those ahead of time, got an email saying they had everything, come and get it, and then just a few minutes later another one saying something was wrong with the order, please call 1-888-237-8289 for options. So I made the mistake of calling that number, had quite a phone tree to navigate, got ahold of a real live person who was nothing more than somebody who determines where calls should be routed (wasn't that what I'd just gone through in the automated system???) and then sends me on to a hold queue, which, after 10 minutes or so, starts to ring. Rings 4 times I think. And then goes dead. Later in the day I do the smart thing and call the store in San Carlos, and find out that it was a strange inventory scenario in which they had it in their store's "warehouse" but not on the floor, but if I came in, yes, I could get what I needed.

So against that backdrop of failed retail experiences, I look at things in my own shop and realize that we're actually doing pretty darned well. Our two new guys, Alec and Austen, are getting things figured out pretty quickly. Margie, not yet a veteran, maybe half

a year or so, can handle most things that come her way. Chris is doing a bit of anything and everything, sales & diagnosing mechanical issues. Kevin's selling what he sells best (lots of road bikes, quite a few hybrids), Michael's doing a great job coordinating all-things-mechanics, Karen's keeping track of schedules and handles the register, Roger, Jose & Charlie are building bikes and working repair miracles out of sight (upstairs), and Becky? She's a bit scared about taking things over when Kevin and I head to France in two weeks and was showing a lot of stress earlier in the day, but by the end, not sure how, but it seemed like she was a different, more-confident person by the time we closed. We sold a lot of bikes, we took in a lot of repairs, and we performed a lot of on-the-spot minor miracles.

Obviously, it's unfair to single out our Redwood City store and how everything seems to be pulling together at just the right time; they're going through a very tough time trying to reconcile their inventory and sales after the computer fiasco, and it's heroic just to keep the doors open and pretend to be fully-functional. But that's a story my brother Steve will have to write himself. He "lives" in the Los Altos store, while I spend what seems like most of my life in Redwood City.



I had a good indication it was going to be a really, really good day on the ride this morning, as we rounded a corner on West Old LaHonda and came across a solitary Sunflower at the edge of the road. I was ready for it; Kevin had mentioned it on Tuesday's ride, and has apparently kept an eye on it for a while. Only since last Tuesday has it had a flower though. I made sure to get a picture today. Not a great picture; hard to climb with one hand on the bar, another on a cell phone that was never designed to be held in one hand while you take a photo with it. As I get stronger I'll get better at it. Film at 11.