



# Wrenching

## A Typical Summer Day

### *Typical?*

There is no such thing as a typical summer day at the Center. The only commonality is that we work our tails off all day and seem to get nothing accomplished that we intended to do. Somehow, the work we need to do gets done. It is not uncommon for customers to be at the front door before the shop opens. Sometimes several hours before the posted opening. The phone may also start ringing at or before that time with customers wanting to know whether we are open or whether we have a part for which they know not all the information required to determine if we have that part.

To start the shift, we pick a bike to prep for sale or repair. We get it up in the stand and begin working on it. About the time we start making headway, the first customer comes in. That will be the last time we work on the bike in the stand for the rest of the day. After that, it's one thing after another. By no means is this meant to be whining. We enjoy every minute of it. Most of it anyway.

Below are the activities that might happen on any given summer shift.

- Bikes to be repaired are dropped off, written up and put in the log book.
- We check the log book for the next repair in line and then spend time looking for it. Sometimes the bike was already repaired and picked up, but it is not marked as such in the log book.
- Repair work is completed along with the accompanying documentation.
- Calls are made to customers telling them their bikes are ready for pick-up. Sometimes we have no number or a wrong number.
- Repairs are picked up.
- **There is a seemingly constant flow of people needing on the spot repair work to get their bikes going.**
- Donations are dropped off, having to be logged and stored.
- *Where will we find room for all these bikes?*
- We spend time showing customers our bikes for sale and try to find a good fit.
- We supervise customers' test rides.

- We don't have the right bike for someone to buy? Let's go to the basement and look for one we can prep for them.
- We search for and retrieve parts we require for repairs or bike prep.
- We sell parts we have in stock.
- We order parts we don't have in stock.
- Customers pay and we fill out receipts.
- Bikes are refurbished and prepared for sale along with the accompanying documentation.
- Test rides are done on all bikes prepped for sale.
- We research and determine the price of the bikes we have prepared.
- We spend time searching for parts stored in a location unknown to us or forgotten by us.
- We spend time searching for tools that seem to have moved since our last shift.
- We borrow tools from one another's stand because we can't find that same tool missing from our own stand. That tool may be in someone else's shop apron and won't be seen again until the end of the shift.
- Customers come in looking for something we don't have, but we spend time looking for it.
- We spend time answering the phone.
- We spend time answering customer questions.
- We help customers load or unload their cars.
- We see bike related issues we've never seen before.
- We often seek help from one another when a fix is just outside our reach.
- For inner tubes we have salvaged, we spend time checking for leaks, prepping, patching and labeling them for use on a repair or for sale.
- We tear down and salvage for parts bikes we cannot refurbish economically.
- We sort salvaged parts and put them away.
- We talk to customers about just about anything.
- *As the shop fills with customers and bikes, we have no room to get around the bikes, mechanics and customers.*
- We perform oddball repairs like exercise bikes, walkers or wheelchairs.
- We do volunteer training.
- We do volunteer supervision.
- We wash bikes and parts of bikes.
- Kids with unsafe bikes with multiple things wrong come in. Because of the poor condition of the bikes, these may take multiple hours of effort.
- Groups of kids, all needing some sort of repair or parts appear.
- We teach kids how to work on their bikes.

- We pick a 'nice' bike from the basement thinking it will be easily prepped. Frequently, that is a bad assumption. 'Nice' bikes are there for a reason.
- We get bikes with repairs having been done by someone else who gave it their best try. We must figure out how to undo those repairs.
- We sort and locate bikes in the correct location.
- We must fill our spray bottles with the chemicals we use.
- We must fill our lube bottles.
- We must fill our grease guns.
- At the end of the day, we attempt to document for the next person what was done on the partially completed bike on which we are working.
- After every shift, we must clean up our work stands to make sure everything is in its place for the next shift.
- We regularly do vacuuming, sweeping and mopping.

*It's all in a day's work.*