

Growth cycle

Genevieve Parker is the program director for Reno Bike Project. The group moved in 2017 from East Fourth Street to Grove Street. In June 2018, they leased an additional storage space, back in the old neighborhood, at 635 E. Fourth Street. This weekend, they'll open the new digs to the public as an additional full-service shop. A grand opening celebration—with a bike swap, games and DJs from KWNK—is scheduled for 10 a.m.–5 p.m., April 20. For information, visit RenoBikeProject.org.

What made you decide to go back to Fourth Street?

It was a happy coincidence. We were looking for extra storage space ... and we found that place, that building, and it's huge, so we had to kind of reevaluate whether to rent that building. ... The original plan was just storage, but we saw how much space there was there, and we were like, We could put a production center over there, we could put a small shop over there, and we could have all the storage that we need and probably more. So it was almost the building that dictated what happened there. It felt really right, though. ... We lost a lot of storage from what we had at the old Fourth Street location. Also, we're busier than ever ... and we're getting more donations. We had to grow.



PHOTO/KRIS VAGNER

Do you have a sense of why you've been getting busier? Do you think it's a natural momentum?

I think it is a lot of natural momentum. The city is growing, and I think a lot of people who both lived here already and who moved here are realizing that getting around by bike is a great way to do it, and they can bypass a lot of traffic woes if they choose to bike.

Has your clientele changed over the last few years?

Definitely, from moving here, yes. We've always had a really diverse clientele. This neighborhood here [near Grove Street] has a lot of families living in it. ... It doesn't have the same [homeless] shelter and services that Fourth Street did. So, our shop has become a lot more kid-friendly in the last of couple years, that's for sure.

How so?

We are selling a lot more kids' bikes. ... And we have a lot of kids coming through here, in afternoons and on weekends—and we're continually helping them patch flats and pump tires. It's good energy.

This is the first time you'll have two full-service locations. What did you have to do to make that work financially?

We decided to just make it work on the budget that we had. To be honest, that location over there is not making money yet, but we are hopeful that it will be in a couple of years, and we hope to float it until it does.

Have you had to beef up your staff?

To a degree, we've made it work with staff that we had before, but we have been actively hiring. We have brought a few new faces on, and they're a big help. But we're still hiring. We could use more people.

What are you looking for in an employee?

Most importantly, someone who feels really passionate and wants to learn, and secondarily, someone with experience as a bike mechanic or as a customer service person. The passion and the excitement and the teachability are probably the most important aspects.

The RN&R hasn't caught up with you in a while. Have you started any new programs lately?

One of the things I'm most proud of as program manager is, we have a job skills training program that uses our two shops as an environment for training people who are maybe in their first jobs with general employability skills, making them pretty savvy mechanics—but also a lot of attendance skills that you'd need for any specialty retail job. It's for youth 16-24. It lasts for 15 weeks, and it's paid the whole time. □

NOTES FROM THE NEON BABYLON

BY BRUCE VAN DYKE

Debates in June?!

You know, a guy just can't help but notice that Trump, when it comes to his taxes, acts *exactly* like a man who doesn't just *want* to keep all of that info secret, he's downright *desperate* to do so. Maybe it's the brand new team of \$500-an-hour lawyers he's hired to keep all this tax stuff completely invisible. The optics just aren't real good, ya know? So gee, let's go ahead and take a wild stab here—that a man who has lied his ass off for 50 years just might have fibbed a little on his taxes a couple of times? I know, I know. Kind of a stretch, right? I'm getting to be such a cynic! (Is Prez Capone gonna fight to the death about his taxes because he knows that it was a simple tax evasion bust

that finally brought down the real Capone?)

Nice to see that more and more folks are getting over the hurdle about Pete Buttigieg's name (boot-a-judge) and actually hearing the good stuff he has to say. By the time the debates begin rolling in June, he's gonna be a player. In fact, he appears to already be one. (Maybe he's this year's Jimmy Carter?) Another guy who has something important to say, and knows how to say it—Jay Inslee, the climate change candidate. He's a smart, committed, courageous man, and we could use a few of those in top level spots these days.

OK, the first show is in the books, and yes, they brought the Thronocity last Sunday night. (Jeez, that poor UMBER kid.) The word is that episode three coming up on the 28th will be—well, the word *underwhelming* won't be applicable. And I'm sure I wasn't the only viewer around these parts who noticed that Dany and Jon's Dreamy Dragon Cruise looked like it was happening right here in the High Sierra. Jeez, I kept looking for the crushing Tahoe shot while they flew and frolicked about on their big lizards. (Is it just me, or does *Game of Thrones* right now have about 10 times more buzz than the last three *Star Wars* flicks combined?) □



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