



REPORT

From the office of...

MSU MACycle Coordinator

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Andy Tran
SUBJECT: MACycle Report 4
DATE: 21 Oct 2016

UPDATE

- The conference was extremely good. More on that at the end. That was why I missed the last report, by the way—I was in Detroit the four days before it was due and the house we were crashing at had no wifi.
- Auction went extremely well, between two and three times more income than last year for fewer bikes (I think).

SERVICE USAGE

Interestingly, I've noticed fewer *unique* visitors and more repeat ones. There have been enough repeat visitors that some of them have started asking if they can volunteer. I think this is a natural progression—it's how I personally got involved—and it means that we keep our usage consistent while building a stronger community each time. Usage will predictably dwindle, but we will need that wave of volunteers for when springtime hits.

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

The bike auction made about three thousand dollars, for the bike sales alone. That's about 2.5x the amount made last year. I'm not massively inclined to believe that was due purely to new leadership, but I know a few things helped:

- A Facebook event that was actually fairly well circulated
- a very good auctioneer (one of our own volunteers who did an excellent job—those who were there can confirm)
- the idea that Wooder and I came up with which was to add the membership fee on top of every bicycle sold (+\$5/bike * 100 bikes = an extra \$500).
- I also did go through the bicycles that we had pre-auction and removed some of the really broken down bikes that were dangerously or irreparably broken. This meant that the bikes we sold were of higher average quality and safety, which probably pumped up customers a bit more.

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

I'm going to be submitting a special events funding request soon for a project I have in mind, but a sneak peek is that over the last two summers (and a few in the winter), at other bike shop I work at (in collaboration with a local help-you-get-settled organization for newcomers to Canada), I helped run a few nights where refugee families in the area would give us height measurements, we would pre-pick bikes that fit, and they would come and fix the bikes with us and get them for the price of parts. It's a good project, and I sometimes see those kids riding around when I head downtown. Funding goes toward helmets, bus tickets, and hopefully paying/recognizing mechanics for their time (because while it is emotionally rewarding, it is extremely tiring to run).

There are enough bikes for a second auction in the spring. It might be a good idea to do another auction then, so that we can work on bikes throughout the summer and not have a ridiculous boom in September. I haven't put much thought into this yet.

BUDGET

I actually have to admit two things: First, I've been bad at keeping records on my end of the exact amounts of money that I deposited. I have a number in the thousands (roughly \$8k deposited to date—for reference, last year's September statement had \$4.5k of revenue and an End Of Year revenue total of \$11k). I think I will have actually exceeded my goal for the year (2016-2017) by the end of this term.

Second admission (which is actually a good thing) that I misunderstood the “special projects” part of my budget until now and have been underutilizing it, for things that would very validly have gone in that category (e.g. minor remodeling, refreshing our “specialty” tool selection (not specialty as in rarely used, just expensive and you can MacGuyver solutions without them but it's much more precise to have the right tool... you get the point). I'm going to meet with Kevin today (Friday 21 Oct) to discuss going through my past invoices and correcting these things. This is a good thing because it means I will be correctly spending each of my budgets.

As I mentioned, the bike auction was much more successful than in previous years. This goes a LONG way, since most of our revenue comes from selling parts, which we sell at almost no profit. Also, we've stopped losing 13% on everything we sell, because I started charging tax (like we should have been doing anyway). Sigh)

VOLUNTEERS

New volunteers ask to join, I train them, and they commit to an already existing time. It works well. I'll do a formal push for volunteers around November so that I can get people on board before next term, but the shop will be quite dead at that time anyway.

I had a volunteer appreciation night but only half of my volunteers showed up; I think I'll end up doing several dinners just so that everyone gets a chance. Otherwise, I might put together an order of hats or something—similar (or less) cost, but a more lasting form of appreciation.

I currently have twelve volunteers on a weekly schedule. That's eleven more than last year. This model of volunteers setting the schedule and opening the shop is **much** better than previously, where the shop was only open when the director was there. That said, the director is usually the best mechanic on staff, and I often get phone calls when I'm not at the shop asking how to do this or that niche thing.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

I found myself overworked for a week, and the conference didn't help in that regard, because when I came back, I was pretty swamped. I had to cut some of my own shop hours for that reason. It's fine now.

SUCCESSES

I think I outlined our recent successes above already, but again: very successful auction, very good volunteer turnout, and very good position budget-wise.

Bike!Bike! Conference in Detroit

B!B! was an amazing experience. I met a lot of good people from across North America, from Mexico to Alaska; political activists, teachers, and generally extremely fun people. I was there for four days and three nights, and there were three days of workshops/talks.

Some examples:

- A workshop on storage solutions where shop managers sat together with a whiteboard and listed problems they had and solutions. *Very* useful talk.
- A chat about earn-a-bike programs for impoverished areas, and how to run nights for women&trans people in your shop
- A discussion called Disengaging With The White Savior Complex. I didn't go to that one because I happen to not exhibit said complex, but I like that it happened.

Also, there was a screening of bike porn, which was literally a bunch of us sitting there watching pornography as art, I guess. So that was cool.

All in all, it was a great time to network, learn, and grow as someone who will probably be spending the rest of my life working with bicycles in some capacity. Next year's B!B! is in Winnipeg, and I greatly encourage you to send at least one or maybe two people there. (Also, it was probably one of the cheaper events to fund because they gave us very cheap accommodations (we had twelve people in sleeping bags on a floor)).