

Richard Conradt, co-owner of the Walton Trail Co., relaxes on a barstool before closing Monday night. Conradt said business has been good since the the company opened May 1.

Food, bikes and more at Walton

By Anne Steyer Staff Reporter

Signs tacked to the counters and walls read "Free Air, Free Oil, Free

What the signs should say is "Great Food, Great Services, Great Atmosphere," because The Walton Trail Company, owned and operated by bicycle enthusiasts Richard Conradt and Rich Rodenburg, gives all these things and more.

Located one block north of the MoPac Trail in Walton, the 110-yearold building on the corner of east 118th and A streets that now houses the Trail Company has been home to many things, including a U.S. Post Office, a hardware store, a general store and Willie's, a local tavern.

But now the site is a stopping and starting place for people using the MoPac Trail, Nebraska's newest trail for hikers and bikers.

Any number of the shop's 12 employees are on hand to fix flats, rent bikes and provide advice about their favorite pastime — cycling. Bicycle accessories are located on shelves that cover an entire wall, highlighted by tires and tubes hanging from the ceiling.

Bicycle rental is \$10 for two hours more than time enough to trek the 2.5 mile distance between Walton and the trail's Lincoln starting point, 84th and O streets, and back again.

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Writing an effective ad

CALL 4

There's not another bike shop east of town past 40th street. and we have a really good service staff and sales tax is cheaper here than in Lincoln.

> - Conradt Walton Trail Company

But, Conradt said, the shop rents more than bicycles.

"Child-carriers, car racks, you name it, we'll rent it," he said.

That accommodating philosophy has been with the partners from the beginning. Conradt, a Lincoln High School teacher and swim coach, and Rodenburg, owner of Bike Pedalers at 33rd and B streets, have been planning the Trail Company for nearly three years, Conradt said, long before the path to Walton was finished. Accommodation and patience were both necessary to see the project through.

"We spent a whole lot of time and money getting itready," Conradt said, "but now everything is going really

The success of the Trail Company, which opened the first week of May, is probably owed in some part to the tinue as the trail expands.

variety of services offered. It not only boasts the full-service bike shop, but a fountain service as well.

The shop bakes bread fresh daily and the menu offers a variety of sandwiches, with a load of extras that can be piled on free of charge -- horseradish and pickled pepper rings among them—as well as raisins, ice creams, ciders, juices, waters and sodas, with coffees from The Mill tossed in for good measure.

But, Conradt said, no matter how good things get, "you always have these big dreams," to make it better. He said he and Rodenburg hope to develop the upstairs level also, and will work to increase awareness of the shop's location and convenience.

There's not another bike shop east of town past 40th street,"Conradt said, "and we have a really good service staff and sales tax is cheaper here than in Lincoln."

Conradt said he is enthusiastic about the proposals for further developments of the MoPac Trail. Funds for a pedestrian underpass at 134th street were approved at the end of May and city officials estimate the underpass will be completed by win-

"I think it will do nothing but help the smaller towns," Conradt said.
Reception in Walton has been very

warm and welcoming, Conradt said, and he said expects that trend to con-

Summer

Continued from Page 10

pan. The characters are likeable even the bad guys - and believable, and they say and do the most unbelievable things.

And strangest of all, "Wonderland" is an easy read. It skims along nicely, never letting the reader get too bagged down in the mire of events that are never going to be explained or explainable.

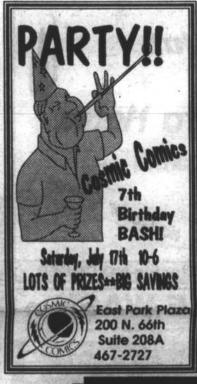
Even when something does get 'explained" it's in terms that cast doubt on everything else. One comes to believe that the events are important in themselves, entirely independent of any outside and secondary explanations or meaning.

In that way it's a lot like real life. But Murakami's "real life" brighter, quicker, and more forgiving if that's the right word - than any real life you're likely to be familiar

Harsh things happen here, beautiful things are lost — just like in real life—but the characters seem more at ease with loss, more likely to let things go when it comes time. In that way, they are not harmed by loss. Murakami is kind to his characters, even when he kills them off.

Is this a particularly Japanese atti-

tude, or is Murakami saying some-thing pointed about the nature of loss? Whatever the case, you can bet he's aware of it, that—if anyone is he's in control.





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