

## A step back in time at Cecil store



Robin Baker behind the counter at restored Cecil store

By Anne Morter

Walking through the door of the newly refurbished Cecil Store transports you back in time. The place, with its fresh coat of white paint, is quickly filling with items of historical significance including several pieces of the original equipment. And then there's the proprietor, "rut nut" and history buff, Robin Baker, leisurely enjoying an ice cream bar at the table in front of the big front windows. Things just feel pretty relaxed and easy at the Cecil Store.

The Cecil Store was built in 1888 and actually remained open until 1974. In the almost 20 years since then, the building has been used as storage shed by the Krebs' Ranch, the owner of the property. The dream of reopening the Cecil Store had been in the backs of the minds of some of the Krebs family but their ranch work keeps them more than busy.

Then along came Robin Baker, who saw an opportunity to live

and work at one of the only two actual Oregon Trail campsites in Morrow County. "I had been thinking about it for about a year," said Baker, before bringing the project to reality with the help of numerous friends and neighbors.

Cecil was once like many other little towns in the area, a busy center of commerce. It boasted a big wheat and sheep shipping depot and its own school. The store stocked a little bit of everything, from dry goods to cheese by the wheel to clothing and hardware. Baker has no intention of stocking the store to its former level but instead offers cold pop, ice cream and other snacks that are sure to appeal to hungry Oregon Trail tourists. She also wants to fill the place with crafts, made by local crafts people. "We have a lot of talent here in Morrow County," she says. "As we go on, it will build on itself, with people bringing in

items on consignment." She would like to keep things on a pioneer or nostalgia theme.

Baker also offers a good selection of tourist information, promoting both Well Springs and Cecil. She has been one of the primary movers in making Well Springs a popular tourist site but she is quick to admit that she was spreading herself too thin where Well Springs was concerned. She said she was leading tours whenever someone called, which was getting to be quite frequent. She continues to give tours but only those scheduled in advance. With the Navy contracting with the National Park Service to interpret the site, she sees it becoming a site less likely to require a guide.

Now a new "hiking-only" trail is open near Cecil, one that is more accessible for many people. According to Baker, the Cecil Trail is only three quarters of a mile off the road where the Well

Springs site is a much longer walk.

With the store now open for business, Baker is busy dreaming up new activities for the town of Cecil. The visit of the Official Wagon Train in August is, of course, a major event for the summer. She is also hoping to use the large upstairs of the store as a classroom when the weather is too nasty for outdoor learning about the Oregon Trail. And an old fashioned Christmas Bazaar is on the back burner for this Christmas. "We just want it to be a real interesting, fun place to be," says Baker.

### Bridal Tables

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## Library kicks off program



Wendell Buck as shiek

Oregon Trail Library district librarian Wendell Buck gets "in character" as he enthralled local children with tales of the Thousand and One Arabian Nights. Buck was on hand at the Hepp-

ner Library for the kickoff of the summer reading program. The program for children in kindergarten through sixth grade is entitled "Wild About Books". Contact the library for more information.

## 5K wellness walk slated in Boardman

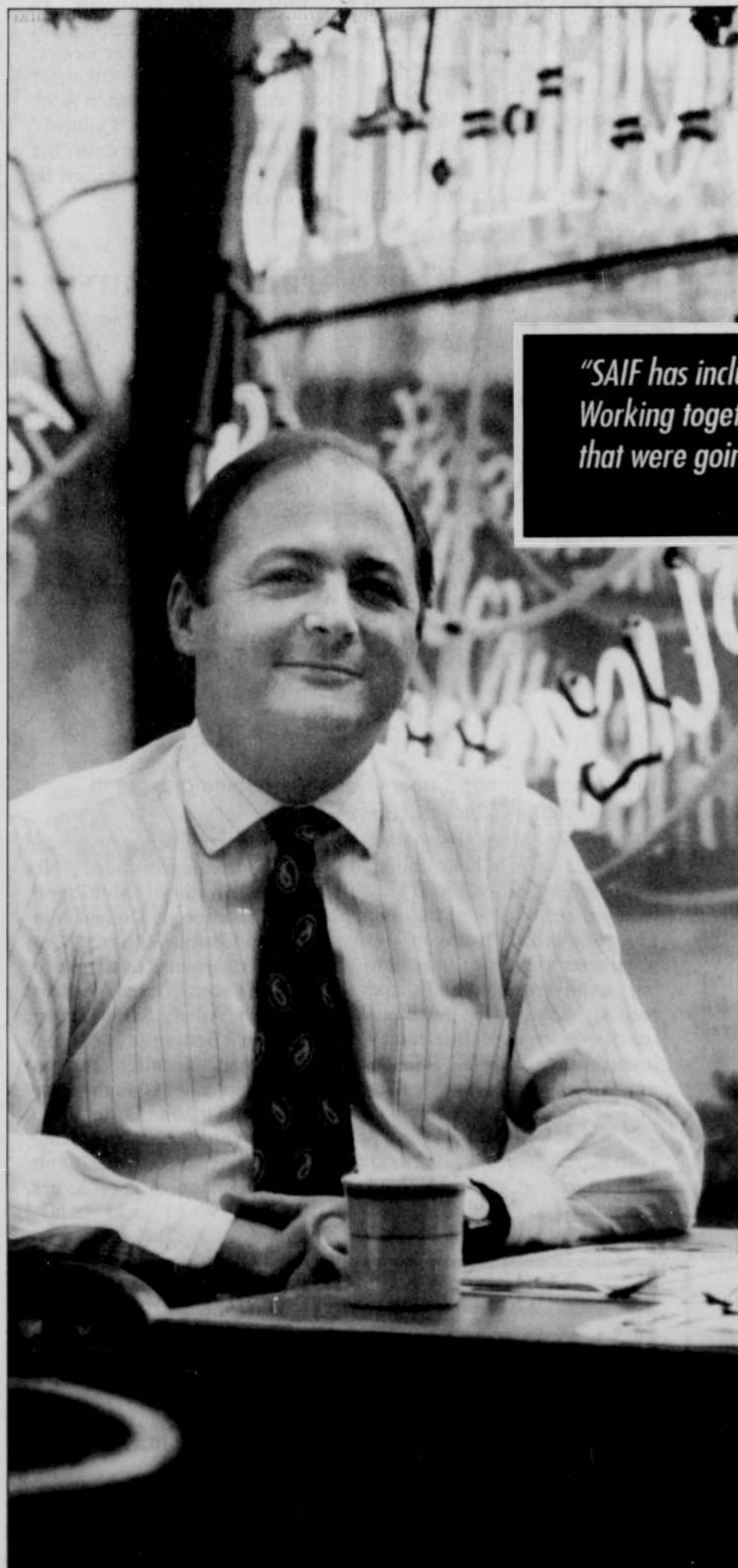
Thinking about starting a wellness program? Looking for an activity that is fun for all members of your family? Like the great outdoors and a river view? Boardman Fourth of July celebration has the perfect activity for you.

A 5K (3.1 miles) Wellness Walk will take place between 8 and 10 a.m. Sunday, July 4 in and around Boardman.

The non-competitive event begins at the Marina park. A well-marked route and rest stops will be provided.

There is no charge to participate. All participants must register. T-shirts will be available for \$5 to those that pre-register by June 24. To receive a T-shirt at the event, registration forms must be returned by June 24. T-shirts ordered after June 24 will be mailed after the event.

Registration forms are available at Boardman City Hall, Boardman Pharmacy and Hardware and Boardman Health Care Clinic. For more information call 481-9474 days or 481-9457 after 7:30 p.m.



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