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1990, October - December

# Ray City Community News

Vol. 1 No. 3

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Cathy Mobley  
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Ray City, Ga 31645

# Ray City



# Community News

Vol. 1 No. 3

October November December  
Published by Ray City Community Development Council

Quarterly

## Ray City Fall Festival

God's special gift to mankind is the month of October. The glorious sunny days with a touch of crispness in the air and the cool comfortable nights are reward enough for having endured the long hot summer. With the gloom of a barren winter approaching, the gentian sky and colorfully changing foliage are a welcome contrast to the days ahead. October is the time of harvest--a time of celebration--a time to pause and enjoy life.

The Ray City accolade to autumn will be observed by a Fall Festival. Families and friends can come together in the park for a weekend of carefree entertainment. The Homecoming Committee has mapped out a family-oriented schedule of events for Friday evening, October 19th and all day Saturday, October 20th.

The festival opens with a feature that is done better in South Georgia than anywhere else--a fish fry. It will be held at the Senior Citizen's Center, Friday evening. Chefs will start dishing up the fish, with its accompaniment of hush puppies and coleslaw, at about 6:00, and

continue until the fish are gone.

At 8:30, a community dance will begin on the Center's parking lot. The band "Horizon" will play as couples sway under the stars.

Bright and early Saturday morning, the day begins with a pancake breakfast in the Center, from 7:00 to 8:30 A.M. By 9:00, the arts and crafts show and the food and game booths will be in place and will be open all day for those who wish to browse, to buy, and to be entertained.

Ten o'clock is Parade Time! Bands and floats and horses and clowns will wend their way through the streets of Ray City to the delight of all who behold them. This year, the Homecoming Committee has invited Wing Commander Col. Marvin Esmond to be Grand Marshall of the parade and Col. Esmond has graciously accepted.

At 1:00, city officials will hold welcoming ceremonies; then the afternoon will be given over to special events.

At 2:00, a dance contest will be held. Power 96 Radio D.J.'s will spin the platters for the contest.

2:00 is also the time the Amateur Horse Show will begin. The Horse Show will have six timed events: the Coca Cola Race, Corncob Race, Bareback Cloverleaf Race, Personal Pickup, Crawl Thru Barrel and Catalog Race.

At 2:30, a dog show is tentatively scheduled. MAFB Special Police will demonstrate how dogs can be trained to find drugs.

At 4:00 an Amateur Arm Wrestling Competition will begin. Weight Classes are: Up to 140 lbs.; 141-160 lbs.; 161-190 lbs.; 191-up. The competition will be double elimination.

The day ends with a Gospel Sing in the Center, beginning at 7:00 P.M. It is a fitting end to a festival--voices uplifted in psalms of praise to God, Who gave us October.----



## An Afternoon With Miss Lois

As are the seasons, so are our lives. Springtime is our youth; summer the time of maturing. Autumn brings the harvest. Then is winter--the time of rest and reflection.

Miss Lois Carter has lived the seasons for eighty-eight years. Now, small and fragile, she looks too frail to have weathered the storms of nearly nine decades, but weather them she has and in her winter season, Miss Lois remembers...

She recalls the Ray City of 1925, when she first moved here with her husband, Newt, and young son J.D. She did not want to move. Born and reared in rural Lowndes County she found the young, lusty town intimidating. Twenty-five hundred busy people lived here then, drawn by the industry of the pine country. The Carters themselves came to Ray City because Newt had a good job on the turpentine "still."

"He made \$8.00 a week", she says, smiling. "Of course, out of that, we had to pay rent."

She was amazed by all the merchandise offered by three grocery stores, a dry goods store, two drug-stores, the fish market, and the milliners shop. She cooled milk with a nickel's worth of ice from the cold storage plant and banked at Ray City Bank.

In those days, the railroad was a vital part of community life; bringing in supplies and taking out industrial products. Best of all were the four daily passenger trains; a far better mode of transportation than the buggy or Model T Ford.

Then came the depression. Gone were the sawmill and the bank. Gone, too were the businesses,

whose closed doors signaled the end of an era for Ray City. The town was devastated. The Carters were luckier than some. Newt kept his job and could buy groceries at the company commissary. However, the grocery bill often took all his wages.

"There were months at a time when we never had so much as a quarter in the house. Newt even got his haircuts on credit."

The war years followed and the young men of Ray City became G.I.'s. People now had money for

food but most of the available supply was needed for the war effort. The rest was rationed. Miss Lois still recalls the shortages and the ration books. She also recalls the opening of Moody Field and its employment opportunities for depression-ravaged Ray City.

After the war, life returned to a semblance of normality, but the world had changed. The following decades brought space exploration, civil unrest, and another war, this one strange and indeterminate. It also brought technological advances undreamed of less than a century ago.

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These years, begun in the late summer of Miss Lois' life, meant changes for her, too. She became a career woman. It started in the late 1940's, when she was clerking in a grocery store.

"Mr. Roy Swindle's wife had been city clerk for several years and she passed away between Christmas and New Years. A delegation of the council came and asked me if I'd accept the clerks job. I'd never done that kind of work, but a council member said he'd teach me and that's how I got to be clerk."

She held the position off and on from 1947 to 1953. In 1957, she again became clerk and stayed in the post until her retirement in 1972.

She also became involved in the political scene because, as she says, "I loved politics. I started helping hold elections in '47. When I was elected to the Democratic Executive Committee, I held that office until 1986." Asked if she'd seen many political changes, she replies, "Yes, and I've been in a lot of them."

Miss Lois now lives quietly with her niece and nephew. She has outlived her husband and son, and has become reflective.

"So many things have happened that I never expected to. Times have changed so it does not seem like the same world. People have changed, too. They don't visit anymore."

A visit with Miss Lois is well worth the time. Spend an afternoon with her. Listen, as she talks of a Ray City that was and is no more. As she speaks in her soft, southern voice, a verse in Ecclesiastes will come to mind: "For everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under the heaven."

The seasons of Miss Lois' life have

## Ray's Mill Pond Cafe

On a typical evening at Ray's Mill Pond Cafe, a look at the license plates on cars in the parking lot could give one a quick lesson in geography, because the plates carry the names of half the counties in Georgia, as well as those of nearby states. Ray's Mill Pond Cafe is the

shaped her into the person she is today, a woman warm and caring, who has the dignity of maturity. We who are fortunate enough to have met her know we have been granted one of life's rare privileges.

premier fish house in our area. The restaurant itself is not in the least pretentious. The dining rooms have been added as the need has arisen - with no claim to architectural aesthetics. The road leading to the restaurant is unpaved; yet the place is always crowded and people will wait as long as it takes to get a table, because the food is well worth the wait.

Catfish is the menu selection most often ordered. One might think a catfish is a catfish is a catfish, but  
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**Jim & Pat Wiggins**  
welcome you to

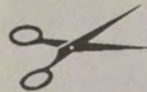
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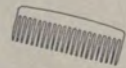
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**455-2021**

continued from page 3

Lamar Booth says the best tasting ones come from the St. John's River in Florida. He should know. He has been preparing them since 1963, when his mother, Ann Campbell, bought the restaurant. Obtaining the other fish on the menu becomes something of an international affair; the flounder and trout begin life in Canada, and the sea trout is imported from Argentina. The other fish--mullet and nile perch, like the catfish, come from Florida. It all comes to the Cafe, fresh-dressed, in four big trucks each week. That's a lot of fish.

The restaurant and its surroundings are a part of the history of Ray City. The original townsite was built around Ray's Mill, a grist mill erected in 1866 by Thomas M. Ray and his father-in-law, Levi J. Knight. According to Martha Edwards Horowitz, great, great granddaughter of Ray, the place was originally called "Knight's and Ray's Mill." She says that after Knight's death, Ray bought the other half of the land, the mill and the water rights. These rights included the 3,000 acre pond from which the millstream fed. It was here that the first post office was established, in a building still standing near the restaurant.

The mail was carried by oxcart to and from Adel once a week. Lamar Booth relates a story of local entrepreneurs who would catch bream from the pond and send them, via oxcart, to Adel, where they would be sold for a nickel each.

The mill itself was operated continuously until the 1940's. The millhouse has long been demolished, although the mill itself and the precisely grooved millstones lie near

the bridge that now crosses the milldam.

The restaurant was started about forty years ago by a club, whose ten members took turns running it. In the late fifties, it was bought by a couple named Owens, who ran it for about three years before selling it to Ann Campbell. When she retired in 1979, Lamar Booth took it over and promptly leased it to his son, Larry, and his daughter in law, Doris and Joyce Booth. They have been managing it since then. Lamar still helps out, and it is usually his friendly greeting that hails customers as they walk in the door.

The family originally kept the restaurant open seven days a week, serving both lunch and dinner. Eventually, however, the work became too much for them, so they cut back to serving dinner four evenings a week, Wednesday, through Saturday. They do little advertising. The fame of the restaurant has spread by word of mouth. After eating a heaping platter of fish, complemented by a relish dish, fresh coleslaw, grits and mouth-watering hush puppies, the words of most satisfied customers are, "This is the best food I ever ate."

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(Today we hear a lot of bad news about our schools system and students who do not acquire even the basic skills. Its time for some good news--news about students like Kristi Johnson, a bright, enthusiastic talented young lady now in her final year at Ray City Elementary School. The following essay and a Christmas poem elsewhere in this issue were written by Miss Johnson.-ED.)

## Ray City Elementary

by Kristi Johnson

I like Ray City School because the teachers are friendly, understanding and willing to teach until you learn. At the point where some teachers might give up and decide they didn't care if anyone learned anything or not, these teachers are still thinking of ways and examples to prove their point.

Some teachers are faced with a student who has a difficulty in learning. While they could treat him/her like any other student and not bother with extra explaining to help him/her to understand, the teachers I have learned under explain everything thoroughly and simply so that everyone understands; but if someone still does not catch on immediately, they explain it again as many times as needed.

Although we do not have as much equipment and learning tools as sometimes might be needed, the teachers use what we have very skillfully, so that what we don't have is not needed.

These teachers also have a close relationship with the students. Although most have our respect, they treat us almost like friends.

## The Holidays Are Coming

On October 1st, with the sun shining brightly and warm breezes rustling the not-yet-turned leaves of the trees, it is hard to believe that only 85 shopping days remain until Christmas. Sometimes, in our area, the warm December days make it hard to visualize a picture-postcard

This helps us to have more fun learning and also to learn easily.

I like Ray City Elementary because the people who instruct me have the gift of teaching and they use it to the best of their ability.

Christmas. Yet Christmas is a season of the spirit. It is felt in the heart, regardless of weather conditions.

In Ray City, Christmas time is a special time, with a warmth found only in small towns--a time families and friends share happily. The streets are festooned with brightly colored lights whose twinkling is answered by those on porches--in windows--and around the welcoming doors of the people here who decorate their homes and carry out the traditions.

continued page 6

## RAY'S MILL POND CAFE

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## CDC Update

Since its inception, the Ray City Community Development Council has had, as a primary goal, the improvement of the physical appearance of Ray City. With that in mind, the organization applied for a state-funded grant to landscape along the major streets of the town. Last spring, CDC received a \$5,000 grant for the first phase of this project. The Georgia Area Planning and Development Council then began to develop the necessary landscape plans. The plans have been completed and are now on display at City Hall. CDC chairman, George Skinner says actual work on the project will probably start in February, the best time of year for setting out new plants.

Skinner has also consulted with the State Department of Transportation and the Department has tentatively agreed to furnish, plant and maintain crepe myrtles along the two main highways running through town. This frees up grant money, which can be used to landscape areas leading off the main street. By the middle of March, all landscaping should be completed.

CDC has also filed a \$9,000 grant request to refurbish the caboose the city has obtained from Norfolk and Southern railroad. The grant was held up the last legislative quarter because of technical omissions. It has been resubmitted for the fourth quarter and CDC anticipates its approval. The property adjoining Ray City Bank is being prepared for the caboose. The city plans to use it as a Welcome/Information Center and as a meeting room for civic organizations.

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The churches have special services and cantatas. Carolers stroll through town, bearing the news that is as fresh today as it was 2000 years ago; the carols they sing have come down through the centuries, putting to music the awe and mystery of a Birth that would change mankind. The live nativity scene once again enacts that humble Birth--a message that a King is born in a manger.

The spirit of Christmas is reflected

in the eyes of the children of Ray City--in a look of expectation of good things to come--a look of anticipation and unconcealed excitement.

For just a little while we forget our worries. For moments we remember the importance of love. And, if for just a fleeting second we feel a "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will to men," then we, too, have captured the Christmas spirit.

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## PTO Carnival

Ghosts and Goblins will be the star attractions on a very spooktacular Ray City evening in October. The date is Saturday, October 27th, and the event is the annual Halloween Carnival, staged by the Ray City Elementary School P.T.O.

Carnival committee chairman, Thomas Clayton has released a "hair raising" schedule of activities, which includes a costume judging contest, a cake walk, a haunted house, food and game booths and Bingo for the fainter of heart. Concessions and refreshments will also be available. The Carnival will be held on the school grounds from 4:00 to 7:00 P.M. The costume contest will be at 3:30, just prior to the Carnival opening.

Members of the P.T.O. extend a warm invitation to students, parents, teachers and friends in the community. Moneys received from the event will be used to supply items to the school that would be otherwise unavailable.

In the past, proceeds from the carnival have helped to buy instructional materials, library supplies, playground equipment and computer equipment. In fact, the list of purchases could go on and on. The organization is proud of the fact that every penny earned at the Carnival is a penny spent for the benefit of the children.

## What's Been Happening....

**JULY:** The July 4th celebration was a great success. Visitors to the park during the event-filled day numbered over 3000.

**AUGUST:** Courageous male citi-

zens of the area displayed their thespian skills in an all-male revue called "A Womanless Wedding." Two performances were given for delighted audiences.

**SEPTEMBER:** The City of Ray City hosted an Appreciation Dinner for Moody Air Force Base as a gesture of welcome for MAFB new Wing Commander Col. Marvin Esmond. Attending the dinner were members of the City Council and CDC, as well as guests including Col. Esmond; Col. Ray Trusz, base commander; Col. Jack Laurer, base

controller; Rep. Hanson Carter and Sheriff Jerry Brogdon. The dinner was sponsored by The Citizen's Bank and GTE.

ALSO.....a new walking track is being constructed in Ray City Park. When completed, the quarter-mile asphalt track will be bordered by concrete benches and a water fountain. The track will be well lit for evening walkers. Rep. Hanson Carter was instrumental in Ray City's ability to obtain the matching-fund grant.

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# Senior Citizens Center

The new Senior Citizens Center will be officially dedicated Saturday, October 13th. The Center has a kitchen equipped with a stove and refrigerator. City officials are investigating the possibility of instating a Meals on Wheels lunchtime program. In order to do so, it must ascertain if senior citizens in the area want the service. The following survey is printed to obtain input from senior citizens. Older members of the community who wish for such a service are asked to complete the survey, clip it from the newsletter and return it to the City Hall.

# We Remember

We in Ray City miss some familiar faces--faces that belong to young men and women of Moody AFB, gone now to Saudi Arabia. We are proud of these young people whose chosen career is the defense of our country. We pray that God be with them. We also feel warm compassion for the families left behind. And we remember how fortunate we are to have defenders like them. If you wish to mail Christmas wishes or gifts to anyone serving in Desert Shield, mailing should be done by October 22, 1990 for them to receive them on time.

# CHRISTMAS

by Kristi Johnson  
 When I think of Christmas I see,  
 A brightly lit cedar tree.  
 On each limb, many shapes and sizes,  
 And underneath, carefully wrapped surprises.  
 When I think of Christmas I see,  
 Jesus, as a little tiny baby,  
 Lying in a straw-lined manger bed  
 With bright chubby cheeks, all rosy red.  
 When I think of Christmas I see,  
 Happily smiling faces, shouting with glee.  
 And the sounds of colored paper being torn,  
 Long before dawn on a Christmas morn.

**SENIOR CITIZENS SURVEY**

If you wish to have a lunch time Meals-On-Wheels program at the Ray City Senior Citizens Center, please complete the following questionnaire.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Can you travel to the Senior Citizens Center?  Yes  No

If no, would you want a meal delivered to your home?  Yes  No

Do you live in Ray City?  Yes  No


If no, how far from Ray City do you live? \_\_\_\_\_ miles.

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