

Labor Day: Folks enjoy the last summer holiday

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Drive In on Vischer Ferry Road, Halfmoon was just beginning to get busy. Co-owner Lena Riberdy has been working in the Drive In's kitchen for 18 years. She started working part-time at 14. Despite graduating from two colleges Riberdy said she found it too enjoyable to leave and put her criminal justice degrees to work.

"I've been here so long I get people's orders started when I see their car drive in," she said. "People are predicable and it's those repeat customers that keep us going."

Three of those predicable repeat customers were Shane, Tammy, and five-month-old Taryn. Tammy spent part of the day picking her daughter up from her parents' Kingston home and Shane admitted to relaxing at home in front of the television.

"If it was a better day we'd have been on the boat," he said. "But we thought it was a little cool for Taryn."

Choosing what to eat didn't take the couple long.

"Two chicken speedy sandwiches, onion rings, and Michigan fries," said Tammy. "It's

always the same. The diet starts tomorrow."

Drive-in restaurants like the Country In or Hayners on Route 236 are seasonal businesses. Like golf courses and race tracks the weather affects their bottom line.

Riberdy said the Country Drive In will close Oct. 1. For Hayners, Labor Day marked the end of their regular season.

"It's been an excellent summer for us despite all the rain early on," said Carolyn Hayner. "People just seemed to accept it at one point and started coming out rain or no rain."

Hayner and her husband own and operate the drive-in along with a loyal staff. Monday was the last Classic Car Cruise In of the season at Hayners and Carolyn and the staff started the grills up at 5 p.m. just as the cars and customers began arriving.

"We're going to be open the last two weekends in September and all four in October and that'll be it for the season except for the pie orders we always take around Thanksgiving," Hayner said.

Out behind the restaurant building the cars slowly pulled in, each driver waving and



Photo by GLENN GRIFFITH/Community News

Shane, left and Tammy enjoy a bite to eat at the Country Drive In on Vischer Ferry Road in Halfmoon last Monday.

acknowledging the others as old friends. With an oldies station laying down a thick background track of classic rock the owners began trading information about their cars and their lives.

Ed Kepner and Louis Dahoda have several things in common.

They both own classic red Ford Mustang's and Dahoda worked with Kepner's father at the former Ford auto plant on Green Island.

They know their cars and how they were built.

Kepner has a 1968 Shelby GT 500 standard with a 428 cubic inch engine. Dahoda has the

smaller 1966 Mustang automatic with a straight six 200 cubic inch engine.

Parked next to each other with the hoods up the two men began to dissect the engines' differences for the non-mechanically minded.

"I get 14 miles per gallon," said Kepner in answer to a question.

"I only get 17 with mine," said Dahoda.

"Back when these were built," Kepner said pointing to the two cars, "they didn't even consider gas mileage. Never gave it thought. No one did."