



by Alexandra Edwards

Soon after relocating to beautiful Southeast Tennessee, I invited my father to come and explore the nearby attractions. Being an avid big band and jazz music lover, his first request was to visit the famous Chattanooga Choo Choo. As we pulled into the parking area, Dad's dry sense of humor made it difficult to resist rolling down the car window and saying to the attendant, "Pardon me boy, is this the Chattanooga Choo Choo?" Of course, the young lad hadn't a clue what we were grinning about.

This December will mark the 100th anniversary of the

overnight packages, and much more.

By the end of the year, the 100 year railroad station, renown across the globe, will become eligible to join the prestigious group of Historic Hotels of America, ending its 20 year old association with Holiday Inn.

Over 3 million dollars have been spent on renovations and additions throughout the historic property, adding a complete new look to the grand dome lobby, the terminals most prominent feature. "This milestone gives us the opportunity to look back and celebrate our incredible past while also focusing on the new and exciting future of our timeless attraction," said Jim Bambrey, General Manager of the Chattanooga Choo Choo.

The major highlight of the Spring celebrations will be



Station Terminal

grand old Choo Choo and year long celebrations have been planned to commemorate the historic event.

Every month through December 1st, a number of special events have been planned which will include parties, contests, concerts, keep-sake souvenirs,

a special big-band concert by none other than the Glenn Miller Orchestra, whose original band members put the the station on the map in 1941 with their famous recording of "Chattanooga Choo-Choo."

The concert will take place on May 16th at

Pardon Me Boy...



8:00pm. Tickets are \$40. Special overnight packages for two which include a pair of tickets to the concert will be available for that night. The "Moonlight Serenade" gives the choice of a Standard room for \$229 (for two) or Victorian Traincar for \$279 (for two) and includes a pre-concert social in the formal gardens, a CD of Glenn Miller Golden Hits, and a commemorative photo taken at the concert and mailed to your home. For an extra \$60 the "In The Mood" package gets

you all of the above plus a prime rib dinner buffet in the Garden's Restaurant. Advance purchase is required. For reservations call (423) 266-5000.

During the big band era of the early 1940's, the Glenn Miller Band was a huge success producing multiple

hits, leaving behind a legacy of music still appreciated by both the young and old of today.

Familiar to most are the melodies Pennsylvania 6-



Glenn Miller

5000, Moonlight Serenade, I've got a Girl in Kalamazoo, In The Mood, and of course, Chattanooga Choo Choo. Originally featured in the 1941 movie Sun Valley Serenade, the song Chattanooga Choo Choo

was sold over a million copies in less than three months and in 1942 became the first gold record ever awarded.

Band leader Glenn Miller's life ended tragically in 1944 after he had taken off in a single engine airplane never to be seen again, he was declared dead one year later. A decade later, due to popular demand the Glenn Miller Estate authorized the formation of the present Glenn Miller Orchestra. For well over fifty years the orchestra has traveled over 100,000 miles each year playing nearly 300 dates keeping alive the big band sound loved by so many.

As part of the Choo Choo celebrations the Tennessee Valley Railroad will offer special excursions from the Choo Choo to Grand Junction on the 1st and 3rd weekends between May 30 and September 5th.

During the summer months, choral and band concerts will be held in the Choo Choo's outdoor formal gardens.

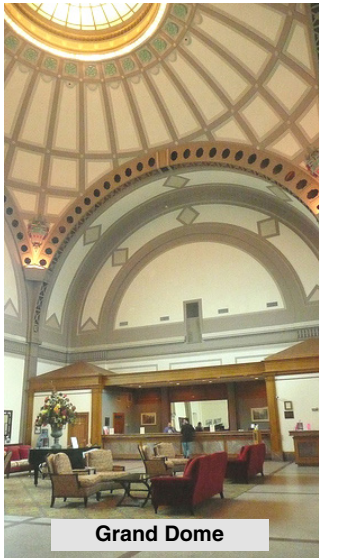
Many exciting activities and competitions are being planned for fall and the holidays. Past visitors to the Choo Choo are invited to share their favorite memories. Since the grand opening of Southern Railway's new \$1.5 million dollar Chattanooga Terminal Station on December 1, 1909, initially receiving it's nick-

name from a newspaper columnist in 1880, the Chattanooga Choo Choo was to become a huge tourist attraction known around the globe for it's track 29.

During World War II, the Terminal Station was often filled to capacity. Since its grand opening, the Terminal Station has greeted three Presidents; Woodrow Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Franklin Roosevelt.

After the decline in rail commuting, Southern Rail closed the doors of the Terminal Station. The last passenger train to leave Chattanooga was on May 1, 1971.

In 1973 a group of investors converted the old Terminal Station into a family vacation complex at



Grand Dome

a cost of \$10 million dollars. Later that year, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Choo Choo Partners Ltd. assumed ownership in 1989 when it became part of the Holiday Inn family of hotels.

After becoming an independent hotel at the end of the year, the Chattanooga Choo Choo intends to retain its historic charm. "Visitors love the nostalgia of the experience and we want to continue to provide the ambiance of the 100-year old Terminal Station," Bambrey said.

For more information on the Chattanooga Choo Choo's 100 year Anniversary events, call 1-800-TRACK29 (872-2529) or 423-266-5000.

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