



by Alexandra Edwards

A Tennessee Valley Vacation

call 423-472-4551 or Bradley County parks 423-728-7035.

Children of all ages will enjoy learning about the "Trail of Tears," at Red Clay Historic Park. The area served as the last council grounds for the Cherokee nation. A replica of a

The warm weather is here, graduation days are over, school is out and families are making plans for a hot sizzling summer vacation.

With ever soaring gas prices and money being a little tight for most this year, it makes sense to spend those valuable vacation days closer to home. The good news is, we are surrounded by vacation spots. From the Great Smoky Mountains to the many tourist attractions of Chattanooga, Tennessee Valley has enough fun filled vaca-

tion ideas to keep the kids occupied from now until school is back.

Here in **Cleveland** we have some wonderful recreational parks where long lazy summer days time can be spent picnicking, swimming, playing sports, cycling or hiking. Try Kenneth Tinsley Park on Keith Street. Swimming pool admission: \$3 adults-\$2 children 11 and under. Deer Park on 17th Street has a great playground for the youngsters and good picnic areas. Bradley County Recreational Park on Urbane Road has quite an impressive BMX track. For more information on Cleveland parks



Cherokee farm and council house show how the area might have looked 150 years ago. The park's center houses a large exhibit of Cherokee artifacts as well as a small theater. During August 2-3 the park will host it's 26th annual "Cherokee Days of Recognition." For more information call 423-478-0339 Admission: Free with \$3 parking fee.

In the **Chattanooga area..** pitch a tent, take the kids camping at Harrison Bay State Park on Hwy 58. The scenic wooded 1,200 acre park surrounding the beautiful Chickamauga Lake makes a peaceful set-

ting for camping, boating or fishing. Bathhouses are located in each of the 4 camping areas as well as a playground. For more information call: 423-344-7966

Kids love animals and will certainly enjoy a day at the Chattanooga Zoo, formerly Warner Park Zoo.

The small 6 acre zoo is located inside Warner Park, just 2 miles from downtown Chattanooga. The zoo's newest exhibit is the Himalayan Passage featuring red pandas, snow leopards, langurs and the highly endangered Bali-Mynahs. You can also see playful spider monkeys, a Jaguar and macaws. The most popular animal of all

though is Hank, one of the five chimpanzees. Hank will celebrate his 40th birthday on Saturday June 21 and the zoo invite you to "Hanks Day" combined with their Grand Opening of the zoo's new front entrance. Hank's birthday has been one of the the favorite zoo events between families and children where they enjoy cake and ice cream, arts and crafts and much more. Admission: Adults \$6- Children 3-15 \$3. For more information call 423-697-1319 or 423-697-1322.

Lake Winnepesaukah continues to be the south's favorite amusement park. With all the thrill rides, kid-



Hank

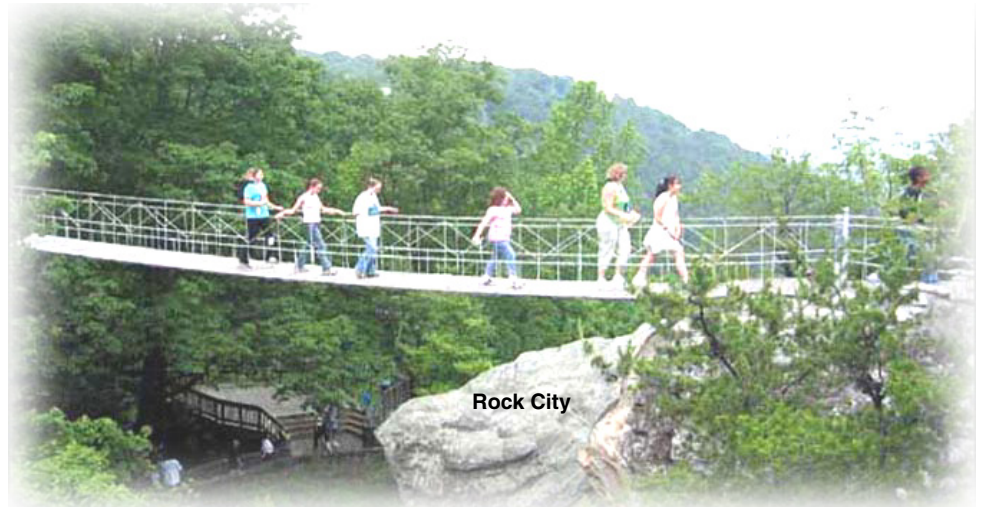
die rides, games and free concerts it has to offer, admission is still a reasonably good value; Gate admission \$5, unlimited ride pass \$21 or individual ride tickets 95 cents each or \$12 for a value strip of 14 tickets.

ing states. Admission: Adults \$15.95 - children \$8.95. For more information call 423-820-2531. Also on Lookout Mountain, a cool place to go on a really hot day is Ruby Falls where the temperature stays

At the bottom of the cave you will board a glass-bottom boat for an exciting trip on the Lost Sea. The lake is located 140 feet below ground level and covers more than 4 acres. Admission: Adult - \$15.95 Children (5-12) - \$7.45. For more information call (423) 337-6616.

Mayfield Dairy Visitor Center in **Athens, TN**, is a fun place the kids will love to visit. Visitors are invited to browse the Mayfield gift shop, watch a video about Mayfield products and take a free and educational plant tour. At the end of the tour, sit outside and cool off with a scoop of your favorite ice cream. Admission: Free - just the cost of the ice cream.

Forget driving eight or more hours to the beach, we have them right here in beautiful **Ocoee, TN**. Grab your swimsuit, beach tow-



Rock City

Take the kids for a ride on the Incline Railway to the top of historical Lookout Mountain and learn about civil war battles. Adult: \$14 round trip - Children (ages 3-12): \$7 round trip. For more information call (423) 821-4224.

The winding flag-stone trails at Rock City are fun and entertaining. When you follow the Enchanted Trail, it will take you through some amazing rock formations, beautiful gardens, and narrow caverns like Fat Man's Squeeze. The 4100 foot trail leads you across a fun swinging rope bridge to Lover's Leap and spectacular views 1700 feet above sea level. On a clear day it is possible to see the seven surround-

at 60 degrees year round. located over 1120 feet beneath the surface, Ruby Falls is the nation's largest and deepest waterfall open to the public. Hundreds of gallons of water rush over by the minute every day and amaze visitors. Admission Adults: \$14.95 - Children (ages 3-12): \$ 7.95. Parking at both Rock City and Ruby Falls is free.

Another cool and interesting place to visit when temperatures are in the sizzling nineties is The Lost Sea, America's largest underground lake, located in **Sweetwater, TN**. The adventure begins with a guided tour which will explain the fascinating geological development of the cavern rooms and rare for-

els, sun tan lotion, and a picnic and head for the Cherokee National Forest. East along highway 64 you find two beaches safe for the kids to play and paddle. The second beach is sandy so don't forget the sand toys. Remarkably, there is also a third beach at the top of Chilhowee by the camp grounds. Admission for all beaches: \$3 per day parking fee.

All these local places to spend summer vacation and we haven't even touched on Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg and the Great Smoky Mountains which can still be reached on less than a tank of gas.

Have a great fun filled Summer!



The Lost Sea