

Coot & Holler Gazette

Vol. 24, No. 1, Thursday, August 28, 2025

Submit material to cootnholler@otr.org by 4 p.m. daily.
Or drop a written blurb in the envelope at Cooters.



OTR Schedule THURSDAY

Noon	OTR opens and welcomes all cavers in celebration of our 74th Annual Reunion!
Noon–11 p.m.	Registration Office open; Registration
Noon	Cooters Pub opens the taps for OTR 2025
Noon–9 p.m.	Decontamination Station open; Map #2
Noon	Sauna opens
Noon–4 p.m.	OTR Museum open
Noon–4 p.m.	OTR Merchandise Sales open; Merch Tent
6–7:30 p.m.	Opening Ceremony/Memorial Tribute; Memorial Garden
8 p.m.	Welcoming of OTR Virgins; Bonfire
8:30 p.m.	Lighting of the Bonfire
Dusk (±8:30)	Movie; Crawl-In Theater
9–11 p.m.	OTR Virgin & Sponsor Reception; Event Tent
9 p.m.–Midnight	Live music: Grateful Gary; Pavilion
2 a.m.	Last Call at Cooters Pub (may close earlier)
4 a.m.	Sauna closes

Non-alcoholic (NA) beer available at Cooters! Ask the Cooters staff about the available options!

Chair’s Welcome Message

By Sarah Richards
Welcome everyone to the 74th annual Old Timer’s Reunion, where we are celebrating the wonder of Wonderland! My staff and I have been working for months to prepare an unforgettably magical OTR experience for you all, and we are thrilled that you are here! From the Gate to the River and everywhere in between, you’ll find that OTR is sprinkled with surprises to delight all ages and stages! Check out the Event Schedule in the *Guidebook*, and keep an eye on the *Coot & Holler* each day for the latest updates! Finally, if you’re a virgin, be sure to pick up a *Virgin Guide* to help you explore everything that OTR has to offer! We hope that you have a fantastic weekend!

This Just in From WOTR!

WOTR is going digital!
You thought we were gone. We said we were gone. I guess we lied. But...WOTR will no longer be broadcast over the airwaves. Instead, we will be streaming at www.wotr.live for the event. There’s even a request page! Will we read it? Who knows. But it’s there.
If you have any questions stop by and we’ll answer them. See you at the party.
And just like any good infomercial: “One more time. That’s www.wotr.live. Quantities are limited, so log in now!”

Virgin Reception at the Bonfire (9-ish–whenever)

Please join us for a special Welcome Reception for OTR Virgins and their Sponsors Thursday evening around 9-ish The celebration will start rolling right after the **Bonfire** Ceremony (don’t forget to pick up your Virgin Guide there). We promise no Virgin sacrifices! We simply want to WELCOME first time attendees to the Annual Old Timers Reunion. Come meet and greet some of OTR’s core staff and resources and get some signatures for that Virgin Guide you just picked up. You’ll meet other Virgins, maybe plan some cave trips, and have some light refreshments. Many people report meeting the very best of people at OTR for lifelong friendships.

Trash: Please do NOT use the garbage cans along Vendor Row for your campsite trash.

Beneath Our Feet: The Hidden World of Caves & Karst is the 2025 seasonal interpretive exhibit for the Appalachian Forest Discovery Center in Elkins, WV. The hours are 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Thursday–Sunday and admission is free.

Interact with a replica cave and try its simulated crawl space, read the interpretive panels about cave conservation and historical exploration, and see the caving gear and prehistoric fossils on display. They also have a pretty neat gift shop and a permanent exhibit about the Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area.

The exhibit is in the Appalachian Forest Discovery Center, which is housed within the historic Darden Mill building. The address is 2 Railroad Ave, Elkins. The building also houses the West Virginia Railroad Museum.

Jim Van Gundy, a retired professor, caver and geologist, will be doing a presentation titled **The Geology of Caves and Their Origins** at the **Appalachian Forest Discovery Center (2 Railroad Ave, Elkins, WV)** on Saturday, August 30 at 3:30 p.m. The general public, including OTR attendees, is welcome to attend.

Patty Jördan and the OTR Museum

by Joel Jacobs OldtimersReunionMuseum@gmail.com
Patty Jördan is the co-curator of the Dale Ibberson Memorial OTR Museum, along with Steve Luke. Dale was OTR Chair in 1985 and ’86 and a TRA Fellow. He amassed an extensive accumulation of caving related artifacts that became the heart of the museum’s collection. He died in 2009.

Coot & Holler: What kinds of things will a visitor to the museum find?

Patty Jördan: A visitor will find years of OTR t-shirts, name badges, guide books, wrist bands, and other items of OTR. Also a Who’s Who of OTR, which is people of OTR like Bill Biggers and Dale Ibberson and a couple of others.

C&H: Who was Bill Biggers?

PJ: He is a well-known caver with amazing stories.

C&H: Who was Dale Ibberson and what’s your connection to him?

PJ: Dale Ibberson was a man who enjoyed caving and also my dad.

C&H: Can you tell me more about Dale? Was he your biological father?

PJ: Dale was with my mom, Judi Stack, for 33 years and he loved her four children like they were his own. He was in many organizations including The Robertson Association, the National Speleological Society, Pennsylvania Cave Conservancy, the York Grotto, and many others. He was known for speaking up for what he believed in.

C&H: What sorts of things is the museum looking for in the way of donations?

PJ: We are looking for any OTR-related items.

C&H: Where is the museum located on the TRA grounds?

PJ: It is next to the Kiddie Korral.

C&H: Can you mention those wide pictures of attendees up on the walls. I forget their name.

PJ: They are called panoramas.

C&H: Does the museum accept monetary donations?

PJ: Yes, we do.

C&H: Thank you, Patty.

Fang's FUN Fax

Is this the youngest attendee from the 66th Old Timers Reunion, currently celebrating his **10th** birthday this year? **Evan Biggers**, born Tuesday, August 25, 2015, attended his 1st Old Timers Reunion registering (by his folks Crystal & Stevan) on Thursday, September 3, 2015, only 9 days later! You're nearly halfway to becoming a COOT, Evan!

Searching for a Drinkin' Buddy

Hey Friend: You stopped by the GRODY Grotto camp last year bearing a bottle of Rocky Mountain Stranahan's Original Colorado Single Malt Whiskey. The bottle is empty, but I still have your fancy shot glass. ~Harny

Thank You, Tom & Barbara Williams . . .

... for another good time at the Wine & Cheese party! ~The TRA Work-Week Krewe

Happy 50th OTR, Bill Prewitt!!!! We LOVE you!!

The **Loyalhanna Grotto will be offering a gear cleaning station** during OTR, daily Thursday through Sunday, Noon to 9 p.m. Please stop by the Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy (MAKC) booth on Vendors Row for assistance.

TRA Elections by Susan Nettles

Are you interested in running for a TRA Trustee 2-year term? Please email a good headshot to OTR.elections@gmail.com to be displayed during voting. Then find me to get your signature on candidate form. I will be at/near Cooters during these times: Friday: 4–5 p.m.; Saturday: 10:30–11:30 a.m. and 5–6 p.m. I will be able to take your picture if need be.

Crawl-In Theater (@ Dusk, Weather Permitting)

This year's film festival will feature:

Thursday: *Alice In Wonderland* – Disney's original film from 1951, 75 minutes

Friday: *How to Train Your Dragon* – DreamWorks, 98 minutes

Saturday: *How to Train Your Dragon 2*, 102 minutes

Sunday: *How to Train Your Dragon–The Hidden World*, 104 minutes

No dragons or white rabbits were harmed in the making of these films.

What's Up? (8/28/25) by Joel Jacobs

The full Corn Moon is at 2:09 p.m. on September 7, so the moon will be waxing during OTR, growing bigger and brighter each evening. You'll still need a flashlight to get around at night and it would be smart to put flagging tape on tent lines to help identify tripping spots. Solar powered dusk to dawn garden lights are another way to mark hazardous places. The Harvest Moon, the full moon closest to the Autumnal Equinox, in 2025 is on October 6 at 11:47 p.m. Next year there will be a full moon during the entirety of OTR.

Holes by Joel Jacobs

Chapter 1 – Lost

There's a golf course a few miles away from the Old Timers Reunion site where I play on occasion. I lost a ball there recently. I was playing solo and had hit a long drive on a short par four and pitched up toward the flag with an eight iron. It looked like it went in the hole for an eagle, that's 2 under par, but when I got there, the ball was nowhere to be seen. "An error in judgement," I thought. "I was too far away to actually see it go in the cup, so it must have flown over the green and landed somewhere nearby." I searched for it, but it was gone. One of those vagaries in a game which at times can be frustrating and unpredictable but sometimes highly elating.

I estimated where the flight of my ball had crossed the front of the green, dropped a new ball there, chipped up and sank the putt. It went in the hole and when I bent down to retrieve it, I saw that it was nestled up against the flagstick which was not in a normal cup, but one where the bottom of the hole was not discernable and the stick was on the side. I tried to pry the ball loose, and when I did, it slipped out of my fingers and fell into what looked like a bottomless black tube. That made it two lost balls on the same hole. I took out a tee, that's the little peg you put the ball on to drive with, and dropped it into the hole. It slid past the stick and disappeared without a sound.

I remembered that on my search for the first ball there was an area just past the fringe of the green that dropped off into a jumble of limestone rocks, thick tree roots and wild vegetation. Since there were no golfers pressing me to hurry, I began to inspect this area. An overhanging boulder about 10 yards past the green and perhaps 15 feet down from it left a dark slot beneath it. I bent down to have a look. When I did, I felt a slight breeze of cool air blowing out accompanied by a kind of humming sound far off in the distance. "Really?" I thought, "a cave under a golf course? Why not?"

To be continued . . .