

Coot & Holler Gazette



OTR Schedule

FRIDAY

9 AM–11 PM	Registration Open
10 AM–2 AM	Cooters Pub Open
10 AM–4 AM	Sauna Area Open
11 AM–4 PM	Speleo–Obstacle Course open
11 AM–4 PM	Museum Open
1–4 PM	Merch Sales Open (Merch Tent)
1 PM	The 9th Annual ROOTs & TOOTs Celebration (Cooters)
3–5 PM	1950s Society Reception (Event Tent)
4–6 PM	Chug Contest (Pavilion Area)
5–9 PM	Decon Station open
5–7 PM	Live music: ♪ Shanty Irish ♪ (Cooters)
7–8 PM	OTR Trivia Night (Pavilion)
8 PM – 2 AM	Brew Crew open (Pavilion)
Dusk (±8:30)	Movie (Crawl–In Theater)
9 PM–12 AM	Live music: ♪ Jeremy Short ♪ (Pavilion)

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

OTR 75th Anniversary Time Capsule: Share a photo, a story, a letter, or a small trinket. Take to Gate Mahal. The Gate Goddesses can answer questions. The capsule will be opened at the 100th anniversary.

ROOTs & TOOTs Celebration, Friday, 1 PM, COOTers

Since 2016, ROOTs & TOOTs have gathered together, mostly at COOTers to celebrate 40 (R.O.O.T.s-Real Original Old Timers) and 60 (T.O.O.T.s-Terrifically or Truly Original Old Timers) years of attendance at Old Timers Reunions. The 2025 OTR gathering was the largest ever, welcoming more than 60 celebrants and supporters to enjoy fellowship, a cold beverage and toasting new members into the ranks. William “Bill” Biggers and Chuck Hempel were honored with their 60-year pins. Tom and Barbara Williams provided wine tastings and snacks, and the always gracious COOTers staff supplied draft beverages. In 2025, all told, 6 TOTs, 120 ROOTs, and 315 COOTs were in attendance. This data is derived from self-reporting registrations. The gathering continues once more this year—same venue, same day & time. See you there!

Event Tent 2026: Cavers Against Sexual Harassment (CASH): Friday, 5–6 PM

Come learn from fellow grottos and caving organizations their lessons learned on how to handle those difficult situations of sexual harassment. It

TRA Membership Update by Scotty

Baker, Membership Secretary

Online applications for membership now available. Go to <https://otr.org/application-for-new-tra-membership/> to apply. The online application accepts Venmo and credit & debit card payments through PayPal. If you have family, friends, grotto members, acquaintances, or just see someone that would make a great addition to our group and they are a caver, ask them to apply. The benefits outweigh the cost—just look around while at OTR and see how much fun this group is.

If you have any questions, please contact me at membership@otr.org.

Have fun at OTR, enjoy the local caves, have a safe trip back home, and I will see you next year.

NOTE: Scotty Baker will be at Registration Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m. to answer questions about membership and address issues. Scotty can also be found with Standing Stone Grotto, along Karst Lane behind Vendor’s Row next to the Fire Lane—look for the high-flying US and Ohio State flags.

is everyone’s responsibility to ensure a safe, supportive caving culture. We will have a respectful, open discussion about sexual harassment issues in our community. What can we do together, what support do we need, what resources already exist. Learn more about [CASH](#) here.

The Fourth Annual OTR Bullock Distillery Free Bourbon

Tasting by Nick@Nite aka Nick Schaer
Friday, September 4th, 6:30 PM in the OTR Party Section along the back road

OTR Trivia Night! Friday, 7 PM

Bring your phone and your friends to the Pavilion to show off your vast knowledge of all things OTR! If you don’t know the answer, you’ll at least learn something new about how OTR came to be the unforgettable event we all know and love! For example, do you know when the new Pavilion was built? Do you know when the DooDah Parade started?

A Toast to OTR Fellow Nigel Willis: Friday, 7:30–8:30 PM at Cooter's Pub

Please join the Willis Family and Red Fox Den at Cooters Pub from 7:30–8:30 PM as we celebrate the life of Nigel Willis. First round is on the family; after that, use your own Cooters card.

Lost and Found in Registration: Stop by Lost and Found in Registration if you are missing some items. Including the last chance to claim items left from last year. ~Dr. Kat

Sign up with **Trevor Finn, the DooDah Dude**, to join in the fun that is the DooDah Parade. His edress is DooDahOTR@outlook.com.

BEFORE YOU GO CAVING: Fill out a CAVER ALERT INFORMATION SHEET (CAIS).

“Benjamins? Cooters after Shanty Irish. Wear white. Drink Guinness.”

Crawl-In Theater (@ Dusk, Weather Permitting)

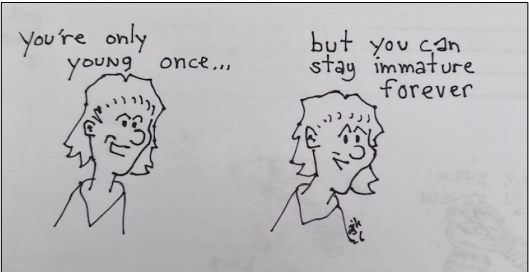
This year’s film festival will feature: **Friday:** The Lion King; **Saturday:** The Goonies **Sunday:** Over the Hedge
The **Kiddie Korral** is seeking “new blood” to learn and ultimately become the audio/visual folks who would show the films at the Kiddie Korral and join the KK team! If interested, please visit the Dead Puppies Grotto camp.

Welcome to OTR! Did you bring an instrument to OTR this year? New and old friends welcome at **Buzzzzzz City’s Friday night jam at 9:30 p.m.**
DON'T BE BASHFUL! ALL ARE WELCOME!

Please disregard that the documentary the guys are making will be sole property of TRA. A revised *Coot & Holler* will be posted online.

MYSTERY MISSING RADIO—\$100 REWARD!! Lost last year. Please contact TRA Radio Krewe Chief Gene Harrison, 703-585-4565

Please take camp trash to dumpsters. ~Denny & Dave



Happy Birthday to the sexiest twins: Troy and Andy.

Be aware: Bat Boy may make an appearance.

Textile Sauna volunteers, look in your email. Textile Sauna website is now live!

Did you miss out on those AWESOME 75th Anniversary mugs this year? Well- exciting news for ya. First Aide is having a raffle for TWO of them! Stop by First Aide and buy a chance or two. Drawing will be at Band Aide by BuZzzzz City on Sunday night at the Pavilion! Must be present to win-unable to provide shipping.

CaveSim needs your help! The CaveSim team educates over 20,000 kids a year at 100 days of educational programs for the public, typically in 8–12 states. The CaveSim truck has 321,000 miles on it and a new truck is needed. You can help out at www.cavesim.com/support.

What’s Up? (9/4/2026) by Joel Jacobs

The circumpolar constellation Ursa Major, which never sets, has been called a bear by many observers: Greeks like Homer (“Keep the bear on the right,” Matt Damon shouted sailing directions as Ulysses in the recent Christopher Nolan-directed movie, *The Odyssey*.) and Aristotle, the Iroquois and the Algonquin tribes of North America, and even poets like Bryant, (“The Bear that sees star setting after star in the blue brine, descends not to the deep.”) and Tennyson, who wrote, “I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel’d thro’ a great arc his seven slow suns.” The long tails that are part of this huge figure are the three stars of the handle of the Big Dipper and are said to have been stretched by Zeus when he hurled them into the night sky. Another legend calls them bear hunters.

A Diamond Story by Joel Jacobs; **Chapter 2: 20K**

The box was about the size of a fast-food hamburger container. It hinged open. Inside was an inch and a half-thick stack of the left side of one hundred dollar bills. Except for a tiny bit of his left eye and cheek, the full face of Benjamin Franklin stared back at me as if to say, “Yours for the taking. Now, find the other halves.”

I pulled out the wad of gray/green paper. Beneath it was a Post-it note on which someone had scribbled, “The rest? Find me at OTR.”

Melissa and I were in limestone rich Thailand on a caving vacation. Friends had hooked us up with some Thai cavers. We were visiting our third cave together. They had no idea what the note meant, but Mel and I understood part of it.

“What is OTR?” asked Boonsanong.

“It stands for Old Timers Reunion,” I answered. “It’s a caving event that takes place every year during America’s Labor Day weekend, which is the first Monday in September. Over a thousand cavers get together to celebrate our interest in caving not just as a sport, but as an intellectual and scientific endeavor.”

Melissa clarified it, “Basically, it’s a 4-day caver party.”

“But what does all that money have to do with it?”

“I have no idea,” answered Melissa. “Art, do you?”

“Nuh, none at all,” I stammered, “but this is serious money, maybe \$20,000. This note was meant for us to read, not for someone else. Somebody knew we would be caving here, probably an American, who knew that we would be curious and that we would find it. Are you guys aware of anyone else who caved here?”

Sumalee answered, “This is a popular cave because it’s very pretty. Many people come here to see the decorations. We could ask our friends, if they knew who was here.”

“That could help,” volunteered Melissa, “but since it’s so much money, it might be dangerous to ask too many questions.”

“Yeah,” I agreed. “I think you should not get involved in something like this. We go to OTR every year, so Melissa and I will take the box and its contents with us when we go this year and try to figure this out.”

“What can you buy for \$20,000?” asked Melissa.

Everybody offered something: Boonsanong, “A small, used car”; Dang, “Drugs”; Suntadt, “Computer equipment”; Sumalee, “A black pearl neckless and earrings”; Mel, “Right! Jewelry, precious stones, like a whopping big diamond.”

To be continued . . .