

Coot & Holler Gazette

Vol. 25, No. 3, Saturday, September 5, 2026

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



OTR Schedule

SATURDAY

8 AM	OTR 5K Run/Walk (meet at Front Gate at 7:30 AM)
9 AM–9 PM	Registration Open
9 AM–4 PM	Vertical & Cable Ladder Contests (Contest Field)
9:30	Long–Range Planning Committee (Location TBD)
10 AM–2 AM	Cooters Pub Open
10 AM–4 AM	Sauna Area Open
10 AM–12 PM	Textile–only time at the Sauna
11 AM–4 PM	Museum Open
11 AM–4 PM	OTR Caving Festival (Pavilion & Contest Field)
11 AM–4 PM	Speleo–Obstacle Course open
11 AM–4 PM	Carbide Lamp, OTR Trivia, Poster, Chug, and Sleeping Bag Contests (Pavilion Area)
11 AM–4 PM	Maggot Races (behind Pavilion)
11 AM	‘Batman the Magician’ (Pavilion)
12 noon	The 9th Annual Bubbles Fun Run (meet at Lutz Rock Memorial Garden)
12 noon	Children’s Activities (Pavilion)
12–4 PM	Brew Crew open (Pavilion)
12–4 PM	Merch Sales Open (Pavilion)
12:30 PM	The Raunchy River Jam (River Stage)
12:30–3:30 PM	Live music: ♪ Tim White & JB Stalnaker ♪ (Pavilion)
1–2 PM	TRA Town Hall Meeting (near Bonfire)
5–9 PM	Decon Station open
5:30 PM	Staging for The Doo–Dah Parade (meet at Lutz Rock Memorial Garden)
6 PM	The 38th Annual Doo–Dah Parade
7 PM	Photo Booth (Pavilion)
7:30–9:30 PM	Live music: ♪ Not Reely Dan ♪ (Pavilion)
8 PM–2 AM	Brew Crew open (Pavilion)
Dusk (±8:30)	Movie (Crawl–In Theater)
9:45 PM	Fireworks
10:30 PM–12:30 AM	Live music: ♪ Queen City Funk and Soul ♪ (Pavilion)

75th OTR Aerial Photo *Sunday, 12:30 PM at Lutz Rock Memorial Garden*

We last assembled for a formation-style aerial photo at the 50th reunion in 1999. Here’s your opportunity to be a part of the next generation of OTR photographic history! Meet at the Lutz Rock Memorial Garden on **Sunday at 12:30 PM** sharp to take your place in the “75th OTR” formation that will be captured from overhead! Please arrive on time, so that we can get the photo staged and captured expeditiously and let you all move on to your Sunday afternoon fun at the River Party!

PUTT PUTT GOLF TOURNAMENT

TOURNAMENT BEGINS
FRIDAY
AT 1PM
AT HOLE #1
AT ELVISGROTTO

TOURNAMENT RUNS
UNTIL 4PM
ON SATURDAY

AT 5PM SATURDAY
THE TOP 5 SCORERS
WILL FACE OFF IN
A FULL ROUND!
SPECTATORS FOR THE
FINAL ROUND ARE ENCOURAGED!

NO PUTTER?
NO BALLS?
NO PROBLEM!
PUTTERS AND BALLS
WILL BE PROVIDED
AT HOLES.

PRIZE FOR
THE CHAMPION!

A PRIZE FOR
THE BEST HOLE!

IS YOUR GROTTO
SPONSORING
A HOLE?

Please
REGISTER
AT ELVISGROTTO
★ BY NOON ON FRIDAY ★

Elvis Grotto goes golfing and takes OTR with them. To join in the fun, go to Elvis Grotto's camp during the hours listed in today's schedule.

TRA MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY 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.

Did you miss out on those AWESOME 75th Anniversary steins 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.

Greetings! Joe and I will not be at OTR this year. As some of you may already know, Joe was involved in a serious accident on November 1, 2025, which left him partially paralyzed and reliant on a wheelchair. Despite the challenges he faces, Joe has been working tirelessly to regain his strength and independence. Our journey together began 43 years ago at Alpine Shores where we met in the middle of the Cheat River, and it has been quite a remarkable ride to the present day. We will miss seeing our caving friends, but we encourage you all to enjoy and raise a glass in celebration. Best foot forward. ~Love, Joe and Sue

Added to Event Tent: Saturday at 5 PM: Philip Balister will talk about using a drone for cave prospecting on the Loser Plateau in in Austria. Geotiffs suitable for GIS and 3d models showing potential cave entrances were created from photos taken with a consumer grade drone.

So, you may be wondering about the origins of “Nuke the Gay Baby Whales,” and “Die Yuppie Scum,” and even “The Older I Get, the Better I Was.” Credit Vic Ward, chair of the 50th OTR and the following year, 2000. RIP, You Ol’ Brit!!

New Decal in Town: The 3rd edition of the wildly popular oval OTR sticker makes its shiny debut in honor of the 75th Annual Diamond Reunion. Designed by talented graphic magician Amanda Willis, you'll spot it on vehicles, golf carts, notebooks, computers, and plastered on message boards throughout TRA's landscape. Visit Fang at the G.R.O.D.Y. campsite on the Sauna Road for your FREE personal decal.

The gardens near the showers are beautiful! Kudos to the gardeners!

IF YOU DIE, WE SPLIT YOUR GEAR. Most of you know my Kimmie died a few years ago and being the caver that she was, she would want her stuff split among her fellow caver ladies . . . so Saturday after 12 noon, Kimmie’s entire wardrobe (9 closets and 8 dressers) will be at the Wildside campsite (Margaritaville) for all the caver ladies to split up. This is not for people to take home for other people or to sell. Clothing ranging from garden wear to professional attire, mostly size med and large, some small, and some xl. Mostly size 7 shoes. Please come by and see if there is anything you'd like. ~Brian

BEFORE YOU GO CAVING, fill out a CAVER ALERT INFORMATION SHEET (CAIS)

The Chair and Ice Czar thank Hunter Smith from the Met Grotto for his help.

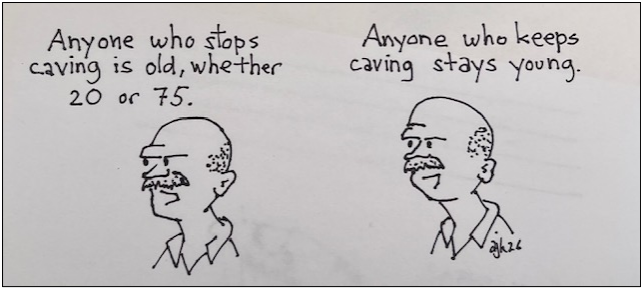
Please join your fellow attendees in leaving your mark by signing this year's OTR plaque at bon fire corner of the pavilion.

Please take your camp trash to the dumpsters. ~Dave & Denny

Reminder: OTR Fermenters Forum: Sunday 12:00 noon at the Event tent. Come on down to see what we are all about. Bring 2 Beers, Meads, Wines that are homemade, to share with the group. No problem if you don't have anything to share!

Crawl-In Theater (@ Dusk, Weather Permitting)
This year’s film festival will feature:
Saturday: The Goonies
Sunday: Over the Hedge

Welcome, Lochlan, to your 1st OTR!



What’s Up? (9/5/2026) by Joel Jacobs

The Great Bear constellation contains the asterism that we call the Big Dipper. The artist Vincent Van Gogh painted “Starry Night Over the Rhône” in 1888, which depicts all seven stars and the dramatic, energy-filled “The Starry Night” in 1889. He was so enraptured by it that he wrote, “. . . the picture comes to me as in a dream.” If you extend an imaginary line from the two stars at the end of the ladle part of the configuration, Merak to Dubhe, called the pointer stars, you find the North Star, Polaris, upon which the entire night sky rotates. Polaris is the brightest star in the constellation Ursa Minor and is about 430 light years from Earth.

A Diamond Story by Joel Jacobs; **Chapter 3: OTR**

Our Thai caving trip got us lots of good pictures, some new friends, and a mystery to unravel. We talked about it on the flight home.
“So, Art, how do we find whoever this is?” asked Melissa.
“We need to catch their attention.”
“How do we do that?” she asked.
“Place a blurb in the *Coot & Holler*.”
We did. It read, “Benjamins? Cooters after Shanty Irish. Wear white. Drink Guinness.”
Melissa and I put on our purple logo shirts from the 2025 reunion and enjoyed the dulcet tones and sweet harmonies of the Gaelic folk songs. We scanned the crowd and noticed a few white tees. When the music was over, we looked to see who was left. It couldn’t have been more obvious. A tall, rugged-looking fellow wearing a white t-shirt and a

ball cap with a \$100 note pinned above the bill was drinking from a clear, 16 oz. cup. The beverage was black. His name tag read “Brody.”

I sauntered over to him, Melissa at my heels. “Do you always wear your money on your hat?” I asked.

“Only when I’m responding to a *Coot & Holler* message about the other half of my grubstake. Is that you?”

“That’s us,” interjected Melissa. “We found it in a cave in Thailand, read the note, and brought it with us to Old Timers.”

“You don’t have it on you, do you?” he asked.

“You kidding? It’s safe, though. Why don’t you tell us about it?”

He motioned toward a table and said, “Let’s sit,” and while we took our seats he continued, “It’s 50% of my payment for transporting a black market, royal-blue diamond. I have the other half. I cut the hundreds in half so that no one could steal all of them because I was sure I would be followed, maybe mugged. I felt certain that no one would attempt to take just my half. That they would wait till the halves were together again.

“How did you get involved in this?’ I asked.

“Long story short—I went to a jewelry store in Bangkok to buy a star sapphire to replace one that my father lost. It fell out of its setting while he was playing golf. He and his foursome scoured the course for it but they never found it. The clerk behind the counter whispered in my ear that, if I met him at the market across the street, he could get me a better price than in the store. When he arrived, he opened a handkerchief and in it was a star sapphire and a magnificent, big, blue diamond. I bought the sapphire for a few hundred baht. Then, he made me an offer. For \$10,000 he asked me to smuggle the diamond into the U.S.”

To be continued . . .
