



The Region Record

Vol. XXI No. 3 Summer 2008

Landowner Liability Issues

by John Pearson

In early February 2008, Bob Handley and I decided to try and update the landowner liability law for the State of West Virginia. I researched which section of the law pertained to landowner liability. In many states, this law is referred to as "The Sportsman Law." In West Virginia it is found under Chapter 19, "Agriculture," Article 25 "Limiting Liability of Landowners." The purpose of this article is to encourage landowners to make their property available to the public for recreational purposes by limiting their liability for injury to persons entering their property.

The West Virginia Cave Law specifically states that the owner of a cave is not liable for injuries sustained by any person using the cave if no charge has been made for the use of the cave. It doesn't address above-ground activities on a cave property. That comes under Chapter 19, Article 25.

Going over Chapter 19 Article 25, one finally comes to a section of definitions of recreational activities that are included for protection: ATVs, horseback riding, winter sports—you name it and it is listed under the definitions, except caving. Bob Handley and I discussed whether we should request that there be legislation introduced to include caving in the definitions under 19-25-5. We decided that

Bob could act as president of West Virginia Cave Conservancy (WVCC) without prior board approval on the matter. We had some deadlines to meet, though. The last day legislation could be introduced to the state Senate was February 18, 2008 and the last day it could be introduced in the House of Delegates was February 22, 2008. It was already February 6, 2008. As Bubble Cave LLC would benefit from this legislative amendment as well as WVCC, I worked on letters for both entities to be sent to members of the legislative branch where our two conservancies held properties, specifically in Greenbrier, Berkeley, and Mineral Counties.

Bob took my draft of the WVCC letter and beefed it up. I then sent drafts to Cliff Lindsay and Jeff Bray for their comments. They were also working on the liability issues for the conservancy, so we wanted to keep them in the loop. I also sent a draft to J. C. Fisher for his comment on Bubble Cave's behalf. I managed to get all the Bubble letters printed out, signed and mailed out on Monday, February 11th. Bob came had come by and signed the WVCC letters that previous Saturday and took them to be mailed off the same day.

We both received written responses from some of the legislators whom we had written. Senator Jesse O. Guills of Greenbrier County sent me an e-mail on Thursday, February 14th that he had received my letter and stated

that the request was reasonable and appeared to be something property owners, as well as insurance carriers, would readily support. He stated that it was quite unlikely that it would be acted upon this legislative session, but we would have an early jump in getting it passed in the next session.

WVCC and Bubble Cave had taken the first steps in beefing up the landowner liability law to include caving. On February 18, 2008, West Virginia House Bill 4648 was introduced to the West Virginia legislature by a Greenbrier County legislator. Senator Guills may not have had time to act, but it appears his support got Delegate Thomas W. Campbell to introduce the bill. Also on that day, Senator Jon Blair Hunter of the 14th District (Monongalia County) introduced Senate Bill 723 to the legislature. Both bills were in the Judicial Review stages when the March 8th deadline for legislation passed. We made the docket this legislative session, but unfortunately both bills died in committee. We didn't succeed this time, but we are willing to continue to pursue the matter in future legislative sessions until we succeed.

We specifically requested the following for inclusion in Chapter 19, Article 25, Paragraph 5(5) to read:

(5) "Recreational purposes" includes, but shall not be limited to, any one or any combination of the following noncommercial recreational activities: Hunting, fishing,

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The *Region Record*

The *Region Record* is the quarterly publication of the Virginia Region of the National Speleological Society. Any articles, announcements, or other materials of general interest to cavers in the Region are welcome. **Send all material to Bob Hoke (6304 Kaybro St., Laurel, MD 20707 (301)725-5877, e-mail editor@varegion.org).** Electronic submissions (e-mail or disk) are encouraged, but any form of input is welcome. Non-copyrighted material contained in the *Region Record* may be reprinted by organizations that are affiliated with the VAR or the NSS, provided that proper credit is given to the *Record* and the author. The opinions expressed herein are those of the individual author, and do not necessarily reflect those of the editors, the VAR, the NSS, or their internal organizations.

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Region Record Subscriptions

- New NSS members in the Region receive two complimentary copies of the *Region Record*.
- Current NSS members moving into the Region from elsewhere receive two complimentary copies. Current NSS members who move within the Region get no freebies.
- When a subscription is going to expire the last issue will be stamped "Time to Renew." No renewal notice is sent.
- When a person attends a VAR meeting he/she is automatically added to the list to receive the next four issues. If he/she is already on the list, four additional issues are added to the subscription.
- When multiple people live at the same address only one copy of each issue will be sent to the address unless a box requesting individual issues is checked on the VAR registration form or a request is sent to the Circulation Manager.

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Regional Calendar

July 17-21 **Weeklong NCRC Cave Rescue Class** in Rockingham County, VA. More info at www.er-ncrc.org.
 Sep. 19-21 **Fall VAR meeting** near Covington, VA, hosted by the Blue Ridge and James River Grottos. More info in this issue.

Aug. 11-15 **2008 NSS Convention** in Lake City, Florida (west of Jacksonville).

Aug. 15 Deadline for submitting material for the Fall issue of the *Region Record*.

Aug. 28 - Sep. 1 **Old Timers Reunion**. Join about 2,000 other cavers for 5 days of partying and (maybe) a little caving. You must be a TRA member to attend. See www.otr.org for info. (See additional info in this issue)

Sep. 18-21 **Help construct a bat-friendly gate for Trout Cave**. More info in this issue.

List Your Event Here

If you have a caving event that is of regional interest please send information to the Editors listed above so it can be included in the calendar.

Liability

(continued from page 1)

swimming, boating, camping, picnicking, hiking, pleasure driving, motorcycle or all-terrain vehicle riding, bicycling, horseback riding, nature study, water skiing, winter sports, caving and visiting, viewing or enjoying historical, archaeological, scenic or scientific sites or otherwise using land for purposes of the user.”

This is exactly how both bills were introduced. So, if you are a West Virginia resident, I urge you to send an email to your Delegates and Senators in support of these two bills. They love hearing from their constituents. To find where to send your support of HB 4648 and SB723, go to <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Senate1/members/senmemview.cfm>. If you don't know what district you are represented by, use the easy Search Districts by ZIP code function on the right side of the Web site.

Fall 2008 VAR September 19-21

Sponsors: Blue Ridge and James River Grottos

Place: Covington Moose Lodge Field, Covington, Virginia.

Latitude and Longitude: 37.807817 and -80.034156.

Directions from Southern Virginia: Take I-81 north to exit 150B (Troutville-Daleville Exit); go north on US-220 to I-64. Take I-64 west through Covington to Exit 10 (the Humpback Bridge); turn right onto US-60, and go 1.8 miles to Moose Park Road; turn left onto Moose Park Road and follow it to the end.

Directions from Northern Virginia: Take I-81 south to I-64; take I-64 west through Covington to Exit 10 (Humpback Bridge); turn right onto US-60, and go 1.8 miles to Moose Park Road; and turn left onto Moose Park Road and follow it to the end.

Directions from West Virginia: Take I-64 east to Exit 10 in Virginia; turn left (back under I-64) onto US-60 and go two miles to Moose Park Road; and turn left onto Moose Park Road and follow it to the end.

Campground: Our campsite is about 12 acres in size. It is a flat, grassy, open field. Dunlap Creek runs along one side of the property, which has a few trees. Areas will be reserved for vendors and other activities, and the vendors will have electricity. There will be no RV hookups. Bathrooms are available, as well as portable toilets located throughout the site. No showers will be available. The site is convenient to many caves in Virginia and West Virginia, as well as many other activities and many motels, gas, restaurants, and stores.

Activities: Squeeze "Guillotine Trough" squeeze box (thanks to Charles Kahn), tree climbing (thanks to Paul Stern and Bob Wray), and world-class caving (both led and self-led trips in Virginia and West Virginia). Cave trip sign-up sheets will be available through pre-registration.

Entertainment: Friday and Saturday night DJ (Thanks to John Fox), bonfire (weather permitting), kiddie playground, and three horseshoe pits (located near playground).

Saturday Night Speaker: Phil Lucas will speak on the "The benefits and results of digging for caves." There will be an emphasis on conservation, since each brand-new cave is "pristine," and it is important to keep it that way.

Saturday Food: Wine, beer, and sodas Saturday night. No underage

drinking allowed—you will not be served without a name tag. The Saturday night dinner will be provided by the Moose Lodge, and served in the Moose Lodge Hall at 6:30 PM. You must have a dinner ticket to be served. No vegetarian meal will be available. The dinner will include: ham, chicken, cole slaw, potato salad, green beans, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, bread, dessert, tea, and lemonade.

Sunday Food: A Sunday-morning all-you-can-eat pancake and sausage breakfast will be provided by the Front Royal Grotto. This will be from 8 AM to 10 AM, or until the pancakes run out. The cost is \$4 for adults and \$2 for children.

Caving: Caving trips will be provided to Catawba Murder Hole, Crossroads (Virginia), Culverson Creek, Grapevine, Island Ford, Lockridge Aqua, Marshalls, McClungs (Lightener Entrance), New Castle Murder Hole, Norman Cave, Organ Cave (Lipps Entrance), Paxtons Cave, Pocahontas Poor Farm, Porters Cave, Scott Hollow Cave (Double Waterfall), and Scott Hollow Cave (The Omega Loop).

NOTICE: The Virginia Region is requesting that all cave gear be washed prior to attending this event, due to the possibility of spreading the White-Nose Syndrome to the area.

Cost and Pre-registration: The cost is \$27 for adults 16 years old and older, \$17 for an adult without a meal, \$15 for children, and \$13 for children without a meal. A pre-registration form is in this issue. Please be sure to sign the waiver statement and indicate your first three choices for led caving trips. The deadline for the pre-registration price is September 2. and prices are \$3 per person higher after that date. A copy of the pre-registration form can also be found by visiting: www.varfall2008.com.

VAR Outstanding Service Award Nominations

By Meredith Hall Johnson

Start thinking about who you know around the Region who deserves a bit of extra recognition for all he or she has done for us, caves, and caving. Nominations for the annual VAR Outstanding Service Award are being taken now. Be sure to include a paragraph or two with examples of why this person deserves this award. Think about past winners; among them, Don Anderson, Evelyn Bradshaw, John Fox, Jim Hixson, John Holsinger, Karen Kastning, Phil Lucas, and Andy Reeder. This is fewer than half of the recipients since 1999. You can find the rest listed on the VAR Web site at <http://varegion.org/var/awards/serviceawards.shtml>. We are talking the cream of the VAR caver crop here, folks. But there are more like them out there. You just have to drop me an e-mail and their names will be considered for this year's award. The deadline is August 22, 2008. We can give up to three awards each year and the presentation is made at the Fall VAR.

Thanks!

Help Wanted!

by Meredith Hall Johnson

If you have photographs or trip reports of any West Virginia Cave Conservancy-owned, -managed, or -leased caves (see wvcc.net for the list), please send ASAP to Meredith Hall Johnson at merecaver@yahoo.com for possible inclusion in the next issue of the WVCC newsletter, *The Open Cave*. Thanks!

Volunteers Needed! Help Construct a Bat-Friendly Gate at Trout Cave

September 18-21

by David West
Manager, John Guilday Caves Nature Preserve

Trout Cave was historically the second largest Indiana bat hibernaculum in the state and populations of this species in the cave have recently increased significantly. In order to protect and continue to restore populations of this federally listed species, the entrances will be gated during the weekend of September 20th, which happens to coincide with the Fall VAR meeting in Covington, Virginia. The gate has been fully funded, primarily by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with additional contributions coming from the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, Bat Conservation International, and of course, the National Speleological Society. After the gate is installed, the cave will be open for recreational and educational use seasonally from the 15th of April through Labor Day.

Volunteers are needed for September 18-21. Some prep work will occur on the 18th and 19th. The greatest need for volunteers will be on Saturday the 20th, with a continuing need on Sunday the 21st to wrap things up. Arrangements to provide local camping and food for volunteers are underway. Every effort to minimize damage to the hillside will be made, and plantings or other mitigation are also planned. Safety will of course be a major consideration. Those planning to assist should contact me at d270@bellatlantic.net.

The decision to gate the cave was made in accordance with the Cave Preserves' previously established management guidelines and will al-

low the area to be managed in a way that will maintain the Preserves' goals to protect and encourage the habitats and populations of endangered species while optimizing cave access. We recognize that the gating and winter closure are not universally supported, but are convinced that under the current conditions, this is the right thing to do. The Virginia Region has a long history of supporting the John Guilday Caves Nature Preserve's Management Committee, and we trust that support will continue.

Thank you.

Why Gate Trout Cave?

by Bob Hoke

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Services have asked the National Speleological Society to allow the construction of a gate at the entrance to Trout Cave (Pendleton County, WV). The gate will allow the effective closure of the cave in the winter and will (hopefully) facilitate the recovery of the cave's small, but growing, hibernating colony of endangered Indiana bats (*Myotis sodalis*).

This article provides some historical background for the gating request and discusses the benefits of having an enforceable winter closure of the cave.

The documented population of hibernating Indiana bats in Trout Cave has varied over the years:

- The cave was extensively mined for saltpeter during the American Civil War. With all the activity and torch smoke it is very likely that any bats were chased out and the postwar population had to rebuild from zero. There are no

known records of prewar population counts.

- Apparently the population did recover over the next 75 years because in 1941 an NSS report estimated that the cave held at least 1,000 Indiana bats in several clusters.
- There are reports of banding 238 Indianas in Trout in 1951, 232 in 1952, and 565 in 1953. These bats were seen in the main passage, about 500–600 feet inside the entrance.
- In 1955–57 there were reports of several clusters of Indiana bats and an estimated population of at least 1,000 Indianas.
- By 1960 the Indiana population had dropped to five. In 1961 there were 13 and by 1965 there were none.
- When the NSS purchased Trout Cave in 1983 there were 21 Indianas, mostly located in a small side passage not far inside the entrance.
- From 1983 through 2005 there were bi-annual bat counts and the

population of Indianas varied from 2 to 24 individuals.

- In 2005 the population suddenly jumped to 96. In 2006 it was 93 and in 2007 it increased to 158 individuals (see the graph below). In addition, the number of Indianas in the main passage has increased from a maximum of 12 in the 1983–2003 period to 35 in 2007.

Why did the bats decline so precipitously by 1960? There is probably no way to know for sure, but here are some possible reasons:

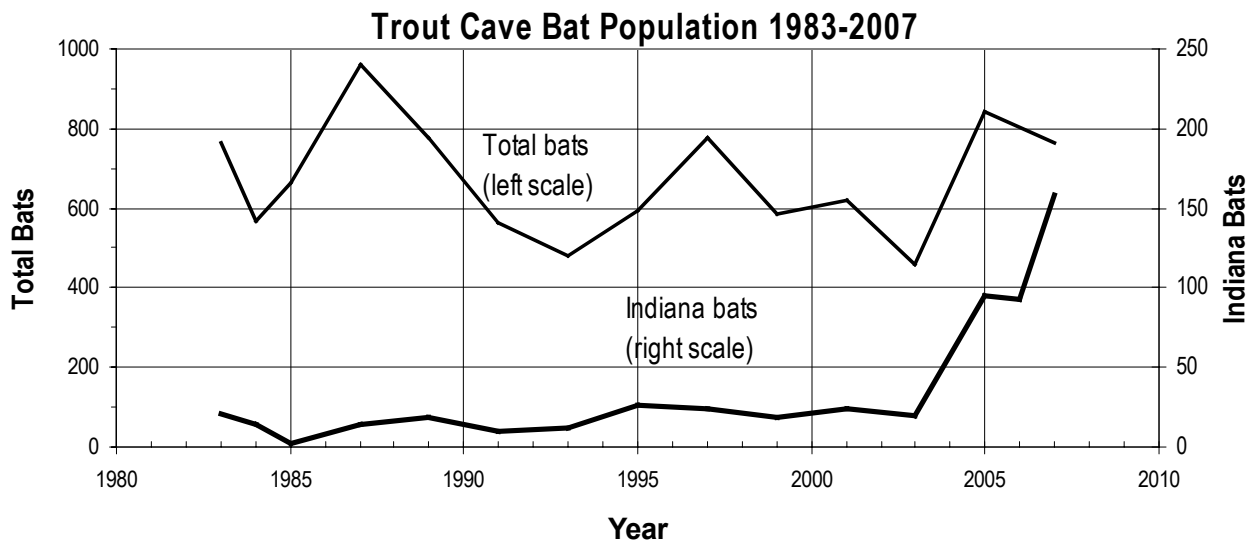
- Caver disturbance (noise, light, smoke, vandalism, etc.).
- Loss of summer habitat to timbering and farming.
- Excessive banding of large numbers of bats in the 1940s and early 1950s.
- DDT and other pesticides killing the food supply or affecting reproduction.
- Environmental changes in the cave (there are undocumented ru-

mors of passages being closed in the 1960s).

Clearly something changed around 2005 to make the cave more attractive to bats. There are various theories:

- Another hibernation cave became unusable and the increase in Trout is the refugees.
- Something has changed in the cave to make the habitat more desirable.
- Reduced use of carbide and human smoking means fewer noxious fumes to disturb hibernation.
- The general bat population in West Virginia is doing reasonably well and Trout is just seeing its normal share of the state's bats.
- Bats like cavers and find that sharing their cave has some sort of benefits.

Several cavers have noted that it looks like the bats have become accustomed to the presence of cavers and they say there is no need to close the cave. Superficially this sounds like a good reason to leave



This graph shows the dramatic increase in the Indiana bat population in Trout Cave (lower line) compared to the total number of bats in the cave (upper line). Clearly something has changed since 2004 to make Trout Cave more desirable. It is hoped that gating the cave and closing it in the winter will allow an increased recovery of the bat population to documented historic levels of at least 1,000 individuals.

the cave open. However, unlike the Pipistrelle bat, Indiana bats are not sound sleepers. They are very sensitive to disturbance and will awaken if disturbed. It doesn't take many disturbances for them to use up their stored body fat and not survive the winter. An effective winter closure is the only way to insure that the bats are not disturbed. Needless to say, it is hoped that by eliminating human disturbance in the winter the cave's population of hibernating Indiana bats will continue to increase and perhaps exceed the historic levels.

A gate is needed to allow an effective closure. Trout Cave may be the most popular wild cave in West Virginia. Most of the visitors are not from the organized caving community and there is no way to enforce a winter closure without a bat-safe gate on the cave. When a group drives several hours to visit the cave it is unlikely that they will be dissuaded by signs saying the cave is closed. A gate will let them know that the closure is real. There are two other caves on the same hillside and the Trout visitors can easily go to them instead.

The WVDNR and USFWS realize that Trout Cave is a major recreation resource and they don't plan to request that it be closed in the summer. Their request for funding for the gate states:

"Trout Cave is part of the NSS's John Guilday Caves Nature Preserve. This area is routinely used to educate school and scout groups about responsible recreational caving techniques, as well as cave conservation and management issues. It is anticipated that this use would still continue during the portions of the year that endangered bats would not be present in the cave."

In summary, Trout Cave has been documented as having a significant historic population of endangered Indiana bats. Effectively closing

the cave in the winter, which requires that the cave be gated, has the potential to allow recovery of this population and make Trout again the second most significant Indiana hibernation site in West Virginia.

References: Copies of early bat counts and other source documents are available on the DC Grotto's Web site at www.caves.org/grotto/dcg/bat-counts/bat-counts.html.

Stay Warm at OTR!

by Meredith Hall Johnson

The Battlefield Area Troglodyte Society (BATS Grotto) is selling bundles of wood again at this year's OTR.

Bundles will consist of 5 or 6 logs and sell for \$5 each. Any profits will be divided between the OTR Sauna Committee and the West Virginia Cave Conservancy. Last year we made a whopping \$18 profit, so each group got the huge sum of \$9! Help BATS make a bit more money for the Sauna Committee (you know you benefit!) and WVCC (you benefit here too).

Come by the BATS Camp and buy a bundle or three! Keep your grotto campsite warm this year!!

Reported West Virginia Caves

by Bill Balfour

As of April 2008, by county:

Barbour	7
Berkeley	244
Doddridge	1

Greenbrier	1,329
Grant	74
Hampshire	14
Hardy	23
Jefferson	108
Kanawha	1
Marion	3
Mercer	162
Mineral	6
Monroe	423
Monongalia	41
Morgan	2
Nicholas	3
Ohio	19
Pendleton	397
Pocahontas	608
Preston	97
Raleigh	5
Randolph	534
Summers	15
Tucker	247
Upshur	2
Wetzel	2
Total	4,367

[Reprinted from The West Virginia Caver, Vol. 28, No. 3, June, 2008]

WVCC Member Appreciation Party

by Meredith Hall Johnson

Friday evening of OTR, the West Virginia Cave Conservancy invites current and future members to a wine and cheese party. Starting at 6 p.m. and lasting until the wine and cheese are gone, the party will be held at the WVCC Booth on Vendor Row.

Come see what the WVCC has been doing this past year. Come meet the Directors. Come renew your membership or join this great group in saving caves.

FALL VAR 2008 REGISTRATION FORM

SEPTEMBER 19-21, 2008
COVINGTON MOOSE LODGE FIELD
COVINGTON, VA

HOSTED BY BLUE RIDGE GROTTO and JAMES RIVER GROTTO

ATTENTION: THE VAR HAS REQUESTED THAT ALL CAVE GEAR BE WASHED PRIOR TO
ATTENDING THIS VAR DUE TO THE WHITE-NOSED SYNDROME IN BATS

Use pre-registration prices **only** if your form is **postmarked on or before September 2, 2008**. Please print legibly.

Name _____

Others you are paying for _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

Grotto/Organization _____

VAR FEES:

Pre-registration fees through September 2, 2008 (we will use the postmark). Pre-registration will allow for cave trip sign up.

Adult w/meal (16+ years): **\$27.00** X _____ = \$ _____

Adult without meal: **\$17.00** X _____ = \$ _____

Children w/meal (5 – 15 years): **\$23.00** X _____ = \$ _____

Children without meal: **\$13.00** X _____ = \$ _____

Babies (0 – 4 years): **Free**

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Cost after September 2, 2008, add \$3.00 per person.

Please send completed & signed form along with a check made payable to Blue Ridge Grotto to:

Fall VAR 2008

c/o Susan Burr

4544 Cordell Dr. SW

Roanoke, VA 24018

Led cave trip sign up (List 3 in order of preference): We will attempt to accommodate your first choice.

This is for cavers who pre-register only.

1. _____

2. _____ 3. _____

I understand that caving and event participation involves hazards and risks that carry the potential for serious or fatal injury. I release all claims against the Blue Ridge Grotto, James River Grotto, the event organizers, staff and the Covington Moose Lodge, for any injury, damage, or death which may occur to myself or my family participants.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



The Coot & Holler Gazette

Vol.9 #1

Special Edition

May 2008

59th annual Old Timers Information Update

The Old Timers Reunion, (OTR) will start at noon on Thursday, August 28, 2008 and close at noon on Monday, September 1, 2008, at The Robertson Association (TRA) camp. This Year's Theme is "Pirates of the Carabiner." Blackjack, our Pirate bat says, "OTRRRRRRRRRRRR is great!"

It just seems like yesterday that we were setting up for OTR 2007 and now here we are preparing for OTR 2008. This year will be an exciting OTR, as once again we kick things up several notches with six great bands and a fun filled Pirate weekend. Also returning will be our Las Vegas style charity, (to benefit your favorite cave conservancy) gaming night at Club Grotto, the 3rd annual benefit Texas Hold-em tournament and an "Anything that Floats" boat race."

Blackjack Tobias Robertson, the 2006 OTR logo, mascot & bat, will return this year. Blackjack went on a little trip to the Caribbean this past year and has returned with a few exciting activities for your enjoyment. So bring your best pirate outfits and prepare to "surrender the booty."
Tim Brown, 2008 OTR Chair

TRA membership or Guest of TRA Member Required to Attend OTR

OTR attendees must be TRA members, and/or be sponsored by a TRA member or be a member of a pre-approved caving group. For details, visit www.otr.org, or send a SASE to Scott Baker, TRA membership secretary, at 5470 Logan-Thorville Road NE, Rushville, Ohio 43150, 740-536-7074, smcavin@sbcglobal.net. Membership is \$10. All membership paperwork is due July 31, 2008. TRA memberships are NOT available during OTR. The deadline is firm.

Registration is open around the clock from noon Thursday to midnight Saturday. Staff and hours may reduce after midnight Thursday and Friday. Registration closes midnight on Saturday and reopens 8:30 am Sunday. OTR closes completely to new registrants and guests at 6 pm on Sunday. Prior CONFIRMED arrangements must be made with our registration staff if you plan on arriving after 6 pm on Sunday. You must pay the full registration fee for Sunday. Contact Steve McLuckie at scagrotto@hvc.rr.com or Dave Fricke at caverdave1@cox.net. It is the responsibility of the person who wants to arrive after Registration closes to ensure confirmation of arrangements with the registration staff. If your name is not on their list, you're not confirmed. Please get confirmation ahead of time to avoid the hassle of being turned away at the gate.

On Line Registration: On line registration may be available this summer. Please check the Web site for more information.

2008 OTR Registration Fee Schedule

Arrival Day	Adult 18+	Junior 12-17	Child 3-11	Guest	Infants under 3 are permitted free entry.
Thurs	47	43	34	+20	
Fri	45	42	32	+20	*Day starts at 4:00 a.m. There is NO Pre-Registration
Sat	43	38	28	+20	
Sun	37	34	27	+20	

Checks: OTR accepts cash or checks written in US funds and on US banks. A \$30 returned check fee is charged and disciplinary action may be imposed. Non-paying registrants are reported to the authorities. OTR does not accept registration payment through credit or debit cards.

Legal Photo ID must be provided at registration, even if you do not intend to consume any alcoholic beverages on site. The OTR staff is authorized to request and see ID of any individual on-site at any time. Individuals must be over 21 to consume any alcoholic beverages at the event.

Guests are welcome at OTR, when invited and sponsored by a TRA regular member, who is responsible for the behavior of the guest. TRA regular members may sponsor up to two adult guests. Guests of all ages (except infants) pay the regular registration fee plus a \$20 guest surcharge. Family companions 18 and over are considered guests. Non-adult guests must be children of adult sponsors or the adult sponsor must provide proof of guardianship. Entry cannot be permitted to guests under 18 who are not lawfully in the custody of their adult sponsors. Legal verification may be required. Please choose your guests carefully; invite only cavers you know.

Children of TRA members up to the age of 17 are not considered guests and do not pay the guest surcharge. Caving children may apply for their own membership (\$10). Parents are fully and solely responsible for their children at OTR.

Day Passes are good for the day purchased from 8:30 am until 6 pm. After 6 pm a regular pass must be purchased. Without exception, day passes are \$20 and are non-refundable, regardless of length of visit but, may be converted into a regular registration.

No pets are permitted at OTR, including the gate area or chained to/inside vehicles at the gate. This includes the set up week before the event.

Early Arrival/Late Departure Policy

Unless you are on either the OTR or TRA list of required workers, you will not be able to enter the site prior to noon Thursday. Coming to one work weekend will not put you on the early-arrival list. Staying after noon on Mon is only permitted for pre-authorized OTR clean-up crews. If you arrive before noon on Thursday, and are not on a workers list, you may be asked to return at noon, or you may be permitted to enter the site only to park (not to set up or stake out a camp site). If you are permitted to enter before noon persons arriving at or after noon may be given preference in the registration line. **Best bet, do not arrive before noon.**

Locate other campers by checking the campground map at registration, if your buddies remembered to post it.

Overflow Camping: Historically an overflow camping area has been located in the SE quadrant. Because of the decrease in attendance the past few years we have decided to open this entire area for camping on Thursday at noon. Please use only the space required for your group. If you want to camp in these areas, plan your arrival times accordingly. Exceptions cannot be made. Camping is not permitted in front of the Lutz Rock Memorial area.

Coming Events

Each Old Timers' brings a host of new ideas, although the time-honored Doo-Dah Parade, Speleo-Olympics, Yard Sale, Speleo-Auction and other traditional OTR activities are planned as well. Schedule your arrival on Thursday for the ceremonial opening of the OTR at the Lutz Rock Flag raising and plan on staying thru the final big party on Sunday night - Put a little Pirate theme in your campsite party decorations this year.

OTR is a caver event Please sponsor only cavers.

NEW for '08

A Youth Treasure Hunt is planned for caver children age 15 and under. This will be a three-person team. Each member of the winning team will receive an I-Pod. Sign up at Contest HQ. FMI contact Diane Bozenbury dmtgies@hotmail.com

Tiki Bar Contest. Who will officially tend the Best Tiki Bar of OTR? Judging will be based on the quality and variety of the drinks, and on the décor of the bar and surroundings. Be prepared to offer a drink of your choice, as well as a drink of the Judges choice. Judging will be from 2-7 pm. A sign-up sheet for your choice of time will be at Contest HQ. Winners will be announced during Sunday night awards. Contact Thom Flory FMI 63tflory@bluelink.andover.edu

Meet the Staff Bead Hunt This year's scavenger hunt will be different from past years as participants, (age 16 or older), will be required to comb the camp in search of special beaded name tag holders worn by certain staff members and identify the staffer and their job. First place prize is a GPS unit. Sign up at Contest HQ. Contact Diane Bozenbury dmtgies@hotmail.com for more info.

Anything that Floats Race Sign up at Contest HQ if you group is interested in participating. Please contact either Leecee Molina Deem batgirlie@frontier.net or John Harris jacqharis@embarqmail.com for information.

The Ever Popular Events

ROOTs and COOTs Gathering: We've come a long way in our 59-year history. The tales that ol' cavers will spin are many so join us at the campfire immediately following the Lutz Rock memorial and create your own version of an OTR tale to share with others.

River Parties: A river party band for both Sunday and Saturday is being planned, as well as an anything-that-floats race. For your safety and the safety of others please plan to bring only non-glass containers to the river party.

Speleo Olympics begin noon Friday and end noon Sunday. Check the OTR program or contest office for details, schedules, and rules. \$1 participation fee is required. Contact Eddie Kehs edkehs@ptd.net for details.

Kiddies Activities are not a babysitting service and parental involvement is required. The playground is available during daylight hours only. Parents must supervise and be responsible for their own children.

Campsite Competition The best-dressed campsite receives an award. This year's theme is Pirates of the Caribiner.

TRA Elections will be held in the pavilion on Sunday from 9am until 4pm. If you are a Regular or Life TRA member in good standing and fully registered for OTR 2008, or hold a valid day pass, you are eligible to vote. If you are interested in running for TRA Trustee position, please register with the election committee between Thursday noon and Saturday at 8pm.

COOTers 3rd Annual Charity Texas Hold Tournament Sign up at COOTers early as the tables fill quickly. Also COOTers will be holding a special High Limit table at Club Grotto' on Saturday night. As always the finest in brewed beverages will be available each day at COOTers. Limited edition COOTers t-shirts will be available again this year. Reservations are accepted. Visa, AE and MC are not.

A High Speed Wireless Network is available in the for a small fee to cover costs. Check details at Registration or contact Johnny Parsons FMI JohnP@exhilaronics.com.

Pirate Schedule

Thursday: Lutz Rock Flag Raising; memorial service for departed old-timers; bonfire ROOTs and COOTs gathering; Buzz City plays at COOTers; Main Pavilion 3-D slide show followed by Pirates of the Caribbean movie marathon.

Friday: Old-fashioned pub-crawl, catch Shanty Irish at COOTers; TRA Awards Ceremony; 1950 Society reception; and later crawl or stagger to the main pavilion to see Tyne and the Fast Line.

Saturday: Do Dah parade; auction; Lion's Club chicken dinners; put on your pirate outfit and try your luck at Club Grotto' and earn some \$ for your favorite Cave Conservancy; pirate night continues with music by the band Sweetie; annual T shirt auction and after-hours noodle wrestling brought to you by Loyal Hanna grotto.

Sunday: Sauna fund-raiser, "Music at the River" 1pm till 4pm the Jug Busters; Kilt night; OTR Awards; Music by The Dennis McQuig Band.

News of Note

Vendors must make prior arrangements with the vendors' coordinator Norma Peacock, sweetbat1@aol.com or Kelley Deem at (304) 216-9818 or kdeem@frontier.net. Please don't arrive earlier than the Wednesday set-up day.

Food concessions are prearranged and must have the proper health and safety permits. No other food concessions are permitted. All vendors selling food or beverages may be visited by the Health Department's inspector and must be set-up and ready for inspection when he arrives.

Porta-Pots: We are extremely pleased with service we have received from Zinns in past years. To keep the cost down and to improve their service we must not put posters or throw stuff in the Porta pots other than human or organic waste. It's your own registration fee that goes up to pay for increasing cleaning fees.

Sauna Area: They've got rules to keep it a safe and enjoyable experience for all. Please follow those rules and treat staff with kindness. Check the website for details.

Quiet Time: Generators may be only run from 9am until 9pm unless directed by Security. Identify yourself to Security if a medical condition requires electricity.

Quiet Side: If you chose to camp on the quiet side of the campground please keep it down after 11pm.

Please be kind to the hard-working, dedicated, OTR staff who welcomes you. They're cavers - just like YOU - volunteering their OTR hours to make your registration process and gate entry a bit easier.

Help Wanted

Shower House and "little House" Volunteers to clean out the showers. And help out with all the little grungy tasks that no one ever wants to do, like emptying trash cans, restocking toilet paper, etc. (Can your grotto or camp adopt a shower house for a day?) If you would like to help, please contact Charlie Williams thru the web site at www.otr.org. **Trashy people needed to star in "DIRTY DEEDS!"** You've seen them, two guys in white jump suits, picking up trash and delivering it to the coolers. WELL, they need some help - SOOOOOO why not sign up for a shift or two to help out. It's a job that is greatly appreciated by all. Check with Dave or Denny at the TAFO camp site.

Special Announcements:

Pirate Outfits are encouraged However per our OTR rules, real firearms and edged weapons are not permitted on site. We will allow replica or toy pirate pistols and non-metal pirate swords.

Sound Equipment Wanted: Donations of the following sound equipment for use by our professional volunteer staff during the parties, awards ceremonies, and other special pavilion ceremonies: 1 QSC speaker amp RMX 1450, 1 Mackie mixer CFX 16 MK II, 1 mixer case ATA CFX 16, 1 snake, 6 PSSL mike stands A 300, and 6 SHURE mikes. If you are willing to donate these to OTR, please contact Harny or Fang thru the web site.

Coot & Holler Gazette: now is the time to send your articles and news worthy stories for consideration for the daily printing in the Coot & Holler to olebat@gmail.com.

Trash: Please recycle. If you can pack it out, do so. We note who brings and leaves furniture onsite and you may be invited to not return.

Arrival and Set-Up Reminders: OTR begins at Noon on Thursday. Plan Your Arrival Accordingly! No Reserving or Marking of Space Before Noon. You Must Be Present to Occupy Space at OTR.

FMI is our main sponsor year after year. Please support them by buying their ropes.

John Cadle is a continued sponsor in 2008, donating registration computer equipment. If you would like to help John and his IT committee, contact him thru the web site.

Staff Contacts: To contact OTR staff, go to www.otr.org, and click on the link for Contacts.

Please Feel Free to Copy & Disseminate Special Edition Informational Update Widely Within the Caving Community!!

The Coot & Holler Gazette is published four times annually, on consecutive days, during the annual gathering of the Robertson Association members. This gathering is known as The Old Timers Reunion. The views and opinions expressed are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editor. Circulation is limited to 300 copies each issue, so hang on to these priceless limited edition copies, and watch their value increase. Editor, Carol S. Jackson, photographers Bill Jackson, David Roberts and Charlie Williams. Reporters A. James Kramer and Elizabeth V. Binsfield. Published by Carol's Carriage, North Field. Contributions are welcome, and may be submitted at collection boxes located at the Carol's Carriage office, OTR HQ, in the registration building, or at COOTers, located on Vendors row. Deadline for submissions is 7pm each evening.

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