

Rearguard Falls *by A. James Kramer*

Every year millions of mature salmon leave the oceans for the mountains. They forge upstream through fresh glacial rivers to spawn and die, though they may not anticipate the dying. On the Fraser River, near Jasper Park, the strongest, most persistent, and luckiest of the Coho elite have overcome uncounted obstacles in an 800 mile uphill odyssey, but at Rearguard Falls they can go no farther. Nearly fifty years ago I watched dozens of great fish struggle mightily against the inevitable. Two weeks ago I was there again, but I was too soon. We had seen them swarming in a Ketchikan creek and Chilkoot Lake, but the Fraser is a long slog and they wouldn't arrive until Labor Day weekend. You can see where this is headed.

Which is when thousands of cavers make their annual run to the mountains. They manage all obstacles as they have for years. COOTS are veterans of decades of OTRs. ROOTS more so, though their numbers are down. Despite appearances, they are the strongest, most persistent, and luckiest of the Old Timers. If nothing else, they know about swimming upstream. After 40 or 50 years driven by a common spiritual imperative, they have little to prove and a lot to remember, including the names on the memorial rock that grow more numerous and familiar. I wonder how an old Coho comprehends Rearguard Falls.

Salmon watching is a lot like fishing. You do your best to study the weather, tides, moon phases, and hatches, but sometimes it just ain't happening. In *The Snow Leopard*, Peter Matthiessen tells of a spiritual trek to the Himalayas in search of a rare snow leopard. He has amazing encounters with men and nature, but he never even glimpses a leopard. My dad knew the Zen of fishing. He would say that you'll never catch anything unless you're fishing. He just kept at it. As do the salmon. As did Matthiessen. As do we. Don't even think about Rearguard Falls.

The Bat Chapter 2 – Hear that? *by Joel Jacobs*

Art and Melissa exited the dry sauna and headed for the river. It was the middle of the night and there were just a few people enjoying the freedom of the spa area. Cooling down they floated on their backs looking up at the familiar circumpolar stars while all the time adjusting to the slight pull of the current which wanted to take them downstream.

Melissa was the first to hear it; a whirring sound, like the beat of a humming bird's wings, only softer. She looked in the direction from which it first emanated, but by then it was somewhere else; behind her, then above her, then nothing. She stood searching the heavens and asked, "Art, did you hear that?"

"Hear what, Mel?" ; "Dunno. Something moving in the air, making a whoosh sound like a big bug. It's gone now." ; "A bat?" asked Art. ; "I don't think so." ; "I didn't hear anything," said Art. "Let's go take a shower and wash this river off us and you can tell me about it while we dry off by the fire."

They went up the steps, which were lit by rope lights, and howled together after pulling the chains for the cold water. Then they joined the group on the upwind side of the fire pit.

"Tell me," said Art. ; "I heard a whirring sound, you know," she pursed her lips together and blew out a, "whew." ; "I love it when you do that," said Art smiling at her.; "Arthur," she scolded. "Seriously. There was something in the air. It moved so fast I couldn't track it and then it disappeared. ; "Ok," he said. "We'll listen for it and if we hear it again we'll try to get a look at it.

At the farthest spot from the fire was a stage for performances. On it was a naked guy, beer can in hand, sleeping or passed out, flat on his back. Atop his chest was a flat, dark object. "What the hell?" Art queried. And as he began running at it, the contraption lifted off the prone body, and shot up into the open space above the spa area. It went over Art's head and rocketed toward the river. Melissa ran for the deck above the steps down. She watched as it sped over the opposite bank.

Art caught up with her. "Did you see it?" he asked. "Yes, and I saw where it went. With a compass and a topo map we can chart where it was headed." ; "Sounds like fun, said Art. ;

Chapter 3 – The Fifth

"I gotta check on that fella on the stage," said Art. "See if he's ok." ; "Right," said Melissa.

They approached the man who was just beginning to stir. He coughed through his fluffy gray beard, sat up, snorted and took a sip of his beer. ; "You feel alright?" asked Art. ; "Why do you ask?" said the man answering Art, but ogling Melissa. ; "Because you're bleeding," she said, pointing at the blood trickling down the right side of his neck. ; He touched the spot, looked at his fingers wet with blood and said, "Humph."

"You should have that looked at," said Art. The Med Tent is on the way to our camp. We'll walk you there." He didn't say anything about the machine that might have made the leaking wound. ; "Sure," he said. "Ah, thanks. Let's get dressed." He was shaking after seeing the blood.

At the medical pavilion, the staff sent for the doc. "This is the fifth puncture we've had today," said one of the attendants. Instead of waiting they left a cell phone number. They were on the way back to their camp site when Melissa observed, "It did look like a bat." ; "Yeah," said Art, "a highly refined and dangerous bat shaped drone capable of drawing blood. First thing tomorrow we go back to the saunas and take a reading." ; "Yup, but for now . . ." ; ". . . let's have some fun," finished Art.

They were tenting with the York Grotto people who welcomed them after they told them about the experience with The Watchman the previous year. They were a diverse group; young, old, kids, parents, musicians, singers and true cavers with hundreds of years of caving combined. And they were next door neighbors to the Dead Puppies from Maryland, a coterie of people who knew how to party. They partied.

To be continued . . .

Department of Corrections: Chapter 2 of *The Bat* was inadvertently omitted from Friday edition, and is included today. The editorial staff regrets the error.

What's Up? Author inadvertently submitted last year's file and regrets the error. Proper year items are included today.

Drop off your filled-out daily Grotto Volunteer Participation Contest forms at Cooter's by noon today and

tomorrow. This contest ends Saturday (forms turned in by noon on Sunday). *MHW*

For proper ventilation of Porta-Potties please be sure to close the lid. Your fellow campers thank you.

You make me laugh in the middle of the night, at the break of day, and in the midst of every crisis. U B da BEST! *Fang*



Hand sewn quilt, with cotton batting, made and donated by Wilma Perkins. To be Silent Auctioned to benefit Sauna Rebuild Fund. Bidders must register at COOTers.

OTR Tournament of Champions. Come compete at the obstacle course on SAT August 31 from 9am – 1pm for a qualifying time. Fastest 50% of participants for day qualify for Round 1 at 1:30pm. Top half qualify for Round 2. Until 1 victor remains the fastest. Winner will receive \$50 Caver Bucks. Be there if you dare. Witness the Horn of Victory. (advanced Course) – *Sterling Dawson*

Please take your camp trash to the dumpsters.

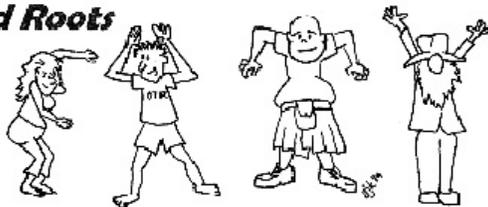
ROOTS & TOOTS meet & greet gathering today, Friday, 1PM, COOTER'S. Come toast our newest TOOT – Patty Taylor. Woo Woowooo!

Renzy will be telling fortunes by “throwing sticks” in the dome from 2 – 4PM. She asks for donations to the sauna fund in return.

Renzy of Loyalhanna is collecting single-use plastics for an art project. Bring them to the pumpkin. Look for the white trash bag if she's not there.

Coots and Roots

Dyslexic disco dancers



Gordon Birkheimer: see Mike Rusin at Fart area. Bring “ransom money”.

Cooterville Residents: Please use the Zinn potties. Help keep the stink down. *#Fart-triliquist*

You know how good the kitchen smells when you take the lid off the pot of spaghetti sauce? Think of the porta-potties as very much NOT a pot of spaghetti sauce. Lind up or down? Your choice. *by Bob “The Nose” Caver*

Was very disappointed with the bonfire lighting event. Scheduled and post for 830. Walked down at 815 & it was fully ablazed. Why bother announcing a time if you're gonna do it when you want ? *PW.*

Hi Tommy – Thanks for helping me break into my car. You are a creative locksmith. John Collins gets an honorable mention too. Happy OTR, cheers! *Penny*

Saturday Night! Come to the Loyalhanna Pumpkin and party like it is the 70's. Toga! Toga!

Tonight at midnight it will be one year since you accepted my \$5.00 ring. Love you more now than ever.

RSO

Thanks to all the ROOTs & TOOTs who enjoyed a pint at COOTER's Friday – lookin' forward to seeing you ALL (and more) in 2020. The ROOTs & TOOTs Committee P.S. – Oh, and tanks to COOTER's and Shack for the ever welcoming toast!! *Fang*

K” D” D – Happy to see you resurrect your role as OTR Auctioneer ... will you be styled in your fashionable baby blues? *Your Adoring Fans*

Stephen “Doc” Mosberg is running for TRA Trustee this year. His years of active participation in TRA, includes development of 2 important directives already! He supports fun & freedom at OTR with safety for all. Please vote for Doc! (He approves this message)! *SEM*

SHAME SHAME – RITZ Grotto missed gate duty – Restitution can be made by signing u for 2 time slots.

Bit thank you to “mow the lawn John” (Harris) for the fantastic job caring for and preparing the site for all of us. *Bru.*

Looking for electrician & plumbing apprentices – OJT & licensed personnel needed to step up & volunteer services during OTR & future work weekends – ask for Bill Bradwell / Tim Brown/ John Vitela.

Additional Event Tent presentation: Sunday 2pm “Excavating our way thru the Dick Blentz House” by Sam Frushour & Patty Cummings (Event Tent located @ end of Vendor's Row).

OTR Virgins – pick up your gift at On Rope1. Ask Wm or Carolina about the history on this item.

Attention OTR virgins – Gate signings are SAT & SUN 12: midnight to 6AM. *The Gatekeeper*

Eastern Region, NCRC meeting 10am Sunday at the dome – all welcome. Bring our own chair.

Want to be a Camp Master? Come talk with John in BATS! Dutch Star RV is our base for the week.

OTR Merch tent hours: Saturday, 3-5 pm, Sunday 12-2 pm. Location is in front of the Chairman's tracker across the road from the ice cream stand.

Don't forget to volunteer! Join the fun of volunteering and try for a prize in the Grotto Volunteer participation Contest.

Grotto Volunteer Participation Contest – see Susi Weston or Meredith Hall Weberg at the BATS camp for information.

Vote for Sarah Richards! Sarah will make a fabulous TRA Trustee!

OTR Military Tribute to be Held Tonight Please make sure to attend the OTR Military Tribute tonight in the Main Pavilion at 9:30PM. This will be a very special time when we can celebrate and thank the OTR attendees that have served in the military. This will be a wonderful opportunity to recognize our veterans / active military personnel as they receive a small token of gratitude and our show of appreciation for the sacrifices that they endured.

The York Grotto will be celebrating its 60th anniversary by sponsoring the Fall MAR in Newville, PA September 20–22. See yorkgrotto.org for more info.



Kelly Deem, Past TRA President, Tim Brown, TRA President, and Dave Shackelford, Cooter's Chair, burn the mortgage for Cooter's. The mortgage for \$25000, negotiated in 2013 for Cooter's improvements, to be repaid over 19 years was paid off in 5 ½ years.