

Coot & Holler Gazette

Vol. 25, No. 4, Sunday, September 6, 2026

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



OTR Schedule

SUNDAY

8 AM	Gathering of Believers (Lutz Rock Memorial Garden)
9 AM–4 PM	Registration Open
9 AM–4 PM	TRA Elections (Pavilion)
9 AM–1 PM	OTR Yard Sale (Pavilion)
9–11 AM	Merch Sales Open (Pavilion)
9:30 AM–12 PM	The Robertson Association Board Meeting (Event Tent)
10 AM–4 AM	Sauna Area Open
10 AM	Quilters Guild (Cooters)
10 AM	Volunteer for After–Fireworks Cleanup (meet in front of Showers)
12–3 PM	Fermenters Forum (Location TBD)
12–3 PM	Museum Open
12:30 PM	75 th Reunion Aerial Photo Shoot (Lutz Rock Memorial Garden)
1 PM–12 AM	Cooters Pub Open
2–5 PM	River Party; Live music: ♪ The Jugbusters ♪ (Tygart River; River Stage)
5–9 PM	Decon Station open
8 PM	TRA/OTR Awards Ceremony (Pavilion)
8 PM–12 AM	Brew Crew open (Pavilion)
10 PM	Band Aide live music: ♪ Buzzzzz City ♪ (Pavilion)

The Robertson Association (TRA) Business Meeting (9:30 a.m.–noon)

All TRA members are welcome to attend.
Bring a chair.

TRA MEMBERSHIP

SECRETARY Scotty Baker can be found with Standing Stone Grotto to answer questions about membership and address issues. Standing Stone is along Karst Lane behind Vendor’s Row next to the Fire Lane—look for the high-flying US and Ohio State flags.

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

OTR Schedule

MONDAY

Noon	OTR 2025 concludes. Please deposit all trash in the dumpsters located along the road on your way out (—please take all recyclables with you) and leave the property by Noon. See you next year!
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Non-alcoholic (NA) beer available at Cooters! Ask the Cooters staff about the available options!

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

Crawl-In Theater (@ Dusk, Weather Permitting)

This year’s film festival will feature: **Sunday:** Over the Hedge

Update on Chris’s Hole: So deep and so wide. It keeps going forever.

Matthew Blakeman: Happy 50th Birthday to my big brother! You're not old, you're just a classic collector's item—mostly because you smell like dust and need a lot of maintenance. Love you, bro! ~Cristie Blakeman

Aspire to good health, like you have something better to do?

The cake was delish, Patty! Yums all around to serenade Shanty Irish and Vic. They’ll be missed.

There’re some **new COOTs** in town—JV, Sarah M, Chuck, and many more. Celebrate 20 years of OTR!

Mucho Many Thanks to Jonathan, Amanda, Stevan & Catie, Maria, Rocky, Alan & Norma Dee for the reading of 304 names @LutzRock. You are the sweetest!

Honey H, I will always love you! [heart emoji]

Stephen Owens and the Shanty Irish by Joel Jacobs

Stephen Owens is a member of Dead Puppies that camps next to York Grotto at OTR. Proximity brought us together. Conversations over a brew, or two, have evolved into our friendship.

Coot & Holler: What does Shanty mean as used in the Shanty Irish?

Stephen Owens: Shanty Irish were the poorer Irish folks living in less than optimum conditions in (maybe) shanties, as opposed to the Lace Curtain Irish, who were better off and could afford better housing.

C&H: How long have you been together as a group?

SO: We started playing in 1996 for a church benefit, then other charitable causes. That’s 30 years.

C&H: When did the Shanty Irish begin playing at OTR?

SO: We think about 2010, so this would be our 16th year. Vic Ward was instrumental in getting us our first gig at Cooters. He was also our sound guy.

C&H: Do you have a leader?

SO: Michael Burkey was instrumental in forming the band. He is our “unofficial” leader to this day.

C&H: Are all the players in the group members of the Dead Puppies?

SO: No. All but two are Dead Puppies. There are currently 7 band members.

C&H: Do you perform at other venues?

SO: Yes. We play out roughly 12–15 times a year. Our busiest time is Saint Patrick’s Month. We play every weekend in March. We started a Celebration in Cumberland (where we are based) called “The Hooley.” Originally this was a school benefit, and we would circulate to 7–8 pubs and take up a collection for the local Catholic school’s athletic program. We managed to collect around \$20K over a 3-year period for them. This event has grown since 1996 and has become a major Cumberland event each year with many pubs, restaurants, and bands, turning the town into a giant St. Patrick’s festival! We have played at The Garrett County Gaelic Festival for about 15 years. We had a 20–year gig at a Gettysburg pub during Remembrance Day in November. Our most distant gig was at a brewery in Estes Park, CO, that totally exhausted our coffers due to transportation costs. We even managed to play The Purple Fiddle in Thomas, WV, a few times.

C&H: Is there anything else we should know about the Shanty Irish?

SO: We are a not-for-profit band. Any \$\$ we manage to earn is used to maintain our equipment and cover expenses such as gas and food or donated to a worthy cause. It should be noted we love playing at Cooters. OTR folks are always enthusiastic and supportive, and Shack is the best host!

C&O: Thank you, Stephen.

What’s Up? (9/6/2026) by Joel Jacobs

The handle of the Big Dipper is curved. If you follow that curve for one full dipper length, you come to Arcturus, the fourth brightest star in the sky, “The Guardian of the Bear,” the alpha star in the constellation Bootes, Greek for The Plowman. At 37 light years away, it is one of our closest neighbors in space. Continue the curve for another dipper length and you will find Spica, the 16th brightest star in the sky, and the alpha star in the constellation Virgo, the Virgin, or the Maiden, in Latin. One legend has her as the personification of justice and the daughter of Zeus and Themis. In Egypt she was the goddess Isis. It is about 275 light years away with a brilliance that is 2,300 times more luminous than our sun.

A Diamond Story by Joel Jacobs; **Chapter 4: Mules**

“How much is the diamond worth?” asked Melissa.

“I looked it up,” he answered. “A flawless, one-carat blue diamond could command as much as a million dollars. I couldn’t refuse. It was easy money, but then I had to find a way to get your half to the U.S. without actually handling it. My friend Boonsanong made sure you found the box. I didn’t want to get caught, or ambushed. I needed a mule.”

“That’s us?” asked Melissa. “We’re the mule? The mules? You tricked us because you knew we couldn’t shy away from a mystery about OTR.”

“Spot on. You two have a reputation. I depended on it, but more importantly, OTR is safe. There is controlled access. You have to be a TRA member or a guest of one to get in. I felt sure that no bad actors could intercept our transaction.”

“So now what?” she demanded.

“We make sure the serial numbers match and tape all those notes back together.”

“Where?”

“In one of our tents. You keep the ten as a reward. You’re finished, thank you, and I deal with the diamond folks. I’m going to ask for another ten in cash. The less you know about that, the better. It could get dicey.”

“Right,” I said. “Let’s get it done. Where’s your tent?”

Brody gave us directions to a spot deep on the wild side. We went back to our locked SUV and got the money out of the glove compartment. As a precaution, Melissa stuffed half of it in her undies and I slid half in a sock. We got to his location after sunset. Brody was sitting in an aluminum chair next to what looked like a pile of rags. “Someone sliced up my tent, punctured my air mattress, slashed everything. They must have been looking for the cash and this.” He opened his hand and shone a light on his palm. The rectangular blue diamond glittered in its brilliance. “They didn’t find either. I had them on me.”

“So they did get into OTR,” stated Melissa turning on her powerful flashlight and sweeping its beam around. “This is getting scary. They’re probably watching us right now.”

“Maybe they’re tearing our stuff apart, too,” I said.

“I doubt that,” she said. “There’s always somebody at our camp site.” She put her lips close to my ear and whispered. “Did you see that guy dressed all in black at the outer edge of my light beam? He turned away when the light hit him.”

“Not really, but I did see movement.”

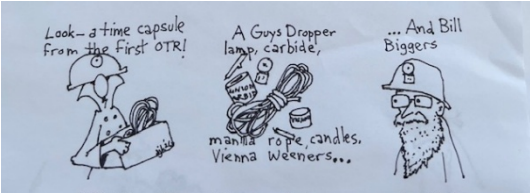
“He headed for the fence line. I bet he came in from the adjoining fields.”

Brody held up a pair of scissors and a roll of clear tape and said, “Let’s go to your place and put these notes back together. Then, I’m going to leave. I have an appointment at a bar in Lykens later tonight. Boon is already there.”

After the 100s were repaired, Mel and I secured our wad, said good bye to Brody, and went for a soak at the sauna. Later, on our way to the pavilion to do some dancing, Mel got a text from him that read, “Whew! The deal is done. See ya next year.” We’re looking forward to hearing that story. For now, we believe we’re safe. The guy in black was after the jewel, not the money. We have \$10,000 to upgrade our ride or to spoil ourselves with and so much for mysteries, Benjamins, and diamonds.

~The End~

Wow, are you still reading?



PANDA NOTICE: The pandas living in the bamboo grove in the Wild Side would like to go home with you (please take just one), but they’ll miss their friends, so you have to promise to bring them back next year for a bamboo reunion. And maybe bring along a panda friend.
