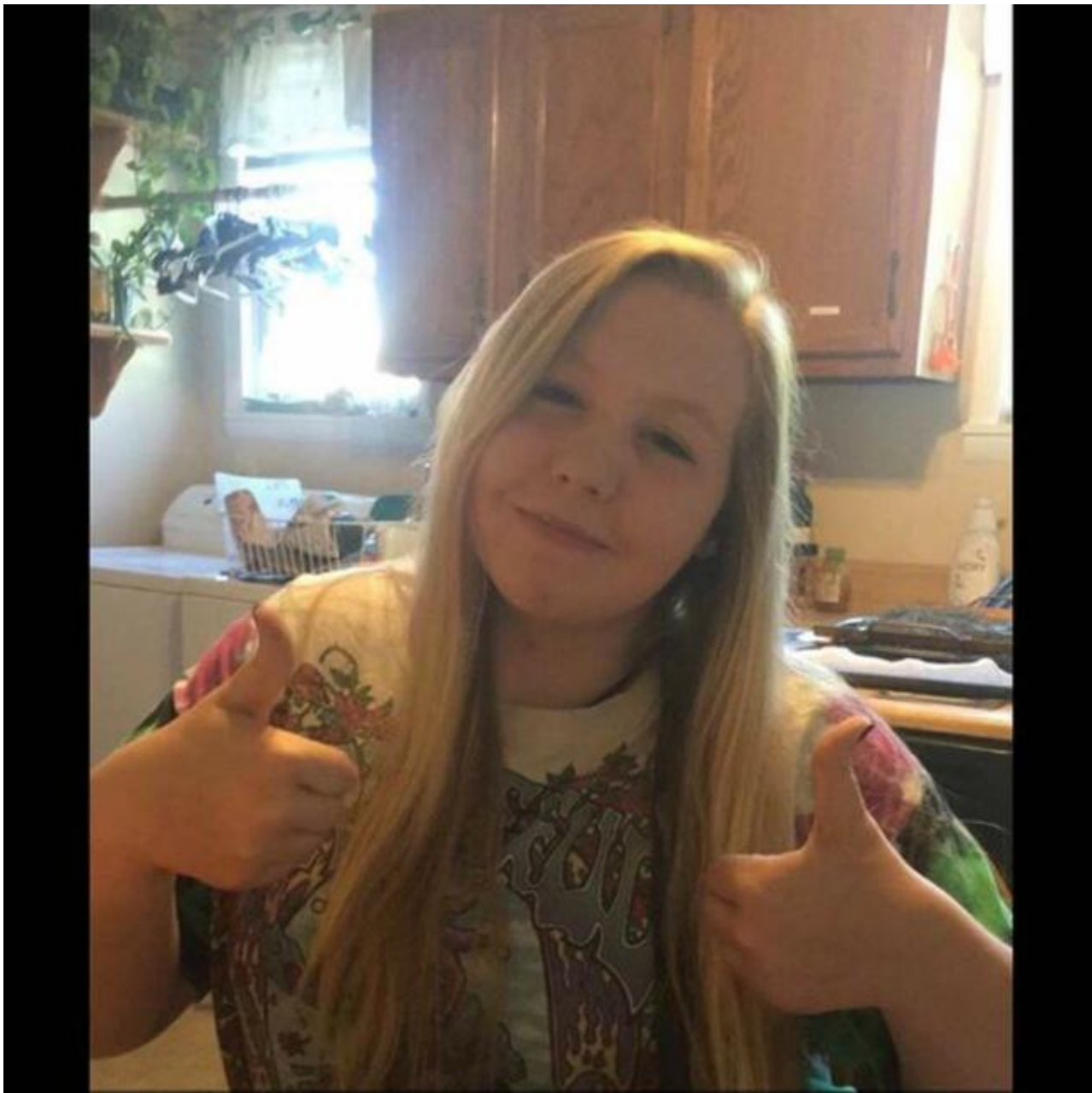


Gangbusters lineup for Saturday festival to honor legacy of local teen

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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COTTAGE HILLS – Saturday, May 12, 2018, is the Trinity River Festival at the Cottage Hills VFW.

While most people would view the untimely passing of a 17-year-old girl in a sudden car crash as a tragedy, the friends and family of Trinity Buel have converted their grief into an opportunity to carry the legacy she would have done herself if given the chance. Buel was killed in such a crash on Feb. 17, 2018, while coming home from her shift at the Alton Steak N' Shake. Since that horrible day, many who knew her have done everything in their power to remember her through efforts she would have done herself if the universe had given her the chance to do it.

So far, two litter cleanups – one at Buel's beloved Piasa Park and another at Norside Park where one of her siblings wants to see a skate park one day – have taken place in her honor. They have been organized by her close family friends, Erik Konkol and Chris Unthank, and her mother, April Gray.

Those same people have been joined by swarms of other volunteers to establish the Trinity River Festival this coming weekend. With more than a dozen bands on three stages all day with vendors, food and activities for the entire family, the short-notice rock show has come together quite nicely, due to the incredible outpouring of support, Gray said.

“We've done an enormous amount of work to put this all together in just over two months!” She said via Facebook Messenger. “So many bands reached out to Doug Bush, who has worked to coordinate all the musicians, sound equipment and set up all three stages. Michele Scott, from VFW Post #7678, has coordinated all aspects of the day of activities and the setup at the venue. Sally Kirbach has worked to secure more than 20 vendors. While many more people have donated time, services and equipment to make this all come together.”

Some of those who have donated their time and talents include the bands. Saturday's list of bands is like a veritable who's-who of Alton's rock music scene, including the following bands on the outside stage:

- 11 a.m. Accidentally on Purpose
- 12 p.m. Mondin Band
- 1 p.m. Mars Needs Guitars Plus

- 2 p.m. Autumn Konkol
- 2:30 p.m. Krickett and the Grilled Avocados
- 4 p.m. Family Values
- 5 p.m. Typsy Gypsy Acoustic
- 6 p.m. Hookie
- 7 p.m. Spillie Nelson
- 8 p.m. The Stubblefield Band

And these bands on the inside of the facility:

- 2 p.m. Floor Nine
- 3 p.m. Moonglasses
- 4 p.m. Earthdad
- 5 p.m. Greasy Gabe and The Cisco Kids
- 6 p.m. Grass and Stone
- 7 p.m. 33 on the Needle
- 8 p.m. The Mindframes
- 9 p.m. Biff K'Narly and the Reptilians
- 10 p.m. Hideous Gentleman

There is a \$5 cover charge at the door, which will go toward Trinity's Way, a non-profit founded in Buel's honor.

“Our purpose is to provide necessary support and supplies to other charities that protect and serve the best interests of animals and the environment,” Gray said in a Facebook message. “We also host community events, like the litter cleanups and the upcoming pet food drive this Saturday, to help educated people about these issues.”

Alongside the concert this weekend will be a pet food drive for the Riverbend Pet Food Pantry, which will have a booth there. Buel was known to love animals and would make a habit of rescuing lost pets and returning them to their owners. She would also borrow dogs from friends and family members and take them out for days on the town.

Another of her passions was music – especially live music. Gray said her and Buel's father were both huge fans of music and would often take her to concerts. Her first concert was when she was little over a year old when she saw the Jerry Garcia Band with Melvin Seals at the Alton Expo on the riverfront. Buel carried her love of the Grateful Dead to the end of her life and had a varied musical taste, which also included the works of new smooth jam artist Khalid, who is not much older than Buel was at the time of her passing.

“Knowing your kid's dreams and expecting to see those come true one day, but instead waking up every day now knowing that those dreams are gone, I have to do what Trinity would want done,” Gray said. “I can't imagine sitting idly by. That's what Trinity's Way is for me, and everyone involved in the organization. We intend to take Trinity's caring and kindness for animals and the environment and make as many of her dreams come true as possible.”