

Bushfest: Basically an annual Alton Rock N' Roll Hall of Fame

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COTTAGE HILLS – Described by its organizers as one of the first “Backyard Festivals” in the Riverbend, Bushfest has opened to more than just the friends of Doug and Kristy Bush.

In fact, it is now open to absolutely everyone.

Taking place at Cottage Hills VFW Post 7678, located at 121 S. Williams St. in Cottage Hills the Saturday, Sept. 29, Bushfest is a \$5 festival with 24 music acts from 11 a.m. - midnight. It will honor fallen musicians from the area including Doug Bush's best friend, Ryan Grant, and Chris Belden. Belden was a major part of the Toys for Tots drive at that VFW. The \$5 ticket sales, vending fees and other fund-raising efforts for the festival will go to Grant's wife, Kristin, and daughter, Sarah, as well as Chris's wife, Kathy.

“It's a real family event for us, and our daughters, Gabby and Lilly Fazio, and sons, Brandon Keeney and Dean Bush, will be found working the ticket booth – as well as serving the chili, selling t-shirts and 50/50 raffles,” Kristy Bush said in an email. “In addition to our kids, we will have so many of our family and friends that will be volunteering all day.”

Saturday will be the 10th incarnation of the festival, which began in the Bushes' backyard on Eugene Street with Doug Bush's band Agents of the Free. Agents of the free included Doug Bush, Brian Keith and the late Ryan Grant, Jim Fox and Waide Neal.

“They had started a band together... and wanted to play out with original music, and throwing a party with all your friends, inviting original artists like Elbow Through Hammer, Hope and Therapy, Same Old Explosion and 33 on the Needle into the mix was just the beginning,” Kristy Bush said in an email.

She said each year of the festival included more bands. In 2017, when the event was still mostly a private party, Bushfest included two stages featuring a dozen bands in 10 hours – an ambitious day of music, indeed.





Previous acts are an eclectic batch of local favorites, including Biff K'narly and the Reptilians, Hideous Gentlemen, Hookie, Gemini Hustler, Yard Dogs, the debut of Kristy Bush's band, Krickett and the Grilled Avocados, and scores more Kristy Bush said she could not even list all at once.

“My favorite would be when Doug proposed to me in the bounce house at Bushfest 2016,” Kristy Bush said in an email. “His could understandably be the year of the squirrel – well maybe not favorite, but one of the most memorable.”

By “Year of the Squirrel,” Kristy Bush is not referencing some unknown Midwestern American zodiac. She said a squirrel had chewed through the wiring of the festival and caused a brown-out, meaning considerable damage was done to equipment at the festival as well as the house.

This year, the festival will be hosting 24 bands. Kristy Bush said coolers are not allowed, but lawn chairs are probably a good idea for people to bring.

Here's the line-up of those two dozen acts across multiple stages:

Main Stage

12:45 – Framily Values

2:15 – Agents of the Free

3:30 – Krickett and the Grilled Avocados

5:00 – Hope and Therapy

6:45 – Hideous Gentlemen

8:45 – Caveofswords

Second Stage

12:00 – Lifehouse Band

1:30 – Mars Needs Guitars Plus

3:00 – Set Break Sarahs

4:15 – Elbow Through Hammer

6:00 – Accidentally on Purpose

7:45 – Moonglasses

9:45 – Spillie Nelson

10:45 – Smokin' Oldie Band

Inside Stage

1:00 – Josh Grassle

1:45 – Darian Roe

2:30 – Steven Jackson

3:15 – Autumn Konkol

4:00 – Erin Joe Paddlefoot

4:45 – The Graham Band

5:30 – Set Break Sarahs

6:15 – Still Smokin'

7:00 – Kenny Jamison

7:45 – Peanut Butter Jam

8:30 – Bud Summers