

Petitions circulated to help save Bonny Lake

By Tom Betz

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Petitions are being circulated in Goodland, St. Francis and around eastern Colorado to try to save Bonny Lake in Yuma County, Colo., and supporters feel they have a good way to save the water and the state park.

Time is running out as the Colorado Division of Natural Resources has announced the lake will be drained sometime after Labor Day, — Monday, Sept. 5 — unless an agreement with Kansas can be worked out.

The latest effort is to get people in northwestern Kansas and northeastern Colorado to show their support for saving Bonny by signing petitions scattered around or by signing an online petition asking Colorado and Kansas to seek a joint way to save and operate the lake and state park.

In Goodland the petitions can be found at Dan Brenner Ford and Yost Farm Supply. This petition

asks Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska to save Bonny State Park. The petitions are a part of the effort to show officials in Denver and Topeka people out here do care about saving the lake, said Don Stewart of Burlington.

Stewart is president of Flatlanders Campground Club from Burlington, and the club has volunteered to maintain the 56 acres (visitor center and campground) for three years as long as Colorado will keep it a state park.

Audrey Hase of Kirk, Colo., took up the challenge to save Bonny, and wrote to Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback. Brownback wrote back saying the decision to drain the reservoir has been made by Colorado, and Kansas has not requested this action.

Hase said people in Eastern Colorado have formed a grassroots group of around 1,100 members, in the last two months, trying to save the reservoir.

Hase said the main issues are to

get Colorado into compact compliance with Kansas on the South Fork of the Republican River. She said the bottom line is Colorado has to deliver the water to Kansas.

She said the second main issue is not to shut down any more irrigation wells in northeast Colorado. She said Colorado has already taken 30,000 acres out of irrigation, and farmers don't want to shut down any more with the already poor economy. Colorado is building a pipeline to deliver water to the Republican River in Kansas, but it will not be completed until next year.

The main sticking point apparently is the annual evaporation from Bonny, and Hase has an idea that might give both Colorado and Kansas a reason to save the lake. She said the idea would be to have Kansas own the water in the lake and Colorado would own the land and both states could operate the park with people from Kansas be-

able to use their Kansas State Park permits at Bonny.

"Eastern Colorado and Western Kansas Communities can benefit from the economic boom of a thriving reservoir," Hase said. "When Bonny is full it brings in 260,000 visitors and translates to \$9 million of economic revenue flowing through the area in the form of gas, food, liquor, camping supplies, etc. This does not factor in the revenue the park, state, counties, etc. will see in the form of park passes, licenses, camping fees, leases, jobs, the list goes on and on."

Hase has been in contact with Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper, and has gotten positive feedback from Alexandra Davis of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources.

"The primary message I have received is both states are interested in saving Bonny Reservoir, however," she said, "until there is a doable solution for compact

compliance, saving Bonny is a dead end. Because of the hydrology of the Republican River Basin and the delayed depletions caused by well pumping, compact compliance options are limited. On Kansas's side, they just want their water, period. Colorado needs to provide it under the compact. However, they do not want to see Bonny Reservoir drained and there is a huge communication breakdown, because they don't understand what the specifics are as to why Colorado is choosing this solution."

The final piece came from Bud Mekelburg who belongs to a group that represents the three states interests in the Republican River. It had come to the group's attention this spring the Kansas Water Commission was planning to build some type of reservoir/water holding retention area on the South Fork on the Kansas side. The three-state group had written a letter to the Kansas Water Commission in April and questioned the reasoning for such a reservoir, Hase said.

"So the thought is we owe Kansas about 4,000 acre feet of water every year for evaporation," she said. "What if, instead of releasing this down the river, it was held in Bonny Reservoir as the property of Kansas. Then if Kansas needed it for their state for drought, etc., it could be released for an emergency. This seems to solve all facets of the problem. Kansas gets their water and instead of it going down the river and being of no use, or their state having to invest in a multi-million dollar reservoir for regen-

eration, they have an opportunity to share in an interest in Bonny since they own the water in a reservoir that is only seven miles from the Kansas state line. This could be an amazing option for both states to make revenue on an established state park where Kansas would own the water and Colorado owns the park. They need each other to make this work."

In addition to the written petitions around the area Hase started an online petition that supports the two state cooperative solution. She is hoping people will sign the petitions and send messages of support to Kansas Gov. Brownback and Colo. Gov. Hickenlooper.

"We need to show those leaders we want to save Bonny," she said.

The group's information can be found on Facebook at Eastern Colorado Irrigation/Water Issues. The web site for the online petition is <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/savebonny/>.

Bonny Reservoir was created by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation as a flood control project following the 1935 flood on the Republican River that killed more than 100 people and produced wide devastation from northwest Kansas into Nebraska and back into Kansas as the river rolled past Concordia and down to Salina where it joins the Saline River.

Bonny has been a Colorado State Park for many years, a good fishing lake and stopping place for migratory birds, but the reservoir has become a contentious point in the Colorado, Nebraska and Kansas Republican River Compact.

Obituaries

Alma Richards

Jan. 2, 1916 - Aug. 14, 2011

Alma Richards, 95, lifelong Hardesty resident, died Sunday afternoon, Aug. 14, 2011, at Southwest Medical Center, Liberal, Kan.



Richards

The daughter of Florence (Tracy) and Tandy William Thurman, Alma Maxine Thurman was born Jan. 2, 1916, in Tyrone, Okla. Alma's mother died 10 days later and she was raised by her aunt Jenny (Tracy) and uncle Mel Hughey. Young Alma rode her pony to Meadow View country school and later graduated from Hardesty High School with the class of 1934.

She was united in marriage to Everett Leander Richards on Dec. 20, 1935, in Guymon, Okla. The Richards farmed and ranched east of Hardesty at their home place, The Club Ranch.

Alma was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother and neighbor. She enjoyed gardening, sewing and quilting, was active in the Home Demonstration Club, Hardesty Senior Citizens, TWE Club, was a charter member of the Good Sam's Club and was always active in church and school activities. Alma was a fan and support to her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, attending all of the activities and sporting events she

was able. She was a longtime member of the Hardesty United Methodist Church.

Alma was preceded in death by her parents and her aunt and uncle that raised her; an infant son, Everett Estel Richards; brother, Clifton Thurman; her husband, Everett Richards, who died in 1996; and her grandson, Gary Ray Grice.

Survivors include two daughters, Phyllis L. and husband, Jim Bohling of May, Okla.; and Deanna K. Grice of St. Francis; two sons, Rodney Dean Richards and wife, Bernell; and Darrell Richards and wife, Treva, all of Hardesty; 11 grandchildren and their spouses, Leon and Beverly Richards, Clellie and Ginger Richards, Becky and Terry Gilbert, Richard and Annette Bohling, Robert and Phyllis A. Bohling, Lynda and Kent Latta, Leisha and Todd Burden, Brenda and Jack Hays, Priscilla Grice, Jason Richards and Jarod Richards; 23 great-grandchildren and five great-great-grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held Thursday morning, Aug. 18, at the Hardesty School auditorium with Rev. Max Whipple officiating. Interment will follow in Hartville Cemetery.

Memorials may be given to the Hartville Cemetery, c/o Henson-Novak Funeral Home, Box 1306, Guymon, OK 73942. Friends may sign the online register and send condolences at www.hensonnovak.com.

Gary Lynn Krien

Dec. 7, 1948 - Aug. 10, 2011

Gary Krien died Aug. 10, 2011, at his home in Great Bend, Kan. He was born in Cheyenne County, Kan., on Dec. 7, 1948.

He was the third child of four, Elaine, Marlene and Arlen (the youngest).

He was preceded in death by his parents, Phillip and Lydia, brother, Arlen, and son, Bobby (who he loved deeply).

Survivors include son, David and his wife, Deandra, and daughter, Kari and her husband, Tracy, grandchildren, Chase, Kensley, Josie, Harper, Kylie, Tracen and step-granddaughters, Chanell and Chauntell.

Gary or Jake, as his close friends called him, attended and graduated from St. Francis Community High School in 1966. Jake enjoyed horsing around with friends and playing basketball. After graduating from high school, he and his best friend, Johnny Schorzman, joined the Navy. He proudly served four years during Vietnam on the U.S.S. Shangra-La. During his tour, Jake received multiple honors such as an award of bravery. He carried that

sense of pride to the day he died.

Upon his return from the Navy, he was blessed with three children, Bobby, David and Kari. His hobbies included shooting prairie dogs, reloading ammunition, watching Fox News and one of his favorite pastimes was deer hunting with lil Mikey Sherlock.

Jake was always know for his big heart, helpful nature and, above all, common sense approach. He never turned anyone away, no matter the size or intensity of the situation.

"We love you and will miss you! However, coma yada, yada, yada!" his family said.

Funeral services were held Aug. 15 at Peace Lutheran Church, St. Francis, with Pastor Glenn Isernhagen officiating. Casket bearers were David Krien, Tracy Peter, Chase A. Krien, Rolland Smith, Mike Sherlock and Jared Douthit.

Military graveside services were performed by the Naval Honor Guard. Burial was in the St. Francis Cemetery. Arrangements were made by Knodel Funeral Home, St. Francis.

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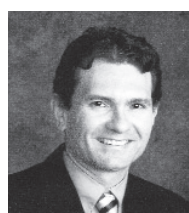
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