

## Courier Letters

### Now clearly a bridge to nowhere

Earlier this year I wrote the Forest Service to ask why the road to the "bridge to nowhere" is closed. They said the "legal reason" was due to rutting and erosion. They also said that this decision was made in 2009 after "two and a half years of public notice and participation" and they didn't have the funding for the gate until recently. Who is the "public" that decided we don't want access to this bridge or to the river?

If a Forest Service road can be shut down due to lack of maintenance, then this means that any of "their" roads can be shut down at any time. Would it have been more cost-effective to get a truckload of dirt to fix the road rather than close a bridge that would cost taxpayers millions today? Instead, the "bridge to nowhere" is now a permanent monument to government waste and mismanagement that we are forced to see every time we drive to and from Bakersfield.

Now I see that the Forest Service is planning on shrinking the HIRA areas around the lake. At first I thought this will open up free access but these areas will likely become campgrounds with higher fees and virtually all other access will be closed due to "rutting" or "low oxygen levels" in the water. The people will be herded like cattle into these smaller areas where they can be closely monitored.

We are no longer viewed as citizens, but as subjects to be controlled. We have become nothing more than a means of revenue used to support the personal agendas of those in charge.

Neil Olsen  
Bodfish

## Community Announcements

### River Rhythms 2013 free concert series

The Kern River Valley Education and Cultural Foundation has announced the line-up for the 2013 River Rhythms free concert series at Kernville's Riverside Park. All shows will take place from 6:30 to 9 p.m. each Friday in August. All shows are free of charge and will feature local and regional artists. There will also be light food and beverage products available for purchase. For sponsorships, donations, and information, contact River Rhythms chairperson Charlie Busch at Kern River Radio, 760-376-4500 or KRVECF president Chuck White at 760-379-0764.

### Energy Assistance funds available

The California Agency has received the 2013-14 Energy Assistance Funds

### Things I have noticed...

## Curse of the cherry tomatoes

Rod Middleworth  
Courier Columnist



Middleworth

No matter how I try, I do not have a green thumb.

By now everyone knows that if I plant it, it will die. But being ever the optimist again this year, I planted tomatoes.

I looked at the description of what I could expect if I put tomato plants in some secluded area in my yard. I hoped that neighbors would not see the debacle of me again ruining my plants.

*No matter how I try, I do not have a green thumb.*  
Middleworth

Also I would keep track of the costs and check those costs against what Vons charges.

So I bought four tomato plants, all of the Beefsteak variety (\$1.25 each). Then I bought a bag of potting soil (\$5.42), and some tomato fertilizer (\$4.16). I noticed a contraption called an Earth Box, which I was assured would grow anything. I bought two Earth Boxes plus postage and tax (\$34.99). I mentally estimated the cost of California Water Service used over the next eight weeks (\$15) for a total cost of \$60.82.

Then I sat back in my lawn

would grow into a tomato, grew. I stood near the plants and talked to them, read them stories and even sang robust nature songs. And then one day some tomato blossoms turned into tomatoes but as I could see, none of them were of the Beefsteak variety. Instead, all were of the cherry tomato ilk.

I was disappointed but I had to admit, they would be easier to give away. Every day I faithfully watered and gave them plant food and discussed with them the state of the world politics. The season is almost over.

All the tomatoes I picked are now in a small bowl in the icebox. A total of 22

cherry tomatoes were grown. Their skin is like latex and they are hard as a rock. We had a couple in a salad last Saturday and I almost broke a tooth on one of them. Well almost.

Just for kicks, I divided the number of tomatoes I raised (22) into the total cost of growing them \$60.82 and found that each cherry tomato cost me \$2.76. This didn't include the cost of my labor and the ridicule of my neighbors when they spotted my barren plants.

So next year I will resist the urge to become a man of the soil and instead will buy my 'maters