But Will the State Listen?
Representative Andrew Roraback will attend the selectmen's meeting on Monday, August 4, to hear our town officials' and citizens' concerns about what First Selectman Gordon Ridgway calls the state's "general bad attitude" in its dealings with Cornwall and the other small towns. Gordon cites a number of recent examples:

- A newly appointed official at the Department of Environmental Protection has interpreted DEP regulations and is threatening to fine the town $25,000 a day if we don't stop burning wood at the dump. He concedes that the wood causes little pollution and that trucking it elsewhere will actually have a greater environmental impact as well as increase our recycling expense, but he says, "I have no choice."
- In the face of vocal opposition in town to the Department of Transportation's plan to spend $1,445,000 to install new cribbing on a few hundred yards of Route 4, the DOT is not only going ahead with the planning but has actually budgeted $50,000 more for the project.
- Although the state officially closed Mohawk State Forest a couple of years ago, pleading lack of funds, the state is now buying up more land. The state pays the town $12,000 a year (which won't be increased for at least 10 years) to install new cribbing on a few hundred yards of Route 4, the DOT is not only going ahead with the planning but has actually budgeted $50,000 more for the project.
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Rodway calls the state's concerns "very concerning" and that trucking it elsewhere will actually have a greater environmental impact as well as increase our recycling expense, but he says, "I have no choice."

Maps, Maps, Maps!
Over 40 of them, of and about Cornwall, by Cornwallians, from kids to octogenarians, in a terrific show at the Cornwall Library organized by Tim Prentice, who contributed his own atlas of Cornwall. There are maps featuring frog and turtle ponds, great old ladies, cats, early settlers, historical conflicts, floods, visions of 2020, Cornwall subways, Poohville, theme parks, the Library, local road kill, and more.

An awards ceremony for the map project will take place at noon on August 23 at the Cornwall Library. The judges will be Bob Terrill, chairman, David Cadwell, Ella Clark, and Lisa Lansing. Prizes will be awarded in several categories, including most colorful, most visionary, most imaginative, goofiest, and least reliable. The judges may decide that none of the 40 maps on display meet their exacting standards. Should this occur, a referendum will be held to elect a new panel of judges.

—Phyllis Nauts

Snake at the Lake
On several sultry days last month a three-foot-long eastern banded water snake basked at the edge of the boat ramp of the Cream Hill Lake Association. Bare-ankled boaters stepped gingerly around the reptile. Head lifeguard Jen Heiny had spotted other water snakes in the water, but happily these seemed shy and kept away from swimmers.

Nobody seemed to know what to do about the sun-bathing serpent until one day Skip Kosciusko arrived on a motorcycle wearing a leather jacket, leather gloves, and a backpack. When Skip grabbed the snake, it smeared the dock with a foul-smelling fluid. He rinsed the snake off and let the kids and grown-ups who had gathered around admire it, and showed them how to stroke its scales. He explained to the kids that people shouldn't kill water snakes since they aren't troublesome.
poisonous, and then put the snake in his backpack and carried it off to a large, quiet, and unpopulated swamp.

—Lib Tobin Terrall

Library/Town $$$

July was filled with meetings about the Library/town offices’ need for expansion. On July 11 the joint task force heard estimates for three plans from Gerald Ricard, the estimator hired by the Cornwall Association. Ricard provided figures for the different plans in a way permitting true comparisons to be made with consistent numbers based on square footage and national estimating codes. But he pointed out that the specific figures are preliminary estimates only, not actual costs, which have to be based on detailed engineering plans and architectural drawings. None of the estimates include any payments by one group to the other, nor do they include the cost of purchasing the Monroe-Bodkin building, architectural fees, or furnishings.

Option A, in which both the town offices and the Library remain in the present buildings, with expansion and a usable second floor, is estimated at $1,610,020. Option B, in which the Library moves to Monroe-Bodkin and the Town expands in the present buildings, is estimated at $246,982, consisting of the cost of the town offices expansion at $91,388, and the library move at $155,593. Option C, in which the Town moves to Monroe-Bodkin and the Library expands in the present buildings, is estimated at $1,051,883, with the cost of the Library expansion estimated at $825,408, and the Town move at $226,474.

The following day Rick Wolkowitz explained his and Ben Gray’s position as to owners of Monroe-Bodkin to the task force and said that, as in all real estate transactions, a price for the property would be determined by an offer followed by negotiations. He also said that although a school is the most likely buyer of the three main Marvelwood buildings, if the Town and Library boards expressed enthusiasm for the purchase of Monroe-Bodkin, the owners would be willing to risk taking the building out of the school group (possibly making it less attractive to a school buyer). He also indicated that while he and Ben Gray are not in a position to give the public information, likely to take place in September, the Cornwall Association will underwrite a mailing to give everyone in town all available facts and figures, and a walk-through date will be set for Monroe-Bodkin. Following the hearing, the task force will recommend a single proposal to be presented to the town for a vote.

—Anne Baren

Please Watch Out For Kids!

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway is troubled because he has gotten several calls about kids who just missed being hit by cars or trucks. He is asking everyone to be careful: “Parents should know that highways are not playgrounds, and kids need a safe place to play other than town roads. But kids also use the roads for biking and walking. Motorists should be aware that the little travelers are everywhere now. They are often difficult to see because of their size and curves in the roads. Please drive slowly.” —The Editors

Red Sox Finish On Top

Congratulations to the Cornwall Red Sox for winning the tri-town Little League championship. The league consists of seven teams from Cornwall, Kent and Sherman. The Red Sox finished the regular season in first place with a record of ten wins and two losses. The Red Sox beat the Kent Tigers in an exciting two-game championship series and brought the championship trophy home to Cornwall.

The team was led to victory by the strong pitching arms of Dan Hammond and Stefan Wolf. Other infielders were Will Evans, Brian Lynn, Ben North, and Cale Williamson. Outfielders were Josh Bate, Damian Davis, Tim Freyberg, Joey Gantner, Amanda Hunter, Stuart Jones, and Kyle Whitney.

Umpires for the season from Cornwall included Ted Cheney, Nick Hunter, and Tyler Grimes. Coaches included Rick Lynn, Dave Williamson, Mark North, and Rob Hunter. Sue Williamson was the team’s official scorekeeper.

—Rick Lynn

July Scene on the Green

Sack races, three-legged races, water balloon toss, the limbo, street dancing led by Natasha Cole—an enthusiastic crowd of mostly children turned out on the Cornwall Green for these and other events at the July Fest, Park and Rec.’s July Fifth celebration of the Fourth of July.

Led by pied piper and entertainer Skip Hunt, the kids rode their patriotically decorated bicycles, tricycles, and what-have-you in the annual children’s day parade. One of the high points of the day was the watermelon seed spitting contest, judged for accuracy, distance, and style. Some seeds spread widely, some were chin-stickers only. Another high point was the tug of war: the losers were dragged happily through a wall of water sprayed by the Fire Department pumper, and then Alphabet Joe Gwadzakas and Adam Fischer aimed the hose in the air and sprayed everyone they could get.

—The Editors
Letters to the Chronicle

last five years. I love Cornwall, and love to spend time at the lake with friends that I see every year.

Today, while I was in Sandy's living room with my cousin Marisa and Eli Ingersoll, I looked out the window and saw a black bear. It was real close to the window. Eli and I jumped up and yelled, "Marisa!!! Look, a bear!" Marisa came running over just in time to see it running into the woods. The screams scared the bear, but brought Sandy running down the stairs, too late to see the bear. Marisa, Eli, and I were scared and excited. I called my mother and father in Boston to tell them the news. Uncle Dave said that I should write you, because people in Cornwall love to hear about these types of stories.
—Ben Wright

CHENEY BLOOMS

I wish to express my appreciation to Lynn Cheney, who has for two years volunteered her talents designing the exquisite flower gardens in front of the Cornwall post office. Everyone who has entered the building has high praises for the beautiful assortment of bleeding hearts, silver daisies, impatients, tulips, and many other varieties. There is always a surprise added when Lynn returns here on evenings or weekends. This year we also have a cherry tomato bush. Everyone in Cornwall gives their thanks to Lynn, who is so kind and a well-known designer of flower gardens.
—Liane Dunn, Postmaster, Cornwall

The Lottery In Cornwall

Over $100,000 a year is bet in Cornwall on the wide array of gambling games offered by the Connecticut State Lottery. That comes to an average of about $70 a year for every man, woman, and child in town.

One theory—that the state highway crew is responsible—appeared to be more guess than fact. Further research finally revealed that the late Oscar Huempfner, once the owner (in the late '40s) of the land behind the frog, was the first to daub paint on the rocks, creating the monster head that still thrusts out of the roadside. Some Corndollans report that the creature (not yet painted) was in evidence at least ten years earlier.

Who was the most recent of the en plein air Picassos to do a touching-up of the frog? This reporter was given the name of a suspect, but telephone messages to the designated artist were unanswered. However, word came around from those in the know that the painter and others involved wanted to keep their identities secret.

Who were some of the earlier painters? They are as yet unknown. Perhaps, as Marc Simont suggests in his illustration in the June issue, the frogs themselves did some painting, thereby honoring their noble heritage while seeking recognition as an endangered species. Hmm—maybe. So—let it all remain a mystery. After all, mystery lends enchantment. I'm all for that.
—Ken Keskinen

Quilters' World

A handmade quilt tells the tale of a sewing circle and a scrap basket. Long ago, quilting bees provided an opportunity for the women of the community to socialize.

Each Tuesday evening, members of the Northwest Corner Quilters' Guild meet at the United Church of Christ to evoke the past and fabricate for the future. Recently, the Guild has been working to restore and complete a beautiful Cornwall heirloom quilt. Donated by Dorothy Sandmeyer, the quilt was started by Ralph Sandmeyer's aunts Martha, Kate, and Harriet over 50 years ago. The Sandmeysers used a Flying Geese pattern and a palette of warm pinks, bright blues, and buttery yellows.

The quilt will be displayed at the Guild's annual Quilt Show at UCC on Saturday, September 20 (the same day as the Agricultural Fair). Raffle tickets will be on sale. For just $1 this rare work of collaborative Cornwall art could be yours.
—Susan Lilly Ott

That Giant Rocking Chair

Have you been missing the giant rocking chair that was in the Cornwall Bridge triangle for much of the winter? And wondering where it went? And maybe even wondering where it came from in the first place?

Ian Ingersoll, whose workshop fabricated the chair, says it was designed by Barbara Droughel, visual arts teacher at M.I.T., under a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The chair was originally shown in a sculpture exhibit at the Katonah (New York) Museum. When that show ended, Ian was asked to care for the chair until Droughel could find a permanent home for it. He installed it where we all could see and enjoy it, and where it inspired Cornwall residents to provide the chair with an occupant—Edward, the straw man, with his various accouterments.

After the long winter Edward was beginning to get a bit shabby and some people were getting unhappy about that. Just about that time Droughel found a permanent home for the chair (but not Edward) in a museum in Cambridge. So the chair is not only safe for a long time to come but probably being enjoyed by many more people than in Cornwall or even Katonah.
—Hanna Grossman

Frog Mystery Remains

From the swamps of myth and memory rises the frog of history to croak answers to the question, Who paints the frog on Route 7 south of Cornwall Bridge?

One theory—that the state highway crew is responsible—appeared to be more guess than fact. Further research finally revealed that the late Oscar Huempfner, once the owner (in the late '40s) of the land behind the frog, was the first to daub paint on the rocks, creating the monster head that still thrusts out of the roadside. Some Corndollans report that the creature (not yet painted) was in evidence at least ten years earlier.

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The Lottery In Cornwall

Over $100,000 a year is bet in Cornwall on the wide array of gambling games offered by the Connecticut State Lottery. That comes to an average of about $70 a year for every man, woman, and child in town.
and is used to support the budget. Retail sales centers, like Baird’s and The Berkshire Country Store, get 5 percent of the receipts as their commission. The remaining 4 percent covers Lottery administration and overhead.

This sharing of proceeds means that the average return on a ticket is not nearly as good as if you played roulette in Foxwoods or Las Vegas, which returns about 95 percent to bettors after each turn of the wheel. In fact, it’s not quite as good a rate of return as I remember getting from the illegal “numbers” sellers when I was at M.I.T. But it seems to be good enough for those who keep playing in the hope of a big win—or at least of breaking even.

To complete my research on the Lottery, I first went to Baird’s and bought two $1 “instant gratification” tickets on behalf of the Cornwall Chronicle. Karen Collins, the salesperson, showed me how to scratch off the silver covering to reveal whether any of my six numbers matched. The first card, on a game called Rub-A-Dub Doubler, was a loser. But the second card produced three matching numbers! Karen calmed my excitement by pointing out that the Chronicle had only won one dollar.

Caught up in the swing of things, I immediately reinvested the Chronicle’s winnings in a Cash Five Quick Pick. Not to be outdone, KC Baird matched my wager with another dollar. His proceeds, too, were pledged to the Chronicle’s readers.

Baird’s to see the face, I revealed both my three-card poker hand and the show will continue on Saturday, Sunday and from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. Thanks to the Mohawk Ski Area, the show will again take place in the Mohawk Ski Lodge.

Cornwall Cup: Sign up now to play in the Cornwall Drug & Alcohol Prevention Council’s annual “Cornwall Cup” soft-ball games, to be held Saturday, September 6, at the Cornwall Consolidated School, 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. Organized to promote good sportsmanship and friendly competition between the three Cornell’s, the games are inter-generational and family-style. West Cornwall now holds the trophy and will be challenged by teams from Cornwall Village and Cornwall Bridge. To play, call your team captain: Cornwall Village, Jerry Blakey (672-6516); Cornwall Bridge, Bill Dinneen (672-6740); West Cornwall, Susan Williamson (672-4813). Players must be in the sixth grade or older. First 20 to sign up receive a free CDAPC T-shirt, designed by Jessie Bate, who won the design contest for the 1997 T-shirts.

Paint the Town: Ochre, puce, purple, whatever! Artists of all ages and outlooks are invited to paint West Cornwall on Saturday, August 23. (People are encouraged, not required, to paint their pictures that day.) Finished pictures will be for sale at a silent auction from 5 to 8 P.M. at the Hughes Memorial Library, with refreshments provided by local establishments. Come eat, drink, buy a picture, and benefit Cornwall Extrax for Kids. Questions? Call Phyllis Naults, 672-6608.

Art in Cornwall: When the map show closes at the Library, Erica Prud’homme will exhibit watercolors of Umbria and Maine from August 25 through October 11. Elizabeth Perry will be exhibiting watercolors and oil paintings of flowers during the month of August at the National Iron Bank in Cornwall Bridge.

Stretch Exercise: classes led by Alice Cadwell in the Town Hall, free and open to all, now meet on Monday mornings from 8:30 to 9:30 as well as on Wednesday evenings at 5 and Friday mornings at 8:30.

Rummage Triumphant: A happy break in the steamy weather helped propel bargain hunters to the UCC Woman’s Society annual rummage sale on July 19. For the first time, clothing items were all in the former Marvelwood Dining Hall, and, after checking out the goodies at the Parish House, a steady flow of people followed a T-shirt trail to the new sales premises. Well over $12,000 was raised at the sale.

Gannett Show: The Historical Society will have an exhibit of drawings by Ruth Gannett (1876-1979), including books she illustrated, opening Saturday, August 16. Open Saturdays, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M., and Tuesdays from 9:30 A.M. to noon.

Flash! Until mid-August, absolutely free, the Cornwall Library has trial access to Electric Library, an Internet source of full-text magazine and journal articles. Come in quick while this service is available!

CCC Registration: The Cornwall Child Center will be open for fall registration on Wednesday, August 27, 10 A.M. to noon. Anyone with questions or who is unable to attend may phone director Pam Brehm at her home (824-1289).

Library Book Sale: Please bring books—new or good condition, and preferably recent—to the Cornwall Library for the annual book sale, to be held Columbus Day weekend.