



VARNA NEWS

INFORMATION AND ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR THE VARNA COMMUNITY



On a recent Saturday afternoon the Varna Community Center was buzzing with geography questions & answers. There was also laughter. Here’s what some participants had to say when GeoWhiz was done: **“Thanks for doing this! It was great!” “Would come again.” “Harder [than expected] but very fun.”** Three-person teams with members from Varna, Ithaca, Cornell, Ithaca College and Candor competed to answer the most questions correctly. The audience was made up of folks who came to cheer on family members or just to see what GeoWhiz was all about.

Questions were projected on the wall where everyone could see them, teams wrote their answers on white boards and held them up when time was called. Prof. Jake Brenner from Ithaca College presided as judge and scorekeeper. Prizes were awarded for the most points earned and for the last team standing after the elimination round. There were also prizes for the best wrong answer (*‘Lake Ontario’* - one team’s answer to every question that involved a lake) and best team name (*‘Bad L’atitudes’*). Winners were delighted by the prizes donated by *Roses Home Dish, Varna Auto Supply, Bell’s Auto, Dyce Lab for Honey Bee Research, and Collegetown Bagels.*

In addition to providing a fun Saturday afternoon event, GeoWhiz raised funds for the VCA through donations from individuals and *Jim Ray Homes; Tompkins Financial Corporation; Guttman and Reiter Attorneys at Law; Strebel Planning Group, and McGuire Family of Dealerships.* Also, *The History Center in Tompkins County* promoted GeoWhiz and reviewed Tompkins County questions for accuracy.

The recent quiz was a trial to try out logistics. Based on feedback, the GeoWhiz planning team has concluded that *GeoWhiz* has the potential to be an ongoing educational offering for the wider community as well as an annual fundraiser for the VCA. While the recent GeoWhiz focused on local and US geography, from here on, GeoWhiz questions will cover the whole world.

The first full-scale, annual GeoWhiz event will take place November 10 2018!

FREESE RD. BRIDGE PROJECT UPDATE

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Preliminary design	
• Draft design	Mar. 2018
• Public info meeting #2	Apr. 2018
• Final design report	May 2018
• Design approval	Jul. 2018
Final design	
• Advance detail plans	Nov. 2018
• Plan, specs & estimate	Feb. 2019
• <u>submittal</u>	Feb. 2019
• Authorization to Advertise	Feb. 2019
Bidding and Award	
• Advertisement	Mar. 2019
• Award	May 2019

Construction: May - November 2019

Timeline for Freese Rd. bridge project presented by *Barton & Loguidice* at the public meeting on January 10 in Varna.

The Town of Dryden’s application for funding to rehab the Freese Rd. bridge was approved last fall; the Town Board then appointed a committee to select an engineering firm to complete a design for the project. Varna residents Laurie Snyder and David Weinstein were on the committee that chose the firm of *Barton & Loguidice* (<http://bartonandloguidice.com>) This company was selected because they had previously dealt with historic projects that involved community input.

On January 10, a public information meeting (PIM) was held where representatives from *Barton & Loguidice* and the *NYS Department of Transportation (DOT)* gave an overview of the bridge project. Doug Mills from DOT cited DOT guidelines for retaining a one-lane bridge, including the fact that a one-lane bridge can have a maximum of only 350 vehicles per day. Recent traffic counts for the Freese Rd. bridge average 2000 vehicles per day, so Mr. Mills stated the existing bridge must be replaced with a two-lane bridge. This evoked many questions and comments from citizens who, by-and-large, favored preserving the bridge as a one-lane structure. (Bridges in Forest Home have ~4000 vehicles per day!)

Before the meeting on January 10, the Town did not plan to have citizens actively involved in the bridge project. However, due to strong push back from citizens, a citizens committee has now been convened by the Town. The committee, with representation from Varna, Ellis Hollow, Tompkins County legislature, and Historic Ithaca Preservation Services, held its first meeting on January 22 at the Varna Community Center under the leadership of Kathy Servoss, member of the Dryden Town Board.

Upcoming meetings of the Citizens Bridge Committee are scheduled for: **Monday Feb. 5 @ 6pm**, **Monday Feb. 12 @ 5:30pm**, **Monday Feb. 19 @ 6pm**, **Monday Feb. 26 @5:30pm**. Meetings will be at the Varna Community Center and are open to all interested parties. To learn more, email Kathy Servoss: kservoss@dryden.ny.us

To receive the VARNA NEWS fast and in color, email: newsletter@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org



2018 VCA Board of Directors

Sue Heath
Mike Pitzrick
Scott McArt
Melissa Miller
Jess Sofen

Officers:

Jan Morgan - chair
Laurie Snyder - vice chair
Simon StLaurent - treasurer

Everyone is welcome to attend meetings of the VCA board. Come and see this dynamic group in action and get a taste of what it would be like to be a board member. Please contact Jan (chair@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org) (607-256-1617) if you are interested in serving your community.

The board meets monthly and deals with issues and projects designed to improve the quality of life in Varna. At this time, there are three open seats on the board. We are especially looking for someone to learn about being treasurer, as Simon plans to retire from that position at the end of 2018.

This year, meetings will be held at the Varna Community Center, Monday evenings at 7:30. Upcoming meetings will be: Monday Feb. 16 at 7:30 pm and Monday April 2 at 7:30 pm. The schedule is also posted on the VCA website: www.VarnaCommunityAssociation.org

The VCA is a 501c3 non-profit corporation. EIN 16-605-2986

Community Solar Access (from the Town of Dryden website: www.dryden.ny.us)

Dryden Residents wishing to sign up for community solar:

Distributed Sun is working on setting up a webpage for reservations. In the meantime, you can send them an email and they will reach out to you when sign ups can actually begin. Address your email to: info@localcommunitysolar.com

KNITTERS and CROCHETERS

Come and join us as we share our skills. We will meet at the Varna Methodist Church (965 Dryden Rd.) on the SECOND and FOURTH Sundays of each month from 3 - 5 pm.

Questions? Call Sis Johnson at: (607) 272-6806



HAMLET OF VARNA ONLINE

Stay in touch with neighbors by joining the 'Hamlet of Varna' at NextDoor.com Lost cats, event reminders, help with finding a reliable contractor - these are examples of notices that get posted. It's an easy way to keep up with what's going on in Varna and nearby neighborhoods.

AMAZON SMILE

Do you shop at amazon.com? You can easily set up your account so that 0.5% of each purchase goes to the VCA. Sign up at smile.Amazon.com It costs you nothing to do this, and the VCA will benefit from your thoughtfulness. Thanks!

VARNA NEWS SPONSORS

Thanks go to these Varna businesses for giving financial support to the Varna News. The newsletter is sent to over 500 addresses in Varna:



GOLD LEVEL

- Jim Ray Homes, Inc.
- Lifestyle Properties
- Varna Volunteer Fire Company

BRONZE LEVEL

- Plantation Inn
- Rose's Home Dish

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday May 12 FOOD TRUCK RALLY & BEER TASTINGS! at the Varna Community Center

Pancake Breakfasts in Varna - Best Around!

8am to noon

Feb. 11, Mar. 11, Apr. 8, May 13

Varna Community Center

Featuring made-to-order pancakes, waffles, French toast, homemade unsalted butter and whipped cream, breakfast meats, scrambled eggs, hash browns, fresh fruits, breakfast breads, orange juice, and coffee, tea or hot cocoa. Prices: Adults \$8, Seniors \$7.00, ages 5-12 \$7.50, age 5 and under free.

Volunteers get a free breakfast! **To volunteer, contact Susan Simmons sasrvcs121@yahoo.com**

Would you like to help plan the next GeoWhiz event? The planning team would be happy to hear from you! Email GeoWhiz@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org or call Jim at (607)256-1617



NEWS FROM VASP

www.VarnaAfterSchoolProgram.com

The Varna After School Program kicked off 2018 with lots of fun and play! We spent January engaged in winter themed crafts and activities such as the coffee filter snowflakes decorating our windows. January 15 was a full day smorgasbord of winter fun, with icicle art, snow painting, snow slime and soap snow balls. We also welcomed VCA board member Laurie Snyder, as she helped children make mobiles. The Pre-K room has been reading weekly stories associated with the alphabet. We ended the month with the letter "N". Although there have been chilly winter days, we are still playing outside, making snowmen, snow angels and sliding down the back hill. Follow our Facebook page "Varna After School Program" to keep up with our busy days!

VASP is currently providing jobs to five employees, plus two students through Cornell's Work Study Program. VASP is averaging 30 students a day, PreK - 5th grade, from six out of eight elementary schools in the Ithaca City School District. There some spaces available for the rest of this school year, so if you know of someone looking for great after school care, please consider VASP.

****If you would like to volunteer in your community, VASP is always accepting volunteers to play with children and assist in activities anytime between 2:30-5:30pm****

Wish List: **Pick up can be arranged**

- Snow pants and boots
- Craft supplies (paper, popsicle sticks, feathers, pompoms, glue, tape etc)
- Monetary donations (tax deductible)

To contact Director Sarah Mahool
call (607) 272-2658 or email

VASP@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org

VARNA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION 2017 ANNUAL REPORT (highlights)

Chair's report (Jan Morgan): In 2017 the Varna After School Program (VASP) finances went from red to black, a fence went up around the playground, and we prepared to launch GeoWhiz. The Community Center was the site of public meetings for a *HeatSmart Tompkins* presentation, the *Community Foundation* Spring Awards Ceremony, *Borger Compression Station* expansion, and *Town of Dryden* meetings on consolidating sewer & water districts as well as Freese Rd. Bridge work. We collaborated in a variety of ways with volunteers from *Habitat for Humanity*, teens enrolled in *Cooperative Extension's Project LEAD*; and students in an *Ithaca College* Accounting class. We provided a \$250 award to Yasong Liu who won the VCA's TC3 Student Award essay contest. We look forward to serving Varna again in 2018.

Treasurer's Report (Simon St.Laurent): 2017 was an extremely challenging year financially. VASP had a successful first year in serving children and families, but it drained the VCA's finances substantially. Increased insurance requirements, payroll, and accounting costs meant we had to draw on endowment income to stay afloat. While kitchen rentals did well, kitchen expenses were also high. Thankfully the *Town of Dryden* helped us buy materials for the playground fence, *United Way* helped with VASP, and fundraising and donations outperformed their targets. While it was a wild ride, 2017 closed in the right direction with VASP doing well enough to start repaying the VCA's investment.

Secretary's report (Kim Simmons): There were 10 Board of Directors meetings in 2017. Secretary duties at meetings were shared among board members.

Program Committee: (Debby Lecoq, chair): Thank-you to ALL of the volunteers and the donations from private individuals and businesses that made our programs happen this year. Here are some examples: For Earth Day, an inter-generational event called, Birds and Bees, was presented by Scott McArt, Director of *Dyce Lab for Honey Bee Research*, and Jody Enck, President of the *Cayuga Bird Club*. *Reduce Waste Tompkins* was also there. In August we held the Summer Family Fun Fest; it was free and open to the public. There was a bounce house, face painting, a visit from the *Varna Volunteer Fire Co.*, and a Deputy Sheriff spoke about the DARE program. *Texas Roadhouse* played games with the children and *Home Depot* led building projects with the children. In the fall we hosted a presentation by researchers from Cornell and participated in citizen science data collection. There was a hike led by Angelika St.Laurent on land in Varna owned by the Town. We had several dish-to-pass food events and held our annual FREE Thanksgiving Dinner, thanks to Geoff and Dawn Potter, Bob and Carol Stone and families. There were nearly 200 meals served.

Property Maintenance Committee (Sue Heath, chair): Throughout the year, we maintained seasonal service maintenance of our equipment, building, and property. Grounds upkeep was completed by Don Heath who attended to mowing the lawns, back and front. *Cornell Facilities Management* donated a truckload of asphalt tailings to fill in potholes in the driveway. To conserve water, low flush toilets were installed with grant support from *Sustainable Tompkins*, and new fan/LED

fixtures, donated by *Finger Lakes Electric Supply*, were installed in the bathrooms. New exterior signage was funded by a grant from the *Legacy Foundation* and the 'Buy-A-Letter' campaign that brought in donations from the community.

Fundraising Committee: (Susan Simmons, chair) Fundraising activities in 2017 netted nearly \$4000. This includes net profits from 8 pancake breakfasts; a chowder dinner; a BBQ ribs dinner; donations at the Family Fun Festival and Thanksgiving dinner; refund bottle, can and ink cartridge donations; calendar sales; Amazon Smile rebates; the Buy-A-Letter campaign; online donations during the '*Giving is Gorges*' campaign; and donations from businesses and individuals for GeoWhiz. Grant funding was received in 2017 from *United Way of Tompkins County*, the *Legacy Foundation of Tompkins County*, and *Sustainable Tompkins*. Many thanks go to the the volunteers and generous donors who helped make all this possible!

Varna Community Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 4771
Ithaca NY 14852-4771

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Permit #312

CALENDAR OF VARNA EVENTS

Events are at the Varna Community Center, 943 Dryden Rd. (NY Rte. 366) unless otherwise indicated.

- Feb. 5, 6pm** — Freese Rd. Bridge Committee
- Feb. 11, 8am-Noon** — Pancake Breakfast
- Feb. 11, 3-5pm** — Knitters group at Varna Church
- Feb. 12, 5:30 pm** — Freese Rd. Bridge Committee
- Feb. 19, 6 pm** — Freese Rd. Bridge Committee
- Feb. 19, 7:30pm** — VCA Board of Directors
- Feb. 25, 3-5pm** — Knitters group at Varna Church
- Feb. 26, 5:30 pm** — Freese Rd. Bridge Committee
- Mar. 11, 8am-Noon** Pancake Breakfast
- Mar. 11, 3-5pm** — Knitters group at Varna Church
- Mar. 25, 3-5pm** — Knitters group at Varna Church
- Apr. 2, 7:30pm** — VCA Board of Directors
- Apr. 8, 8am to Noon** — Pancake Breakfast
- Apr. 8, 3-5pm** — Knitters group at Varna Church
- Apr. 22, 3-5pm** — Knitters group at Varna Church



Vivian shows off the mobile she made at the Varna After School Program.

