



# VARNA NEWS

INFORMATION AND ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR THE VARNA COMMUNITY

## MORE Student Housing in Varna

A student housing development company called Trinitas Ventures (<https://www.trinitas.ventures>) is in the process of purchasing property in Varna from Steve Lucente. While the buyers have no specific plans yet, they have scheduled an Open House where their representatives will be available to introduce and answer questions on the proposed multifamily housing development for the 16 acres off the corner of Dryden Road and Mt. Pleasant Road (where Mr. Lucente proposed to build the Varna II project several years ago).

As Ray Burger, Dryden's Director of Planning, has stated, it is very early in the process of this project. The Open House will be an excellent time to help Trinitas representatives get to know about Varna. We can tell them about our community, what Varna residents value about living here, and what we hope for in future development.

The Trinitas website includes this statement: "We develop properties that have broad housing appeal to students and the communities in which we build." On May 14 you can let the developers know what appeals to *your* community!

### Trinitas Ventures OPEN HOUSE

Monday, May 14 from 6:30-8:00

Varna Community Center

Free and Open to the Public

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## Freese Rd Bridge Project Update

A group of nearly 20 citizens from Varna and surrounding communities has been meeting since January to discuss plans for the Freese Rd. Bridge. Dryden Town Board member Kathy Servoss and Christine O'Malley, Preservation Services Coordinator of Historic Ithaca, have also been taking part.

While members of this 'Citizens Committee' have not been unanimous in favoring preservation of the Freese Rd. bridge as a one-lane structure, most of the committee's discussions and efforts have been aimed at ensuring that serious consideration is given to that option. To this end, the committee urged the Town Board to request that the engineering firm of Barton and Loguidice (B&L) draft multiple designs for the bridge.

B&L's draft design document became available in mid-April. It includes designs for rehabilitation of the current one-lane bridge, replacement with a new one-lane bridge, and a new two-lane bridge. You can search for the draft design document on the Town's website: [www.Dryden.ny.us](http://www.Dryden.ny.us)

The Freese Rd. bridge is described in the Town's Hamlet of Varna Community Development Plan as a characteristic of, and a gateway to, Varna. Because the existing bridge is eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the State Historic Places Office (SHPO) is reviewing the draft design document. SHPO's recommendations will be incorporated into the final design for the bridge. The final design is due by early summer.

A public information meeting regarding the bridge project will be held in May or June.

### Pancake Breakfasts in Varna—Best Around!

8am—12pm Sunday May 13

Varna Community Center

943 Dryden Rd

Featuring all you care to eat pancakes, waffles, French toast, sausage, bacon, ham, hash browns, sausage gravy, biscuits, fresh fruit, OJ, hot beverages, homemade unsalted butter & whipped cream. Adults \$8, seniors \$7, ages 5-12 \$7.50, under 5 free.

### VASP Vacation Day

May 15

### School District Voting

May 15, 2 pm—9 pm

Varna Community Center

All registered voters in Dryden District #4 are eligible to vote on the Ithaca City School District's 2018-19 budget and candidates for the School Board. For more information, see:

<http://www.ithacacityschools.org/districtpage.cfm?pageid=214>

### ICSD Budget Hearing

5:30 pm May 7

Board Room, ICSD Administration Building, 400 Lake St

### Varna Families Meet at the Playground

2-4:30pm, 2nd & 4th Sundays of June, July and August

June 10 & 24, July 8 & 22, August 12 & 26

Let's meet at the playground where we can run around, toss balls, be silly, chill out, and enjoy each other's company and the warm weather. Bring the kids, water, any lawn games you like, and maybe a blanket to spread out. Feel free to bring snacks for your family, or something to share with others (this part is optional!) Questions? Contact:

Jamaica Brown [jkb36@cornell.edu](mailto:jkb36@cornell.edu) 607-280-1196

### Federal Primary Election

June 26, 12pm—9pm

Varna Community Center

Democrats vote on which candidate will have the privilege of running for Congress against the Republican incumbent.

### Knitters Group

3-5pm, 2nd & 4th Sundays



This group of busy knitters creates hand-crafted items for charity. Some recent items have been comfort robes for hospice clients as well as infant hats and blankets. All levels of skill welcome. The group meets from 3 to 5pm on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month at the Varna Church (963 Dryden Rd). All levels of skill welcome. DONATIONS OF YARN REQUESTED – If you have yarn to donate please contact Sis Johnson (607) 272-6806.

### Food Truck Rodeo & Beer Tasting

Postponed until Fall. Watch for details in the next Varna News.

### Varna Remembers

Two long-time residents and contributors to the community died recently. We are saddened by their loss even while remembering the contributions they made to our hamlet.

**Catherine (Katie) Simmons** died at home in February. She raised her family in Varna. Katie's daughter Susan remembers zooming down Dryden Rd. on her bike as a youngster back when there wasn't so much traffic! With her husband Dale, Katie enjoyed seeing the world from an RV and sharing the sights with family. She was also a gardener and contributed to her community in various ways. Daughters Kim and Susan, and grandsons Aaron and Brad carry on Katie's legacy of helping others.

**Nancy Tillapaugh** was a long time resident of Varna with her husband Ken. Several years ago, Nancy relocated to Georgia to be near one of her sons. She there in March. Nancy was employed at Shew Furniture at the corner of Dryden Rd. and Oak Brook Dr. for more than twenty years. When the store closed Nancy made sure the store's red 'Welcome' mat was donated to the Varna Community Center. Nancy was a board member of the Varna Community Association and an active member of the Varna Seniors group.

### Varna Church News

963 Dryden Rd

607-277-7910

Varna United Methodist Church invites you to visit any Sunday. See calendar for events.

If you like to sing or play a musical instrument, join us at our mishmash musical. For more information call Alice at 607-272-2970.



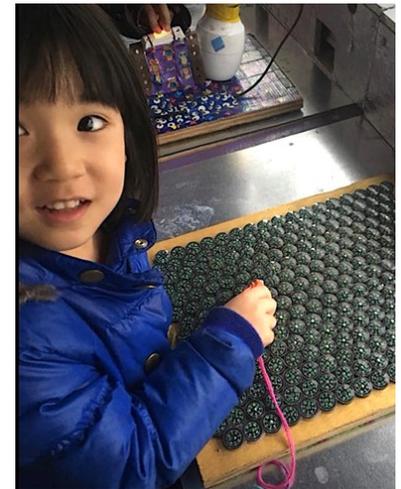
Mars and a puppet friend

## VARNA AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Varna After School Program is in full swing this spring. As students arrive to VASP from six different elementary schools from the Ithaca City School District, they are engaged with staff, children, free play, outside play and crafts. We are currently providing care to 24 students, PreK – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, and jobs to six employees, all with diverse backgrounds.

We've spent the past month at VASP celebrating what should be the change of seasons, with plenty of April shower crafts. Spring break brought us several visitors; the Physics Bus, Cornell Cooperative Extension nutrition program, Cornell K-9 unit and the Tompkins County Public Library. Children were able to learn about each special guest and participate in a special activity from each guest. We have also welcomed a volunteer from Ithaca College who facilitates music activities with us.

We're almost done with our reading through the alphabet in PreK, as we focus on the letter W and a great book called Woodpecker Wants a Waffle. Regardless of the weather, we have spent much time on our wonderful playground.



Joanna on the Physics Bus

Many thanks to Fingerlakes Electric Supply for donating LED lights and fan fixtures, and to Modern Living Rentals for donating the cost of installation!



Our deep gratitude goes out to Strelbel Fund for Community Enrichment for their continued commitment to supporting Varna Community Association.



### VASP LEADERSHIP CHANGES AHEAD – Jan Morgan, VCA chair



You may have noticed a recent job listing for Director of the Varna After School Program (VASP). Early this spring, VASP Director Sarah Mahool alerted us that she will not be returning after the end of this school year.

Sarah joined VASP in November of 2016, just a few months after the program started. She has done an outstanding job of making sure all VASP policies and procedures meet or exceed NYS requirements. She has hired and supervised talented and caring staff to work with the children. Inspections by the Child Development Council have all been positive with no deficiencies found!

Sarah has paid particular attention to safety in all aspects of the program. She has made sure there is always sufficient staff and has often helped out by providing care herself. And, she has kept well-organized records of all aspects of the program. In sum, Sarah has been a real asset to VASP and she will be missed. We wish her well!

We are in the process of hiring a new Director to take over the program at the start of the 2018-19 school year. The new Director will need to hire a replacement for Program Coordinator Gina Cusano-McLaughlin. Gina has done a great job this year planning a variety of creative, instructive, and fun activities for children. She is expecting a baby at the end of May and has decided not to continue at VASP next year. Gina's enthusiasm and kindness will be missed!

So, as you can see, there are changes in store for VASP, but the VCA Board will making sure the program continues in a way that maintains excellence. For more details, contact Jan Morgan, [morganj@tc3.edu](mailto:morganj@tc3.edu), 607-256-1617.



Kevin at show and tell

Varna Community Association, Inc  
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Ithaca, NY 14852-4771

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**2018 VCA Board of Directors**

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**Officers:**

Jan Morgan - chair  
Laurie Snyder - vice chair  
Simon StLaurent - treasurer  
Kim Simmons - Secretary

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

**Varna Events**

at Varna Community Center, 943 Dryden Rd except where noted

- May 13** Pancake Breakfast
- May 14** Trinitas Ventures Open House
- May 15** VASP Vacation Day
- May 15, 2-9 pm** School District Voting
- May 19** Chicken BBQ at Varna Church ... watch for smoke!
- May 26 10am-2pm** Varna Church accepting clothing donations
- Jun1** Giving Is Gorges event
- Jun 2** Clothing giveaway at Varna Church
- Jun 10, 3-5 pm** Varna Families Meet at the Playground
- Jun 24, 3-5 pm** Varna Families Meet at the Playground
- Jun 26, 12-9 pm** Federal Primary Election
- Jul 14** Chicken BBQ at Varna Church ... watch for smoke!



**Varna News Sponsors**

Thankyou for your generous support!

**Gold Level**

- LifeStyle Properties  
<https://www.lifestylepropertiesithaca.com>
- Strebel Fund for Community Enrichment  
<http://www.strebelcpa.com>
- Varna Volunteer Fire Company  
<http://varnafire.org>

**Silver Level**

- Modern Living Rentals  
[info@modernlivingrentals.org](mailto:info@modernlivingrentals.org)

**Bronze Level**

- Plantation Bar and Grill  
<https://www.facebook.com/ThePlant1285>
- Roses Home Dish  
[www.RosesHomeDish.com](http://www.RosesHomeDish.com)
- Varna United Methodist Church  
<https://www.facebook.com/VarnaUnitedMethodistChurch>



Thanks to Debby Lecoq for securing these sponsors!

## Are Pancake Breakfasts in Varna’s Future?

If you love the pancake breakfasts and want to see them continue, this is the time to let us know that you are willing to pitch in! For many years, Susan Simmons has done the lion's share of organizing the breakfasts. She’s done a great job, but once the breakfast on May 13 is done, Susan is retiring from those responsibilities. We probably won’t find someone to do everything she did, but the work can be split up among several volunteers.

Here are jobs that need to get done **before** each breakfast. Which job are you willing to do?

- Email notices to the media to advertise the breakfasts (We’ll provide the contact list) – once a month, two weeks before each breakfast
- Email the list of folks who usually volunteer to work at the breakfasts and keep track of who is available to work **to make sure we have enough help**. Send follow-up emails as needed. (We’ll provide the contact information) – once a month at least a week before the breakfast – two weeks ahead is better.
- Check at the Community Center to see what pancake breakfast supplies we have and make a list of what is needed. (We’ll provide access and the inventory check-list) Notify the shopping volunteer– once a month
- Order items for pick up (usually from Cortland Produce) and shop for supplies that are purchased from local stores. (Usually we shop at Clark's Shur Save in Dryden as they give us a discount on thick sliced bacon - a crowd pleaser!) -- once a month
- Put out the pancake breakfast sign the Sunday afternoon prior to the breakfast.– once a month
- Check in with the other volunteers who are taking care of the before-breakfast jobs. Make sure everyone is on track. Troubleshoot as needed – once a month
- Arrange tables, chairs, and other furniture the evening before the breakfast, set the tables (we’ll provide access and instructions) – once a month, 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday evening

If these jobs don't get done, then pancakes won't happen. Many of the **before** jobs only require sending emails and can be done on your own schedule.

To let us know how you will help, Contact Jan: [Chair@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org](mailto:Chair@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org) (607-256-1617)

THANK YOU! And remember – volunteers get free breakfast!

### CRASH COURSE

JUNE 1, 24hrs, online

NO HOMEWORK!

**Needed:** A crash bar for the glass door on the front of the Varna Community Center.

**Reason:** To ensure the safety of children and adults.

Currently, State and Town safety inspectors have said our front door must remain unlocked while there are children in the building. That means people who are not part of the Varna After School Program can walk in anytime. That happens - a lot! Most such visitors are harmless and good-natured, but the interruptions take After School Program staff away from the children in their care. And, sadly, there is always the outside chance that the next visitor might not be harmless.

**Your role:** Donate toward the cost of the new crash bar! We estimate the cost at \$1500. The installation will be pricey since our front door is all glass, and we'll need a keypad that allows parents to punch in a code and come into the building at any time.

**How to donate:** Along with dozens of other non-profits, the VCA is participating in Giving Is Gorges – a 24-hour online fundraiser that runs from 12:01am to midnight on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2018. It’s easy and it’s fun! Mark your calendar: **JUNE 1 – Giving is Gorges!** Here are ways to donate:

On June 1<sup>st</sup> visit [www.GivingIsGorges.org](http://www.GivingIsGorges.org) and search for “VARNA”. Follow the steps to donate using a credit card.

Write a check to “Varna Community Association” and put “Crash Bar” on the memo line. Send to Varna Community Association, PO Box 4771, Ithaca NY 14852-4771.

Bring a crash bar donation check or cash to the pancake breakfast on May 13.

**Your donation of any size will help us fund this upgrade to ensure the safety of our kids. Thank you!**



## Finding the Trails of Varna

Most maps of Varna just show you the roads, and might indicate natural areas. While we have many trails in the area, the maps available tend to be either very coarse or very partial.

Cornell Botanic Gardens has a few helpful maps. They offer a map of their properties west of Forest Home drive at:

[http://www.cornellbotanicgardens.org/sites/default/files/Orient.Map\\_brochure\\_0.pdf](http://www.cornellbotanicgardens.org/sites/default/files/Orient.Map_brochure_0.pdf)

They also have a map of their Monkey Run Natural Area at:

[http://www.cornellbotanicgardens.org/sites/default/files/Monkey\\_run.pdf](http://www.cornellbotanicgardens.org/sites/default/files/Monkey_run.pdf)

If you want a comprehensive map of the area, though, marked to indicate how popular given routes are, though, it's hard to beat the Strava heat map at:

<https://labs.strava.com/heatmap/#13.95/-76.44066/42.46760/hot/all>

Full access to the map requires having a Strava account, but this picture provides a view from January 2018. While it does have a street map layer, most of the detail is generated from people using fitness trackers and their phones to keep track of their workout activity. Strava assembles the map from data it collects from individuals who have opted in to sharing, creating a guide to places that are busy.

Unlike typical maps that show sizes of roads based on their status as highways or how many lanes they have, this one emphasizes places that people are running, walking, or biking. (There is a little activity from boaters on Fall Creek as well.)

Activity is concentrated on the left (west) side of the map, closer to the Cornell campus. Freese Road and Mount Pleasant Roads are the easternmost boundaries of intense activity, though the Monkey Run trails are also visible both north and south of Fall Creek. The Freese Road bridge is an important junction for a number of these routes, and the Freese Road curve looks busier than seems safe.

The Lehigh Valley (formerly Elmira Cortland and Northern) railbed is visible, though not as traveled as Route 366. That may change as the rail-trail moves forward. The most striking aspect to me is the relative quiet of Route 13, which was built to be very friendly to cars, but not much else. Even though the stretch north and east of Varna isn't limited access, pedestrians and bicyclists seem to shun it.

One area that I note is largely missing on the map is the Parke-Dabes Natural Area on the south side of Route 366, opposite 1176 Dryden Road. Apparently there aren't a lot of runners and hikers there, at least not runners and hikers who have opted into using fitness trackers!

Simon St.Laurent

