



# VARNA NEWS

## VCA TRAIL UPDATE

### Help out August 24-25

Hello Varna Community! I am Jonathyn Thornton of Boy Scout Troop #55. I plan to begin my Eagle Scout project at the VCA in the next several weeks. The first phase of the project will begin the weekend of August 23-25th.

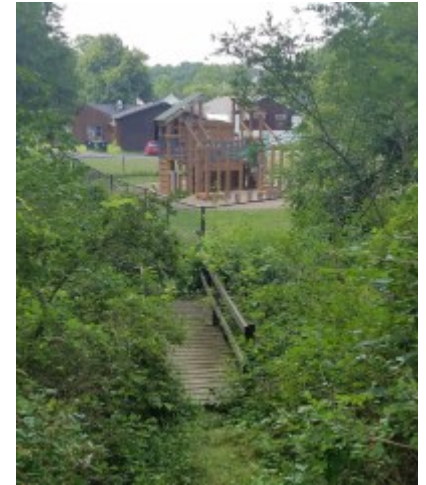
I plan to repair and expand the hiking trail from the VCA Playground to Hillside Acres. I intend to widen the trail, add wood chips, bridge wet spots, and improve signage. I also plan to build and install some wooden benches for hikers to use as spots to sit and enjoy the trees and wildlife.

I am seeking volunteers to help out **Saturday 8/24 and Sunday 8/25**. I will have 4 hour time blocks for volunteers to sign up. On Saturday the blocks will be 8am-noon, noon-4pm, and 4-8pm. On Sunday the time blocks will be 8am-noon and 12-4pm. In order to complete this project I will need help from my brother scouts and most importantly the Varna community.

Please consider signing up for a time slot or two. To make my project a success, I will need help from many. It would be awesome if I had 15-20 volunteers per time slot. Varna is such a wonderful community, which I had grown up in for 13 years, so I know we can all do this together to make a beautiful trail for all to enjoy. To sign up, visit <https://forms.gle/HKxcSmjWgVQTZwpz9>.

I am also asking community members to sponsor materials for the benches at \$50 per bench. A bench could be in memory of someone or could simply be for the benefit of the community. I will have a plaque placed on each donated bench if the person donating so chooses.

If you are interested in sponsoring a bench, please contact me at [jonathynthornton@gmail.com](mailto:jonathynthornton@gmail.com), or 607-200-4184.  
—Jonathyn Thornon



*The VCA trail, looking down to the bridge, playground, and community center.*

## FAMILY FUN FEST

We love having Family Fun Fest! This year it will be **August 18th, from 2-4pm**. Everyone is invited, and it is free, including ice cream given by Art Lecoq.

Come and play at the Varna Community Center, 943 Dryden Rd. Kids can jump in the bounce house, shoot baskets, build with Home Depot, slide and swing, do art projects, and eat popcorn. The Texas Road House Lizard will be coming to play. Everyone can blow bubbles with Amy Albright, Director of the Varna After School Program, build a railway lantern with a member of the Dryden Rail Trail Committee, and more! -Deb Lecoq

### Welcome, Students!

If you live in Varna, you are a member of the Varna Community Association. There are no dues. You are welcome to participate in any of the events and activities described in this newsletter. We look forward to meeting you!

## A New Island Rises in Varna

The commercial kitchen in the Varna Community Center has seen several changes this year that make the kitchen a cleaner and more efficient workspace. The last issue of the Varna News featured photos of new sinks in the kitchen. Since then, the old center island has been removed and replaced with a large heavy-gauge stainless steel table. Like the sinks, the table was paid for with grant money from the *Women Building Community* grant program of the *City Federation of Women's Organizations*. The work surface of the new table is three inches lower than the old island. This means it fits the industry average of 36 inches and is ergonomically correct for most cooks. Here's what one regular renter says:

*"The new [center] table in the Varna Community Center has helped us immensely. It is lower which makes it easier on our shoulders and hips. It also created more workspace so I can hire an additional person to help us which lightens our heavy work load."* Rose Arena, Chef and Owner, *Roseshomedish, LLC* [www.RosesHomeDish.com](http://www.RosesHomeDish.com)

Also popular with kitchen users are two new electrical outlets hanging over the center table. The wiring was professionally installed and paid for with rent from Rose's Home Dish and the other small business owners who use the VCA kitchen.



## A Musical Story

### Part 1: The Piano

A small piano in good condition was donated to the VCA by a friend in Caroline. She was happy to have the instrument go to a place where it will be used for community events, music activities for VASP, and so forth. The piano arrived at the Community Center thanks to a crew of strong young volunteers, a rented UHaul trailer, and Don Heath's trusty pickup and excellent driving skills.



*Piano movers: Matt Funicelli, Liam Moore, Jeremy Russell, Warren Russell*

### Part 2: The Dolly

The VCA joined hundreds of other groups in the annual online "Giving is Gorges" campaign to raise funds for local non-profits. Generous donors to the VCA's online campaign (plus several off-line donations) contributed enough to cover the cost of a

sturdy piano dolly. This means we'll be able to safely roll the piano around in the Community Center as needed for various events and also store it out of the way for pancake breakfasts, voting, etc. The dolly will arrive in time for the start of the school year and weekly visits from Ithaca College Music Education students who lead music activities with VASP students. Thanks to everyone who helped to make this piano adventure happen!

### Varna AfterSchool Program (VASP)

Looking for afterschool care for children in grades K-5? You can find care here, at the Varna Community Center. **Register now for VASP** for the 2019-20 school year! Contact Director Amy Albright at 607 272 2658 or [VASP@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org](mailto:VASP@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org).

### VASP awarded United Way FOCUS grant

In June, the VASP director attended an award ceremony at Dryden Middle School where students presented checks to support four nonprofit organizations. Each year a group of middle school students, with guidance from a faculty member, have \$2000 in United Way money to allocate to local non-profits. Dryden organizations submit applications that the students read and discuss. This increases students' awareness of what nonprofit groups contribute to the Dryden community. It also gives students experience in prioritizing needs and allocating money appropriately.

For the past several years, the VCA has been fortunate to receive funds through the FOCUS program. This year's award of \$405 is for "Fresh Food for Kids." VASP staff will use this money toward the purchase of fresh fruit and vegetable snacks for children in the after school program during the next school year. While \$405 does not cover the entire cost of providing nutritious snacks to VASP students, it is very helpful! - Jan Morgan



VASP Director Amy Albright (bottom left) with FOCUS students and other award recipients

### Freese Road Bridge Update

The Dryden Town Board has selected a new two-lane bridge to replace the existing 133-year-old historic bridge as its preferred design for the Freese Road bridge. The Board submitted their selection to the NY State Historic Preservation Office and the Federal Highway Administration. At this time, the Dryden Town Board is awaiting their approval or rejection.

The NY State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is aware that the Varna/Dryden community would prefer rehabilitation of the existing Freese Road Bridge, rather than a two-lane bridge replacement. The Varna Community Association is on record in support of preserving the current bridge since it is an historic cultural artifact that contributes to the unique character of the hamlet of Varna.

It's not too late to send an email or letter to the Dryden Town Board to let them know your thoughts about the bridge. Write to: [Supervisor@dryden.ny.us](mailto:Supervisor@dryden.ny.us) or Dryden Town Board, 93 East Main St. Dryden NY 13053. -Laurie Snyder

**Wishlist item: Towels of any size for VASP.**



Thanks to Bigsby Market for donating summer flowers for the front of the Community Center.

## GeoWhiz - November 2nd

It's not too early to get a team together for GeoWhiz, the VCA's annual geography quiz event. Teams of three will answer a variety of geography questions while competing for prizes and the honor of being named the 2019 GeoWhiz champions. Learn more at: [www.GeoWhiz.org](http://www.GeoWhiz.org).

Everyone is invited to come and watch the teams play. Audience members can also play along as questions are asked and answered. There will be refreshments too.

Questions will be about the geography of Tompkins County, the USA, and the world. Here are a few samples from GeoWhiz 2018:

- What was the 50th state admitted to the union?
- Which country has a larger land mass: Argentina or Chile?
- Which three Tompkins County towns were NOT part of the Military Tract?
- The Gobi desert lies partly in China and partly in what other country?

Interested in helping to plan this year's GeoWhiz? It's fun and you'll learn stuff too! Contact: Jan Morgan or Jim Skaley (607) 256-1617, [JESkaley@aol.com](mailto:JESkaley@aol.com) or [Morganj@tc3.edu](mailto:Morganj@tc3.edu)



## Tai Chi Classes Coming to Varna

The Taoist Tai Chi Society of the USA, Ithaca branch, will offer Tai Chi classes at the Varna Community Center starting in October.



Beginning classes will be offered Monday evenings at 6:30-8pm, Tuesday and Thursday at 11am, and Sunday morning, other than the second Sunday of the month, when the pancake breakfast is offered, at 9am. Continuing classes for those who already know the set will also be offered.

Contact information is 607-277-5491.

The Taoist Tai Chi® arts exercise the entire physiology, including the tendons, joints, connective tissue and the internal organs. The focused concentration required to practice the Taoist Tai Chi® arts occupies the mind, drawing it away from daily worries and tension. Practice of the Taoist Tai Chi® arts can develop an attitude of calm, compassion and reduced self-centeredness. Body, Mind, Spirit are all engaged in this practice.

The Taoist Tai Chi Society of the USA is a 501(c) charitable organization administered primarily by volunteers. Its mission is to make the benefits of the Taoist Tai Chi® arts available to all.

### Pancake breakfasts return

The VCA pancake breakfast will be starting up again on **September 8th, from 8am to 11am**. We always need volunteers to cook, serve, and clean, so let [simonstl@simonstl.com](mailto:simonstl@simonstl.com) know if you can help!



**Q:** When is a pile of rocks better than gold?

**A:** When **2 big truckloads** are **donated by RMS Gravel** and delivered for free to fix the Varna Community Center driveway.

**Thank You, Thank You RMS Gravel!**

And thanks to Art Lecoq for his help in making this happen

## The Varna United Methodist Church

If you live in Varna, you probably go by the little church at 965 Dryden Road every day. Did you know that in 1843 a couple of local families donated 2.3 acres of land to “the residents of Varna” and upon that land those same residents along with other neighbors built (from the ground up) the “Varna Community Church” and the Parsonage house which still stands directly to the north of it? In 1970, the “Elders” of the Church deemed it prudent to join the United Methodist Conference and guess what? We’re still standing and hold services **every Sunday at 11 a.m.**, and the Parsonage house (while not used by a Pastor & their family) is rented and provides income to maintain the Church.

176 years later, the little church with a big heart carries on many mission outreach activities. The Pew Knitters for Charity meets at church the 2nd and 4th Sunday of every month from 2-4 p.m. and creates lovely, warm items for various agencies in Tompkins County, among them The Cancer Resource Center, Franzisca Racker Center, area nursing homes, and local schools (donations of #4 yarn are greatly appreciated). Our small but generous congregation also donates non-perishable food items for monthly donations to the Town of Dryden Children’s Backpack Program, which provides meals to kids who might otherwise not have food on the weekends or during school breaks. We also organize Blood Drives for the American Red Cross and hand out bracelets for the elderly through the Alzheimers Foundation. We also

collect 10 oz. plastic or metal coffee cans with lids which we give to the Lansing Church for their Peanut Brittle Sale, eye glasses, hearing aids and neckties which are used to tie sleeping bags for the homeless. If you can donate anything, please leave it in the blue bin next to the main door of the Church.

On **August 24 from noon until gone** we’ll have our next **Chicken BBQ** and we’re adding the option of a **Smoked Pork Ribs Dinner. You must order the Ribs ahead of time** (pre-orders only). Call 607-272-6806 no later than Wednesday, August 7th to get details and pricing and to pre-order. In September we will have another clothing giveaway. If you have clothing (only) to donate, please bring it by on **September 7 between 1 and 4 p.m.** The Clothing Giveaway will be held **on Sat., Sept. 14 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.** – all are welcome. Our last Chicken BBQ for this season will be on Saturday, **September 21st** from noon til gone.

We’d like to thank all the kind souls who gather trash and recycling along the roadside and dispose of it, as well as the “handy men” who have recently power-washed the parsonage and the Church – you earn your wings each time you help and we want you to know that it’s noticed and appreciated!

While our weekly speakers may not be affiliated with the United Methodist Conference, we always have a speaker to deliver our message on Sunday from 11 - 12 who speaks to us about the grace and fellowship of Christianity. We hope you will join us some Sunday soon to meet some new friends. –Susan Simmons

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Thanks to [Jim Ray Homes](#), [Lifestyle Properties](#), the [Varna Volunteer Fire Company](#), and Rose’s Home Dish ([roseshomedish.com](http://roseshomedish.com)) for sponsoring this newsletter!

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## Planning and Zoning Updates

Trinitas still has not completed its application--so the project cannot go forward until that occurs. In the meantime, the Planning Board, at the request of the Town Board, did a preliminary SEQR review (SEQR is the state's process to determine if a project meets all environmental concerns).

Over four hours of public meetings, the Planning Board carefully reviewed the applicants documents, including the initial part-1 of the SEQR process filled out by the applicant. They determined that should the Town Board move the project forward, the Planning Board has advised the Town that the project should require a full environmental impact statement. This will require a scoping session in which

the public may ask for consideration of additional information not yet provided in Trinitas’ application. Trinitas also has to show that all storm water will be retained on site--still under review.

Finally, because of the size of the project the current “aged” water and sewer lines cannot accommodate the project. This will require that water and sewer mains will need to be replaced with larger capacity. Normally this cost will be borne by the sewer and water district and be reflected on local tax bills. It is possible that the Town could require that Trinitas pay for this upsizing of the sewer/water mains. If residents in the area are concerned regarding this project then they should send letters to the Town Board and/or attend Town meetings to express their views.—Jim Skaley

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Ithaca NY 14852-4771

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Pancakes / Waffles / French Toast /  
Bacon / Sausage / Ham / Fruit /  
Eggs (to order) / Omelets / Coffee /  
Hot Chocolate and more breakfast—  
**September 8th, 8am to 11am!** \$8  
adults, \$7 seniors, \$7.50 for kids 5-12.  
Kids under 5 eat free!

**Community Café Series** at the Varna Community Center, 943 Dryden Road.  
3rd Sunday, most months

**August 18, 2-4pm Family Fun Fest**

Varna's favorite end-of-the-summer event is back! There will be fun activities, food, displays, music, and more. (See page 1.)

**September 15, 3pm**

Community Cafe will feature Gabriel Tavares, voice and guitar, a local musician who collects guitars and writes his own songs.

**October 20, 3pm**

Amy Albright, Director of the Varna After School Program, will present a craft or activity. Amy is delightfully creative and she'll make this a fun event for all ages!



The VCA is a **United Way Funded Partner.**

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**Upcoming elections**

This year's General Election will be November 5th. There is one contested election. Three people, James Skaley (D), Loren Sparling (D), and Ron Szymanski (R) are running for two Town Council seats. Town Supervisor Jason Leifer (D), Town Justice Christopher Clauson (D), and Town Clerk Bambi Avery (D, R) are running uncontested.

The last day to register to vote in the November elections is **October 11**. Voter registration forms are available at the Community Center (943 Dryden Rd., Route 366).

**Save the Date:** The VCA's GeoWhiz geography quiz fundraiser will be returning on November 2, 2019. (See page 4.)