



VARNA NEWS



BOY SCOUT TO IMPROVE VCA TRAIL

Jonathyn Thornton of Boy Scout troop #55 is planning a project that will hopefully help him earn Eagle Scout status. At the April meeting of the Varna Community Association board of directors, Jonathyn described his plan to repair and expand the hiking trail from the VCA Playground to Hillside Acres. He explained that he intends to widen the trail, add wood chips, bridge wet spots, and improve signage. He also plans to build and install some wooden benches for hikers to use as spots to sit and enjoy the trees, and wildlife.

The VCA board unanimously approved Jonathyn's proposal and provided him with a letter of support. Jonathyn has also received a green light from the

Troop 55 Committee and he is now awaiting the final meeting with the Baden Powell Council Eagle Project Board for his final approval. He will work with other scouts and scout leaders to do the work sometime this summer. He would appreciate help from Varna volunteers too. If you can help, give Jonathyn your contact information and he will let you know when the work is scheduled.

Jonathyn is 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. Jonathyn 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 Jonathyn at jonathynthornton@gmail.com or 607-200-4184.

FREESE ROAD BRIDGE PROJECT UPDATE

There has been no announcement of a decision on the Freese Road bridge, and, as usual, we have no idea what might be going on behind the scenes. We do know that the Town, New York Department of Transportation, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and the Federal Highway Administration have all been weighing in.

The Town proposed replacing the existing bridge with a two-lane structure with new trusses. In my opinion, the Town Board reasoned that as long as the bridge had trusses (upright structures along both sides of the bridge), people in Varna would be happy and wouldn't care if the trusses were new rather than historic. This option did not pass muster with SHPO. SHPO informed the Town that the only option that would not damage the historic bridge would be to keep it in place as a pedestrian bridge and construct a new two-lane bridge just downstream. That option would have required taking private property from three separate property owners. Fortunately (again, in my opinion) the Town passed a resolution saying that option was unacceptable.

So, it seems, we are now in uncharted waters where

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all the decision-making parties are failing to acknowledge that the best solution -- in terms of preserving history, minimizing cost, avoiding environmental disruption, keeping traffic realistically slowed and unimpeded -- would be to renovate the current structure and keep it as a one-lane bridge. — David Weinstein

CU HERP CLUB VISITS

On St. Patrick's Day, the Cornell Herpetology Club returned to the Varna Community Center to show off their snakes. Students brought reptiles that visitors—both kids and adults—could learn about, touch, and even pick up!



Photos by Laurie Snyder - Bradley (left) and Eva M. (right).

HELLO DOLLY!

Is Dolly Parton coming to Varna?? Um, no. This is about a different kind of dolly – the kind that helps move stuff around. The VCA is in the process of acquiring a free, spinet-sized piano for the Community Center. The piano will need to permanently sit on a special dolly so the piano can easily be moved around in the building. Believe it or not, a piano dolly costs hundreds of dollars. Good used pianos abound. Good used piano dollies, not so much. That's why we are holding a HELLO DOLLY fundraising campaign. The goal is \$750, to be raised through Giving is Gorges.

During last year's Giving is Gorges campaign the VCA raised money to put a crash bar on the front door of the Community Center. Donors were generous and the crash bar has made the door safer. This year we are asking for contributions for a piano dolly.

Having a small piano with a full sized keyboard will be a big help for the Music Education students who come each week from Ithaca College to do music activities children in the Varna After School Program. The piano will be also available for the Community Café 'Jam for Dad' event on June 16, and it will encourage other musical happenings for the future! The dolly will also allow the piano to be moved safely out of the way for pancake breakfasts, voting, and so forth.



To donate online and help us reach our goal, please go to www.GivingisGorges.org and search for Varna. You can contribute any time between now and midnight on JUNE 12. Thank You!

If you prefer to write a check, make it out to 'Varna Community Association' and put 'dolly' on the memo line. Send your check to: VCA, PO Box 4771, Ithaca NY 14852-4771.

TRINITAS PROJECT UPDATE

The application of Trinitas Ventures Corp. to build a 550+ bedroom student housing development off Mt. Pleasant Rd. in Varna continues to be incomplete. **The project has not been approved by the Town Board and work has not started.** There has, however, been some activity on the property as the Town's consulting engineering firm (T.G. Miller) requested that borings be taken to assess the stability of the ground in various places on the proposed site. At its April meeting, the Town Planning Board, approved a resolution recommending that Trinitas complete a full environmental review of the project (i.e., a "draft Environmental Impact Statement"). The Planning Board's resolution and notes describing the reasons for the recommendation of a full environmental review are being sent to the Town Board. —Jim Skaley

DO YOU PAY AN ELECTRIC BILL? SAVE 10% ON ELECTRIC BILLS and SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY!

WHO: Any renter or homeowner in Dryden who pays a NYSEG bill.

SAVE 10%: The new solar farms in Varna are managed by *Solar Farms New York*. Sign up with *Solar Farms New York* for energy from the sun and you will be guaranteed a 10% discount on your electric bills. The discount is available to Town of Dryden residents. You'll also get a \$50 Visa gift card!

SUPPORT THE VCA: *Solar Farms New York* will donate \$100 to the Varna Community Association each time someone enrolls and uses the promo code: **VARNA**

IF YOU ALREADY SIGNED UP: Sign up again!

Solar Farms New York - <https://solarfarms.formstack.com/forms/varna>

Dryden residents who previously signed up with *Solar Farms New York* (**or with *Distributed Sun***) will receive the improved savings. Sign up again now! Enroll with *Solar Farms New York* today and receive Guaranteed Savings on solar credits applied to your monthly bill.

Your discount is guaranteed with no contract, no obligations. For example: Town of Dryden residents receive their solar credits on their NYSEG bill for \$100 in solar credits. *Solar Farms New York* will then bill the customer \$90 - that's a 10% savings!

You will be supporting green initiatives and New York State's Clean Energy Standard; a mandate to get 70% of electricity New York State from renewable sources by 2030

The Varna Community Association will receive \$100 from Solar Farms New York for each new subscriber. You receive a \$50 Visa gift card Enrollment Bonus when you use the code **VARNA**, and receive an additional \$25 bill credit when you enroll in AutoPay

You can feel good about supporting your Community Association and supporting local jobs in renewable energy.

Getting started is easy! You'll need:

Your NYSEG POD ID is located on page 3 of your NYSEG bill. It starts with N01. The enrollment process at *Solar Farms New York* will help guide you.

Billing information (ACH or credit card) - just like a hotel reservation, this secures your enrollment. No charges will be made until after NYSEG applies credits to your bill.

Ready?

Visit <https://solarfarms.formstack.com/forms/varna>

Enter your email address, and click **Get Started**.

Thank you for supporting your Community Association!





Varna After School Program Updates

VASP is celebrating the return of warm weather! The program benefits greatly from the VCA's community playground and equally enjoys the nature that surrounds it. There was much excitement over spring break, as VASP's full day programming allowed for themes such as Minute to Win It and Carnival. As Varna After School moves into the final months of the academic calendar, we remember all the friends we have made this year and have begun to think ahead to next.

VASP has begun to register children K-5 from ICSD schools for 2019-2020. Varna After School delivers safe, developmentally appropriate, educational and engaging opportunities for individual discovery, large and small group social interactions, and outdoor play.

VARNA KIDS HAVE CLEAN HANDS!

The new portable handwashing station at the Varna Community Center is a big hit with children enrolled in the Varna After School Program. The miniature sink on wheels provides warm water and makes hand hygiene easy and fun. It was purchased with grant funding from the Legacy Foundation of Tompkins County. The new handwashing unit means that children can wash up independently right in the room where activities are held. This promotes children's independence, encourages hand hygiene, and frees up VASP staff to continue working with other children. (Previously, every time a child needed to wash their hands, a staff member had to interrupt work with other children and escort the child to the bathroom sink at the back of the building.) We are grateful to the Legacy Foundation for providing this upgrade to our childcare facilities!



At VASP: 'Cookie Face', a Minute To Win It game where a cookie is placed on the forehead and the player must use only face muscles to move the cookie to their mouth.

NEW PANCAKE BREAKFAST OPTION

Matthew Perry keeps adding more things to Varna's monthly pancake breakfasts. He makes the whipped cream and butter fresh every time, and has included fruit and mint in the cream at times. The waffle decorations keep getting more exciting. He added eggs to order a while ago, and in March put something new and delicious on the menu: omelettes.



Varna Volunteer Fire Company Open House

The Varna Volunteer Fire Company held an open house on April 27th and 28th, inviting the public to see them, serving hamburgers, hot dogs, and cookies, and providing fire safety information. Visitors could see the latest in emergency medical equipment, explore the trucks, and try on the gear.



Thanks to the [VVFC](#) and Rose's Home Dish (roseshomedish.com) for sponsoring this newsletter!

Over One Hundred Served (in a morning)

April 14th was the busiest breakfast in recent history. While most breakfasts serve 60 to 80 customers (and 15-20 volunteers), this breakfast counted 85 paying customers, had 12 people use their Buy-5-Get-1-Free cards, and also fed 20 volunteers. (The record, only achieved once and hopefully never again, is 192 paying customers.)

The next breakfast will be Mother's Day, May 12th.



Community Café Series—2-4 pm, 3rd Sunday most months

At the Varna Community Center, 943 Dryden Road.

FREE and open to the public – all ages welcome!

May 19, 2-4pm—‘Smart Gardens’

A conversation with Laurie Snyder (Varna gardener) and Monika Roth (from Cornell Cooperative Extension) about Deer-Resistant and Pollinator-Friendly gardening. Also, Celeste Rakovich from the Tompkins County Health Department will tell us how to stay safe from ticks while enjoying outdoor activities. Light refreshments available.

June 16, 2-4pm—‘Jam for Dad’

This is a Father’s Day musical jam session! Bring an instrument, your voice, or just come and listen to your neighbors play. Joe Haines will take the lead on keyboard. You can enjoy jam-enhanced refreshments too.

Primary elections will be on June 25, noon - 9pm

July 21, 2-4pm—‘Poetry Slam’

Bring your own poetry to read or recite. Or, share favorite poems written by others. Poets of all ages are invited! Thoughtful, silly, sad, or exuberant -- all poems are welcome. Enjoy poetic refreshments while listening to your friends and neighbors.

Save the date: August 18, ‘Family Fun Fest’

Varna’s favorite end-of-the-summer event is back! There will be fun activities, food, displays, music, and more. Mark your calendar! To volunteer to help with planning or running this event, please contact Meghan Reiff (607-379-2720) (reiffmeghan@hotmail.com)

Save the Date: The VCA’s GeoWhiz geography quiz fundraiser will be returning on November 2, 2019

Varna Community Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 4771
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—
**Mother’s Day, May 12th, 8am to
Noon!** \$8 adults, \$7 seniors, \$7.50
for kids 5-12. Kids under 5 eat free!