



# VARNA NEWS

## COVID-FREE AIR at the COMMUNITY CENTER

Air inside the Varna Community Center will soon be safer for everyone to breathe. Thanks to a plan developed by the VCA board, an air filtration system will be installed. The new system will bring outside air into the building, filter the air, send filtered air to the rooms of the building, and then exhaust 'used' air back outside. The system will create an indoor environment that is free of most pathogens, toxins and allergens. Most importantly, it will filter out the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 illness.

Working with local experts at Snug Planet (now owned by Halco), we have identified a system that fits our needs. A heat recovery ventilator unit will be installed in the attic above the 'big room.' Outdoor air will run through filters in the unit and will then be sent through ducts to rooms throughout the building. Other ducts will pull 'used' air from the rooms and exhaust it outdoors. The rate of air exchanges will be appropriate for the size and use of the building, and all ductwork will be out of sight in the attic.

Installation of the air filtration system is scheduled for April. It will cost slightly over \$20,000. This total includes purchase of equipment and supplies and the labor required to build and install ductwork. We have been extremely fortunate to be able to secure grants to pay for the project. Generous grants have been received from the United Way T. Merrell Shipherd Fund, the Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency, the Child Development Council, and the Community Foundation's McPherson Family Fund.

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## Freese Road Bridge

The Town of Dryden has been informed by the State Historic Preservation Office and the State Dept of Transportation that instead of moving the historic trusses on to a new bridge, the Freese Road bridge should be left whole but moved to another location where it would serve as a pedestrian



bridge. Consequently, the town is searching for someone willing to take the responsibility or costs to maintain it. Unfortunately, Freese Road will be left with a new one-lane concrete bridge, with traffic lights at both ends, that does not have any visual evidence or reminder of the history and innovative technology once used in this location.

*Photo by Laurie Snyder*

The VCA is always looking for more participants. Let us know if you would like to be involved in any of these committees: Building, Program, Fundraising, and Breakfast. Remember, if you live in Varna, you are a member of the Community Association. Please consider volunteering! You don't have to be on the board. To learn more, contact:

[chair@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org](mailto:chair@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org)

### COVID-free Air (cont.)

The VCA's volunteer grantwriter Jan Morgan says: "It is heart-warming to see how grantors have stepped up and allocated generous dollars for local COVID-19 relief projects - especially projects that help childcare providers." With the air filtration system in place, the VCA will soon be able to re-open the Varna After School Program.

Building users will still need to use COVID-19 precautions until health officials lift pandemic restrictions. But going forward, everyone will enjoy the ongoing benefit provided by the air filtration system. Just imagine how much construction dust will be created when sewer and water line replacements and other repairs along NY Rte. 366 begin. The new air filtration system will take care of that and so much more. Whether voting, sharing a community meal, or attending a meeting, we can all look forward to breathing safe air inside the Community Center.



For information on COVID-19 vaccines in Tompkins County, please visit:

<https://tompkinscountyny.gov/health/covid19vaccine>



### Volunteer at Varna

The Varna Community Association, Inc. is run by a volunteer board that makes decisions about VCA policies, programs, and finances. Current board members are: Michal Kulagowski, Lee Yoke Lee, Jan Morgan, Meghan McQuaide Reiff (secretary), Jennifer Russell (treasurer), Laurie Snyder (chair), and Simon St. Laurent (vice chair). There are also many other community members who help the VCA in large and small ways and you are always welcome to volunteer! Even during the pandemic, there are many things that need to be done to keep the Varna community strong. To find out how you can help, contact Laurie Snyder at 443 610 9297, snydwood@yahoo.com.

### Varna Church Update

Due to Covid, the Varna Church is still closed, but our Outreach is busy. In 2020 the Mitey 5 PEW KNITTERS sent 362 items to charity. This included Cancer Resource, Nursing Homes, stump covers for our veterans, area schools, Catholic Charities, and Share the Warmth. We sent food to local pantries. Our church has a Big heart we love to share with others. We can always use new or left over yarn from your projects. Monetary donations are also welcome. Please reach out to others, during this time with a quick note, phone call, or text. We need to help and encourage each other.

#### BLESSINGS

Our little congregation was sad not to have our Christmas Eve Service or the banquet for the Cornell track team. The banquet has been a tradition neigh on to one hundred years. We always did it at the beginning of December just before their finals. On that certain night you could see many track team members running down the hill to our church. This has always been a very joyful event at the Little Church with a Big Heart. —Alice Humerez and Sis Johnson

### Old Glory at the VCA

The United States flag flying in front of the Varna Community Center recently was looking tattered and in need of replacement. Simon St. Laurent donated a heavier-duty flag. The Reiff family put up the new flag and deposited the old one in the 'mailbox' at the Dryden VFW. Thanks to all these volunteers who helped make the Community Center look spiffy and patriotic!

### Cleaning up Dryden Road

Looking for neighbors who enjoy exercise, fresh air, and community service! We're organizing a spring clean-up of Dryden Road this spring. If you or your group would volunteer to collect litter and refresh our neighborhood, please contact Meghan McQuaide Reiff at reiffmeghan@hotmail.com. More details to come as the weather warms.

Thank you to our volunteer snow shoveler, **Bradley Simmons**. We love volunteers! Bradley gets Ithaca High School School Community Service Credits for volunteering at the VCA.

## Varna Trail project path to Eagle Scout

Johnathyn Thornton received his Eagle Scout Award on 11/12/20. To earn this award, he planned and completed improvements to the woodland trail between the VCA playground and Hillside Acres. Jonathyn is grateful to the Varna Community Association for supporting his Eagle Scout project. Not only is he now an Eagle Scout, Jonathyn is also a Sea Scout, a Venturing Scout, and an Aviator Explorer. He is also a member of the Coast Guard Auxilliary in Ithaca. He recently received an Ithaca City School District Commendation Award for being a high honor student. After he graduates from IHS in June, Jonathyn plans to go to college to become a history teacher.

The **Varna Volunteer Fire Company** continues its much-needed operations during the pandemic. If you're interested in helping, please stop by the fire station on a Thursday at 6:30pm.

In March, the Dryden Recreation Department will offer two online programs of Creative Writing with published author Lisa Harris, as well as Virtual Yoga with Erica Shockley, all from the comfort of your own home.

<https://drydenrec.recdesk.com/Community/Page?pageId=26643>

The VCA is now brighter and more energy-efficient, thanks to an **LED lighting upgrade** from Lime Energy, covered in large part by NYSEG.

The **Blue Food Cupboard**, now in the vestibule, remains an active and necessary part of the Varna Community Center. We moved the cabinet into the better-protected vestibule area, added a heater to the cabinet to keep cans and similar items from freezing, and added a cooler outside. The cooler originally let us distribute 28 Thanksgiving meals prepared by Luna Inspired Street Food, and now serves generally for foods that need to stay cool.

A growing number of volunteers keeps the cupboard stocked every day. You don't need to sign up to take or leave food—just stop by! Take what you need, and give what you can (but keep it *in* the cabinet and cooler). Please spread the word to people who could benefit or give.

The VCA is also receiving food donations from the Friendship Donations Network. We thank our volunteers and Tompkins County Mutual Aid for their support.

The VCA will also **accept cash donations and use them to stock the cabinet**. You can find a donation link at the top right corner of our site at <http://varnacomunityassociation.org/> or mail a check to VCA at VCA, PO Box 4771, Ithaca, NY, 14852. Donations to the VCA are tax deductible.

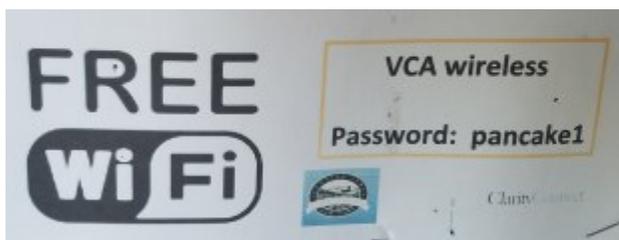
The Varna Little Library, in the vestibule of the community center, offers the community a place to find a free book (adults and children) and/or to leave a book for others.



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

Non-Profit Org  
US POSTAGE PAID  
ITHACA, NY 14850  
PERMIT #312

Sadly, there are no  
pancake breakfasts  
planned for the spring.



If you need **Internet connectivity**, the VCA wireless can help even if the building is closed. The router is in the back of the building, so the parking spaces behind the building have better reception. It's not a huge connection, and weather and power outages occasionally interfere. You're welcome to use the network, but please observe social distancing, and especially please stay out of the way of our kitchen renters if they are working while you're there.



United Way  
of Tompkins County  
Funded Partner