



VARNA NEWS

Afternoon Fun in Varna!

Feb. 24, 1-4pm

Everyone is invited to come to the Varna Community Center on Friday, February 24, 1 to 4pm, to spend time with friends and neighbors. Bring a game to share if you can. We'll play, tell stories, have tea, and simply enjoy each other's company. Masks are optional but recommended. If you need transportation call: 607-272-2658 and leave a message.



What: A time to be with others & maybe make new friends
Who: Anyone who would like to come – all ages are welcome
When: Friday, 2/24/23, 1pm-4pm

Where: Varna Community Center, 943 Dryden Road

Why: Because we can!

Blue Food Cupboard

The Free Blue Food Cupboard and cooler continue to be busy. We are always happy for cash or food donations. Thank you to those of you who continue to support this community outreach, including the Varna Methodist Church. To learn more about the cabinets and find more locations where you can leave or pick up food, visit <https://mutualaidtompkins.com/food-sharing/locations>.

Varna's Little Library

The Varna Little Library, also in the vestibule of the community center, offers a place to find a free book (adults and children) or leave a book or movie. Please make sure your donations fit into the cabinet, as books dislike rain and snow.

Kids Cooking—OURS & YOURS Program

The free O.U.R.S. & Y.O.U.R.S. after school programs for grades 2-8 are held at 4-H Acres on Lower Creek Road and at the Varna Community Association. Most Wednesdays, we will be cooking up new recipes at the Varna Community Association - where everyone will get a chance to take groceries home to try and recreate the day's recipe at home! (The program runs through May 3rd, except for February 28th and April 5th.)



Our Wednesday Cooking Program will include a take-home grocery component through a grant awarded to YOURS in Spring 2022 for the 2022-23 school year.

Contact program manager Patrick Lynch with any questions. Sign up by February 24th at <https://tinyurl.com/OursYours>

Photos by Jan Morgan



Memorial Service for Town Councilman, Varna Volunteer

Jim Skaley turned his love for Varna into extensive work in Dryden politics, and was on the Dryden Town Board. He died just before Christmas. A celebration of Jim's life will be held Saturday, March 25 at 2pm at the Ithaca Unitarian Church located at 306 North Aurora Street in downtown Ithaca. Everyone is welcome!

Varna Church Update

Greetings from Varna Church. HAPPY NEW YEAR from Varna Church. Our Hymn/Carol sing was so much fun and enjoyed by all. Keep watch for the summer bar b q dates. Pew Knitters made 825 items for Charity in 2022. Any 4 ply acrylic yarn or monetary donations are always welcome. We accept old eye wear or hearing aids, which can be left in the blue tote on the porch, at the church. Books & food pantry items can be left at the Center. We WILL HAVE Palm and Easter Sunday services at 11-12. However, this year, we WILL NOT hold Ash Wednesday or Good Friday services. You can visit other area churches for these.



Projects created by the Varna Church Pew Knitters Re-
member your loved one on February 14th, and
HAPPY EASTER. *-Sis Johnson*

Varna Volunteer Fire Company

The Varna Volunteer Fire Company responded to 324 alarms in 2022, up 7% from 2021. Our membership continued increasing to 57 active members with over 20 new exterior firefighters and 8 interior firefighters, in addition to those already certified, with many more currently in classes around the region. We also expanded our EMS presence with a total of 25 EMTs and 4 CFRs, and several

more currently in training around the state. We strengthened our community relations by participating in and organizing various local events, increased preparedness with countless training hours, decreased our average response time by implementing a shift system with on-duty members and bunkers, and trained two new CPR instructors to begin a community CPR training program.

The Varna Volunteer Fire Company is offering discounted group CPR, AED and babysitting courses for any interested residents. Successful completion will result in a Red Cross certification. There is no minimum age to participate and we can provide training at our station or a location of your choice. For more information, please reach out to cpr@varnafire.org.

As a 100% volunteer service, we need YOUR help to protect our community. If you are interested in being a firefighter, EMT, driver/operator, or support member, we have a spot for you! Come to the station (14 Turkey Hill Rd) between 6:30-7:30pm on a Thursday evening or email: chief@varnafire.org if you have questions.

Spring Highway Cleanup

We'll have a spring road clean-up of Route 366 sometime when it's warm. If you'd like updates on road cleaning plans, contact Meghan McQuaide Reiff at reiffmeghan@hotmail.com.

Get Vaccinated

Vaccines are still available for free for all New York State residents above the age of 5. Second boosters are now available for people over 50. For information on COVID-19 vaccines in Tompkins County, please visit <https://tompkinscountyny.gov/health/covid19vaccine>.

Rent the Varna Community Center

Do you have a family party or a meeting coming up and need a space that will allow room for lots of people? VCA is once again available to be rented. The rates are reasonable, the air handler cleans the indoor air regularly, and the floor is no longer cracked and green! Masks are strongly recommend while inside the building. Email: rental.vca.facilities@gmail.com or leave a message at: 607-272-2658

Seeking NYSEG Bill Relief

Have you experienced problems with your NYSEG bills and/or with their customer service? If so, you are not alone! There has been a spike in complaints to the Public Service Commission, the state agency

that regulates NYSEG and other utilities. Complaints have ranged from excessively high bills, to no bills at all, to not properly accounting for solar credits, and more. As a result the PSC Consumer Advocate Dept is currently conducting an investigation into the billing and customer service practices of NYSEG and sister company Rochester Electric and Gas (RGE).

The PSC wants to hear from you about any of the following (or other) billing and customer service issues:

- Have you received delayed bills or no bills for extended periods of time (more than one month)?
- Are your bills based on actual meter readings or estimates? How many months of estimates in a row have you received? Have you submitted your own meter readings? Have they been incorporated into your bill instead of estimates?
- If you did not receive a bill for one month or more, how long did it take to receive a bill, and did you possibly receive more than one bill as a “catch-up”?
- If you called your utility to inquire why you did not receive a bill, did you receive timely, accurate and adequate information from your utility about why you were not receiving your bill(s) and when normal billing would resume?
- If you receive renewable energy services from a community solar farm have you had any issues with receiving bills, credits, or with inaccurate, delayed, or non-existent credits and billing reconciliations?
- If you are a customer with solar panels or another form of renewable energy, have you had any issues with receiving bills, credits, or with inaccurate, delayed, or nonexistent credits and billing reconciliations? Or have you had troubles with demand metering?
- If you receive supply service through an Energy Service Company (ESCO), have you had issues with receiving bills, credits, or with inaccurate, delayed, or nonexistent credits and billing reconciliations?
- What experiences have you had with NYSEG's customer service? How long have you been on hold? Have the customer service representatives been helpful? knowledgeable? Has your problem been resolved in a timely manner?
- If you own a business, how has NYSEG billing and/or customer service impacted you?
- Are you a member of a community choice aggregation program (CCA) or a CCA administrator and have had billing problems?

This list is not exhaustive, and you can make comments on other issues related to the companies' performance.

Please let the PSC know about NYSEG issues you are facing. Submit your comments about billing/customer service problems at <https://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/Comments/PublicComments.aspx?MatterCaseNo=23-00068>

to be part of the investigation

Do NOT disclose your account number as these comments will be publicly visible. While the webform asks for your email and physical addresses, that info will not be made public.

You can also contact the PSC directly if you need help. Their general complaints and inquiries helpline is at 800-342-3377, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Monday - Friday. Their hotline for residential electric and gas shut-offs is at 800-342-3355, 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Monday - Friday.

Join our board?

The Varna Community Association is looking for new board members. Might you be interested? Being a board member is a great way to keep up on Varna happenings, and to give back to the community. To learn more about opportunities, contact chair@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org

Sidewalk Celebration this summer?

While we're delighted that part of the sidewalk went in last fall, we're going to wait until the sidewalk is complete before scheduling some kind of party or festival to welcome its arrival.

If you live in the Hamlet of Varna, you are automatically a member of the non-profit Varna Community Association (VCA). There are no dues or paperwork, just friendship and community.

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 area behind the building has 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.



VCA wireless
Password: pancake1



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

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OURS & YOURS Program

Kids cooking on Wednesdays at the Community Center. See page 1!



Afternoon Gathering February 24th, 1-4pm

Everyone is invited to come the Varna Community Center on Friday, February 24, 1 to 4pm to spend time with friends and neighbors. Details on page 1!



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



The blue food cupboard and cooler continue to serve the neighborhood. We welcome donations of food and personal hygiene items!

The *Varna News* is published quarterly, in February, May, August, and November. Simon St.Laurent (simonstl@simonstl.com) is the editor.