



VARNA NEWS

GET READY FOR FUN – SATURDAY, JUNE 7

Rain or shine, let's walk!

VARNA WALKS! is a family-friendly outdoor fundraiser for the Varna Community Association. You, your friends, and neighbors will explore scenic trails in Varna, while 100% of registration fees and donations will help the VCA offer free programs and resources to the community – like our annual Summer Family Fun Festival and the 24/7 free food cupboard.



Cost: \$10/person, \$25/family of 3-5 members

Register online at Dryden Recreation: drydenrec.recdesk.com

Between now and June 7: gather sponsors. This is entirely optional, but kids especially might enjoy collecting donations from grandparents, mom's co-workers, neighbors, etc. There will be a sweet prize waiting for the person who brings in the biggest total of donations.

8:30am -11am, June 7: check in at the Varna Community Center. We'll give you route and safety information plus a *VarnaWalks!* sticker to show your support. You will also receive a list of specially curated trails, 1 to 3 miles long. There will be something for everyone – for instance, the *Sidewalk Loop* option will be perfect for people needing a flat surface. Many routes feature the new *Jim Skaley Trail* between the VCA and the Dryden Rail Trail. Try as many routes as you like. This is not a race; it's time get out and celebrate this great area we call home!

After signing in: You are ready to hit the trails. The VCA restrooms, playground and picnic tables will be available all day.

FAQs, list of trails, and more, can be found on the [VCA website](#).

Bring Mom to Breakfast!

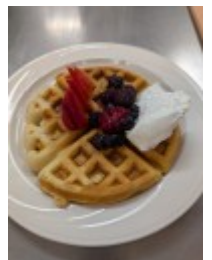
Save the date! On Sunday, May 11, the Varna Community Association will host its Annual Mother's Day Breakfast from 8-11AM. Breakfast will include hot and fluffy pancakes, waffles, scrambled eggs, biscuits with sausage gravy, and bacon or ham, along with breakfast breads, fresh fruit, orange juice, and a variety of beverages.

We are particularly appreciative of donations from New Hope Mills, Country Moose, and several local individuals and businesses who have provided many of the ingredients and products needed to provide a great breakfast for Mom, Grandma, Wife, Sister, or any and all of the ladies in your life.

Come and enjoy a delicious breakfast, visit with friends and neighbors, meet new people, and leave having had a great meal.

Anyone wishing to donate or volunteer please contact Dawn at 607-280-9750 or via e-mail at cathcm618@yahoo.com

See you at the Varna Community Center on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 11th!!



Soup and Salad, May 3rd, 4-7pm

Varna's Soup and Salad event returns! Enjoy an all you can eat variety of soups and chili, tossed salad, bread and butter, desserts, and beverages at the Varna Community Center. Texas Roadhouse is donating salads and rolls with cinnamon butter, and the rest of the food is made and served by volunteers. Eat in or take out! Adults \$9, Seniors \$8, Children 5-12 \$6, under 5 free.

Varna Knitting Club, May 18th, 2-4pm

Would you like to learn how to knit? Or have company while you do some knitting? The first meeting of the VCA Knitting Club will be held on Sunday, May 18, 2-4 pm in the Community Center. Bring a pair of knitting needles and a ball of yarn and let's get knitting! There will be a few extra supplies so no worries if you can't get any.

Lessons are available for beginners. Crocheters also welcome. Hope to see you there!

Varna Volunteer Fire Company

New York's annual burn ban is in effect from March 16 through May 14! Help prevent brush fires by knowing exactly what's allowed. Backyard fire pits and campfires less than three feet in height and four feet in length, width, or diameter are allowed, as are small cooking fires. Only charcoal or dry, clean, untreated, unpainted wood can be burned. People should never leave these fires unattended and must extinguish them. Burning garbage or leaves is prohibited year-round in New York State. Avoid burning on windy days, keep flammable objects away from the fire, and always have a fire extinguisher nearby.

Varna Church Update

Our April 26 talent show was a fun night after winter's end. When you put Winter clothes away, keep in mind our clothing give away every September. We'll start accepting donations in August, with details in the next newsletter. We only accept clothing and children's books. Thanks for the small boxes and egg cartons left in the blue bin on our porch. All will find use. The Pew Knitters have grown to serving 45 non profit Agencies, locally. If you want to knit or crochet to help out, contact Sis Johnson 607-272-6806. You can work at home, and drop items off in the blue bin with your name included. Happy Mother's & Father's Day. Be safe on the Memorial and July 4th Holidays! -Sis Johnson

Ithaca Carshare coming May 28th

[Ithaca Carshare](#) will station a van at the Varna Community Center starting on May 28th. They'll also give a presentation that evening at 7pm on "Ithaca Carshare: What It Is, How It Works & How To Sign Up." Come and find out how to improve your access to transportation!



Spring Clean-up at the Community Center Saturday May 17th 10am to 2pm

We need volunteers for various jobs inside and out. No matter your age or skill level, we have a job for you! Just put on your work clothes and show up any time between 9am and noon to join with friends and neighbors to clean, paint, haul, and fix stuff.

Highway Cleanup

Saturday May 24th at 9am will be the Spring road clean-up of Rt. 366, with a rain date of May 31st. If you'd like to help keep Varna beautiful, get some fresh air, and spend time with neighbors, meet us at the turnout across from 1237 Dryden Road. If you have any questions contact Meghan McQuaide Reiff at reiffmeghan@hotmail.com. Hope to see you there!

Strength and Balance Class

Mondays, 9:30am at the Community Center

This class is open to everyone 50 or older. You can come to as many (or as few) classes as you like. Chris Dunham, an instructor from [LifeLong](#), leads exercises to strengthen core muscles and promote balance. He creates a non-judgmental atmosphere and offers alternatives to fit individual needs. Mats are provided. You do not need to be a member of [LifeLong](#). **Wear comfortable clothes and bring \$5** each week. Give it a try!



A Woman of Distinction

On March 18th, Assemblymember Anna Kelles posted a [tribute to Sis Johnson on Facebook](#):

"Let's take a moment to celebrate the incredible Sis Johnson, a woman whose kindness, dedication, and selflessness light up every corner of our community. In her 80s and unstoppable, Sis continues to pour her heart into service—volunteering up to 50

Celebrate May and June with your neighbors!



Ithaca College African Drumming and Dance performance - Free!
May 1st, 7-7:30pm, in front of the community center

Soup & Salad (\$), May 3rd, 4-7pm in the community center

Pancake Breakfast (\$), May 11th, 8-11am in the community center

Community Center Cleanup, May 17th, 10am-2pm in and around the community center

Knitting Club, May 18th, 2-4pm in the community center

Highway Cleanup, May 24th, 9am across from 1237 Dryden Road

Ithaca Carshare, May 28th, 7pm in the community center

Varna Walks! (\$) June 7th, register online at dryden-rec.recdesk.com. Visit the [VCA website](http://www.varnacomunityassociation.org) for more information or call Jan: 607-227-2403.

July in Varna, enjoy the playground and trails!



The VCA also has an online calendar. Scan this QR code to see it, or visit <https://www.varnacomunityassociation.org/calendar>



Fire Alarm System Donors



The
Varna Community Center
fire alarm system
was made possible by
these groups,
businesses, and
generous individual
donors.



THANK YOU!

Pleasant Valley Electric set out the parts



New fire pulls



24/7 monitoring



hours a month with American Red Cross blood drives and lifting spirits with hundreds of handwritten birthday cards each year for volunteers at Varna Volunteer Fire Co., Red Cross, Greater Ithaca Activities Center and Varna United Methodist Church.



But she doesn't stop there—Sis is part of the Pew Knitters group at her church (pictured here—she asked her group to take this photo specifically for this post to make sure she had one!). Together, they lovingly craft and donate knitted covers for amputated limbs, helping Veterans and others stay warm and comfortable. Her thoughtful creations are shared through the Tompkins County VA Clinic and Department of Veterans Services, touching lives in the most personal and meaningful ways.

Sis, your quiet acts of love and service have rippled through this community in ways that can never be measured. You are truly one of a kind, and we're in awe of you."

COVID tests available

The VCA now has plenty of free COVID tests available for home use. You may pick them up in our blue food cabinet or contact VCA to request them. Many more are available in bulk quantities for organizations or individuals thru the "Tompkins Cortland Masked Activity Collective" at <https://www.tcmac.org>.

Pollinator Garden updates

Sustainable Finger Lakes has awarded the Varna Community Association a Neighborhood Mini-Grant of \$265.00 to purchase plants and materials for creating an onsite pollinator garden and a base for installing an

onsite bike rack. This will extend last year's pollinator-friendly garden in front of the Community Center.

The newly planted plants took a while to establish themselves, but by late summer there were plenty of blooms. Golden ragwort (above right), beebalm, catmint, fringed loosestrife, anise hyssop, Jacob's ladders, yarrow, asters, and bleeding hearts all made it through their first winter. The native rose and elderberry bushes are doing great. At least one of our flowering raspberries has survived the winter.



We also had plenty of dandelion, saw thistles, burdock, goldenrod, ground ivy, and a few locust seedlings. For now, weeding is judicious. The dandelions will be allowed to stay, as pollinators love them and they aren't much hassle to more perennial plant species. Saw-thistles are a much more invasive weed and will be pulled. The goldenrod, while native and an excellent pollinator plant has to be kept under control. One locust seedling will be allowed to grow, as the trees are excellent for pollinators. The ones too close to the sidewalk will be removed.

Speaking of removal: Why haven't we removed the dry stalks from last year, yet? And why are there so many small weedy looking plants allowed to spread over the ground? Old plant stalks serve as hide-outs for pollinators to weather the winter. Little ground cover plants like woodland strawberries provide insects with shelter under their leaves. These gray stalks and little weedy plants are just as important to our pollinators as the beautiful blooms they visit in summer.

Ithaca College African Drumming and Dance Group – FREE! Thursday, May 1, :30pm in front of the Varna Community Center

If you came to watch and listen to this multicultural group a year ago, you know they will bring enthusiasm, rhythm, and agility for their performance. If you did NOT see them last year, be sure to catch them this time! Bring your friends and neighbors too. The event will last about 30 minutes - short enough to get kids home on a school night and long enough to appreciate the cultural heritage presented by this talented student group led by Dr. Baruch Whitehead of Ithaca College's Music and Education Department. Bring your own chair if you'd like to sit. If it's rainy, we'll move inside.

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



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Varna Walks!

June 7th, 8:30-on

Varna Community Center

Soup & Salad, May 3rd, 4-7pm

Pancake Breakfast, May 11th, 8-11am

Mondays, 9:30—Strength & Balance for 50+

May

1—Ithaca College African Drumming and Dance performance - Free! 7pm

3—Soup & Salad, 4-7pm

5—VCA Board Meeting, 7pm

11—Pancake Breakfast, 8-11am

17—Community Center Cleanup, 10am-2pm

18—Knitting Club, 2-4pm

24—Highway Cleanup, 9am

28—Ithaca Carshare, 7pm

June

2—VCA Board Meeting, 7pm

7—Varna Walks!, 8:30-on

2024 VCA Board of Directors

Members: Amy Albright (Vice Chair), Samantha Fields, Laurie Foster, Sue Funicelli, Mason Jager (Secretary), Janet Morgan (Chair), Dawn Potter, Simon St.Laurent (Treasurer)

Meetings: usually held the first Monday of the month, 7pm, at the Community Center

You: Guests are welcome at board meetings. Come and help us make plans for Varna.

Email: Chair@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org

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

