



# VARNA NEWS



## PIZZA and VCA ANNUAL MEETING

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 7 @ 6pm

Varna Community Center

All Varna residents are invited to the Varna Community Center Friday February 7 at 6pm. This will be the VCA's annual meeting of the membership, and we need you! If you live in Varna, you are a member of the VCA. Bring your kids & bring a neighbor. (Friends from outside the Hamlet of Varna are also welcome – they just don't get to vote.)

At the meeting, we'll celebrate 2024's accomplishments, elect members of the VCA Board of Directors, and discuss ways to improve our community's quality of life. Discussion topics might include: ideas for information tables at pancake breakfasts, rethinking the VCA award for TC3 students, and possible re-opening of the Varna After School Program. Bring your ideas and enjoy **pizza courtesy of Papa Johns**. Yeah!



The VCA's 2024 Board of Directors. We're a great group and we'd like you to join us.

## Pancake Breakfast raises \$367 for Ovid Fire Relief

On January 21st, a massive fire destroyed the core of the Village of Ovid, including their grocery store, apartments, and several businesses. At our breakfast on the 26th, we collected \$367 to help them. We deposited the money in the Ovid Fire Relief fund at Community Bank, which is coordinating with the Ovid Federated Church to provide help to those affected by the fire. Any

Community Bank branch office can accept donations - just mention Ovid Fire Relief. Many thanks to Q104 for promoting the event.

Our next breakfasts are planned for March 16th and May 11th.



## 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!



## Varna Volunteer Fire Company

We're thrilled to announce that we've achieved an ISO Class 2 rating! Only about 2,000 out of nearly 38,000 fire departments nationwide hold this distinction—and in New York State, only about 5% of all fire companies. Even more noteworthy, we're one of the few fully volunteer departments to earn this distinction! This milestone is a testament to our hard work, training, and teamwork. We're proud to serve you every day.

We couldn't have done this without the dedication of our members and the incredible support of our mutual aid partners, the Tompkins County Department of Emergency Response, and the Town of Dryden Codes Enforcement Office.

Learn more about this achievement and what it means for our community at <https://www.varnafire.org/about-us/iso-class-2-rating>

## Varna Church Update

The busy Christmas and holiday season are over, but the Spirit lives all year. We are planning a Talent Night sometime in April. We would love to have you join us. If you have talent to share, please call Alice Humerez at 607-272-2970 to sign up.

Congratulations to Christina Stark for having raised over \$30,000 for Hospicare with her Women Swimmin'. You do Varna proud.

In 2024 the Pew Knitters gave 1110 knitted and crocheted items to 30 agencies! We are always looking for yarn or money donations. Please keep dropping small boxes and egg cartons at the church door. They are very appreciated.

We have 29 light blue fabric pew cushions 76" x 13.5" that need to go to a new home. Call Susan at 607-280-8042 if interested.

Remember the upcoming Holy Days. Sunday Services are from 11:00-12:00 and our doors are open for you to join us. Happy Spring! -Sis Johnson

## Fire Alarm System

In December, following weeks of discussion and careful consideration, the VCA Board of Directors approved installation of a fire alarm system in the Community Center. The most compelling reason to do this was the increasing number of hours the building is used each week by individuals, families, non-profits and small food businesses. Board members also were concerned with potential risks posed by the 40-year-old gas-fired boiler and the number of people using the commercial gas range in the kitchen. It's great to have so much going on, and we want to make sure everyone stays safe and the building is protected from disaster.

Pleasant Valley Electric was the low bidder for the project. They have done much good work at the Community Center, so we accepted their \$20,000 proposal for a monitored fire alarm system that will automatically alert 911. The work is scheduled for mid-February when the building will be quiet.

MANY THANKS to those who contributed to the VCA's first ever Giving Tuesday campaign. We set an aspirational goal of \$2500, and we made it!

That money helped pay the fire alarm down payment. We are now applying for grants and asking for donations to pay the balance. If you can make a donation of any size we would REALLY appreciate it. You can visit [www.VarnaCommunityAssociation.org](http://www.VarnaCommunityAssociation.org) to donate online. For questions, contact Jan at [chair@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org](mailto:chair@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org) (607-227-2403)

## Ithaca Car Share

[Ithaca Carshare](#)'s plan to station a vehicle at the Community Center is delayed a bit, but it's still in the works. You may have noticed the tall wooden post in the front parking lot. Before too long, that will hold a sign and charging station for a Carshare vehicle. We have invited the Carshare team to attend the March 16 pancake breakfast to provide information about their services.

### Giving Thanks in Varna

At noon on Thanksgiving Day 2024, there was a happy explosion of folks entering the Varna Community Center for a free Thanksgiving dinner! The dinner was open to everyone, and guests arrived throughout the afternoon to enjoy a community meal of turkey with all the fixings, delicious vegetarian lasagna, and a tasty variety of pies.

Started in 2012, Varna’s free Thanksgiving Dinner served between 150-350 guests annually until it was interrupted by the pandemic. But in 2024, with the help, interest, and desire of many volunteers and generous donors, the dinner was back, and it was phenomenal! Ingredients came in, grocery stores assisted, volunteers let us know their availability, and news outlets provided free advertising.

Preparations began the Sunday before Thanksgiving with volunteers cleaning, organizing, and noting what was still needed. Then, volunteers gathered in the Community Center’s kitchen and baked 35 pies, peeled 100 pounds of potatoes, roasted 15 turkeys and prepared all the various additions for the dinner. Thanksgiving morning, the kitchen busied with volunteers getting everything ready, making sure nothing was missed. In the dining room, volunteers set up tables, chairs, decorations, and place settings. Still others were preparing the serving table or shoveling the outside walkways in anticipation of diners arriving.

It was wonderful to see the dining room fill up with guests. Some had been present at our previous Thanksgiving dinners, and some came for the first time. Many hugs and tears were shed for those who were no longer with us, but it was a wonderful time to get together and reminisce of the great times we all had in years past. Geoff Potter, who passed away a year ago, was one of the key organizers of the first dinner. He would be happy to see that the dinner has returned and was as well received as it was the first year. He would have been particularly pleased to see his grandson, Coby, provide transportation for a person who had no home and no way to get to Varna. Thanks to Coby’s help, this guest was very grateful for the opportunity to participate, enjoyed a huge meal, and left with a big bag of goodies and leftovers.

Co-Chairs Dawn Potter and Susan Simmons sincerely thank the many businesses and individuals that donated time, talent, food, or funds. There are too many to mention each person, but special thanks goes to Chris Allinger at Q-Country radio who endorsed, backed, and supported the event. With help from so many people, we served nearly 250 dinners.

Looking ahead, we will host a free Thanksgiving Dinner in 2025! Mark your calendars and attend, participate, volunteer, donate, or assist however you would like. Let everyone know you are glad to be part of Varna! -Dawn Potter

### KEEP UP TO DATE

The Varna News is published only 4 times a year, so we’ve started sending emails between newsletters with updates about goings on in Varna. If you would like to be added to (or removed from) the mailing list, contact [chair@varnacommunityassociation.org](mailto:chair@varnacommunityassociation.org) To make sure VCA messages don’t land in your spam folder, please add [CommunityAssociationVarna@gmail.com](mailto:CommunityAssociationVarna@gmail.com) to your contacts.

### Chair Re-covering Project

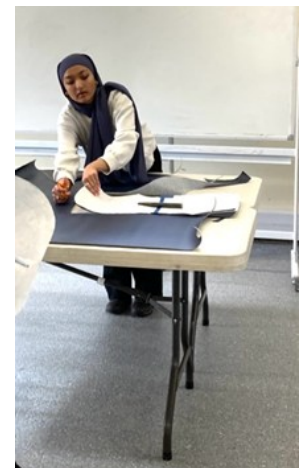


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Want to help the blue team? email: [chair@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org](mailto:chair@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org)



Cornell student volunteers who helped re-cover chairs before classes started in January

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

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

## **PIZZA and VCA**

## **ANNUAL MEETING**

**FRIDAY FEBRUARY 7 @ 6pm**

**Varna Community Center**



Follow the VCA on [Instagram!](#)

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

### **February**

3—VCA Board Meeting, 7pm

7— VCA Annual Meeting, 6pm

### **March**

3—VCA Board Meeting, 7pm

16—Pancake Breakfast, 8-11am

### **April**

7—VCA Board Meeting, 7pm

### **May**

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

5—VCA Board Meeting, 7pm

### **2024 VCA Board of Directors**

**Members:** Amy Albright (Vice Chair), Laurie Foster, Sue Funicelli, Mason Jager (Secretary), Janet Morgan (Chair), 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](mailto:Chair@VarnaCommunityAssociation.org)

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