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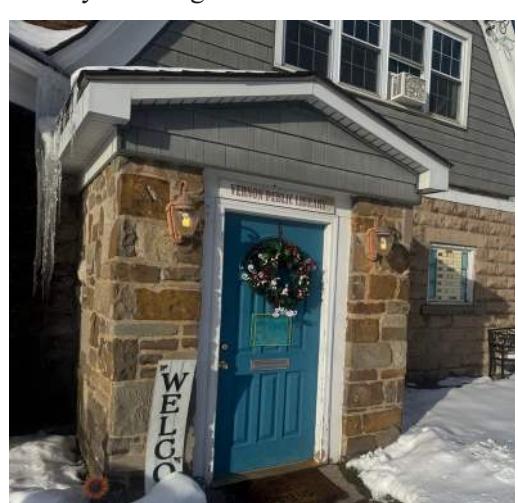
Madison County, NY & Beyond WEBSITE: hineighborcny.com

Jan. 12
2026

The Vernon Public Library: Education in the Wilderness Since 1806

By Linda Hansen

I am so glad that you joined me on my latest library adventure. With the holidays winding down and



Academy until some later settlers who believed in the importance of freedoms in both receiving education and practicing religion, who were church members, built the library back up in the 1890s.

By 1902, the Vernon Library Association formed the Vernon Public Library by permanent charter from the University of New York.

Various buildings were used until it was moved to the current building in 1962, the Lewis Memorial Building, an old carriage house, that was gifted to the library to continue its mission of serving the community in literacy and education. More particulars about the history of the library can be found in Pioneers of Vernon, which was accessed for me by the Director of the Vernon library: Amanda Moyer. Amanda Moyer is also a frequent contributor to *Hi, Neighbor!*

Now we can go inside and check it out! The library shares a parking lot with Circle K, so park your vehicle and walk around to

the front door and go on in. There is a lot to see in this little library, just open the door and look ahead to the vintage pastel walls and scalloped shelves. There are many many books and DVDs, etc., all stacked neatly on the beautiful shelved walls.

It's so much like walking into a comfortable living room that I felt like just grabbing a book and curling up for a good read, but instead I continued my visit.

When you peruse the website, you will see the children's room, which is just left as you walk in. It is a spacious, well-lit room filled with children's books and activities along with multiple colorful children's tables and chairs. The walls are decorated with art that the children did themselves. It is an awesome space for kids that comes alive with storytime activities in the summer months.

There is a meeting/movie room upstairs and

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Music Venues in/near Madison County: Please send us your events calendar, so we can publish it for free for *Hi, Neighbor* readers!

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Australia's Social Media Ban is Now in Force

--Other countries are closely watching what happens

Lisa M. Given, Professor of Information Sciences & Director, Social Change Enabling Impact Platform, RMIT University. *The Conversation*

After months of anticipation and debate, Australia's social media ban is now in force.

Young Australians under 16 must now come to grips with the new reality of being unable to have an account on some social media platforms, including Instagram, TikTok and Facebook.

Only time will tell whether this bold, world-first experiment will succeed. Despite this, many countries are already considering following Australia's lead.

But there are other jurisdictions that are taking a different approach to try and keep young people safe online.

Here's what's happening overseas.

A global movement

In November, the European parliament called for a similar social media ban for under

16s.

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, said she has been studying Australia's restrictions and how they address what she described as "algorithms that prey on children's vulnerabilities", leaving parents feeling powerless against "the tsunami of big tech flooding their homes".

In October, New Zealand announced it would introduce similar legislation to Australia's, following the work of a parliamentary committee to examine how best to address harm on social media platforms. The committee's report will be released in early 2026.

Pakistan and India are aiming to reduce children's exposure to harmful content by introducing rules requiring parental consent and age verification for platform access, alongside content moderation expectations for tech companies.

Malaysia has announced it will ban children under 16 from social media starting in 2026. This follows the country requiring social media and messaging platforms with eight million or more users to obtain licenses to operate,



and use age verification and content-safety measures from January 2025.

France is also considering a social media ban for children under 15 and a 10pm to 8am curfew for platform use for 15-to 18-year-olds. These are among 43 recommendations made by a French inquiry in September 2025, which also recommended banning smartphones in schools, and implementing a crime of "digital negligence for parents who fail to protect their children".

While France introduced a requirement in 2023 that platforms obtain parental consent for children under 15 to create social media accounts, it has yet to be enforced. This is also the case in Germany. There, children aged between 13 and 16 can

Continued on Page 3

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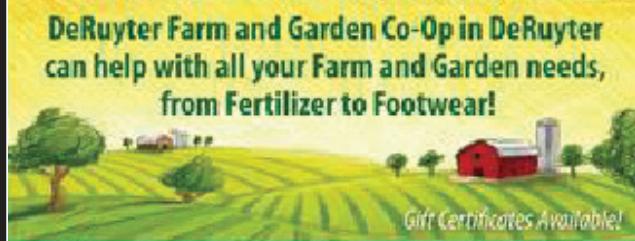
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time filled with stories, songs and fun! Cazenovia Library

Preschool Stories & Crafts | Thursday, January 15, 10:30am, Story Garden: Join Ms. Debora for a story time with books, songs and rhymes followed by an interactive creative activity. For ages 3 & up with a caregiver. Cazenovia Library

Coffee and Cards | Thursday, January 15, 3pm, Library Reference Room: Join this 3-week series to learn to play card-based games. Registration requested. Cazenovia Library

STEAM Squad!: Come join the STEAM Squad on Thursday January 15 at 4:30pm to investigate mysteries using science, technology, engineering, art and math. Open to all kids ages 7-14. Register here: <https://events.morrisvillepubliclibrary.org/event/14823525>. Even if you have come before, sign up again as it's different things we do every month! Morrisville Public Library

HPL Poetry Group, January 15, 12:30 pm Join us on January 15th at 12:30 pm for a meeting of our library Poetry Group! All poetry lovers are welcome. Bring in poetry to share or just bring yourself to hear something new! Hamilton Public Library

Hamilton Community Book Club, January 15, 6 pm Join us on January 15th at 6 pm for a meeting of the Hamilton Community Book Club. This month's book is "The Anthropocene Reviewed" by John Green. Hamilton Public Library

RSVP's Osteo BoneBuilders | Friday, January 16, 10am, Community Room: A gentle stretching and workout for adults and seniors. Cazenovia Library

Block Party | Friday, January 16, 10:30am, Children's Area: Create with the Library's block collection that includes wooden blocks, magnet blocks and more! For children 18 months and

SEE YA THERE
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Contact Us: Phone 315-655-9431, E-mail: hineighborcny@gmail.com or Our Website www.hineighborcny.com

Town of Madison Historical Society

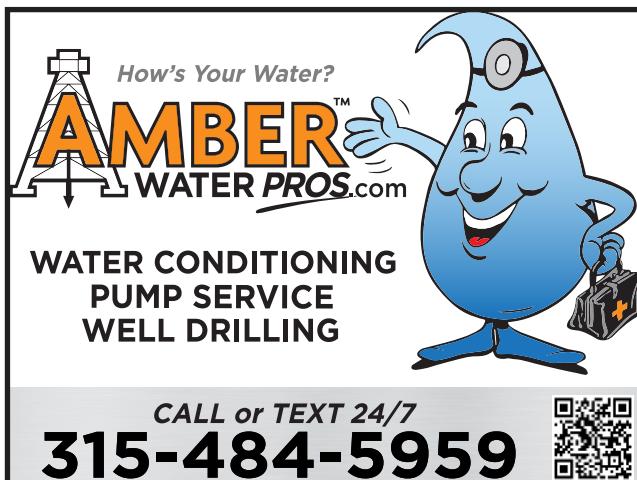
DANCE Feat. TERRY GRIMES
Sat., January 17, 2026 - 7:00-10:00 p.m.

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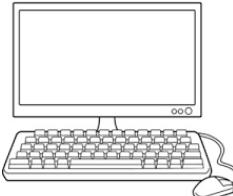
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VERNON LIBRARY

Continued from Page 1

public-use computers, books and DVDs for sale at incredibly low prices, and mystery box sales of great reads for different levels of all ages for the rest of January. There's also a constant bottle and can drive, where you can drop off or someone will pick them up for you!



The library has movie days, story and craft hours, a crochet & knitting group, and more. The library event calendar is always on the website and it's available at the library too.

I recommend you check this library out for a nice no stress visit. Vernon Public Library is having a chili fundraiser and bake sale January 17, 11am -until sold out, for \$10. Dinners can be pre-ordered by calling the library 315-829-2463. Additional chili dinner info is on their website. Tell them I sent you!

Linda Hansen is a recently retired mom of 4 adult children who is now able to actively address her passion in the 4 R's: Recycle, Reuse, Repurpose, Renew (energy) while living in Fenner, NY on their little family farm.

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SOCIAL MEDIA

Continued from Page 1

only access platforms with parental consent, but without formal checks in place.

And, in Spain, the minimum age for social media accounts will rise from 14 to 16, unless parents provide consent.

Norway announced plans in July to restrict access to social media for under 15s. The government explained the law would be "designed in accordance with children's fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, access to information, and the right to association".

In November, Denmark announced it would "ban access to social media for anyone under 15". However, unlike Australia's legislation, parents can override the rules to enable 13- and 14-year-olds to retain platform access. Yet there is no date for implementation, with lawmakers expected to take months to pass the legislation.

It's also unclear how Denmark's ban will be enforced. But the country does have a national digital ID program that may be used.

In July, Denmark was named as part of a pilot program (with Greece, France, Spain, and Italy) to trial an age verification app that could be launched across the European Union for use by adult content sites and other digital providers.

Some pushback

The implementation of similar restrictions is not being taken up everywhere.

For example, South Korea has decided against a social media ban for children. But it will ban the use of mobile phones and other devices in classrooms starting in March 2026.

In the city of Toyoake (south-west of Tokyo, Japan), a very different solution has been proposed. The city's mayor, Masafumi Koki, issued an ordinance in October, limiting the use of smartphones, tablets, and computers to two hours per day for people of all ages.

Koki is aware of Australia's social media restrictions. But as he explained:

If adults are not held to the same standards, children

will not accept the rules.

While the ordinance has faced backlash, and is non-binding, it prompted 40% of residents to reflect on their behaviour, with 10% reducing their time on smartphones.

In the United States, the opposition to Australia's social media restrictions has been extremely vocal and significant.

American media and technology companies have urged President Donald Trump to "reprimand" Australia over its legislation. They argue American companies are being unfairly targeted and have lodged formal complaints with the Office of US Trade.

President Trump has stated he would stand up to any countries that "attacked" American technology companies. The US recently called eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman-Grant to testify in front of Congress. US Republican Jim Jordan claimed her enforcement of Australia's Online Safety Act "imposes obligations on American companies and threatens speech of American citizens", which Inman-Grant strongly denied.

The world will keep watching

While much of the world seems united in concern about the harmful content and algorithmic features children experience on social media, only one thing is clear – there is no silver bullet for addressing these harms.

There is no agreed set of restrictions, or specific age at which legislators agree children should have unrestricted access to these platforms.

Many countries outside Australia are empowering parents to provide access, if they believe it is right for their children. And many countries are considering how best to enforce restrictions, if they implement similar rules.

As experts point to the technical challenges in enforcing Australia's restrictions, and as young Australians consider workarounds to maintain their accounts or find new platforms to use, other countries will continue to watch and plan their next moves.