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Ivy Lodge is an open and accepting community made stronger and more magnificent for having embraced differences among its members.



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Tee time

Golf in the Hudson Valley

by Zac Shaw

GROWING UP, I was not alone in believing that golf was a stupid and pointless game. Hit a ball towards a small hole? Over and over again? With a bunch of rich white dudes? They manicure acres of grass for that?

I was wrong. Golf is ecstasy. Golf is thrilling. Golf develops character, physical coordination. And mental acuity. Golf courses are generally carefully maintained ecological wonderlands. And most surprisingly of all, it turns out that golf is for everyone.

Golfers understand that this game is so much more than meets the eye. It's unfortunate that golf, seen at a superficial level, has such a bad reputation among many non-players. They say it's pointless, racist, environmentally destructive, and only for the rich.

I once believed that. Now I live for birdies. Golf is great.

What changed about my attitude? Everything.

The course owners I've met here in the Hudson Valley – and there are a lot of them – regard themselves as environmental stewards, some with more passion than the parks-and-recreation folks.

Yes, golf has a history as a white man's game. But the large majority of courses I've played at welcome all ethnicities and genders. Our area's diversity is duly reflected on its courses, particularly in the public courses whose businesses thrive or die on taking all comers. The world of golf is not without racial bias, but it isn't the bastion of bigotry of yesteryear.

Golf can be an expensive hobby, but it's not inaccessible. People from all walks of life are playing. There are courses here for players of all income levels. Serious golfers may cringe, but I still play with most of the starter set of clubs I bought seven years ago for \$125. I spend that much every year replacing balls that end



ZAC SHAW

up in ponds, in woods, and sometimes in what seems like extraterrestrial dimensions. Yes, greens fees for 18 holes plus cart might seem a luxury purchase, but walking back-to-back nines at a budget par-three course remains a sublime experience.

Golf needn't be exorbitantly expensive. It can be an investment on a par with many other hobbies, and its dividends

are massive and multifaceted.

Perhaps we're a bit spoiled. The Hudson Valley Golf scene is one of the best in the Northeast. That's no subjective assessment. It's hard to beat the breathtaking scenery, the large number and diversity of courses, and the friendly community that has welcomed myself and many others into the pursuit of par. Golfers who live here know how lucky we are. Visiting

golfers readily acknowledge that what we have is special.

Below you'll find descriptions in alphabetical order of 18 courses within Hudson Valley One's coverage area. I've played at most of the courses. I'm not just trying to be nice when I say they are all great, each for different reasons. I have tried to encapsulate those reasons so you could find the course that best matches your style.

Always check with the golf course for the most current information before visiting.

Alapaha Golf Links (Kingston)

9 holes • public

This family-run executive course is a long-time local favorite. PGA pro John Durcan Sr. and son John Durcan Jr. are cornerstones of the Kingston golf community. Alapaha is great for beginners, while more experienced players will enjoy seeing how many birdies they can rack

up on this scrappy set of par threes with three short par fours.

With only a handful of hazards, this course is forgiving to all. Finish earlier than you thought? Hit the driving range or the indoor simulator. If you are looking for a budget-priced, accessible, down-to-earth and thoroughly enjoyable outing, head to Alapaha.

Apple Greens Golf Course (Highland)

27 holes • public

This might be Hudson Valley golf heaven. Apple Greens is a spectacular, USGA-spec, professional-grade course with accessible rates, especially for weekday locals.

At 27 holes, you can choose your own golf adventure amidst gorgeous Mohonk views. Highlights include a 610-yard par five and an island-green par three, plus many other memorable and challenging

holes. The crew here is super-hospitable, which is good because there are 15 holes with water.

Apple Greens is a truly exquisite blend of high-quality golf holes and laid-back, golf-lovin' friendliness.

Catskill Golf Club (Catskill)

18 holes • public

You will never get bored golfing in the Hudson Valley, because you will keep finding beautiful gems like the Catskill Golf Club. It's a proper 18-hole journey with myriad hazards. Don't let this course's affordable rates lull you into a false sense of security. You'll have to think through shots carefully, winding your way through elevation changes and around a creek that runs through half the holes. With wilderness all around (and out of bounds), this is as serene as budget golf gets. As long as you stay out of the trees, that is.

Colonial Country Club (Tannersville)

9 holes • public

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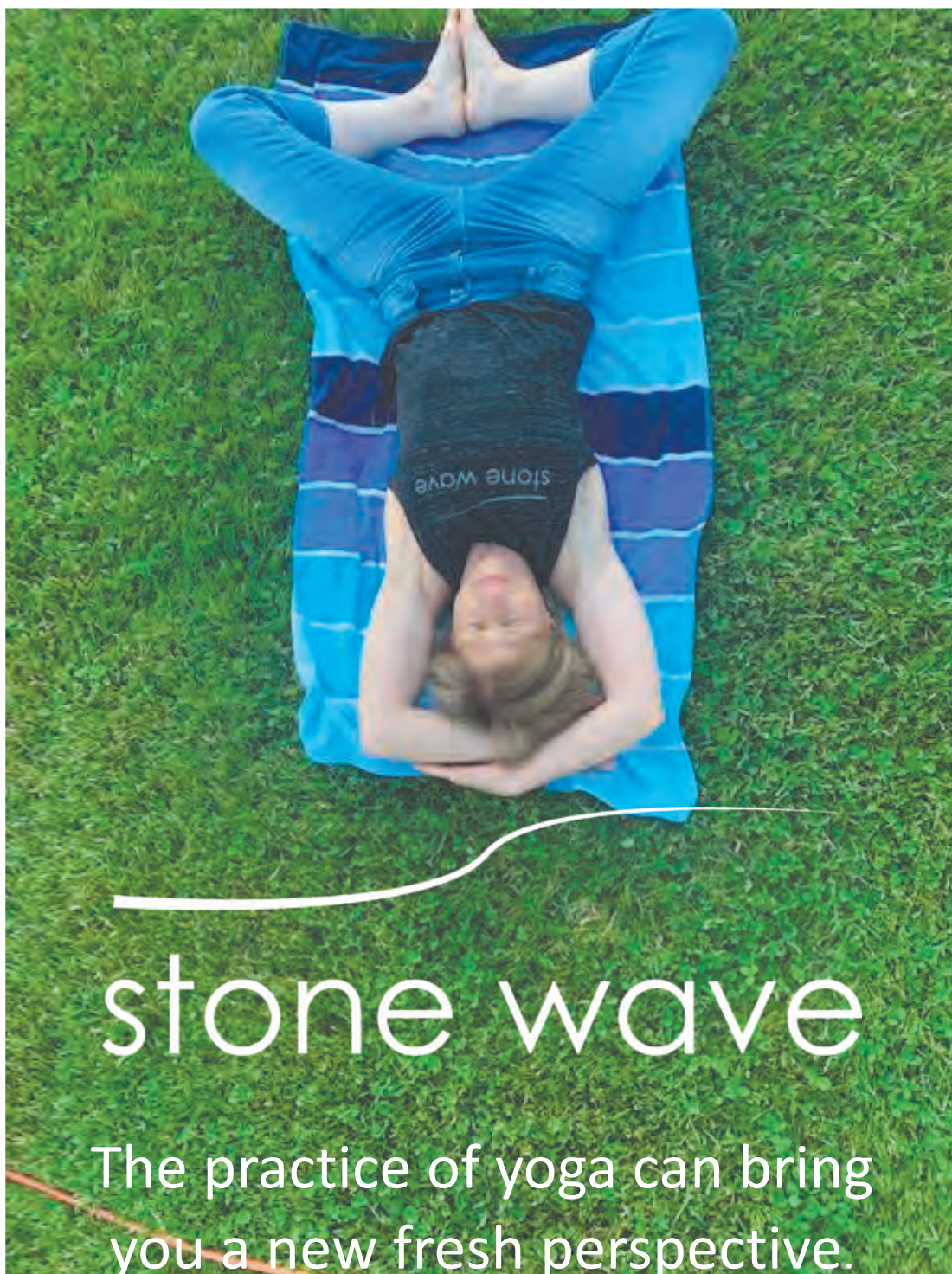
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any public course, Colonial Country Club should be on your Hudson Valley Golf checklist. The staff is known to be incredibly hospitable, and the great food complements the great people.

But you came here for the golf, and you will not be disappointed. You'll find cool elevation changes to remind you that you're deep in the mountains (not like you could forget the stunning panoramic views). The grounds are kept in such

great shape that sometimes you'll need to pinch yourself to make sure you're not playing a private course.

Copake Country Club (Copake)

18 holes • public

With over a century of history, the Copake Country Club course feels richly rooted in the local landscape. Despite the vintage founding year, this club is thoroughly modern, with a great

on-site restaurant, indoor simulators, cool Airbnb rentals, lessons, leagues ... everything you'd come to expect from a top-shelf public course.

Though the course sits nestled next to Copake Lake, water won't be much of an issue. However, there are plenty of

Hudson Valley Health

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Dinsmore Golf Course (Staatsburg)

18 holes • public

Some of the best courses in New York State are in state parks, and Dinsmore

is no exception. This links-style masterpiece will keep you on the tip of your golf shoes as you navigate mighty elevation changes amidst phenomenal views (including a truly grand panorama from the clubhouse).

The rough can be, well, rough, so don't get cocky on your tee shots or you'll be lost in a sea of weeds. The greens and grounds overall are immaculately maintained.

This is a must-play Hudson Valley course. Shade is scarce, so bring plenty of water and sunscreen.

Edgewood Club (Tivoli)

9 holes • private

Next to Clermont State Park is the

stately Edgewood Club, a well-to-do private club that dates back to the 1880s. Lovingly maintained, challenging yet accessible to all skill levels, the course winds through the woods, with tight fairways and tricky trees.

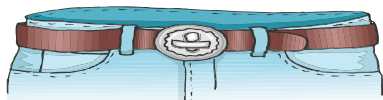
This exclusive and idyllic setting can only be accessed through recommendation of an existing member.

Green Acres Golf Club (Kingston)

9 holes • public

What's not to love about Green Acres? The laid-back atmosphere belies a serious commitment to constant course improvement. In the last few years, many new water and sand hazards have

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been added, and yardage has increased, cranking up the challenge. Green Acres is slowly but steadily turning into a top-class course.

Every time we visit we feel like part of the family. As one of the first courses to open and the last courses to close for the season, this is a course built for die-hard golfers. We did our first nine at Green Acres in 40-degree March weather.

That kind of commitment is why we can't wait to see the club's ultimate goal of constructing a full 18 holes. It's shaping up to be something special. As it stands today, this is a great casual course with a nice diversity of holes, interesting greens, and affordable rates. It's our go-to golf

destination as Kingstonites playing on a budget, and it keeps getting better.

Inness Golf (Accord)

9 holes • public

The newest course in the local landscape, Inness Golf is also perhaps the most unique. You'll immediately be in awe of the huge practice green, which also contains the greens for the second and ninth holes.

Featuring nine well-groomed wonders of course architecture, the vibe is surprisingly laid-back, with no dress code and a rustic vibe throughout. Chic lodging and the mouthwatering fare of a restaurant will tempt you to stay longer. This is the

course we didn't know we needed, and now we can't get enough of it.

Mohonk Mountain House Golf Course (New Paltz)

9 holes • public

This Scottish-inspired course is one of the oldest in the United States, dating back to 1897. It is accurately described as "a shot-maker's paradise." You will find yourself in for an intense round of golf featuring uneven fairways and blind tee shots. Trees loom from every direction, and the scenery is (no surprise) breathtaking to the point of welcome distraction.

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Left to Right: Joseph Belluck, Jordan Fox, Kristina Georgiou

get nine holes here included in their accommodation fees, but day guests can also book a tee time ... and for fairly reasonable rates, considering this is a playground for the one per cent.

New Paltz Golf Club (New Paltz)

9 holes • public

It's easy to see why some regard the New Paltz Golf Club as the best nine holes in the Hudson Valley. The first hole immediately takes your breath away, with its majestic mountain views and a sharp dogleg left. The course is challenging yet accessible to less experienced golfers, long yet interestingly contoured, and well-maintained while rustic and woodsy.

Plan to have a meal at one of the the fantastic on-site restaurants if you've got the time.

Red Hook Golf Club (Red Hook)

18 holes • semi-private

This 18-hole opus requires golfers to don their thinking caps and plan their shots strategically. You'll find fairways that hook left and right, water hazards requiring precise navigation, and devilish

greenside bunkers lying in wait. Trees will come into play as well, which is unsurprising given the course's sylvan, bucolic setting.

All-in-all, this is a formidable and fun romp through the woods that you soon won't forget. Non-members can play Monday through Thursday and during twilight hours on other days. Check out The Fairway Tavern for classic golf eats.

Shawangunk Country Club (Ellenville)

9 holes • public

The towering Shawangunk Mountains frame these formidable nine holes in Ellenville. With long, rolling fairways, elevation changes and tricky trees, the layout is lovingly sculpted around the contours of the natural landscape. With picturesque mountain views surrounding you, it's easy to get so relaxed you forget you've got a shot coming up.

While it's not golf-related, it's super-cool that they open up for snow tubing, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in the winter. That gives you a sense of the fun, down-to-earth attitude that prevails around the greens.

Stone Dock Golf Club (High Falls)

9 holes • public

A goose-quackin' good time is in store for golfers at this forest-flanked beauty. The aforementioned birds do a great job fertilizing the fairways, but it's the new owners who truly deserve the credit for recent course improvements. Elevation changes are all over the place, and the rough is not forgiving.

There's a laid-back, hometown feel to this course and its super-hospitable staff. This is a course for casual golfers who love the game and just want to get out there and hole nine balls without fancy bells and whistles. It's exciting to see the course and facilities getting the love they deserve. The attention can only make this local favorite a sweeter golfing experience.

The Twaalfskill Club (Kingston)

9 holes • private

The golf course at this private club has some serious history. The first putt was drained in 1903, and since then the rolling hills of Twaalfskill have bedeviled even experienced golfers. Ball placement is a science here, with greens that don't leave much room for error.

Rolling hills make the course feel melted over the natural landscape, perfectly in tune with its surroundings. If you're into the members-only scene, you might be tempted to join this enthusiastic, golf-loving community.

Turtle Creek Golf Course (Wallkill)

9 holes • public

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fashion at Turtle Creek. The course is as scenic as it is unforgiving, with elevation changes, doglegs, undulating greens, ample hazards and tight fairways. It's truly one of the area's most humbling golf experiences.

Beginners will need to bring a box of balls and a prayer if they wish to produce a decent score. Those who like a good challenge will have an absolute blast plotting each shot through one of the prettiest nine-hole outings in our area.

Wiltwyck Golf Club (Kingston)

18 holes • semi-private

A few years ago, this palatial course was members-only. Now it's open to the public during some weekdays and twilight weekend hours. It's an exciting opportunity for the average Joe to experience the members-only feel of an exclusive club for fairly reasonable greens fees.

Famous course designer Robert Trent



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The greens at Dinsmore.



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Jones sculpted this long and challenging series of deceptively difficult holes where club selection is always critical. With a professional-grade landscape that is always kept tidy, this is as close as you'll get to cosplaying as a PGA professional in Kingston city limits. It's truly magic to feel like you're on a hike through the woods while ogling park-like, well-groomed greenery as far as the eye can see.

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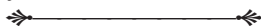
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Woodstock Golf Club (Woodstock)

9 holes • private

Woodstockers know this golf course as the gateway to their community, though a relative few have ever set foot there. The exclusive club dates back to 1929, a time-weathered testament to the sumptuous scenery of our area.

The challenging layout has you navigating tricky approach shots to bunker-flanked greens, deceptively challenging tee shots, and the occasional teenager driving by on Route 375 shouting obscenities during your backswing (sorry). Overlook Mountain towers above in all its majesty over the well-manicured grasses fit for even the most discerning player.

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A bridge too far?

*Mental-health commissioner
must navigate complex relationships*

by Geddy Sveikauskas

THE FIVE MILLION dollars in federal ARPA money allocated for the provision of mental-health services provides the spark of creativity with which Ulster County can organize its programs more effectively, according to Tara McDonald, the first commissioner of the unit newly separated from the county's health department. The uptown Kingston resident hopes to make the most of the opportunity.

In its 2022 budget, Ulster County government earmarked \$20 million to address mental-health needs. The biggest portion of that considerable allocation was for the county's first mental-health and addiction recovery center.

On April 26, the county announced it had bought the former Medical Arts Building at 368 Broadway, which it described only as "an existing commercial office building," for two million dollars of ARPA money. Ulster County said it plans a crisis stabilization center at the location which will allow individuals in need of mental-health or addiction services to connect immediately with an integrated team of professionals for support and treatment options.

In partnership with the county, the non-profit multi-location Access: Supports for Living had set up a clinic on Suite 205 there last year, well before the purchase of the 368 Broadway building. The clinic



Tara McDonald.

is open from 10 to 6 Monday through Friday and the rest of the time virtually. This service connects the county's urgent-care and mobile mental-health teams. Therapists are available 24/7 by phone and through telemedicine.

An unusual feature of this particular office building is its connection via a second-story covered walkway over Foxhall Avenue (clearance eleven feet

eight inches) to next-door Kingston Hospital, part of HealthAlliance of the Hudson Valley, owned and operated by the Westchester Medical Center (WMC), with which Ulster County executive Pat Ryan has been engaged in a bitter two-year feud about the location of behavioral-health facilities for Ulster County residents.

Since at least September 2020, WMC has been seeking state decertification of 60 in-patient beds in Kingston -- 40 for mental health and 20 for detoxification. These services will be offered in Dutchess County, WMC said.

Ryan felt the WMC decision, which the health system has stuck to ever since, was very damaging. "Our supposed partners have pulled the rug out from underneath us," he said bitterly at that time. He has argued that the inpatient beds should be located in Ulster County, with the other elements of the health system, rather than distant from them. The last thing vulnerable people need is

PROVIDED

alienation from their support.

Ryan plays the long game

It is difficult to see the choice of location at 368 Broadway as unconnected to that feud. Ryan, McDonald and their colleagues have been busy creating a strategically placed beachhead for behavioral-health services cheek by jowl and physically connected with a WMC facility.



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Is there a long game being played here?

Last May, Ryan assembled a group of 30 persons as a behavioral health task force under the chairmanship of Tara McDonald, at that time deputy commissioner of mental health within the county health department. Meeting monthly, the task force was tasked with an analysis of the gaps and opportunities of the county's system. "It is our intention," said McDonald at that time, "to focus on the challenges of accessing services and to recommend additional pathways in which residents can connect to immediate support."

In September, the task force recommended an integrated system that included the return of inpatient psychiatric services. The county executive budget for 2022 acted on many of these recommendations.

With support from the county legislature, the decision was made to form a separate county mental health department that would be designated by the state as a Local Governmental Unit which would oversee funding for mental health, substance abuse and developmental disabilities.

An integrated vision

A search for a head of the new department was held, with a pay of \$97,807 offered. McDonald, a veteran of 13 years with the State Office of Mental Health in the

field in Albany before coming to do youth work for Family of Woodstock in Ulster County, was selected as commissioner on March 24 of this year. She said she expects to maintain her offices on Golden Hill until the new digs at 368 Broadway are ready, hopefully in about 18 months.

Fifteen people currently under the new commissioner's purview. She expects that number to expand to 19 on the near future.

The treatment of mental health is a very stressful occupation, not made any easier during Covid. McDonald said that workforce recruitment and retention takes a lot of her time. The crisis has created a focus on bonuses for retention, she noted.

Therapist turnover is a problem for patients, of course. Too many patients who badly need support have had to work with three different therapists within six months.

Though it may help, a bridge between buildings doesn't create a relationship between their occupants. Ulster County and WMC are still poles apart when it comes to their visions of an integrated system of behavioral health.

Ryan, McDonald and their colleagues know that. But the county's actions of the past year must put some pressure on WMC grudgingly to accept the more holistic local vision of behavioral health as more appropriate than their own.

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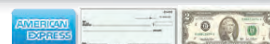
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Back in the saddle again

Linda Neu overcomes very serious injuries to ride once more

by Violet Snow

AFTER LOSING HER leg in a motorcycle crash, a Hurley resident was determined to ride her horse again

"I'm an adventurous kind of person," Linda Neu says cheerfully, explaining why she took up motorcycle riding after 16 years of owning horses. She later adds that she was also grieving over the death from kidney failure of one of her beloved horses, Coco. "I was angry. I had to do something different."

It's a chilly spring day in Hurley, where three horses are lazing in the sun outside the barn, ears twitching as they listen to our voices. Neu's 22-year-old mare, Shyla, is a tall bay red roan quarter horse she bought at the age of two and a half, when two previous owners had given her up as unmanageable. Holly, a chestnut, belonging to Neu's sister, is mild-mannered, an easy ride. Dory has ambled to the paddock for a drink of water after grazing on the lawn. "She's 32, and she just walks," says Neu, "so she's free-range."

The property is at the end of a rural road, so Dory is safe wandering loose. She never goes far from the barn. Neu's son-in-law, Sloan Hoffstatter, bought the little mare for his daughter at an auction, bidding against a kill shelter seeking meat for dog food.

Four years ago, Dory almost had to be put down because of infections under her teeth. To save her, a vet administered massive doses of antibiotics, while Neu and Hoffstatter hand-fed the horse daily with warm oat mash.

NEU HAS RIDDEN OVER FROM THE house on a four-wheeler, her dog Simon running alongside. Now she stands



PHOTOS BY NILS SCHLEBUSCH

Linda Neu with Shyla.



Shyla (on left) and Holly.

with a cane handy as she tells the story of her accident. "My boyfriend and I bought motorcycles and took a safety course to learn how to ride," she says. "The third time we went out, we were riding on Route 32, up past the old game farm, and we were going around a long curve. All I can figure is that I crossed riding a motorcycle with riding a horse. Instead of turning my upper

body and hand, I was trying to turn with my hips, the way you turn a horse. And the bike just wouldn't turn."

Neu's leg was crushed against the side of an oncoming car, and she was flung through the air. "My mother had been dead for 15 years, and I saw her," Neu says. "She appeared on a red frame bicycle, riding in front, and I was in back."

Neu's boyfriend, George Washburn, ran to where she lay on the ground. "Your eyes were open, but you weren't there," he told her later. In the ambulance, on the way to the

field where the helicopter would land to airlift Neu to Albany Medical Center, the EMTs did not think she was going to make it.

"When I woke up, my family was there at the foot of the bed, trying to keep me from noticing that my leg had been amputated," she says. "But I was doing hand signals that showed I knew it was gone." Then she fell back asleep.

After three days, when she finally regained consciousness for more than a few minutes and the tube was removed from her throat, Neu's first words were: "I want a margarita, and I will be back on my horse."

Even more life-threatening than the mid-thigh amputation of the right leg, her pelvis had been shattered, along with muscles and blood vessels within. She wasn't allowed to put any pressure on the left leg, to protect the healing of her pelvic area, so she had to use her arms to move her body.

Washburn obtained a high-tech wheelchair that could navigate outdoors. "The day I returned from the hospital," Neu recalls, "I rode the wheelchair out to the horses to feed them hay and grain. My priority was to care for them. I'd put Shyla on a lead rope, and she'd walk along next to the wheelchair." Meanwhile, her granddaughters, Olivia and Rosebud, who live next door, were riding the horses to keep them in shape.

Six months after the accident, Neu received a prosthetic leg, enabling her to get around with a walker. She began to groom the horses. One day, Shyla spooked at something and knocked Neu over. A friend, trainer Donna Milby, helped work with Shyla so she wouldn't startle as easily. They gradually accustomed her to being tapped and stroked with a cane and to hearing the cane clatter to the ground.

Shyla also had to get used to the changes in her owner. "She would smell my leg, and then she'd exhale, like she was saying, Okay, it's Mom. She'd missed the interaction with me. I had a strong bond with the horses."

As a kid growing up in Hyde Park, Neu liked to climb onto a neighbor's horse when the owner wasn't home. She'd jump off before he returned. When she and her sister, another Donna, had horses of their

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own, they would ride in cow-herding competitions at Clinton Corners. Sometimes they'd trailer up to West Kill and ride through the woods to the fire tower. Neu even took Shyla camping. Although the horse was high-strung, Neu said, "We clicked. I knew what she was thinking, and she knew what I was thinking."

FOLLOWING THE ACCIDENT, NEU SOON became bored with her regular sessions of physical therapy and quit. "I got the basics of P.T., but I was getting better therapy with the horses. At the barn, I was moving, bending, lifting hay, clean-

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ing hooves." She would tie P.T. stretch bands to the paddock gate to do exercises for rebuilding muscles in her core.

By then, the wheelchair had been replaced by a four-wheeled all-terrain vehicle. "I figured, if I can stay on a four-wheeler in the woods, I can stay on a horse. I waited until my family was away, and I went out by myself." After proving her point, she began to work with Milby, the trainer, to prepare herself and Shyla for riding.

It took a team to get Neu back in the saddle. Having worked at Bread Alone for 21 years, she knows a lot of people. Her customers and Facebook friends put together a GoFundMe page and raised \$40,000 for her rehabilitation. One customer, filmmaker Tracy Christian, dived into creating *The Ride* (coming out this year), a short documentary about Linda's return to riding. The process of filming helped her deal with emotions surrounding the accident and the rigors of recovery.

An old friend, Jack Skerritt, offered to build her a mounting deck with bars she could grab while easing onto the horse. Milby taught Shyla to approach the platform and stand still for the

mounting process. "She had to get used to the difference in my body weight and balance," said Neu.

A year after the accident, she started riding. When mounting, she has to keep her prosthetic leg straight while lifting it over the horse's back. Then, using an app on her phone, which hangs on a string around her neck, she activates a micro-processor in the leg that is programmed to keep the knee and ankle at the correct angles for sitting in the saddle.

She's learned to rely on her hips, rather than using her legs and feet, to give the horse cues for movement. Shyla has learned to respond to the new patterns. Neu's daughter Hannah used rope fencing to create a track in the paddock, so Linda could ride safely as she worked to regain her balance.

Last fall, she went with her sister and Milby on a ten-day camping trip in

the Adirondacks, riding the trails on horseback.

Other parts of Neu's life are coming back too. Washburn, who restores classic cars, installed a left-foot gas pedal in her truck. She uses a tractor to clean and clear the paddock, with the help of a hand brake installed by a friend, Sasha Ivanov. Neu's daughter, Kayleigh, took her kayaking last year at Wilson State Park, and helped her pick out a tricycle so she can ride on rail trails. In the last month, seven-year-old granddaughter Rosebud has occasionally grabbed the cane, encouraging Neu to walk a few steps with no external support.

Generous as her family and friends have been, Neu's animals have provided indispensable support. "My horse Shyla and my dog Simon are my inspiration and motivation," she says. "They continue to be my greatest healers."

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Helping the most vulnerable

*Local therapists provide
uninterrupted free care to foster-care kids*

by Erin Quinn

MORE THAN 130 children in Ulster County live in foster care. These children often experience physical and/or emotional traumas that require their removal from their biological parents' care. They often experience a nomadic life moving from foster home to foster home.

These compounded traumas make for a rough childhood. Fortunately, a group of dedicated local therapists volunteer their time and expertise pro bono to be paired with these foster youth, bringing them into their private practices for as long as the children want to continue therapy. They are welcome, even after leaving the foster-care program.

Seven therapists of the Hudson Valley chapter of A Home Within (AHW), a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting children who experience foster care at all stages, work with foster youth in Ulster County. Additional volunteer therapists to help address this critical mental-health void for one of the most vulnerable populations would be welcome.

"Fifty percent of young adults who age out of foster care end up homeless or incarcerated," said Kathy Adorney, clinical director of the Hudson Valley's AHW Chapter. "One of the best things we can do to prevent this is to provide them with uninterrupted therapy that is free. These children are pulled from their biological parents due to some sort of trauma, and then they're put into foster home after foster home, and their attachments to adults are constantly broken. This can cause them to give up on attaching to a caring adult."



**Kathy Adorney, clinical director
at A Home Within, Hudson Valley
chapter.**

In the early 1990s, Toni Vaughn Heinman, a California psychotherapist, and a group of like-minded colleagues formed an organization to focus solely on the therapeutic needs of current and former foster-care youth, a population experiencing the multitude of complex traumas and loss that left them vulnerable to all the things parents try to protect their children from — teenage pregnancy, drugs and alcohol, dropping out of high school, trouble with the law, abusive relationships.

The HV chapter volunteers specialize in an entire range of approaches to help children learn to cope and to heal: art therapy, play therapy, trauma expertise — an entire range of approaches to help children learn to cope and to heal.

A consultation group

When a licensed therapist or one in the

process of being licensed agrees to take on a client referred from a foster-care experience, Adorney explained, they make them part of their private practice. "Toni [Vaughn Heinman] knew that once money became involved the care could be interrupted, and she did not want to see that happen, which is why we use only professionals that volunteer their services," she said.

The therapists are members of a consultation group which meets regularly to discuss the foster clients they work with. They problem-solve together and bounce perspectives off one another.

"Private practice can be a very lonely thing," said Adorney. "Therapists just go from problem case to problem case, and having the ability to just talk to one another about the last time they saw their particular child and what the trials and successes have been -- without violating HIPPA laws -- is so helpful. That is such a necessary resource for therapists to help them be the best provider they can to these children and young adults."

The service is also available to anyone who has gone through a foster experience who still would like to seek therapy.

"The therapists help serve as a place to contain the struggles of the child," explained Adorney, "and the consultation group works to help contain the therapists."

Ten times the stress

Therapists working with several foster-care clients recognize that they've been able to provide the balance, stability and healing that has helped these young adults stabilize and connect. "We've put some videos together where you can just see the joy in these therapists' faces," said Adorney, "and testimonials about how

wonderful it's been to work with these children and young adults."

What about the effects of the pandemic on foster-care youth? "Imagine the stresses that the average family went through and then amplify that by ten times," replied Adorney. "The lockdown and having children going to school online at home and having to work. And these were not their biological children, they are kids in their foster care." The stresses related with this time only magnified the complex traumas that some of these children have from their past and exacerbated them.

"Many of these kids come from extreme trauma," she said. "Add stresses onto that like we had in the pandemic, and it can force them inward and have them shut-down, or it can make them oppositional and defiant and difficult. It was hard on the foster parents, the kids, the families, and we're doing everything we can to help alleviate that and to provide this critical service."

There is no shortage of children seeking professional therapy, but there is a shortage on therapists to work with AHW. "Without treatment, children in foster care who have suffered the trauma of abuse and/or neglect by their parents are likely to be impacted for life," Adorney added. "This can make all of the difference in the world for these kids."

AHW needs more volunteers. It's very flexible with the type of licensing, as long as there's a commitment to being part of the consultation group and an interview with Adorney and one of the members of the consultation group."

AHW's vision is that "all children who experience foster care are provided this essential support, ensuring that as they transition from foster care, regardless of which stage of life they are in, they have the inner tools they need to thrive. By matching youth with experienced therapists, we address the trauma and disruption inherent to foster care, help youth manage stress and anxiety, and develop the inner tools they need to become healthy adults."

Anyone interested in learning about joining the Hudson Valley Chapter of AHW (ahomewithin.org) as a therapist, or someone with a foster experience that would like to seek treatment or a foster parent who would like additional support should contact Adorney at kathy@ahomewithin.org.



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