

THURSDAY'S AFTER-WORK PARTY

Wednesday, July 5, 2006 | [Cincinnati.Com](#) » [CiN Weekly](#) » [Health/Rec](#) » Head to the park for yoga

Head to the park for yoga

No registration or experience needed - just a mat and some time to relax

GINA DAUGHERTY | CIN WEEKLY

There are times when I envy people in Cincinnati because I see them doing things I wish I were doing.

Earlier this month I got to be one of those people I might envy when I took a yoga class in Eden Park, under the stage of Seasongood Pavilion.

Fourteen of us, along with instructor Nikki Hamilton, unrolled our yoga mats for the 7 p.m. Wednesday class sponsored by Inner Circle Social Collective, which sounds new-agey, but is actually a singles organization for young professionals.

Linda Littman, founder of Inner Circle Social Collective, created the class for everyone, single or not. Just bring \$10 and a yoga mat - no registration or yoga experience necessary.

RAIN OR SHINE

Hamilton, who also teaches at It's Yoga in Clifton, says people shouldn't be dissuaded by the weather, either heat or rain.

"People don't always realize that we're underneath the pavilion, so we're covered she says. "Even when it's hot, we're under shade."

But the summer heat is also welcome at Yoga in the Park.

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ZOOM DAVID SORCHER | CIN WEEKLY
 Linda Littman has helped organize a Wednesday evening yoga class in Eden Park.

JUST THE FACTS

WHAT: Yoga in the Park

WHEN: 7 to 8:30 p.m. every Wednesday until it gets cold. Another class at 10 a.m. Sundays will start July 9 (no class July 30)

WHERE: Seasongood Pavilion (across from the Cincinnati Art Museum), Eden Park

PRICE: \$10



"We're doing Ashtanga yoga, a flow-based yoga, so you want your body to be warm," Hamilton says. "The warmer it is, the easier it is to bend, so the warmer the better."

During one class earlier this summer, just as students were lying down to rest and entering deep relaxation, Hamilton said it started to rain. Everyone could hear it falling through the trees, as if it had been cued up for the end of class.

YOGA FOR ALL

It was pretty warm the night I attended,

though the heat didn't seem to bother any of the 13 people filling the pavilion stage.

Andrew More, of Burlington, was far and away the most limber and practiced student in the class. At one point he balanced his entire body on his arms, and later performed a backbend while balancing on his head.

The rest of us were wowed, including Sue McLaughlin, of Oakley, who happened to be on the mat behind More. They don't know each other, but McLaughlin kindly referred to him as "the rubber-band man" when chatting about her own challenges with yoga.

"I've tried it off and on," she says. "But I've never gotten into a routine with it."

Yet she's attended three Yoga in the Park classes, which could be a new record for her. She's in shape, but not in pliable, yoga-shape, so the class is challenging without being overwhelming for her.

"It's the summer solstice and I'm in the park doing yoga - that's pretty cool," she says. "And the fact that it's outside kind of makes me relax a little more, and I don't seem to worry about what everyone else is doing."

More, on the other hand, has attended all of the Inner Circle Yoga in the Park classes, and though the near three-year yoga student doesn't find it particularly challenging, he enjoys taking classes in different locations with different instructors.

"I love being out in the park," More says. "It's a wonderful place to practice yoga. I also enjoy Nikki's teaching style. She attempts to make the class about more than just the physical exercises. A lot of people think that yoga is just like taking an aerobics or step class, and this is not really the case."

PARKING: Free parking across from the pavilion

CONTACT: www.cincyinnercircle.com

ETC: Coffee from Sitwell's will be available for the Sunday morning classes starting at 9:30 a.m.

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FINAL THOUGHTS

Over the course of the hour-and-a-half-long class, a dozen or so runners and walkers passed by, enjoying their own summer evening in June.

One woman even stopped to sit on a bench in the pavilion to watch. As I stretched into warrior one, I wondered what she must think of stumbling upon this group of 14 yoga students and an instructor bending into their mats in the park.

I figure she must have thought it was very cool, just like I did. Maybe she even envied us a little.

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