

NEPA Yoga Festival continues to grow, returns to Scranton's Montage Mountain

By Matt Mattei - mmattei@timesleader.com

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In addition to a full schedule of yoga classes in a variety of styles, the NEPA Yoga Festival offers information and consultation on a multitude of wellness and healing practices as well as art, vendors, food and fun activities for children. - Submitted photo



Shown is a map of the NEPA Yoga Festival on the grounds of Montage Mountain in Scranton.

- Submitted photo

In its fifth year, the NEPA Yoga Festival is stretching all over Montage Mountain in Scranton.

“We’re using every possible inch we can at the water park,” festival founder Chelsea Manganaro said. “We use the rental building, the lodge, Slocum Hollow, the deck. We use the grounds for our vendors. We’re not going down to the pavilion, but we have utilized all the space we possibly can.”

The annual event will take place from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and will feature a full schedule of yoga classes as well as areas where patrons can meditate, explore healing methods and view the work of local artists. The festival offers lectures, vendors, food, a children’s area and fun activities like swimming and slacklining.

Manganaro, of Moscow, started the festival in 2014 to try to bring her yoga community closer together with a major event. Since then, the owner of Near Me Yoga and Near Me Cafe has seen the gathering grow in size and reputation.

“It’s definitely gotten a lot of traction even outside the area, which is exciting for me ... seeing how far it’s reaching, from mostly word of mouth and Facebook,” she said.

New this year, Manganaro noted, is an area dedicated specifically to meditation.

“We’ve had meditation (sessions) in the past,” she said, “but this year, we’ve added a space where people can go to get away from everything else and meditate.”

Another first will be the presence of The Salted Pixie, which will be educating the crowd on the benefits of Himalayan salt-cave therapy, which it offers in Archbald.

“It helps with asthma, upper respiratory issues, chronic pain; it has a ton of benefits, but it could just be for relaxation as well.”

The festival’s healing area will return this year, inviting patrons to consult with a variety of medical professionals and homeopathic practitioners, and a series of lectures will be presented featuring titles like “The Love Revolution,” “The Warrior Within” and “7 Keys to Walk Your Talk in Life.”

“We have six lectures from presenters from all over the country. Basically, they’re looking to have talks with people that will allow them to create the best versions of themselves,” Manganaro said.

And, of course, the all-day gathering offers a wide selection of yoga styles, including vinyasa, dosha, acro, partner yoga and laughing yoga. Embedded in the class schedule are other wellness-oriented activities such as tai chi and hula hooping.

“There are three areas of classes,” Manganaro said. “You can pick and choose where you want to be. If none of the classes at 1 p.m. work for you, you can try a lecture or meditation. You don’t have to choose all yoga, all day.”

As has been the custom since the festival’s inception, classes cover all skill levels, from beginner to advanced.

“We do have instructors from all over NEPA, but also from all over the world,” Manganaro said.

For those who might be interested in education but aren’t sure they’re ready for a yoga class, a \$10 spectator pass allows patrons to attend lectures and visit the healing area and vendors without purchasing the full-priced ticket.

“We want to get a different audience there,” Manganaro said. “There are people out there who don’t know what yoga is, and we want people to know just because it’s called the NEPA Yoga Festival, that doesn’t mean they’re not invited.”

The kids’ area will feature a carnival class, kids’ tai chi, hula hooping and more fun options that make the event family friendly. Family passes admit two adults and two children for less than the price of two general admission tickets.

And if the whole family plans to spend an entire day at the festival, they’ll have to eat.

“We have all types of delicious foods including vegan and vegetarian options,” Manganaro said. “Montage will be open for people as well.”

Manganaro encourages people to come and experience the festival regardless of if they have someone to go with.

“You can come alone and meet people very easily,” she said. “A lot of people think they need a friend to go with, and you really don’t even have time to talk, running from yoga class to yoga class.”

And the enthusiasm with which a growing circle of practitioners and patrons embraces the NEPA Yoga Festival is a credit to the community that surrounds it, Manganaro said.

“A lot of teachers in the area are supportive of the event ... and promote it just as much (as I do) and are involved in it,” she said. “The yoga community is definitely expanding. (It’s) a great resource for many people, so if you’re new to the area, if you have any sort of ailment, mental or physical, yoga is there to help cure that.”



The fifth annual NEPA Yoga Festival will take place Saturday at Montage Mountain in Scranton. https://www.timesleader.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/web1_Yoga1.jpeg The fifth annual NEPA Yoga Festival will take place Saturday at Montage Mountain in Scranton. Submitted photo Annual wellness celebration returns to Montage Mountain

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IF YOU GO

What: NEPA Yoga Festival

When: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday

Where: Montage Mountain, 1000 Montage Mountain Road, Scranton

Additional information: General admission passes cost \$69. Tickets range from \$10 for a spectator pass to \$119 for a family pass that admits two adults and two children. For additional ticket options and information, visit nepayogafestival.com.