

Cheshire Cat, white rabbit and friends attend Mad Tea Party in Portland (Photos)

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As people strolled through Peninsula Park in Portland on Saturday, many did a double take.

A Cheshire cat was seen lounging in the grass as she listened to the smooth sounds of a cello.

A white rabbit posed for photos amid a sea of mannequin legs.

And dozens of Steampunk-clad people sipped tea and while playing croquet with bowling balls and sledgehammers.

It was all part of a Mad Tea Party organized by Fredrick Zal, a Portland resident who describes himself as creating "silly things".

Zal, a lover of tea and tea rituals, was mulling over the idea of a Mad Hatter tea party. His original plan was for a small, intimate event.

"It was going to be four or six of us, but we put it on Facebook and it got a lot bigger," he says.

When he saw the interest in a themed tea party, he started planning. It took two months to put it together.

A formal tea was served, British style, with custom tea blends created by Friday Afternoon teas. Caterers provided savory and sweet treats, described by Zal as having an "Alice in Wonderland flavor".

People enjoyed the warm weather, playing miniature golf with flamingo-shaped golf clubs, standard croquet and Mondo croquet, where players use a sledgehammer to move bowling balls around a course.

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A live performance by cellist Skip vonKuske and Grace Young on viola provided a relaxing tea drinking atmosphere.

Tickets were sold online and about 40 people attended Saturday's inaugural event.

Costumes and formal attire were required. "It's Portland," says Zal. "If you can get people together, why not have them dress up? It's more fun."

---[Kristyna Wentz-Graff](#)

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