The Vermilion

Traditional Hindu festival of color paints Girard Park

Camille Barnett camibar1995@gmail.com

Hundreds of people dressed in white gathered to celebrate in vibrant clouds of powder at, arguably, the messiest and most colorful festival Lafayette’s cultural groups have to offer.

The seventh annual admission-free Lafayette Holi festival was held in Girard Park Saturday afternoon. Lafayette Holi is a half-day event that has been a tradition held on the last Saturday of March since 2011. In 2014, Lafayette city-parish government declared it a city festival.

“It was great,” said Anthony Xananame, a junior at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. “I enjoyed it way more than I thought I would. It was really interesting to see the community come together.”

Holi originated in India. A Hindu event widely known as the Celebration of Color, the festival marks the arrival of spring. It celebrates fertility, color, love and the triumph of good versus evil.

Most attendees of Lafayette Holi rushed to the banner that read “COLORS” upon arrival. Here, they selected from plastic bags sorted and filled with bright green, yellow, red, purple, pink, orange and blue powder-like substances, called gual, a non-hazardous mixture of food-grade cornstarch and food coloring.

“Happy Holi!” yelled a festival worker with an enormous smile from behind the “COLORS” booth, as he rubbed his orange, gual-covered hands on the cheeks of those who approached the table to receive their individual bags of powder.

Festival-goers who arrived in white were completely covered in colors within minutes of attendance. Following tradition, strangers threw, poured and sprinkled color on other strangers as they moved through crowds.

“I had so much fun, but it was

HOLI
continued on page 4