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India Day Parade Marches On

BY BETSY ABRAHAM

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The Indian community from Long Island and the tri-state area gathered in Hicksville on Sunday, Aug. 9 for the annual India Day Parade.

Hicksville's India Day Parade mirrors those held in New York City and New Jersey and celebrates Indian Independence Day, which is Aug. 15. Like prior years, this year's festivities kicked off at the Patel Brothers Plaza and continued down Broadway, ending at the corner of Broadway and E. Barclay Street where there was an array of Indian food, musical performances and other cultural programs.

Almost 20 groups, including several social, religious and political organizations, marched in this year's parade, which was led by grand marshal and Bollywood actress Neetu Chandra. Joining Chandra as a chief guest of honor was Nina Davuluri, who was crowned Miss America 2014 and Miss New York 2013. Davuluri was the first Indian-American Miss America.

"One of the most heartwarming parts of my year of service was to interact with the Indian American community," Davuluri said. "It goes to show that regardless of our race, ethnicity or

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Discovering Hicksville's Hidden Parks

BY DEBBIE DE LOUISE

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When you ask a Hicksville parent or caregiver what park they take their children to in Hicksville, most people will say Cantiague Park. But there are also 17 smaller parks, known as parklets (some people call them hidden parks or pocket parks) in Hicksville.

According to Brian Devine of the Town of Oyster Bay Parks Department, "a parklet is a smaller park, often in a residential area...that generally (has) considerably less amenities than a full scale park. Also, most are not lit for night use."

The parklets in Hicksville were built by the Town of Oyster Bay over a period of time. Cantiague Park is a Nassau County park. "Some of the parklets, particularly those made in the last 15 years have

been created as a result of SEA FUND (Save Environmental Assets) Bond Money," Devine explained. "SEA FUND allocations have been voted for by town residents on several occasions to enable the town to acquire land and utilize it for the purpose of community use. This has protected parcels of land from over-development commercially, and helped contribute to the quality of life our residents enjoy here in the TOB."

For Hicksville moms, parklets are convenient and usually less crowded than the larger parks in the area. They are places they've gone as children and can continue to go as they take their own kids. Jennifer Miller Papoutsakis and her 9-year-old son recently visited the H-7 parklet on Dean Street north of Jay Street. Her son kept asking her if the



Children can enjoy playing at hidden park H12, which is located on Andrews Road at the east ends of Violet and Libby Avenues.

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park was there when she was a kid. "I did go with the neighborhood kids," she said. "We rode our bikes there."

"There's a hidden park next to Willy Lane in Hicksville. My aunt Lena and uncle Emil lived across the street from it," said Hicksville resident, Jenn Eicholz. "They used to take my brothers, sisters, and I to play there when we visited them. It was so much fun. Now my sisters and cousins have babies and we take their kids there. Whomever built these hidden parks was a genius."

A mom who lived near the H-3 parklet on Page Drive and Clinton Lane as a child said, "I spent many hours growing up in the Clinton Lane and Michigan Drive parklets. It was a place I could get away and it was peaceful. It was a great place to hang out with your friends."

Although most moms reported positive experiences about the parklets, Maria, who has lived for 17 years near the H-6 parklet on Glenbrook Road and Boulevard Drive, had a concern about the teenagers in the area littering the parklet at night.

"During the day it is great seeing children playing, but at night it attracts drinkers and pot smokers. It is pitch black at night and I feel it is really hidden," she said. "When kids are there at night, they dump the garbage pails and leave the mess or leave beer cans and bottles. I've gone in there during the day and have cleaned up the bottles so the little ones don't get hurt. I have also called the town and they have come to clean up if it is really bad and they do oblige,



Hidden park H06, at Glenbrook Road/Boulevard Drive. (Photos by Debbie DeLouise)

no problem."

Although activities and events such as the town's Music Under the Stars Concert series are not scheduled in any of the parklets due to their small size, some smaller groups make use of them. For their end of year picnic in late June, the fifth grade class at Holy Family was taken down the road by their teachers, Mrs. DeVito and Mrs. Will, to the H-8 parklet on Fordham and Cornell Avenues to enjoy the small park away from school grounds.

For more information or the location of a parklet near you, contact the Town of Oyster Bay Parks Department at 516-797-4129.



Local residents can play basketball or have fun on the playground at hidden park H08.

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