

Konkani Express

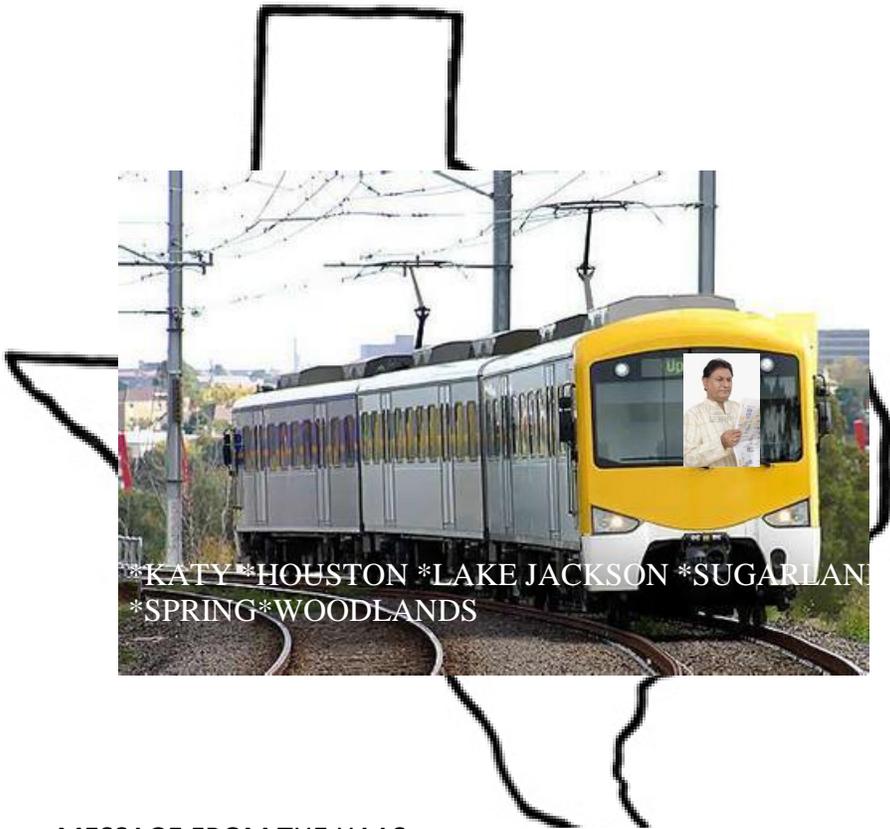
April 2013



Vasant utsav :
A celebration of spring

KONKANI EXPRESS

KONKANI EXPRESS EDITION 2



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MESSAGE FROM THE HAAS PRESIDENT:

Dear Greater Houston Konkani Community,

It has been a busy three months for our committee. We celebrated our first event –the Satya Narayana Puja, and are now getting ready for our annual spring picnic .We wanted everything to be perfect. How do we make it perfect? I was full of apprehensions. Would there be enough food? How will we keep the food warm? etc. As I entered the hall that morning there were people decorating the deity, people bringing food, people setting things up, warming up the food, etc.

This reminded me of a beautiful story of disabled boy’s father who was trying hard to understand his son’s disability and often wondered where is God’s perfection? One day while passing through the field with his little boy, who desperately wished to play baseball, the father asked a group of boys playing baseball if his son could join. Initially none of the boys wanted a disabled, non athletic and inexperienced boy on their team. On the dad’s persistence, the losing team agreed to take him in. When the disabled boy didn’t even know how to hold the bat properly, the pitcher moved a few steps to lob the ball in softly. A team mate stepped in to help him steady his bat. The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and threw the ball, not to the first baseman but in a high arc to the right field far beyond the reach of the first baseman. Everyone cheered as the boy reached 1st, 2nd, 3rd bases and finally completed the home run. That night the child returned home a hero with his dream fulfilled and a proud father who was smiling softly, tears rolling down his face. The **true heroes** were the team mates who could make dreams come true. Those boys had reached their level of God’s perfection!

Yes, as I entered the hall and saw those busy volunteers, I smiled softly --- These will ever be my **heroes!!** HAPPY UGADI to one and all!

Truly,

Maya R. Prabhu

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HAPPY UGADI!

“Uga” stands for era and “Adi” stands for beginning. Ugadi signifies beginning of the Konkani New Year. It is also celebrated as the beginning of spring. Traditionally in South India, fresh tender cashews are harvested for ‘Tendle Bibba Upkari’ to complement ‘channa gasi’ and ‘Madgane’ on this occasion. This year Ugadi falls on April 11, 2013.

Reflections:

“I remember the tying of Thoran (marigolds and mango leaves) to vessels, the reading of the new panchang and sharing fruits on Ugadi”

_ Chaya Ubhayakar
Houston, Texas.

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Ram Navami – April 20th, 2013

HAAS scholarship awarded!

The SGS Sabha has informed us that this year the HAAS scholarship was awarded to :

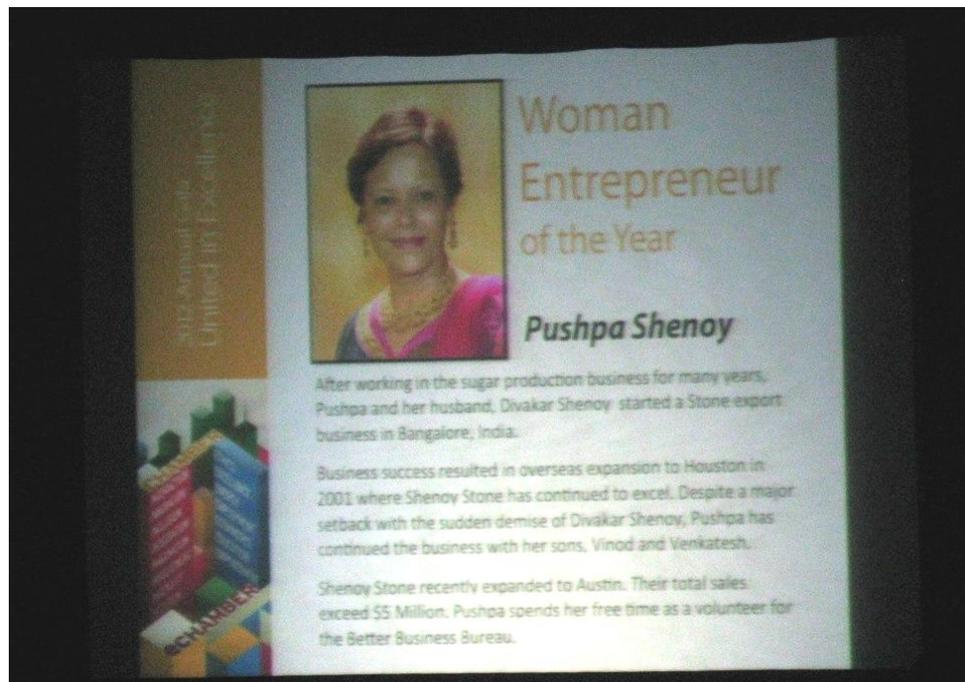
Miss Deeksha D. Mallya
D/o Mr. Dinesh R. Mallya
6/8 Sri Ram Kripa
Govind Kini Road
Ullal
S. Kanara 575020

She is doing her first year B.E. (Computer Science) at Canara Engineering College, Banjanapadavu, Bantwal.

We wish Miss Deeksha Mallya all the best in her future endeavors! Many thanks to all HAAS members who made this scholarship opportunity possible. We look forward to your continuing support to giving enterprising young konkani similar opportunities.

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Keeping Up with the Konkani
Pushpa Shenoy



Driving up Beltway 8 West Loop in Houston, one cannot miss the prominent sign “Shenoy Stone” sitting atop an expansive bright showroom. It sits as testimony to the spirit of entrepreneurship in America. Started from humble beginnings in 2001, it has flourished under the care and guidance of its CEO Mrs. Pushpa Shenoy. Said to be Houston’s Finest Natural Stone Source; it indeed lives up to its name! With over 200 colors of stone to choose from, making the right choice often needs guidance which Pushpa and her experienced staff is always ready to provide. Attentions to quality, detail and customer satisfaction have been the pillars on which she has built her company. No wonder she was recently nominated Woman Entrepreneur of the Year by the Indian Chamber of Commerce!

Sheila Prabhu of Houston, Texas explores how Pushpa Shenoy exemplifies the inner strengths that Konkani Ladies tap into when venturing into new fields.

1. What made you decide to become an entrepreneur?

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I joined medical school after my graduation in 1979, but my father pulled me out in 1980, just after 9 months, to get married. My husband recognized my determination in anything I did, so he initiated me to work with him. Since then, I have been in business for 33 years to be exact.

2. What was the most challenging part for you when you started your business?

The biggest challenge was when we started the business in this country, in 2001, an outlet of the same business we had in India. We had no friends, no backing from banks, no one to help, no relatives, no house, or any employees. We had to do everything ourselves, but I suppose starting all over again at the bottom rung of the success ladder has a charm of its own. Having seen and experienced luxury from the 22 years of working and attaining a very stable position in India, it was fun to start over again with limited facilities. We knew that we had our backup company in India, but we still decided to take on the challenge. We had already started, and we weren't going to stop until we were done.

The biggest challenge really came in 2006 when my dear husband of 25 years passed on unexpectedly. I decided to continue with the business we both had so fondly nurtured and not go back to India. But, I could not have done it all alone. I felt blessed I had strong pillars of support-- Our sons, Vinod and Venkatesh and our daughter-in-law Subhiksha. Without their love, resolute support, unerring courage and far sightedness; we could have not scaled this Mt Everest of a competition in this business. The full credits of realizing late Divakar's dream of (1) a branch in Austin, now under the care of Venkatesh and Divya (2) our own premises on Sam Houston Fwy..Shenoystone.com goes to my sons. God Bless them!"

3. What did you do before you started selling granite/stones?

We use to own a sugar manufacturing industry, but when the Indian government started having stringent policies, we had to change businesses. We decided to choose Granite after making a thorough study of the industry by staying in Italy for a few days.

4. How did you choose to specialize in the stone business?

We had made up our minds: we were definitely going in for an export business. We had a choice among leather, clothing, or granite. Leather had lots of restrictions with bans from certain countries. Some countries feared that the material may be carcinogenic based on the kinds of tanneries and methods used in India. Clothing was ruled out as well because of the governments' quota system for exporting. We only had granite to choose as our export based industry.

5. Decorative natural stones look great in residential settings. What stones do you recommend for a) kitchen and b) bathrooms?

I definitely recommend granite for kitchens because it increases the value of a house. If you like marble, then it is a safe bet for the bathroom counters.

6. What is your favorite stone and why?

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I love granite. I like the ones with most movements in them.

7. Do people have to worry about radioactive radiations from their granite slabs?

Not at all! You will not believe it, but if you used the radiation measuring gadget, you will see radon emitting from everything we have in a house, sheet rocks, wood, and so on. A radon is a radioactive, colorless, odorless, tasteless noble gas that determines the radio activeness of anything. The craziest thing is that a slice of potato emits more radon then granite!

8. Tell us about your most creative work.

I love drawing, painting, gardening, and jewelry making. I like to hang out with my friends a lot. I have to be on the go and love doing new activities all the time.

I have also got a bike license. I love shooting and hunting. I have done the Avon walk of 39.3 miles last year. I also volunteer.

I am on the membership committee of the BBB (Better Business Bureau), the Business Outreach Committee of the Indo American Chamber of Commerce, and the Committee of Women Entrepreneurs and Leaders.

9. We are proud that you have been recognized as leading lady entrepreneur of the year by IACCGH. What advice would you give to aspiring ladies?

Be strong! You are not inferior to anyone. Be humble, speak your mind, do your 100%, and make lot of friends.

Thanks to Sheila Prabhu, Houston, Texas
for her help in this insightful interview



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Keeping up with Konkanis : Satish Rao



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It was a cold wet winter's evening when we went to dine at Udipi Café. The warmth with which we were greeted contrasted well with the cold dreariness outside. The waiters promptly brought us hot spicy 'Rasam' which awakened the senses. The dosas and chutneys that followed were a delight. The crispness of the dosa mixed well with the softness of the different sauces, satiating the taste buds and inspiring the mind to think of greater things. My mind rose to reflect on the man who was behind all this. Up flashed a mental picture of Mr. Satish Rao who owns Udipi Café's in Houston, Katy and Sugarland. Modest, Hardworking, sincere, always smiling were some of the adjectives that popped up in mind to describe him. I felt I knew him well but nagging questions remained. How did a man that was India's representative on the Olympic Bicycling Team get to be in the restaurant business? What would make the President of the biggest democracy in the world decide to accept a dinner invitation to his home – No Red Carpet needed? We decided to go the source to get these questions cleared up. The following are excerpts of a frank interview held with Mr. Satish Rao:

1. How did you get into the restaurant business?

I was born in Hiriadka, Karnataka to a family of Restaurateurs, both on my father's and mother's side I grew up in this type of environment. I remember helping my Dad from a young age. I learned a lot from him.

2. What made you choose the Udipi name?

As I hail from the Udipi area of Karnataka, I decided to choose the name. However I had to change the spelling to "Udipi" since "Udupi" was already taken.

3. What Konkani dishes do you prepare for the general public at your restaurants?

Popular items I prepare include Channa Gashi, Avnas Sasam Upkari, Valval and Dhalithoy. The general Public indeed relishes these Konkani specialties

4. Who was your inspiration in this business?

My father, the late Mr. Yashwant Rao was my main inspiration. He mentored me since I was a school Kid. I have happy memories of helping him in his restaurant. I learned a lot from him.

5. While growing up in the busy restaurant business how did you qualify for the Indian Olympic Team For cycling?

I used to watch people ride their foreign bikes. One day I requested a gentleman to let me have a trial ride. I then wanted my own bike. I remember buying parts and then assembling my own resin bike. I practiced regularly and was selected into the Karnataka Bike Team. I was proud of my first Benetton Bike. From there I went on to represent India in the 1982 Asiad Games and the 1984 Olympics in California.

6. What was your most memorable moment as a bicyclist?

Most memorable was at age 19, when I travelled 52 countries on bicycle. My Passport was stolen in Yugoslavia but kind locals helped me. I had no money and did not know their language. Yet, they helped me. "A million dollars cannot buy the pleasure I got on my journey around the world."

7. How did you prepare for Honorable President Kalam's visit to your home for dinner?

It was quite an experience. My neighbors and friends helped me get the place ready. He enjoyed good Udipi fare

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8. What is your “Signature dish?”

It is hard to choose. People choose Chole Bhatura as our signature dish.

9. What is the best part of you endeavors?

“Meeting people and getting to know them. I have had opportunity to dine with the richest of the rich and the poorest of the poor and enjoyed every moment. I am blessed.”

As I left, Satish Rao’s above words echoed in my ears. I knew now why even Hon’ble President Abdul Kalam would accept his dinner invitation – No Red Carpet needed!

Ramkrishna Prabhu, Houston, Texas



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AMGALI KONKANI BHAASA

I am a CSB (Chitrapur Saraswat Brahmin), and I speak Konkani. My friend is a GSB (Gowd Saraswat Brahmin), and she too speaks Konkani. But whereas I say “*vachuli*” and “*hanga thaunu*” - which would translate into English as “went” and “from here” - she says “*chamkali*” and “*hanga sukkun*”. We both speak Konkani - but just a little differently from each other. Our dialects are different. In fact, Konkani has well over a dozen dialects. This in itself is quite remarkable given the fact that we are a small community, and that Konkani is spoken by less than 0.25% of Indians. Some other varieties of Konkani - apart from CSB and GSB - are the Nawayathi, Moplah, Kochi Konkani, Koli, Malvani, Karwari, Karadhi, Sangameshwari, and Goan dialects.

These dialects originated in a geographical region or state in India and over time took on the flavor of the other languages spoken in that region. For example, the Kochi Konkani, which originated in Kerala, is liberally spiced with Malyalam. Similarly, the Malvani, Karadhi, and Sangameshwari dialects that are native to Maharashtra are generously peppered with Marathi.

In fact, geography matters even within a dialect. I call a katori a “*vaati*” because I grew up in Maharashtra. My cousins, who are CSBs like me, call it a “*gindal*” because they live in Karnataka. My “*khidki*” is their “*kandi*”; my “*thode*” is their “*salpu*”.

History matters too. History is the reason why our language is infused with so many foreign terms. The Portuguese ruled over Goa from 1505 to 1961. During that period, they colonized not just the land but, inadvertently, the local language (Konkani), as well. Eventually, Portuguese words like *caju* (cashew), *batata* (potato), and *sabun* (Portuguese: *sabão* for soap) filtered from Goan Konkani into the larger Konkani vocabulary.

Other colonial powers, which held sway in India such as the French and British, also left their imprint on Konkani. While English/Konkani words are too numerous to list, some French/Konkani words include *cartus* = cartridge (French: *cartouche*), and *parval* = parole (French: *parole*.)

Konkani also includes a sizeable number of Persian and Arabic words such as “*nasheeb*”, “*khabar*”, and “*umedi*”. In the 5th century AD, Arab traders began visiting the Malabar and Konkani areas along the west coast of India. They came to India lured by the promise of exotic spices such as pepper, cardamom, and cassia.

The Arabs brought with them iron, ivory, and rare animal pelts as barter for spices. They also exchanged cultural and intellectual ideas with the natives - many of whom spoke Konkani - and frequently intermarried with them. The Moplahs of Malabar and the Nawayathis of Bhatkal are said to be the products of these Arab-Konkani intermarriages. This mingling of blood also had the effect of mingling languages – the traders’ Arabic and Persian with our own Konkani.

The Muslim invasions that began in the 13th century and lasted until the 16th century, served to add many more Arabic words into the Konkani vocabulary.

Konkani is written using a variety of scripts such as Roman, Devanagari, Kannada, Malyalam, and even Arabic - a testament to the cultural exchanges that Konkani have had over the centuries with their non-Konkani fellow countrymen as well as with foreigners. (The Arabic script is used mainly by Konkani Muslims.)

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Konkani is the child of Sanskrit and sibling to other Indian languages such as Marathi, Hindi, and Gujarati. Konkani is also, as one speaker at a Sammelan put it, “*amchen aavsu*” (our mother) – an apt description of the almost umbilical connection one feels with one’s mother tongue.

In conclusion, I would like to say just this:

Konkani amgeli chanda bhaasa

Konkani amgali gomti bhaasa,

Konkani amchen goad bhaas (Goan)

And I believe that this sentiment would be echoed by most Konkanis – regardless of their dialects.

---Gauri Sirur

Katy, Texas

कोंकणी
Konkani

IACCGH Hosts Webinar on Fiscal 2013-2014 India Budget

The Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston (IACCGH) under the leadership of Pankaj Dhume successfully hosted a Webinar on Tuesday, March 5th, 2013, titled “**Impact of the new India Budget for Fiscal 2013-2014 on NRIs**”. The webinar highlighted the tax and budget changes put forward by the Indian Government for the new fiscal year. The webinar was chaired & moderated by Mr. Sunil G. Shenoy and the content was provided and presented by Sanjay Grover and Heetesh Veera, Tax Partners at Ernst & Young Pvt Ltd, India. The program was possible thanks to the support of Tejas Mody & Mithun D'Souza, India Tax Desk at Ernst & Young LLP New York. A complete recording of the webinar is available at the following link:

<http://www.anymeeting.com/IACCGH/ED53D8838047>

Mark your calendars

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Dates to Note:

April 27th – HAAS Picnic:

The annual HAAS picnic will be held at Lost Creek Park, 3703 Lost Creek Blvd, Sugarland, Texas 77479.



May 12th

Celebrate Mother's day to cherish happy moments with your mom & join us for bhajan and luncheon .Watch out for the details!

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Soar with the eagles



Of our Houston area Konkani Community!

The Eagle is a beautiful graceful bird belonging to the family 'Accipitridae". The Bald Eagle is unique to North America and is our National Bird. The Boy Scouts of America has aptly named its highest honor 'The Eagle Scout' incorporating this regal bird in its medal. An Eagle Scout has earned a minimum of 21 merit badges, developed a service project 'The Eagle Project', participated in a Scoutmaster Conference and completed an Eagle Scout Board of Review. Eagle Scouts are now highly represented in the military, politics and major professions. Famous Eagle Scouts include Gerald Ford- 38th President

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of the United States, Steven Spielberg – Film Director and Astronaut Neil Armstrong.

The Konkani Community of Houston is proud to salute three of its finest youth Mr. Sreesh Shenoy , Mr. Sharath Bhat and Mr. Kiran Bhat who have achieved this highest honor. They share their views on the rigorous path traveled to become an eagle scout. Their motto: “Once an Eagle, always an Eagle”



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The following are excerpts of an interview conducted by Advancement Chairperson Mrs. Ranjisha Bhat:

How did you get interested in scouting? **Doing outdoor activities independently with the troop being adventurous got me interested in scouting. (Sharath Bhat)**

2. What was the hardest part of becoming an eagle scout? **Eagle Scout service project. I did a landscaping project for the Hare Krishna Temple. Fundraising, coordinating the volunteers and putting the whole project together was the hardest part of becoming the Eagle Scout (Sreesh Shenoy)**

3. How have you changed in the process of becoming an eagle scout? **Before becoming an eagle scout I used to depend on a whole group to get things done. Being an eagle scout made me an independent person. Increased my confidence and leadership qualities.(Sharath Bhat)**

4. Tell us about a favorite experience in scouting? **Canoeing at Lake Summerville. (Kiran Bhat)**

5. Would you recommend scouting to younger konkani and why? **Definitely. It changes the way you approach life. It gives a totally different prospective of life. I would recommend them to start as early as cub scouts. (Sreesh Shenoy)**

-Thanks to Ranjisha Bhat for her help in submission of this interview.



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First one to interpret all three konkani proverbs correctly will receive honorable mention in the next edition. Email answers to haas110902@yahoo.com

Konkani Proverbs:

1. "Saglechi Ramayan Aikoonu Ramu Rakshasu ki Ravanu Rakshesu Mhalla-Le-Gadi"
2. "Saglyankayi Ditttha Mhanthalo Konnaakayi Dee Na!"
3. "Sarvani(Sakkadani) Palki-nthu Baslaa-Ri Whaon-Wathale kona?"

Radha Golikeri "Amulpachi," Houston, TX



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*Konkani Creativity & Cooking
Corner*

Naan Khatai

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 cup confectioner sugar/powdered sugar
- 1 cup ghee (clarified butter)
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 5 saffron strands
- 2 teaspoons cardamom powder

Topping:

- ¼ cup crushed pistachios, ¼ cup crushed mixed nuts

Method:

Mix together all ingredients and set aside for 3 hours. Knead dough again and shape the dough into small round balls. Press each lightly with crushed nuts and place on a cookie sheet. Preheat oven at 300 degrees and bake for 20 minutes.

Asha Dhume, Sugarland,

Texas



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Sri Satya Narayana Pooja Event 2013: Glimpses



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2013 HAAS Membership:

Have you forgotten to renew your membership? Don't miss out on discounts! Memberships are available as follows:

Single Person - \$15

Family of two - \$ 25

Additional member \$5/ for each person

Please contact Jyoti Nayalkar at jnayal@hotmail.com for more details on membership.

HAAS has been formed to provide a common meeting ground for the Amchigele's residing in and around the Greater Houston area.

Our mission is to

- Preserve and promote our culture, tradition and deep rooted heritage.
- Confer the values and spirit of our culture to generations after us, and
- Provide an opportunity to network socially and professionally with other Amchigeles.

**Houston Area
Amchigele Samaj**

www.ourhass.com

HAAS has been created to preserve and promote our culture so that we can pass it on to future generations.

We would like to hear from you on how we can help our organization have greater impact.

If you have any new ideas to encourage youth involvement or any service opportunities for our organization— we would love to hear from you.

Also, if you have any specific concerns or goals you would like addresses, we hope to hear from you as well!

Maya R. Prabhu: nonche1@yahoo.com

Asha Dhume: ashadhume@gmail.com

Sucheta Kini: suchetakini@yahoo.com

Jyoti Nayalkar: jnayal@hotmail.com

Aparna Shenoy: aparna_shenoy@hotmail.com

Gaurav Dhume: gaurav@dhume.com

Sreesh Shenoy: kleinkid@gmail.com