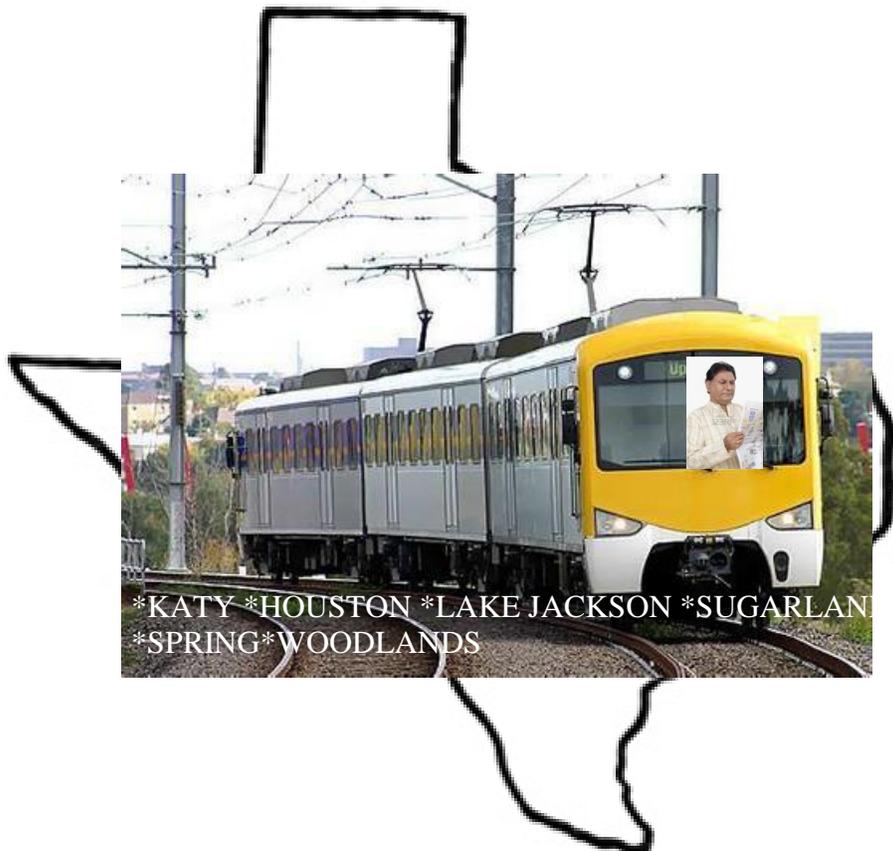


# KONKANI EXPRESS

JANUARY 2013

KONKANI EXPRESS EDITION 1



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### MESSAGE FROM THE HAAS PRESIDENT:

Dear Greater Houston Konkani Community,

Happy New Year! With the excitement of the New Year upon us, I spent some time reflecting upon various resolutions. While the traditional “eating more healthy” and “exercising daily” are important though now cliché, I want my resolution this year to encompass the experience of my greater HAAS family. I wish to reach out to as many new members as I can while building on the current friendships within our organization. When my daughter asked me why HAAS is so important that it is incorporated into my resolution for this year, I began to realize how this community has become an extension of my own family. While it’s easier to feel the warmth and love in a nuclear family, I believe we can extend these precious sentiments of love, guidance, and protection to a greater community through excellent organization and communication. As one of my good Konkani friends showed me a picture she took of geese migrating over long distances in a “V” formation, I drew inspiration for HAAS. The geese use that organizational pattern to reduce wind resistance with switching of positions as they tire, keep track of their members and communicate encouragement through honking to those leading them. I believe we can all coordinate and fly to great heights with HAAS! It is with great enthusiasm that I present the new HAAS board for 2013-2014 accompanied by the updated magazine for our community (The Konkani Express)! Thanks to all current members of HAAS for their support and friendship and I look forward to meeting new members of the community. Wishing everyone a happy, healthy and prosperous year ahead and remember to renew or sign up with HAAS to start 2013 off right!

Truly,  
Maya R. Prabhu

# KONKANI EXPRESS JANUARY 2013

## MEET THE BOARD



**Sreesh Shenoy:** I am excited to be one of the Co-Youth coordinators for the upcoming HAAS term. As a sophomore at Klein High School, I enjoy playing sports and music for school. I will do my best to make sure this term is great for not only the young men and women of our community but also for the organization as a whole!

**Maya R. Prabhu:** I am President this year. I enjoy working as an anesthesiologist. My interests include Indian music and spending time with family and friends. My hope for HAAS is to see it grow in size and spirit!

**Gaurav Dhume:** I am the Co-Youth coordinator for HAAS this year. I am a senior at The Village School in Houston and hope to pursue a business degree in the future. I've been playing tennis and tabla for over a decade, both of which I greatly enjoy in my free time. My goal for this next year is to involve the youth as much as possible in HAAS activities and events, and to ensure the continuation of a strong youth committee after I go to college.



**Aparna Shenoy:** I am the new Event Coordinator for HAAS. I am originally from Mumbai and have lived all over the US before settling in Houston almost 10 years ago. I am married to Anand Nayak and have an 8-year-old son, Ansh. I work in the field of HR in the Oil & Gas industry. I enjoyed organizing events such as Sports Day, Dandiya Raas, and other cultural activities in Mumbai. As the Event Coordinator for HAAS, I hope to coordinate activities that encourage great participation to engage a sense of community.

**MEET THE BOARD**



**Jyoti Nayalkar:** I am the Treasurer. My husband Suresh & I live in Sugar Land. I am a proud grandmother of four grandchildren. HAAS = Unity of Konkani Community. Please be a part of it by becoming a member!



**Asha Dhume:** I am Vice-President. I am married to Pankaj Dhume and proud mother of Mahima (Junior at Rice University) & Gaurav (Senior at Village High School). I love to read, cook, travel & make new friends.

**Goals for HAAS:**

I am thrilled to be working on an all-women committee and hope to make an impact on the cultural and social activities of the Houston Area Amchigele Samaj.



**Sucheta Kini:** I am the Secretary for HAAS.

I along with my husband Ravi Kini and daughter Mahamaya moved to Houston in September 2006.

We became members of HAAS in 2007 and have happily been a part of HAAS community since then.

I look forward to:

1. Coordinate and communicate with the committee/ members to plan and execute all the events efficiently
2. Help provide opportunity to new and young talent at HAAS events
3. Enhance the use of Konkani language at the HAAS events

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
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## Dates to Note: Feb 10 (Satyanarayana Puja), April 27 (HAAS Picnic!)

**MAKAR SANKRANTHI** --- January 14, 2013

Makar Sankranti is one of the most auspicious occasions for the Hindus, and is celebrated in almost all parts of the country in myriad cultural forms, with great devotion, fervor and gaiety. It is a harvest festival. Makar Sankranti is perhaps the only Indian festival whose date always falls on the same day every year on the 14th of January (with just a few exceptions when it is celebrated either on 13th or 15th of January)

Makar Sankranti is the day when the glorious Sun-God begins its ascendancy from *Dhanu rashi* ([Sagittarius](#)) to *Makara rashi* ([Capricorn](#)) and entry into the Northern Hemisphere. Thus, it signifies an event wherein the Sun-God seems to remind his children that "Tamaso Ma Jyotir Gamaya" which translates to "may you go higher & higher, to more & more Light and never to Darkness."

To Hindus, the Sun stands for knowledge, spiritual light and wisdom. Makar Sankranti signifies that we should turn away from the darkness of delusion in which we live, and begin to enjoy a new life with bright light within us to shine brighter and brighter. We should gradually begin to grow in purity, wisdom, and knowledge, even as the Sun does from the Day of Makar Sankranti.

The festival of Makar Sankranti is highly regarded by the Hindus from North to down South. The day is known by various names and a variety of traditions are witnessed as one explores the festival in different states. In Maharashtra they celebrate it by offering friends sweets made out of sesame seeds (Til) by stating "Til guLa gyaa and goad goad bola", which means "please accept sweets made out of Til and talk sweetly (friendly)." Women celebrate it with Haldi Kumkum. In Gujarat they fly kites. In Tamilnad, it is known as Pongal and they boil milk and rice till milk overflows out of the vessel. In Punjab, it is known as Maghi. In Bihar, it is known as Sakraat or Kichdi. Konkani eat sweet kichdi of roasted mugdal, rice and jaggery

----Sadanand Pai, Houston ,TX

### Reflections:

Mrs. Sandhya Shenoy of Houston , Texas says " I have happy recollections of Makar Sankranti. We would visit our Marathi friends. They were decked in traditional Marathi garb including nose rings as they greeted us with 'til gula' and sweet welcomings.

--- Sandhya Shenoy, Houston, TX



## KONKANI EXPRESS      JANUARY 2013

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

### Kashmiri Shivaratri Celebration—March 10, 2013

Shivratri, also called Herath or the night of Shiva in Kashmiri, is the celebration of the marriage of Shiva with Shakti. The festival begins on the first day of the dark fortnight of Phalgun with the thorough cleaning and decorating of houses for the entire week. It ends on the amavasya day after puja is performed with the distribution of prasad of walnuts.

On the 8th day we have Havan and night long Keertan. The next 3 days will be spent on puja and feasting on delicious food. Walnuts will be soaked in Kalash. The 12<sup>th</sup> day is the day when the main puja of Shivaratri is held. It is performed for 9-10 hours in one's home and followed by a big feast after first offering the cooked items to the deity.

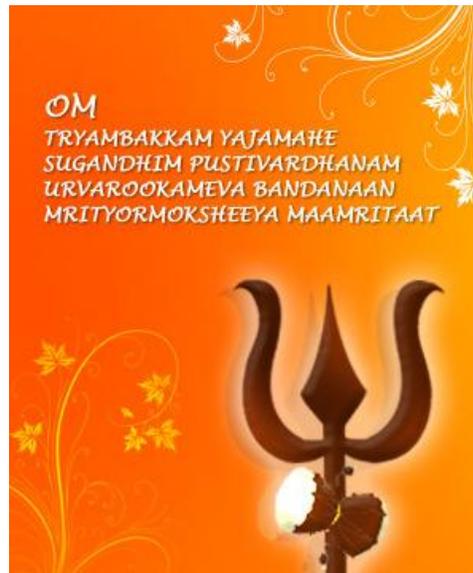
Next comes Shiva Chaturdashi. This is popularly called 'Salaam', perhaps because on this day friends from the Muslim community would come to felicitate Kashmiri Pundits. On this day we would all wear new clothes and gifts would be exchanged. We would play games with each other using small conch shells. We would visit our relatives and friends with gifts to wish each other Happy Herath.

On the Amavasya day, the culminating puja of the festival is held. The walnuts are broken to take the kernel out, and along with cakes made of rice flour, are first offered to the deity and then distributed to relatives and friends.

Every married daughter is regarded as the embodiment of Paarvati and is sent by her parents to her Shiva's home along with new clothes, money and gifts.

Shivaratri is the biggest socio-religious festival in Kashmir. Any account of the customs and rituals of Kashmiri community, without a mention of the Shivaratri festival, would be incomplete.

--Usha Shiralkar, Sugarland, TX





**KEEPING UP WITH THE KONKANIS**  
Radha Golikeri "Amulpachi"

**1. Before you came to America, what was your life in India like?**

I led a very hectic life in India while working in the Marketing Research Department of Hindustan Ltd. The job was challenging with balancing the long periods of travel required over 5 states (such as Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra) with raising my young kids (Sudhir was seven at the time) at home. The job was necessary for me given my husband's health; so, I learned to handle the required travel.

This difficult time taught me to be resourceful as the job required I speak the languages of the people whom I interviewed for marketing research purposes. In fact, I learned Gujarati just by purchasing an instructional book! Interviewing different kinds of people not only taught me to be multilingual but also to be a bit thick-skinned as I never knew what kind of welcome I would receive.

After retirement about 29 years ago, I moved to America to be with my family. After my grandchildren began elementary school, I joined United Way Senior Center where I still volunteer today. This opportunity keeps me physically and mentally active. For the last 16 years, I have been felicitating high school Indian graduates with numbers over 800 students so far.

**2. What kind of activities are you involved with now?**

The greatest portion of my time is given to the United Way Senior Center. I volunteer five days a week of my time to them from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. I also enjoy writing articles and collecting quotations. In fact, I make sure to write in my journal every day.

**3. What do you think has been your biggest accomplishment so far?**

My greatest accomplishment has been my job. I was raised in a small town which did not even have a college. So, after completing my high school education, I had no further aspirations. When my husband's situation demanded it though, I was able to rise to the occasion to support my family. I feel I learned more working than I would have in an academic setting. More importantly, this experience taught me self-confidence and the ability to face any situation boldly. I enjoyed my job and while I began it due to circumstance, I continued it by choice much after my husband's health recovered.

**4. How would you encourage youth and their parents to become active in HAAS and general Houston communities?**

Work hard and follow the values and rules of your elders. Obey the advice of the elders. Honesty and sincerity should always be there. Keep your mind active by doing crossword puzzles or other things to keep your mind busy. Work is victory!

Thanks to Anu Malya Houston, TX for her help with the interview submission! Please check out Amulpachi's lovely poem on page 8!



**KEEPING UP WITH THE KONKANIS  
IRA DOMNITZ**

**1. Please tell me about yourself, your work, and your interests.**

I am a lawyer, husband and father to two great kids. I went to law school at Boston University and specialized in Health Law. I am licensed in Massachusetts, Texas, and with the USPTO (United States Patent and Trademark Office). I have been practicing in Houston since 2001, and am a patent attorney. Primarily I work with copyrights, trademarks and commercial litigation.

Something unique about me is that while in college I wrote a vampire novel, before vampires were popular. I am very much into sci-fi and have been invited to speak at a science fiction conference in Boston for the past two consecutive years. I enjoy working out and am proud to say I have lost over 55 pounds in the last year.

**2. Can you tell me about your company and the services it provides especially those that are relevant to Konkanis?**

My company, Stephens & Domnitz, PLLC, is a small law firm that has over 30 years of experience in the field. We work with companies to provide big firm experience lawyers at small firm rates. Specifically we work in areas of intellectual property, commercial litigation, and corporate/contract issues. More specifically, we work with patents, copyrights, trademarks and protect trade secrets. The intellectual property law aspect as well as the corporate/contract law that we provide would be of particular interest to Konkanis because almost all companies have intellectual property and may need advice from a legal standpoint. We welcome inquiries from any Konkani who requires the services of our firm. Our website is [www.stephensdomnitz.com](http://www.stephensdomnitz.com).

**3. You have provided many community services over the years to the Konkani community. Which experience was your favorite one?**

My most favorite experience was when I had to dress up as Santa Claus on the holiday cruise when I was the treasurer for HAAS. I got to interact with the kids, and it was really fun and cute. I also enjoyed giving a presentation at the Konkani Sammelan in 2004 in Toronto about intellectual property. It was interesting to speak to and meet Konkanis from all over the country and around the world.

**4. Your wife is Konkani and you are of Jewish background, how do you feel about being part of the Konkani community now?**

Initially, when we went into Indian restaurants people were curious. The staff would assume that both my wife and I were eating separately as the idea of us being together was difficult to grasp. The Konkanis have definitely been accepting and I have found that Konkanis, as a whole, are extremely interested in other cultures. Furthermore, being treasurer of HAAS has expanded my knowledge on how Konkani culture works and the uniqueness of it. I don't feel like a non-Konkani anymore, because when I go to events I'm just viewed as a Konkani. I'm really glad that my kids also participate in Konkani events and that they get a good cultural mix in their upbringing.

Thanks to Gaurav Dhume Houston, TX. for his help with this interview submission!

**KEEPING UP WITH THE KONKANIS  
SUE MCFADDEN**

Sue McFadden was born in Bombay, India, and moved to the United States when she was 13 years old. She mainly grew up in Baltimore, Maryland but moved to Florida when in her 20s as she began her career and has now settled in Houston over the last three years. Sue is a very experienced insurance agent as she has been in the insurance industry for 20 years and has worked with State Farm since relocating to Houston. She sells a comprehensive list of insurances as she has multiple licenses. She has her property and causality license for insuring property, her life and health license, her series 6 licenses for insurance on mutual funds, and her mortgage broker license for financing homes and cars. She now owns her very own insurance business here in Houston. She is a highly respected member in her profession as well as the Konkani community. She initially faced some challenges with her transition from Florida to Houston as she started her own new business and settled into a new home in a town where she did not know anyone. She sincerely believes that joining the Konkani community has helped her acclimate to our city because it gave her and her family a sense of belonging. She enjoys all Konkani and HAAS functions with the Diwali functions being her favorites. She loves the festive atmosphere, the plethora of dancing, the good food, and the wonderful company.

If anyone ever has any questions about insurance, she is a knowledgeable and friendly resource that our community is lucky to have! Check out her website [www.suemcfadden.net](http://www.suemcfadden.net) and HAAS wishes her great success!

Thanks to Sreesh Shenoy Houston, TX  
for his help with this profile submission!

KONKANI CREATIVITY AND COOKING CORNER



WORDS

Thoughtless words may kick up a row
Harsh words may raise a foe
Spiteful words may embitter a soul
Caustic words may plant a scowl
Kind words may embolden the plight
Encouraging words may brighten the light
Tender words may infuse cheer
Warm words are soothing and dear
Surely right words at right time
May blossom enchanting chime

Radha Golikeri "Amulpachi," Houston,TX



Date Laddu Recipe:

- 8 oz pkg chopped dates
1 stick butter
1/4 cup sugar (optional)
1/2 cup chopped roasted pecans
3 cups rice crispies
1/2 tsp cardamom powder
Grated dry coconut flakes (optional)

Melt butter, add sugar and stir until dissolved. Add dates and cook on low heat for 5-7 minutes (until dates are melted). Add nuts and cardamom and mix well. Add rice krispies mix well and take the pan off the heat. When the mixture is still warm make laddus and roll in the grated coconut if desired.

Shobha Shenoy Houston,TX

# KONKANI EXPRESS

JANUARY 2013

*Have you checked  
out our website?  
[www.ourhass.com](http://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](mailto:nonche1@yahoo.com)*
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- Sucheta Kini:** [suchetakini@yahoo.com](mailto:suchetakini@yahoo.com)*
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**Houston Area  
Amchigele Samaj**

[www.ourhass.com](http://www.ourhass.com)

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.