

Konkani Express
Dec 2017



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Message From the President

Greetings and Happy Holidays everyone,

I cannot believe 2017 is coming to an end and we are fast approaching the year 2018. This year has been a roller coaster of emotions from fun, excitement, heartbreak and hope. While our community is small, this year showed the power of one by how we all came together to support Hurricane Harvey victims. Sheila, Akhila, Aparna, Archana and I, along with our youth members Samitha, Neha and Mallika, feel blessed to be representing this community. I cannot say enough times THANK YOU to all for supporting your friends and families during these times of need.

As we recap the year, I want to take this minute to reflect on what has happened. The four main events Satya Narayana Puja, Karaoke Night, Janmashthami and Diwali were well attended and well received by all. Along with these, we also organized 8 bhajan get-togethers, a musical night, released 4 newsletters and wrapped up the year with the annual Annual General body meeting. All in all, a busy but productive year 😊

HAAS committee is grateful for the support and appreciation you have shown us. This is great encouragement as we start the planning for the upcoming year.

So why do we do all of this? To give the Konkani community a place to bond, promote the Konkani talent, keep our culture alive and meet and make lifelong friends. And we cannot do it without all your support and participation and we request each and everyone of you to spread the word and introduce HAAS to all your friends and families.

We look forward to seeing you all at the Satyanarayana Puja on February 3rd 2018.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Sincerely,
Jayanthi Nayak

AMCHI Achievements: Nandita Shenoy

Foreword: As we think of about where we as a community have made our marks, we have successful businessmen, lawyers, doctors and engineers. In recent years, we see Konkani's who have broken the boundaries and ventured on to become successful in other areas like journalism, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, etc. Today, we introduce you to Nandita Shenoy the Playwright. While she currently resides in New York, she is however a proud Konkani and the cousin of a fellow Houstonian Amchi. Nandita has defied the conventions and stereotyping to venture out and become a successful playwright and actor. In her interview below, she recounts her amazing journey towards accomplishing her dream and inspires us all to reach for the skies.

1. What exactly do you do? I am an actor and a playwright.

2. What inspired you to be a part of this field? I started performing at a young age and always loved it. My mom enrolled me in dance classes when I was 6, and I still remember my first recital vividly. I recall being on stage and how electric it felt to me. I get that feeling even now when I perform and think there is nothing in the world like it. The only thing that has been more exciting is hearing an audience laugh at dialogue that I have written. That has been the most gratifying experience in my professional life.

3. What steps did you take to get where you are now? I was an English major in college, and so I had to gain most of my theatrical training once I came to New York. I moved here to become a professional dancer. After experiencing extreme anxiety at auditions, I decided to go to every audition there was to overcome my fear. I accidentally landed a role in an Off-Broadway musical and fell in love with the theater. I worked in musical theater for more than 10 years, Off-Broadway, in National tours, and in regional theaters, but knew after a few years that I wanted to do more than dance in the chorus. So I took classes and found people who were doing the kinds of work that I wanted to do. Around, 2002 I became involved in the South Asian theater community, working in small theaters around New York on plays written by South Asian writers. One of my friends encouraged me to write, and the first short play I wrote was produced in New York in 2007. After that I joined the Ma-Yi Writers Lab which is the largest collection of Asian American playwrights ever assembled. Since then I have been balancing writing and acting. I am often taking classes to hone my skills or learn new ones. I think one of the joys of being in the theater is constantly learning new things, whether that is new dialogue or accents or skills like sword fighting or period dances.

4. What obstacles, if any, did you encounter and overcome? First, there is a tremendous amount of stereotyping and discrimination in the entertainment industry because so much of being hired is what you look like. Part of why I wanted to move beyond musical theater was that there were not many roles for me in musicals. My friend who encouraged me to write did so because we were all sick of playing stereotypical roles. Writing has been a tremendously empowering experience for me in that it allows me to create content and develop characters that feel true to life. Also, women are held to different standards than men in terms of how they look as well. Sometimes I have had to battle others' conception of what an Indian woman is supposed to look like, even though I am an Indian woman!

5. What are some of your accomplishments and what do you consider your greatest accomplishment? I have been a working actor for 20 years and a working playwright for 10. I'm really proud of making a living in this field. The play I am most proud of is "Washer/Dryer," a full-length play that has had three professional productions across the country including Off-Broadway in New York. I played the leading role Off-Broadway, and it was beyond my wildest dreams to write and star in my own show playing on 42nd Street. I'm also proud of the play I am an actor and a playwright.

6. What is your favorite play of the ones you've written or are writing? What is it about? "Washer/Dryer" is about an Asian American couple (she's Indian, he's Chinese) that impetuously gets married and moves into the wife's studio apartment on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. When the husband discovers that the apartment is single occupancy only, he demands that they move, but the wife insists on staying because the apartment contains a most-coveted item in New York real estate: a washer/dryer. Hijinks ensue. I love this play because it is a comedy with a lot of heart that features people of all different races trying to fulfill that most human of needs: love. So many plays about South Asian or East Asian Americans center on race, and I wanted to write a play in which all the characters were very specifically ethnic without their ethnicities becoming the central issue of the play.

7. Do you have any advice for other people who are interested in pursuing activities in theater or the arts? Get involved in your community and in your art! I go to the theater several times a week to support my friends and to see what different kinds of work are out there. So many of my opportunities have come from my peers in the Asian American community. The industry is based in relationships (like so many industries), so be kind to those you meet and cultivate relationships with people who do the kind of work you want to do. And stay curious! If I had not explored options outside of my original plan, I would probably be a retired chorus girl by now!

For more information on Nandita Shenoy and her works visit www.nanditashenoy.com

Recipe Corner

Fig, Walnut and Honey Ice Cream

INGREDIENTS

2 cup whole milk
2 TB cornstarch
1/2 can of condensed milk
4-5 TB of honey
3 cups heavy whipping cream
100 gm dry figs
1/4 cup milk.
1/2 cup of walnuts chopped fine.



METHOD

1. Add 2 TB cornstarch to 1 cup whole milk and mix well
2. Take another cup of milk add 1/2 the can of condensed milk and heat it. Bring it to simmer.
3. Add the cornstarch milk continue to cook on medium flame.
4. Add 4-5tbsp honey and 1 cup cream. Cook till thick.
5. Heat the figs with 1/4 cup milk in the microwave, to soften them. Crush the figs in a blender.
6. Add the figs with 1/2 cup of finely chopped walnuts to the milk mixture.
7. Cool and freeze.
8. Whisk it after 4 hr. At this time add 2 cups of cream refreeze till you serve it.

Recipe Corner

Shrimp Koliwada

INGREDIENTS:

- 1.5 cup of Shrimp medium sized and cleaned & de-veined
- 1 medium sized tomato- chopped
- 1 cup of chopped Onion
- 2 TB of Garlic paste
- Tandoori Masala (Shaan Brand) - 1 tsp
- Tandoori masala (any other brand)- 2 tsp
- ½ tsp of Red chili powder
- 2 TB chopped cilantro
- Salt to taste.
- 3 TB of oil



Note- You can use just any one brand of masala too however, the Shaan masala gives a good color to the dish. Also, the Shaan masala already has salt in it and hence one should use additional salt only if needed.

METHOD:

1. Heat the oil in a sauté pan. Add the onions and sauté for 4-5 minutes or till the onions are pale.
2. Add the chopped tomatoes, garlic paste, and stir fry for a minute.
3. Add the shrimp, salt and the masalas and stir fry till the shrimp are cooked. (Maybe 4-5 minutes. Shrimp cook very fast)
4. Garnish with chopped cilantro.

This can be an appetizer or can be served with roti, or used in a wrap with tortillas.

Recipes submitted by Sujata Desai

Find more recipes on <http://Sujskitchen.Blogspot.com>

What's been happening?

Janmastami

We celebrated Janmashtami in August at the Austin Parkway hall in Sugarland. As you walked in, the first thing that greets you was the inspired decorations on the wall adorned with baby Krishna, peacocks and lights. As the guests settled down with their appetizers, we kicked off the evening with the cultural events which was followed by Aarti and Bhajans at the end of which everyone enjoyed the delicious goda poha Prasad made by Smt. Vasumati Bhat

The kids then got to do a variation of pin the tail on the donkey appropriately modified for the occasion as “Pin the peacock feather on Krishna”. And in keeping with our Janmasthami tradition, we then concluded the cultural and kids activities with the very popular Dahi Handi where the young kids got to reach up and/or jump up to the pot to get dahi.

Once the dahi handi event concluded, it was time for dinner and the festivities continued after dinner with foot stomping Daandia music and dancing. The HAAS members very skillfully and rhythmically danced in sync with the music and the clicks of the daandia sticks reverberating around the hall.



Diwali

Last but definitely not the least, the year ended on a high note with the Diwali Gala. This was held in a new location – the Weekley Center in Cypress and was a grand success.

The color, the sparkle and the glamour of the evening greeted each guests as they walked into the venue. The walls and windows were decorated with diyas, lanterns and lights and the tables had beautiful vases floating candles. A sparkling photo booth with red and gold background was setup at the entrance for the guests to take pictures with their families and friends.



The evening started promptly at 6pm with the social hour and delicious appetizers. The evening's programs commenced with the lighting of the lamp by the HAAS Board members.

Following this was the cultural program which was delightfully emceed by our multi-talented Gurudath Kamath. This year's cultural event had something for everyone young and old, with a variety and cultural mix representing Indian culture with a Bharatanatyam performance and vocals, Bollywood glamour with amazing dances, a blend of east meets west with a symphony of tabla and drums concert, stand up comedy act and a comedy skit skillfully portraying what life with social media (aka facebook) means to all of us.



After the program dinner and dessert was served and everyone gathered with friends and families to sit down and enjoy the scrumptious dinner.

But wait... What's a Gala without Dancing? As dinner wound down, DJ Jas started the tempo back up to get the HAAS members on the dance floor and the fun and music continued until it was time to wrap the evening.

What a fantastic way to cap the festivities for 2017!!



SAVE THE DATE

SATYANARAYANA POOJA

When: February 3rd, 2018

Where: First Colony Community Center

4350 Austin Parkway

Sugar Land, TX 77479



Gregorian Calendar vs Lunar Calendar

There are a number of ways in which the Gregorian calendar differs from the Hindu calendar. The Gregorian calendar is based on the earth's revolution as it circles the sun, while the Hindu calendar is based on the moon's movement around the earth (Hindu calendar, 2015). In the Gregorian calendar, each of the 12 months has 30 or 31 days, while the months in the Hindu calendar have just 28 days. The Hindu calendar adds an extra month, known as the *Adhik Mas*, to the year after every 30 months to cater for the loss of additional days because its years constitute of 28-day months.

The main differences between the Gregorian and Hindu calendars have to do with their basic functions, and understanding of the passage of time. While the Gregorian calendar is based on the movement of the earth around the sun, the Hindu calendar is based on the moon's movement around the earth. The Hindu calendar is also more focused on the alignment of Hindu religious festivals and signs of the zodiac than the Gregorian calendar is.



JANUARY 2018						२०७४
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Our Traditions: Magha Mas

Magha Mas, or Magha month, comes during the months of January and February in 2018 and is a time for many different festivals and pujas for the Konkani community and Hindus around the world. It is named thus because in this month, the full moon is usually found nearby or within the star cluster called “Magha”. We celebrate the Utsav festival during which people bathe in the nearest holy river, like the Ganga, Kaveri, or Saraswati Rivers, as a way to cleanse themselves and start fresh.

Makra Sankranti is observed every year on January 14. Women give each other gifts, sweets, and haldi kumkum and make food and sweets using kichidi. Kichidi pollo is one of the more common items made during this time.

Other traditions during Sankranti include Surya Puja and kite flying. Maha Shivratri also falls within Magha Mas. Maha Shivratri is celebrated by all Hindus and is considered to be one of the most significant events in India's spiritual calendar. Traditions during Maha Shivratri usually involve performing pujas, abhishek, and going to the temple to pray and seek blessings from Lord Shiva.



Have you checked out our website? www.ourhaas.com

HAAS – a community for the Amchigeles residing in and around the Greater Houston area.

Our mission:

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.

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!

New in 2017 for HAAS

HAAS website – The banners have been updated and new information including the newsletter, paypal, etc has been updated on the site.

PayPal- PayPal was setup and is now accessible on our website. This can be used to pay for both membership and event fees

International Student Discount – As a courtesy to our overseas guests, it was approved by the board that they can attend any event at the membership event rate

Donations to HAAS – This year a Satyanarayana Picture with Frame, Projector, 1 microphone stand and a flood light was donated to HAAS for use at future events

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*WISHING YOU
AND YOUR
FAMILY A VERY
HAPPY
HOLIDAY
SEASON AND A
PROSPEROUS
NEW YEAR!!*