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Newsletter for the Los Angeles Mumbai Sister City Affiliation

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Autumn Issue 2008

LANE MASER, EDITOR/DESIGNER

CHANGE ALWAYS PRODUCES CHALLENGE.

WHETHER IT IS DESIRED OR RESENTED, WE ARE CALLED UPON AS CONSCIOUS PEOPLE TO EXPLORE NEW LEVELS OF PATIENCE, COMPASSION, AND UNDERSTANDING WITHIN OURSELVES TO ACCOMMODATE ANY FOREIGN TERRAIN WE MAY FIND OURSELVES EXPOSED TO.

I pondered this subject the day after the recent presidential election; I had received celebratory e-mails and phone calls from friends locally and internationally, expressing their joy and relief that Senator Obama is to be the new leader of our nation. I found myself thinking of the "red states" and their disappointment at not having their leader of choice in line for the presidency and wondered how

cooperation would ultimately be attained. In considering the electoral map, one can not escape that once again there is a geographically based experiential and perceptual divide in this country that plays out politically.

In 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower created the Sister Cities Program with the purpose of increasing partnerships between U.S. and international cities with the intention that individual relationships nurtured through Sister City affiliations would diminish potential world conflict. In other words, if we are less of a stranger to one another and function from a point of mutual respect and understanding, with the purpose of cooperating with one another, we are less likely to create disputes. We will also be more willing to resolve disagreements between friends than strangers.

MANY EUROPEAN COUNTRIES REQUIRE GRADUATING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TO TRAVEL ABROAD IN ORDER TO BE EXPOSED TO DIFFERENT CULTURES AND LIFESTYLES, KNOWING THE EXPERIENCE WILL BROADEN THE STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE, SENSE OF CONNECTION AND RESPONSIBILITY TO THE REST OF THE WORLD; AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES WOULD BENEFIT OUR CULTURE BY INSTITUTING SUCH A PLAN. TAKEN A STEP FURTHER, PERHAPS REQUIRING AMERICAN STUDENTS TO TRAVEL IN THEIR OWN EXPANSIVE COUNTRY TO EXPLORE THE MULTI-CULTURAL TAPESTRY WITHIN OUR OWN BORDERS WOULD ASSIST IN MELTING THE POLARITIES OF OUR PRESENT SOCIETY.

In his profound performance piece *Swimming to Cambodia*, the inimitable monologist Spaulding Gray questioned, *if we can't work it out with our next door neighbor, how is the United States going to work it out with the rest of the world?* Yet that is the task at hand for every individual on the planet and we must each ask ourselves how we can best serve to achieve a goal of cooperation and peace. The question itself demands an increase in every individual's consciousness as they interact with each life form on our amazing and precious planet. - Lane Maser, President



Aloo Chander

Article & Recipe by Barbara Hansen pg 3

DIWALI — India's Festival of Lights

Our gratitude to everyone who came to this year's Diwali Celebration.

Proving generous hearts remain open despite challenging times, we enjoyed our greatest attendance ever and expect this year's gift to Americans to surpass previous donations. Thank you all.



Lane Maser



Lane Maser





from inside india

KAVITA SHANBHAG WHO VISITED BOARD MEMBER SMITA SALGAONKAR RECENTLY IS THE FOUNDER OF AN ORGANIZATION CALLED *CHILDRaise*; KAVITA'S SON WAS BORN WITH SEVERE DYSLEXIA. TAKING TIME OFF FROM HER JOB AND EARNING A DEGREE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION SO TO FOCUS ON HELPING HER SON FUNCTION NORMALLY IN SOCIETY, SHE HAS BECOME AN AUTHORITY IN INDIA ON CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS. SHE HAS ALSO WRITTEN SEVERAL BOOKS ON FINDING RESOURCES FOR SUCH CHILDREN IN INDIA. AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, RESOURCES AND FACILITIES IN INDIA (EVEN IN A LARGE CITY LIKE MUMBAI) FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN ARE QUITE LIMITED. HER SON IS NOW FUNCTIONING ON A NORMAL LEVEL AND IS IN COLLEGE PURSUING A B.COM (BUSINESS ECONOMICS DEGREE). SHE IS CURRENTLY COUNSELING SEVERAL CHILDREN AND SMITA IS PERSONALLY HELPING HER WITH HER EFFORTS BY SPONSORING A CHILD.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.CHILDRAISE.COM.



DIWALI by Chinmay Redkar - age 11 years

Diwali is the most important of Hindu festivals.

It is celebrated with great enthusiasm throughout India. It is

celebrated on the new moon day in the month of Kartik (October-November). The mythological story behind Diwali is that it is the victory of lord Rama over the wicked king Ravana. It symbolizes the victory of good over evil. Diwali brings with it a message of new hope, new enthusiasm & new ideals. People begin to prepare themselves for the festival

many days before the actual date. Houses & shops are thoroughly cleaned & white washed. In the evening each house



has it's row of lamps decorating the balconies, window sills & on every little space outside the house where lamps can be lighted. The markets are beautifully decorated with little multicoloured

lights and are a lovely sight. People crowd to the markets not only to buy gifts & sweets but especially also to see the decorations. People call their friends and relatives over and have sweets but also make

merry. There are happy reunions of families and friends. New clothes are worn by the young and the old. The whole country wears a festive look. At night people worship the Goddess Lakshmi-the goddess of wealth and prosperity.

Fireworks & bursting crackers are a part of celebrations. The night sky is lit up with the light of millions of fireworks lighting up at the same time. The buildings are lit up with billions of multicoloured lanterns. Thus Diwali, the festival of lights is a festival which brings happiness & joy to all.

People of different religions too join in and it has also become festival to unite the different

communities of the country.

During Diwali we light the crackers. We draw the rangoli. We decorate the house. We send cards to everybody. We make sweets at home and eat them. We light diyas. I like Diwali very much.

- Ayush Shenoy, 5 years.

STUDENT ART BY: DAKSHATA POLEKAR,
KALPESH JADHAV, NEETA BHANUSHALI,
DEEPAK, CHITRANG SAXENA, TEJAS TAMBE



Aloo Chander

Article & Recipe by Barbara Hansen

The United Nations has named 2008 the International Year of the Potato.

Since India is a leading producer and consumer of this crop, it's a good time to try one of the many delicious ways that potatoes are prepared there. The following recipe is called Aloo Chander. Aloo means potato, and the source is Phulan Chander of the Samosa House (Bharat Bazaar in Culver City).



Aloo Chander of Samosa

This easy vegetarian dish is made in two stages.

The first step is to blend a masala spice mixture.

The next step is to cook the potatoes with the masala and other seasonings, adding tomatoes, peas and cilantro for color. A bonus is, the dish can be prepared in advance and will be just as good when reheated.

MASALA

½ medium onion, cut into chunks

1 serrano chile, stemmed and seeded

1 ½ teaspoons lemon

juice ½ teaspoon cumin seeds

¼ teaspoon coriander seeds

¼ teaspoon turmeric

¼ teaspoon salt

Combine the onion, chile, lemon juice, cumin and coriander seeds, turmeric and salt in a food processor and process until very finely ground. Stop the processor several times to scrape the mixture down from the sides, then continue processing.

Set aside until needed.

Makes slightly less than ½ cup.

THE POTATOES

4 russet potatoes, about 1 ¾ to 2 pounds

1 teaspoon cumin seeds

2 tablespoons oil

½ cup water

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 teaspoon salt

2 large cloves garlic, finely chopped

2 roma tomatoes, about ½ pound, peeled and finely chopped

2/3 cup frozen peas

½ cup cilantro leaves, coarsely chopped

1 ½ tablespoons finely chopped ginger root

Reserved masala

½ teaspoon turmeric

Peel the potatoes. Cut each potato in half lengthwise, then cut each half crosswise into 5 pieces, making 10 pieces. Place the cut up potatoes in a bowl of cold water to prevent browning.

Heat the oil in a large skillet. Add the onion, garlic, ginger, cumin seeds, turmeric and the masala. Cook until the onion is tender, about 10 minutes. Add the drained potatoes and turn until coated with the spices. Add the water and salt.

Cover and simmer over medium low heat 30 minutes, until the potatoes are tender, stirring once.. Add the tomatoes and peas and cook 2 minutes. Stir in the cilantro.

Makes 6 to 8 side dish servings.

From the 2008 Toronto Film Festival

By Mira Advani Honeycutt

The Toronto film festival unspooled over 300 films this year.

During my 8-day visit to the festival, I didn't get to see even 5 % of that.

Among my favorites this year was the electrifying "Slumdog Millionaire," a story of a teen boy who rises from the slums of Mumbai and becomes an unlikely contender on the Indian version of "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire," winning a whopping 20 million rupees.



The film made its world premiere at the festival and nabbed the people's choice award (this award is usually an indicator of the future Academy Award nomination).

Directed by English filmmaker Danny Boyle ("Trainspotting"), the film is inspired by Vikas Swarup's novel, "Q & A" and features newcomers Dev Patel as Jamal and Frieda Pinto as Latika. Bollywood veteran actor Anil Kapoor plays the role of the game show host.

At a press conference in Toronto, Boyle, commented that he opted against casting a top Bollywood actor in the lead as they all now sport big muscles. Thats not the look he wanted for his slum kid Jamal.

The gritty story about 2 brothers Jamal and Salim is set against the backdrop of Mumbai's slums. Their life changes as they see their mother is killed during a riot. Alone and orphaned they turn to the streets becoming slumdogs They befriend another orphaned girl Latika and the trio forms a close bond. Their adventures take them through the underbelly of Mumbai as they learn to survive in the urban jungle. Young Jamal's street smarts land him on the TV game show where he baffles the host and the audience by scoring all correct answers.

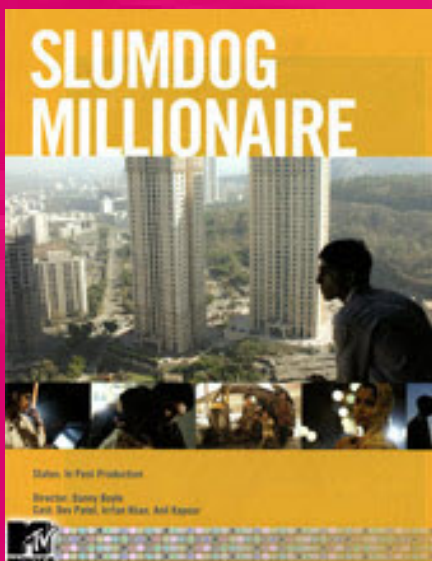


How did a kid from the slums acquire the knowledge without a formal education?

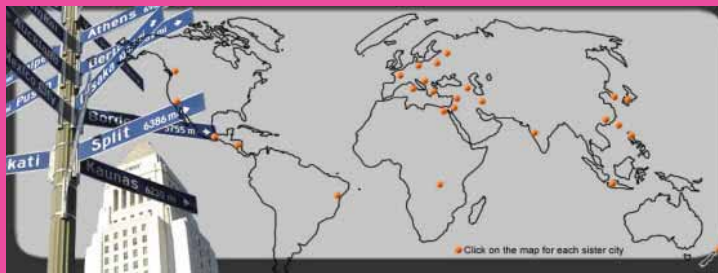
Was he cheating?

Both the game show and reconnecting with Latika, the love of his life, become a big test in young Jamal's life.

Boyle's cinematic touch and A.R. Rahman's rhythmic music bring Mumbai's street life to a pulsating experience.



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April

President Lane Maser at LAMSCA sponsored film, *Shot in Bombay*, with actors Vik Sahay, Rupinder Nagra and writer/director Richie Mehta (in white) et.al. of IFFLA Opening Night Gala Film, AMAL, winner of Best Narrative Film.

In April at the Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA), we were proud to sponsor the documentary "Shot in Bombay" a revealing examination of Bollywood's film industry and its players as seen through the making of the gangster film "Shootout at Lokhandwala," which re-enacted an historic criminal incident in India.



Erik Friedl

Los Angeles Sister Cities Cultural Day was June 1st.

Held at The Grove, talent representing cultural entertainment from eleven Sister City Affiliations provided the crowd with exhilarating native song and dance.

Representing Mumbai and co-sponsored by India Tourism, was the dynamic and energetic Bhangra Dancers *Anakh Punjab Di*.



Their spirited, high-powered dances energized and thrilled the audience. If you would like to enjoy a sample of their rousing routine, see their Giant Bhangra 08 performance on YouTube visit.

<http://www.videospider.tv/Videos/Detail/882079411.aspx>

June



Also in June we had our first afternoon of *Street Foods of Mumbai*. Held at Flavor of India in West Hollywood, on what turned out to be one of the hottest days of the year, stalwart guests partook of the flavorful Chaat in temperatures reminiscent of the streets of Mumbai; it was an unanticipated authentic extreme!

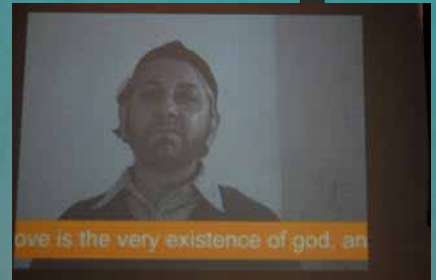


LaneMaser

July



DONNA ENAD NAPPER, GALLERY OWNER
INTRODUCES CURATOR PEGGY HAMILTON.



In July on a much cooler day than our previous event we expressed our gratitude to our generous supporters by sharing an afternoon reception at d.e.n. contemporary art in Culver City. Co-curator Peggy Hamilton provided her unique insight and knowledge to the exhibit, *Contradictions and Complexities - Contemporary art from India*, with a brief lecture explaining the currently exciting India art scene, it's artists and the collections in the show. Sheba Chhachhi, Anita Dube, Chitra Ganesh, Mithu Sen were some of the contributing artists on view.



Meditations for the Future

Sunday, November 30th

Come see the Los Angeles Sister Cities Float and wave to the many representatives of all of Los Angeles' Sister Cities at Hollywood's Santa Parade 2008.

<http://cms.hollywoodsantaparade.com/index.php>



FALL SESSION 2008

The Bollywood Bhangra Workout: Mondays, 6.35pm at UCLA: John Wooden Center.

Bollywood -Tech: Thursdays, 8.00pm starting 10/9 at MnR Dance Factory in Brentwood.

Bollywood.Bhangra.Beats: The Original, Saturdays, 1.30pm at Swerve in Los Angeles.

Bollywood.Bhangra.Beats: Advanced, Sundays 11:30am at Swerve in Los Angeles.

Bollywood-Tech for Teens (intermediate-advanced): Tuesdays at 8.00pm at MnR Dance Factory in Brentwood.

SEE WEBSITE FOR PERFORMANCES

http://www.blue13dance.org/Site/blue13_dance_company.html



IFFLA 2009 will take place on April 21-26 at ArcLight Hollywood, a state-of-the-art facility in the heart of Los Angeles.

<http://indianfilmfestival.org/>

introductions:

This month we'd like you to meet a few of our board members of this all volunteer organization.



Smita Salgaonkar, is the founder of President of Neemo's Exotic Ice Creams, which manufactures and supplies exotic ice cream to restaurants, hotels and other events. She is a co-founder of Saffron Spot, a popular snack bar in Artesia, which features her exotic ice cream creations and other unique desserts. Smita was Mrs. Asia in 2007 and participates in many community and business activities and has been a board member of LAMSCA for over 5 years.



As chief film critic for The Hollywood Reporter, Kirk Honeycutt reviews films not only from its home office in Los Angeles but at major international film festivals such as Sundance, Cannes, Berlin and Toronto. A member of the prestigious Los Angeles Film Critics Association for over 30 years, he appears regularly on television and radio shows around the world.

Lane Maser (President), as an actress, artist and writer, she has worn many professional hats, mostly involving design. From visual merchandising, photo styling, in-house displays for Disney, floral & cake design, and interior decorating, she uses her versatile, creative talents to accomplish the task at hand, such as creating, designing and editing *Mumbai Masala*. Her first play, *Reincarnation, the Musical* is scheduled to be produced next year by TheSpyAnts Theatre Company. She is currently in rehearsal for the West Coast premiere of *Kidnapped By Craig's List*, opening at the Elephant Lab in Hollywood on November 22nd.



Mira Advani Honeycutt (Chairperson) is a freelance food/wine/entertainment writer and author of California's Central Coast The Ultimate Winery Guide (Chronicle Books, 2007). She is also the founder/producer of Asia Pacific Fusion Food & Wine Festival. Longtime LAMSCA board member, Honeycutt was appointed the organization's chairperson by former mayor Richard Reardon.