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Newsletter for the Los Angeles Mumbai Sister City Affiliation

Summer 2009

THE LOS ANGELES MUMBAI SISTER CITIES AFFILIATION'S MISSION IS TO PROMOTE PEACE THROUGH CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING, MUTUAL RESPECT, AND COOPERATION BY CULTIVATING SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES OF LOS ANGELES AND MUMBAI.

L.A.Mumbai.SCA@gmail.com [WWW.LACITY.ORG/SISTERCITIES/MUMBAI.HTM/05/HTM](http://WWW.LACITY.ORG/SISTERCITIES/MUMBAI.HTM/05/HTM)

EDITOR -  
LANE MASER

The mission of Sister Cities is one that speaks to my heart: connecting with people around the world while holding an intention of peace to create a conflict free planet.

I've had the good fortune of traveling to several places around the world (ironically not yet to India). While exotic-to-me-geography and unique architecture are amazing and engaging, it is the people who always leave the deepest impression in my heart. From the accordionist wearing three coats while playing in snowfall along the frozen banks of the Gulf of Finland in Helsinki, to the woman with the roadside crêperie in Normandy, who on the anniversary of D-Day, brought out her dictionary so we could better discuss her experiences there during the war; to my tuk tuk driver Saven in Cambodia (who I stay in touch with thanks to e-mail) who escorted us through the ancient ruins of Angkorwat and to the ghostly terrain of former killing fields; to the jubilant throngs of multinationals ecstatically celebrating the turn of the new Millennium in Paris - it is the people and our exchanges that bring smiles to my memories, a deeper connection to their foreign lands and a constant wish for harmony in their part of the world.

Sister Cities understands this importance of linking individuals to one another. Creating, cultivating, and nurturing connections that draw the people of our planet together in friendship is its mission. This task asks us to be conscientious and to expand our consciousness, for when balancing anything between two individuals, connected awareness, and cooperation facilitates our efforts. If we wish to maintain harmony we will stretch ourselves to accommodate another, learning a different way of doing things along the way, hopefully growing in the process. Perhaps one of the greatest lessons in knowing others is the process of learning - not only about them, but about our self as well. Who are we and how are we in the face of challenging circumstances? How do we show up when we are pushed out of our comfort zone?

I've asked myself these questions as I've explored what it means to be president of our nonprofit organization; the experience has sometimes been akin to foreign travel. Tacit in the role is service to the community while maintaining the vision, integrity, and honor that nonprofits hold sacred as they apply themselves to their missions. Challenging? Absolutely. Rewarding? Undeniably.

Recent achievements toward our goals include re-establishing a board in Mumbai. New Mumbai board member Cherylanne de Souza will soon be joined by others there who will serve as our official line of communication. Together the two boards will decide on upcoming projects for exchange. In May we refined our mission statement and the board approved writing a grant proposal that will bring funding for paid staff, allowing the organization to strengthen its infrastructure, develop membership and deepen its activities locally and in Mumbai.

It has been an honor to support the endeavors of LAMSCA and it is not without conflict that I must now step down from my duties. It seems I have traveled far; I have met lovely people and had challenging circumstances along the way, all have helped me grow. Though I am departing, I hold the goal of Sister Cities in my heart and will continue to participate, supporting activities that unite our world's citizens in conscientious accordance.

Namaste. Lane Maser, (Immediate Past) President



**Gujarati Style Spiced  
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## Chairperson's Message

INDIA COMMEMORATES ITS INDEPENDENCE ON AUGUST 15TH, WHEN THE COUNTRY FREED ITSELF FROM THE BRITISH RULE AND EMERGED AS AN INDEPENDENT NATION IN 1947. "AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT HOUR, WHEN THE WORLD SLEEPS, INDIA WILL AWAKE TO FREEDOM," SAID THE COUNTRY'S FIRST PRIME MINISTER PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU IN HIS FAMOUS SPEECH, TRYST WITH DESTINY.

THE COUNTRY NOW IS NOT JUST AWAKE BUT LEAPING FEVERISHLY INTO THE 21ST CENTURY. HOWEVER, IT WAS MAHATMA GANDHI WHO PAVED THE PATH OF FREEDOM FOR INDIA. THE DIMINUTIVE MAN DID NOT HOLD ANY POLITICAL OFFICE, BUT HIS FORCEFUL MESSAGE WAS SIMPLE - PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE, A TOOL SO POWERFUL THAT IT GAINED THE COUNTRY ITS INDEPENDENCE.

ALTHOUGH, HE WAS NEVER AWARDED THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE, HIS MESSAGE RANG LOUD AND CLEAR AND HAS BEEN EMBRACED BY WORLD LEADERS INCLUDING PRESIDENT OBAMA. IT WAS ALSO THIS MESSAGE OF PEACE THAT INSPIRED PRESIDENT DWIGHT EISENHOWER TO LAUNCH THE CONCEPT OF SISTER CITIES 50 YEARS AGO - ASPIRING FOR GLOBAL PEACE BY REACHING OUT TO PEOPLE AND UNDERSTANDING THEIR CULTURES. AND WHAT DO WE FIND? THAT WE ARE NOT ALL THAT DIFFERENT AFTER ALL.

AMERICA CELEBRATES INDEPENDENCE DAY WITH FLAGS AND FIREWORKS, SO DOES INDIA. PEOPLE HAVE PARTIES WITH FOOD (BBQ AND CUPCAKES IN AMERICA, TANDOORI AND GULAB JAMUN IN INDIA) AND ENTERTAINMENT. AND YES, ON THIS DAY PEOPLE FLY KITES ALL OVER INDIA - IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS. ITS SMALL DIFFERENCES LIKE THIS THAT MAKE WORLD CULTURES AND TRADITIONS SO FASCINATING.

I ENCOURAGE YOU TO COME EXPERIENCE A BIT OF THIS CULTURE IN ARTESIA'S LITTLE INDIA AS IT CELEBRATES ITS INDEPENDENCE DAY WITH A VIBRANT STREET FAIR OF FOOD, MUSIC AND DANCING (KITES NOT INCLUDED!) - MIRA ADVANI HONEYCUTT

## To attend

AUGUST 22, INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION 5 - 10:30 PM  
15711 PIONEER BOULEVARD, NORWALK, 90650

[Miss Showbiz India Beauty Pageant on Aug. 29 at The House of Blues.](#)

[India Calling! KCRW's World Festival HOLLYWOOD BOWL Sunday, September 20th 323.850.2000](#)

Celebrate India's music and dance - from the intoxicating beauty of the Indian classical and folk legacy curated by maestro Shankar, to Anoushka's hypnotic fusion, to the irresistible Punjabi pop of bhangra king Malkit Singh - plus an Indian handicrafts and travel village opening in the afternoon.

[Daughters of India: Photographs by Stephen P. Huyler; \(thru Sept. 13th\)](#)  
Fowler Museum at U.C.L.A. Wed.-Sun. 12-5 (free)

[Ancient Gods and Modern Politics: Mithila Painting \(thru Sept. 13th\)](#) Craft and Folk Art  
Museum 5814 Wilshire Blvd. Tues.-Fri. 11-5 (til 7 p.m. Thurs) Sat.-Sun. 12-6

[Discovering Ganesha: Remover of Obstacles](#) Photographs of contemporary Ganesha festivals in Mumbai plus pre-modern representations of Ganesha from the Pacific Asia Museum's own collection. Pacific Asia Museum (thru Sept. 20th); 46 N. Los Robles, Pasadena, CA Wed.-Sun. 10-6 For more information on the photography, visit: [www.discoveringganesh.com](http://www.discoveringganesh.com)

The Pasadena Music Circle will be starting their indian लाइवेट concerts in September at Herrick Chapel Occidental College. in Eagle Rock)

SAVE THE DATE: DIWALI CELEBRATION — India's Festival of Lights.  
This year's annual fundraiser will be

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11

# Little India Tour Spring 2009

Fragrant aromas wafted through the doors of Rajdhani restaurant as eager guests who had signed up for our popular Little India Tour marched in to start the day with a delicious vegetarian lunch. The thali meal had all the dishes one would find in a typical Mumbai restaurant - bowls of assorted curries, dhals, two types of rice dishes, hot pooris, pakoras, and a medley of fiery hot chutneys. Of course cooled down with yogurt drinks and desserts such as carrot halwa and saffron-scented sandesh.



Once satiated Smita and I sheperded our group to Frontier boutique where the men donned flowing Maharaja Jackets topped with jeweled turbans and women learnt the art of Sari draping.



Then a stop at Cottage Arts to pick up home and gift items, a fine jewelry store and Farm Fresh market to check out the multitude of spices, lentils and Indian vegetables.



Ghee at Farm Fresh



The highlight of the afternoon was a visit to NDM Dance Academy where young students (and future Bollywood stars) were honing in on their dance skills.

The tour ended with masala chai and ice cream at Smita's Saffron Spot, a popular hangout for locals.

Photos: Lane Maser

-Mira Advani Honeycutt

Ghee Photo courtesy of: <http://wanderingchopsticks.blogspot.com/2008/02/ghee-indian-clarified->

# GUJARATI BAINGAN MASALA

## Gujarati Style Spiced Eggplant

Article & Recipe by Barbara Hansen

There, tucked into a corner of the produce section of Farm Fresh, were the cutest eggplants imaginable. I say cute, because what else could you call eggplants so small that eight of them added

up to less than a pound? 🍆 Farm Fresh is an Indian grocery in Artesia. It's on Pioneer Boulevard in the heart of Little India's shopping district. Walking on to Rasa, a block or so away, I found still more of these miniatures. That did it. I had to have them, even though I had no idea what to do with them. But I do now, thanks to my friend Mira Advani Honeycutt, who is chairperson of the Los Angeles Mumbai Sister Cities Affiliation and can cook almost anything Indian. 🍆 We had been touring

Little India (see the previous post) and had eaten a Gujarati lunch, and so she gave me a Gujarati recipe. 🍆 Mira stuffs the eggplant with spices, including generous amounts of ground cumin and coriander (I used a cumin and coriander blend from Gujarat that I bought at Farm Fresh). Adding besan (chickpea flour) to the spices makes the dish Gujarati, she said. 🍆 Still in the mood of my vegetarian lunch that day, I served the eggplants with mixed vegetables seasoned with garlic and ginger, turmeric and garam masala; yellow rice scented with cardamom and yogurt, or curd, as they say in India. 🍆 The dessert: what else but sweets from Little India! 🍆



8 small eggplant, 3/4 to 1 pound in all  
2 teaspoons besan (chickpea flour), optional  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon ground coriander  
1 teaspoon garam masala  
1/4 teaspoon turmeric  
1 pinch to 1/4 teaspoon red chili powder  
1/4 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper  
2 tablespoons oil  
1 large onion, sliced lengthwise

2 cloves garlic, chopped  
1 inch gingerroot, peeled and cut lengthwise in thin strips



6 or 7 curry leaves, optional  
1 large or 2 medium tomatoes, unpeeled, chopped  
1 teaspoon salt, or to taste  
2 to 4 tablespoons water, if needed  
1/2 lemon or lime  
Cilantro for garnish

Wash the eggplants. Remove most of the stem end, but leave enough of the base attached to hold the eggplants together.

Stand each eggplant on its base and cut a slit through the center 3/4 of the way down. Now cut another slit at right angles, dividing the eggplant into quarters, but leaving them attached to the base. Set aside.

In a small bowl, stir together the besan, cumin, coriander, garam masala, turmeric, red chile and black pepper.

Carefully separate each eggplant slightly and spoon about 1/2 teaspoon of the masala into the center.

Reserve any unused masala.

Heat the oil in a skillet large enough to hold the eggplants in a single layer. Add the onion, garlic, ginger and the curry leaves and cook until the onion is lightly browned, about 10 minutes.

Add the tomato and salt. Place the eggplants in the skillet and sprinkle with any leftover masala. Stir gently to combine. Cover and cook over medium low heat 10 minutes. Uncover and turn the eggplants over. If the vegetables stick to the pan, add a small amount of water.

Cover and cook 10 minutes longer, or until the eggplants are tender. Uncover and squeeze lemon juice to taste over them.

Serve garnished with cilantro leaves.

Makes 4 servings.

Farm Fresh, 18551 Pioneer Blvd., Artesia, CA 90701. Tel: (562) 865-3191.

LAMSCA board member Barbara Hansen produces the website [www.tableconveration.com](http://www.tableconveration.com) about food, wine, travel and recipes.

# Recently.

June 7th was Los Angeles Sister Cities Cultural Day at The Grove. Dancers, singers and musicians from participating Sister Cities affiliations entertained the enthusiastic crowds in attendance. Here Saffron Six perform the garba, a traditional dance of India.



Photo: Lane Maser



This year's Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles was again a great success. "Bombay Summer" was sponsored by LAMSCA and enjoyed Saturday night, packed house attendance, allowing president Lane Maser to inform even more people about the mission of Sister Cities for peace through cultural exchange. She is seen here flanked by "Bombay Summer" actor, Samrat Chakrabarti and director, Joseph Mathew Varghese .

Indian actress Sharmila Tagore, jury member of the 2009 Cannes Film Festival with Mira Advani Honeycutt at a party hosted by the Hinduja family at their villa in Cannes. Tagore (great granddaughter of the Nobel Poet Laureate Rabindranath Tagore) started her career as a teen actress in Satyajit Ray's films and later found a highly successful career in Bollywood films of 1960s and 70s.



Lane Maser enjoys a chili dog after coordinating the gifts and designing the silent auction tables.



Photo: Erik Friedl

The 50th Anniversary of Sister Cities of Los Angeles honoring the 1959 Partnerships with Eilat, Israel, and Nagoya, Japan was held at The Gilmore Adobe on May 7th. Pink's catered the '50's celebration while Captain Cardiac and the Coronaries rock n' rolled the crowd. The silent auction exceeded the success of past years thanks to generous donations.



Photo: Lane Maser