

# Cupertino Unity Parade lives up to its name

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Cupertino, Calif.

**T**HE City of Cupertino celebrated its 4th Annual Unity Parade and Festival at the Memorial Park on March 11. About 4,000 people attended the celebration.

"We are pleased with the turnout and the diverse nature of the celebration," said Richard Lowenthal, Mayor of Cupertino.

With a total population of 52,000, 45 percent of Cupertino

**Indian Americans of Cupertino members with Mayor Lowenthal**



## Indians pitch in to ease the air

**■ CUPERTINO, CALIF:** The city of Cupertino, population 52,000, home of Apple Computers and Hewlett-Packard has a very diverse population, with Caucasians/White forming about 50.5 percent and Asians and other communities about 45 percent, including Indian-Americans about 11 percent.

However, in recent years, Cupertino has seen its share of racial tensions between some Caucasian Euro-Americans (White) and people of color—especially Chinese American community. This has also resulted in polarizing of communities' post 9/11 and

also due to economic pressures on local businesses and language and cultural misunderstandings.

Says Mayor Richard Lowenthal: "We (openly) acknowledge the ethnic tensions existing in our city—primarily within the Chinese-Americans and the Caucasian communities. And (that) we have taken steps to correct and counter this racism and misunderstandings. Cupertino also has about 11 percent Indian-Americans and by involving them early, we wish to deflect any future tensions and misunderstandings that may arise

of an important segment of the population."

True to his word, Mayor Lowenthal has provided Indian Americans with several forums to join the city mainstream. For example the city administration has helped sponsor a Diwali Mela and the city officials make it a point to attend all the events of the Indian-American community. The Indian-American population is encouraged to visit other community celebrations as well.

Several Indians have been appointed to various commissions and committees like Sheila Mohan (Library); Apoorva Rajagopal (Teen), Vrinda Gupta (Teen), Natasha Pradhan (Teen), Rukmini Sahay (Teen) etc.

residents are of Asian origin. Earlier, the Chinese and the Vietnamese communities celebrated the Lunar Parade.

Looking at the demographics, in 2002 city officials and community members decided to give the parade an international flavor by including all city residents i.e. Europeans, Africans and Asians including Japanese, Indians, Tibetans, Arabic, Palestinians etc. In the past four years, Lunar Parade and International Fair has almost become a regional annual tradition.

This year the parade participants and floats reflected the diverse make up of the city—with almost 11 percent Indian-Americans. A fledgling group—Indian-Americans of Cupertino—proudly displayed their colorful banner while marching in the parade, while the California Cricket Academy followed them closely.

All along the parade, scores of Indian-American teenagers like Radhika Mathur of Monta Vista High School were the flag bearers for various marching groups.

"The Annual Unity parade is a showcase of many ethnic groups and races, recognizing and celebrating diversity, while still being proud Americans," said Ramachandran G., a member of the Cupertino Diwali Planning Committee. Gilbert Wong, Co-Chair of the Parade and Fair 2006 nodded in agreement.

At the International Cultural showcase, award winning Indian dance groups Natyalaya (Kuchipudi) and X'pressions (Folk Dances of India) performed to great appreciation from the mixed audience.

"We all had fun," said resident Ranjan Desai, adding: "Some cultural presentation like Mongolian, Irish we saw for the first time."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Fighting polio in India



**Rotarian Jim Lewis giving toys to children**

**■** Twenty six members of the 530th district of Rotary International from the Simi Valley, Ventura and Kern Counties of California recently returned from India after participating in this year's very first polio vaccination drive. Led by Anil Garg, the team attended an orientation given by the National Polio Committee in New Delhi and then went on to the areas where polio cases have been reported. Spreading out into the rural areas, the volunteers combed remote districts of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh looking for children, below five who could benefit from oral polio drops. "The initial attempt is made through booths wherein 45 to 50 percent of the population is immunized. We then go door to door with a local community leader to immunize the rest. We aim for a 100 percent capture," said Garg.

### Holi at Sunnyvale Temple

**■ SUNNYVALE, CALIF:** Holi was celebrated with gusto at the Sunnyvale Temple on March 11-12. Holika Dahan was observed with a bonfire and puja to mark the occasion. About 2,500 people participated in Rang Panchami. "We had a large turnout," said Raj Bhanot, co-founder and trustee of the temple. A cultural program was also held on the occasion.

### Women's Day at ICC

**■ MILPITAS, CALIF:** Seniors citizens, students and professionals gathered together on March 4 and March 11 to celebrate International Women's Day at India Community Center (ICC). The celebrations kicked off on March 4 with a workshop on the differences in the communication styles of men and women. There were discussions on women's legal issues, including divorce, immigration, workplace rights and self defense for women. On March 11, about 50 women created panels for a community mural. U.C. Berkeley doctoral candidate Smita Radhakrishnan discussed the impact of India's IT revolution and its impact on Indian women. There was a discussion on balance between work and life. The celebrations ended with a film festival which included Aarti Jain's *Neither Milk Nor Yoghurt*.

### UPMA celebrates Holi

**■ FREMONT, CALIF:** Uttar Pradesh Mandal of America (UPMA) held its first cultural program on March 11 at the Grimmer School here. About 400 people participated in the event which was co-sponsored by India Community Center (ICC). The highlight of the show was "Holi Hungama". With 'Uttar Pradeshi heritage and culture' as its theme, the program included folk dances, poetry, skits like *Bhakta Prahlad* and *Kanha ke rang anek*, a ghazal performance, songs by local band Bandits and traditional Holi songs.

### Nirvana chef wins contest

**■** Nirvana chef Ramanuj Sahai's Chicken Tikka Masala beat LA's top ethnic restaurants at the 2006 Los Angeles Cultural Dining Tour Cook-off Contest. Six restaurants (Greek Island, La Velvet Margarita Cantina, Messob, Nirvana, Tibet Nepal House, and Vivoli Café) served six diverse chicken dishes that represented their culture at the Hollywood Kitchen Academy face-off.

