

## PRESENTER LEVEL



## LEADERSHIP LEVEL



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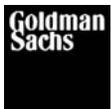


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The South Asian Women's Leadership Forum (SAWLFL) is a non-profit organization committed to the advancement of South Asian women professionals in the marketplace. Since our inaugural program, held in three years ago this month, SAWLFL has grown to a community of over 3,500 women across North America.

SAWLFL has held and collaborated in over fifty distinct events since inception. SAWLFL events showcase prominent South Asian women as speakers representing a broad spectrum of leadership and decision-making capacities.

### SAWLFL OFFERS A NETWORK

- ◆ Meaningful and robust opportunities to interact with peers representing diverse professional backgrounds.
- ◆ Meet and interact with women in various stages of reaching their professional goals.

### SAWLFL OFFERS EDUCATION

- ◆ Facilitates interactions among our members in a dynamic setting
- ◆ Presents community leaders for fruitful and interactive discussions on compelling business and leadership topics
- ◆ Showcases issues important to women professionals as they continue their careers or re-enter the workforce
- ◆ Fosters on-campus leadership roles for female students through mentorship and the SAWLFL Internship Program

### SAWLFL OFFERS RESOURCES

- ◆ "Peer network" of women facilitates professional achievement and career guidance for SAWLFL participants representing law, public policy and finance
- ◆ Conducts and analyzes research on issues affecting South Asian women in the workplace
- ◆ Partners with external experts such as *Working Mother* and *Oxygen* in order to ensure the visibility of South Asian women in mainstream media

### SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP FORUM (SAWLFL)

954 Third Avenue, Suite 766  
New York, NY 10022

[info@southasianwomen.org](mailto:info@southasianwomen.org)

[www.southasianwomen.org/congress](http://www.southasianwomen.org/congress)



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

February 25, 2006

Dear Friends:

It is a great pleasure to welcome everyone to the annual Congress of the South Asian Women's Leadership Forum. The City of New York is delighted to be a part of this event that strives to provide South Asian women leaders with tools and resources that enable them to enhance their already significant leadership capabilities.

I commend the women participating in this summit, and I wish you all the very best for an informative and enjoyable day as you explore ways to add even more purpose to your power.

A hallmark of a successful leader is commitment to ongoing growth, and the many remarkable women who have gathered here today to exchange valuable information demonstrate their professionalism and talent for leadership just by being here.

In addition, I would like to pay tribute to SAWLF's dedicated team for hosting this event.

You have been a tremendous source of support for South Asian women throughout the nation, and initiatives such as today's event add immeasurably to the community. It is always gratifying to recognize those who are committed to making a difference, and I wish each one of you all the very best for continued success.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Bloomberg  
Mayor

Dear Congress 2006 Participant:

SAWLF participants are public and private sector professionals that number over 3,500 across the US. Through a combination of events, mentoring, and education, SAWLF serves as a platform for professional women to meet and assist one another with individual and professional objectives and, ultimately, leave a network and legacy for the women that follow us to utilize and build upon.

SAWLF began in late 2002 with an informal gathering of South Asian women at Cheena Chandra Gallery in Manhattan. It is soon thereafter, with the enthusiastic drive/commitment from Neelam Sharma, we initiated our first official event with author/creative director Ameena Meer. Komal Dhall and KPMG supported SAWLF's first Women Leaders Series program in July 2003 with special guest speaker Nell Merlino, founder of *Take Our Daughters to Work Day*. SAWLF has since continued the series with "trailblazers" such as Kiran Bedi, Civilian Police Advisor in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at the United Nations and the first and highest ranking woman in the Indian Police Service.

SAWLF's success can be contributed to its many volunteers and speakers. They devote their time, and, in the true spirit of our organization, share their network and resources in order to support our monthly events. Under the leadership of Preeti Priya, Esq., SAWLF has hosted and/or collaborated in over forty-five programs since our inception. Members Devika Kamboh, Shivika Chauhan, Nalini Dhar and Anna Chanmugathas have been instrumental in outreach and building corporate support for SAWLF. While SAWLF events have been limited to New York; with the support of Seema Paul and the UN Foundation, and a team led by Nidhi Kapila, Sonali Weerackody, Ragini Dalal and Sheila Oak; SAWLF held our inaugural Washington DC program in November 2005. Sarika Sidhu, Geetika Tandon and Aruna Dhingra will lead SAWLF's expansion to Chicago (June 2006).

The foundation and continuum of SAWLF has its roots in education, and mentoring. In 2005, under the direction of Kaumudi Goda, Ritu Malik, Lata Setty, Sima Saran Ahuja, Farah Homsy and Chitra Nawbatt, SAWLF proudly launched its mentoring initiative, Vertical SAWLF, in law and public policy as well as finance. As part of Congress 2006 activities, we invite you to participate in today's silent auction which has been organized by Fatema Basrai, Amera Sherrin, Anu Sehgal and Antara Prasad. Auction proceeds will benefit SAWLF's mentoring program, Vertical SAWLF.

In closing, I want to thank you for participating in our second annual Congress. We welcome your feedback and encourage you to help strengthen this invaluable professional platform.

Best Regards,

Simi Ahuja  
Founder  
South Asian Women's Leadership Forum (SAWLF)  
[www.southasianwomen.org/congress](http://www.southasianwomen.org/congress)

# VOLUNTEER WITH SAWLF!



Serving on a SAWLF Committee is a rewarding experience and an opportunity to contribute and strategically direct the future of a dynamic non-profit organization.

Over 50 women and men volunteers participated in the planning and preparation of SAWLF Congress 2006. Join us today as we prepare for Congress 2007 - February 24, 2007 - in New York City.

Volunteering with SAWLF is a fantastic way to share, sharpen and learn new skills, broaden your network, meet other members, and foster personal and professional growth.

Whether you want to contribute for one week or one year, SAWLF can offer a challenging and rewarding professional experience! This year, consider volunteering with SAWLF in one of the following areas:

- ◆ Membership
- ◆ Events
- ◆ Corporate Development
- ◆ Programming
- ◆ Congress 2007
- ◆ Marketing & PR
- ◆ Vertical SA

For additional information, please contact SAWLF at [info@southasianwomen.org](mailto:info@southasianwomen.org).



"I am pleased to see the South Asian Women's Leadership Forum reach new heights every year through its national Congress," said Commissioner Guillermo Linares of the NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. "South Asians are among the millions of immigrants and daughters of immigrants who are building a better City and a better nation each day. The creativity, strong leadership and expertise of South Asian women across so many sectors are inspiration for all New Yorkers. I wish SAWLF continued success."

*statement by*  
IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER  
GUILLERMO LINARES ON CONGRESS 2006

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### Preeta Bansal, Esq.

- ◆ Partner, Skadden Arps
- ◆ Chair, US Commission on International Religious Freedom
- ◆ Former Solicitor General, State of New York

### Ameena Meer

- ◆ Author
- ◆ Creative Director

### Nell Merlino

- ◆ Co-Founder and CEO, Count-Me-In for Women's Economic Independence
- ◆ Founder, *Take Our Daughter's to Work Day*

### Shoba Purushothaman

- ◆ President, CEO and Co-Founder, The NewsMarket, Inc.

### Sonal Shah

- ◆ Vice President, Goldman Sachs
- ◆ Founder, Indicorps

### Meeta Vyas

- ◆ First South Asian woman to become CEO of a publicly traded company (Signature Brands)
- ◆ First South Asian to head a \$1 billion business (GE Appliances' Cooking Products) at General Electric

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### Simi Ahuja

Founder

### Fatema Basrai

Director of Marketing & PR

### Komal Dhall

Director

### Preeti Priya, Esq.

Director for External Affairs

### Lata Setty, Esq.

Director

The foundation and continuum of SAWLF has its roots in professional development and education. To further this goal, the South Asian Women's Leadership Forum is pleased introduce **Vertical SAWLF**.

A recent survey of SAWLF members indicates that more than 20% of participants work in the legal profession and occupy roles in the either the private or public sectors. More than 32% hold roles in the diverse finance industry. In an effort to serve the specific professional development needs of these distinct groups, SAWLF will create and host specialized programming with these professionals in mind:

- ◆ Through a bi-monthly events platform, SAWLF will offer members access to speakers, resources and education they require for personal and professional advancement.
- ◆ Vertical SAWLF will develop an information network and professional directory that will be accessible as an on-line platform.

SAWLF is seeking professionals to further develop the Vertical SAWLF programs in the areas of finance, law, healthcare, technology and media. To get involved, contact SAWLF at [info@southasianwomen.org](mailto:info@southasianwomen.org).

### Vertical SAWLF (Women in Law and Public Policy)

Sima Saran Ahuja, Esq.

Kaumudi Goda, Esq.

Farah Homsj, Esq.

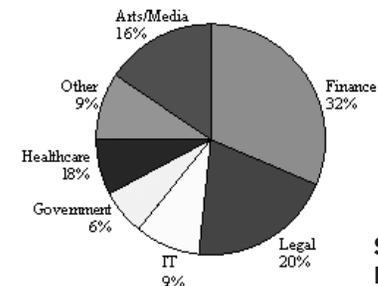
Ritu Malik, Esq.

Preeti Priya, Esq.

Lata Setty, Esq.

### Vertical SAWLF (Women in Finance)

Chitra Nawbatt



**SAWLF MEMBERSHIP  
PROFILE 2005**



Through Congress 2005, SAWLF united business and community leaders alike for the largest single gathering of South Asian women professionals ever to be held in the United States.

**(L to R)** Abha Dawesar, Sarita Choudhury and Sabrina Dhawan at the Congress 2005 luncheon

Women of diverse professional and cultural backgrounds participated in the full-day program that also included a sensational Silent Auction and closing networking reception.

### Opening Keynote Presentation

Zeyba Rahman, Chairperson, World Music Institute and Producing Partner, Jungli Billi Productions **(R)** selected the topic "Living Our Values" for her address to SAWLF members.



### Luncheon Keynote Presentation

Ms. Sara Mathew, Chief Financial Officer of The Dun & Bradstreet Corporation and Leader, Strategy **(third from L)**

## THE SOUTH ASIAN WOMAN: HOW DOES SHE DEFY BOUNDARIES?

This session featured South Asian women who are shaping and influencing the media industry including film, advertising, print, Internet, and fiction. Panelists debated and discussed how women are portrayed in the mainstream media and how, through their experience as media influencers, reconcile their personal interests for representation within the limitations (as well as opportunities) of the current marketplace. Panelists also shared observations on the visibility of South Asian women in present-day media as well as the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

### Introduction

Sabrina Dhawan, Screenwriter, *Monsoon Wedding*

### Panelists

Sarita Choudhury, Actor, *Mississippi Masala*

Abha Dawesar, Author, *babyji*

Sabrina Dhawan

Ameena Meer, Author and Creative Director

This panel was moderated by Shandana Durrani, Senior Editor, *Cigar Aficionado*



Saturday, February 26, 2005  
PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, New York City

## GETTING, KEEPING & WIELDING POWER

Dr. Deepali Bagati, a senior associate in research at Catalyst, moderated an engaging discussion that highlighted winning business strategies and practices as well as individual experiences of challenge and achievement.



Photography Jay Manda/On Assignment



### Introduction

“A Lesson in History” by Nell Merlino, Co-founder & CEO, Count-Me-In for Women’s Economic Independence and Founder, *Take Our Daughters to Work Day*

### Panelists

Preeta Bansal, Esq., Partner, Skadden Arps

Anita Gupta, Director of Communications, Citigroup Global Risk & Global Compliance

Meeta Vyas, first South Asian woman to become CEO of a publicly traded company, Signature Brands

Congress 2005 attendees actively bid on the event’s thirty distinct auction items.



Following the afternoon networking break, Congress 2005 participants were invited to participate in one of the following industry-focused Interactive Sessions Presentations:



### South Asian Women Lives in Law and Public Policy

Lata Setty, Esq., Pangea, LLC, moderated an Interactive Session with Seema Singh, Esq., the ratepayer advocate for the state of New Jersey and Preeta Bansal, Esq.

### South Asian Women in Finance

This Interactive Session featured a conversation between Komal Dhall of KPMG, Shalini Aggarwal, Investment Management, Goldman Sachs and Roopa Purushothaman, a global economist covering global thematic issues as a member of the Goldman Sachs’ global research team.

### Building Effective Networks and Alliances

This panel featured a candid discussion between Sonal Shah, Vice President, Goldman Sachs and Purvi Shah, Executive Director, SAKHI for South Asian Women.

**Closing Remarks** by Meera Gandhi, Social Entrepreneur

**Musings** by Comedienne Vijai Nathan (below)



Simi Ahuja  
 Preeti Priya, Esq., Dobshinsky & Priya LLC  
 Neelam Sharma, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP  
 Devika Kamboh, Kamboh Financial Planning

Sima Saran Ahuja, Esq., Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP  
 Fatema Basrai, Deloitte  
 Harjot Bassra, iStyle  
 Shivika Chauhan, Citigroup  
 Anna Chanmugathas  
 Komal Dhall, KPMG LLP  
 Nalini Dhar, Citigroup  
 Kaumudi Goda, Esq.  
 Farah Homsj, Esq., Poe and Freireich PA  
 Nidhi Kapila, Bank of America  
 Chitra Newbatt, Deutsche Bank  
 Antara Prasad, Teyaari, Inc.  
 Anu Sehgal, Colgate-Palmolive  
 Sonal Shah, Goldman Sachs  
 Amera Sherren  
 Jasmin Thankachen, NBC Universal  
 Sonali Weerackody, Merrill Lynch

Dear Congress 2006 Participant:

In the summer of 2004, SAWLF members were introduced to a new interactive format called the "blog." Blog is short for weblog. A weblog is a journal (or newsletter) that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption. Blogs generally represent the personality of a person or organization.\* The "blog" format allowed our vision for a on-line newsletter to expand to "The Big iDEA!" and create a "virtual" platform for women - from New York to New Delhi - to meet, participate, share resources and comment on the critical issues that impact their professional lives.

Not only do we educate with facts and pertinent articles that highlight women in the workforce, The Big iDEA! reveals to its readers the growing number of women who hold key leadership and decision-making roles in our world and how they manage the duality of their professional and personal lives. Our profiles of local business owners such as Shobha Tummala, the owner of Shobha in New York City, to trailblazers in broadcasting like Ann Curry from Today, NBC tell "her" story of challenge and achievement. Recent features including "The Balancing Act," and "What Does it Take for a Woman to Succeed in the 21st Century?" have helped to sprout discussion and interest in women's professional issues thus impacting the way people think about and view women in the workplace.



I invite you to get "The Big iDEA!" and to participate as a reader, writer, or editor. With your involvement, we can expand our bi-monthly "blog" into a vital publication shared by South Asian women professionals around the world. If you have a great story idea or want to profile a SAWLF member or community leader, we'd love to hear about it. Send in your "Big iDEA" to me at [jasmin9802@yahoo.com](mailto:jasmin9802@yahoo.com).

Sincerely,  
 Jasmin Thankachen, Editor  
[www.southasianwomen.typepad.com](http://www.southasianwomen.typepad.com)

\*Courtesy of [www.bytowninternet.com/glossary](http://www.bytowninternet.com/glossary)

## February

In collaboration with the Asia Society, SAWLF hosted an evening reception to launch a season of special events highlighting Asian and Asian-American women business leaders. The February 15 program, "Celebrating Asian Women Trailblazers" included opening remarks by distinguished guest speaker Ms. Vishakha Desai, the president of the Asia Society.



## May

Asia Society with SAWLF presented "Trailblazers: Asian Women Entrepreneurs" Four successful Asian women entrepreneurs representing industries including technology, real estate and fashion were invited to share their personal stories of achievement. Panelists reflected on the obstacles as well as key drivers of their success as they have blazed new trails in their respective fields. Special guest speakers included Shoba Purushothaman, CEO and Co-Founder, The NewsMarket, Inc. and moderator Geeta Anand, a senior special writer for the Wall Street Journal.

## July

SAWLF hosted an interactive session for South Asian women participants at the Working Mother Best Companies for Women of Color Multicultural Conference in New York City.



## December

SAWLF presented featured film Sakhi Pila (Boy Odissi Dancer) and Kal at the South Asian International Film Festival (SAIFF) in New York City.



Dear Congress 2006 Participant:

Launched in the summer of 2005, the Corporate Ambassador Program (CAP) has been instrumental in building awareness for SAWLF events and activities within Fortune 500 companies. SAWLF members serve as "Corporate Ambassadors" and as key contacts and primary representatives of SAWLF within their organizations.

As CAP participants, they:

- ✦ Hold periodic information sessions in order to introduce their colleagues to SAWLF and update them on SAWLF events, programs and achievements
- ✦ Establish "local networks" for SAWLF members "on the job"
- ✦ Identify new resources for SAWLF in terms of individual and corporate contributions

The Corporate Ambassador Program at SAWLF offers several advantages for its participants:

- ✦ Advance and expand inter/intra-corporate networking
- ✦ Interact with and draw upon the experience of seasoned business professionals
- ✦ Play a key role in establishing a professional and historical legacy for South Asian women in the US
- ✦ Effectively utilize leadership and communication skills
- ✦ Leverage the SAWLF platform for professional growth and advancement opportunities
- ✦ Meet other like-minded talented professionals
- ✦ Enhance your planning and management skills
- ✦ Proactively manage your career and leverage a professional platform for career advancement
- ✦ Participate in a dynamic management team - the SAWLF Executive Committee - a committee that propagates women's professional development and advancement

I cordially invite you to join the CAP team today! For additional information, please contact me at [shivikac@hotmail.com](mailto:shivikac@hotmail.com) or 917-657-0440.

Best regards,  
Shivika Chauhan, Chairperson  
Corporate Ambassador Program (CAP)

SAWLF  
CONGRESS  
2006



## Lakshmi Pratury, Career Catalyst

Lakshmi Pratury's varied and rich career spans for-profit enterprises, venture capital and non-profit organizations. Most recently, Lakshmi was a leading force in fundraising at the America India Foundation (AIF) where she also established a number of initiatives "in the field" including leading the team that brought digital education to over 80,000 children and 2,000 teachers throughout India.

Prior to joining AIF, Lakshmi was associated with the venture capital firm Global Catalyst Partners (GCP). While at Global Catalyst Partners, she identified and established relationships between India's development community, local executives and GCP. Lakshmi began her career with the Intel Corporation where, over a twelve year period, she held various key roles in marketing, marketing communications, advertising, and evangelizing the software development community. Lakshmi's responsibilities at Intel included launching the \$250 million Intel 64 Fund, the first cross-industry fund launched with the sole intent to support developers to port to Intel 64-bit architecture. Lakshmi also drove and managed Intel's relationship with media companies, talent agencies and Hollywood talent. As a technologist, Lakshmi designed applications for executive speeches that took the PC beyond the office environment into more creative settings like film, fashion and music.

Lakshmi holds a Bachelors degree in Mathematics from Nizam College, India; an MBA from the Bajaj Institute, India; and attended IIT Bombay. Lakshmi also holds an MBA from Portland State University with a minor in Theater Arts. A published author and experienced interviewer, Lakshmi has conducted several memorable celebrity interviews and actively contributes to local radio programs and theater.

## Vani Kola, Founder, Certus Software and Rightworks

Vani is a serial entrepreneur and visionary known for identifying emerging markets and building successful market-driven software companies. For the last 10 years she has been focused on founding and building her various companies.

She was founder and CEO of Certus Software, a leader in the Financial Compliance Market with over 70 customers worldwide. Vani's personal commitment to excellence and integrity influences her approach to building companies, developing products and empowering people.

Prior to establishing Certus, Vani was the founder and chief executive officer of RightWorks, a successful e-procurement company that was acquired by ICG and subsequently by i2.

Before founding RightWorks, Vani held management and engineering positions at Consilium and Control Data Corporation. She holds MS and BS degrees in electrical engineering.

Vani is profiled in numerous books and has been identified as one of the top 10 entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. Outside of enjoying building high growth companies, her interests focus on raising her two daughters and musing about finding the perfect balance between work and family. She is involved in various organizations focused on fostering entrepreneurship and women's leadership.

# SAWLF CONGRESS 2006

ADVANCING SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN

**Indra Nooyi**, President and Chief Financial Officer, PepsiCo, Inc.

Indra Nooyi is President, Chief Financial Officer and a member of the Board of Directors of PepsiCo, a position she assumed in May 2001. She is responsible for all of PepsiCo's corporate functions, including finance, strategy, supply chain, business process optimization, corporate platforms and innovation, procurement, investor relations and information technology. She was appointed to her position and elected to the Board of Directors in May 2001. With revenues of about \$27 billion, PepsiCo ranks as the world's fourth largest food and beverage company. It includes: Frito-Lay, the world's largest manufacturer and distributor of snacks; Pepsi-Cola, the second largest soft drink business; Tropicana, the largest marketer and producer of branded juices; Gatorade, the world's leading sports drink, and Quaker Foods, which merged with PepsiCo in August 2001.

Between February 2000 and April 2001, Ms. Nooyi was Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of PepsiCo, where she played an instrumental role in PepsiCo's merger with The Quaker Oats Company. Between 1996 and 1999, Ms. Nooyi was Senior Vice President of Corporate Strategy and Development. She had an integral role in PepsiCo's strategic restructuring, which included the spin-off of Tricon Global Restaurants, the purchase of Tropicana and the public offering of The Pepsi Bottling Group.

Before joining PepsiCo in 1994, Ms. Nooyi spent four years as Senior Vice President of Strategy, and Strategic Marketing for Asea Brown Boveri. She was part of the top management team responsible for the company's U.S. business as well as its worldwide industrial businesses, generating about one-third of ABB's \$30 billion in global sales. Between 1986 and 1990, Ms. Nooyi was at Motorola where she was Vice President and Director of Corporate Strategy and Planning, having joined the company in 1986 as the business development executive for its automotive and industrial electronic group. Prior to Motorola, she spent six years directing international corporate strategy projects at the Boston Consulting Group. Her clients ranged from textiles and consumer goods companies to retailers and specialty chemicals producers.

Ms. Nooyi began her career in India, where she held product manager positions at Johnson & Johnson and at Mettur Beardsell, Ltd., a textile firm. In addition to being a member of the Board of Directors of PepsiCo, Inc., Ms. Nooyi serves as Successor Fellow at Yale Corporation. She is a member of the Boards of Motorola, the International Rescue Committee and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City. Ms. Nooyi also serves on the Advisory Boards of Yale School of Management, PlaNet Finance and Greenwich Breast Cancer Alliance, as well as, on the Board of Trustees of Eisenhower Fellowships and Asia Society. She is a member of The Trilateral Commission. Ms. Nooyi holds a BS from Madras Christian College in Madras, an MBA from the Indian Institute of Management in Calcutta and a Master of Public and Private Management from Yale University. Ms. Nooyi is married and has two daughters.

**Meena Mansharamani**, Senior Vice President, Innovation and Insights, Pepsi-Cola North America

Meena Mansharamani is Senior Vice President, Innovation and Insights for Pepsi-Cola North America (PCNA), a position she assumed in November 2005. She is responsible for both short and long-term product and package innovation to drive the Division's growth agenda. She also oversees foundational consumer insights that drive portfolio management, innovation, brand marketing and channel and customer strategies. She is a member of the Senior Executive Team at PCNA, and works closely with PCNA's Chairman and CEO, functional leaders and bottling partners to ensure that the team achieves its growth goals in the LRB (liquid refreshment beverage) space.

Ms. Mansharamani joined PCNA in January 2005 Vice President, Strategic Initiatives. In this role, she was responsible for developing new business strategies and operating models to capitalize on PCNA's marketplace opportunities. Pepsi-Cola North America's robust portfolio of brands includes Pepsi, Aquafina, Mountain Dew, Sierra Mist, SoBe, Tropicana, Dole, Lipton Iced Tea and Starbucks Frappucino.

Prior to her new role at PCNA, Ms. Mansharamani was Vice President of Corporate Strategy for PepsiCo from 2000-2004. In this capacity, she worked with PepsiCo's CEO and President on top-line growth initiatives across PepsiCo's portfolio of businesses. Two key areas of focus included developing a new approach and focus to PepsiCo's approach to innovation and strengthening the company's emphasis on health and wellness.

With revenues of about \$27 billion, PepsiCo, Inc. is a global snack and beverage company. It manufactures and sells a variety of salty, convenient, sweet and grain-based snacks, carbonated and non-carbonated beverages, and foods. The Company is organized in four divisions: Frito-Lay North America (FLNA), PepsiCo Beverages North America (PBNA), PepsiCo International (PI) and Quaker Foods North America (QFNA).

Prior to joining the PepsiCo team, Meena was Vice President in the Consumer Goods and Retail Practice of A.T. Kearney, a management consulting firm. During her 10-year tenure at A.T. Kearney, she served a variety of industries, including apparel, automotive, transportation and financial services. She received her MBA from Wharton and her MA/BA from Harvard University.

SAWLF  
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## GUEST SPEAKERS (L TO R)

**Prabha Sipi Bhandari, Esq.**, VP Senior Counsel, Mergers & Acquisitions, Viacom, Inc.

Prabha Sipi Bhandari is VP Senior Counsel at Viacom Inc. in New York and has been responsible for Mergers & Acquisitions at the Company since the separation of Viacom Inc. into two separately traded public companies, Viacom Inc. and CBS Corporation. Prior to joining Viacom in 2000, Ms. Bhandari was a corporate associate at the law firm of Davis Polk & Wardwell in New York. Before that, she clerked for the Honorable John M. Duhè, Jr. of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Ms. Bhandari received her J.D. from New York University School of Law, where she served as Notes and Comments Editor of the New York University Law Review and published her note in the Law Review, *The Failure of Equal Regard to Explain the Sherbert Quartet*. Ms. Bhandari co-founded the South Asian Law Students' Association at NYU and served as its co-chair. She received her BS from Cornell University in Industrial and Labor Relations. Ms. Bhandari is a member of the Committee on Women in the Profession at the Association of the Bar of the City of New York.

**Neetu Bhatia**, Vice President, Media, Communications & Technology Investment Banking Group, BMO Financial Group

Neetu is a Vice President in BMO Financial Group's Media, Communications & Technology Investment Banking Group. She has over seven years of experience originating and executing several strategic advisory and financing transactions in these sectors. Neetu's transaction experience includes over \$40 billion of executed deals for Time Warner, Google, Comcast, Cablevision, Verizon, BellSouth, SBC, Cingular, AT&T, Sprint, Nextel and others.

Prior to joining BMO Financial Group, Neetu was a Vice President at Blaylock & Partners where she helped build the Media & Telecom advisory franchise along with senior members of the former AT&T Broadband management team. Prior to working at Blaylock & Partners, Neetu worked at Lehman Brothers, originating and executing several lead-managed media and telecom advisory, capital raising and restructuring transactions. Before joining Lehman Brothers, Neetu also worked as a consultant with McKinsey & Company, advising senior management of Fortune 500 companies on strategic and operational issues.

Neetu has an M.S. in Management and Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical Engineering from the College of Engineering, Pune, India, where she graduated as the Best Outgoing Student. A former national cricket player, Neetu serves on the Boards of several not-for-profit organizations in New York City and India. She is also a

regular columnist for several leading financial publications in India. Her story was recently featured in a book to motivate young students released in New Delhi by India's President, Dr. Abdul Kalam.

**Megha Bhouraskar, Esq.**, Founding Partner, Poppe & Bhouraskar LLP

Megha Bhouraskar is a founding partner of the firm of Poppe and Bhouraskar LLP in New York. She specializes in intellectual property (copyright and trademark), real estate and commercial law. Megha has extensive knowledge of the Indian music and film industry and a large number of her clients consist of South Asian businesses and individuals representing diverse industries in the US and India.

Megha was one of the original members and a Board Member of SAKHI for South Asian Women and has served on the Board of Asian Women in Business. Megha was granted the Governor's Award for her activities in the South Asian community in New York and she has served as a New York Delegate to the Democratic National Convention.

**Neelam Deo**, Consul General, Consulate General of India, New York

Ms. Deo joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1975. Over the course of her international career, Ms. Deo has held posts in Rome, Bangkok and Washington DC. She has also served as the Ambassador in Copenhagen and Abidjan with concurrent accreditation in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Niger.

Prior to her arrival in New York, Ms. Deo served as the Joint Secretary for the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, India where she oversaw relations with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Maldives. Ms. Deo holds a Master's Degree in economics from the Delhi School of Economics.

**Sabrina Dhawan**, Screenwriter, *Monsoon Wedding*

Sabrina Dhawan's first produced screenplay *Monsoon Wedding* was awarded the 'Leon D'Oro' (Golden Lion) at the Venice Film Festival in August 2001. *Monsoon Wedding* was also nominated for a Golden Globe and a BAFTA for 'Best Film in a Foreign Language'. Ms. Dhawan also won 'Best Screenplay' from Bollywood Awards for *Monsoon Wedding*. She later adapted the award-winning novel *Death of Vishnu* and a one hour film, *Cosmopolitan*, for PBS starring Roshan Seth, Carol Kane and Madhur Jaffrey. Ms. Dhawan also wrote a short



film for Canal Plus on 9/11 that was directed by Mira Nair. She has also written a thriller, *The Promise*, set in Houston, TX and Bombay, India, for Killer Films (of *Boys Don't Cry*, *Far from Heaven*, *One Hour Photo* etc). Ms. Dhawan is currently working on a TV movie for Disney Channel and on an animation film, also for Disney. For the animation film, she is working with the composer, Alan Menken, who has won multiple Academy Awards for films such as *Aladdin*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Pocahontas*, etc.

Ms. Dhawan was born in England and was raised in New Delhi, India. She graduated from Columbia University's graduate film program with Honors in 2001. Her thesis short *Saanjh - As Night Falls* played at over two dozen festivals around the world. It was cited as 'Best of the Festival' at the Palm Springs International Film Festival 2000; as 'Most Original Film' by New Line Cinema at the Polo Ralph Lauren New Works Festival 2000. It won the 'Audience Impact' Award at Angelus Awards in LA and was also nominated for the Student Academy Award. Ms. Dhawan presently teaches screenwriting as an Assistant Professor at Columbia University's MFA program.

**Mallika Dutt**, Executive Director, Breakthrough

Mallika Dutt is the founder and executive director of Breakthrough. She has been a human rights activist for over two decades, working passionately on transforming attitudes and approaches towards human rights. Until December 2000, Mallika was the Program Officer for the Human Rights & Social Justice Program at the Ford Foundation's New Delhi office. She focused on addressing the rights of marginalized communities like dalits, adivasis, and women.

Dutt also served as the Associate Director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership, where she held the first US meeting to create links between human rights domestically and abroad. Mallika authored the widely-referenced *With Liberty and Justice for All: Women's Human Rights in the United States*. She was also the co-author of the globally utilized manual, *Local Action Global Change: Learning About the Human Rights of Women and Girls*.

While studying law at New York University, Dutt co-founded Sakhi for South Asian Women, combating the violence against women in the New York community. She was also an Arthur Garfield Hays Civil Rights Fellow, and worked at the Center for Constitutional Rights and the ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project.

Mallika has served on several boards and committees, including the Human Rights Watch Women's Rights Project, Sister Fund, Asian American Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, Lt. Governor Committee on Public Police Relations, Committee on Sex and Law, the Association of the Bar of the City of New York,

and the India Abroad Person of the Year jury. Mallika is also an active member of the US NGO Coordinating Committee for the UN World Conference Against Racism and currently is on the Board of WITNESS.

She is the recipient of many awards including the the Spirit of Asian American Award (USA, 2003); Phoenix Award for Service (USA, 2002); National Citizen's Award for Contribution to Women and Development (India, 2001); South Asian Women's Creative Collective Award for contribution to the South Asian community (USA, 2001); NYU Law School BLAPA Alumni Award for Distinguished Service (USA, 2001); the Public Interest Law Foundation Alumni Award (USA,1991). Mallika graduated from New York University School of Law with a JD in 1989 and is a member of the New York State Bar.

**Vanita Gupta**, Esq., NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

Vanita Gupta joined the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) as a Soros Justice Fellow in September 2001. She is now an Assistant Counsel at LDF, where her work centers on civil rights litigation that promotes systemic reform of the criminal justice system. Ms. Gupta successfully led the effort to overturn the convictions of 38 defendants in Tulia, Texas, organizing over a dozen national law firms in this fight and coordinating the legal and media strategy.

Working with co-counsel, she also settled the civil rights cases filed on behalf of the wrongfully convicted Tulia residents for \$6 million. The settlement also disbanded the narcotics task force responsible for the drug sting and resulted in the early retirement of two key officers involved in overseeing the sting operation. In furtherance of her clients' cases, she has appeared on the NBC Today Show, CBS Evening News, CNN, PBS Lehrer News Hour, Court TV, MSNBC, and National Public Radio, and has been quoted extensively in international and national print media. The New York Times profiled her in its "Public Lives" section on April 16, 2003. For her work in Tulia, Ms. Gupta has been given the Drug Policy Alliance Justice Gerald Le Dain Award (2005), the Reebok Human Rights Award (2004), the National South Asian Bar Association Attorney of the Year Award (2005), the India Abroad Publisher's Special Award (2004), the Upakar Foundation Community Ambassador award (2004), and the American Red Cross "Rising Star" award (2003). She continues to represent individuals accused of crimes who have been subjected to racial bias and other serious problems in their encounters with the criminal justice system. Most recently, she has represented individuals accused of looting baby diapers and water in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. She has also been working with other lawyers and activists on reforming New Orleans' broken criminal justice system since the hurricane.

Ms. Gupta received her law degree from New York University School of Law, where she served as the Colloquium Editor of the *Review of Law and Social Change* and was awarded a Vanderbilt Medal for Public Service and the Anne



Petluck Poses Prize for her death penalty and juvenile rights-based clinical work. She attended Yale University, where she graduated magna cum laude in History and Women's Studies. Prior to attending law school, she served as the public policy coordinator at the Harvard School of Public Health in its Violence Prevention Programs.

**Sheila Hooda**, Managing Director, Equities Department, Investment Banking Division, Credit Suisse

Sheila Hooda is a Managing Director in the Equities Department in the Investment Banking Division of Credit Suisse. Based in New York, Sheila is responsible for Client Relationship Management in the US, focusing on building relationships, maximizing revenues and profitability with the largest Equities clients of the Bank. Prior to joining Credit Suisse in 1998, Sheila worked at Bankers Trust and at McKinsey and Co. She has global work experience with financial institutions from the US, Europe and Asia Pacific.

Sheila received an MBA in Finance from the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business and has a Masters in Management from the Indian Institute of Management – Ahmedabad, India. Sheila is also actively involved with programs to empower women through Education and Micro Credit, particularly in developing countries. She is a Steering Committee Member of The International Alliance for Women and led the opening of two Micro Credit Banks in Southern India. Most recently, she has been involved with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals in the area of Micro Credit.

In the field of education, Sheila is the co-chair of the Tri-State Chapter of Pratham, which focuses on grass roots education in the impoverished areas and remote villages in India. Currently over three million children have been assisted through this program with the goal to eradicate illiteracy by 2010. Sheila is also the lead fundraiser for Prerana, an education initiative that provides tuition to deserving underprivileged children in India.

Sheila is married, lives in Westchester County and has twin eight-year old daughters.

**Beena Kamlani**, Senior Editor, Penguin Group

Beena Kamlani has worked in book publishing for over twenty-five years at Oxford University Press, Harper & Row, Random House and both the Viking and Penguin imprints of the Penguin Group. In her eighteen years at Viking Penguin, she has edited and developed a wide range of books. As Saul Bellow's editor, she worked closely with him and also with Robert Fagles (on Homer's Iliad and



Odyssey, and Virgil's Aeneid), Blanche Wiesen Cook (Eleanor Roosevelt), Diane Middlebrook, Bob Shacochis, Sir Peter Medawar, Terry McMillan, Peter Kramer, Jacquelyn Mitchard, Margaret George, William Brodrick, David Leavitt, and Garrison Keillor, among others. She is also assistant professor of publishing at New York University, where she has taught a course on book editing for the past twelve years. In March 2002, she received an award for teaching excellence from the university.

**Padma Lakshmi**, Founder, Lakshmi Films

Recently, Padma Lakshmi has been playing royalty: the Machiavellian Indian Princess Madhuvanthi in ITV/BBC-America's soon-to-be-seen *Sharpe's Challenge*, opposite Sean Bean; Princess Bithia, the Egyptian princess who found the baby Moses in the bulrushes and raised him as her own child, in ABC's new mini-series *The Ten Commandments*; and the spoiled Princess Kaitaama, ruler of a large part of the known universe, on *Star Trek: Enterprise*.

It makes a change from playing a pirate in *Lamberto Bava's Caribbeans* (in Italian); the tuneless singer Sylk, Mariah Carey's rival in *Glitter*; a young Indian-American woman resisting an arranged marriage in *Mistress of Spices*; and an Indian fashion model turned bank robber in the Bollywood epic *Boom*.

Her acting career isn't all that's booming. Her best-selling first cookbook *Easy Exotic* (2003) was awarded the prestigious *Prix Versailles* for the best first cookbook in the world that year, and her eagerly-awaited second book is to be published in the fall. Padma has also hosted her own show, *Padma's Passport*, on the Food Network as well as making documentaries about Spanish and Indian cuisine and culture for the *Planet Food* series - screened all over the world.

Padma has written extensively on both food and fashion for *American Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Gourmet*. Originally known as the first internationally successful Indian supermodel, Padma walked the runway for Ralph Lauren, Emmanuel Ungaro, Alberti Ferretti and many other leading designers. She hosted Italy's highest rated TV show, *Dominica In*, on RAI television. (She is fluent in Italian, just one of her five languages.) Her career as a film actress was launched in Italy, when she starred in Sergio Sollima's film *Sandokan: The Darkness and the Light*. Padma holds a B.A. in theatre studies from Clark University. She lives in New York and London.



**Irshad Manji**, Author, *The Trouble with Islam Today: A Wake-Up Call for Honesty and Change*

Irshad Manji is a Fellow with the International Security Studies programme at Yale University. The New York Times has dubbed her “Osama Bin Laden’s worst nightmare.” She takes that as a compliment. Irshad is the best-selling author of *The Trouble with Islam Today: A Wake-Up Call for Honesty and Change*. Her book has been published in 25 countries, including Pakistan, India, Turkey and Lebanon. In those countries that have banned *The Trouble with Islam Today*, she is reaching readers by posting free translations on her website. Irshad’s columns are distributed internationally by The New York Times Syndicate. She is also producing a feature film about what there is to love within Islam, to be aired on PBS later this year. As a volunteer, she sits on the inter-faith editorial board of *Seventeen* magazine in New York.

Above all, Irshad is founder of an initiative to help young Muslims revive Islam’s tradition of independent thinking. In that capacity, she has just been selected a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum. Oprah Winfrey has honored Irshad with the first annual Chutzpah Award for “audacity, nerve, boldness and conviction.” *Ms. Magazine* has also named her a Feminist for the 21st Century. And on International Women’s Day 2005, the *Jakarta Post* in Indonesia - the world’s largest Muslim country - identified Irshad as one of three women creating positive change in Islam today.

**Fawzia Naqvi**, Microfinance Specialist

Fawzia Naqvi is a microfinance specialist. Until recently Fawzia worked for Women’s World Banking for five years as a Relationship Manager for Asia. Prior to joining WWB, she spent ten years with Citibank in New York, where she worked for the Financial Institutions Group for Emerging Markets. Her responsibilities at Citibank included building banking relationships with the Not-for-Profit sector in Central Eastern Europe, Middle East, Africa, South Asia and Latin America. In 1997, she was asked to coordinate and manage Citibank’s Task Force on Microfinance Initiatives and was given responsibility for managing all business related initiatives with microfinance institutions in the emerging markets.

Fawzia left Pakistan at the age of 15 for the Philippines where her family lived for 12 years. In 1982 she came to the United States for undergraduate and graduate studies. She has a bachelor’s degree in international relations from Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts and a master’s degree from The School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University.

**Shoba Purushothaman**, Chief Executive Officer & Co-Founder, The NewsMarket, Inc.

Shoba has 20 years of experience in the global news and marketing industries. She was a business journalist for nine years including at the *Wall Street Journal* and *Dow Jones Newswires* and has been an entrepreneur for the last 12. The NewsMarket - [www.thenewsmarket.com](http://www.thenewsmarket.com) - is her second company in the news and marketing industries. The first business she co-founded grew to be a leading international broadcast public relations consultancy that was successfully acquired in 2001 by a public marketing services group.

The NewsMarket is the only web-based platform that aggregates, markets and distributes broadcast-standard video content to news outlets around the globe. Customers using The NewsMarket to distribute content to the media include Intel, Google, General Motors, GE, Pfizer, adidas, UNICEF, the US Department of State and the American Red Cross. Over 7,500 media outlets in 140 countries source content via The NewsMarket including NBC, CNN, Deutsche Welle, BBC, CCTV, Doordashan, TV Globo, Al Jazeera and local affiliates across the U.S. A seasoned entrepreneur with global operating experience, Shoba has also successfully raised capital for The NewsMarket from angel investors and the venture capital community.

**Sonal Shah**, Vice President, Goldman Sachs and Founder, Indicorps

Sonal is Vice President at Goldman, Sachs & Co. working with the Executive Office on developing and implementing a corporate citizenship and environmental policy for the firm. Prior to joining Goldman Sachs, Sonal worked at two think tanks, the Center for American Progress and the Center for Global Development where she focused on policy issues such as the impact of HIV/AIDs and malaria on development, new aid financing mechanisms, trade, outsourcing, and post conflict reconstruction issues. She continues to serve as an adviser to both institutions. Sonal also has extensive expertise in policy-making working in the US government at the Department of Treasury on the Asian financial crisis, World Bank/IMF lending policy, the National Security Council, and as Treasury Attache to Bosnia and Kosovo on their post-conflict development. Most recently, Sonal served as an adviser to the new President of Liberia on her economic strategy as she entered office.

Sonal is also the co-founder and director of Indicorps - [www.Indicorps.org](http://www.Indicorps.org) - a non-profit organization offering one-year fellowships for Indian-Americans to apply their particular skills and expertise to work on targeted development projects in India. For this work, she was awarded the India Abroad Person of the Year award in 2003.



**Madhulika Sikka**, Former Senior Producer, Nightline/ABC News

Madhulika Sikka was a senior producer at ABC News Nightline and one of the most senior South Asians in US television until November of 2005. She started as a researcher at the broadcast in 1992.

Prior to coming to ABC, Madhulika worked at World Monitor, a television broadcast of the Christian Science Monitor. She has worked for CBS News in Tokyo and NBC News in London.

Madhulika is the winner of five Emmy awards, a Barone award, an Edward R. Murrow award, a Dupont and Peabody and two awards from the South Asian Journalists Association (SAJA).

Madhulika has a BA from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London and an MPhil from Cambridge University. She lives in Washington D.C. with her husband and 2 children.

**Shamina Singh**, Director & Vice President, Community Relations, Citigroup Global Consumer Group

Shamina Singh is Director and Vice President of Community Relations for Citigroup's Global Consumer Group. In this position, Shamina is responsible for leveraging financial and programmatic resources to benefit communities in over 100 countries where Citigroup does business.

Prior to joining Citigroup, she spent fifteen years in the public service sector building bridges between the public, private and citizen sectors.

During the 2004 Presidential elections, Shamina worked with America Votes, a coalition of the largest grassroots organizations in the US, working together to increase participation in electoral politics. Before the elections, Shamina worked on Capitol Hill as Senior Advisor to US House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, on Budget, Social Security, Health and Employment issues.

Former President Bill Clinton appointed Shamina to lead the first White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. As Executive Director, Shamina led the efforts of this historic office by providing recommendations, to Presidents Clinton and Bush, which expanded access to federal programs and business opportunities for 11 million Asian Pacific Americans. She began her tenure with the Clinton Administration in 1998, with her service as Congressional Liaison for Secretary of Labor, Alexis Herman. In this position, she worked with Members of Congress and led a comprehensive team that developed and implemented the President's health care agenda, impacting 140 million

participants in private sector health insurance plans.

Shamina has worked with former Texas Governor Ann Richards, former Dallas Mayor and Texas Secretary of State, Ron Kirk and SEIU, the largest and fastest growing labor union in North America.

Shamina is a Fellow with the Aspen Institute and remains active in many community organizations.

Shamina received a Bachelor of Science from Old Dominion University in 1991 and a Master of Public Affairs from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs in 1997.

**Puja Vohra**, Director, Consumer Marketing, Bravo

Puja is a seasoned media marketing professional, with a career that spans media outlets in the US and India. She is currently the Director for Consumer Marketing at Bravo, a cable network part of the NBC Universal family. Her responsibilities include managing marketing and promotions for Bravo's original arts, entertainment and pop culture programming.

Prior to Bravo, Puja has held senior marketing positions at Viacom Plus and Oxygen Media. She also co-founded eKani, an Internet radio start-up company based in New York, NY.

Puja started her marketing career as a member of Seagram's start-up team in India where she was responsible for the launch of several alcoholic beverages in the nascent Indian market. Following that she moved to MTV India and worked with several of India's leading consumer product marketers to create one of India's first media sponsorship marketing groups.

Puja holds a Bachelor's degree from Hindu College, Delhi University and an MBA from the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta.



**Shanthi Weeransinghe**, Agency Sales Director, North Shore Financial Group, MetLife

Sri-Lankan business woman, Shanthi Weeransinghe, first ventured overseas more than twenty-five years ago. After being raised and educated in South Asia, Shanthi left her homeland to join a German company, providing organizational guidance to garment producers around the world. During her twelve years in Europe, Shanthi also pursued additional training at technical schools in Austria and Germany.

Eventually, Shanthi left Germany for the United States, where she entered the financial services arena. Shanthi has achieved a great deal of success in this industry, including recognition in the insurance industry's Million Dollar Round Table.

As an Agency Sales Director for North Shore Financial Group, an Office of MetLife, she recruits and develops financial services representatives.

In addition to her professional activities, Shanthi also participates in charitable endeavors around the world, including acting as a volunteer during the aftermath of the Tsunami.

An avid runner, Shanthi was also the first Sri-Lankan woman to run NYC marathon in 1995, and has completed seven full marathons to date.

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2006

ADVANCING SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN

UK Comedic Sensation **Shazia Mirza**

Trained at the Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama in London, Shazia works full time as a writer, actor and stand up comedian. Shazia began stand up comedy in September 2000 and since then shot up the ladder, picking up along the way the 2001 Hackney Empire Best New Act competition at the London Comedy Festival and winning Metro Magazine's People's Choice Best Comic Award at the London Comedy Festival 2002.

Shazia is in huge international demand with coverage from press, TV and radio across the world. She has performed stand up shows in Germany, Denmark, Italy, Sweden, USA, France, Ireland, Belgium and Holland. In the UK Shazia is picking up TV credits and is constantly working the UK comedy circuit. Highlights have included a rave performance as part of Eve Ensler's V Day event at the Royal Albert Hall where Shazia wrote and performed a monologue which received a standing ovation from the cast which included Isabella Rossellini, Maureen Lipman, Rita Tushingham, Meera Syal, Dannii Minogue and Anita Dobson. Other events have included the Arosa Comedy Festival, Switzerland, a solo show in San Francisco, a sell out run in Paris and for the British Council she has performed in Pristina, Kosovo. Shazia has also recently performed 5 sold out shows in the Sodra Theatre, Stockholm followed by a sell out tour of Sweden.

Shazia has appeared on Have I got News For You, Joan Bakewell's Taboo, Richard & Judy, was the subject of a BBC 2 First Sight documentary. She wrote and presented for the BBC 10 Things You Always Wanted To Know About Islam But Were Afraid To Ask. More recently she has been seen on Richard & Judy again on their successful Book Review slot and CBS in the USA have screened a profile on her for 60 Minutes which is an enormous accolade. Shazia has recently finished filming stand up for The World Stands Up, for Comedy Central USA and 60 Acts in 60mins for the BBC.

Shazia in 2005 again sold out at the Edinburgh Festival with her full length show at The Pleasance. She is now on a national theatre tour with 1001 Nights Now which is a story telling theatre piece produced by Northern Stage in conjunction with Nottingham Playhouse and Deptford Albany. Directed by Alan Lyddiard. In the play Shazia also performs one of her own monologues commissioned for the piece (runs to Feb 2006). Shazia is currently working on a new show for Edinburgh 2006 and is soon to tour Sweden with her solo show.

"Her laconic one-liners represent something quite unique in modern comedy. In these fraught times, she actually manages to make being a Muslim woman seem wonderfully life-enhancingly funny. Anglo-Islamic understanding is now even more elusive than before, but if anything, that makes Shazia's comedy even more valid, and even more vital" THE GUARDIAN GUIDE, William Cook "My name is Shazia Mirza....' she says. 'At least that's what it says on my pilot's licence'. No one can resist - the room erupts" Elle Magazine, Natalie Meddings.

# PATTERN ON PATTERN. IN RED

"It is with color that you render light, though you must also feel this light, have it within yourself."

- Henri Matisse



Each quarter, Anita Itty writes on topics of leadership, identity, business and culture for SAWLF. Ms. Itty received an MBA from Columbia University and is the 2003-2004 winner of the First Words South Asian Literary Prize. Ms. Itty lives in New York City where she is currently working on a novel. To contact Anita Itty, please e-mail [aiaddress-sawlf@yahoo.com](mailto:aiaddress-sawlf@yahoo.com).

**M**emories of being in a sari shop in India with yards and yards of fabrics spread out, a wild and beautiful overlapping of flowing textiles, a riot of vividly colored patterns that were embroidered, embossed, block-printed or dyed. Also, the visual stimulation of embroidery and design on cushions and wall-hangings, carpets and dhurries, block-printed bedspreads, bandhini dupattas. Seeing pattern everywhere, imagining patterns where there were none. This is something that Indian fabrics gave me - an understanding of the vocabulary of pattern and fabric, an appreciation for the drape and flow of textiles, the orchestration of color, pattern and texture. And so, a visceral pleasure in Matisse's paintings.

Looking at Matisse and his use of textiles I realized that one of the defining characteristics of his oeuvre is the interplay of pattern on pattern, always reinforced with a subtly brilliant use of color. This idea of pattern on pattern inevitably brought to mind moiré patterns. A moiré pattern is created when one semitransparent patterned material is placed over another patterned material and a pattern that does not exist in either original can be seen. Originally, the word moiré came from mohair (from mukhayyar in Arabic), which is made from the hair of the angora goat, but later came to mean what is also called watered silk, a fabric where a rippling wave-like pattern is formed when lengths of dampened silk thread are pressed together and meshed, or where the moiré pattern is impressed with heated and engraved rollers after weaving. Matisse is known to have collected textile swatches and I wonder if a piece of moiré silk was a part of his museum. Matisse grew up in the textile manufacturing town of Bohain and this appreciation for textiles led to his collecting pieces of fabric as an art-student. He collected assiduously, from that early collection of swatches, to the famous piece of toile de Jouy that was found in a thrift store and soon became central to his compositions, to Moroccan textiles and robes. African Kuba fabrics and Spanish shawls. A red Madras headdress or a green Romanian blouse were inspirations for paintings. As in a moiré pattern, Matisse's incorporation of pattern juxtaposed with pattern creates something new, a pattern that did not exist before, a third imaginary new thing in the painting that the viewer sees - something harmonious, languorous, and beautiful.

## Matisse, His Art and His Textiles: The Fabric of Dreams

Metropolitan Museum of Art

June 23, 2005 - September 25, 2005

As his biographer Hilary Spurling says, "It was as if the fabrics Matisse painted gave up their individual identities - as tablecloth, bedspread, wall-hanging - to become the expressive fabric of his painting." The textiles in his paintings lost their functionality and became abstract, became instead pattern and color.

Matisse has been dismissed by critics as being merely decorative, that his interiors were some Western fantasy of the Orient, complete with odalisques in harem pants. Matisse said about his work, "The whole arrangement of my picture is expressive. The place occupied by the figures or objects, the empty spaces around them, the proportions, everything plays a part." He also said that the decorative element was an extremely precious thing for a work of art, "an essential quality". There is, however, a different way of seeing his work: that his paintings instead of being merely decorative are in fact at that halfway point between European and Islamic art, fusing elements of classical Western art - still life and portraiture - with the patterns of textiles and fabrics, capturing decoration (or pattern or geometry) which is at the heart of Islamic art. As in Persian art, the perspective is flattened, and figures and objects float in a densely detailed space.

In the fall of 1910, Matisse spent a week at the Munich exhibition, 'Masterpieces of Islamic Art'. This show was of seminal importance and is also credited with influencing Kandinsky to create his first abstract painting. The exhibition was defining in its impact on the metamorphosis towards a modern sensibility in Matisse's work. Enamored now with Islamic art he traveled in December of that year to Granada to see the Alhambra. This only further intensified the effect of the Munich show. After going to Granada, Matisse went to Seville and painted Spanish Still Life and Seville Still Life - both paintings that he had visualized while visiting the Alhambra. What is the beauty of the Alhambra if not color and pattern and the juxtaposition of pattern against pattern? One looks at these two paintings and sees that their titles state exactly what it is that they are: the marriage of the Alhambra (or Spain, or Seville) with European still life.

Matisse began his career as a leader of the Fauves (who worked with violent color) - and color, the use of color, color against color, this is something that Matisse manipulated to much effect. And there is his use of red, glorious red, the color of passion and anger, of headdress or culottes, of wall and studio. If

Matisse was in love with textiles and patterns then I believe that red was the color of this love. Red is seen as a recurring theme in his work - from the early *Mme. Matisse: Madras Rouge* in 1907 where his wife is portrayed wearing what has been called a 'Red Madras Headdress'. Even then, in this early painting, as in *Dishes and Fruit on a Red and Black Carpet* from the same year, one sees the beginning of the appreciation for pattern. In 1908 he painted *Harmony in Red/La desserte* where pattern on the cloth covering the table (the same piece of white and blue toile de Jouy now recolored violently in red) frees itself and starts covering the wall, and the textile is transformed into some fantastic creature of his imagination. The 1911 painting, *The Red Studio*, is an unabashed paean to the color red, and to pure color, saturated and intense. By the time *Odalisque with Red Culottes* is painted in 1921, the use of pattern on pattern is sophisticated, subtle, adding to the overall feel of languor and beauty, and the red of culottes is both center and anchor in the composition.

#### **Pattern on pattern, in red.**

These days, I see echoes of Matisse everywhere - the textural play of pattern and color in some of Wong Kar-Wai's sets, the Rockwell Group's new interior for Nobu 57, an Englishman walking down the street in patterned jacket on patterned tie on wildly striped shirt. It's a difficult thing to pull off, this pattern on pattern thing, but when done well, it is oh so beautiful.



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Genuine **peridot**, freshwater cultured **pearl** and **sterling silver bib necklace** from Greenwich Jewelers.

**Photography** by Ms. Yamini Nayar - Ms. Nayar's photographs are of miniature dioramas constructed from found and crafted objects, drawings, archival imagery, and cardboard. In the representation of these spaces, an earring becomes a picture frame, pushpins hold up a sofa and a drawing of a kitchen points to its absence, to challenge our expectations of what is real, perceived and of significance in understanding identity.

Enjoy a playful and eminently palatable **dinner for two** at the **Leela Lounge & Restaurant**.

Private consultation with **Feng Shui** Master Miriam Tsao.

Distinctive **jewelry** by Me&Ro.

**Indian inspired tunic** by designer Payal Singhal.

**Marc Ecko Kids** is the touchstone of a generation - with strong roots in hip-hop and youth culture.

Two **handcrafted pillows** by Ankasa - well regarded as the manufacturer of fabrics for designers Oscar de la Renta, Carolina Herrera and Escada.

**Masala Dance & Fitness** - two volume set from the "Indian Jane Fonda" - the first South Asian fitness icon to introduce Indian dance to fitness enthusiasts everywhere.

**Tina Elaine Jewelry** presents two of its signature pieces - **pearl necklace** with **black onyx/smoky quartz** and the **Carnelian necklace**.

Be Yoga - classes with a mix of over fifteen different styles of **yoga**.

Known for his signature bowtie, amusing antics and witty repartee - enjoy **lunch** with **Congressional candidate Raj Bhakta** from The Apprentice.

Experience **Egypt 2005** by photographer Samanta Batra Mehta.

### **Preeti Priya, Dobshinsky & Priya LLC**

Dobshinsky & Priya LLC is a general practice law firm in historic downtown Manhattan. The firm specializes in personal injury, real estate and litigation. Preeti focuses on personal injury litigation and provides general counsel to small businesses and sole proprietors. She is extensively involved with SAWLF as director for external affairs. Preeti is an avid cyclist and loves to travel.

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### **Warren Berry, Big Dream Productions**

917.975.9832

Warren is an award-winning filmmaker and videographer. Combining digital technology with outstanding production value, Big Dream Productions helps companies realize success through cost-effective, innovative visual communications, including corporate, broadcast, and Internet video and web photography.

### **Mala Desai, Freelance Designer/Writer**

507.269.1415

[maladesai@yahoo.com](mailto:maladesai@yahoo.com)



Mala is currently employed as an in-house graphic designer at a Midwest utility. She also spends her time as a freelance designer and writer, serving a local women's magazine and a NYU dance troupe. Mala will be relocating to New York City in early 2007 to pursue an Associate Degree in graphic design. She holds a BA from UNC-Chapel Hill where she studied communications and journalism. SAWLF requested Mala to update and re-design aspects of the 53-page Congress 2006 program guide for release in its electronic format.

### **Lynn Cole, Lynn Cole Graphic Design**

347.204.1649

Lynn works with innovative companies and organizations to encapsulate their vision and essence through effective graphic materials. She is responsible for designing the program guide that was distributed to Congress 2006 participants.

9:30am - 7:30pm	<b>Registration and Badge Pick-up</b>	Lobby
9:30am - 11:15am	<b>Continental Breakfast and Silent Auction</b> Proceeds from the Silent Auction will benefit SAWLF's scholarship and future programs for South Asian women	Lower Level
10:00am - 10:15am	<b>Welcome Remarks</b> by <i>Simi Ahuja</i> , Founder	Lower Level
10:15am - 11:15am	<b>Opening Keynote Presentation</b> <i>Ms. Vani Kola</i> , Founder, Certus Software and Rightworks  Ms. Kola will join Ms. Lakshmi Pratury for an interactive conversation with audience Q&A to follow	
11:30am - 12:30pm	<b>Morning Panel Presentations</b> Women Initiating Change PANELISTS <i>Ms. Vanita Gupta</i> , Esq., NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. <i>Ms. Irshad Manji</i> , Best-selling Author, <i>The Trouble with Islam Today: A Wake-Up Call for Honesty and Change</i> <i>Ms. Fawzia Naqvi</i> , Microfinance Specialist	22nd floor
	<b>India: Opportunities in Today's Marketplace</b> A Dialogue with <i>Counsel General Neelam Deo</i> of the Consulate General of India, New York	22nd floor
12:30pm - 2:30pm	<b>Congress 2006 Luncheon</b>	Lower Level
1:15pm - 2:15pm	<b>Congress 2006 Distinguished Keynote Presentation</b>  <i>Ms. Indra Nooyi</i> , President and CFO for PepsiCo., Inc. will participate in an interactive segment with <i>Ms. Meena Mansharamani</i> , Senior Vice President, Innovation and Insights, Pepsi-Cola North America	Lower Level

This interactive segment will bring together two leading-edge professionals for an engaging discussion that will highlight winning business strategies and practices as well as their individual experiences of challenge and achievement.

	<b>PANELISTS</b> <i>Ms. Sabrina Dhawan</i> , Screenwriter, <i>Monsoon Wedding</i> <i>Ms. Beena Kamlani</i> , Senior Editor, Penguin Group <i>Ms. Padma Lakshmi</i> , Founder, Lakshmi Films <i>Ms. Madhulika Sikka</i> , Former Senior Producer, Nightline/ABC News
	Panel will be moderated by <i>Ms. Puja Vohra</i> , Director Consumer Marketing, Bravo
3:45pm - 4:15pm	<b>Afternoon Networking Break</b> 22nd floor
4:15pm - 5:15pm	<b>Vertical SAWLF</b> 22nd floor Interactive Panel Presentations with Industry Specialists
	Vertical SAWLF serves as a "peer network" that facilitates professional achievement and career guidance for SAWLF participants representing law and public policy, finance, and business
	Congress 2006 attendees are invited to participate in one of these segments:
	Small Group Presentation I Women in Law and Public Policy <i>Ms. Prabha Sipi Bhandari</i> , VP Senior Counsel, Mergers & Acquisitions, Viacom, Inc. <i>Megha Bhouraskar</i> , Esq., Founding Partner, Poppe & Bhouraskar LLP
	Small Group Presentation II Women in Finance <i>Sheila Hooda</i> , Managing Director, Global Equities Division, Credit Suisse <i>Neetu Bhatia</i> , Vice President, Media, Communications & Technology Investment Banking Group, BMO Financial Group <i>Shanthi Weeransinghe</i> , Agency Sales Director, North Shore Financial Group, MetLife
	Small Group Presentation III Small Business Leadership <i>Ms. Shoba Purushothaman</i> , President, CEO & Co-Founder, The NewsMarket, Inc.
5:30pm - 7:30pm	<b>Closing Reception</b> Musings by UK Comedic Sensation <i>Shazia Mirza</i>





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**Best Wishes to the  
South Asian Women's Leadership Forum  
for a Successful Congress 2006**



## another woman.\*

at some point in her career, every woman has shared  
challenges with another woman  
down the hall  
up the street  
in a corner office  
three thousand miles away.

at some point in her career, every woman has needed  
to compete with another woman  
to fight on behalf of another woman  
to place her trust in another woman  
to interview another woman.

at some point in her career, every woman has needed  
another woman to trust with her children  
to remind her of who she used to be  
to be a role model without ever knowing it  
to listen.

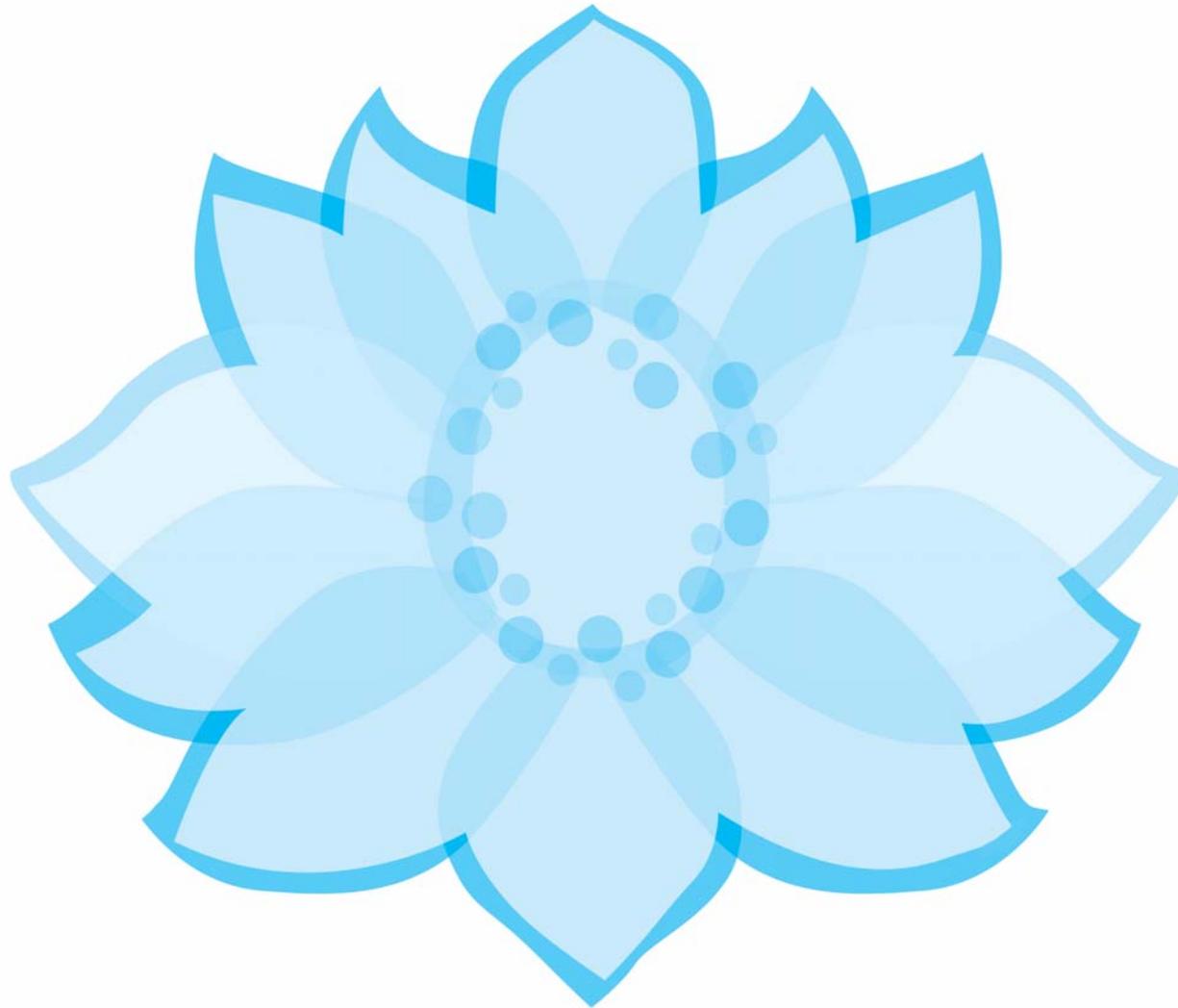
at some point in her career, every woman should tell her story.  
not for her, but for another woman not so different from herself.

change begins with understanding.  
understanding begins with conversation.

\*connectedthinking

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2006

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