



Annual Report 2023



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Introduction:

Newah Society of Calgary (NSC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving, promoting, educating and transferring the Newah language, culture & heritage to the interested members and their descendants. The membership base is mainly from the City of Calgary and its vicinity. The Organization's activities will be primarily limited to the City of Calgary. The organization's office will be based in the City of Calgary, Alberta.

Objective:

To preserve and promote this endangered Newah language, culture and heritage to its members, their descendants & other interested supporters by disseminating knowledge and allowing opportunities to practice its language, culture, and heritage.

Activities:

1. Publication

A half-yearly Newsletter was published in January and July 2023. It has included NSC's activity reports, articles, and Nepal Bhasa (Newah Language) learning materials. This regular publication disseminates information to community members who have opted to update news from the Society's activities, events, and forthcoming programs. Essentially, this newsletter aims to create interest in knowing the cultural values, beliefs, and norms and connect with the community members.



NSC's Newsletter

2. Si Bicha Guthi

Si Bicha Guthi was endorsed from the Executive Board which was effective from January 28, 2023.

Newahs, the aboriginal inhabitants of Nepal, have a distinct identity. They have been following their religion and culture for a very long time. One of their special characteristics is their honesty in dealings and their nature of living with others harmoniously, living together for a common objective and purpose in a group of persons in the community known as Guthi. Guthi is an organized institution created to enhance the people's standard of living. Guthi systems in Newah Society are believed to have continued since the 5th century Before Christ (BC). At present, the Guthi is an integral part of Newah culture all over the World. A Newah is born in Guthi, continues the Guthi activities, and dies during Guthi activities. Guthi, therefore, occupies a very important place in the life of a Newah.

The main objective of the Si Bicha Guthi is to support the welfare of the people by undertaking a religious activity for taking care of death rituals (renders service) to the society as well as standing for the welfare of the Guthiyars (members). Generally, for the first ten days, the mourned family is in quarantine and has to maintain isolation (Kriya) from some groups from other families and people. In this case, without Guthi and its members, the mourned family can't easily perform their ritual activities and daily life. Si Bicha Guthi is an absolutely service-oriented system with the welfare of Guthi members/families and also provides financial assistance to mourned families as per their rules of the Guthi. Although the amount of financial assistance might be limited, it would partially support the needy family. The Si Bicha Guthi members raise the Restricted Fund as per their understanding and policy.

This type of cooperation will be provided to valid members of Si Bicha Guthi and their family member (s) in a single household family. The Si Bicha Guthi Policy, for its memberships, fundraising, management, and procedures, will be developed under an acting committee of three members coordinated by the Director of Event and Fundraising of the Executive Board, Newah Society of Calgary (NSC).

3. Highway Clean Up

NSC participated in the 3rd Alberta Highway Clean Up program on Saturday, May 6, 2023. It was run from 9 am to 12 pm in Langdon, near Calgary. NSC received \$ 1,300 in lieu of 13 km Highway Cleaned Up.

NSC likes participating in community development activities conducted by the Government of Alberta and stakeholders. This is a way of creating a healthy environment around the highway areas, which was initiated by the Government of Alberta once a year.

Altogether, 31 energetic volunteers participated in this program. They are Abhi Gyawali, Anita Kayastha, Apekchhya Shrestha, Arun Shrestha, Binod Amatya, Christina Maharjan, Govinda Shrestha, Gyanendra Pradhan, Hem Basyal, Hemanta Maharjan, Hisila Maharjan, Jhalendra Shrestha, Krishna Basukala, Mina Kumari Shrestha, Moti Kaji Shrestha, Navraj Shretha, Nisha Pradhan, Nisha Shrestha, Phanindra Gyawali (Kusum), Purushottam Shrestha, Radha Maharjan, Ram Shrestha, Sangit Sharma, Shirisha Maharjan, Shreeya Shrestha, Shristi Sharma, Shyam Kumari Shrestha, Sulav Shrestha, Sunanda Shrestha, Sunil Shrestha and Tejash Shrestha.



Volunteers are engaging Highway Clean Up

4. Nepali Mela - 2023

Newah Society of Calgary participated in the First Nepali Mela-2023 held in Prairiewinds Park, NE, Calgary, on Saturday, July 24, 2023. It was organized by Nepalese community-based Organizations with the slogan “Our Culture, Our Identity and Our Pride: Let’s Embrace together.” NSC excitedly participated in showcasing and promoting Newah culture and heritage in this program with a parade, Jhaki, multicultural showcase, Newah cuisine and Newah cultural dance performed. Around 700 Newah people visited this event across Alberta. During the events, Newah cultural activities were highly appreciated and encouraged to get them in 2024 Nepali Mela, too. NSC also achieved a great opportunity to explore its cultural values and vibes and strengthen in this event.



Newah activities are in Nepali Mela-2023

5. Community Gathering

NSC organizes a community gathering program with community people outings every year in summertime. During this time, Newah people share, chat, and plan for upcoming activities, have potluck meals together and entertain, and get refreshments with members. This year, NSC organized a picnic in North Glenmore Park, SW, on August 11, 2023, and 92 persons attended.



Members are in entertainment program

6. Ihi Program (Ritual Event)

NSC conducted a cultural life event, the “Ihi” program, in Calgary on August 20, 2023. This is a ceremony in the Newah community where pre-adolescent girls are “married” to Suvarna Kumar, a symbol of the God “Vishnu,” ensuring that the girl becomes and remains fertile. It is believed that if the girl’s husband dies later in her life, she is not considered a widow

because she is married to Vishnu and so already has a husband that is believed to be still alive. Ms. Pari Shrestha, aged 9, has been done Ihi in this event. Her parents were glad to conduct this event in Calgary due to the inappropriate conditions for visiting Nepal.



Ms Pari's Ihi ceremony



Rosy Shrestha & Preeti Pradhan

We are very grateful to the Newah Society of Calgary for their help conducting the Ihi event in Calgary. Actually, we live in Saskatchewan with my daughter Pari Shrestha, nine years. She is turning ten years old soon and is scared that her menstruation will happen before her Ihi and Barah. These events should be done before her first menstruation, according to Newah Culture. We wanted to do it in the backcountry with family members but have not succeeded due to the limited budget for travel and other expenses. Now, we have completed it with an affordable budget in Calgary. NSC played a great role in preserving and promoting Newah culture, which is of great help to Newah community members to live and thrive with their culture and life ceremonies.

7. Indra Jatra and Yenhe Punhi

Indra Jatra and Yenhe Punhi were celebrated in the presence of 82 Newah people on September 30, 2023. Kids were so excited to attend this program for having Newah Samayabaji, knowing its importance and seeing Lakhey's dance performance. It is one of the biggest festivals of Newah traditions in Kathmandu Valley. During the ceremony, mostly typical Newah cuisine was prepared and had it among the community members. Usually, the Lakhey dance is performed in most areas of Nepal on the occasion of Indra Jatra and Yenhe Punhi.



Newah Cuisine

8. Annual General Meeting

NSC's 3rd Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday, September 2023, with 45 life and general members and 23 non-members. During the Meeting, Jagadish Kayastha, General Secretary, presented the Annual Progress Report and Kalpana Mool, Treasurer, presented the Annual Financial Report. A new NSC's Executive Board Committee was formed for the year 2023-2025 with the following members:



Executive Boards members

President	- Hemanta Maharjan
Vice-President	- Arun Shrestha
General Secretary	- Raju Shrestha
Treasurer	- Roshi Shrestha
Joint Secretary	- Tejash Shrestha
Member	- Suman Singh Maharjan
Member	- Nisha Shrestha
Member	- Shirisha Maharjan
Member	- Pooja Shrestha

9. Mha Puja and Nepal Sambat 1144

NSC conducted the Mha Puja and Nepal Sambat 1144 celebration in collaboration with Calgary Nepalese Community Association (CNCA) and Nepalese Community Society of Calgary (NCSC) on November 14, 2023, at Crossroads Community Association. One of the Newah community's largest celebrations occurs during "Yampanchak-Tihar," the second-biggest celebration observed in



Mha Puja Celebration

Nepal and among the Nepali community. Since 2022, NSC has been the driving force behind the annual event's conduct in Calgary. Altogether, 81 people excitedly participated; among them, 61 participated in the Mha Puja (worship) program.



Kid decorating Mandap for Mha Puja

Mha Puja is an annual ritual performed by the Newah people as part of New Year celebrations to purify and empower the soul. It is performed on New Year's Day of Nepal Sambat (an indigenous calendar of Nepal), the national lunar calendar of Nepal, which occurs during the Swanti festival.

This year's celebration included Mha Puja worship, speeches by the presidents, a cultural program, the awarding of certificates, and dinner. As Master of Ceremonies, Ms. Nisha Shrestha and Ms. Shirisha Maharjan started the program. The NSC President, Mr. Hemanta Maharjan, warmly welcomed all attendees and guests while also elaborating on the significance of Mha Puja and Nepal Sambat in the Newah community. The NCSC President, Mr. Shreekanta Ayril, and the CNCA Board of Directors, Mr. Sandesh Raj Kharel, also spoke about the significance of Mha Puja and Nepal Sambat. The youngsters from Hasna Shrestha, Shreeya Shrestha, Hisila Maharjan, Pari Shrestha, Pritha Neupane, Suprima Dhakal, Deepana Sharma, Akshada Kuikel, and Yahvi Tiwari then performed dances subsequently. In a similar vein, Arun Shrestha, Paresh Shrestha, and Anoj Sthapit sang songs. Mr. Arun Shrestha thanked each participant at the program's conclusion.



Kids performing Newah dance

10. Fundraise

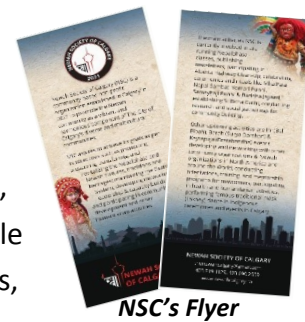
NSC fundraised \$ 681 (dollar six hundred eighty-one) to support the grievance family of the late Sojin Shrestha, who passed away on November 9, 2023, in Edson, Alberta. The fund was electrically transferred to his wife, Nina Tamang. The fund was supported by the following like-minded donors: Arun Shrestha, Daya Ram Nhuchhen & family, Hemanta Maharjan, Kiran Shrestha, Lakshman Shrestha, Pradyamna (Raju) Shrestha, Prasanna Man Shrestha, Dr. Raju Tuladhar and Sudhir & Mumu Mool.



Late Sojin Shrestha

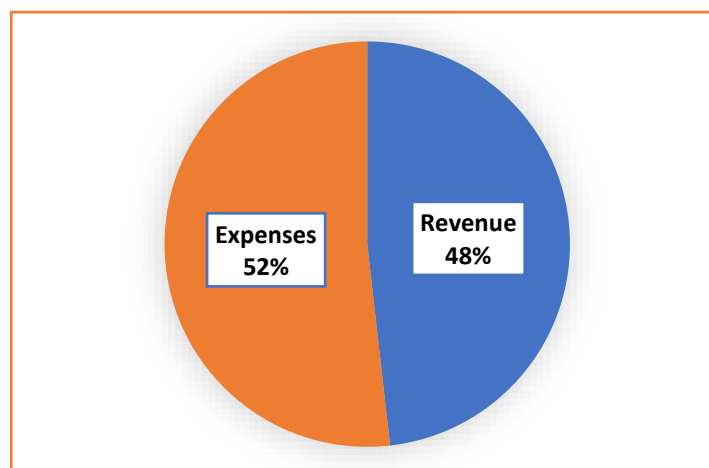
11. Other Activities

- Hemanta Maharjan participated in International Topi Diwas organized by NRNA Alberta on January 1, 2023, and expressed its importance to the Newah people and the Newah community.
- NCSC and NSC jointly organized the 2667th Buddha Jayanti at NCSC Hall on Sunday, May 7, 2023. It was run in the presence of students of the Nepali Class and their parents, as well as invitees. Hemanta Maharjan, NSC's representative, participated in this program and expressed Buddha's Triple Gems, Four Noble Truths, Eight-Fold Paths, The Five Precepts, Ten Paramita and Mahapariniravan.
- A Flyer was published in terms of NSC's introduction and activities for disseminating message to community people.
- The Research titled **"A Scenario of Newah Cultural Heritages in Newah Communities in Canada"** is in progress. The data collection survey will be begun in the Newah Community across Canada in 2024.
- Hemanta Maharjan participated in a Radio Program on July 10 to disseminate Newah Culture, tradition, and heritages to be performed in Nepali Mela 2023.
- Hemanta Maharjan and Laxman Shrestha participated in a Radio program on November 10 regarding Mha Puja and Nepal Sambat 1144.
- NSC collaborated with the Centre for Research, Education and Social Service on "Promoting Healthy Life and Collaborative Art Works" on October 29, 2023, at Citadel Community Association. Hemanta Maharjan, Raju Shrestha, and Shirisha Maharjan from NSC participated.



NSC was in workshop

12. Financial Report



13.Thank you,

NSC would like to acknowledge our partners and contributors for their ongoing supports. Every donation and contribution preserve and promote Newah cultures, tradition, and heritage in Calgary's diverse and multicultural city.

- Calgary Nepalese Community Association (CNCA)
- Nepalese Community Society of Calgary (NCSC)
- Centre for Research, Education and Social Service (CRESS)
- Government of Alberta
- ActionDignity, Calgary, Alberta
- Mr. Damodar Prasad Pradhan
- Mr. Dibya Pradhan, Life Member, NSC
- Mr. Dorje Lama, Life Member, NSC
- Mr. Prajwal Pradhan, Life Member, NSC
- Mr. Rabrindra Thanju, Life Member, NSC
- Mr. Jeeban Katuwal, Realtor, Remax
- Mr. Laxman Shrestha, Life Member, NSC
- Mr. Ishwori Bhattra, Easy Air Travels and Tours
- Mr. Vishnu Basyal, Founder, Onpassive
- Dr. Nagendra Prasad Sharma, Life Member, NSC
- Green Chilli Restaurant