



**MASKWA  
AQUATIC  
CLUB**



Annual Report  
Fiscal Year  
2017/2018



## Executive Summary

In the 2017/2018 term, the Maskwa Board was presided over by the following directors:

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Position</u></b>
Debbie Spencer	Commodore
Geoff Morse	Travel and Logistics
Brian P. Toole	Vice Commodore
Mel Simons	Member-at-Large
Kathy MacDonald	Secretary
Beverly Billard	Treasurer
Erin Crosby	Marketing
Hannah Forsyth	Paddling Chair
Alexa Irvin	Athletes Rep
Dan Dugie	Member-at-Large
John Moore	Member-at-Large
Karen Scott	Social Chair & Swim Chair
Mark Peachey	Past Commodore
Tracy Hilton-King	Volunteer Coordinator

Non-voting Maskwa staff members, Head Coach (Jon Pike) and Office Administrator (Christian Brousseau), also sat on the board.

With many new individuals in key roles, this was a heavy year of learning and transition. There was a key focus placed on improving transparency and communication while starting to document policies and procedures to ensure consistency in Maskwa operations that transcend board member terms.

To further address the challenges of administrative changes and more evenly distribute the work of the board, we will be making the following changes for the 2018/2019 term:

- All board members will be assigned an area of expertise that they are responsible for so roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and distributed
- Committees will be formed for specific initiatives to allow focused work outside of the board meetings so that each committee can come to the board with well defined recommendation
- The roles of Vice Commodore and Vice Treasurer will be assigned to those who have expressed an interest in taking over the Commodore or Treasurer role in the following year to provide a year of mentoring/shadowing and continuity through transition

It has been a very busy year at Maskwa with new projects, initiatives, and one of most attended summer programs yet. As the Club operations have grown, it has become increasingly clear that we needed to grow our staff base to ensure the Club operates effectively and professionally to provide the level of service our members expect. To that end, we added an Office Administrator and additional Academy program coaches to the Maskwa team.

In addition to our staff and board members, it takes a large number of volunteers to provide all the services Maskwa needs throughout the year and getting those volunteers is an ongoing struggle. We understand Maskwa families are busy and it can be a struggle to find the time to volunteer. We have made a significant change this year to give families the option to volunteer or pay a volunteer fee so that Maskwa can then pay resources to take care of work that needs to be done that we do not have a volunteer for. This is similar to what is currently done at other clubs who face the same volunteer challenges and the new volunteer fee was introduced with the 2018 fall program registration.

Maskwa is a large organization with a lot of moving parts and we are thankful to all of our staff, board members, and volunteers who help ensure the Maskwa ship runs smoothly and provides our membership with a great service. It is an organization we are all proud to be a part of.

## Paddling Program

From brand new programs to keep our members active and engaged, to reworking the way our young athletes enter elite sport, there have been significant changes to the paddling programs at Maskwa this year. For those that don't know, the Maskwa paddling program runs all year, and as always, there is a lot to reflect on after a busy season.

After months of tough winter training and a successful Florida training camp, our high performance athletes started the 2018 racing season with some strong results. Maskwa Head Coach Jon Pike sent the largest club contingent to the first set of National Team trials with 10 athletes competing in Gainesville, Georgia. As a result of those trials, Maskwa athletes Mark de Jonge, Alex Scott and Bret Himmelman represented Canada and Maskwa on a World Cup tour in Europe.

Back home, eager young athletes were taking strokes in cold water through the Spring Development Program. Coach Leah Jessop did a great job in preparing those athletes for the summer season and beyond. Meanwhile, our high performance athletes competed on Lake Banook at the Atlantic Team trials with 6 athletes named to the U18 core team and several athletes nominated to the Canada Cup Team.

With a Maskwa summer staffing record of 20 coaches, we welcomed over 330 little athletes to the club this summer. It is always a busy time, but if you take a good look, you can see an athlete getting their furthest from the dock in a tippy boat, learning

to take a j-stroke and having fun with friends in a K4. This summer we introduced two new initiatives. Development coach Leah Jessop worked with each age group during their singles block to help athletes work on fundamental technical skills, and the Goal Getters program was created to challenge and inspire the athletes to learn the basic skills of the sport.

This summer Maskwa also offered some new programs to our members, the Alumni program and the Paracanoe & PaddleAll programs. Maskwa relaunched the alumni program in order to gear the program towards past Maskwa athletes that are looking to focus on school or work but want to go for a paddle, work out with friends and remain a part of the Maskwa community. Maskwa's Sam Morse and Leah Jessop, under the direction of Head Coach, Jon Pike, took the initiative to start a Paracanoe and PaddleAll Program at the Club to introduce athletes with physical or intellectual disabilities to the sport of CanoeKayak. We had three very enthusiastic athletes that made great improvements over the summer. Maskwa was proud to be recognized for this new program with the Community Action Recreation Award. A big thank you to Sam, Leah, Coach Jon and all the volunteers that helped make the program a success. We hope to build both of these new programs heading into 2019.

This summer, Maskwa's Mark De Jonge was honored as one of the Top 15 greatest Nova Scotian athletes of all time. A truly impressive and special recognition of an incredible athlete and person. Many Maskwa athletes are on track to follow in Mark's footsteps with some impressive international results. Anna Negulic and Jacob Steele competed at the World University Championships in Hungary, Alex Scott and Zane Clarke raced at the U23 World Championships in Bulgaria, Mark DeJonge and Alex Scott represented Canada together at the Senior World Championships in Portugal, Andrew Billard won gold in the U16 Olympic Hopes in Poland, and Maskwa athletes Sam Morse and Marlee MacIntosh represented Canada at the ICF World Marathon Championships in Portugal. Marlee came home with Canada's best-ever result: a gold medal in Junior Women's C-1! Congratulations to all our international superstars, Maskwa is always proud and cheering you on back home.

At the end of August, Maskwa's U13 and U15 athletes competed in the U13/U15 Championships at Lake Banook. Their hard work all summer paid off big and they brought home the burgee for Best Overall U13/U15 and crowned the U13/U15 Champs. A big congratulations to coaches and athletes, every race and every point counted towards the group achievement. Maskwa quickly shifted gears to compete at the largest regatta of the year, the Canadian Sprint National Championships in Sherbrooke, Quebec. A few warcanoe races later, Maskwa was proud to be the top Atlantic-Canadian Club, and 4th Best Club overall in Canada (against more than 50 other Clubs!). One of Maskwa's top record performances at the National Championships ever. A big congratulations to all the Maskwa athletes and coaches on another wonderful summer season.

Our Masters also competed in Sherbrooke at the annual CanMas regatta. Maskwa's Masters finished 8th overall and were the top Atlantic-Canadian Club as well. Assistant Head Coach Jake Jeanott now leads the group into their winter program. The Masters program is always a great option for those of all skills and abilities over the age of 25.

The 2018 Pan American Canoe Sprint & Paracanoe Championships took place on Lake Banook, Dartmouth, in September. The regatta saw over 16 countries and 350 athletes from North and South America race in a spectacle of world-class sport. Maskwa was proud to have 8 athletes represent Team Canada at the event: Mark DeJonge, Alexander Scott, Alexa Irvin, Marlee MacIntosh, Dave Waters, Geneva Bond, Jessica MacKay, and Kavita Thomas. Four of our U13 athletes had the honour of representing Maskwa in a mixed K4 exhibition race and many of our U11's got to present medals to athletes.

Also in September, Maskwa launched its new Academy Program. Head Coach Jon Pike enrolled in the High Performance Coaching and Technical Leadership program at the University of British Columbia this year, and in an effort to focus on long term athlete development, the Academy program was created. Assistant Head Coach Jake Jeanott has been working hard with a large number of young athletes to help develop and improve their technical, crew boat and fitness outcomes. The Academy program will not only help teach these young athletes the fundamentals of being a high performance athlete, but it will also teach them how to train. Maskwa is keen to help develop athletes and bring out the best in those who love to paddle. We couldn't be prouder of this program, the coaches and the young athletes fostering a love for the sport in cold weather.

In November 2018, Maskwa is in a period of growth. With an influx of young paddlers that are eager to make their boats go fast, our staff and board members are working hard to set them up for success. We are making big investments into our paddling programs, staff, equipment and facilities so that we can continue to support all our athletes in the years to come. From Kiddie Kayak to Masters, to our athletes aiming for 2020 and everyone in between, Maskwa's foremost goal is to support our members in achieving their goals, whatever they may be. With the momentum of the 2018 season behind us, we are on our way to many more accomplishments and warm memories to come.

## Swim Program

Overall the swimming program had a successful summer with about 200 children enrolled in various swim levels, not including the camp participants. Swim participants were not registered in the Maskwa Goal Line but were individually registered through email.

**Staff:**

We had 9 lifeguards this summer. 5 were full time and 4 part time. We also had a casual lifeguard who would fill in if there was an issue with a sick call or a day off here and there and that seemed to work well. I would recommend this strategy in the future.

Beth Young was our head lifeguard. She is a very dedicated and organized individual that worked under the pressure of a large swim lesson group. She managed the lifeguards' schedule, organized the children into the lessons, was the liaison between the manager and lifeguards and between the coaches and lifeguards. Beth also managed the parent emails regarding swim lessons.

Interviews were conducted for hiring all the lifeguards. Mid-summer the head lifeguard, Swim Chair and Manager conducted individual staff reviews and they went very well. It was a great opportunity to get reacquainted with the lifeguards and to address any staffing issues. All the life guards expressed that they were enjoying the summer working at Maskwa.

**Staff Orientation:**

The Waterfront Course was given to all lifeguards in June. This is a required course that Maskwa pays for and it is offered every year. All the lifeguards attended the main orientation day held on June 27th at 5pm. After the general orientation the lifeguards had a separate orientation with a review of what's expected as a lifeguard at Maskwa and the differences in lifeguarding at a pool and at a lake.

**Swim Lessons:**

Swim registrations were high this year. We estimated most children registered in the U11 paddling and younger were part of the swim lessons making the number of children a challenge to manage. (See below for suggestion to ensure accurate enrolment numbers) Overall, the swim lessons ran smoothly however the lifeguards did have difficulty getting the children from the paddling to the swim lessons with our majority of parental complaints about their children missing swim lessons. (See below for suggestions.)

**Water Testing:**

We tested samples from the deep end and the shallow end every two weeks. No issues were identified with bacteria levels within the normal range for a lake for swimming each time the water was tested.

### **What Could be Improved:**

- 1) The ongoing problem of children missing swim lessons because they either don't show up or are late to lessons continued through the summer of 2018. With the increase in registration numbers the lifeguards were too busy to look for children that did not show as they were busy with the class on hand. We knew this from previous years and so thought of creating lists to check children who arrived on time so at least the lifeguard would know who was not present. However finding the child who didn't show up was a challenge. We need to devise a way to organize this part of the programming. We need to learn from past experience what doesn't work and create a new plan. I propose this issue be part of the staffing sub committee so that we can tackle which staff members will be responsible for ensuring children make it to swim lessons and then back to the paddling program.
- 2) Registering for swim lessons should be part of the Goal Line registration system. This year the head lifeguard registered all the children into the lessons but with such a high number of registrants it was difficult to manage. I propose adding the swim level the child is registering for so there is a starting place and then once registered the instructor can move the child to another lesson if appropriate. If a parent is unsure of which level their child should be registered for we can state on Goal Line the date and time of swim level assessments.
- 3) The summer of 2018 we started with swim level assessments on the first day of swim/paddling programming. This should happen the weekend or a few days prior to the start of the season. There was too many children present the first week to accurately do swim assessments.
- 4) End of summer interviews with the lifeguards would be an asset to ascertain the quality of our programming from the staff point of view. The feedback would be a valuable tool for learning about what worked and what didn't while the issues are fresh but also an opportunity to assess staffing interest for the next summer.

### **Masters Program**

The Maskwa Masters program continues to be well attended by an enthusiastic, determined group of individuals who don't forget to have fun while learning new skills and staying fit.

The 2017/2018 winter program led by Master member Dan Dugie averaged over a dozen participants from November to April engaged in circuits and individual

exercises that increased in intensity over the duration. The mix of paddlers and non paddlers added to the variety and made the Thursday after workout socials all the more interesting.

New Coach Jeff Meagher was very enthusiastic throughout the summer and led a program that was enjoyed by new and returning paddlers alike. The workouts were challenging and the instruction most helpful as all worked to reach their goals while enjoying the beautiful waters of Kearney Lake. In all 3 local regattas Maskwa was one of the top performing clubs and was consistently the largest club in terms of participants. As noted in the Paddling report Maskwa had the highest Atlantic Division finish at CanMas and, thanks in part to medaling in both war canoes entered, all participating Masters came home with at least one National medal for their efforts.

Assistant Head Coach Jake Jeanott took the reins after the summer season for our final regatta and now leads the group into their winter program. He is leading a challenging and very well accepted program that will no doubt benefit all who participate.

## Summer Program

Our 2018 summer program was one of our mostly highly attended years yet. We had a total of 335 athletes registered for the paddling program this summer:

U11 = 165 athletes (80 girls + 85 boys)

U13 = 123 athletes (49 girls + 74 boys)

U15 = 44 athletes (21 girls + 23 boys)

U17 = 3 athletes

Overall, program feedback was very positive and we had a solid turnout at most regattas. Given the strong interest in our summer program, it is clear that we need to make some investments in both equipment and summer staffing to prepare for next year to ensure we offer quality programming and adequate supervision. A summer planning committee has already been started to address these areas.

Lack of singlets and cost of the singlets that were available for purchase was a major concern for parents this year. We are taking actions to look at alternate suppliers to see if cost can be reduced and will also order the singlets no later than April 1<sup>st</sup> this year to ensure that they arrive before the start of the summer racing season.

The structure and location of U11 regattas was not ideal for our members as parents typically work during the day. This is something we will discuss with ADCKC to see if the U11 regattas can be held on weekends and at Lake Banook similar to the U13 and U15 regattas next summer.

In addition to the summer paddling program, we had 254 children registered in Adventure Day Camp which meant that program was full or nearly full every week of the summer. We had a strong showing of volunteers to help with the day camp this summer and that was instrumental in improving the experience for those attending. The weekly themes were very popular and next year we will be defining the theme weeks in advance so people can sign up for specific theme weeks they want.

There were three major areas of concern that affected both our day camp and summer paddling program:

1. Canteen – The current canteen contract with Chadwick is no longer working for Maskwa customers. Many concerns were expressed with the high prices, lack of healthy options, lack of food in general, and inability to properly track use of pre-paid tabs.
2. Bullying – Current supervision and disciplinary measures need to be improved to curb the bullying and pranks that occurred this summer to ensure that Maskwa is a safe and positive experience for everyone.
3. Theft of personal belongings – Despite reminders to not bring personal items of value to Maskwa, some large cost personal items went missing this summer. In addition, we had many cases of stolen cash and lunches.

The summer planning committee is working on changes that will address each of the concern items above.

The newly paved parking lot and water bottle refill station were perhaps the most exciting addition to Maskwa for our returning families this summer. We received many thank you notes for those enhancements to the facilities.

## Facilities & Maintenance

Over the last 12 months we have created a formal Facilities and Maintenance Committee. Long time member Dan Dugie accepted responsibilities to take on the annual maintenance activities required at the club and together we have worked to create a summary of regular annual maintenance along with a long term summary of requirements/upgrades. Volunteer assistance continues to be a struggle and as such Maskwa agreed to compensate Dan for his time and efforts conducting the various maintenance activities required. Dan did an excellent job to have everything ready for the commencement of the Summer program and now that the fall has arrived we must finish winterizing the Club over the month of November before the snow arrives. Highlights of some of the Facility upgrades completed this year include:

Paving of the parking lot;  
Purchase of the Maskwa truck;  
New Docks;

Update of the Security System, door locks and security protocol;  
Replacement of the Race Course;  
Installation of storage units in old Club House; and  
Installation of the Filtered Bottle Filter.

Many maintenance/upgrade items will need to be reviewed/prioritized for 2019 and these will be discussed and approved by the Board over the winter months.

## Safety & Security

Maskwa experienced a lot of unwelcome summer visitors in the evenings and weekends. Some of our private property signage had become faded or gone missing so there was a growing public misperception that Maskwa was a public facility. To address this for next summer, new No Trespassing signs have been installed and we are working with local law enforcement to establish regular patrols. To that end, they have strongly suggested that Maskwa provide membership cards for next year to help them enforce who should and should not be on premise after summer programming hours. This is something that will be considered as part of the summer planning committee activities.

## Human Resources

As a result of a random selection foreign worker program audit by Service Canada, it became clear that Maskwa's HR practices were lacking in key areas that need to be improved to ensure legislative compliance and reduce liabilities. To that end, we have made the following improvements so far and will be continuing to formalize internal processes:

1. Introduced leave tracking measures and contract language that encourages our staff to take the vacation they are entitled to.
2. Introduced time tracking and approval system for hourly based employees.
3. Introduced core hours for salary based employees.
4. Introduced expense tracking and approval system.
5. Lifejackets were provided to all coaches.

Additional measures will be implemented as part of the summer planning committee activities to ensure that all summer staff have a clear understanding of what is expected of their role, documented policies and procedures to follow, and safety training.

## Funding Grants & Major Projects

In November of 2017 ACOA contacted us to say they had grant money available for Maskwa and noted that paving our parking area would be a great use of those dollars. We immediately organized a team and after a great deal of effort the result was we were able to get some of our parking area and roadways paved .It has made a huge difference and we are very grateful to ACOA and to our MP Geoff Regan for

his help in this regard. In addition ACOA also funded our new race course and docks to the tune of \$13,000 which were funds left over from the Canada 150 program. All these grants from ACOA were .50 cent dollars. Usually govt grants are .33 cent dollars so we were very fortunate. We also received funding of \$12,000 for our new war canoe from area Councillors Tim Outhit, Russell Walker, Matt Whitman and Richard Zurawski. They each contributed \$3,000 each. Maskwa thanks them and greatly appreciates their support for our athletes.

## Communications & Social Events

A major focus of the board this year was improving communications, transparency, and building a strong sense of community. To that end, we had two major initiatives this year that we will continue to build on:

1. **Newsletter:** A newsletter was started to keep families updated on what is happening at the Club and to ensure they have easy access to important information at key points in the year. The newsletter is issued monthly during peak months of May through September and then bi-monthly from October through April.
2. **Social Committee:** A social committee was established to plan at least one event a quarter for our members. Events held this year included an afternoon at Hatfield Farms, summer dances for our U11 and U13/15 athletes, war canoe launch ceremony, Annual Corn Boil & Awards night, Nationals potluck, Nationals pizza party in the tent, and the Annual Bonfire to end off the summer season.

The positive feedback on both the newsletter and the social events held this year was overwhelming. These were areas where Maskwa was widely seen as lacking in recent years and returning members were particularly impressed and thankful for the focus on communication and fun this year. There is still much more we can do to improve in these areas with community give back and more active social media engagement.

## Financial Summary

### Highlights of 2017/2018

- Cash position as of October 31, 2018 - \$214,452.75
- \$106,000 in grants and donations. 2.5 times greater than previous year.
- U11 Summer Program had an increased revenue of \$39,000 (increase of 41%)
- Revenue from Masters Program doubled
- Boat storage revenue doubled
- Truck lease bought out in the spring.

### **Cautions for Upcoming Year**

- Crossfit has decided to terminate their lease February 28, 2019. Maskwa will need to find new ways to make up for this revenue loss of over \$22,000 per year.
- ADCKC Fees - \$17.00 per athlete that Maskwa has not been collecting from athletes for insurance and safety boat fees. This appears to have been an oversight for years, but will be added into fees for future years.
- GoalLine access needs to be restricted to ensure that no one is registered for a program who has not paid. Families were making arrangements to “pay later” or in installments through the Summer Office Manager. This was not supposed to be happening, even though it was pointed out several times. For Summer 2019, our policies will be written out and GoalLine users will not have the ability to register participants for programs without full payment.
- Family discounts need to be audited as this is an option that families select on their own and there is no way to verify it through GoalLine at the time of registration.

### **Accounting**

As the club has grown significantly and the administrative needs have evolved, we decided to transition all of our financial services to the accounting firm Christopher Mossop Inc. The daily bookkeeping will be completed by the office manager under the guidance and supervisor of the treasurer and the accounting firm.

A laptop was purchased for Maskwa financial use only and is restricted to 4 users. We have upgraded our accounting software and our payroll system. The Credit Union Atlantic accounts have been closed out and our banking has transitioned over to RBC. This change allows us to have credit cards for the head coach and treasurer and online banking services.

An expense tracking form has been implemented and all individuals who have incurred expenses on behalf of Maskwa must complete one of these forms for approval and payment. The office manager is currently working on a filing system (both electronic and paper based) that appears to have fallen by the wayside over the years. All paper based files will be kept in one central place and accessible to all who need access to them, and electronic files are on google drive and permissions are granted accordingly.

### **Registration**

Spring Registration was set up incorrectly in GoalLine for the first few weeks. ADCKC, CKC, and Capital Fund fees were not mandatory fields and families were opting out of paying these fees. This was a real problem because we then had to go

back and collect these fees from families. The GoalLine setup was fixed and registration went smoothly for the rest of the registration period.

## **Fees**

There were no fee increases in programs this year, except for the fall/winter Masters Program. This group voted that they would like to have a full time coach in the off season and agreed to a fee increase to cover the costs. Jake Jeannot has taken on this group.

Fall registration - all inclusive fees this year. We will not be collecting additional fees in the spring for ADCKC, CKC, Capital Fund, Boat Storage and Volunteer Fee.

Collection of fees continues to be a struggle, but we have seen some improvements and have implemented a new process. All fees are due by the 15th of the month, and if the payment has not been received, the office manager will be following up within a week requiring that the fees be paid. Since we now have someone in in year round, paid position, it will be easier for this to happen. We are also exploring charging late fees.

## **Approval of 2016/17 Annual Report**

At the 2018 AGM Meeting (November 19th, 2018), a motion was brought forth to approve the 2017/2017 Annual Report.

*Motioned By: Hannah Forsyth, Seconded By: John Moore. All in favor.*

Attendees of the 2018 AGM included:

Debbie Spencer-Bond (Commodore)  
Beverly Billard (Treasurer)  
Hannah Forsyth (Paddling Chair)  
John Moore (Community & Grants Chair)  
Dan Dugie (Masters Representative)  
Jake Jeannot (Coach)  
Chris Mossop (Accountant)

Rita Clarke (Vice Commodore)  
Micheline Cote (Vice Treasurer)  
Alexa Irvin (Athletes Representative)  
Karen Scott (Swim & Safety Chair)  
Jon Pike (Coach)  
Christian Brousseau (Office Administrator)