



Annual Report

**Fiscal Year
2018 / 2019**

Executive Summary

In the 2018/2019 term, the Maskwa Board was presided over by the following directors:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Debbie Spencer-Bond	Commodore
Rita Clarke	Vice Commodore
Mark Peachey	Past Commodore
Beverly Billard	Treasurer
Micheline Cote	Vice Treasurer
Geoff Morse	Travel and Logistics Chair
Hannah Forsyth	Paddling Chair
Alexa Irvin	Athletes Representative
Dan Dugie	Masters Representative
John Moore	Community Relations & Grants Chair
Karen Scott	Swim & Safety Chair
Lee Anne Webber	Social Chair

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

Overall Operations *(Debbie Spencer-Bond, Commodore)*

Maskwa had another strong year in terms of both athlete performance and registration numbers. We were also once again fortunate to receive grant funding to assist with our grounds improvement projects, summer staffing, and purchasing of new equipment. Feedback from parents and athletes was overall very positive on the quality of our paddling programs, facilities, communications, and professionalism. Many returning families for our summer program have noted that they felt Maskwa operations were much improved from last year and that the changes we made increased their confidence that their children were being cared for in a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment that encouraged a love for the sport. We have once again gathered staff and parental feedback on our programming and are using those insights to make the summer program even better this year.

With the Crossfit lease now terminated and the purchase of new equipment, we have significantly improved the indoor gym space to facilitate athlete training during the off-season. We also purchased new boats this year to support our on-the-water training needs, but given

our high registration numbers, we still face supply and demand challenges there and are looking at what can be done differently in our summer program next year to lessen the impact. A key addition to our Maskwa athlete supplies this year was the purchase of reflective running vests to ensure the athletes are safe and visible during their runs after the sun goes down. The athletes have all been willing to wear the vests and appreciative that Maskwa purchased these for their use.

A key focus of operational activities this year was on securing our land lease renewal with the province. Given that we do not need all of the land that we currently lease to run our paddling program and that we do not want the liability of maintaining that footprint, we will be significantly reducing the size of the land we are leasing and have engaged the services of a surveyor to define the new proposed lease area based on our programming needs. The lease renewal has been a lengthy process, but we are optimistic this will be completed before spring 2020.

Both our summer paddling program and day camp program reached higher than expected registration numbers with particularly high demand experienced for our U12 Boys program. Maskwa had a solid number of athletes participating in all summer regattas and hosted the U11 regatta in July. As part of the summer 2020 program planning, we will be re-assessing the registration cap for each group and how best to execute the program to minimize the challenges of large registration numbers. We have confirmed that our summer program manager will be returning for 2020 and having that continuity will be invaluable in ensuring smooth operation of the summer program. The quality of the experience in the summer paddling program was reflected in our new Academy program registrations for the 2019/2020 season. The summer coaches did an outstanding job of providing a fun and safe environment while developing each athlete's paddling abilities and making suitable athletes aware of the Academy program. The day camp staff were also active recruiters in identifying those children that may be a good fit for the summer paddling program and providing them with information on the summer program. With the demographic of the new subdivision developments in proximity to Maskwa, it is expected that program demand will remain high for the next 5-10 years at minimum.

Maskwa took over operation of the summer canteen in 2019 rather than partnering with a third party vendor and that was a successful venture with much greater than expected profits for Maskwa. Given the success, we will continue to operate the canteen on our own this coming summer and are using the lessons learned from the 2019 canteen operation to improve how we approach this for 2020 and provide even better value to our members.

In 2019, we introduced two new program options for our adult members. First was a summer dragon boat program with one practice an evening for recreational interest only. This new offering was well received and practices regularly attended. Given the interest, this program is something that Maskwa may want to consider growing and having a competitive component. Second new program was a Masters Punch Pass for the off-season only to provide members who cannot make the time commitment during the off-season to attend up to 10 practice sessions to remain connected to their group and keep up their fitness level. This program offering was greatly appreciated by long term members who have previously had no low commitment option for off-season training.

A big change at Maskwa this summer was the adoption of a new singlet design. When our previous supplier, Adidas, could no longer supply the base singlet, we had to come up with a new design that excluded the trademark Adidas 3 stripes. A challenge was put out to the senior athletes to come up with some new design options that were then voted upon by the Academy, Masters, and High Performance groups. The design selected has been well received and parents appreciate the lower cost of this design compared to the Adidas style. In addition to new singlets, we did some spirit wear orders this year for Maskwa socks, hoodies, and tracksuits. There were some sizing issues with some of the orders and our supplier was great in dealing with those at no cost to Maskwa to ensure our members were pleased with their purchases.

Financial Summary *(Beverly Billard, Treasurer)*

Highlights of 2018/2019

- Cash position as of October 31, 2019 - \$393,198
- \$80,248 in grants and donations.
- Increased revenue from day camp by \$40,580. Added 10 more spots weekly and added an additional camp week at the end of the summer.
- Canteen revenue - increased by \$7,295 (2019 - \$10,718 versus 2018 - \$2,793)

Cautions for Upcoming Year

- Ensure application for HRM tax exemption is completed and submitted by Mar 31
- Summer Student grants come out in December/January
- Avoid cash – opt for payments via Goal Line or Etransfers
- Pay cycle - holding back pay for summer staff (see further details under salaries)
- Additional hours of work must be **pre-approved**. Several staff made assumptions that Maskwa would accept additional hours worked at the employee's own discretion.

Accounting

Our financial services have been transferred to the accounting firm of TruePath Financial Consulting Inc. from Christopher Mossop Inc. The daily bookkeeping is now completed by the Office Manager under the guidance and supervision of the treasurer and the accounting firm. Maskwa is using SAGE for an accounting software package, and this is cloud based allowing the accountant to see our files. A lot of work has gone into refining categories for expenses and revenues, so we are better able to report on specific areas with confidence. Departments have been developed to easily break down costs associated with paddling, camps, swimming, etc. Historical SAGE files have been achieved and a fresh accounting system commenced on November 1, 2019. This will allow for a much cleaner accounting system with rules around clients, revenues and expenses.

The expense tracking form has been in place for over a year and all individuals who have incurred expenses on behalf of Maskwa must complete one of these forms for approval and payment. The Office Manager has developed a filing system (both electronic and paper based) that has Maskwa back on track for proper record keeping and documentation. All paper-based files are kept in one central place and accessible to Maskwa Executive only. Electronic files are on google drive and permissions are granted accordingly.

Registration

Spring registration went extremely smoothly this year. All costs were mandatory, and this alleviated chasing and tracking folks who did not select all of the appropriate fees. All camps were full or nearly full, and discounts were not given on typically slower weeks. Promotion of programs was done through social media, reaching out to local schools and buying a spot in www.familyfuncanada.com/halifax/category/summer-camps/.

Fees

- High Performance fees were all-inclusive this year and made things much simpler by not having to collect fees twice for these groups. In September, two months of fees (non refundable) are due up front for High Performance Paddling programs.
- Family discounts had to be requested by members and this worked out extremely well and did not require audits as it did in previous years.
- Boat storage fees now go from September 1 to August 31, to align with the High Performance program dates. These fees are now part of the membership for this group, but still need to be paid separately for members in other groups (masters, alumni, etc)

- Fees had not been raised in 4 years, resulting in an increase of 15% this fiscal year. On a go forward, fees will increase annually by a small percentage, to avoid future large increases.
- Collection of fees has improved immensely, with all families being up to date by the end of each month. All fees are due by the 15th of the month, and if the payment has not been received, the office manager follows up within a week requiring that the fees be paid.

Salaries

For summer staff this year, we had them only submitting hours missed and pre-approved additional hours to reduce the amount of paperwork. This worked very well and will be the process for future summers. The one caution is that it must be made clear to staff that payment for additional hours MUST BE preapproved and is not at the employee's discretion.

Summer staff did not have 2 weeks of pay held back and this created challenges for submitting payroll. The turnaround time was too tight and resulted in staff being overpaid or underpaid if paperwork wasn't submitted by end of day Friday. Also, if staff had regattas on the weekend, they missed the payroll cut off and these hours were not paid until a future cheque. Lesson learned, holdback pay for summer staff so they Maskwa has 1 week to process the pay instead of only a few hours.

Budget

The Social Committee was given an annual budget of \$5000 to spend at their discretion. The money is to be used on social events to benefit all members.

Facilities & Maintenance *(Dan Dugie)*

Over the past year, the maintenance activities required to facilitate an active club providing numerous programs to large numbers of participants, continues to require a year round effort. The needs of Maskwa have been met by following a general cycle of spring and summer preps, summer program support, fall and winter preps, and ongoing maintenance and upgrades throughout the year. Priorities of tasks continue to be safety, security, and program support followed by present and future infrastructure needs.

Using a combination of compensated and volunteer efforts, the annual tasks of install and removal of docks, repair and maintenance of club, safety boats/motors, trailers and truck, and install and removal of the race course, were completed on schedule. Highlights of some of the facility upgrades completed this year include:

- Removal of deteriorated playground equipment
- Repair and update of sand court deck
- Replacement of swim dock shore anchors and deck structure
- Completion of old Club House Shore Erosion Protection project
- Removal of center gym walls

New maintenance/upgrade items will be reviewed/prioritized for 2020 and these will be discussed and approved by the Board over the winter months.

Safety *(Karen Scott, Safety Chair)*

New to the board this year was the addition of a Safety Chair. This position may have been filled before but had been vacant for a couple years. The Safety Chair organized a Safety Committee that had its first meeting July 3, 2019 and met again mid August. During the meetings a mandate was set and can be found on the Maskwa shared drive. A Checklist was created as part of a “spot check” that was recommended by the Safety Chair in May 2019. The spot check was recommended to be completed by Board Members during the summer months, however, this task was transferred to the Safety Committee mid summer.

During the summer months there were no concerning safety issues raised. Small minor concerns were addressed quickly.

Swim Program *(Karen Scott, Swim Chair)*

Overall the swimming program had a successful summer with about 200 children enrolled in various swim levels, not including the camp participants. This was very similar to the summer of 2018. Swim participants were registered in a Maskwa spreadsheet. Even though this wasn't a perfect way to register the kids, it was certainly better than by email which was done the previous year. We were able to get payment for all registered but there was still some confusion as to what session the kids had registered for and if they had gotten their report card but this only happened to 3 or 4.

Staff: We had 11 lifeguards for the summer of 2019. Six were full time, one was part-time and we had 3 subs. We had found the previous year that a sub or casual lifeguard was useful, however, it seemed that even though it helped with making sure we had coverage, the lifeguards did overly use the sub availability and took too much vacation time which impacted our granting money. We may still try to find subs for the summer of 2020, however, vacations will not be granted unless in extenuating circumstances and will be reviewed through the HR Committee.

Eden Godon-Ferguson was our head lifeguard. Eden managed the lifeguard schedule, called in any subs as needed, organized all the swim lessons and made sure the kids were placed in the correct levels with the help of her colleagues. She was a great liaison between myself and the lifeguards and worked well with the other coaches as did all the other lifeguards. She is a very dedicated and organized individual that worked very well under the pressure of a very busy area at Maskwa. Eden also was the parent contact. Parents often would email either Christian or the swim email and Eden would be cced or just respond. I would step in as required.

We did have staffing conflict at the later end of the summer. One of the lifeguards made an inappropriate comment to a child and when called upon it was also inappropriate to staff. That lifeguard was removed immediately as a lifeguard. It was very much a surprise that this lifeguard had responded in the manner that he did as he had worked at Maskwa for a couple years but in light of the seriousness of the situation he will not be invited back. Interviews were conducted for hiring all the lifeguards. Going forward we will hire back those lifeguards who worked well at Maskwa and we will interview only new candidates if necessary. We had an exit interview with Eden, the head lifeguard. This was a great way to identify issues that occurred during the summer and ways to make improvements.

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.

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:

We took some steps to try and improve the ongoing problem of children missing swim lessons because they either don't show up or are late to lessons. We introduced letting coaches know which children had swim lessons and when and it was their responsibility to get the children to

lessons and the lifeguard's responsibility to get the children back to the coach. Even though this improved the situation, it was not an ideal solution. We still found a few children wandering around the premises unsupervised or find that children were missing lessons. With the help of the Summer Manager, the children would be directed to their swim class or to their designated group. This is an area that still needs attention. We will continue to explore further options in this area in the summer Planning Committee.

Paddling Report *(Hannah Forsyth, Paddle Chair)*

How do you condense the 2019 paddling programs at Maskwa into a few paragraphs? As always, our High Performance athletes started the year by heading south and paddling hundreds of kilometers at the Maskwa training camp in Indian Harbour Beach, Florida. For some, the winter preparations led right into the first set of national team trials in Montreal. There, many of Maskwa's top athletes landed on the podium and were named to various Canadian teams for international competitions.

Back home, new Maskwa singlets were delivered and our Academy athletes and Masters said goodbye to Coach Jake Jeannot, who had been offered a position with ADCKC. With Morgan MacIntosh leading the year-round Academy program into the summer, these younger paddlers took to the newly open water and our High Performance athletes raced the second set of national team trials in Dartmouth, with three qualifying for the Pan Am games in Peru. As well, thanks to the efforts of Sam Morse and volunteers, this summer Maskwa once again offered the PaddleAll program to introduce athletes with intellectual disabilities to the sport of CanoeKayak.

Maskwa's eight week Summer Paddling Program had a large coaching staff, and in addition to teaching members how to paddle and race, the coaches also ran the Gold Getters program (a skills-based program to help athletes learn the sport and take home some well-earned awards).

As always, Maskwa shows up big at regattas, and there were great turnouts this year. Most notably, the U12/U14 Atlantic Championships at Lake Banook at the end of August, where Maskwa won the Overall Burgee, as well as the burgee for U12 Men's, U12 Women's, U14 Women's, U12 Overall, and U14 Overall! A big congratulations to all the athletes who worked so hard, and to all the coaches who did such a great job with the kids this summer. With the bar set high by our younger athletes, our senior athletes had excellent performances at the National Championships in Regina, Saskatchewan. Once again, Maskwa was the top club from the Atlantic Division with 444 burgee points, taking 4th place overall.

In other parts of the world, both Mark de Jonge and Alex Scott competed at the Senior World Championships. Mark raced in the K-4 500m and placed 14th (qualifying the boat for the Olympics), while Alex raced K-1 200m and placed 17th. At Pan Ams, Alexa Irvin and Anna Negulic were gold medalists in the K4 500m, and Jake Steele won silver in K-2 1000m. Andrew

Billard won the B final at Junior Worlds and picked up lots of hardware at the Olympic Hopes Regatta.

In the fall, four of our athletes were nominated to the Canadian Sprint National Team: Bret Himmelman, Anna Negulic, Mark de Jonge and Alex Scott. Maskwa athletes also traveled to Eskasoni, Cape Breton to race, socialize, and share their skills with beginner level paddlers and grow the paddling community here in Nova Scotia.

We also started the fall with new Academy Coach, Marie Rousseau Demers. Marie comes to us with paddling experience from across the country and she is a great addition to the Maskwa family. This year, we have 44 Academy athletes being led by Coach Marie.

A big thank you to Coach Jon, Coach Marie and all our summer coaches. Without your efforts, there would be no Maskwa, and we know our athletes have bright futures with your leadership. Maskwa continues to grow and build with huge successes and takeaways along the way. With this momentum we head into 2020, which is undoubtedly going to be a very BIG year.

Masters Report *(Dan Dugie, Masters Representative)*

The Maskwa Masters program continues to inspire a combination of seasoned paddlers and those new to the sport who continue to challenge one another but remember to have fun while learning new skills and staying fit. In addition to the program details below, regular Thursday night socials and Saturday after practice Tim's runs provide lively interactions. The Masters 6th Annual Canada Day Breakfast raised over \$1400 this year and supports the purchase of items that benefit the Club members as a whole.

The 2018/2019 winter program led by Assistant Head Coach Jake Jeanott averaged over a dozen participants who made great gains from the program. Utilizing a growing intensity that built on individual strengths while engaging the group in friendly competition and more burpees than any thought they ever could (or would want to) complete we were well prepared for the upcoming paddling season.

With Jake moving to a Division job, the spring coaching was provided by Nicky Jessop followed by Phil Laliberté for the summer and Alexandra Proudfoot for the September regatta. Together the Masters were provided with a challenging program that built on their individual/team goals as well as setting us up for strong competition finishes. In all 3 regattas Maskwa continued to be at the upper end in terms of participation and overall results. Nationally, thanks to Barry MacPhail, Maskwa was the lone Atlantic Division Club represented at CanMas in Regina.

New assistant Head Coach Marie Rousseau arrived in mid Sept and took over as the Masters Coach. She provided an excellent fall on-water program that benefitted many as she helped

each paddler with the technical changes that make us better paddlers. This combined with challenging workouts was a great benefit to all who were in attendance. The transition to the dryland program in November continued the personal fitness challenges and has been well received by all participants.

Athletes Report *(Alexa Irvin, Athletes Representative)*

It was a pleasure to serve as the Athlete Representative for the 2019 season. Athletes at Maskwa saw lots of success on and off the water, at all levels from U10 to senior. Even though we are a very large paddling club, it is my feeling that athletes at Maskwa feel like they are part of a family, which is important for everyone from the youngest first-year paddlers all the way to the athletes competing at senior international competitions. Knowing you have the support of a great group of teammates back home can make a huge difference when away competing, and makes coming back to Kearney Lake always something to look forward to.

As the Athlete's Representative, my role is to provide an athlete's perspective as part of the board decision-making process, as well as to bring forward any issues or suggestions from athletes to the board. If necessary, I can also serve as the point of communication between individual athletes and the board regarding disciplinary or other issues.

I think that it is very important for Maskwa to have an athlete voice on the Board of Directors, and I believe that Maskwa does a good job at listening to the athletes that call Maskwa home. Moving forward, I would suggest that the Athlete Representative's role include collecting more formal feedback from athletes in order to better assess the athlete experience at Maskwa. This could be done through an online survey, or email. I think this type of data could help Maskwa identify priorities, and provide an even better experience for athletes at the club.

Community Relations & Grants *(John Moore, Community Relations & Grants)*

The year 2019 was a productive one in terms of receiving help from our government at all levels. At the provincial level, our MLS Rafah Di Costanza was very involved on a number of fronts. In January she organized a meeting with Mayor Mike Savage to discuss the Maskwa lease and the possibility of HRM getting involved. It was an informative meeting with HRM becoming more aware of the issues facing Maskwa regarding its lease. If anything, HRM became aware of the importance of their involvement in the regional park.

In the spring Dan Dugie, Jon Pike and myself met with a regional official from the Province to discuss possible funding opportunities. One of the areas discussed was potential funding for the erosion problem by the old club house. She responded back to us and said we should be eligible for some funding on that project. I believe an application has been made in that regard and hopefully we will be successful in receiving some funds.

In April, we had a call from Geoff Regan's office wondering if Maskwa could host an event where a major announcement would be made concerning the Blue Mountain regional park. The event took place on April 24th and MPs including Darren Fisher, Geoff Regan, Andy Fillmore and Mayor Mike Savage were in attendance. An amount of almost \$900,000 was announced by the Federal govt to HRM to purchase more land for the regional park. It was a great opportunity to show Maskwa off as well and everyone was impressed with the venue.

In July at the Canada Day Breakfast Councillor Richard Zurawski mentioned he had funds to help us buy boats. This was welcome news and as a result we received \$15,000 to purchase badly needed new boats. He also mentioned he could help us initiate a recycling program which I believe is in the works. He also said he could provide funding for a security video surveillance system in such time we are ready.

We also are in the process of applying for an employment grant and our MLA Rafah di Costanza gave us a glowing letter of support for that grant.

2020 looks like another promising year for our continued help from the government. I plan to meet with our various elected representatives to put forth our continued need for funding to allow us to continue to grow and get better. It's an ideal time given the upcoming world indigenous games to be held at Lake Banook this summer and of course the Olympics in Japan. Thank you.

Social Committee *(Lee Anne Webber, Social Chair)*

The following is a summary of events organized by the Social Committee for the 2019 paddling year. A budget of \$5000.00 was allocated toward the Social Committee and funds were disbursed for various groups and activities as decided by the Social Committee. Detailed expenses can be obtained through the Maskwa treasurer report.

The Social Committee met monthly prior to summer 2019. The goal was to outline activities that would further strengthen teambuilding and friendships out of the water. The committee

brainstormed and decided on activities for all group levels with a primary focus on the summer program. Meetings and or group emails were scheduled for all decision making and spending.

The first major event was the Open House on July 15th. It was decided to host the Open House on the Maskwa deck and luckily the weather worked in our favour. It was well attended and there was a lot of positive feedback. On July 6th, Maskwa hosted the first Ice Cream Social. It was not well attended so the consensus was to combine the Ice Cream Social and Open House for the same afternoon for the 2020 season. Mid-July, a Beach Day was hosted for all Maskwa families. It was well attended and gave parents and family members an opportunity to enjoy the beach and give paddling a try! Our summer session concluded with the traditional Corn Boil and Award Ceremony on August 20th . Once again, the weather worked in our favour! As in previous years, the Corn Boil was well attended and there was a lot of positive feedback. Our September bonfire was cancelled this year due to a cleanup and unfortunately was unable to be rescheduled but will return for the 2020 year.

Once summer concluded, the Social Committee met to come up with ideas for the fall/winter programming. A Freshii breakfast was organized for all Academy athletes, a holiday dinner at Athens Restaurant for High Performance athletes and the traditional holiday Gingerbread Decorating party for all athletes.
