



Annual Report

**Fiscal Year
2019 / 2020**

Executive Summary

In the 2019/2020 term, the Maskwa Board was presided over by the following Directors:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Rita Clarke	Commodore
Brian Smith	Vice Commodore <i>(as of Oct 2020)</i>
Debbie Spencer-Bond	Past Commodore
Beverly Billard	Treasurer
Shawn Connell	Vice Treasurer
Micheline Côté	Paddling Chair
Karen Scott	Swim Chair
Nik Thomas	Safety Chair
Lee Anne Webber	Social Chair
John Moore	Community Relations & Grants Chair
Martin Lundrigan	Facilities & Maintenance Chair
Mark Taylor	Code of Conduct Chair
Dan Dugie	Masters Representative
Jacob Steele	Athletes Representative

Non-voting Maskwa staff members, Head Coach Jon Pike *(until Sep 2020)*, Head Coach Christian Hall *(as of Oct 2020)*, Assistant Head Coach Marie Rousseau-Demers, and Office Administrator Christian Brousseau, also sat on the Board.

Overall Operations *(Rita Clarke, Commodore)*

2019/20 at Maskwa was a busy one. A new Assistant Head Coach - Marie Rousseau-Demers - started in October 2019 and coached over 40 athletes in the Academy program. Programming was ticking along as per usual with off-season training until March when a Pandemic caused all operations to cease including Florida training and a Provincial “lockdown” was enforced. The coaches did a great job during the “lockdown” period and kept athletes engaged through “Zoom call” workouts. This provided both a physical and mental break for the athletes, who for the first time, were not able to go to the Club. Olympic Trials in Atlanta (and ultimately the Olympics) were also cancelled which impacted a number of our older High Performance athletes. Prorated refunds were provided to all athletes to reimburse Florida costs (if applicable) and program costs.

Working together with ADCKC and SportNS and by having virtual weekly Commodore meetings, we were able to open the Club in early June and allow paddlers back on the water with significant restrictions including groups of 10(max) and 2m physical distancing. As a result, we were unable to host any events and parents were not allowed on the grounds as we had to limit the access to staff and athletes to the outside facilities and inside washrooms. Summer programming was heavily impacted and the Board supported a recommendation to cancel weekly day camps, the U10 program, swimming lessons and have two summer program sessions per day rather than one long day for all ages. We limited the numbers to 80- U14/U16 in the morning and 80- U12 athletes in the afternoon. We ran the entire summer program with two full time coaches, one administrative assistant, 3 lifeguards, and 15 summer coaches. The 18 summer staff were all paid through federal summer grants. Families who had already registered had the opportunity to withdraw without penalty. The U14/U16 program was full while the U12 program ran with approximately 65 athletes. The Masters program ran as per usual, but access to the private boat bay was limited to training times. In spite of all the changes and by all accounts, the summer was a success. Families and athletes were happy to have the opportunity to paddle and the summer staff were happy with the programming. At the end of July, we were able to start competitions on Lake Banook which included Masters regattas, modified Atlantic Championships and National Championships regattas. We are proud of the many Maskwa athletes who were named to the Provincial teams.

Jon Pike gave his resignation at the beginning of September and we immediately began a search for a new Head Coach. We had a large hiring panel including myself, the Past Commodore, the Disciplinary Chair, the Paddle Chair, and an outside resource. We interviewed several fantastic candidates and Christian Hall accepted our offer and joined Maskwa as Head Coach at the end of October. He immediately took on the High Performance group and began to engage our Assistant Head Coach Marie Rousseau-Demers to look at changes for the programs and the Club as a whole.

The Fall saw a change in the way we were able to provide our year round programs due to COVID related restrictions for group sizes. An invitation-only Academy group was created, but this left out a significant number of younger athletes who enjoy training year-round but are unable to commit full-time to the program. A Fall program run by 2 part time coaches was introduced and a Spring program is planned to extend the season for the athletes not invited to the Academy program. The coaches and members of the Board are working through various options for 2021 programming for Board approval.

In March, during the time of “lock-down”, which impacted many outdoor activities including parks and trails, the parking lot at Maskwa became quite popular with hikers. MLA Rafa DiCostanzo contacted us to block off the parking lot so that people couldn’t gather on Maskwa

property. We immediately placed a chain link gate across the entrance and started a full summer and fall of controversy with the trails groups and Saskatoon Drive neighbours. Through our negotiations with the Province for a new lease, we discovered that Maskwa and Maskwa Board Members are liable for any activities that take place on our property if they are not associated with Maskwa activities. We spoke with a liability lawyer who suggested that the best course of action was to keep the gate closed until our issues of liability can be addressed. A flurry of complaints and accusations were brought forward from the Kearney Lake Residents Association and members of various trails groups. As a result, Maskwa had to remove the entry gates after a series of reputational threats and an additional threat from a neighbour to cut off access to the property since the road leading to Maskwa runs over her property. Two permanent gates were installed at the entrance and exit to the paved parking lot to try and limit access and property vandalism. Additional conversations are taking place with the Province and HRM to determine an adequate solution for trails parking and turn around for Saskatoon Drive. In the meantime the Maskwa parking lot is once again being used as a cul de sac for Saskatoon Drive which has associated safety concerns and liability issues for our club and athletes. It is anticipated that the paved roadway and gravel lots will have increased damage resulting in increased maintenance costs based on the increase of large trucks and school buses turning around in the lot to service the residents on Saskatoon Drive.

An updated 20 year lease was signed with the Province of Nova Scotia with a reduced footprint to release the trails back to the province. This assists with some of Maskwa's liability concerns with regards to unmaintained trails and will allow for trail development and maintenance by groups who are willing and have the capability. The new lease provides some flexibility with the placement of additional gates and also allows for Maskwa to enter into a third party lease agreement for the gravel parking lot area.

Financial Summary *(Beverly Billard, Treasurer)*

Highlights of 2019/2020

- Cash position as of October 31, 2020 - \$319,355
- \$75,247 in grants and donations
- \$87,405 in COVID-19 grants, wage subsidies and loan forgiveness
- No revenue from day camp and canteen
- Reduced summer programming numbers
- All summer staffing positions were funded through summer student grants
- Very successful fall programming for younger paddlers. A great "cash cow".
- No more family discounts
- COVID club closure policy if club is closed for more than 14 days, members only pay \$50

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**. Historically staff made assumptions that Maskwa would accept additional hours worked at the employee's own discretion.
- Expenses must be pre-approved, not assumed that they will be reimbursed.
- CEBA loan needs to be repaid (\$30,000 of the \$40,000)
- Applied for a \$20,000 extension on the CEBA loan and 50% is forgivable.

Accounting

Our financial services are handled by the accounting firm of TruePath Financial Consulting Inc. The daily bookkeeping continues to be 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 now allows for a much cleaner accounting system with rules around clients, revenues and expenses. We have been using this for over a year now and it is working very well.

The expense tracking form has been in place for over 3 years. All individuals who have incurred expenses on behalf of Maskwa must complete one of these forms for approval and payment. The Office Manager has a filing system (both electronic and paper based) that has Maskwa having 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.

Fees

- High Performance and Academy 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 these paddling programs **BEFORE** the programs begin.
- Family discounts were discontinued. This was voted on by the Board in the fall of the year

- Boat storage fees now go from September 1 to August 31, to align with the High Performance and Academy program dates. These fees are now part of the membership for these groups, but still need to be paid separately for members in other groups (Masters, Alumni, etc.)
- Fees for High Performance Paddling 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.
- Master's program fees remained the same because they such a substantial increase the year before, as did the Summer Programs.
- 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.
- Due to COVID-19, there were no fees collected for April and May. Partial fee payment of \$50 only per athlete for the month of December. Maskwa implemented a new policy that if the club is closed for more than 14 days in a month, members only need to pay \$50 to participate in the program.

Salaries

Summer staff only submitted 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** pre approved and is not at the employee's discretion.

All summer staffing positions were funded through summer student grants this year. This was a big cost savings, especially since there was not a day camp program which is our largest revenue generator for the year.

Budget

The Social Committee was given an annual budget of \$5,000 to spend at their discretion. The money is to be used on social events to benefit all members. Any unused money does not get carried forward to the following year.

The approved equipment budget is \$30,000 which the coach is able to spend for new equipment. These large ticket items require approval before purchase.

The High Performance coaches have been allotted a discretionary budget of \$5,000 for program enhancements such as nutrition sessions, yoga, treats, etc.

Paddling Report *(Micheline Côté, Paddle Chair)*

March 2020

- Florida training camp shut down, athletes return to Nova Scotia.
- All programming suspended at the Club.
- Introduction of Zoom workouts for Academy, High Performance and Masters.
- Training programs altered to adhere to new restrictions.

April 2020

- Nova Scotia government allows water training.
- In conjunction with ADCKC, our Head and Assistant coaches work to have athletes train following all rules and regulations, including sanitization of docks and equipment, physical distancing practices and set times for each athlete to arrive at the Club. Entrance and exit points are established to minimize contact.
- Paddlers in Academy that do not have their own equipment are assigned a boat and paddle to use for the duration of spring paddling.
- Coaches not permitted to retrieve any paddler that tips.
- Athletes are encouraged to paddle close to shoreline for safety and covid restrictions.
- Private boat bay off limits to all. Only accessible during specific training times.

May / June 2020

- Summer programming is reevaluated to adhere to new rules.
- Day camp cancelled.
- Summer paddling divided into a morning/afternoon shift. U12, U14/U16
- U10 cancelled (due to high numbers and age)
- Groups of 10 athletes that stay with the same people and coaches for the duration of camp in order to keep the same "bubble".
- Greeting table in small parking lot with sanitizer and attendance list.
- Groups meet coaches in the parking lot.
- Heritage Hall closed to children only open to coaches and staff.
- Number of paddlers kept to minimum to be able to meet all rules and regulations.
- Government grants cover coaches and lifeguard salaries
- As part of their responsibilities and duties, coaches and lifeguards must clean and sanitize bathrooms, Heritage Hall, boat bay, while keeping the Maskwa grounds clean.

July-August 2020

- Regattas are reintroduced with new rules and regulations.
- No parents / guardians on the Maskwa side of Lake Banook.

September-October 2020

- Introduction of an 8-week on-water fall paddling program which proves to be very successful. Two groups of 20 paddlers are formed and coached by Nikki Scott and Sarah Page. The results of a survey have us looking into the possibility of a winter program that would have the athletes train 3 times per week. Monday, Wednesday and Friday evening 6:30-8:15pm and Saturday mornings 11:30-13:30 pm. Christian offers to write out a training schedule and coach this group, alongside Nikki twice a week. Registration for the program was very low because of athletes' commitment to other sports (hockey). Therefore the winter session for this group is cancelled and a start up date for spring 2021 is in the planning.
- Academy starts a new season by "invitation only", and athletes are chosen by Marie. Participation requires a 80% commitment. Morning practices which are scheduled 4 times per week are offered to the group, with the requirement for only older paddlers to attend. They are asked to try to make a minimum of 2.
- Marie helps with the transition of the departure of Jon Pike by offering his athletes the opportunity to train with her. As well as taking over the regular High Performance scheduled training time and days until the arrival of Christian Hall in mid-October.
- A warm fall allows our Masters group to paddle well into mid october. Transition to indoor winter training November 1st.
- Maskwa athletes that are training with our National Team, paddle on Lake Banook until their departure to Victoria, BC where they continue to paddle until the beginning of December.
- New covid regulations in November, bringing back Zoom workouts for all groups.
- Marie goes to Quebec to spend some needed time with family and continues to provide Zoom workouts to Academy athletes.

December 2020

- Covid restrictions lifted, all groups back at the gym training.
- Masters continue Zoom until the return of Marie.
- Maximum of 25 athletes.
- Swimming resumes at Dalplex for High Performance athletes twice a week
- Christian offers High Performance athletes the choice to train on those days from 17:00-18:30, for those not comfortable or able to commute downtown
- Christian trains Academy athletes while Marie is away
- Marie returns the 27th and must self isolate until the 11th of January.

Going forward, we are in the process of scheduling a time to discuss summer programming:

- Government grants
- Salaries, hours, positions (if needed) to be discussed.
- Number of paddlers/day camp kids.

- What the summer will look like with covid restrictions... or loosened restrictions
 - Budget for equipment; boats to be repaired, new boats to purchase, gym equipment (if needed). Sun shelter for lifeguards.
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Swim Program *(Karen Scott, Swim Chair)*

The summer of 2020 was a unique one in the face of COVID-19. Swim instructors/lifeguards were hired in mid March for the 2020 season but once COVID restrictions came into place it became difficult to determine if swim lessons would be possible while also maintaining COVID-19 protocols and rules. By mid May, the decision was made to only have lifeguards for the season of 2020 and swim lessons were cancelled. By mid June we had secured three lifeguards. Head guard was Alasdair Clarke, who managed guards Isabelle Flynn and Conall McCutcheon. All three lifeguards had completed the waterfront course in June of 2019. The course has a two year certification and although we like to offer this annually to our lifeguards, with COVID restrictions the course would be difficult to provide and was not needed given our lifeguards were already certified and experienced lifeguards.

June 23, 2020 was orientation for all staff including the lifeguards of which all three attended. The summer proved to be uneventful for the three guards. They worked very well with paddling staff and were the front line for first aid at the Club. Alasdair Clarke as the Head Guard was responsible for organizing lifeguard duties. All three guards were responsible for open and close routines for the beach. Water testing was performed every two weeks. All reports were sent to Maskwa Administration and the Swim Chair and are on file for reference. Bacteria levels remained within normal levels at the peak of summer.

The summer of 2020 was unique for Maskwa. However, despite the challenges of COVID -19 and the new rules placed upon the lifeguard staff, they handled the rules well; wearing masks where appropriate and social distancing as needed.

Safety *(Nik Thomas, Safety Chair)*

No major safety matters relating to injuries were reported or brought to my attention. Other safety matters to improve Club facilities (indoor and outdoor) and equipment have been discussed and some have been addressed while others are work in progress.

- 1) A working draft of a safety/site item checklist was developed and will be implemented for routine (daily/weekly/monthly) use.
- 2) A more formalized plan to align with the recent published CKC Safety policies will be implemented for the 2021-2022 season. This may include linking with Maskwa personnel (Board and staff) for reporting transparency and athlete safety. ADCKC does some of this reporting however for each Club in the division, although it will be best practice to have all pertinent documentation on hand at Maskwa.
- 3) Discussions to develop an anonymous reporting mechanism around athlete safety (anti-bullying, concerns etc) were initiated. This may include a front facing hyperlink on the Maskwa website for easy access and could be monitored by various members of the board, including the disciplinary and safety chair acting as a sub-committee for Athlete Safety.

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

The following is a summary of events organized by the Social Committee for the 2020 paddling year. A budget of \$5000.00 is allocated toward the Social Committee but due to covid rules and restrictions, much of that money was not spent. Detailed expenses can be obtained through the Maskwa treasurer report. This year, we were unable to host an Open House, Corn Boil, or many of the traditional events hosted by Maskwa. Money was allocated toward the Academy athletes to host a breakfast for the athletes. Monies spent can be obtained through the treasurer.

Unfortunately, rules and regulations did not permit the Social Committee to meet or plan activities to support the various paddling groups. Here's to 2021 and hoping that it brings more opportunities for social gathering!

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

This past year was very active, especially on the community relations front. First we had Covid 19 in the spring where our MLA asked us to put up a gate to keep the public out of Maskwa as they weren't abiding by the social distancing rules when hiking. From there, we decided it would be better to keep our gate up and this got the trails folks and local residents riled up. My PR abilities were tested to the limit as I found it was a no-win situation. Taking the gate down made it better, however some of the local residents were then miffed as now traffic would be increasing on Saskatoon Drive. Let's hope we can resolve this to the best satisfaction of all, but mostly for our members.

Former Councillor Walker, who was an ardent supporter of Maskwa, agreed to give Maskwa out of his discretionary funds the sum of \$7100 for gates and security cameras. It was recently discussed with new Councillor Kathryn Morse that in the event there are some funds left over, they will be used towards the purchase of electric engines for our safety boats. This is something Councillor Morse appears excited to help Maskwa with. In fact it may lead to a challenge for motorized boat owners on the lake to switch to electric engines. This could extend beyond the shores of Kearney Lake and include other paddling Clubs as well as individuals.

Facilities & Maintenance *(Dan Dugie and Martin Lundrigan)*

Normally the maintenance activities required to facilitate the delivery of numerous programs to a large number of participants are a cyclic and continuous effort utilizing both compensated and volunteer resources. 2020 has not been a normal year.

The year started with ongoing winter maintenance supporting a gym based program that was affected by increased sanitizing needs and then suddenly shut down in late March due to Covid-19 related directives. The usual preparation for on-water start when the ice is gone was replaced by a closed property waiting for permissions on if and when programs could be delivered. Task priorities continued to be safety, security and program support while keeping an eye on present and future infrastructure but with the added focus of enhanced fiscal restraint due to an unknown level of yearly revenues.

From Late May onward, incremental lessening of restrictions defined programming opportunities and the short notice material requirements needed to facilitate them. 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 but on a revised schedule. Facility upgrades were put on hold this year with required maintenance being the focus. This included:

- Implementation of testing and documentation as a Registered Drinking Water Provider IAW Dept of Environment guidelines
- Reconfiguration of the gym layout and a start to the repair and repaint of walls
- Storage crate ventilation completed and subsequent clean up progressed
- A diver was engaged who was able to recover one of the K2s sunk in the previous year
- Repairs and re-measuring of race course due to damage caused by other lake user's boats
- Boat inventory for definition of needed repairs for 2021 completed

- When closed in March, property access was restricted by a chain at the entrance and signage limiting access. Vandalism of the gate on numerous occasions throughout 2020 necessitated repairs and ultimately having permanent gates installed at the Clubhouse parking lot entrance and exit.
- An insurance review both with our broker and a lawyer was done in parallel with the access issues above to clarify liability of non members accessing our leased property for non Club uses.

While still subject to various restrictions that continue to affect revenue, ongoing and future maintenance and upgrades will be progressed in a fiscally responsible manner.

Code of Conduct Report *(Mark Taylor, Code of Conduct Representative)*

This year we had 7 minor code of conduct incidents and no repeating cases. We have a confidential file folder where our code of conduct incidents are documented. I've learned that the athletes & coaches at all levels of Maskwa are not aware of the Code of Conduct Board position. The Board is now doing bi-yearly emails introducing the Code of Conduct Board member as a confidential source for athletes and coaches to talk to. Plus, the new Maskwa website will have an email form for confidential reports to be submitted. We believe the changes from this year will continue to improve the Club as a respectful and safe place to work, play, and compete.

Lessons Learned:

- Maskwa as a Club & Board always needs to document our incidents
- Our Board needs to on-board new employees better, and help all staff integrate with changes

Marketing Year End Report:

- Maskwa is eligible for \$10,000/month in Google ads through the Google Grants program. We are 1 step away from final approval for this program which is encrypting the website (https not http). On top of this Maskwa's domain is expiring in Feb of 2021, so we are creating a new website for Maskwa, with a facelift and some SEO (Search Engine Optimization) components being added.
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Masters Report *(Dan Dugie, Masters Representative)*

The Maskwa Masters program continues to be well attended by a diverse group of wide ranging ages possessing experience levels from those new to the sport to seasoned paddlers. They are best described as welcoming people who enjoy the fun and camaraderie of the group while striving to achieve their own personal fitness goals.

Coached by Assistant Head Coach Marie Rousseau, the Masters have been challenged and instructed both on the water and in the gym to a level that has been very well received by all members. The winter program continued with the gains of fall paddling and provided an intensity to build on the preparation for the 2020 paddling season. One of the highlights of this period was the February cross country ski trip to New Brunswick by a large number of the group.

In March, after a period of increasing precautions, the provincial restrictions imposed due to Covid-19 threw the program for a loop when all Club access was ceased. However the Club reacted swiftly and after less than two weeks closure online Zoom workouts were implemented and well attended. These workouts combined with our traditional Thursday night and Saturday morning socials after practice, arranged online courtesy of Ian Wood, were an important source of connectivity and normalcy during this period of isolation.

With an easing of restrictions in late spring, incremental increases in access permitted a training focus which enabled paddling to resume with social distancing protocols. This focus was a great benefit for the individual development of each paddler and led to many technical gains in their on-water performance. Conditions also permitted the attendance at 2 regattas where the gains of the program were obvious in the overall results achieved. After a productive summer and fall paddling season the cycle restarted in the gym, with the return of Margot's Saturday morning Yoga, which was once again well received by all participants.

Athletes Report *(Jacob Steele, Athletes Representative)*

What a year 2020 was. The world has changed, and Maskwa has too. After 7 years as Head Coach, during which he led the Club to its first two national championship titles, we bid farewell to Jon Pike this fall as he joined the National team as the Head Men's canoe coach for Canoe Kayak Canada. In this role, Jon continues to coach Maskwa athletes Bret Himmelman and Andrew Billard, and we wish Jon all the best in the future.

We were very lucky to welcome Christian Hall as our new Head Coach. Hailing from a prominent Nova Scotian paddling family with 4 years' of experience as Head Coach at Pisiquid

Canoe Club and 5 years' of experience as Assistant Head Coach at Senobe Aquatic Club, Christian is a passionate and experienced coach who will be great for Maskwa.

After everything shut down mid-March, it was a long two months away from the Club until May 20th, the first day the Club reopened, but we continued to train both individually and in groups via Zoom. We were lucky to still be able to hold races for all age levels this summer. With another short shutdown in the fall, Maskwa once again resorted to Zoom workouts. Thankfully, the Club is now open again, and I certainly hope it stays that way in 2021 and beyond.

Looking forward, I believe that the time away from the Club and the protracted racing season in 2020 has made Maskwa athletes appreciate both the Club and the sense of community it provides even more. I also think it has only made us hungrier for success in the 2021 season. There is still much uncertainty ahead, but I know the Maskwa community will stick together, even if it has to be virtually. Go Maskwa Go!