



Association québécoise de voile adaptée



Volunteer Orientation Manual Pointe-Claire Chapter

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Welcome on Board!

Our Mission

Provide the opportunity to people with significant physical and/or sensory deficits to improve their quality of life and their integration into the community by learning to sail independently.

Our Goals

- Contribute to the short- medium - or long-term rehabilitation process of people with physical and/or sensory deficits.
- Develop self-esteem and self-confidence by being able to participate independently in a recreational activity.
- Prevent social isolation of certain people with disabilities by integrating them into the association's social activities.
- Increase public awareness of the realm of possibilities available to people with disabilities which allows them to participate in a sport often considered inaccessible

Our Programs

Recreation Program: for those wanting to spend some relaxing time on the water, perhaps as an extension of a rehabilitation program

Learn to Sail Program: for those seeking more in depth knowledge and skills, an adapted version of the Sail Canada's CANSail program can be followed.

Racing Program: for sailors who wish to hone their skills and satisfy their competitive spirit! There are three training sessions per week and sailors can also participate in out of town regattas and AQVA's Coupe du Québec regatta in Pointe-Claire.

Groups: We also receive groups of sailors, such as classes from special schools, day camps for children with disabilities and support groups for adults with disabilities.

AQVA's programs run seven days/week. Sailors must reserve an outing in advance. Each recreational or learn-to-sail (LTS) outing lasts approximately 1.5 hours and the sailor is accompanied by a sailing instructor (AQVA staff) or sailing companion (AQVA volunteer.) Racing outings take place on Monday and Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings and last about 4 hours. Sailors pay an annual membership fee of \$15 and then \$15 for each recreation and LTS outing and \$25 for a racing session.

When an individual sailor comes for the first time an AQVA volunteer occupational therapist performs an evaluation to determine the safest manner for the sailor to get on and off the dock and in and out of the boat as well as any needs for special positioning or use of the power assist system. Some sailors are able to easily climb in and out of the boats but many of them are transferred to and from their wheelchairs and the boat using a battery-operated lift system.

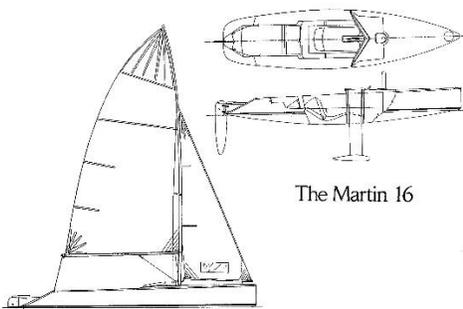
Our Sailors

Some of our sailors have been disabled their entire life, perhaps due to disease or a difficult birth. Some have become impaired more recently, following an accident or stroke. Still others battle degenerative conditions such as multiple sclerosis or a host of other debilitating diseases. For some, AQVA represents a return to a sport they love, but had to give up due to circumstances out of their control. Many thought they would never sail again, and were pleasantly surprised! The majority however, are rookies to the sailing world and simply thrilled to become acquainted with such an exciting and liberating sport, especially when it means one of the few times of the week when a wheelchair, walker or other mobility aid gets left behind and the waters of Lac St Louis are theirs to explore. (See also page 14: Disability awareness)



Our Boats

The Martin 16



The Martin 16 is a keelboat, though some would say disguised as a dinghy. It is nimble, fun in a breeze but with a 330lb keel it has the key safety feature - impossible to capsize! The cockpit layout is cleverly designed to cater to those with limited mobility: The helmsmen sits low in the boat, facing forward with a central “joystick” style tiller and both sheets led through a central easy-to-reach pulley. All other adjustments - boom vang, cunningham, outhaul, bilge - are also within arm’s reach.

Sailors who do not have full use or strength of their arms or hands can use a Power Assist system. An autohelm box can be easily fitted onto the boat. The autohelm has a small, almost effortless joystick - similar to a video game control - that can be used to steer the boat. In addition, a windlass (winch) can also be fitted on to the boat to control the sails with the joystick: left or right for steering, forward or back to ease or trim sails.



Amazingly, the boat can be even further adapted: the autohelm can be controlled by a straw system called the “sip n’ puff”. As the name indicates, instead of controlling the helm and sails with hands, the sailor uses their breath. By just inhaling or exhaling gently into the straws, the rudder will move left or right and the sails can be let out or drawn in. With this amazing design, high-level quadriplegics - those with *no* movement below the neck - can independently sail the boat.

The 2.4mR



The 2.4mR is a one person Scandinavian designed boat that was not designed for sailors with disabilities but just happens to be particularly well-suited due to the fact that the sailor stays seated in one place and all controls for steering, trimming, etc. are within hands reach. Sailors with and without disabilities compete against each other on a level playing field. The 2.4mR is used for the one-person event in the Paralympics.

Our team

AQVA's sailing instructors all have Sail Canada instructor certification. The coordinator makes the bookings for outings, collects money and provides assistance on the dock. The staff are overseen by a manager who insures that everything runs smoothly.

AQVA's board of directors is comprised mainly of disabled individuals who are also participants in the program.



How we're funded

Membership fees & sailing fees generate some revenue. Salaries comprise the major part of our budget for which we receive partial financial assistance from the federal Summer Jobs program as well as provincial and

municipal recreation support program. We must therefore fund raise in order to cover the balance of our costs such as yacht club fees, insurance, repairs, etc. Our biggest fundraising activities are our annual raffle, which has been a success thanks to the support of Air Canada who offer free plane tickets as prizes, and the Sperry Top Sider McAuslan Cup regatta which is organized for our benefit by members of the Royal Saint Lawrence Yacht Club.

AQVA is a registered charity and all personal donors receive a tax receipt.

Volunteering with AQVA

AQVA's activities are volunteer intensive. It just wouldn't happen without all of our volunteers who help us with every aspect of running a successful and safe sailing program.

Your level of commitment is up to you. Let us know what level of involvement you feel comfortable with. If you do commit to helping out on a particular day -- please arrive promptly, and call us a day ahead if you're unable to make it.

Safety and security: The safety and security of the AQVA members and volunteers is important to us. First Aid knowledge and Disability Awareness are welcome. Due to the special circumstances of our members, a security and reference check will be performed on new volunteers.

Liability and insurance: *AQVA carries a \$5,000,000 General Liability insurance. As in most leisure activities there is a degree of risk involved - physical exertion and being near the water. All participants are required to complete and sign a Release and Waiver of Liability.*

With your help we can all make the sport and recreation of sailing accessible to those that otherwise wouldn't be able to sail. You will make new friends, experience memorable moments and most of all, you will be greatly appreciated!

To book a volunteer assignment with AQVA, please call [\(514\) 694-8021](tel:5146948021). If you receive the recorded message, leave a message regarding the time you're available and your phone number. We will call you to confirm your assignment. Or you can send an email to aqva.reservation@gmail.com

If you have to cancel or reschedule your assignment, please give us at least 24 hours' notice.

The volunteer check in is at the AQVA office in the Sail Shed at the Pointe Claire Yacht Club at 1 ave. Cartier, Pointe-Claire.

Volunteer roles

There are a variety of volunteer roles that need to be filled. In all cases, the necessary training for you to perform these jobs will be provided. If you're unclear about what your duties are, PLEASE ASK for clarification.



Sailing Companions

Many of the participants have little or no sailing experience. Qualified sailing companions are required until the participants are certified to sail on their own.

Duties:

- Rig and de- rig the sail boats
- Assist in the transfer of sailors from the dock to the Martin 16.
- Accompany the sailor on the water to ensure a safe and enjoyable sail.

Pre-requisite skills:

- Sail Canada White Sail level III or equivalent experience.
- Ease and comfort in sailing on small boats.

Training:

- Disability awareness
- Rigging and de-rigging the Martin 16
- Rigging and de-rigging auto-helm
- Use of hoists and slings to safely transfers sailors in and out of Martin 16
- Safety protocols

When needed:

- Two hour sessions from midday to evening Monday to Sunday
- Co-ordinate availability with AQVA manager or instructor



Dock Assistants

The staff and experienced sailors require assistance to rig and de-rig and to transfer safely in and out of the boats.

Duties:

- Rig the Martin 16, do equipment check and ensure all components are working properly.
- Assist sailor to transfer in & out of boat.

- Assist sailor in tying off the bow and stern lines and departing dock area safely.
- Secure lines to dock when boat returns
- De-rigging and stowing the sails and other equipment.

Training:

- Disability awareness
- Rigging and de-rigging the Martin 16
- Rigging and de-rigging auto-helm
- Use of hoists and slings to safely transfers sailors in and out of Martin 16
- Safety protocols

When needed:

- Two hour sessions from midday to evening Monday to Sunday.
- Co-ordinate availability with AQVA manager or instructor.



LIFT TRANSFER



Boat and Equipment Maintenance Support

The boats and equipment need preventative maintenance to ensure their integrity and longevity. This will prolong the life of expensive and critical equipment, prevent sailing accidents and contribute to a safe and enjoyable sailing season.

Duties:

- Perform regular maintenance and small repairs to ensure proper functioning of equipment.
- Check that all fittings and system work properly.

Pre-requisite skills:

- Mechanical aptitude and ease with tools.

- Knowledge of small boat repair

Training:

- Disability awareness
- On the job training under the guidance of knowledgeable instructor or manager.

When needed:

- At beginning of season in May for the preparation of the boats that were stored during the winter.
- Prior to and just after the Coupe du Quebec regatta. (usually the last weekend in July)
- Prior to and just after out of town regattas.
- At the end of the season to prepare and winterize the boats.
- On an “as needed” basis.
- Co-ordinate availability with AQVA manager or instructor.



Social Events Support

AQVA hosts and is involved in numerous events including the season opening Happy Hour, annual BBQ, the Coupe du Québec Regatta, raffle draw, closing dinner and other community events.

Duties

- Provide assistance with organizing and hosting events.
- Helping participants during these events, serving food and drink and socializing.

Prerequisite Skills

- Your enthusiasm and easy going, fun loving attitude.

Training

- Pre-event briefing specific to duties.

When needed

- For specific events.
- Co-ordinate availability with AQVA manager



Administrative Assistance

AQVA requires administrative help throughout the year for its many organizational needs.

Duties

- Help maintain organizational records of members, equipment, sponsors and volunteers.
- Help prepare grant applications for aid from corporations, foundations and government agencies.
- Help prepare newsletters, publications and other communications.
- Help in translating text into both French and English.

Prerequisite Skills

- Experience in administration and computer skills in Word, Excel, and database management.
- Fluency in both English and French a plus.

When needed

- Year round for specific tasks.
- Co-ordinate availability with AQVA manager



Out of Town Regatta Assistance

AQVA participates in regattas with other disabled sailing programs in Toronto, Kingston, Nepean, Burlington VT, Lake George NY as well as the the Mobility Cup which is held in a different location in Canada each year. Participation in regattas is important to our sailors both on a social level and on a competitive level. Volunteers and towing vehicles (with a towing capacity of 1000 - 2000 lbs.) are needed.

Duties

- Assist in taking boats out of water, de-rigging and preparing boats for transportation by securing them to the trailers.
- Safety check of trailer - tire pressure, chains, lights and wheel bearings.
- Towing the boats to and from regatta sites.
- Assist in rigging and launching the boats.

Prerequisite Skills

- Knowledge of rigging and de-rigging boats, preparing them for highway transport and mechanical aptitude.
- Experience in towing loads and safe driving practices.

Training

- Rigging and de-rigging and preparing trailers for safe transport.
- Safety and equipment check.
- Launching and retrieving boats using a trailer and/or crane.

When needed

- For specific regattas during the summer season
- Co-ordinate availability with AQVA manager



Learn-to-Sail Program Assistance

AQVA offers the Sail Canada CANSail certified learn-to-sail program.

Duties

- To teach alone or provide assistance to staff in teaching the basics of sailing.

Prerequisite Skills

- Sail Canada White Sail level III or equivalent

- Great knowledge of sailing theory including points of sail, tacking, rigging, seamanship, knot tying, boat parts and equipment, safety protocols and Canadian Coast Guard regulations
- Calm disposition and ability to teach

Training

- Disability awareness

When needed

- 2 hours - one to two nights a week during the season.
- Co-ordinate availability with AQVA manager or instructor.



Learn-to-Race Program Assistance

AQVA offers a Learn-to-Race program that helps hone the sailing skills of our members by taking advantage of group drills and practice races led by experienced racers and coaches. From starts, to mark rounding, tactics and more, we help our sailors perfect their skills and get them ready for the racing season.

Duties

- Serve as companion sailors to inexperienced racers and to experienced racers requiring physical assistance to sail
- Assist with boat rigging and transfers

Skills

- Active racing experience.
- Great knowledge class racing rules and tactics.
- Calm disposition and ability to offer advice and coach without intervening (except for safety issues).

Training

- Disability awareness
- Rigging and de-rigging the Martin 16 and 2.4MR
- Rigging and de-rigging auto-helm and sip-and-puff assistive devices
- Use of hoists and slings to safely transfers sailors in and out of Martin 16
- Safety protocols

When needed

- Monday, Thursday nights 5 pm - 9 pm & Saturday 8 am - 12 pm
- Coupe du Québec regatta and out of town regattas.
- Co-ordinate availability with AQVA race coach or manager



Coupe du Québec Support

Coupe du Québec is AQVA's annual regatta. It is usually held the last weekend in July and attracts as many as 40 sailors from disabled sailing programs throughout central and eastern Canada as well as New England and New York. Sailors are divided into Silver and Gold fleets with one fleet racing in the morning and the other in the afternoon. A banquet is held on Saturday night.

Volunteers are needed for a number of jobs:

- Registration
- Sailing companion
- Dock assistance
- Boat launching, rigging & de-rigging
- Race committee & safety boats
- Spectator boats
- Serving lunch & dinner
- Finding door prizes
- Sometimes even dog sitting for guide dogs!



Fundraising

One of the easiest ways to help us with fundraising is by selling tickets for our annual raffle. Tickets can be obtained from the AQVA manager throughout the season. The drawing takes place sometime in September.

Any personal contacts with corporations and/or foundations can also help us in raising the necessary funds to achieve our goals.

Disability Awareness

Volunteers may feel uncomfortable when meeting people with disabilities for the first time. Understanding the nature of the disability, its impact and effects will give you the ability to overcome that discomfort and allow you to focus on the person and not on their limitations. Here is a description of the disabilities you are most likely to encounter among AQVA sailors. If you would like more information please ask the AQVA manager who can share further information with you.

People in wheelchairs are people first. They neither expect nor wish to have everything done for them and want to be involved in the decision making.

It is best to ask questions, to listen and understand what the sailor needs. The key is to focus on what can be done rather than what cannot. Allow the sailors to do as much as they can independently. Assist them to help themselves.

If communication is difficult due to the disability there will be a friend, relative, or caregiver present from whom you can obtain more information. If you are unsure or need assistance, please approach the AQVA Staff -- they're there to help you.

Helping is a very personal matter, so always aim to build trust. Try not to take over. Find out more about the strengths and limitations, and then help accordingly.

Treat personal care matters as a fact of life. Treat the person as you would like to be treated, with dignity in all situations at all times.

Special Considerations for Sailing

Problems associated with disability may arise in your dealings with the AQVA sailors. Some specific things to keep in mind to limit the impact of those issues are:

Paralysis, the lack of feeling and limitation of movement

- The sailor may not be able to tell you when they're hurting themselves. Make sure that foam pads or cushions available and being used.
- Practice extreme caution when making transfers into and out of the boat not to place their weight on sharp corners or objects.
- Do not bend their paralyzed extremities in unnatural positions.

Balance and/or coordination limitations

- In balance and coordination is an issue, ensure to support or "spot" the sailor during self-assisted transfers.

Lack of temperature control

- Temperature control may be limited, particularly in paralyzed extremities, so ensure that the proper attire is used to ensure for warmth or for protection against exposure from the sun.

DISABILITY	DESCRIPTION	IMPACT AND EFFECTS
CEREBRAL PALSY	Movement disorder resulting from some form of damage to the brain.	Impaired muscle coordination, problems carrying out normal movements and maintaining posture and balance. Speech, sensory and perceptual problems may exist.
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS	Chronic disabling disease of the central nervous system.	Causes a blocking effect on the impulses that control various functions of the body. Weakness, loss in sensation may occur, lack of muscle coordination.
MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY	Chronic disease resulting in wasting or degeneration of the skeletal and voluntary musculature.	Muscles deteriorate - weakness in the arms, legs, and trunk leading to the need for a wheelchair for mobility or confinement to a bed may result.
SPINAL CORD INJURY	Trauma to the spinal cord resulting from automobile or sports accidents, due to injury, or disease.	Diminished motor and sensory function below injured segment. Quadriplegia: Cervical injury resulting in diminished use of legs; diminished trunk control; diminished use of arms and hands; some voluntary movement capability at shoulder, forearm, and elbow. Paraplegia: Thoracic injury resulting in diminished use of legs; partial trunk control; full use of arms. Bowel and bladder control may be affected Involuntary muscle jerks or spasms may occur in the involved limbs
STROKE	Trauma and damage to brain tissue caused by a disruption of the blood supply to the brain.	Permanent neurological deficits can result with all or partial loss of muscle strength on one side of the body. The ability to speak or understand language may also be impaired.
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY	Injury to the brain as the result of head being struck or striking a hard object.	The extent of the functional impairments depends in large part to the extent and to the exact location of the brain tissue damage. Muscle function, mobility, cognitive skills, judgment, memory, and attention span may be affected.

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE!

www.aqvaqc.com

Thank you for your commitment!

References:

National Capital Able Sail Association Volunteer Manual 2006

Disabled Sailing Association of Alberta Staff & Volunteer Orientation Manual 2006

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