

MBC President's Report for the year 2023

2023 has been a year of improvement in that the easing of onerous lockdown conditions has permitted the Club to resume many activities and make a little money. It has also highlighted our need to catch up on maintenance which was sorely lacking over the pandemic years.

As per every year, the greatest hurdle has been juggling the finances. This year we had the continued burden of Benny's retirement payments as well as audit costs for 5 years and clearing up some outstanding BIR issues going back to 2009. Those I am glad to say have all been completed thanks to the stalwart efforts of the Club Secretary, Aux. RAdm Larry Dimagiba PCGA and thanks to Cdr. Vangie Delos Santos, we have also submitted the 2022 accounts. 2023 will bring us back to full compliance hopefully.

The most significant activities this year have been firstly the conversion of Court 1 to a training gym, secondly, the refurbishment of Court 3 and rebranding as a Dojo and finally the extensive maintenance and refurbishment undertaken on the building by the Club and in particular by the 126th Squadron, PCGA as a result of their election of a new Squadron Director, Aux. Commo. Edwin Dalangin, who has also joined MBC in his own right. We were also advised that we had to remove the 'shop' that Benny built at the entrance to MBC. This meant that we had to build a 'barracks' to accommodate the volunteer workers when they were there. So, this has been done, the shop removed and MMDA have started the refurbishment of their facility. We still have to rebuild the fence which will be done in 2024 and make the entrance to MBC much nicer to allow for new signage for MBC and the PCGA

Cash inflows have been helped by a number of new members joining although we have lost a few also and ended the year with 3 less members for a total of 37. The greatest financial help came from GMA who rented the Club premises on several occasions for the filming of their series Abot Kamay Na Pangarap, this will not continue as the politicians have got involved trying to claim the parking fees that previously went to the local Barangay – hence no parking for the film crew permitted anymore. In the latter part of the year we also had a few private party rentals. The rental of Court 2 for storage has also continued to be a welcome source of extra funds which have mostly been used in the refurbishment of Court 1 and in the roof and floor repairs to Court 3. This is scheduled to end at the end of this year although we may get 1 more month's rental if we are lucky.

The Martial arts activities have gotten back on track thanks to the efforts of Squash Captain Gimo Gomez, who now has a new title of Sports Director. Court 1 is proving popular for fitness training, and we are looking at possibly including some other sports clubs (rugby) who may wish to add our facility to their training program as well as use MBC as a social venue after their weekly training sessions.

The Pontoon that was completely replaced in April 2022, has just about stood up to the damage caused by ferry boats and fishing boats. Hopefully, with the new arrangement between the Philippine Coastguard and the MMDA, the already noticeable good behaviour of boats on passing MBC will be continued. PCG have completed the installation of the CCTV but not as yet provided a feed for MBC to add to their website. This should be completed in 2024 together with the installation of a solar power source for the cameras.

The Kids Xmas Party this year was better than ever thanks to Dominik Keller, one of our Life Members, who generously paid for the bulk of the costs to celebrate his own birthday. We also used it as an opportunity to remember his father Thomi Keller who was such an important person in the world of rowing, as well as MBC. Other members such as David Charlton who not only made a very generous financial contribution, but also added 20 packs of David's Salon products. These were used as special raffle prizes for the parents/guardians of the children and hugely appreciated. Then, thanks to the fund raising of Jenny Morales, an applicant of 126th Squadron PCGA, we were also able to give the 160 adults a grocery pack each – something that I know was greatly valued given the extra cost of visiting family at Christmas.

The elephant in the room is still the proposed PAREX Expressway. I have definitely got the impression that there are more significant people who are against the idea now, so take heart from that and I hope this ill thought out (*in my opinion*) project will finally die a death in 2024. Given that the First Lady has allegedly taken on a role to promote tourism on and along the Ilog Pasig, I cannot see how the construction of an expressway to cover most of the river will assist in promoting its tourism values. I hope she does also.

Quintin Pastrana has completed a 2 year project to construct the Caliraya Boat Club and also get a Single and Double from PRA to augment the MBC fleet. The Caliraya Boat Club looks splendid, and we look forward to several visits and a regatta or two in 2024.

In closing, I wish again to express my appreciation and gratitude to all the members for their continued and continuing support to the various Club activities, to all our Club personnel, without whose time and energy the Club would have been unable to service our general membership and lastly to my fellow Board members whose devotion and dedication to the Club are beyond quantification. We look forward to a new addition to the MBC Board in 2024 as will be decided at the AGM, which is being held on January 21st. Thank you also to those of you who strive to promote MBC and in particular make the public aware of the importance of the Ilog Pasig to Metro Manila. The efforts of Kris Ablan in organizing open days and inviting some ecologically minded guests has been very welcome and /I hope opened the eyes of many more to the wonders of the Ilog Pasig. For my part, it was again a pleasure and an honor to have performed my role in serving the Club during this year that passed. I believe that 2024 may well be a significant one for MBC and I hope you will all stay engaged.

Thank you and I hope everyone had a very Happy Christmas and will enjoy a Prosperous New Year.

James Stratton
President
Dec 29th, 2023