



Our Story 50 Years of History ***The Metro Marine Modellers of Toronto, Canada***

by the late Ray Davidson AMYA #5



The evolution of Metro Marine Modellers is unique in that the club, unlike most clubs nowadays, **welcomed all kinds and types of ships, boats and craft.** So that today there are four distinct divisions within the club

Sail, Scale, Display Models (Galleons, period ships etc.), and Fast Electric (speedboats).

All with the one purpose of promoting model sailing and boating; radio controlled or otherwise. However, to retrace the history of the club, we must go back to a small group of individuals who operated free sailing and [vane steered sail boats](#) in the 40's.

These 5 or 6 individuals became the founding members of a group that would be known at the time, as the *Federation of Modellers*.

They met formally for the first time in 1958. These enterprising folk were able to acquire some space at **a local boat show** to show

off their models. This apparently was quite successful and attracted others who were interested, and so it was decided to organize a formal boat club in 1959. The name became **Metro Marine Modellers**.

Membership gradually grew through the 60's with informal regattas at local ponds around the city. The club gained in popularity and members by sailing radio controlled boats at the annual **Toronto International Automobile show**, which usually lasted 10 days.

The pool was only about 14' x 16' and just about 10" deep. Not large by any standard, none the less, it always drew a crowd – and a few new members both young and old.

By 1970, model boating, especially radio controlled boating in the Toronto area had become quite popular. The club membership had grown to almost 100 and it was invited to be part of the **Toronto International Boat Show**. This is one of the largest boat shows on the continent with over 400,000 square feet of exhibits (the show runs for 10 days, incl. 2 weekends).

Metro Marine Modellers (MMM) was located in an adjoining arena with bleachers on 3 sides seating about 1200 on any given evening. With the amount of working stuff, almost exclusively radio controlled, it was often referred to as the best show at the boat show.

By this time, the club had 3 divisions; the sail group being one and with the model boat pool being 65ft x 30ft and nearly 2 ft deep, it was easy, and also popular to even have sail boat races.

Five large stanchion fans were set up at one end of the pond and it didn't take long for challenges to be thrown by big boat sail makers and manufacturers at the show like North and Fogh as I remember. I have no doubt that a few bets were also made.

By 1972, the 10 rater was the first major class that the sail group built and sailed regularly. Plans were readily available from the U.K., such as Collier Herring, Marie 111 and Warlord. My first 10 rater was Red Herring. She sailed on a 55" LWL. I remember making masts from Sitka Spruce in two halves with a channel cutout of each half joined with a piece of 1/16" ply between the two halves along the forward edge then shaped.

This gave a slot along the aft side of the mast and a channel inside the mast for the bolt rope on the luff of the main. Later luff rings and jack lines were used – of course they were definitely simpler, more popular and easier.

The first 10 rater ACCR regatta in Toronto was held in 1972 In 1973, with membership growing, a "Canada Cup' Trophy was initiated by the club and a tobacco company was contacted regarding sponsorship for a group of sailors from our club to go to England to sail in the first regatta for the cup. Interestingly, the tobacco company declined to sponsor us on the grounds that "*the hobby did not necessarily promote smoking*"-Well! Well!

As R/C sailboat racing became more popular around the great lakes and more frequencies became available, MMM sailors sailed increasingly more cross-border regattas with clubs such as Buffalo, Rochester, Chicago, Bowling Green. One great place the **Belmont Country Club in Sandusky, Ohio** where they actually had golf carts to take you and your boat to the water, what a great idea!

However, to continue to compete in ACCR's in the States, it became necessary and appropriate for all of us sailors in Canada to join the newly formed AMYA. Hence, MMM became AMYA club #5. However, to truly compete internationally, Canada needed its own national authority, and subsequently the Canadian Yachting Assoc (CMYA) was formed in 1974 with initially 65 members.

In 1975, regardless of any sponsorship, a group of 6 sailors traveled to England for the first international regatta for the Canada Cup for 10 rater competition.

The Cup was presented to the International Model Yacht Racing Union to be competed for every four years internationally for 10 raters. The same year the Canadian equivalent of the FCC made radio licenses mandatory and the price was \$13.50 for 3 years. Now, of course, no license is required for radio controlled equipment. By 1975, radio controlled sailing was becoming so popular in the

Toronto area that Grant Slinn, one of the designers at the Ontario Science Centre in Toronto, and myself were instrumental in getting the Science Centre to help fabricate 50 Marblehead's. A plug was made from "**Bambi**" plans and Fiberglass hulls were pulled.

The complete kit including boat, #1 rig, and sails was \$50.00, in fact everything except the radio. An interesting fact is that we would construct a winch by modifying a servo by removing the servo's potentiometer and replacing it with a "Ten turn Potentiometer" from the surplus store.

Drums for the sheets would be then attached to the output arm of the servo....it was a little slow, but then, in those days, they all were. Another 50 boats were made the following year. I have to wonder where all those boats are now.

In 1980, "Sail 80" was an international regatta for 10 raters. This was the last regatta held by the CMYA. The organization is now the CRYA (Canadian Radio Yachting Association). I guess radio yachting sounds better than model yachting.

In 1981, the City was building a landfill park on the shore of Lake Ontario at Humber Bay. Our club was asked to submit a plan for a model boat pond which would be included in the project. On completion of the park in 1982 we were given exclusive use of the pond for sailing. There is also a pavilion and storage for the chase boat and marks.

In 1989, MMM hosted one of the largest Marblehead ACCRs at Humber Bay with skippers coming from as far away as San Diego, Vancouver, New York City and of course, Marblehead, Mass. To this day the sail group still use the Humber Bay site for the Soling 1M.



In the last couple of years, the MMM sailing group has moved to a great sailing site at the Port Credit Yacht club. This affords us a wonderful sailing basin, snack bar facilities, and an exceptional site for regattas.

In 2006, the AMYA Region 1 International One Meter regatta, normally held in Connecticut, was held in Port Credit, hosted by MMM. It was a very successful regatta with 24 skippers coming from places such as Texas, Michigan, N.Y., Florida, and Connecticut together with many Canadian skippers.

In 2007, MMM hosted an August Invitational for IOM class at Port Credit. This also was a successful regatta with 16 boats competing and skippers again coming from various parts of North America.

As mentioned earlier the club including the sail group has always welcomed all kinds and classes of boats. Right now there are 4 or 5 active classes of sailboat in the MMM, including: Soling IM, Victoria, IOM (which is the strongest at the present), Marblehead and A.C.

This year the Marblehead ACCR was scheduled to be held here at our Port Credit site, but unfortunately had to be cancelled due to lack of response. However, both locally and farther afield MMM sailors hold and attend regular regattas throughout the spring, summer and fall season.

Today, the Metro Marine Modellers club, from humble beginnings almost 50 years ago is still 100 members strong, meeting on a regular basis and holding various events and regattas, with a committed executive that holds us all in place. Hopefully the club will still be going strong in another 50 years. Who knows??

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The Metro Marine Modellers was the 5th club to register with the organization, the world's largest model club.

For questions, suggestions, and information, you can reach the Webmaster [here](#)