

## **A Reminiscence of Tingley Beach before DCMYC, by Frank Horine**

Recently, I read with pleasure a rendition of the transition from the AMMA (Albuquerque Model Marine Association) to the current DCMYC boat club activities at Tingley Beach. As a former long-time member of AMMA, I can offer some history of our happy times at Tingley Beach.

During the 1960's, 70's, and 80's, we had a diverse group of model boaters sailing R/C submarines, sailboats, airboats, speedboats, scale warships, pleasure craft, paddlewheel riverboats, tugboats, etc. Propulsion power came from steam, electric, wind, and spring motor. We used all the assigned 27MHz R/C frequencies and a few of the 53MHz amateur radio channels to enable many boats to operate simultaneously.

Our usable open-water area was much larger than the small current model boat pond at Tingley, so we could put lots of different boats on the pond at the same time without anyone feeling cramped or infringed upon. Looking back, I now realize our time at Tingley Beach was a "golden age" of R/C boating in Albuquerque, since the very large water area we had access to prevented the squabbles and territory issues that can plague model boaters using highly-regulated small model boat ponds. And Albuquerque was much smaller and more laid back in those days, so the ducks, geese, children, and fishing folks could spread out minimizing use-conflicts so common in big cities.

Some of the more advanced AMMA modelers had multichannel proportional radios, with both early digital systems or conventional resonant-reed systems. Most of my R/C systems were multichannel ganged rubber-band-powered sequential escapements driving homebrew "servos" for rudder, throttle, reverse, horn, sheet winches, and sound effects. I built a high-voltage inverter for my vacuum tube MOPA (Master Oscillator Power Amplifier) 27MHz transmitter so I could power the filaments, plates, and grids of the vacuum tubes from surplus NiCd secondary batteries instead of the costly A, B, and C high-voltage primary batteries. I splurged in 1975 and assembled a Heathkit 5-channel transistorized radio system. It was either the radio or a rebuilt engine for my old truck. I wound up rebuilding the engine myself and so I figured I deserved the Heathkit radio! My sequential escapement systems were bullet-proof, but the Heathkit radio was easier to operate and maintain.

A local electric motor designer, Ray Kroker, sold his unique double-commutator water-cooled boat motors for use at Tingley. Some of the club members could afford these fabulous motors, but I had Pittman or converted electric trolling motors in my boats. By rigging ball-bearing units into the motor endbells to replace the stock Oilite-bushed bearings, my cheap motors would last a long time. Another local company, F&M (Frank and Mary Hoover)

Electronics made multi-channel resonant-reed radio systems which worked well for model boats.

My most complex boat was a 7 foot long 55 pound scratch-built "starship cruiser" with Heathkit R/C electronics and a home-made rotary-valve compressed air-driven water cannon. I made a water-jacket cooler for the small 20 pound thrust trolling motor spinning a small 4 inch diameter prop. This medium-sized model boat was a real hoot to build and I had more fun with this crazy project than any other boat I made for Tingley.

I tinkered with a pulsed-steam-jet propulsion system, and I also designed a forerunner of the modern Azi-pod electric drive, but they were difficult to control with my sequential escapements. I did manage to construct a working (sort of) steam turbine, with reverse even, but the turbine was too inefficient, leaked high-temp steam, and lacked a high-pressure injection condenser. One of our club members started an air-boat racing class which we all enjoyed greatly and gave us many laughs and good times.

My "Star 45" sailboat was rather small, but it sailed well in the winds at Tingley. I installed a home-brew twin-track linear main-sheet and jib winch with a radio-controlled main-sheet reefing system for variable-wind days. This worked well, and I could adjust the main-sheet area under way without putting in to port to increase or lessen sheet area. I put a small Pittman bi-directional motor in this boat as an auxiliary motor for calm days, and a reverse/brake for berthing. Our club was primarily an electric-drive boat club, but we had a few sailboats among the members.

Our club was small, but happy and lively, with weekend attendance of 6-20 boat owners plus many onlookers and would-be boat owners. We sure had fun during the 30 years or so of our model boat activities at Tingley. Thanks to our laid-back members, and plenty of open water, we always figured out ways to have fast boats, tugboats, sailboats, and submarines together on the pond. Fun for all was our motto! Some of the key members passed-on in the 80's and 90's, the city was starting the large-scale renovation of Tingley Drive and Beach, and the AMMA splintered into other activities. I donated all my boats to remaining club members and returned to my childhood hobbies of model airplanes, electronics, and home-brew rockets.

There were very active model boat and full-size racing boat clubs at Tingley Beach before WW II, and gasoline ignition-engine model boat racing in the 1950's. Hopefully, there will always be a model boat club at Tingley- it just seems to fit in whatever the time period!!