



The Parkwood PaddleMug - Combining Coffee and CW

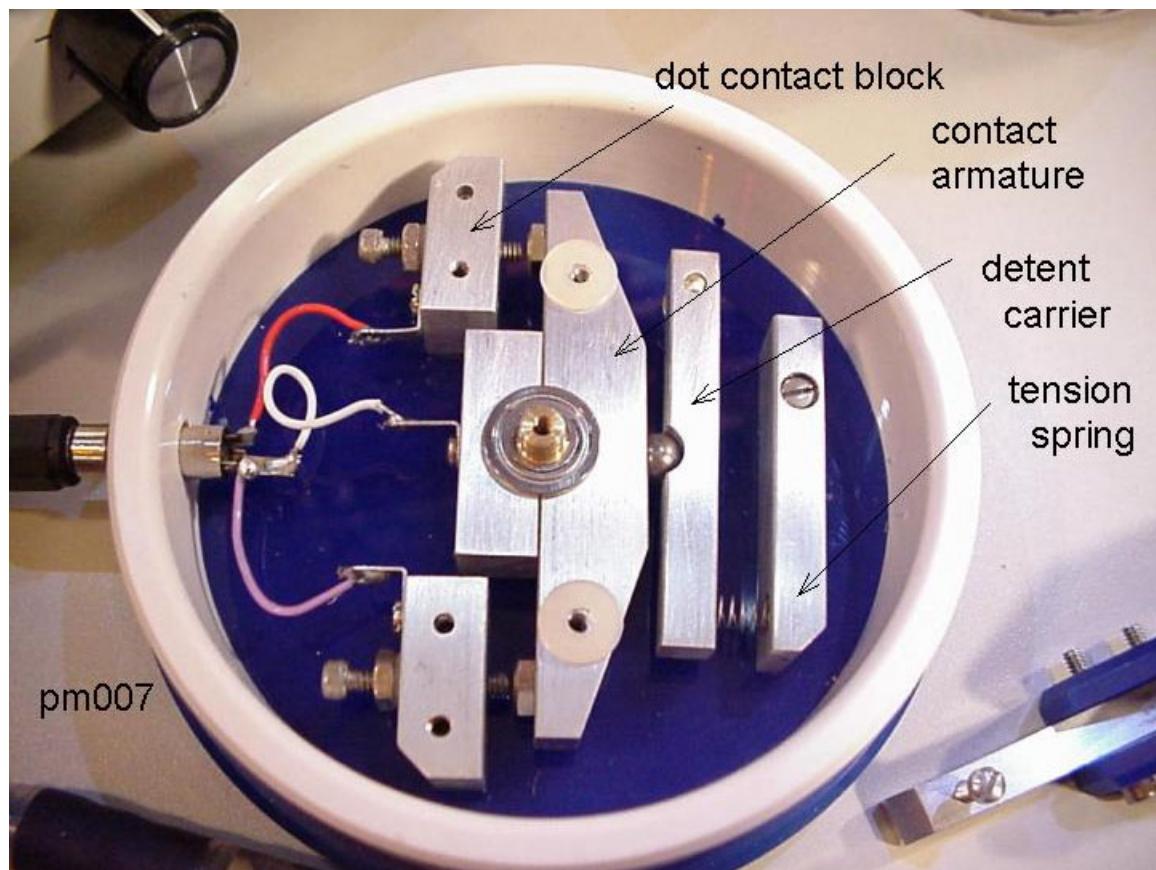
On the morning of the last day of the 2003 Dayton Hamvention, I was sitting with my XYL in Perkins Pancake House and enjoying a cup of their fine coffee. I found my hand (as I have before) using the cup handle as though it were a CW paddle, and a thought struck me. I said to myself, "Self, why couldn't the same device be used as a coffee mug and a CW paddle?" Self mulled this over for a few days and came up with the design shown here. Actually, I was in the mental stages of designing a new single paddle, and this was an opportunity to try out some of the concepts.

The basic design is actually a "coaster" that a coffee cup can be set on. There is a single pivot point at the center of the upper plate that allows it to rotate about its center. When a coffee cup, full or empty, regular or decaffeinated, black or with cream, is set on the coaster, moving the cup handle back and forth actuates the contacts and the cup becomes a non-iambic keyer. For some folks,

consumption of too much of the contents may produce some pretty raggedy CW. The use of Irish coffee may also lead to deterioration of the quality of the output.

Construction Details

Looking down into the unit with its top plate removed, you can see the contact armature that is pivoted about upper and lower ball bearings that are mounted on a central shaft fixed to the base plate. Dot and dash contact blocks have adjusting screws with lock nuts. A detent mechanism that uses a single steel ball maintains the center (off) position and provides the restoring force. Tension is adjusted by changing the position of the spring support at the rear.



The mechanical parts are made from aircraft aluminum and brass. The base plate is made of 3/16" blue acrylic plastic, and the top plate is made of semi-transparent acrylic material, turned to a diameter just slightly less than the inside diameter of the housing. The surrounding ring is cut from PVC sewer pipe and fastened with screws to the base plate. Two nylon washers are used to space the top plate above the bearings so that it will not bind the shaft. The bearing assembly is rugged enough so that the cup will not wobble at speeds above 20 wpm (which is my current limit anyway). Three rubber strips keep the cup from slipping on the upper plate (next figure).

Just in case there is no coffee available, or you're tired of being silly, there is a conventional paddle to substitute for the coffee cup. This is made of aluminum bar stock, with acrylic paddles. Two fingerpieces are used to so that it will have a comfortable feel.



Actually, when used as a conventional paddle without the coffee cup, it is smooth and crisp in action and might appeal to those who do not like to use an iambic paddle.



Here are some further views:

Proper keying technique -



Bottom view -



So this is the kind of thing that springs to mind after three days of being in ham heaven. I am sure that the basic design can be adapted to other potables that are popular among seasoned operators, although their containers do not have handles (which is what started the whole thing in the first place).

Actually, this was a test bed for the basic single-paddle design, and it shows the basic feasibility of the design. This will now be incorporated into a conventional single paddle sometime in the future.

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