

JOHN J. MYERS

RIVER HILLS, WISCONSIN

January 4, 2000

Dear David,

Here's a list of items I used to make my 1997 cootie key, along with notes about them. You could similar items without material change in the feel of the cootie if certain dimensions are the same. Except for the base, you could probably dig stuff out of a junk box or rob an old key or two.

Base: It's brass, 4.25" x 2.75" x 1", which was cast and machined for me by a friend, then fine-polished by me. One of similar size cut from brass stock will do — and it could be larger, of course. If I were drilling a larger base, I'd still use the same dimensions for the armature, its support, and the front overhang that I used for mine.

Armature: The key to the design lies in the armature — its construction and length. I make them by laminating spring brass strips. I selected the materials and dimensions after considerable experimentation, and both Mike and I find the result to be about optimum. I gave ours silver contacts, but if you'll gold plate it, silver contacts aren't necessary.

Armature Support: I used a split contact support post from an old Bencher key, from which I removed the chrome plating

Contact Posts and Screws: These non-plated brass items are from a Vibroplex Brass Racer. You can order them (at high cost) from Vibroplex at, 11 Midtown Park East, Mobile, AL 36606, 1-800-840-8873 (check part number etc. with them):

- #6076A post @ \$12.00 ea.
- #6078 contact set screw @ \$1.50 ea
- #6077 nylon post set screws @ \$1.50 ea
- #4009 contact point @ \$5.00 ea
- #8035 nylon screw insulators @ \$1.50 ea.

Binding Posts: These are 1/4" long threaded spacers 3/8" in diameter (Vibroplex?) from my junk box, topped with brass cap screws from the hardware.

Insulating Washers, Rubber Feet: These are garden variety items. You need four insulating washers for the armature support post and the corresponding binding post, five RH brass screws for the posts, and four small rubber feet with screws.

Knob: I used a rosewood flat knob I got from Stan, W9WBL. One could use almost anything he wishes, as long as it can be slotted for pressing onto the armature.

Gold Plating: I sent my parts for gold-plating to Mark Lang in Titusville, Florida (407-268-4697), but I'm sure any local plating shop could do the job for you.

Dig up and send me your parts and with pleasure I'll fabricate an armature, drill the base, and assemble your key ready for plating.

73,

P.S. Been hamming since '36,
always CW.

John, W9OK

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