

Easy Monkey

Wally Venable

The listing in the American Science & Surplus flyer said “Cymbalic Monkey (you know the one—stupid grin, chatters, jumps up and down, pounds really annoying cymbals together and won’t stop . . . an American classic) Item #92814 Magic Monkey, \$9.95/each.” My new Smith Senior-20 organ was monkeyless, so I ordered one (Figure 1).

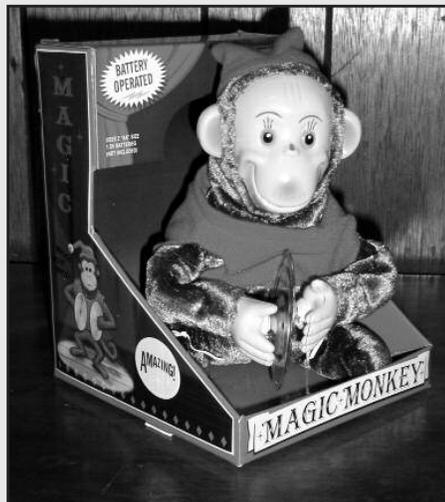


Figure 1. The original Magic Monkey.

I liked the monkey’s action, but I thought it would be nice to add a remote control. The switch and battery compartment were conveniently located under the monkey’s bottom (Figure 2). I opened the switch box by removing the two small screws, removed the slider, then ran a light two-wire cord through the slot and soldered it to the battery contacts. I fastened a horn button (from a local auto parts store) to the other end of the cord. Figures 2-4



Figure 2 (left). The switch box. Figure 3 (right). The battery terminals.

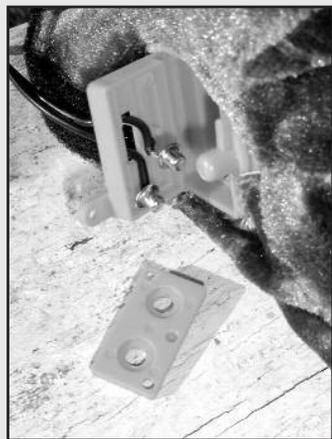


Figure 4. The external wire soldered to the battery contacts.

With the remote control I could now operate the monkey in short bursts of activity with my foot, but I thought it would be better if he actually begged rather than just making noise. It took some searching to find a “tin cup” in an appropriate size. What I actually found was a citronella candle in a pail, but I managed to get the wax out and solder an attachment bracket to the pail. The cymbals were easily removed because they were attached with screws, but I had to put a tab on the cup handle to keep it from rotating (Figure 5). I added two washers on strings to the cup to create the historically appropriate jingle of coins.

With the light cymbals the monkey had a smooth, symmetric motion. However with the cup, the monkey had a more violent action, and kept jumping off the organ stand, but a bit of adhesive hook and loop fastener quickly anchored him. In action, he now squeaks about six times, then bangs the cup about six times. This repeats as long as the button is held, but I like to use short bursts of different lengths. Figure 6



Figure 5. The monkey’s cymbal showing the screw attachment.

Burl Updyke had a similar, but not identical, monkey at the Knoebels Rally. His had a mouth that opened and a switch located in the middle of its back under the coat. While his was somewhat more elegant, the “Magic Monkey” was easier to convert.



Figure 6. The completed monkey with tin cup.

It turned out that the price was a good one (about \$15 with shipping, because one eBay vendor has been offering the same monkey at a Buy-It-Now price of \$13.99 plus \$7.95 shipping.

If you are in the market for a monkey, the easiest way to contact American Science & Surplus is through their web site at www.sciplus.com or they also claim you can order by phone at 888-724-7587.

The Easy Money? At the the COAA rally at Knoebels (2006) my monkey collected \$1.38!

Wally Venable is an Emeritus (retired) Mechanical Engineering professor at West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV.