

Model Yachting Group Launches an Exciting Technological Innovation

Here in Connecticut, we are always working to make model yachting better for everyone. Several years ago, we realized that our frequent altercations at the windward mark were not always the result of spatial disorientation but sometimes due to a certain lack of alertness which seems endemic to our group early on Saturday morning. A hard week at work and a bit too much TGIF can make it difficult for some of us to stay adequately focused given the high level of racing competition we face every Saturday.



One of our members did some extensive research centered on how long-haul truck drivers retain their concentration. The drivers she interviewed recommended various stimulants, some of which appeared to be illegal and/or had deleterious side effects. A device designed to be attached to the ear seemed to be good at waking the wearer up a moment after he or she falls asleep – not so good for those of us standing on a floating dock at water's edge.

The Eureka moment came one restless very early morning which she blamed on too much coffee at dinner the night before: “why not redesign the model yacht handheld radio transmitter to incorporate a cup holder for a large coffee cup?” That way a jolt of wakefulness would always be right at hand – a skipper could always use a straw if racing became so intense that a hand couldn’t be freed for a quick gulp of coffee.

Designs were produced by Club members and sent off to our transmitter manufacturer in China. Initially, the CAD printouts showed a gimbaled cup holder but further experimentation resulted in the introduction of an advanced gyroscopic stabilizer which would keep the coffee in the cup and, as an ancillary benefit, also steady the possibly shaky skipper holding the device. After quite a bit of back and forth and the fabrication and testing of many prototypes, a final design was approved and the patenting process was initiated.

Unfortunately, it appears that an enterprising Japanese manufacturer has jumped ahead of us with a similar but more rudimentary design utilizing a teacup holder attached to the transmitter. The idea is that tea will have a calming Zen like effect on racing skippers, reducing conflict and the subsequent burdens on the Protest Committee.

This also seems like a useful idea but, since the purpose of our invention is the exact opposite, we have a high degree of confidence that our design will win approval in most jurisdictions. We will keep the model yachting community fully informed as we proceed with this important innovation.

E. Packer Wilbur

(photo by Elizabeth Hulme)