

Here is a simple little project that only took me about half an hour to complete. I got the idea from the Roger McGuinn 7-string Martin™ guitar that he endorses. I decided to try it out on my Applause “backpacker” travel guitar since it has little value anyway and I thought it might be a good sound enhancement for the smaller-bodied guitar.

The clever thing I did was using an old clutch-type mechanical pencil as a hand twist drill vise (see photo). I needed a way to drill a new hole in the saddle for the additional octave G-string. Since the hole runs parallel to the top of the soundboard, I would have needed a small drill bit that was a foot long in order to drill it with a hand drill. Instead, I used the mechanical pencil with a small drill bit in it as a “precision” drill which I turned by hand.

The only other semi-tricky part was locating the 7th tuner. The Applause has a highly-beveled headstock, so I had to locate the tuner far enough back to avoid the bevel but still be able to turn. I believe the following pictures tell the whole story. I apologize for the poor picture quality.



If you look closely, you can see the double G-string. I used a spare .009” string for the octave G-string. I might try going to a .010” because the .009” gets a bit “hidden” by the fat wound G-string. I think I spaced the strings a bit too close on the nut. This contributes to the octave string getting lost in the shadow of the fat G-string. The spacing is perfect on the bridge.



Here's a shot of the back of the headstock with the 7th tuner installed. No magic here, just carefully drill the right size hole for the tuner being careful not to splinter the veneer. Two pilot holes for the mounting screws. Again, the challenge here is to locate the tuner as far back as possible and still be able to turn the tuning key. This is to avoid the bevel on the front side of the headstock.



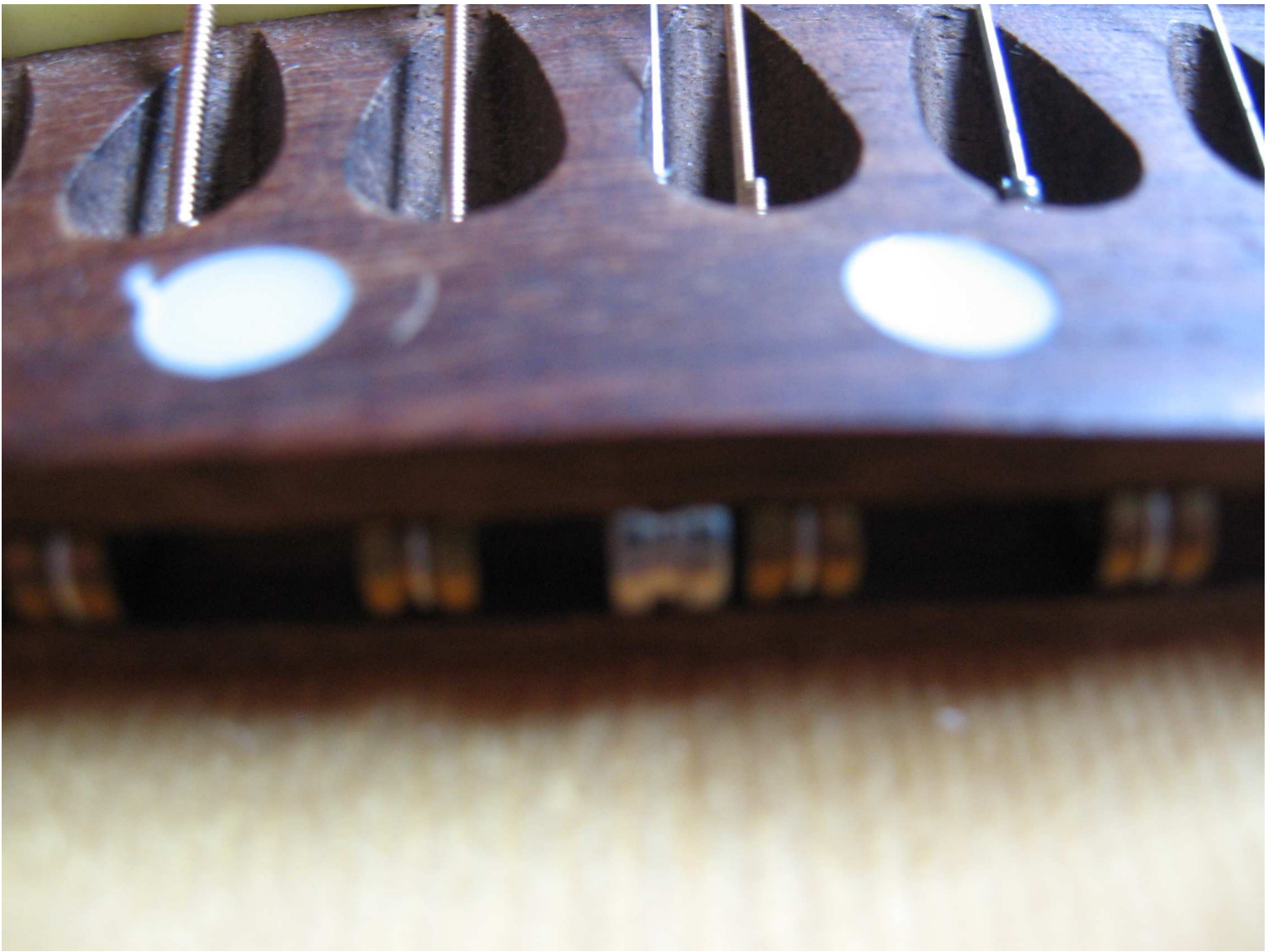
View of the top of the headstock showing the critical placement of the tuner shaft. If your headstock is not beveled, then obviously this becomes a non-issue.



Here’s my ingenious home-made “precision” drill.



Here is the new nut slot for the octave G-string. This spacing is a tad too close. I will use a bigger gap if I ever do this again. Use the spacing I used on the bridge as a good example of the proper spacing. This was my only mistake that is not really a problem, but it would be better with a larger space. Sorry about the focus.



Now this is where patience and care pay off. The trick was to drill a new hole next to the existing G-string hole in such a way that it would come out in the existing string well (gouged out area on top of saddle for each string). This is where I used the twist drill to slowly and precisely achieve this. A long drill bit would have worked also but it would have to be longer than the distance between the saddle and the end of the guitar.



Here is an out-of-focus view of the top of the saddle highlighting the new string location and the new saddle slot. This was a good spacing. Note the critical location of the new drilled hole.

The sound of the octave g-string compliments the already thin sound of the smaller body. This was worth doing. I don't believe the additional string will place any significant stress on the neck or soundboard.

I thought about doing an 8-string (double G and D strings) but then I thought why not just use a 12-string with the unwanted strings omitted☺

Good luck and have fun if you decide to try this. All you need is a spare tuner, an extra string and a bit of patience.

Chow, Riff Ron