

# Knot



# News

## International Guild of Knot Tyers Pacific Americas Branch

June 1998

Joseph Schmidbauer-Editor

Issue #11

### A Simple Expansion Technique for Turk's Head's Knots

*by Pieter van de Griend*

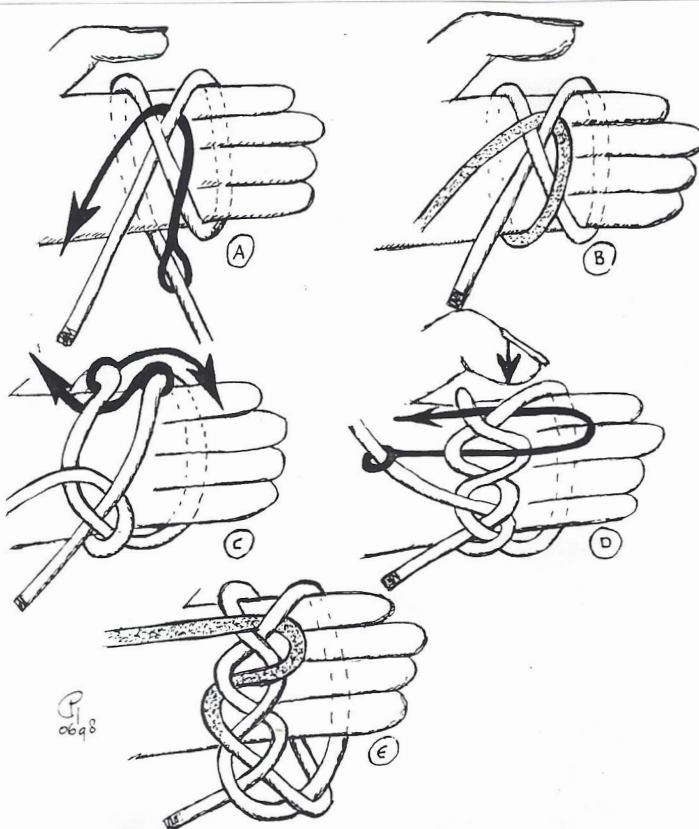
In this article we look at knots which are commonly known as Turk's Head Knots (TH). They are usually held to be flat rings of Under 1 Over 1 coded sennit. Such rings can easily have a different appearance when this so-called coding is changed to, say U2O2. However, here we shall only be concerned with the U1O1 throughout woven type of knots and call them TH. If you know how to tie one such TH, this article will introduce you to a technique enabling you to expand your original construct into a larger TH. We will look at the making of a TH baseknot of 3 parts and 5 (8, 11, 14, and so forth) bights and how that 3-parted 5-bighted TH expansion one way can yield a TH of 5 parts and 9 bights, or upon expansion the other way can yield a TH of 7 parts and 11 bights. The technique mentioned here is not new. It has been described in various other places. As the basic idea can be readily applied to expand other coding-forms of knots, it automatically qualifies itself as a useful principle which any decorative knotter ought to have in the knotting toolkit. The only other thing you need in that same toolkit is a contrasting string.



### Making the 3/5 TH baseknot.

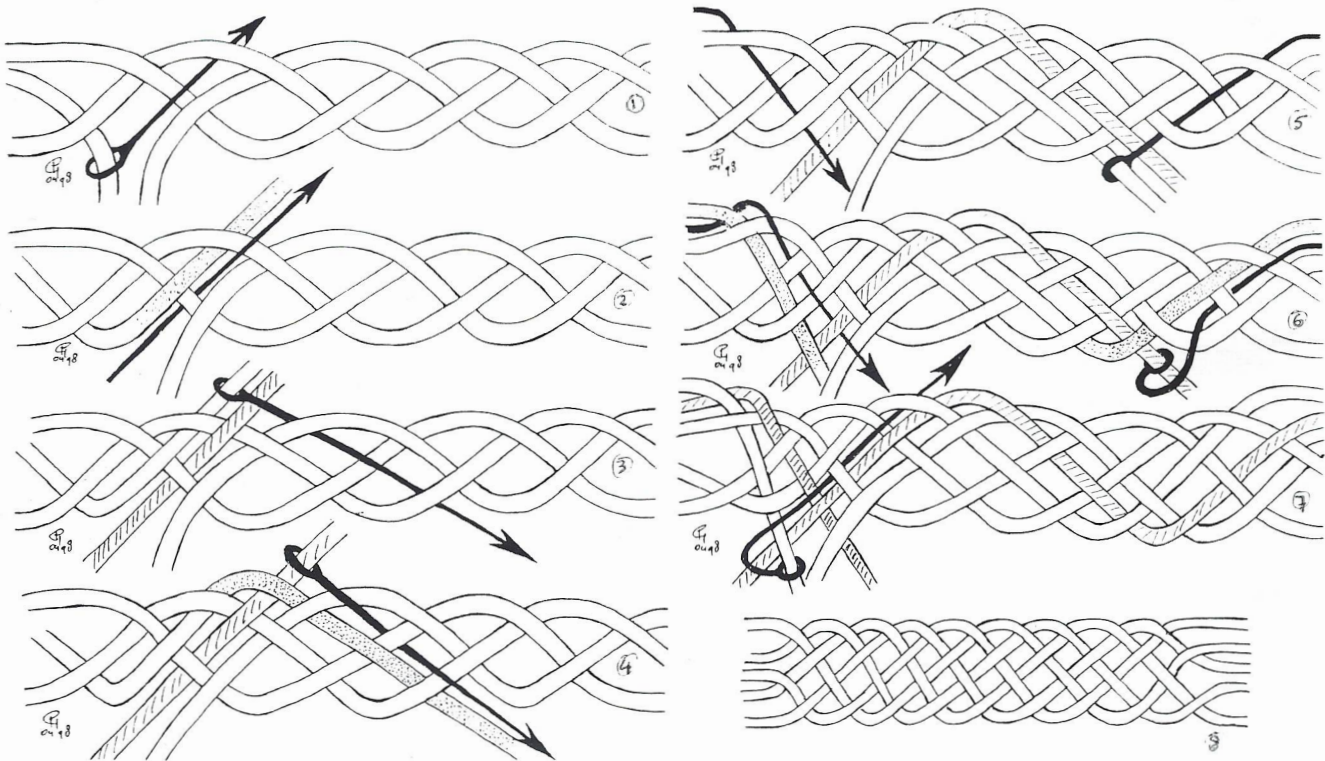
Tying the TH of 3 parts and 5 bights is an elementary exercise. Fig. 1 shows how to perform that trick. The figure is self-explanatory. Repeating moves C-D-E will consistently add a multiple of three bights onto your three-parted Turk's Head. However, for our purposes 5 bights will suffice.

Fig. 1



**Expansiontype I:  
a  $3/5$  TH into a  $5/9$  TH.**

In Fig. 2.1 you can see how to lay the working end. Split the track between the working end and the standing end using your contrasting cord (Fig. 2.2). In all illustrations to follow it will be shown hatched. Continue with the working end producing the required weave (Fig. 2.3). Again split the track by weaving the contrasting cord through the knot (Fig. 2.4). Repeat the procedure once again as shown in Figs. 2.5 and 2.6 respectively. In Fig. 2.6 the working end has linked up with the standing end (start) of the contrasting cord. Now begin replacing the contrasting cord till the working end links up with the standing end of the original cord. Your original cord  $3/5$  will have become a  $5/9$  TH.



**Fig 2**

**Expansiontype II:  
a  $3/5$  TH into a  $7/11$  TH.**

In Fig. 3.1 you can see how to lay the working end. Split the track using your contrasting cord (Fig. 3.2). Continue with the working end producing the required weave (Fig. 3.3). Again split the track by weaving the contrasting cord through the knot (Fig. 3.4). Repeat the procedure a few times more as shown in Figs. 3.5 through to 3.8. In Fig 3.8 your working end has linked up with the standing end (start) of the contrasting cord. Now simply replace the contrasting cord till the working end links up with the standing end of the original cord. Your original  $3/5$  TH has become a  $7/11$  TH.



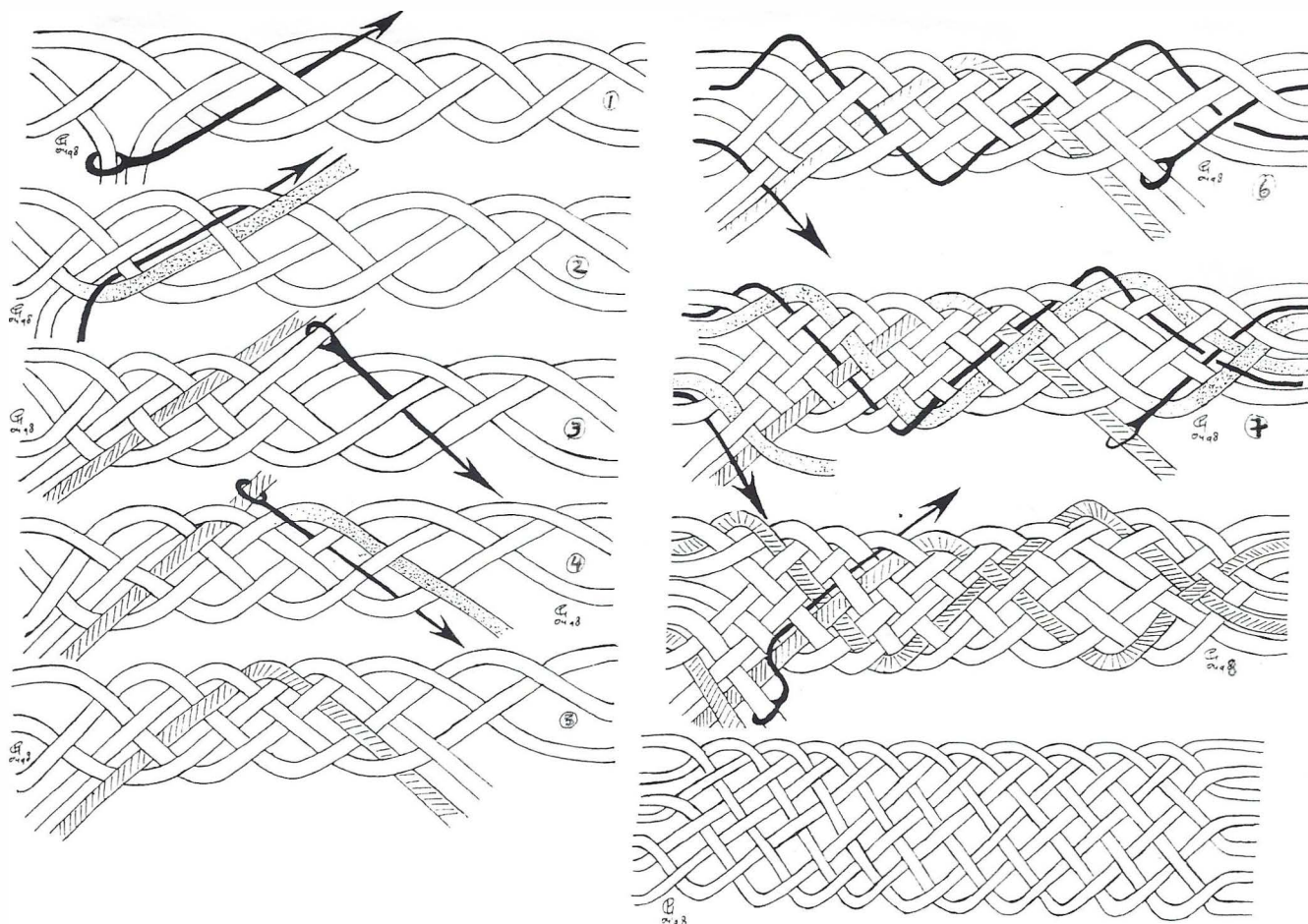


Fig 3

### A few concluding notes.

A disadvantage of this technique is that your weave has a tendency to local bunching, but evening it out should solve that problem. It's obvious that you can easily expand any TH using this technique. Applying the first expansion to your 5/9 knot yields a 7/13 the second gives a 13/23. Doing the same thing to your 7/11 yields a 17/27 or an 11/17 respectively.

### From the Mail Bag

**Maggie Machado** of Oregon sent these comments about the Ropebeds article in KN#9: "The article on the bed frame struck a really interesting note with me. For years in the 80's I pursued a craft which, for lack of anything to call it, I named it 'chain-weaving' because of the crochet chain stitch that emerged as the weaving progressed. I later learned the real origins of the technique and discovered the name for it was 'Punjabi Bed Weaving.' A craft designer must have picked up on it and it later became popularized as 'cording' (whatever that means). It's still around as a craft, with lots of patterns for covering lawnchair frames, etc. Few, however, know the true origins of the technique."

The article that has caused the most comment has been Mike Storch's article on 'The Improvised Ridgepole' in KN#10.

**Lindsey Philpott** of Long Beach, California: "On Mike Storch's article - we found on the *Bill of Rights* that it was better to splice an eye into the line for repeated use of the Trucker's Hitch - it is much easier on the line if it is always going to be in the same place. Not that it would be the case with the tent ridgepole."

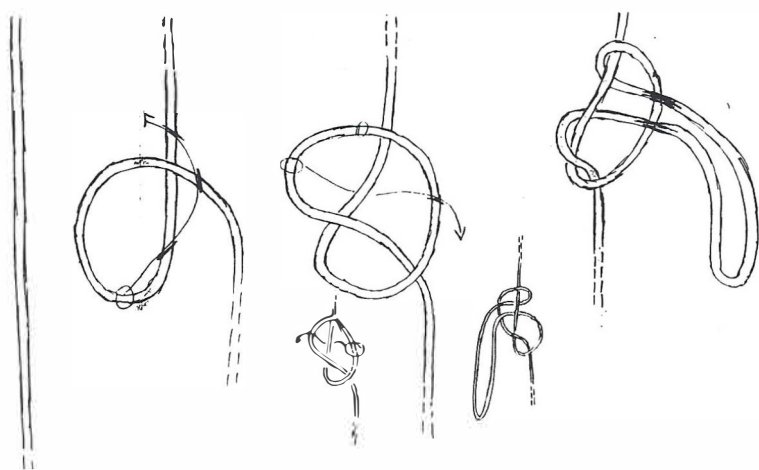
**Terry Ridings** of B.C., Canada: "A couple of comments on Mike Storch's interesting article - the knot he is using around the second tree is a Trucker's Hitch (Ashley #2124). In the closing paragraph he makes reference to 'two half hitches'... a better method would be to use the whole knot - 'a round turn and two half hitches', in this way the work is being done by the friction of the round turn rather than putting the load on the knots. Also his comment about damaging the tree's bark are very valid but in reality if the bark is thin enough to be damaged by the

rope then the tree probably isn't big enough to support the load required of it. Mike uses the 'Ridge Loop'/Artillery Loop (#153) and while it is a good knot, two things are against it - it needs two hands to tie it and after being under load it takes a moment or two to untie it. An alternative is to form a bight (loop) in the rope a couple of fingers in and give it a twist, this forms the basis for a Figure Eight Knot, twist one more time and draw the rope that is going to the second tree into the knot to form a slip knot. The test is that the loop should stay open if you pull on the first tree, if it closes you are using the wrong side of the knot, try the other side. It sounds very complicated but it is not, the beauty of this knot is that when the Trucker's Hitch is untied a quick jerk of the rope removes the loop.

This comes at an interesting time as I have just spent our long weekend teaching working knots to B.C. sea kayakers and building a tarp shelter (using a ridge rope) was one of my workshops."

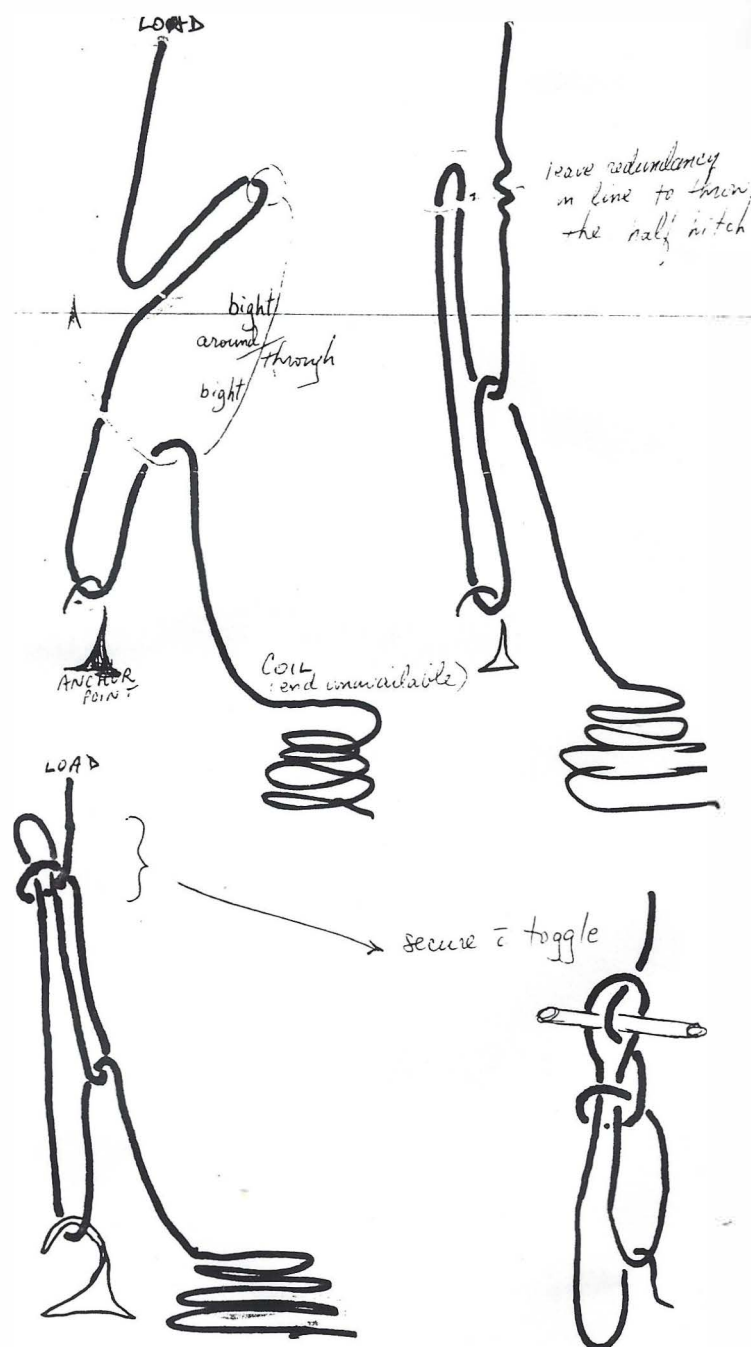
**Alex Kleider** of Bolinas, California: "I read this piece and would like to suggest an alternative method which some might find more effective. The problem is essentially that of the 'Trucker's Hitch.' The way the Trucker's Hitch was shown to me by canoeist Bob Johnson in CA in 1990, before I became so interested in knots, remains to my eye the best solution to the problem. The details are in the sketch below:

Finally a comment about the tie off. It amazes me that people keep describing two half hitches which is so 'shlokky.' The slipped becket hitch is so elegant: you can haul down with both hands, then hold with the right as you pinch the line just after/at its exit through the loop with left thumb and index finger, thus holding the tension and freeing up the right hand to run a bight back around the loop and across the front completing the becket bend, which is, of course, a sheet bend in structure. making a slipped version makes it a snap to undo, but until undone, it is very secure (assuming no one pulls on the loose end!!).



The loop is an Artillery Loop tied a little differently than the descriptions I've seen in books. The advantages of this are that (1.) it is tied in the bight (no end required) and is (2.) easily untied by breaking apart the two encircling components of the tightened knot.

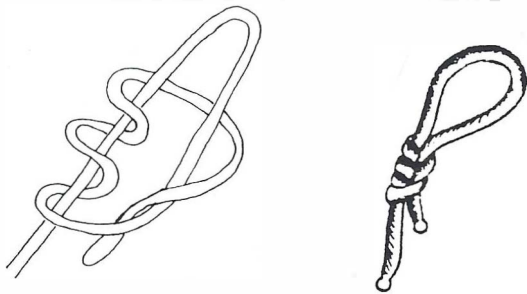
The general arrangement of the two part purchase is as described in the article.





There's another aspect to the trucker's hitch that I only appreciated recently when it was pointed out to me recently by my friend, Jack Oakander, who is a tree man. I thought of it when looking at the picture on page 8 of KM 58. I had always wondered why the books always showed it constructed as shown, using a half-hitch over a bight, as a way of forming the loop, through which the end is then passed to achieve the two part purchase. The result is very insecure unless one puts in a toggle. Well, the time that this method has its merits in the situation when the rope is too long and there isn't an end to reeve through the loop. One can bring a bight over the anchor point, then make another bight with the standing end between it and the load. Bring this bight around the working end and back towards the load where it can be fastened to the standing part by the half hitch. Voila! the end is reeved through the loop without ever having to have been reeved.

**Bob Schwartz** of Washington: "Here is a knot Mike Storch might want to try with his 'Improvised Ridgepole.' It is a kind of tautline hitch, which you can slide easily with two hands but which holds in a wind. The only example of it I have ever seen is in *The Complete Walker III* by Colin Fletcher.



The next closest examples can be found in Geoffrey Budworth's *The Knot Book*, (Fig. 91 'Adjustable Knot') but there is a difference in the final tuck and in the *Fisherman's Knots and Nets* by Graumont and Hensel (Plate 18, Fig. 36). The one by Fletcher is to be preferred, though, because it can be loosened easily by sliding the knot to the slack position and then pulling the two sides of the eyes apart.

I first learned this knot in 1961 when I was on the first of many field trips I took when going through six months of USAF Survival Instructor Training. Altogether I spent 23 years in Rescue and Survival work in the air Force. The last thirteen years were as a Survival Instructor until I retired in 1974. At the time we were going through shelter

construction training in the High Sierras. It was during the winter of 1961 in a burnt out forest deep in snow. One of our instructors, knowing I had an interest in ropework, showed this knot to me with the emphasis that it had no name or title assigned to it.

I use it quite often. Remember to use the straight length of line to half hitch around the other line for added security."

"My father had taught me to make a flat-knot, a bowline, a clove-hitch, two half-hitches, and such sort of things; and I got through with both a long and short splice tolerably well.... I passed the weather-earring of the mizzen-topsail when we had been out a fortnight, and went to those of the fore and main before we crossed the line. The Mate put me forward on all occasions, giving me much instruction in private; and the Captain neglected no opportunity of giving me useful hints, or practical ideas. I asked, and was allowed, to take my regular trick at the wheel before we got into the latitude of St. Helena; and from that time did my full share of seaman's duty on board, the nicer work of knotter, splicing, etc., excepted. These last required a little more time; but I am satisfied that, in all things but judgment, a clever lad, who has a taste for the business, can make himself a very useful and respectable mariner in six months of active service."

*Afloat and Ashore*  
James Fenimore Cooper, 1844

### **Knot Outreach**

We had a number of knotting displays and shows in May. Lindsey Philpott gives this update.

The Banning Heritage Museum is named for Phineas Banning who created most of the shipping industry for the San Pedro area. The show was from 10 till 1 each day from the 11th until the 15th of May. This is their School Week and it is titled Banning Heritage Days. The Museum is the house where Banning used to live. There were on display artisans from the period and I did five half-hour slots per day.

My goal was to give students a look at the daily duties of a sailor, and for them to get some idea of how complex life was without the

modern aids like navigation instruments and engines. I started by describing a typical day in the life of the sailor, asking the children to join me in 'faking' the various activities of the day. The activities I drew from included getting woken up before dawn and taking down their hammocks, to scrubbing the decks and sail-setting. I also made references to mending torn sails and broken rigging, feeding the livestock on board, and checking the bilges for leaks and then re-slinging their hammocks to sleep again. During this period I gave each child a length of cotton rope that they used to practice the knots as I described them. I also described for the older children how the Captain and the navigator had to read a chart, work out a course to sail, and the sailors then had to steer using the compass and the stars. To end this portion, I described what happens when the ship comes to port, including getting goods on and off the ship.

I also talked about the development of California from the 1880's on and the way in which Banning was instrumental in shaping the Southern California community. I dressed in period costume and had some shanties playing over a CD in the background. There was about 1300 children altogether through the week.

Lindsey and Joe Schmidbauer also did another show at the Rancho Los Cerritos. This is an historic site on Virginia Road in Long beach and they had a celebration called 'Early California Days' on May 17th. There was period entertainment of singing and dancing. Roping, blacksmithing, adobe oven baking and leatherwork was demonstrated by volunteers. The Guild demonstrated hand-made rope making and knot tying. In the end we earned a \$50 honorarium and a number of possible new members.

YANK-This sailor life ain't much to cry about leavin'-just one ship after another, hard work, small pay, and bum grub; and when we git into port, just a drunk endin' up in a fight, and all your money gone, and then ship away again. Never meetin' no nice people; never gettin' outa sailor town, hardly, in any port; travellin' all over the world and never seein' none of it; without no one to care whether you're alive or dead. [*With a bitter smile.*] There ain't much in all that that'd make yuh sorry to lose it, Drisc.

DRISCOLL-*[Gloomily.]* It's a hell av a life, the sea.

*Bound East For Cardiff*  
Eugene O'Neill

## Branch Bits

**Joan Beaubian** of New Bedford remembers "that there was a knot bracelet that I bought every Summer when I was a kid. They shrink on your wrists and the kids wear them all season. They were all made in white, by Fall, it was a ritual to have to cut it off before the first day back to school. By then they were no longer white... no matter how much time you spent at the beach....!"

**Maggie Machado** was asked if hemp twine is good to do Chinese Knotting with. Here was her reply

"It just so happens that I have done some Chinese Knotting with hemp. Unless you are doing it just for fun tho', I wouldn't say it's the neatest stuff for anything nice. Any loose knot will start to chafe after awhile and eventually wind up looking very unkempt. I know - I made a necklace with Chinese Knotting as the pendant, and put four itsy bitsy Turk's Heads on the sides (wound up spending a couple of hours on that one). Well, with wear, the Chinese Knotting looks ratty and every one of the Turk's Heads are unrecognizable (look like four little fuzz balls). So, anyway, that's been my experience. Anything with tight (e.g. macramé) knots does fine."

**Pieter van de Griend** of Netherlands comments "on page 5 (in KN#10) you had one of my photographs of work by Frans Masurel . His bell pulls were part of the exhibition KK-readers (KK is short for *Het Knoope Knaauwerje* the Dutch knotters journal - Ed.) had in the fishery museum of Breskens last year. A great little show, which was seen by some 12,000 visitors. It takes Frans several days to make some of those knots. One was on display in the glass case at the New Bedford Ashley Retrospective."

## ⇒ Check This Out!!! ⇐

Pieter would also like to announce the start of his new web site. It is the on line edition of his *Het Knoope Knaauwerje*. also assorted knot links and graphics. The address is:

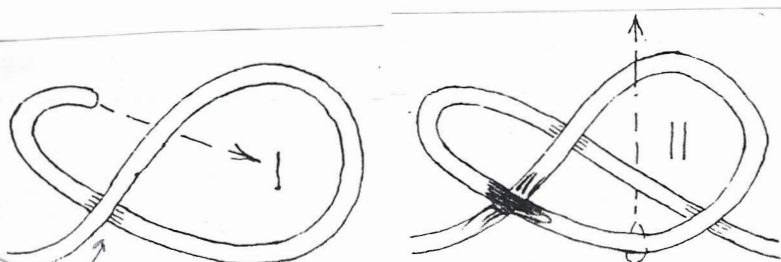
<http://www.euronet.nl/users/vdgriend/homepage.htm>

**Joe Soanes** of California has some good advice when doing half hitch work on tug boat fenders. "There is a trick to keeping the kinks out of the long lengths of line needed to do this kind work. Feed the end of the line through to make your hitch then put the end in your pocket. As you pull the rest of the line through, coil it on top of your foot. When you've pulled it all the way through, flip the coil over with your foot. Take the end out of your pocket and take a few



turns with it to straighten it. This should keep you line from kinking up."

Alex Kleider has found an error in George Russel Shaw's *Knots Useful and Ornamental*. On page 44, Artillery or Man-Harness Knot. Diagrams I and II. The underpass on the left side of the knot should be an overpass.



Incorrect

Corrected

### Quick Quiz

Alright, everyone put your pencils down and close your test booklets. Now I know that YOU didn't need the answers to my knotting questions in KN#9 but I'll print them here for those other knotters who might want the correct replies. These are from *The Seaman's Friend - A Treatise on Practical Seamanship* by Richard Henry Dana, published in 1879.

1. Right Hand Rope
2. Cable-laid Rope
3. Short Splice
4. Long Splice
5. Eye Splice
6. Flemish Eye
7. Cut Splice
8. Single Wall Knot
9. Single Wall Knot
10. Single Wall, Crowned
11. Double Wall
12. Double Wall, Double Crowned
13. Matthew Walker
14. Single Diamond Knot
15. Double Diamond Knot
16. Spritsail Sheet Knot
17. Turk's-Head
18. Two Half-hitches
19. Clove-Hitch
20. Overhand Knot
21. Figure-of-Eight Knot
22. Bowline Knot
23. Bowline Upon a Bight
24. Square Knot
25. Timber Hitch
26. Blackwall Hitch
27. Cat's Paw
28. Sheet Bend
29. Fisherman's Bend
30. Carrick Bend
31. Sheep-Shank
32. Marlinespike Hitch

## Annual General Meeting Friday, June 26th 1998

Mark your calendar now to attend our Second Annual General Meeting. The meeting will begin at 6:00 PM upstairs in the Brass Room of the Los Angeles Maritime Museum in San Pedro, California. There will be elections of officers and a brief review of the past year and a look ahead to future projects.

At 6:30 PM we will have our special guest speaker, Brion Toss, who will give a talk on the topic of "From Spun Yarn To Spectra - How Knots Keep Pace With Technology."

There will be followed by a discussion period, with questions and answers, and (hopefully) time to get your book autographed. The lecture will be open to the general public for a \$10 cover charge, it will be free to all Branch members.

## Knotting Show and Demonstration Saturday, June 27th 1998

We will begin to set up the awnings and tables for the show about 9:00 AM on the front lawn of the Museum. Many hands make lit work and everyone is invited to come help. The Show itself is scheduled to begin at 10:00 AM and will go on till 4:00 PM.

Some of the demonstrations we hope to do during the day are:

Lindsey Philpott - Fender Making (everyone will be taking turns at this)

Darrell McNurlan - Worm, Parcel and Serve

Joe Schmidbauer - Macramé

Sean Vattuone - Netmaking

Tim Howard - Leatherwork

Maggie Machado - Chinese Knotting

Mark Sherman - String Figures

Mike Bowman - Ornamental Knotting

Mike Waring - Hemp Jewelry

Tom Mortell - Fishing Knots

All these demonstrations are subject to change without notice, depending on the whim of the demonstrators. Anyone is welcome to come join in with their own particular skill at anytime.



### **Monthly Meeting**

Keeping with tradition, we will be giving all Branch members the summer off to let everyone take advantage of the good weather.

The next scheduled monthly meeting will be on September 8th 1998 in the rear classroom of the Los Angeles Maritime Museum at the regular time of 7:00 PM. The Secretary will send out flyers to remind all members in due time.

Keep knotting!



**IGKT-Pacific Americas Branch**  
1805 Kingsford Dr.  
Corona, CA 91720

