



Knot



News

International Guild of Knot Tyers Pacific Americas Branch

September 1998

Joseph Schmidbauer-Editor

Issue #13

The Ashley Book of Knots: Corrections and Observations

I mentioned at a meeting last year that my copy of Ashley's was getting quite shopworn and I was thinking of buying a new edition. This led to a discussion of the corrections done to the ABOK by the Guild and just what exactly they might be. I contacted Mr. Geoffrey Budworth about it but he informed me that the master list no longer existed. Then a Branch member in ~~Seattle~~ Washington, Bob Schwartz, sent me a list he compiled from different sources and he also including some of his own observations.

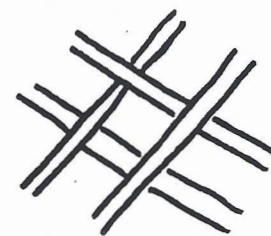
Geoffrey Budworth, John Constable, Colin Jones, Neil Hood and Bob Schwartz are the sources for these updates to the ABOK. Unless otherwise stated, the corrections are by John Constable. These articles from *Knotting Matters* 1, 28, 31, 32 & 33 are reprinted here by permission.

Page Knot

Comment

- | | | |
|-----|-----|--|
| 59 | 366 | Substitute Yardarm Knot #1149 for Sheepshank Knot #1154. |
| 122 | 697 | In bottom right illustration the single black line should be ABOVE the first strand, not below it. As shown, the strand is tucked under five strands whereas the text correctly refers to tucking under FOUR. |
| 124 | 706 | At the base of the knot - right hand illustration - there is an extra single line shown $\frac{1}{4}$ " above the top of the whipping. Note: it became apparent if the three strands are separately coloured (a device I found invaluable for clarifying text). |
| 133 | 743 | Lefthand diagram:
a) Single black line should preferably not be shown as tucked under the whipping as this is not necessary and is difficult.
b) Single black line must be shown as going OVER (not under) middle strand before tucking under right hand strand (as correctly shown).
c) There is a surplus single black line below whipping and above centre end hanging down. |

133 745 Top right diagram - the cross overs are not clear. Should be as shown here:



- 140 776 Jug sling lower diagram. The cross overs are not clear - particularly at the top right corner of the knot where the upper loop appears to lead the wrong way.
- 140 779 The single black line should be shown as passing ABOVE itself (where shown double lined) and NOT under.
- 141 788 I wasted a lot of time on this knot. The text describing the doubled knife lanyard knot is correct but it is incorrectly illustrated in diagram 'A' where the lead shown by the single black lines should in both cases be UNDER then OVER instead as shown. The doubling then continues as correctly shown in diagram 'B'.
- 145 803 Centre Diagram - left hand vertical strand should be shown as passing in FRONT of top loop and not behind.
- 164 883 The 'Crown' sits above the star and not below it as shown.
- 188 1038 Reference in text to 'Knot #387' should read 'Knot #2420'.
- 190 Reference in first paragraph to 'the next two pages' excludes knots 1035 and 1038, on previous page, which can be tied in the bight.
- 191 1056 'Same' should read 'similar' as knot is NOT identical.
- 194 1076 Single line should be shown ABOVE lower side of bight, not below, before passing through coil.
- 194 1077 A warning should be given that an uneven distribution of weight will pull one loop through to another.
- 195 1080 Surely this knot deserves a star (Page 27).
- 196 1083 A bad knot - should be omitted. The illustrations are, in any case, wrong.
- 197 1086 a) Left hand illustration misses out one strand at left side of knot.
b) Text refers to a 'dotted line' but there is not one shown.
- 200 1103 The knot is not of 'similar appearance' - it is IDENTICAL.
- 201 1100 Are these knots identical ? They seem to be, so I wonder if the directions, the drawings or my being all thumbs when attempting to tie the Theodore Knot is the reason I've never completed it correctly. [Bob Schwartz]
- 204 1121 This is NOT 'the same knot'.
- 205 1122 Reference to #1121 should read #1120.
- 208 1142 Bottom illustration is incorrect. It is in fact a mirror image of the knot formed from the one above. A far easier way of tying this knot is given in Eric Franklin's *Tying Knots*, published by Pearson.
- 210 1155 The lower knot is incorrect.
- 214 1171 Something wrong here!
- 215 1182 Cross reference to #1255.
- 216 1191 'Spot marked X' is missing from diagram.
- 218 1200 Center diagram is incorrect.
- 220 1210 The two ends should be shown slightly longer to reduce confusion.
- 221 1209 The text could refer with advantage to the use of this knot when a really tight bend is necessary and there is no second person to 'put a thumb' on the first half of the knot.
- 222 1223 This is in fact a single sheet bend #1431!
- 223 1233 & 1234 The bottom left hand corner of the right hand illustrations (#1233) does not agree with left hand illustration of #1234.
- 225 1250 Surely the ring should be a pretzel as this knot is EASY to untie.
- 231 1298 #1895 should read #1295.

231 1896 Should read #1296.

231 1299 #1895 should read #1295.

236 1325 If you look at the diagrams you will see the 'A' start for tying turksheads using pins around a bar. It shows the thin black arrow moving upwards to the right going under/under whereas it should be under/OVER. [Neil Hood]

236 1326 Similarly as above the move in under/under whereas it should be OVER/under. [Neil Hood]

262 1432 Reference page #274 should read page #273. [Bob Schwartz]

263 1440 Reference page #274 should read page #273. [Bob Schwartz]

263 1443 Reference page #274 should read page #273. [Bob Schwartz]

265 1458 At the lower end of this knot the short side is shown on the LEFT side. It should be on the RIGHT side.

265 1460 The same mistake as #1458.

266 1467 This is in fact a constrictor knot #1249.

273 Knot Security Table

a) Overhand Bend in left-twisted yarn (#1548). Should read (#1558) [Geoffrey Budworth]

b) Onerhand Bend, left handed in left-twisted yarn (#1547). Should read (#1557)

273 1544 Two small boards are not evident. [Bob Schwartz]

276 1565 For 'fay' read 'fray'.

278 1578 I disagree here with Ashley. It was quite normal for the ends (after tying a shroud knot) to be tucked as for an ordinary splice. In such cases if the shroud knot is tied 'against the lay' the lie of the ends is more suitable for tucking.

294 1697 Right hand illustration is incorrect.

294 1702 Could be clearer with advantage.

488 Top illustrations:
For #2659 read #2959.
For #2660 read #2960.

516 3106 The two sketches for knot #3106, coiling an anchor cable over a grating to dry, are mirror images. The upper plan diagram is incorrect for left lay rope because, as Ashley states in the text, a cable is usually coiled counter clockwise.
In a similar vein, sketch for knot #3104 is confusing. For right lay rope it is correct - but do our eyes deceive us? Has the master switched the shading from right to left lay in parts of the upper left diagram? It goes to show that possibly one of the clearest knotting artists this century is open to the odd faux pas'. [Colin Jones]

533 3267 Line should be crossed in (first drawing) opposite directions around the bill before taking turns. [Bob Schwartz]

561 3543 Knot #3344 should read knot #3544. [Bob Schwartz]

561 3546 Knot #3344 should read knot #3544. [Bob Schwartz]

561 3547 Knot #3344 should read knot #3544. [Bob Schwartz]

562 3549 Knot #3344 should read knot #3544. [Bob Schwartz]

577 3690 Should read 'First an eye of Six Strand Round sinnet. Lanyard: - Twelve strand matthew walker etc...'

578 3703 a) After '(#3001)' insert 'Tie a double diamond knot'.
b) Should #1593 read #1592?

609 a) Add 269 to 'clinch'.
b) Add 266 to 'constrictor'.
c) Change references for crown sinnet to 478, 497, 482 & 483.
d) Add a reference to cockscombing being ringbolt hitching to 569 & 570

612 Add 327 to 'Jug Sling'.

616 Add 'Rope making, 23, 30 & 70'.

617 Add 425 to 'Splice'.

The shipboard routine settl'd into, the Boatswain, Mr. Higgs, turning ev'ryone to upon the Project of tidying up the work of the Riggers at Plymouth, who've left far too many Ends untuck'd for this Deck-Tyrant, born under the sign of Virgo, so obsessive about Knot-work, as to provide a source of Amusement for the Captain. Mr. Higgs obliges the section not on Watch to attend Instruction in Lashings, Seizings, the art of making a Turk's Head that might fool a Harem Girl. "You may think no one'll get close enough to see it, but a Thousand details, each nearly invisible, all working together, can mean the difference between a ship that goes warping and kedging in to a Foreign Port, and one that Makes an Entrance. And which will the Scoundrels think of meddling with first, eh? Now I want to see each of ye hauling taut a Matthew Walker, that England shall be proud of," - implying that somewhere there is a Royal Museum of Splices, Hitches, and Bends, where their Work may one day lie upon Display. Some in the Narcosis of the Cruise are more than eager to adopt Mr. Higg's Obsessedness as to Loose Ends, becoming many of them quite picky indeed, scrutinizing the Rigging, often whilst fifty feet up in its Midst, for unsightly Dribblings of Stockholm Tar, Hooks too carelessly mous'd, fray'd Throat-Seizing among the Dead-eyes.

Mason and Dixon
Thomas Pynchon

Branch Library

The Library has been especially blessed with some notable donations:

Notes on Knots by Pieter van de Griend.

Knots and Rope Problems by Pieter van de Griend. Both donated and signed by the author.

The Hamlyn Book of Knots by Geoffrey Budworth

Knotlore by Geoffrey Budworth.

Both donated and signed by the author.

Branch Bits

Tom Hall of Texas writes "The article by Bryant Arrington *The Last Tangle in Paradise* (KN#12) was also good. One thing that will help him to tie the ring for his finger is to change what Bruce Grant calls a Headhunter Knot. He writes that, "A Headhunter's Knot is where the parts are even and exceed the bights by one." Bryant shows this is not true when he writes, "The rings are little more than 1/8" wide and are made to different ring sizes." Bryant needs to count the number of bights in the ring he has. If the ring is narrow and big around, it has to have more than one more bight than part. Also, to change the size for different sizes without changing the width, you would change the number of bights. For narrow Headhunter's knots, the 2 pass Headhunter's knots would have 7 parts (not an even number) and the 3 pass Headhunter's knots have 10 parts. Using these numbers for the parts, think about how many bights you need to fit the finger size. This will depend on the material used. He might try a 10 part 13 bight 3 pass Headhunter's knot. It is tied by first tying a 4 part 5 bight Turk's Head, then raising it to a 7 part 2 pass Headhunter's knot, and then raise it to the 10 part 3 pass Headhunter's knot. This might be an easier knot for Bryant to tie.

As for Bryant working with flat strands without a twist in the strand, rawhide and leather braiders do it all the time. One of these people might help you. Thinking of rawhide, it is worked wet then it dries hard. The natives might have worked the bamboo fiber wet or green, then let it dry.

As for making wedding bands, could it be braided, cut to size, then welded or soldered together? That would be a lot easier than tying it as a knot?

Dean Westervelt of Pennsylvania had these comments: "It was interesting to read of your attempts to tie the HH turkshead. Your 10/9 knot is somewhat easier than the 10/22 which requires two strings. You may have already read of my struggles with the latter. (See Dean's article in Pieter van de Griend's *Het Knoope Knauwertje* #9 or on the web at: <http://www.euronet.nl/users/vdgrriend/Articles/KK9/pp45.htm>)

Have you run across the Masurel Algorithm? It will give you any 4-part TH's (I believe you need a 4/5). From that point you can enlarge to the two- or three-pass knots. The three-pass knot is the O3 U3 O3 knot which you wanted.

I can't figure out how to tie TH's with wire. I worked for 37 years in the copper wire industry and I just can't imagine how to do it. I am sure that a layer of grease or wax on the metal would help, but there

is still the problem of the kink in the strand just before it tightens down. I even considered tying the knot using a strand of plastic, then investment casting and then filling the resulting mold with molten silver. It is the lost-wax process."

Bob Schwartz of Washington sent in this letter: "I think I'd better explain one more bit of info about my 'Tautline Hitch' as I presented it (KN#11). The straight length of line could *not* be hitched around the other line for added security. This can be done if this hitch is used as in tying one-half of a fisherman's knot (ABOK #1414) where the two ends are coming from opposite directions. I use it most often when securing cargo in my pickup bed, as I used eyebolts to anchor the canopy and have a length of 550 'chute cord secured to each eyebolt. This way I bring a line across from each side and use the knot to join both ends. I usually use a slippery half-hitch for the added security mentioned. It can be loosened as described before if the half-hitch (if used) is untied and the knot is slackened and then the end used to tie the half-hitch and the line parallel to it are pulled apart."

Dan Callahan of Alaska asks this question: "There is a request from Jenny on 'The Knot Board' for information on how to properly knot a glass buoy. These buoys are from Japanese fishing nets and they are a common find while beach combing in Alaska due to the Japanese Current. I have seen them from a few inches in diameter to over two feet in diameter. They are used as decorations, and when properly, they are very attractive. If anyone knows where to look for a source of this kind of information, please let me (and Jenny) know."

Raoul, Bruce & John
by Bryant Arrington

Bruce Grant wrote an excellent book, a classic

really, entitled "Encyclopedia of Rawhide and Leather Braiding". On page 410 he tells an interesting story about a knot that was shown to him. It was called the HEADHUNTER'S KNOT (of two passes). In Grant's words, "The man who first introduced the headhunter's knot to civilization never told how it was made."

Grant continues by relating the story as it was told to him. "As the story goes, a chieftain of a savage tribe had explained to him (the person who showed Grant the knot) how to braid the knot and then warned him that he would suffer dire consequences if he gave away the secret. However, (writes Grant)

as I have worked it out myself, I am violating no confidence and fear no savage vengeance."

Grant then goes on to tell how you can braid the knot with two passes. That apparently, is the knot that Grant was shown. On the next page, he has added to the knot. You must understand that Bruce Grant is a master of knots and could do just about anything.

His words tell it best. "As a headhunter's knot of over-three, under-three sequence, this may evoke a triple curse from the chief of the cannibal tribe for revealing the secret... The savage tribes of the Philippines use split bamboo weave this knot into finger rings. They also use it to adorn their spears and other warlike instruments."

After I read this, I remembered two blowpipes that my Dad brought back from the Philippines after WWII. A tribe that was well known for their effectiveness in killing with poisonous darts shot from these blowpipes. The two blowpipes (or, blowguns as some people call them) have been in a curtain rod tube for 50 years and I had forgotten about them until I read Bruce Grant's book.

I remember Dad had said that a tribe of cannibals used the blowpipes and that nobody messed with these natives. He went on to say that the Navy had hired this tribe to guard a supply station because there had been lots of looting. Once they were hired, there was never another problem.

One of the blowpipes had the headhunter's knot of three passes tied around it. The fiber is dark brown and has a rectangular profile. It is an extremely small knot. The ring is only about 1/8 of an inch wide. The knot is a single strand turk's head of 9 bights and ten parts.

Bruce Grant has classified as a "headhunter's type" any turk's head "where the parts are even and exceed the bights by one." I wrote an article in the last issue of Knot News describing how I was unable to tie the knot so small.

I had originally discovered the knot in some finger rings on Biak, Irian Jaya. I have been told that the rings are made by the highland Dani - a tribe that is very well known for headhunting. They still show their trophies to tourists and charge for photos. If you are interested, you can find a photo of such a trophy. Just do a search for Irian Jaya. They always include such tourists shots when advertising tour trips.

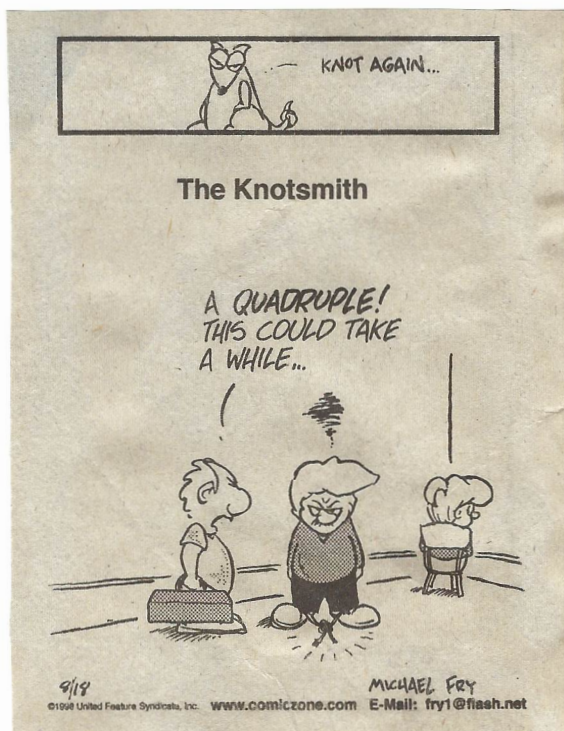
As a result of the article that I wrote, I was shown some pages from Graumont and Hensel's "Encyclopedia of Knots and Fancy Rope Work". On page 526, there is a picture of the headhunter's knot of three passes. It says, "The knot shown in this

illustration is in reality a variation of Turk's Heading and was shown to the authors by one of the descendants of an ancient tribe of headhunters. The manner in which the knot is made was explained only after our promise to never show anyone how the weave is formed. For this reason we are prevented from explaining how the knot is made... The original rings of this kind were made from bamboo reeds and were supposed to bring good fortune to those who wore them."

So there we have it. It was Graumont or Hensel who showed the knot to Bruce Grant. He, of course, was able to figure it out. Whether Graumont or Hensel were more honorable or superstitious is not our's to guess. We should certainly give them the benefit of the doubt and attribute their silence to a very real honesty. They kept their word.

I have tried to pull fiber from fresh young bamboo reeds and found it to be impossible. Perhaps the native did not give away all of his secrets. The fiber of the rings is very dark brown and under a magnifying lens does not look to be bamboo. But that does not prove much.

A greater mystery is how to tribes of headhunters from two different areas of the Pacific came to tie the same knot.



Captain Delano, who had now regained the deck, was uneasily advancing along it when he observed a new face; an aged sailor seated cross-legged near the main hatchway. His skin was shrunk up with wrinkles like a pelican's empty pouch, his hair frosted, his countenance grave and composed. His hands were full of ropes, which he was working into a large knot. Some blacks were about him obligingly dipping the strands for him, here and there, as the exigencies of the operation demanded.

Captain Delano crossed over to him and stood in silence surveying the knot, his mind, by a not uncongenial transition, passing from its own entanglements to those of the hemp. For intricacy, such a knot he had never seen in an American ship, not indeed any other. The old man looked like an Egyptian priest making Gordian knots for the temple of Ammon. The knot seemed a combination of double-bowline-knot, treble-crown-knot, back-handed-well-knot, knot-in-and-out-knot, and jamming knot.

At last, puzzled to comprehend the meaning of such a knot, Captain Delano addresses the knotter: "What are you knotting there, my man?"

"The knot," was the brief reply, without looking up.

"So it seems; but what is it for?"

"For someone else to undo," muttered back the old man, plying his fingers harder than ever, the knot now nearly completed.

Benito Cereno
Herman Melville

(Many thanks to Marty Combs for sending this in)



Wear Boot Knot

6 Part 8 Bight ends & 8 Part 3 Bight center

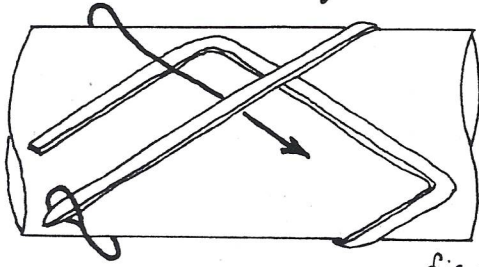


fig. 1

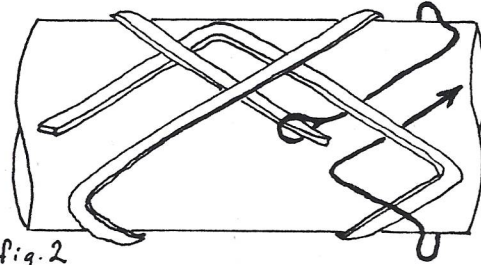


fig. 2

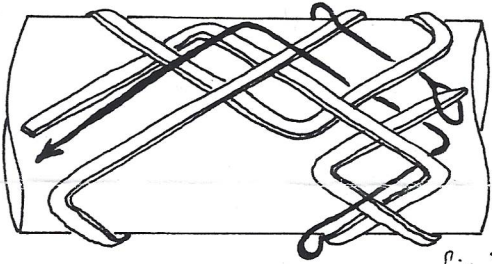


fig. 3

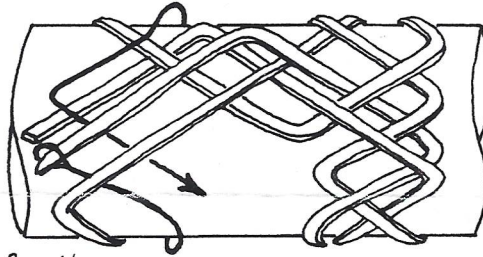


fig. 4

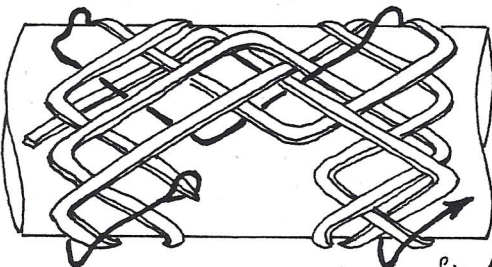


fig. 5

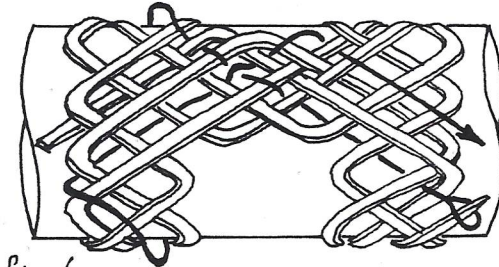


fig. 6

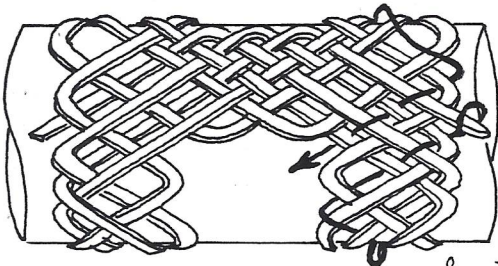


fig. 7

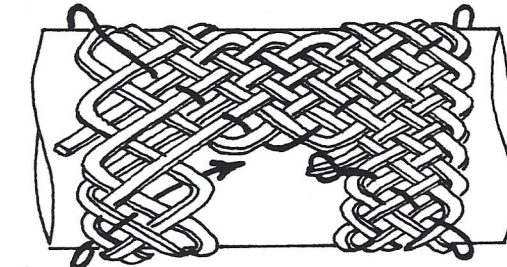


fig. 8

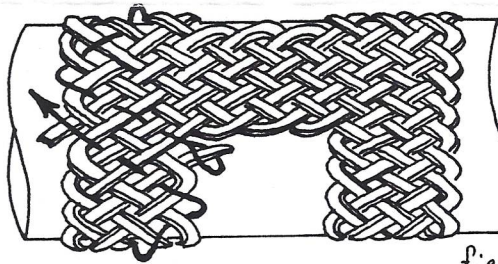


fig. 9

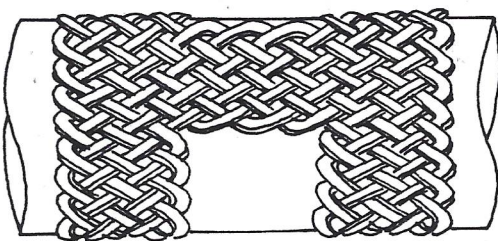
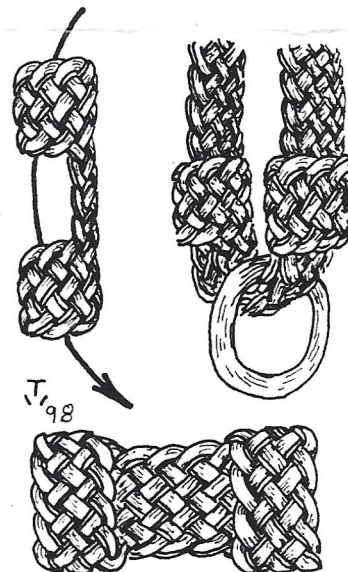


fig. 10



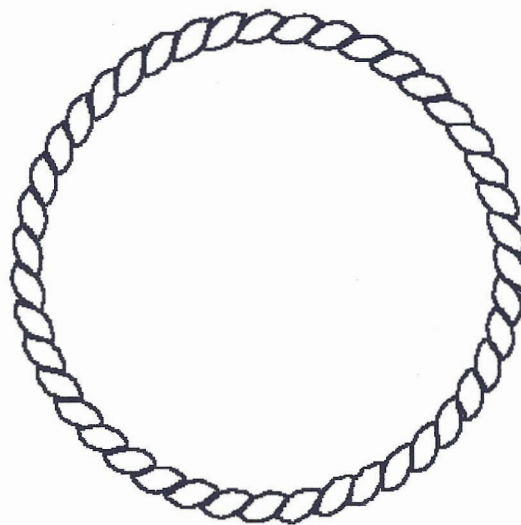
Knotting Events

September 25th Catalina Elementary-
School Knotting Outreach Program

October 10th Miller Children Hospital
'Medicine at Sea' (and knot tying too)

October 13th IGKT-PAB
Monthly Meeting 7:00 PM
L.A. Maritime Museum, San Pedro

November 5th, 6th, 7th American Sail
Training Assocoation



Knot News

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