

Knot



News

INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS - PACIFIC AMERICAS BRANCH

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Joseph Schmidbauer-Editor

Issue #34

Thinking About Knotting:

One Hand Constrictor

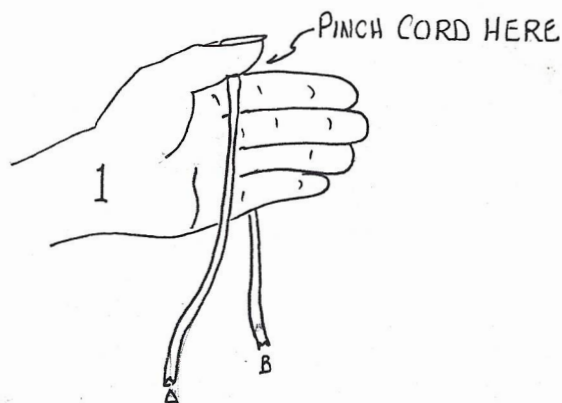
by Roy Chapman

One hand for you and one hand for the ship"...or as the waitress told my father-in-law..."I only have three hands you know!" So many times we are just too "tyed up" to have a spare hand to tie a knot. This is why so many knots are designed to be tied with only one hand. Take a quick journey through your ABOK... #426, #429, almost all the methods of belaying and making fast from #1594 onward and many of the hitches to stake and post et al, such as #1777 and #1779. Not to mention the knots tied with an implement in one hand, such as #1798. I tie knots from the methods in *Tricks and Puzzles* as often the most expedient way. I particularly like #2541; Clove Hitch and #2540; Bale Sling Hitch (Cow Hitch). Both of which I tie with my left hand as the smart hand is always busy somewhere else.

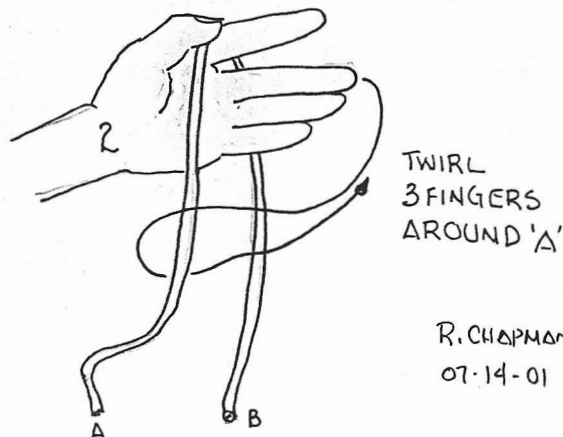
Of course I tie the often-needed Constrictor on a Bight with one hand. What? No ABOK #? Perhaps it is good old #2545? Well, here it is. It takes far more to explain than to tie. I recommend starting with #2540 and #2451 to warm up your hand. I also recommend tying it with your "stupid" hand, for if you are like me, the knot will only be needed when you are hanging onto something that is leaking, shifting, falling or bleeding with your "strong" hand. After all, you are learning a new knot; either hand has to be taught. You may find if you learn it well with the

off hand, you can instantly tie it with the bright one. Tie a Constrictor as in #1188 or #1251 and note it is a mirror of the final knot in #1188 and #1249. I think of there being two Constrictor variations, #1249 and the mirror image #1251. This method produces a #1249 but tied in a bight and with only one hand.

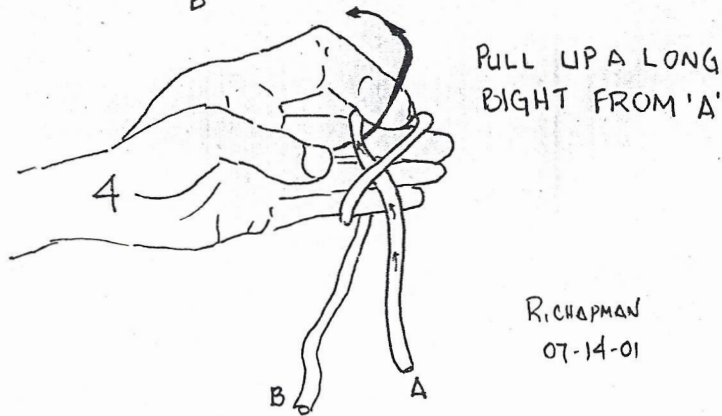
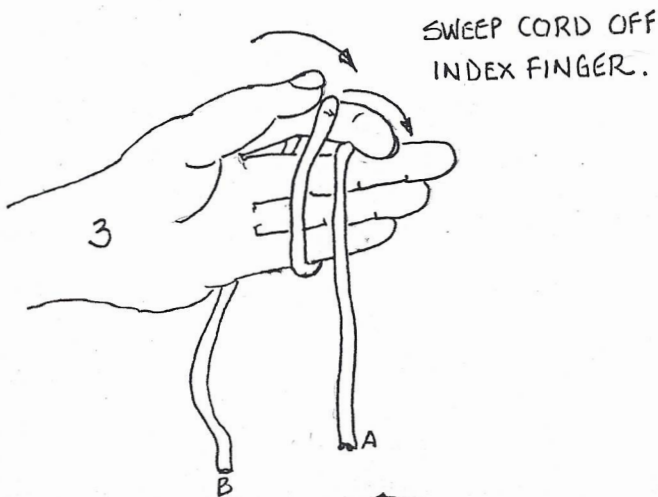
Here goes: middle 5 feet of 550 cord. Pinch the cord in the middle (fig. 1).



Point your hand at the deck and twirl three fingers around strand "A" and pinch it between your index finger and middle finger as in figure 2.

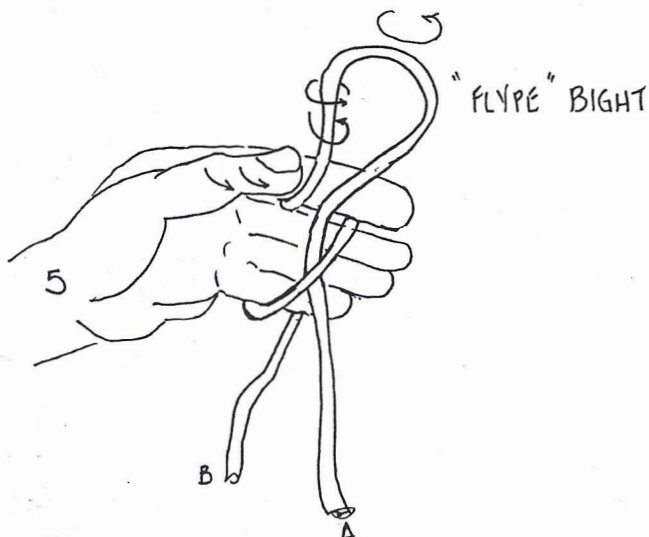


Sweep the strand off your index finger with your thumb as in figure 3 and trap it out there by pressing your index finger against your middle finger (fig. 4).

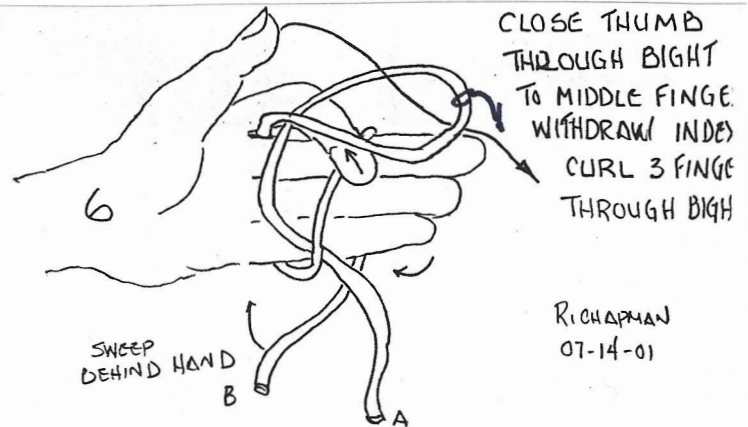


RICHAPMAN
07-14-01

Now slide your thumb under strand "A" and pull up a good bight. Withdraw your thumb to look like figure 5.

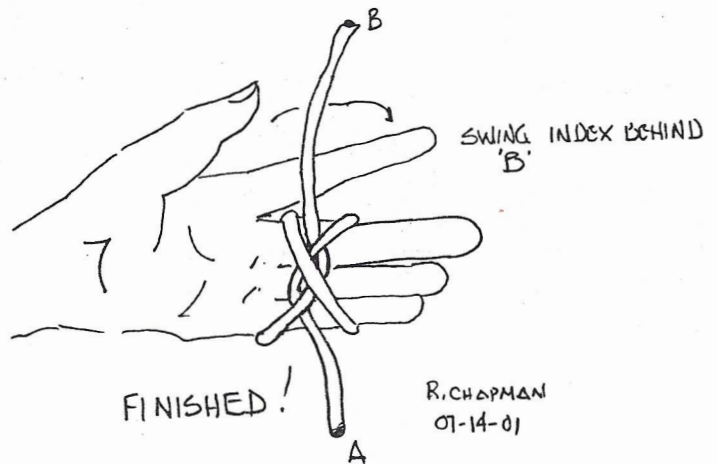


Now flip the bight over by rolling the strand "B" against your index finger with your thumb tip. Drop the bight down so it looks like figure 6. Thrust your thumb through the bight, withdraw your index finger, curl your three fingers so that the bight passes over them.



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07-14-01

Now swing your index finger behind "B" and you end up as in figure 7.



RICHAPMAN
07-14-01

TAKES 6 SECONDS TO DO THIS 7 STEP
VARIATION IN METHOD

It really is far easier than learning to play the bassoon. I often slide the assembly over the item to be constricted, grab "B" in my teeth, "A" in my now empty left hand and draw the knot tight enough to give me my back my right hand. By then I am usually full of adrenalin and can haul stoutly on "A" and "B" often accompanied by an unprintable phrase and a "That will hold you!" And it usually does. By the way, if you make a mirror copy of the figures and tie the knot with your right hand you end up with #1251. But not #2545!

Hemp Twine and Hemp Cord What's the Difference?

by Marty Combs

I'm going to try and get some information out that I get asked about a lot. Many people have asked me if there is a difference between hemp cord and hemp twine? Some one will see a piece that I have done in hemp and ask what kind of line I have used to make it. I will tell them I did the work in #85 hemp cord. Later on I will get a letter or an email from this same person saying they tried the same thing but it does not look quite right. Then they tell me that they used #85 hemp twine and that is when I have to explain the difference.

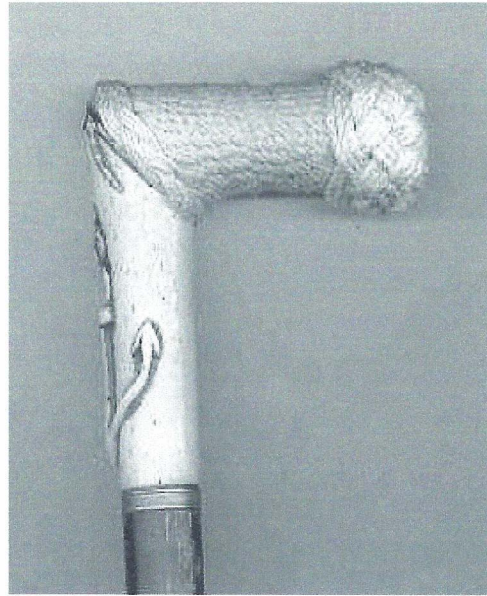
Twine and cord are both good materials but they have different uses. The easiest way to describe it is to say that hemp cord is made from hemp twine. Hemp twine is made up of hemp fibers into what I call a single strand material, kind of rough with a few bumps and irregular areas along the strand. Hemp cord is made up of three strands of hemp twine in rope fashion and has a much smoother and uniform appearance.

I like to use #45 hemp TWINE when forming a Flemish Eye that is used in making some styles of Bell Ropes. Because of its rough texture it makes a good binder knot to hold the strands in place until it is covered with Coxcomb Hitching. I don't use #85 hemp twine much except as netting for those Japanese glass fishing floats. It gives them an antique look because of its uneven texture.

I use the #45 and #85 CORD on projects that need a smoother finish like the coverings and Turk's Heads on bellropes. Hemp cord looks very similar to some linen or flax cords that are far more expensive.

I'll go ahead and give you some information on how to varnish hemp. If you use water based clear varnish it will leave the hemp its natural color. If you use a solvent or oil based varnish on hemp it will turn the hemp a very dark almost black color that looks good, if a very dark color is what you were looking for. Another thing that I discovered is that varnished hemp will be a lot harder than varnished hemp cordage. I have been told that the reason for this is the fact that the hemp fibers are much longer than those used in cotton cordage.

I hope this helps to clear up some of the confusion between these two types of cordage.



A refurbished walking cane by Marty Combs

From the Mail Bag

Bob Schwartz of Washington was kind enough to write us this letter: "Roy's article ["Knives" KN 33] reminded me of the few rigging knives I have acquired over the years. The first one was a British Navy knife I got for a carton of "good" American cigarettes - I didn't use - that I traded to a "white hat" corpsman on the *HMS Cossaks* when I was billeted on one of our 85 footers in North Korea in '52. He said that his medical cutlery was all he needed. The *Cossaks* was a minesweeper that we scrounged water from when all but one of our fresh water tanks sprang a leak. I noticed a couple of the crew wearing macramé belts, but never got a chance to talk to talk to them about it. They were busier than our crash boat crew. On one of our visits, they got called on a mission and left so quickly that their port side paravane tore the hell out of our starboard stanchions.

I could go on for more than two pages about this knife (that I still have) but I will hold off on its interesting history - at least to me - for a while.

When I served in England '57-'60 near Ipswich (Des & Liz Pawson's home town), I found a British Army knife in a local Scout shop. There were about five other versions available, only smaller, but this was the one I preferred. Besides, the blade on the navy knife was becoming a bit wobbly. I've used this knife ever since but held off using it too much when the cutting tip, due to excessive sharpening, would extend slightly when it was

closed. A few weeks ago I read in an outdoor magazine that this problem can be corrected by filing down the thicker part of the blade next to the handle. I might try to get the blade to close further.

Quite a few years ago I received a Buck 315 as a gift and have used it as my primary rigging knife, until I spotted a British Army knife in a mall shop in Eugene, Oregon a couple of years ago. It was a replacement (all steel instead of black handle) for the older version I have. Again my older daughter came through with it as a gift as she did with the Buck 315 years before.

I also have a very old Schrade-Walden 735 a friend didn't want anymore because it had the spike disconnected from the handle. I got the correct size pin to retain the spike but just can't get that part of the handle to hold it so that it doesn't wobble"

Bob Solon of Toledo, Ohio sent in these few comments: "Roy's last article talked about the marlinespike knife (often called "Spike Knife" on eBay). Mine is a Camillus "US Navy Marlin Spike #697. I purchased mine locally at a marine supply store. The price has gone up some but a very fine tool can still be purchased for under US\$40.00. I like Camillus because they back up what they sell. The one rule of any knife, especially a folding knife, is: Do not exert force perpendicular to the blade! Of course, I did just that and loosened my marlinspike. I returned the knife to Camillus to have it repaired. They sent me a new knife with no questions asked.

Dan Callahan of Alaska wrote this short note: "When I made it back from England, I spent a week in the hospital and I've been bedridden since (lower spinal cord trauma) but I'm slowly recovering. I think the eight airplane landings going to England had something to do with the trauma. I was not able to walk when they took me to the hospital. I can walk now, but it is slow going. I am pretty confident that my spinal problems will slowly heal and I will be okay soon. In the meantime, when I'm not groggy from the pills, I've been working with the Heel Knot from Bruce Grant's book *Encyclopedia of Rawhide and Leather Braiding*. This is the knot that Steve Judkins from the IGKT-Solent Branch was making and he showed me how to make (this is a "Type 2" Turk's Head knot). The type of knot that Charles Allard from France showed me was a "Type 3" Turk's Head knot and I'm still working on that one!! There were a few folks at the meeting that were very impressed with these knots and felt that this

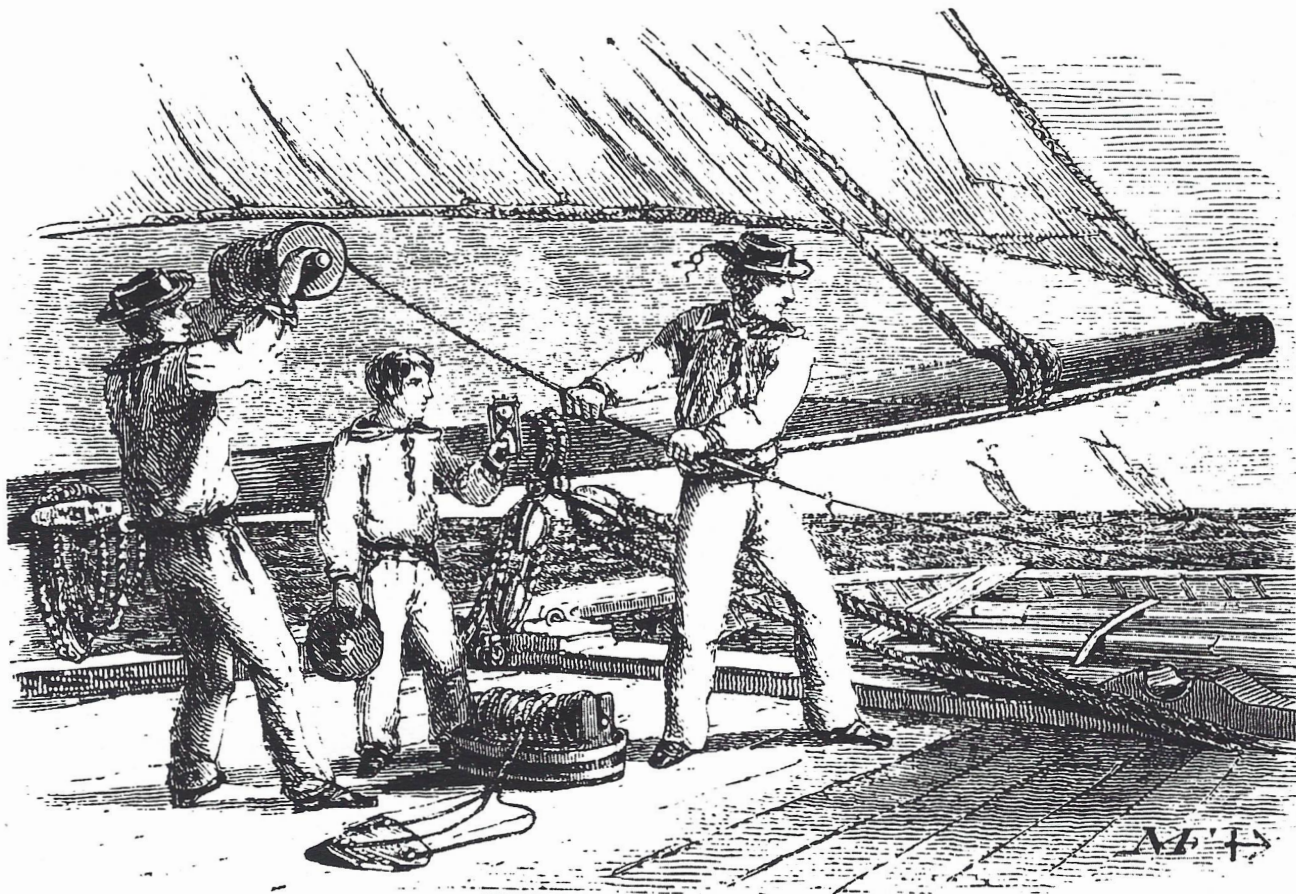
was the direction that Fancy Knot Tying is heading! Actually the Heel Knot was there all the time since Grant's book was copyrighted in 1972. I'm still a beginner at these types of knots and, although they are all "horse-gear" knots, I think they work first-rate cord! I'll be working on "Type 3" Turk's Heads. I have the ones I made with Charles Allard and hopefully I can figure them out (if I can still remember most of what he told me!).



Some key fobs done up by Dan Callahan

The Secretaries Corner

In a past issue of this newsletter [KN 25] I did an article about the log line and its use in the days of sail. A discussion followed about *why* the hourglass was 28 seconds and not some other time standard. No satisfactory answer was found. Dover Publications has reissued *The Kedge Anchor* by William Brady, (a great value and I recommend it as an addition to everyone's knotting library) I found this paragraph therein which might have the answer to this question: "The principle of the log-line is, that a knot is the same part of a sea mile, that half-a-minute is of an hour; therefore the length of a knot should be one-hundred-and-twentieth the length of a sea mile, or fifty-one feet; but as it but as it is more convenient to have the knot divided into eight parts, of six feet each, the proportional reduction is necessary in the glass. Therefore as 51 feet : 30 seconds :: 48 feet : 28, 4.17 seconds; but as the fraction can be more easily allowed in the line than the glass, another proportion is necessary, viz., as 28, 4.17 seconds : 48 feet :: 28 seconds to 47.6 feet, or the length of a knot."



The Branch is still solvent with our bank balance on August 23, 2002 being \$1,320.93. This was before I withdrew money to pay for the copies and postage for this newsletter so it will be a little less than this now.

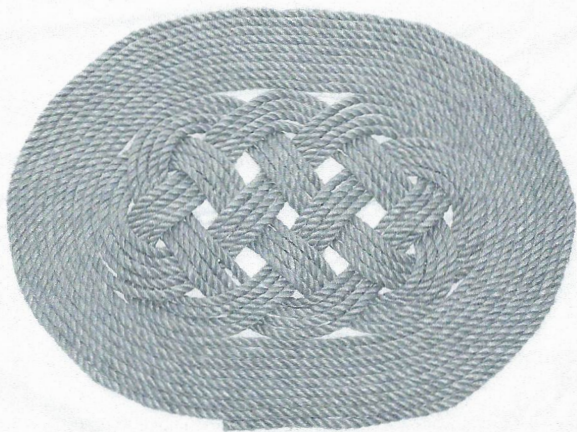
We have acquired two new members over the summer. They are Richie Hakim of Palos Verdes, California and Ed Koepsel of Hemet, California. An updated PAB Membership List is available from the Secretary upon request for new emails, phone numbers and addresses.

Branch Bits

Jimmy Ray Williams has been kind enough to create an account for the IGKT-PAB on Sony's Image Station. The URL is <http://www.imagestation.com/members/igktpab>. Anyone can go view there and view the pictures that Jimmy has placed there for us. There are pictures from the Twin Brigantine launching as well as the recent visit of the Ecuadorian Navy tall ship *Guayas*.

Jimmy Ray has also found a source of horsehair. DKG Leather in Long Beach, California carries horsehair bundles for \$10. That is if you don't already own your own horse.

José Henández-Juviel has found a source on-line that carries hemp, round brass thimbles, bench hooks, 18 oz. Cotton duck etc. The address is: www.Sailrite.com. Phone: 1-800-348-2769.



An Ocean Plat Mat

A number of years ago R.R.M Carpenter, author of *Game Trails from Alaska to Africa* (Scribner's, 1939), said to me: "I hate to take the chance on sailfish and tarpon. I'm afraid they'll spoil me for trout and salmon." Fortunately, I was in a position to reassure him. "You don't need to worry about that. I find that I enjoy swordfishing now just as much as I did before I went whaling!"

Clifford Ashley

FALL 2002 PAB MEETING SCHEDULE

Monthly meetings are held at the Los Angeles Maritime Institute, which is right next door to the LA Maritime Museum, Berth 84, at the Foot of Sixth Street in San Pedro, California. Our gatherings are very informal as well as being very informative. People come to show and tell or to share a new twist on an old trick. The meetings are on the second Tuesday of the month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. Please come join us!

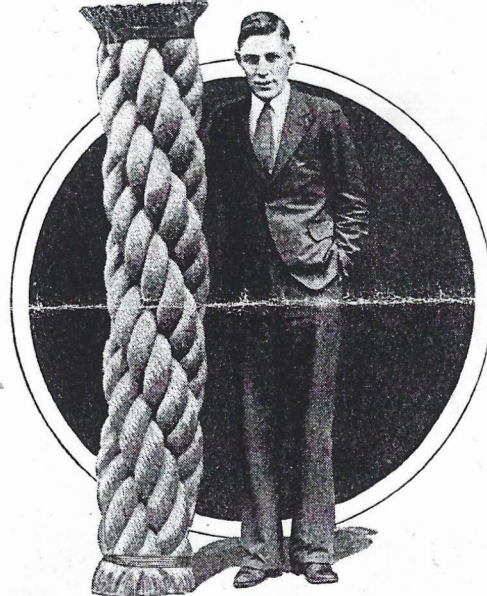
Mark these dates on your calendar:

September 10 th	November 12 th
October 8 th	December 10 th

Also, don't forget the Tall Ships Festival at Dana Point on the weekend of September 21st and 22nd. Volunteers are needed to man the booth and help answer the many knot questions.

Knot News

International Guild of Knot Tyers – PAB
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This Huge Rope, Three Feet in Circumference, Is Used to Hold Steamer Anchors

BIG ANCHOR ROPE OF FIBER STRONGER THAN CHAINS

Fibers, woven into a thick rope, stand strains that snap metal chains in holding the anchors of steamers off some of the Pacific islands where there is an unusually strong ocean swell. What is claimed to be the world's largest rope for this purpose was seen in Melbourne, Australia, recently. It is three feet in circumference, 460 feet long and weighs nearly two tons.