

# Knot



# News

INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS - PACIFIC AMERICAS BRANCH

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Joseph Schmidbauer-Editor

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## Monkey's Fist in a Bottle

*by Roy Chapman*

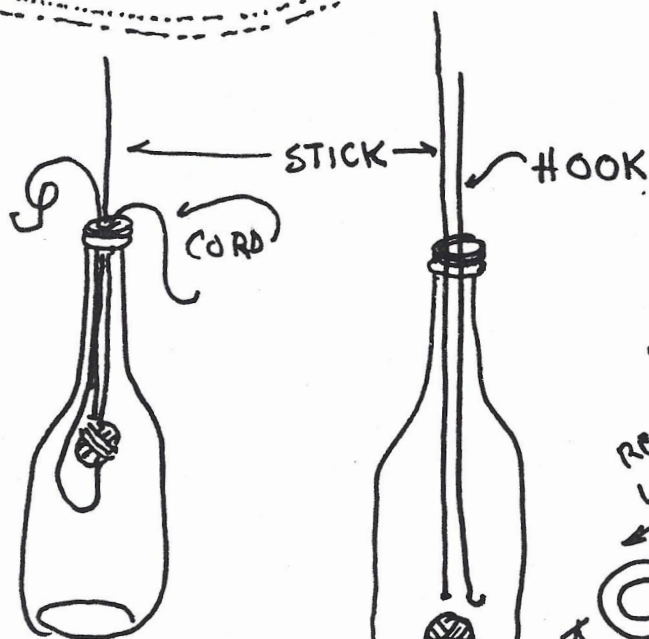
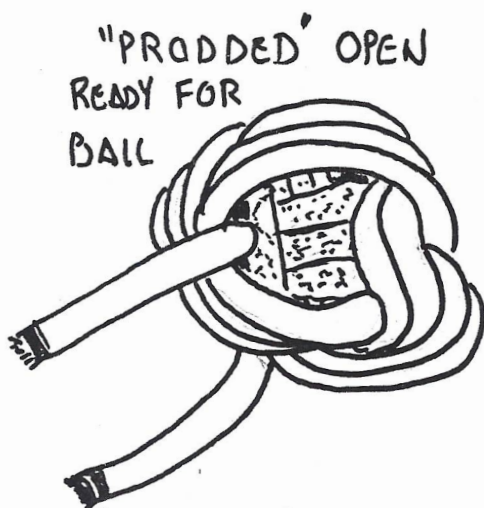
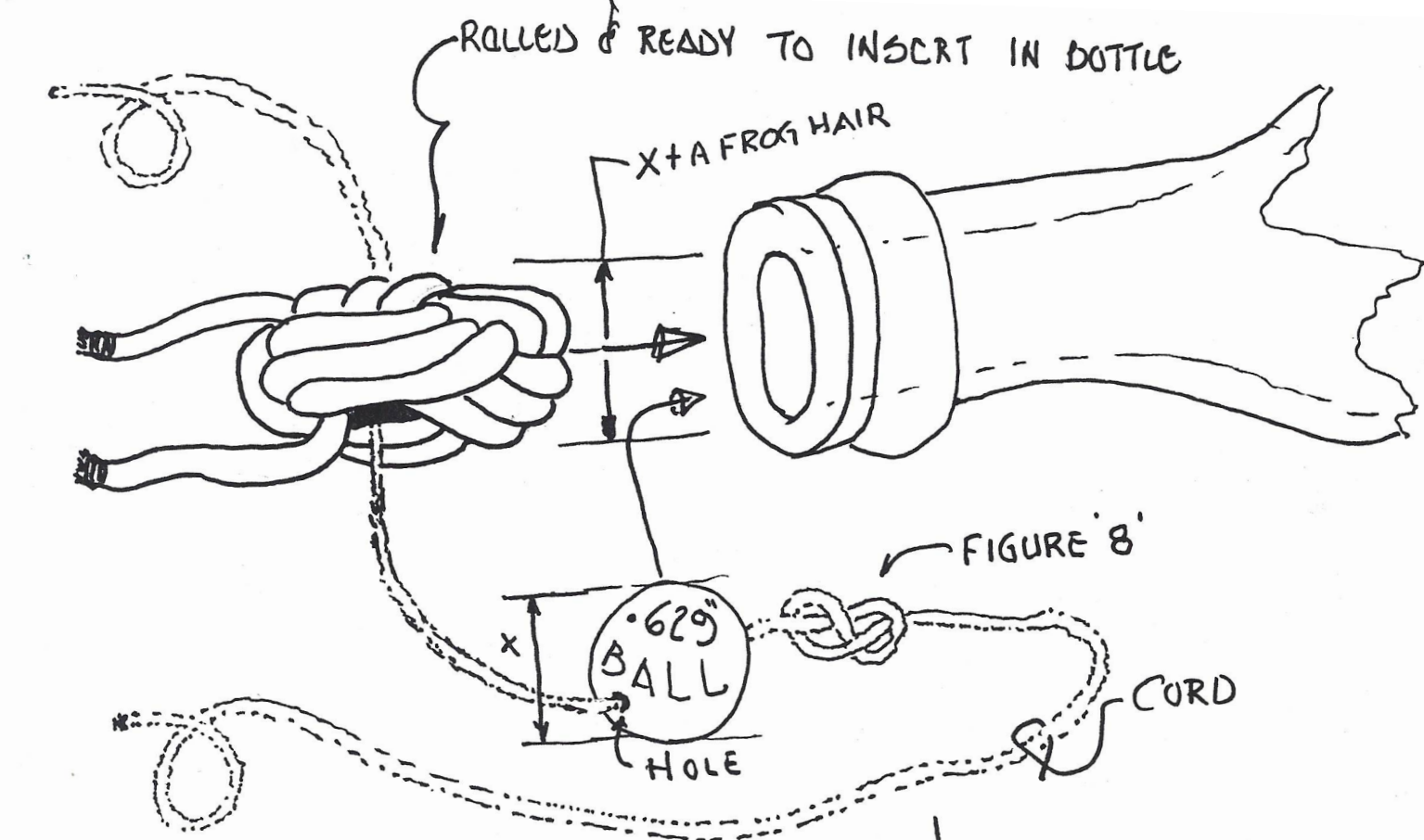
Some years ago, 1994 I think, *Wooden Boat* magazine issued an informal challenge by printing a picture of a Monkey's Fist in a bottle. The Monkey's Fist is larger than the neck of the bottle. They said something about, "What is this, all you IGKT types?" I am offering this how2 for those interested in taking up the challenge.

You will need to make a suitable "hook", just a simple bent coat hanger will work and you can use a knitting needle for the "prod" required below. Learn to tie a Monkey's Fist (ABOK #2202). Then select a nice white wine (clear bottle, don't cha know), good bread, a loved companion and create an empty bottle. Measure the inside of the neck and find a suitable ball, to look good it should just fit down the neck with room for a doubled very thin (1.5mm) "work cord". Drill or ream (an ordinary left-handed low-flaring zincfelt plate reamer might work) a hole in the ball. Alternatively, you might find craft shops that have wooden balls already drilled. I like lead, for it makes the finished knot move around well, "kaathunk", when someone shakes the bottle but pre-drilled wood is fast.

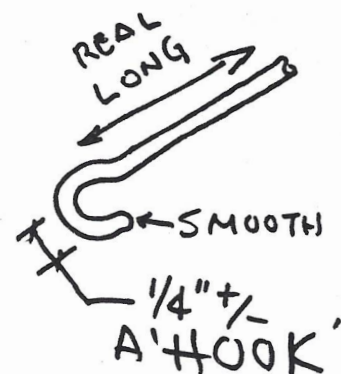
A ball .690" is perfect for a wine bottle, but pre-drilled wooden balls I found were 16mm, which is .6299" and work fine. Paint or stain the ball to match your chosen 'fist cord'. Thread 3 or 4 feet of work cord through the ball and tie a figure eight knot up close to the ball in one end, hereafter called the working end. Tie a Monkey's Fist in

some nice soft fist cord. I am using a fist cord that measures about 4mm under tension and fluffs back to almost 5mm when relaxed (that refers to the cord being under tension and relaxed, not you). The fist cord is made of "textured olefin fiber", whatever that is (macramé cord, I guess). Draw the Monkey Fist down loosely and see if you have completely hidden the core, just tight or loose enough to look good. Now roll the Monkey Fist open without actually changing the tightness and pop the core out. Now thread the pull cord through one of the compartments on the opposite side of the knot and see if you can pull and prod the core back inside. Use only your prod and hook and work in the bottom of a cup or tumbler, about the same size as your bottle. Simulate the bottleneck with your hand so you can see how much pull you can put on the ball to assist it in popping in. If you can then pop it out again roll the knot as shown in the diagrams. I like to put a two strand fancy knot into the ends, make tassels or some other knotting task that would be hard to do in a bottle, but you might leave it trimmed long or even very long so the finished work could be hung by the ends coming out of the neck. Play around with it.

When you are ready put the core (with the work cord and the fist cord) into the bottle, put the rolled knot into the bottle and prod the knot back into the open shape. Put the ball in and gently pull the cord that passes through the knot (the working end not the standing part). Let the work drop to the bottom of the bottle and turn it over by gently pulling on the standing end. Alternatively, prod the ball in and pull the knot up with the hook. If you have trouble, then pull the working end again and bring the knot up to the neck for a little more tension or prod the ball back out for some more



.629" = 16MM +/-



AS FINISHED, IN BOTTLE.

A "MONKEY'S FIST" IN A WINE BOTTLE!

R. CHAPMAN  
JUNE.2001



rearrangement of the pocket. Repeat these procedures until the core is in the knot. Use the probe and hook to fair the knot. From time to time pull all your tools out of the bottle and shake it a bit to help fair the knot. It might take ten minutes or it might take an hour. Try to keep with it until the core can't be seen at all. The first one I made was like some excellent wines, which don't travel well. As long as you just turned the bottle to look at the knot it was fine, but if you beat it up (as the postal service might) it would rearrange itself and the core would show. If you can't get it right don't despair, you can always pop out the ball and pull the knot out of the bottle with your hook and start over. It is important that the core not show. It dramatically speeds the solution of the problem if the person can see the core. Hide the core.

Finished? Write a note... "Man who can do this can do anything" (a quote from the cinema, I think) and drop an old pair of chopsticks into the bottle with note and knot. Or perhaps "You can do anything you set your heart to". Or fill the bottle with water and add a waterproof note saying, "You think tying the knot was tough you should try holding your breath that long". Any of these things will distract the viewer from the truth; a knot with a core isn't what it seems. And a note gives you a spot to sign your name and add "IGKT member" so our collective fame will spread. Now quickly... to the wine shop! No? Perhaps you want to put a Monkey's Fist in a milk bottle or some great antique you have. Let your imagination run. But tie some. You will be surprised how much interest this trick generates in the non-knotting population!

### From the Mail Bag

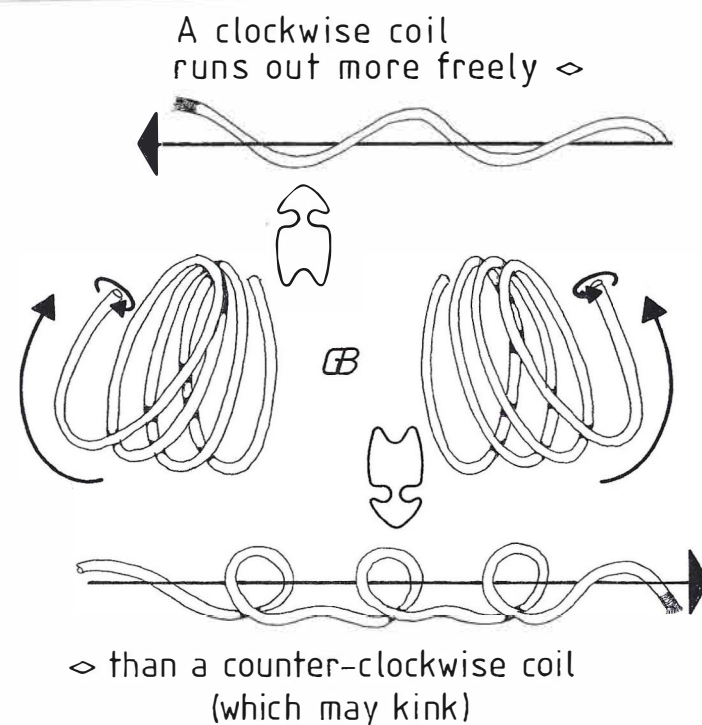
**Geoffrey Budworth** of England, writes: "I look forward to receiving each fresh *Knot News* from the Pacific Americas Branch and enjoy every contribution. To all concerned, well done. Keep it up."

In issue #35 (October 2002) Dan Cashin wonders about the convention that Z-laid or right-handed rope must be coiled and flaked down clockwise (while left-handed hawser-laid stuff is, presumably, wound counter-clockwise). For if I make what is from my point of view a clockwise coil, then someone facing me will see it going counter-clockwise. Similarly if I flake down a line on the deck - whichever way it goes - then, to a pair of eyes looking up from beneath the flake, it would spiral the opposite way.

It is not merely in which direction the rope is led around, that needs to be understood, but also the latent tendency of all lines to twist and squirm while being coiled or flaked down. Coiling right-hand stuff clockwise, we anticipate and tame its inherent contrariness by rotating the rope in the active hand clockwise (as the coil or flake builds). This incidentally *loosens* the lay. It can, however, be coiled counter-clockwise, provided you insert counter-clockwise twist, *tightening* the lay. Either method will work with laid line; and, when coiling of flaking down sheath-and-core or braid-on-braid, one way is as good as another.

The twist eliminated from the subdued coil of flake will perversely reappear, mind you, when the rope is run out. So a flake - which is the worst offender - should be converted into a coil (the larger and looser the better) before putting the line to work. And, since right-hand rope from a CLOCKWISE coil can absorb re-emergent twist by opening its lay slightly, the exhortation from generations of seamanship instructors to 'coil it clockwise' is in fact sound advice. The tightening of right-hand rope pulled from a counter-clockwise coil leaves such torque no escape except as unwanted kinks and snarls. As the American rigger Brion Toss observed: "...all those little twists have to go somewhere..."

At least, that is how I understand it. A brief but cogent explanation, by an IGKT member, of the underlying principles can be found in *The Alternative Knot Book* by the late Dr. Harry Asher, first published in 1989 by Nautical Books (an imprint of A&C Black Limited, London).





**Louie Bartos** of Alaska sent this in:  
 "I have something for your next newsletter: a quiz!  
 I'd like to find out how many people can identify  
 the origin of the marlinespike in the photo below.  
 This spike is made of solid bronze and was used a  
 great deal. It was NOT a decoration."

So, readers, what kind of ship would you find this  
 spike used on and what was the reason for its  
 bronze construction?



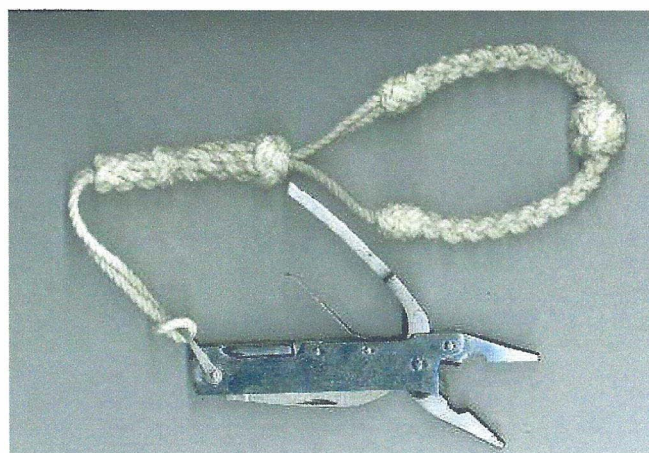
### Branch Bits

Here are some examples of knot work done  
 by **Marty Combs** of Virginia.

The one with the golf ball looking turkshead is  
 made from a six strand english sennit with the  
 turkshead covering how it is joined.



The one with the brass thimble is one strand of  $\frac{1}{4}$   
 inch cotton with crowning over the wrist section  
 finished off with footrope knots on the ends of the  
 crowning.



The one with the turkshead on top of the  
 wristband was copied from the Graumont and  
 Hensel book. I couldn't get the lower part to look  
 the same but it is crowned up and split into two  
 sections at the diamond then a doubled piece is  
 added then braided in a four strand braid knot and  
 joined at the top by a turkshead shroud type knot.



## Thinking of Knotting by Roy Chapman

I have been making a lot of bell ropes lately. I think the harder I work the harder I feel compelled to play. One of my favorite knob knots is "A Diamond and Crown", ABOK #852. As I was searching for alternative crowns I was rereading ABOK Chapter 10, "Multi-strand Buttons, Tied on the Table". Under ABOK #913 the Prophet says, "gives the same result as a Diamond and Crown of four strands". It doesn't. He should have said "similar". If you enjoy multi-strand buttons then I suggest you prove this for yourself. Bundle four cords with a constrictor (or make a short length of sennit) and tie ABOK #852. At the other end tie ABOK #913. See? Similar. That set me to thinking. Since #913 is a wall knot with a particular crown on top and #852 is a diamond with a particular crown on top, what would I get if I put crown #913 on top of a diamond? The answer is: something WONDERFUL! Try it. Tie ABOK #693. Leave it loose enough to double. Place the crown ABOK #913 over it (instead of over a wall knot). Follow the lead "below" to double both diamond and crown. Tuck the ends down the stem. I like this knot! It is very reminiscent of Pieter van de Griend's "Little Lump Knot", but in four strands. The crown from #913 is very much like Pieter's "cross fid arcs". Well. Now I have a whole new avenue to explore. I will be putting crowns from Chapter 10 over diamonds instead of walls. Some may work out. More cord, please!

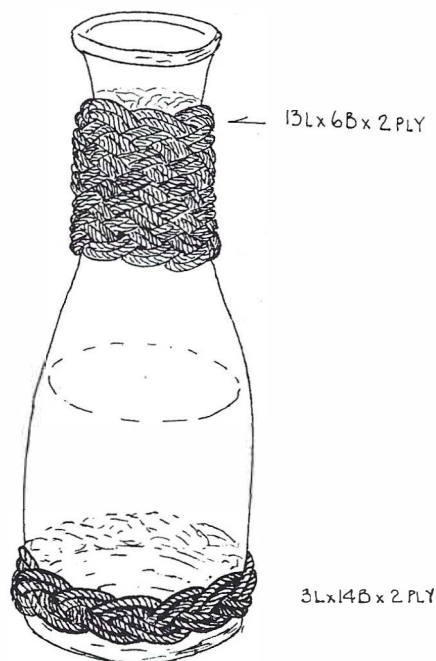


Bell ropes... my wife asked for another bell rope. "Like this one but with a larger knob". OK. I can do this. I toed the rope with a nice loop, a double diamond and some crown sennit. Knob? ...Knob? I tried quite a few. Then ABOK reminded me that covering a knob with a knot would be acceptable (no one would break my thumbs). I tried my usual Diamond and Crown and trimmed the ends. Then I used the same size cord to tie ABOK #2216. The Diamond and Crown made a perfect mouse. Now she says: "Nice, but how about something a bit longer?" More cord, please.



You folks with the internet must get all the best deals! Thanks to one of our fellow knotters I just purchased two 200' reels of 7/8" manila for less than the normal cost of the shipping. Once again snail mail has prevailed. I say this because having been directed to the Lehigh Group's web page I never did find the clearance sale items and only wasted two hours driving to and from a net connection and "connecting" before I got angry and phoned them up.

It seems to me if we all knew each other's interests better we could work our own IGKT "network". I "collect" blocks and tackles. I have thirty-five of them (must be a collector, right?), so I want blocks. And I can get (but have enough already) "shelf worn sail needles" in sizes 14, 15 and maybe 17 for \$.25 each. I mean this chandlery has 400 of 'em! Just going to rust. We have a newsletter and a membership list with phone numbers. I suggest you all write a little for *Knot News* so we can get acquainted. And be pen pals (or... shudder... e-mail pals) so we know who could use what. Heck, you never know when you will stumble on a garage sale with a bin full of "ordinary left-handed low-faring zincfedt plate reamers". Seem any three-shiv blocks for 7'8" manila recently?



IGKT-PAD  
R. CHAPMAN  
OCTOBER  
2002

### **IGKT-PAB Meetings**

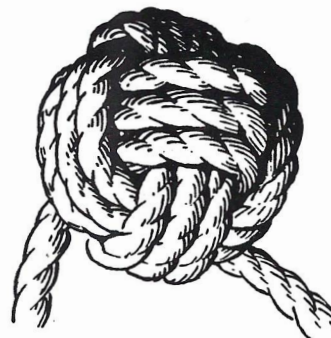
Monthly Meetings are held at the Los Angeles Maritime Institute, which is right next door to the Los Angeles Maritime Museum, Berth 84, at the Foot of Sixth Street in San Pedro, California.

Our meetings are very informal affairs. Members come to show and tell their latest knot project or to share a new twist on an old knotting trick.

The meetings are on the second Tuesday of each month (except July and August) from 7:00 to 9:00 PM.

Please come join us!

Members are also encouraged to contact knotters in their local area and enjoy the fellowship of others with the same interest (mania?).



### **Knot News**

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