

# Knot



# News

INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS - PACIFIC AMERICAS BRANCH

November 2003

Joseph Schmidbauer-Editor

Issue #41

## Fisherman's Fall Festival

by Roy Chapman

We would like to share a good day with all of you. The commercial fisherman's terminal in Ballard, Washington, hosts the Fisherman's Fall Festival each September. It is one of a number of fund-raisers that put money in the fund for widows and orphans of those of the fleet who have lost their lives at sea. The terminal is a bustling dock, serving the offshore fleet. Fortunately for IGKT-PAB our member Clint Funk's son, Steve, is the long-time manager of Chinook's Restaurant and plays a major roll in the organization of the Festival. At Steve's invitation Clint put out the call and seven of us were able to respond.



Roy Chapman's contribution!

We were provided with a covered canopy and display tables in a good location on the wharf. Steve tells us that last year over 10,000 people attended the one-day event and that this year seemed even better. My vocal cords feel as if I personally talked to that many!



Carol Wong and Maggie Machado

We filled three tables: Maggie and Doug Machado set up her display boards of flat weaves, tatting, Chinese knotting and split strand braiding. Pat Ducey brought his masterful cruciform Turk's Heads and other expanded Turk's Head variations. Garry Clements brought marvelous hitched bottles and covered spheres. Paul McNaughton brought his walking staffs and a variety of other work. Clint brought a pride of lions and a gator or two, becketts, ditty bag (overly full... isn't everyone's?) and his training table (a great crowd grabber). For my part I



hogged most of a table with my mats, bell ropes, tackles, staffs, fids and tools, ditty bags and key fobs. I also brought my Ditty Chest (2/3 size sea chest). International member, Carol Wang, came the 160 miles from Vancouver, British Columbia just to meet us! (most of us had 8 hours driving in addition to 10 hours at the show too, but all Carol had to do was say Hi!).



Cliff's marvelous teaching knot board

All of us were amazed at the huge turnout and the un-anticipated amount of genuine interest and enthusiasm from the visitors. We fielded literally thousands of knotting questions. "It is a fid... F-I-D... used like this." "No... actually it is a spherical knot covering... THIS is a Monkey's Fist." Yes, I can show you how to tie that, step to the training table with me." "No, I am sorry, this work is for display, not for sale." We handed out an amazing number of membership applications. I ran out of cards in the first few hours. We all "worked" our booth. I would greet folks with a "Hi! How are you today? What knots do you tie? None? Oh surely your shoes... Oh, I see... cowboy boots. Well step over and see some of the wonderful variety of knots our members tie."

I also noticed that having Maggie's tatting and lace would give the ladies (this is very much a family event) something to look at and talk about while hubby talked about the guy stuff (or the more masculine tarred work would please hubby when she looked at the flat mats and weaves).

One gentleman and I had a lengthy discussion of knots. He, it turns out, does much of the knotting at the Center for Wooden Boats. An hour or two later a representative of the Center came up, saying she had come specifically to invite us to display at their three day Wooden Boat Festival in July! This show draws few of the same boats that appear at the Port Townsend show, having only about 150 boats, but promises to have quite a crowd. We will be indoors. I'll write more as we get closer to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. It should be more fun than hotdogs and fireworks at the Grange Hall! Also it was very flattering to be invited back to the Fisherman's Festival next year! Pencil these dates in on your calendar... join us in having a great time here in Seattle.

Here is what I learned: events are incredible fun, worth any effort. You will not have time to tie knots. You will not have time to look at other work or talk about knots with fellow members. You will not have time to eat or... You will not have time to visit other displays. Knots are tactile, if you don't want it handled don't bring it (and this isn't just true of the kids). Have so much variety that something will catch everyone's eye (I would guess that far less than 50% walked by without stopping to look, talk and touch). Do not charge a dollar every time someone takes your picture. Be prepared to laugh a lot. DO NOT GET PINE TAR ON YOUR WIFE'S TEDDY BEAR.



Pat Ducey's crosses and chalices



## Branch Bits

Along with the show in Seattle, the Branch was also active here in Southern California with displays at a couple of venues.

On September 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> we attended the Tall Ships Festival at Dana Point Harbor. The event was held across the harbor on the grass at the so-called Baby Beach. We quickly filled the two tables provided us with our many different knot displays. It was a hot day and for a short while we were without shade (we had no awning) but then the angle of the sun worked to our benefit and we were more comfortable in the later afternoon. We also displayed our new PAB banner for the first time and it was a real eye catcher. Members Joe Soanes, Tom Mortell, Jimmy Ray Williams, Lindsey Philpott and Joe Schmidbauer all came to help out, answer questions and teach knots. Tom especially shown on Sunday, he was teaching a simple Turk's Head to a couple of girls and that caused a great crowd to gather around and watch the fun.



Joe Schmidbauer      Joe Soanes  
Lindsey Philpott      Tom Mortell

October 19<sup>th</sup> we also did a show at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium at their Autumn Sea Fair. Lindsey Philpott and Tom Mortell were the ones who showed up for this one. It was another good success and we were invited back again next year.



As you may, or may not, know I recently proposed to the IGKT that a Brian Field Memorial Fund be established for the purpose of subsidizing international travel trips by IGKT members. The proposal was well accepted by Jeff Wyatt and Des Pawson and thanks to their time and effort the matter was recently put before the IGKT Council for discussion. I am proud to announce that the Council has accepted the proposal. The fund will not be named for Brian but the concept remains the same. The final name has not been decided but it will something of the order of "The IGKT Memorial Travel Scholarship Fund". But as I told Jeff Wyatt we can make contributions to the Fund to honor whomever we wish. There remains a lot of work to be done defining how the Fund will be administered, how money from the Fund will be made available and/or dispersed and to whom contributions will be forwarded.

But at least this initial hurdle has been overcome.

Best to you and fair leads,  
Gary Sessions  
Secretary IGKT-TxB

## From the Mailbag

Louie Bartos of Alaska sent in this good advice: "Did get in some knot work, other than in the sail loft, my wife told me to make a new mat for the landing at the front door, he old one had to go. Under pressure it is funny how fast things can be made. The hardest thing was getting GOOD, smooth manila rope. The stuff I was able to get is very course, mediocre quality at best. It is nowhere near the old sailmaker's quality or rigging quality that we used to get. Also, I couldn't tighten the mat up enough. Anyway, here is a photo of the mat, the proof I can do other things when pressured. One other thing, I discovered that if you use silicone sealant on the back/bottom side after the ends are seized down, spreading the sealant with a spatula, after it dries you don't have to sew the mat together and it is non-skid and holds it firm."

**Bob Schwartz** of Washington liked the picture in the last KM of the boat wheel that I covered with Grapevine Hitching and he has this to add: "I did my truck steering wheel this past year. Because I didn't like the space caused by wide spokes the Turk's Head went around, I came up with another way to cover this space.

It can be tied on an attached auto steering wheel with a minimum working and viewing area, as opposed to a ship's wheel. When trying to use Turk's Heads I used a mirror to make them easier to tie. Besides a ship's wheel can be more easily detached.

Here are the directions: tie a row of square knots in each direction from the midpoint of the filler cords. I used nine square knots with 550 line. Lock the wheel so that the spoke you will be dealing with is at the bottom of the wheel. Wrap the row of flats (macramé lingo) around the spoke from the side of the wheel away from you. Join the lines together so that you now have 8 strands facing you. Using the top 2 lower (formally tying) cords as filler cords, tie a square knot around them with the next 2 lower (normally filler) cords. Then tie a square knot with the 4 cords on each side. Alternate rows with 1 square knot, 2 square knot, etc. Do this until you have enough of a length of 8-strand work to reach below the original row of square knot when wrapped over the wheel. Rotate the knotting around the spoke so that the 8-strand section can be pulled over the wheel toward you, with the ends tucked under and below the original row of square knots. I made about 16 rows of alternating square knots with the 8 strands. I finished with a 2 square knot row. This way the 2 cords on each side can be used to tie a 4-strand footrope knot, or any other knot you choose, around the slightly lower 4 center cords. Work it carefully to get it snug. The length of the 8-strand section may be misjudged. Don't get confused. When finished, the footrope knot should be facing you. You just try to tie a footrope knot on the opposite side of an attached auto steering wheel!"

**Dennis Armstrong** of Washington sent in this story to continue the discussion about Brass Monkeys from KN#38: "These fellows were in an outlying village in Alaska. It was a particularly cold winter. The smoke had to be pulled out of the chimneys to keep the fires going. One day the old boy was up on the roof pulling the smoke out when he slipped. He managed to control his the fall and was trying to get back inside his residence. The metal around the keyhole had shrunk so his key wouldn't fit. The doorknocker happened to be an, uh, anatomically correct brass monkey. When the knocker was struck it was so cold the balls fell off. Ergo the statement, cold enough to..."

**Sherry L. Schodt** of Pennsylvania sent in this request: "I am emailing to inquire about a knot expert. We are in need of contacting an expert to verify if a knot was tied by a left-handed or a right-handed person. The reason for this is because it will determine who is a murderer. My fiancé is currently serving a life sentence in prison for a murder he did not commit. The murder weapon was a pair of pantyhose tied in knots around the victim's neck. The murderer is left-handed. My fiancé is right-handed. We are seeking DNA testing and also need a knot analyst to view the evidence to verify the tied knot. If you have any information regarding this, please let me know immediately. My fiancé has already lost 20 years of his life. We need to get the truth told in this case. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania does not want the truth known that they put an innocent man in prison for a crime we did not commit"

[This is another example of the kind of letters we get that show how the Guild continues to be the source of knot knowledge. I passed this request along to our President, Lindsey Philpott, who is starting to make quite a for himself in the legal world as a knot expert and consultant.

Investigator John Cook of the Riverside (California) Police Department's Homicide Division also contacted us for information.



He needed some good advice about knots used in murder case and sent along some rather grisly photos for examination.]

### From the Secretary

The first thing I would like to discuss is a name change for our group. I have never been very happy with "Pacific Americas Branch"; it always seemed a bit too long and ponderous. It also makes us easily confused with the North American Branch. I suggest that we change our name to IGKT-Pacific Branch. Our name is shortened but the focus is broadened. We still cover the Western or Pacific side of the "Americas" but we also can cover (if we choose) all the other areas touched by the Pacific. I have been in contact (for example) with knotters in Hawaii, Hong Kong and Japan so growth that way is possible.

So what do you think? Don't really care? A non-issue? If I don't hear anything back from the membership I will take it as an agreement and I will go ahead and change our letterhead, information sheet and application. I will also have the webmaster change our name on the web site.

One good thing is that we won't have to change our initials: we will still be the IGKT-PAB... PAcific Branch.

The next item is our continuing dues drive. A good many members have sent in the requested payments but there are a number who have not. This membership is good till the end of 2003 and this will be the last KN I will send out this year, so consider this your final dues notice. Here are the ones who still need to step up or loose membership in the PAB:

#### Alaska

Dan Callahan

#### California

Cliff Case

David Clark

Dean Cole

Patricia Dunn

Richie Hakim

Stan Harris

Youngmin Lee

Marie Ortiz

Dan Peisker

#### Florida

John Paul Simmons

#### Ohio

Bob Solon

Kyle Wolter

#### Oklahoma

Mike Storch

#### Oregon

Richard Woodfin jr.

#### Pennsylvania

Dan Cashin

#### Virginia

Marty Combs

#### Washington

Robert Leggate

Brion Toss

#### Belgium

Gert "Willy" Willaert

#### Canada

Craig Macdonald

#### Canary Islands

Alberto Alamo Mendoza

I have had a number of complaints from members about their copies of *Knot News* getting torn up by the post office. This issue has been mailed in an envelope to keep this from happening. Would you like me to continue this for your issues in the future? It is an added expense but if you think it necessary to get the KN to you undamaged, I will do so for future issues as well. Please let me know about your individual case if I need to continue sending yours this way or not.

The last item I want to discuss is our upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM). We have not had an official AGM since the one held in Los Angeles in 2000. Lindsey has suggested that we have our 2004 AGM in the Pacific Northwest. We want to follow up on the success and enthusiasm of their first display and have an even grander gathering of knotters in their area. We need someone up there to suggest a venue and start organizing information for us. Our President, Lindsey Philpott, will be our point of contact



here in Southern California but we need someone in the local area to help make things really happen. Will you help? Our bylaws say that we are scheduled to have our AGM the last weekend of June. We can be flexible about this, though, and change it to any time of the year that would be most convenient to everyone involved. Please let us hear from you and let's really make this an event to remember!

## Thinking of Knotting...

By Roy Chapman

There is an almost unbearable desire to cover every surface with knots or hitches. Fortunately all those around me have been spared by my lack of a Turk's Head with a perfectly closed end. Alas. They are now doomed. After meeting Pat Ducey at our show in September I began working with his fascinating cruciform, pear and chalice form single strand TH's. It is amazing how far you can see when you stand on someone's shoulders. Why not tie a flat mat and a cylindrical TH combined to create a closed, flat end on your TH? I started with ABOK #2390 as my flat mat, giving 3 central bights and 6 rim bights.

I chose a 5Lx6B TH. Writing of complex TH's CWA say's in ABOK #1397, "An easy way to build up elaborate knots of this sort is to cut the bights of several knots and then tie the ends of the cords together to form a single large knot. When completed, substitute a single cord for the knotted cord. However, unless care is observed, more than one cord will be required." After proving the "However" to myself several times I finally arrived at the knot shown in the accompanying diagram. This is the briefest form I could find. Working the knot is slower than cylindrical TH's. I found it helpful to put it on the intended foundation as soon as I took it off the pin board. I don't find quite as much leeway in adjusting the fit as you would with a square TH. Using the idea of a flat mat on a 6 bight knot it can be stretched to any of the 6 bight knots (following the "Law of the

Common Divisor"). To do that I found it easiest to tie this knot as a "clue". I do this by placing it on a cardboard tube and putting 6 bight pins beyond the clue for 7, 11 or more leads then drawing the leads on the tube with a marking pen. Now I have almost no limits to the things I can cover with a single strand TH. Think of bicycle handlebar grips! Sweat free drinking glasses! Needle cases! I hesitate to think where this may lead. What will happen as I "raise" my knot the way other TH's are expanded? What will happen if I use other flat mats from ABOK Chapter 30? Will I create oval bottomed baskets? Will my obsession become an addiction?"

## A Clifford Ashley Quiz

devised by Geoffrey Budworth

1. Clifford W. Ashley was born in:  
(a) 1871 (b) 1881 (c) 1891 (d) 1901
2. His middle name is:  
(a) Walter (b) Warren (c) Watson (d) William
3. When Ashley was three years old his uncle taught him to tie a:  
(a) reef knot (b) sheet bend  
(c) clove hitch (d) bowline
4. He was encouraged by his father to learn a halter hitch when he was aged:  
(a) 5 (b) 7 (c) 9 (d) 11
5. His early artistic development was influenced by the school of:  
(a) Bernard Leach (b) William Morris  
(c) Clarice Cliff (d) Howard Pyle
6. When he was 21, the *City Directory* of New Bedford listed his occupation as:  
(a) an artist (b) a grocer  
(c) a student (d) a seaman
7. His chief knot-tying mentor aboard the whaling bark *Sunbeam* was:  
(a) Captain Charles W. Smith (b) Dr. Richard Knowles  
(c) Captain Daniel F. Mullins  
(d) Charles B. Rockwell



8. Clifford Ashley's original Oysterman's Stopper Knot was discovered while trying mistakenly to reproduce what turned out to be merely a misshapen:

- (a) blood knot      (b) stevedore's knot
- (c) figure-eight knot (d) double overhand knot

9. For a time between 1908 and 1911 he profitably bought, restored and sold old mahogany furniture which he had acquired speculatively in:

- (a) Barbados      (b) Jamaica
- (c) Trinidad      (d) Antigua

10. Clifford Ashley wrote for three of the four periodicals. Which is the odd-one-out?

- (a) Harper's Monthly (b) Sea Stories
- (c) Scribner's      (d) Scientific American

11. In 1913 he had a boat named the:

- (a) Auklet      (b) Sunbeam
- (c) Wanderer      (d) Greyhound

12. His house was a farmhouse in:

- (a) Westport, Massachusetts
- (b) Seattle, Washington (c) Mesa, Arizona
- (d) Richmond, Virginia

13. He relates how once, in order to appear properly dressed at a formal occasion, he improvised from a pair of round shoelaces:

- (a) suspenders      (b) a bow tie
- (c) a wristwatch strap (d) cuff-links

14. He was shown how to tie the fiador knot (or Theodore) knot by:

- (a) Charlie Chapman (b) Will Rogers
- (c) Harry Houdini      (d) Will James

15. Sometime after 1916 he patented a symmetrical sinnet, the cross-section shape of which was:

- (a) round      (b) elliptical
- (c) square      (d) an equilateral triangle

16. Which one of the following statements was written by Clifford W. Ashley?

(a) 'Old knots long out of use have a way of coming back into this workaday world with renewed vigor and usefulness.'

(b) 'It is extraordinary how little the average individual knows about the art of making even the simplest knots.'

(c) 'I have found many instances of different names for the same knot and of different knots bearing the same name and I had to compromise in some cases.'

(d) 'As a matter of fact... the wheel, fire, the cultivation of the soil, and other great prehistoric discoveries undoubtedly post-date the knot by countless eons of time.'

17. He once tested bends in a coarse yarn used for the manufacture of automobile upholstery. That yarn was:

- (a) flax (b) coir (c) cotton (d) mohair

18. Which of his 20 symbols sketched in *The Ashley Book of Knots*, each one denoting a particular aspect of an individual knot, represents the feature 'difficult to untie'?

- (a) three joined chain links (b) a pretzel
- (c) a skull & cross-bones (d) a wedding ring

19. The approximate number of oil paintings known to have been completed by Clifford W. Ashley is:

- (a) 50 (b) 150 (c) 250 (d) 350

20. The year of his death, at the age of 65, was:

- (a) 1937 (b) 1947 (c) 1957 (d) 1967

From the following sources:

• *The Ashley Book of Knots* by Clifford W. Ashley, published by Doubleday, Doran & Co. Inc. (1944, New York)

• Biographical notes by Elton W. Hall of the Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Mass., for an exhibition of paintings by Clifford W. Ashley entitled *Whalers, Wharves and Waterways*, dated 18 May - 9 July 1973.

[Answers in the next issue]

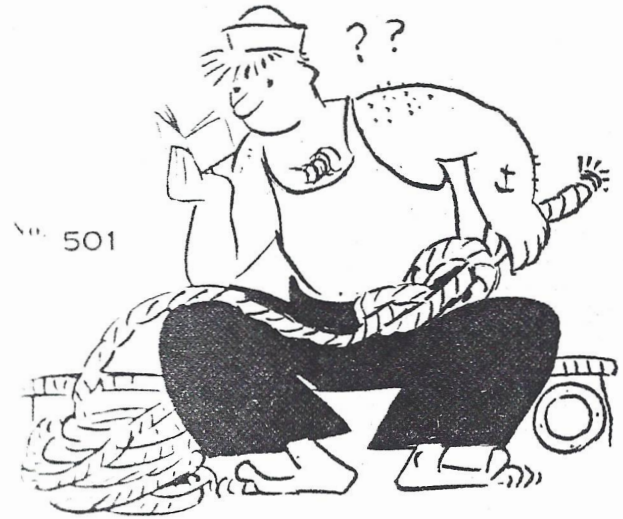
### **IGKT-PAB Meetings**

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.

The meetings are on the second Tuesday of each month (except July and August) from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. Our gatherings are very informal and everyone is welcome to attend. Someone always brings a knotted piece to show and it is great fun to see or share a new knot trick or technique.

### **The final two meetings for 2003 are:**

November 11<sup>th</sup> and December 9<sup>th</sup>



### **Knot News**

International Guild of Knot Tyers – PAB  
1805 Kingsford Drive  
Corona, CA 92880-7311