

Knot



News

International Guild of Knot Tyers – Pacific Americas Branch

November 2009

Joseph Schmidbauer- Editor

ISSN 1554-1843

Issue # 76

A “Real” Sailor’s Knife Lanyard

Jim “Jimbo” Long

This is my friend, Scott’s, Meyerchin marlinspike knife. He is a real sailor and owns several boats. Teaches sailing, races, can move a boat in wind that won’t move smoke, etc. The knife was a “thanks for working here” gift from his former employer, A Major International Mast Company, where he was a Master Mast Rigger...

The lanyard is a souci for letting me rehab the knife (work in progress).

My design parameters: DON’T GET IN THE WAY! Attach fairly, not lubberly – easy access, easy to use but hard to drop the tool. Don’t be ugly.

Here’s a first-order approximation:



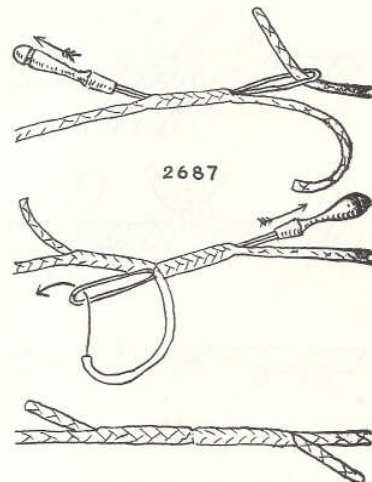
The becket on the knife acts as a safety release for the blade and spike, and it’s very wide as you can see. If you touched it with a stone just right, it would make a very good cabinet scraper, so a lanyard may not be appropriate for everyone. But this is about knotting and using rope, so a Real Sailor’s Knife Lanyard seems like a Good Idea.

In this configuration, sized to fit the User’s wrist, this lanyard will let you deploy the knife blade effortlessly if you let the knife hang down the inside

of your wrist, into your palm. And if you close the blade (please!) and flip the lanyard through the “V” between your thumb and forefinger, you can deploy the spike – even dropping it to work with fingers and picking it back up again – as effortlessly as you could imagine. Lying on a table it’s easy to pick up, and the “double braid” effect of the Snakehead Splice makes the wrist loop tend to lie open and easy to grab. You can grab the knife *through* the wrist loop and just shake it into place. Well, that’s what I think. It really does work for me and I hope you find it useful too!

So how do you fasten the lanyard to such a strange place? The answer should let me remove the lanyard without a lot of grief; important since the owner *might* not like the surprise!

The skills involved aren’t much to speak of. To make the wrist loop I used Ashley’s #2687 “Snakehead” or “Telescope” Splice at the far end.



This is just to close the wrist loop. Use a bend if you prefer, or whatever kinks your cord. If you can get the “bury”, the part that goes inside, to come out exactly right, it won’t have any “weak” spots. Using it to fill the loop makes sort of a “double braid”.

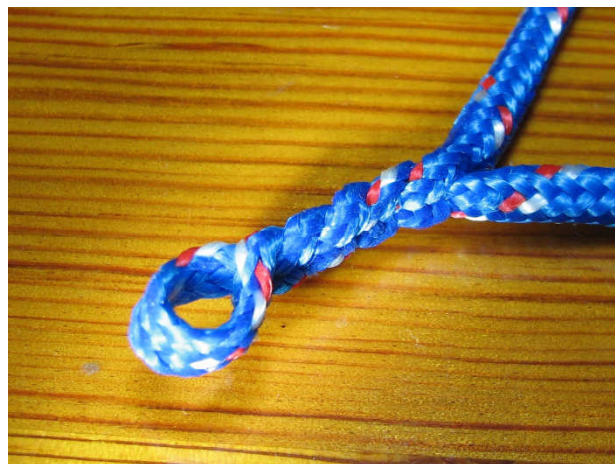
Hint: if you decide to put a stitch in the wrist loop to keep the Snakehead from wriggling apart (it *will*), don't get carried away like I did (you'll see). A single stitch, precisely where the two cords cross and exactly perpendicular to that crossing (and, I think, best done at the *moment* you run the Snakehead home) is all it takes.



As everyone knows, I really like the Brummel Eye Splice. I'm always happy to share it with others, so I'll offer that here in lieu of the actual details, to stay on topic. The only relevant part here of a "Brummel Tuck" is you pass 'A' through 'B', then 'B' through 'A' to lock the two cords together. The "outer" goes through what was the "inner", just a couple of 'pics' (where the braided strands cross) away from where the "inner" emerged. How many 'pics'? However many makes the results lie fair! If you skip a *lot* of pics before you take your "outer" back through your "inner", you'll leave a little "hole" in which you can hang stuff.



That's a hint and not at all relevant, so...



In order to get something around that wide becket, I took the "Brummel Tucks" as inspiration. Instead of taking the 3rd tuck into the other cord to make the bury I passed it all the way through just like the first tucks, *fairing each tuck*. This was repeated a few times to make a wee braid *almost* twice as long, less the wee Eye, as the Becket is wide. The "almost" is to allow for stretching. This is nylon so I expect a lot of stretch.



The Eye is purposefully made to *just* allow the wrist loop to pass through it. "Too tight" would be better than "almost", as Nylon will stretch. The idea is for the Eye to hold the lanyard in the Becket by as much friction as I can stand (well...). That way the owner can take it off, but it's less likely to come off on its own. Yes, that extreme tightness can be a problem.

Here's one way to work it out.

Take a smaller cord.



Reeve it around the wrist loop.



Haul it through (preferably not at the crossover).



Obviously you'd have to put the Brummel Tucks before you make the Snakehead Splice and I wanted a solid feel so I pulled the buried ends of the Snakehead out as close to the last Brummel

Tucks as I could. However you want to finish it is up to you. (Hint: here's where you can pull out extra places to fasten stuff, like flashlights, whistles, etc., just don't cut off the excess when you pull out the bury...). Now on to the fun part!

Think for a moment how the knot is going to come out and how this is the place to make it come out right. Your knife becket's may vary, but for this one I thought it looked best to have the wrist loop lead away from the Becket in the same general direction the Becket leaves the knife. Since the Becket lies across the body of the knife, this would hold the wrist loop away a bit while it was lying a-table, giving a hand a chance to catch it. Mostly it wouldn't fight the lay of the knife. Be your own judge but here's where you make that happen.

Start by sticking the Brummel through the Becket.



Use the string to start the wrist loop.



Then keep the whole thing fair as you pass the wrist loop through the Eye until it fetches up at the end of the braided section.



As you can imagine, pulling the legs of the wrist loop apart will help worlds in running the Brummel home! If your Snakehead didn't fill every last one, those last two or three braids act as a "dimple" in the rig to give the Brummel a place to fetch up and hold. Even if you passed both Snakehead buries all the way through (bulky), all the Brummel Eye has to do is hold the lanyard on while at rest, so let it lie. The Brummel Tuck part, folded over as you can see doesn't pull much, if you left "lanyard hangers" sticking out, you'd have to decide whether to pull them back or through.



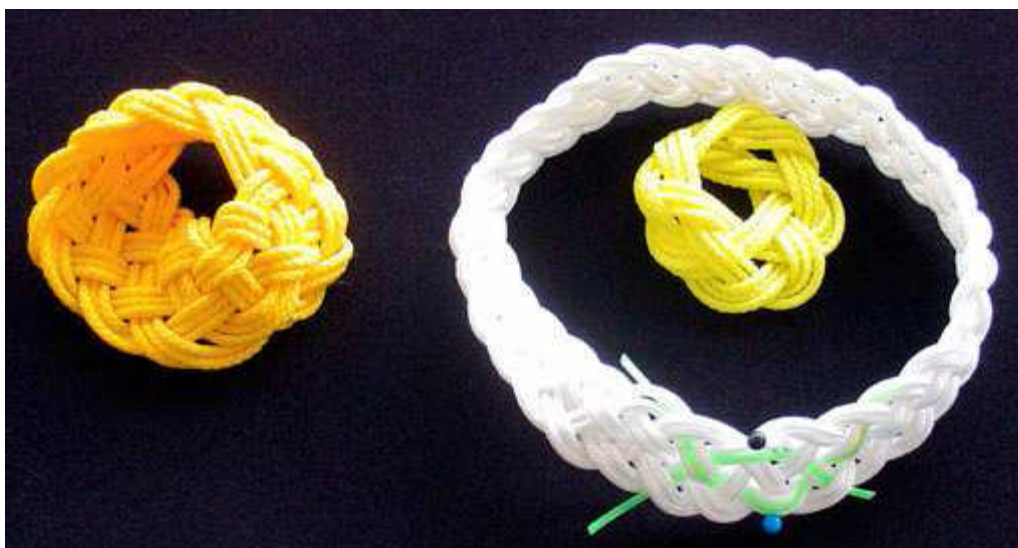
Obviously if this were done in Dacron or HMPE, the stretch would be much different, but this should get you close. I think if I were to use HMPE I would make the Brummel a *lot* smaller relative to the doubled wrist loop (this will use the slippery nature of HMPE) and make at least one more "tuck" to have all the braided part on the becket and have the wrist loop touch it exactly at the edge. Measure with micrometer, mark with chalk, cut with ax. And one stitch will stop a Snakehead! I hope this was interesting, or helps you start something else!



Hawg Poppers
Don Wright

Don't ask me how they got their name. It's a mystery to all I have talked to. It is related to the Harley Davidson Motor Cycle – affectionately called "Hawgs" by the bikes owners. I have an idea they could have been used as a quirt or a short whip to protect one's self in time of need or inflict hurt on someone else if needed. That's about all I can tell you about the name of these ornaments. I started with a 4-strand Round Braid and inserted a thimble and snap swivel. I continued on with 8-strand Compound Crowing and added 2 Star Knots and 2 Matthew Walkers – terminated the Crowning in a Footrope Knot, continued with Square Braid and ended in a Diamond Knot with a short tassell. I added some two pass Turk's Heads for fillers in the blank spots and to cover transition areas. The picture shows it in use on my brothers HD. He has gotten lots of comments. Several people asked him who made them. He really liked them as a gift.





Picture 1

Making a Möbius Strip

Charles Hamel

Möbius minus the umlaut [¨] is Moebius

People should most certainly wonder about how you did one with cordage: a conversation piece with a twist of intelligence.

May be that will send some of them on an exploration trip to the peculiar world of this strip?

Picture 1: those are cordage Möbius Strips.

Now, please, let us manufacture a paper one: take a strip of paper, say 25 cm in length, 3 cm wide.

Make as if to form a ring with it **but**, just before closing the two terminal edges together, impart to one of the two extremities a Pi radian (180°) rotation with respect to the other end.

Clockwise or counter-clockwise, either way will do. It will only change the orientation 'Z' or 'S'. (I prefer to avoid the inappropriate use of "handedness" as it is here far away from the concept of "handedness". Handedness is a neuro-behavioral preference – for a fuller explanation please refer to my web pages – levogyre/dextrogyre or left-chiral/right-chiral are more proper IMO) – *Picture 8*.

You just made a Möbius strip, band, ring, or loop.

A very unusual creature it is: only **one face** and only **one edge**.

<http://www.col-camus-soufflenheim.ac-strasbourg.fr/imagesite/Image-8732.gif>

It was, in fact, discovered by someone else than Möbius. LISTING is credited with a 2 months head start over Möbius (1858).

To make one in cordage, as basic as the small pale yellow one in *Picture 1*, you can use the template I drew: *Figure 1* (inspired by *The Complete Book of Decorative Knots* p100-101 by Geoffrey Budworth). 4 LEAD is, in my opinion, the limit when using a drawn template.

The larger golden yellow Möbius Strip in *Picture 1* did directly around my hand: a 6 LEAD Turk's Head served as a guiding mould.

This is difficult as you only have your mind's eye to see what is not yet there, and a single strand (one color) is not a good visual aid.

You can also try "cut Turk's Head" method, putting color marks, sewing crossings, cutting, then threading in the final single strand in this Möbius 3D scrap template.

I was not really satisfied with that.



Picture 2

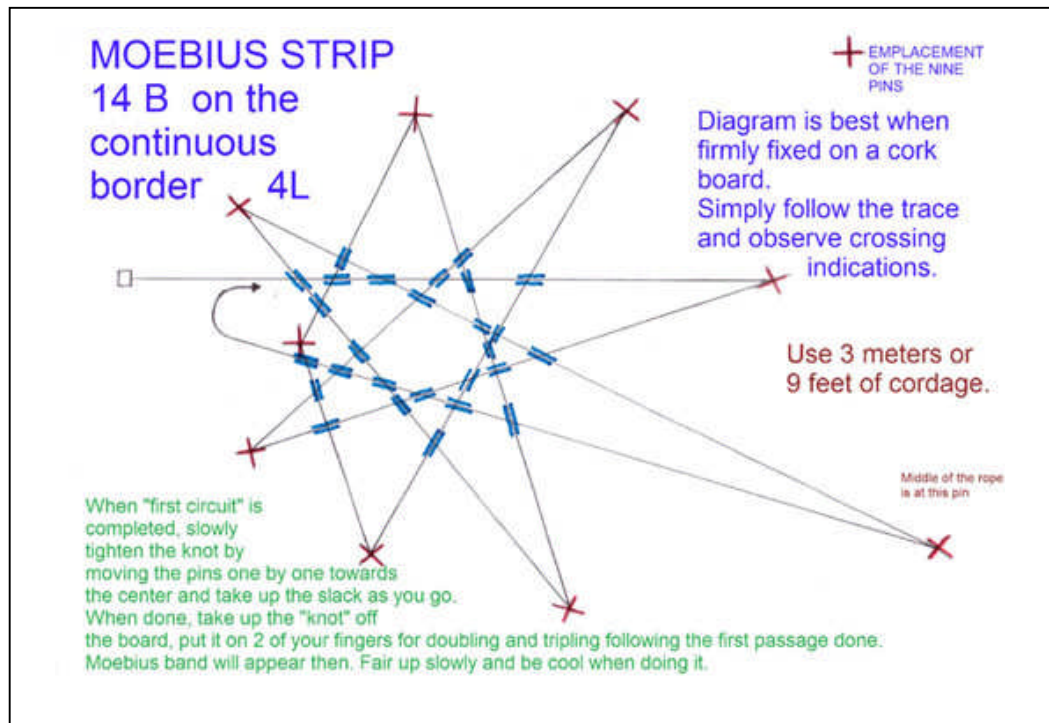


Figure 1

So I devised for myself another way to make the big white one in *Picture 1*.



Picture 3

Instead of using a 'very prone to mistake' Turk's Head mould (uncut or cut) I went the way of braiding differently colored strands to have as a visual disambiguating device.

Green (1),
Blue (2),
White (3),
Yellow (4),
Red (5).

To work use the colors as indicators, but to understand use the digits. In either case color or digit, it is just a 'nominal' variable, nothing more than a label.

If this braid is simply closed on itself with each other of the color meeting with itself at the closure you get a structure that can lead to a 5 strand Turk's Head. If each color meets with another than itself (there are four ways: number of colored strands minus 1) and if not any two colors leads one to the other then you get a mould to make a one strand Turk's Head by threading in a single strand.

Picture 4



To get a Möbius the trick is to treat the braided strip (Picture 4) as if it were a strip of paper: apply a 180° rotation to one of the extremities before threading each of the 5 strands to the other side in the correct sequence.

The starting extremity of the braid will be denoted SPart and the other extremity will be WEnd.

One way (there are a number of them that I will let you discover and derive) the five colors meet after the 180° rotation is:

Green	(1)	meet	White	(3)
Blue	(2)	meet	Red	(5)
White	(3)	meet	Yellow	(4)
Yellow	(4)	meet	Blue	(2)
Red	(5)	meet	Green	(1)

Using digits that will give this closed path.

1-3 3-4 4-2 2-5 5-1

A single strand can run it. Just what we want.
 Figure 2

1	2	3	4	5
2	3	1	4	5
2	3	5	1	4
3	5	2	1	4
3	5	4	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	1	3	2
4	1	5	3	2
4	1	2	5	3
1	2	4	5	3
1	2	3	4	5
2	3	1	4	5
2	3	5	1	4
3	5	2	1	4
3	5	4	2	1
5	4	3	2	1
5	4	1	3	2
4	1	5	3	2
4	1	2	5	3
1	2	4	5	3
1	2	3	4	5

Having used a Turk's Head as a mould for making a Möbius strip allowed me to see that transforming a Turk's Head into a Möbius strip is costing you the loss of some Big Turk's Heads and some change in the crossing.

Ex: with a 3 LEAD 20 BIGHT Turk's Head you will not get a 40 Bight Möbius but, at most, a 37 Bight.

When using the braid mould that fact is less evident.

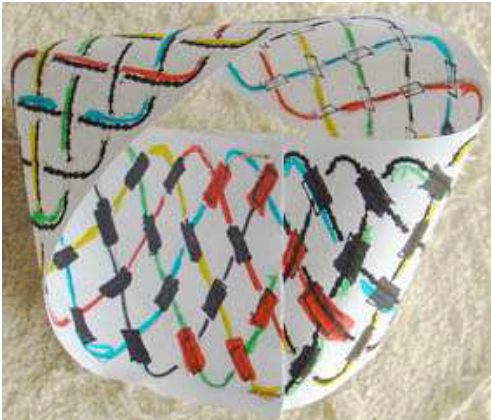
Note that the part where the closure is done has a special construction compared to the rest. (Pictures 5 to 7)



Picture 5



Picture 6



Picture 7

12345 WEnd
 Without the 180° rotation being made before closing the braid you get a mould for a Turk's Head.

For a 5 STRAND Turk's Head, the "closure" is = **12345 SPart**.

For a single STRAND Turk's Head mould you may use any one of those 4 closed circuits.

23514	35214	41532	54132
12345	12345	12345	12345

See Figure 2 to visualize. Print it and play with it.

The closure sequence I used (after 180°) for the large white Möbius was:

12345 WEnd
35421 SPart

I think that I have given more than enough to let you know how to do your own LISTING Strip (I want to give something back to that mathematician).

There are many other closure sequences available for a closed path (I got 60 all told if you don't differentiate which is WEnd and which is SPart and 120 if you want to hold on SPart/WEnd difference).

Use *Figure 3* if you want to work them out like I did (computation and experimentation).

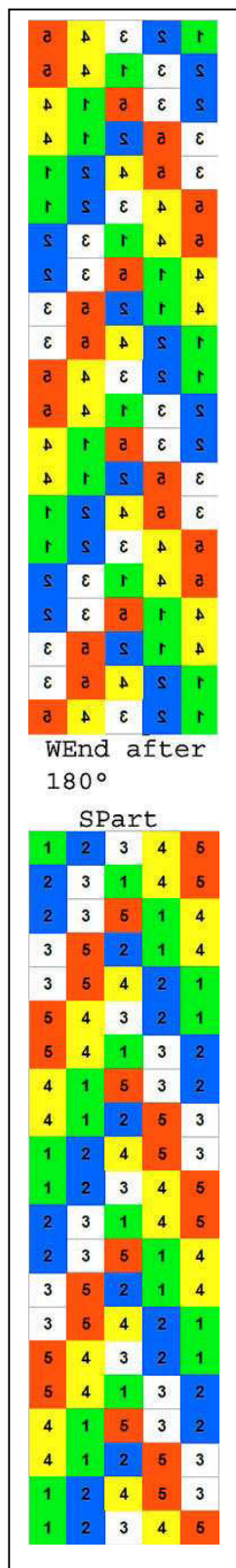


Figure 3

Just a few examples:

41532 35421
54321 41253

35214 54321
54132 12453

35214 23514
41532 12345

23145 23514
54321 35421

35214 35421
23145 54132

I made 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 LEAD Möbius but who will show a 17, 19, 23 LEAD or more in the next KN issue?

The glove is on the floor!

A word to the wise: the length should be many times over the width, just play with the paper to experiment with what I mean.

Don't use too soft, or too stiff a cordage.

Any ODD number of 180° rotation will lead to another sort of Möbius but I will let that well enough alone.

Try them if you dare!

EVEN numbers of 180° rotation *do not* produce Möbius, but 2 FACE and 2 EDGE structures.

Now, some links, to open more vistas.

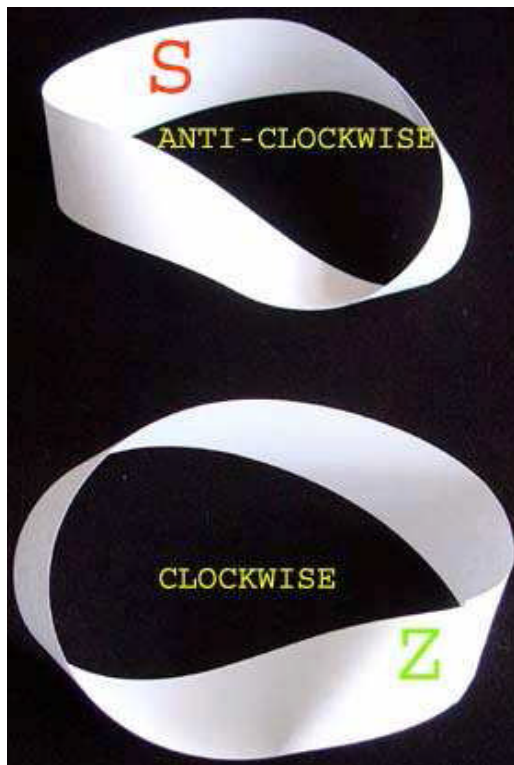
<http://web.meson.org/topology/mobius.php>
a seamless strip

<http://www.math.wayne.edu/~isaksen/Expository/vis-math-paper/node4.html>

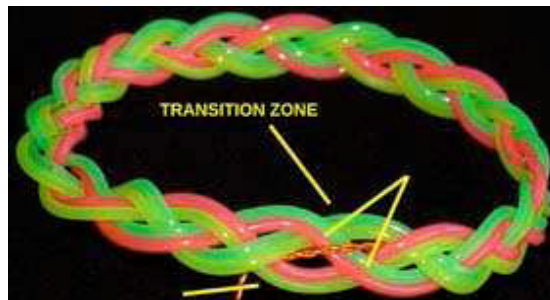
<http://www.math.wayne.edu/~isaksen/Expository/vis-math-paper/node2.html>

a Möbius STITCH that should be honey to those making so called "survival belt"

<http://www.toroidalsnark.net/mathknit.html>

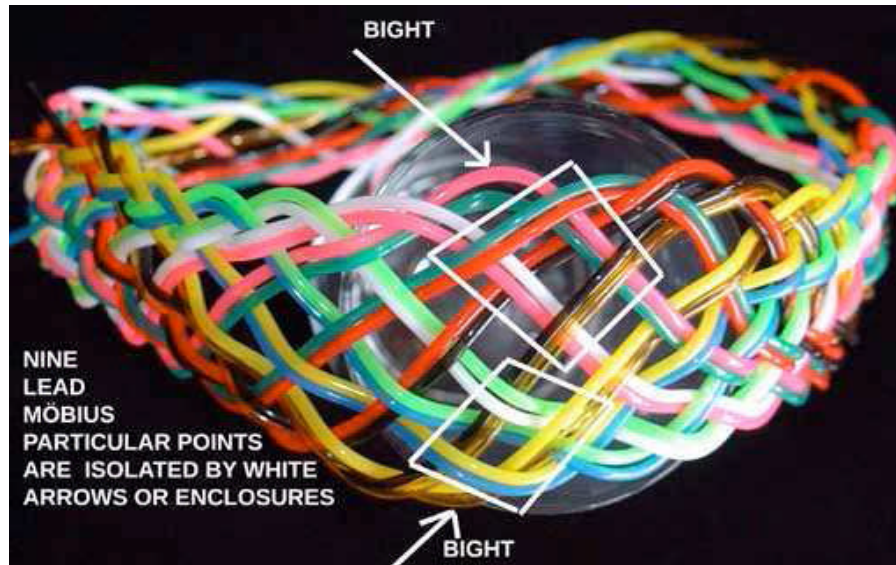


Picture 8



Picture 9

30th May 2008
Vitry-sur-Seine – FRANCE
©Charles Hamel aka Nautile
In loving homage to my late Father



From the Mail Bag
“On the Dutch Naval and Merchant Marine Bowline”

Louie Bartos of , Alaska sent this in: “Comment on the last Knot News regarding the discussion on the bowline. This was many years ago, an old Swedish sailor showed me a very quick bowline method that in Pieter’s illustration turns out to be “Bowline 2”. Later in life when I showed this very quick method, I was told by a higher authority, “THAT IS NOT A PROPER BOWLINE!!! I tried to explain that this was a good method as told to me by an old Swedish square rig shellback. Not so Not so! I will try to write up one of the many ways I was taught to tie this knot.

As I have said many times before, I am not a fancywork knot tyer. I am into the practical and the historical. A newly acquired friend, a J24 sailor/racer, that is now OPS Officer on the Coast Guard Cutter *Acushnet*, asked me to make a new bell rope for the cutter’s bell. They were having a change in command so it would be great to have a new bell rope. This cutter has a large bell in a strange location. I agreed to do it in my very limited free time and said it would not be ultra fancy. The bell rope is 29.5” long with a thimble on both ends, the lower on to fix the bell under way in a 30 foot sea. It is not much but below are a couple of photos.”



The Boatswain, Louie Bartos and the OPS Officer on the *Acushnet*

Kay Fielding of , Oregon wrote: “I have been trying Bowline 1 & 2 and shaking them both to see which one holds better. I think #1 holds better, is that true? Also on reading the article, I discovered a family name. My father was from Denmark. There are Koefoeds on his mother’s side. I have known some here and have a cousin in Illinois who comes from Koefoeds. A fun finding

since we know little about that family tree over there. I forwarded him the article. Thanks for a good newsletter."

Pieter van de Griend of , Netherlands had this reply: "What a great response to the Bowline paper! Imagine finding a descendant to Georg Koefoed. That man left an interesting, but very obscure seamanship's manual for Kronberg's manuscript collection. He was probably the first Dane to show knots used at sea."

Bob Solon of , Ohio and the members of the Executive Committee discuss marketing strategy at the Marine Mart of the Toledo Classic Boat Show.



"We had a good time although it did get boring toward the end of the day. We covered expenses and made a modest profit. Some of the tables around us took a real beating. The fids will each go back into an old sock and crawl back into my Mom's dresser. A couple will get refinished, not that they actually need it. I don't know how one got into the drawer – it needs a rope handle."

I recently went to see the movie 'Julie and Julia' the story of a woman who cooks all of the recipes in Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* in a single year. This lead me to read *My Life in France* by Julia Child, wherein Julia describes her husband, Paul Child, in this manner: "He was a physical person, a black belt in judo, a man who loved to tie complicated knots or to carve a piece of wood."

How can you not like somebody like that?

Roy Chapman of , Washington sells these signature hemp bracelets at the local weekend Farmer's Market.

