

# Knot



# News

**International Guild of Knot Tyers – Pacific Americas Branch**

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**Joseph Schmidbauer – Editor**

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## **Editor Redux...**

Joe Schmidbauer

I am pleased to announce that I am returning, once again, as editor of the *Knot News* newsletter. Since we last talked I have moved from Southern California to Washington State here in the Pacific Northwest. I was laid-off from my toolmaker position at the Boeing C-17 US Air Force transport program in Long Beach, California, but I was able to transfer to the Boeing Commercial 777 program in Everett, Washington. New, job, new state, new home - lots of changes over the last couple of years. Yet, through it all, knotting and knots continues to be my most passionate pursuit and pastime.

In this article I will fill you in on what I have been up to and, perhaps, in future issues you (yes, YOU) will let us know what you have been doing and making. These are some of the knot projects I have worked at and I close with some thoughts on the explosion of knotting interaction in the social media.

I have a small but extensive knot library (books being another obsession of mine). During my move I had to keep my books in storage for over a year. Not a very happy situation for me, but now that my wife and I have moved into our new digs here in Granite Falls, I have been able to set up my book shelves and book collection again. It is very nice being able to access all that knot information at a whim and as the knot mood strikes me.

One of the things we did when we moved here was to try our hand at crabbing. The Dungeness crab season is short and you need to hustle to get the best spots on the dock. The crab pots you use to catch the little buggers come with ropes already attached but I, of course, had to try and make it better.



I did some simple splicing to attach the crabbing rope to the bridle on the pot itself. This kind of rope is very stiff, somewhat difficult to splice and it is weighted so it sinks after you put the pot in the water. We actually did catch a few crabs. Cooked them up on the back porch, enjoyed them with a bottle of wine. What to do with the empty bottle?



What else to do but cover it with some square knotting? Macramé is where I began in knotting (or, at least, it was the only thing I could sell) and I return to it from time to time. This is the bottle about a third completed. Thought I had a picture of the finished product but I can't seem to find it anywhere, you get the idea anyway.

I was able to attend the Fall Fisherman's Festival in Shoreline, WA in 2011 with Pat Ducey and Maggie Machado. It was great fun mingling with the crowds; I made a few mats on the Wee Blast Mat jig and got the kids involved with pulling the ends through to finish the weave.



Unhappily, I was not able to attend this Festival in 2012 because of my moving into our new home but I am planning to attend this year's event this fall.

What else? I have had a couple of commissions. One was to make some horse lead ropes for a friend of mine in Utah. I researched them and found that they are made from 5/8" cordage some 15 feet long. Some are made in 3-strand rope and some from double-braid rope. The request was for three ropes so I decided to make two from 3-strand and one from double-braid. When I went to the chandlery I ended up getting cordage to make one in 3-strand and enough for two in double braid. I am very proficient at doing a 3-strand splice and so I made that one straight away and sent it off to the customer. The double-braid splice, on the other hand, was something I had to learn or, I suppose I should say, re-learn. I had done this splice once or twice many years ago and had not touched it since. So what to do? I had my knot library resource available again but I actually found You Tube to be the best visual way to learn. I practiced on a long length of 3/8" and made splice after splice after splice. It was fun, it was frustrating, and I seemed to get worse before I got better. When that rope ran out, I guessed I was ready for the 5/8" stuff. After

doing the smaller stuff, the larger rope was much easier to work and more forgiving. Having said that the first lead rope came out excellently, the second one was a bust even after I tried it again and again until there was no rope to work with. I got a Splicing Wand for Christmas along with Brion Toss' "Working Rope Book 5 Basic Braided Splices". The wand was too late to actually use this time but reading his book I was able to discover (I think) the reason for my disaster on the second lead rope.

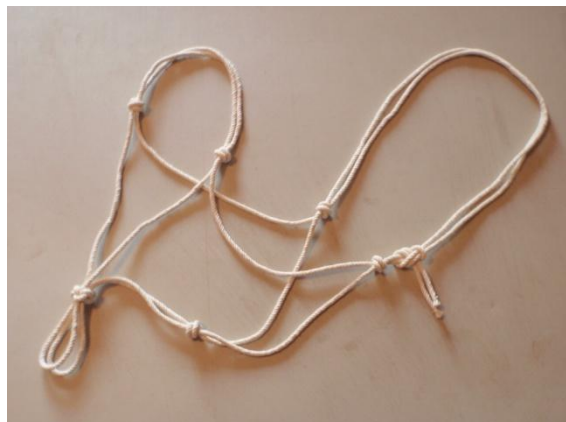


Having touched my toe in the water with cowboy knotting, I tried my hand at a few display items.





This is a Fiador Knot and a Hackamore Knot display. These knots are used when making a horse bridle. So I had to try and make a rope halter as well.



Some mistakes were made in the execution but it was good practice. Had a number of comments from fellow knotters that it is cheaper to buy these at the store than the cost of cordage to make your own - fun to make none the less and to have in the repertoire. The second commission was to make a bell rope for Mark Thompson late of the Mark & Brian radio show. Mark has migrated to doing podcasts with his wife, Lynda, and part of their show is to ring a ship's bell that Mark bought a while back. A bell needs a proper bell rope and that was all the excuse I needed.



Looking at the picture this bell rope, it is a bit different than the customary kind. The problem was that Mark needed a pull cord running from the bell so he and Lynda can ring the bell from their seating at opposite sides of the consol. And speaking of bell ropes, I made another bell rope as well. When we were processing the loan for our new home, there was a bell hanging in the front office that they rung whenever a loan was completed. This bell had some excuse of a rope on it already but I don't need too much of a reason to knot and (as I said before) a bell does need a proper bell rope.

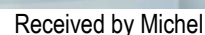


And lastly I did a knot display at my local library in Marysville, Washington and then did the same display only more so at the Evergreen State Fair / Snohomish County Fair in Monroe, Washington. My reasoning for doing was this (as always) was to generate interest in the craft and maybe gain some new PAB members. I do not know if the judges had never seen anything like this before but I was pleased and surprised to win a First Class Blue Ribbon, a Chairman's Ribbon (the best in class, in this case "Collections") and the Sweepstake's Ribbon (the judges personal favorite). I never did get any response from the public at large from either of these displays although I did generate interest when putting up the displays and taking them down.

Those of you who follow Facebook (and you know who you are) have seen these pictures before. And that is the second topic I wanted to cover. I am continually amazed at the surge in Organizations and Groups about knots and knotting that are available. I, myself, am a member of "Mateloteurs", "Knot & Knotting", "KHWV", "Knot Tyers", "Anchorage Knot Tyers Club", "Midwest Knotters Group", "The ABOK Project" and "Escuela de Macramé". This only a small sample of the ones available, I know there are many more.

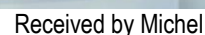
The work I see being shared every day both challenges, inspires and awes me. My own taste in knotting is traditional fancywork and my level of skill is fairly pedestrian. There is work being done and displayed that I probably couldn't touch or master, but it is great to see so many people getting involved with it and pushing the knotting envelope.

Everyone is sharing pictures, instructions, templates and techniques; everyone is encouraged to try; everyone is involved. It is wonderful what is going on and I invite all of you to come on-line (if you have easy access to a computer) and join the fun.

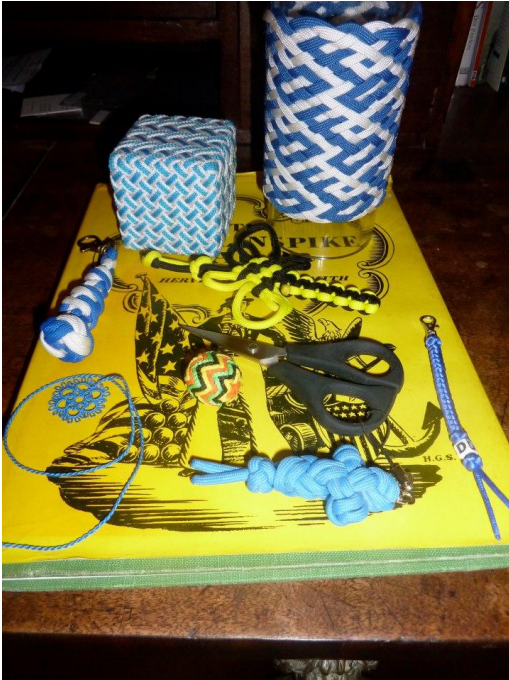


Lily Qualls Morales

It was also suggested that, since there were only six of us, we make "tokens" to exchange with the entire group. All agreed it would be fun to do this, and it is always fun to get snail-mail from all over the world, so we all set to work on those, as well. This token was to be a project that could be made easily and quickly, even just something that we would give away at demonstrations at the various events where we share our skills with the public. Some people (not I, of course <wink>) got a *bit* carried away, however, and, as Stefanos pointed out, some of these "tokens" were as fantastic as the items exchanged with our partners, as you can see from the following photos:







Received by Dominic



Received by Chuck

It wasn't until after we completed this wonderful exchange that the thought occurred that we should probably give a name to this event, since we were certain to offer it again to the general membership of the Mateloteurs group. The Mateloteurs International Knot Exchange became the official name, and the acronym, MIKEX was born.

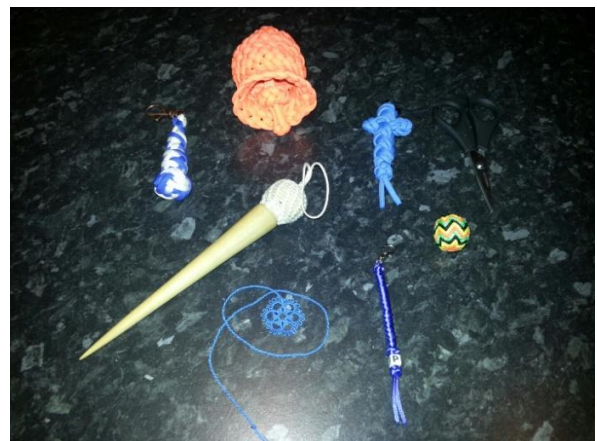
Once these photos were shared publicly on Facebook, there was a lot more interest in "the next one." So MIKEX II is now well underway with EIGHTEEN participants! It is truly a coincidence that we came to a multiple of six again, but that made it easy to have our "token" exchange as well, only with three groups of six, instead of just one group.

Everyone is so excited that, as one participant said, "...we all seem to be as 'jumpy' and talking as kids before Santa comes." She is right, of course; everyone seems to be raring to go and we are all talking on Facebook (in a private message, for all participants), ironing out the details. It all seems to be progressing well and will be much the same as the first MIKEX, only *MUCH BIGGER*!

Stay tuned for a follow-up report on the results of MIKEX II, coming soon to a Guild newsletter near you...



Received by Stefanos



Received by Poul



Received by the author

## Open Letter from Hooley Michaels

When the PAB chapter of the Guild first got started, I offered some articles for the newsletter in an effort to create a momentum and prompt others to do the same. That is, after all, what the PAB's newsletter is all about: the sharing of our ideas and our common interests. Then some years ago there was an active argument among Guild members whether nautical or landward knotting was superior. The argument heated at times, and lasted longer than it should have. In fact, the argument never should have taken place at all. I intend to share my thoughts about that entire episode. In the sense that "knotting" is an all inclusive term that includes nautical, weaving, braiding, forensics, and all the many other branches of the craft, we are all members of the same Guild, working on our own particular branch of that same tree. We have everything to lose by diminishing the value of one of the branches of our common tree. The branch that interests you the most is the branch that you should be doing your best to learn... teach... and expand upon as best you can. When all Guild members do that, the entire tree benefits. My own knotting experience covers several different branches, and there are other branches of the craft I have an interest in but have not explored yet. Eventually I hope to.

My long term and active interest is in leather braiding. I have done a lot to personally help others with the same braiding interest in getting started by giving instruction, finding a source for materials, [sometimes freely giving books and materials] and furthering their experience by mentoring them. Most often my efforts were appreciated. Once they were not, but that is to the detriment of the receiver, not the giver. Perhaps some of the longer term Guild members will remember articles I have written for the newsletter over the years. I believe that the information was helpful beyond just the entertainment value.

Having said all the above, I would like to see Guild members join in the effort to keep the many branches of the tree alive. And in the spirit of the Guild to share some of what you have learned. Share it through a few written words or photos of your work for the newsletter. If there is a book or video that you know of that may help to others, say so in a short letter to the editor. You may be pleasantly surprised at how much your small contribution can help others. Remember this: No matter which branch of knotting you are working at, as long as you keep that interest alive, and do good working at it, then that branch is as important as any other.

## Ship's Wheel Covering

Dave Cook

It has been a while since I've communicated with you all and I thought you might like to see this project. I got a call from my friends at Knot and Rope Supply asking if I'd be interested in working on a ship's wheel for one of their customers. They removed the old one line and had it chemically dipped to get off the paint. We had to buff it up a bit to get off the old residue and make it shine.

The knotwork consists of three-strand coxcombing on the rim with 3 x 8 Turk's Heads and the stanchions just a serving with 3 x 5 Turk's Heads. The material is #60 and #36 cotton cord from Marty Combs. I put on two coats of Minwax water base polypropylene to protect it.

We could have done all kinds of fancywork to it but, with the exception of a 7 x 6 Turk's Head on the king spoke, we just duplicated what was originally on it.

Many thanks to Marty Combs and Vince Brennan for their input. Hope you like it all.



Before



Cleaned and ready to go





Work in progress



Coxcombing and Serving with Turk's Heads



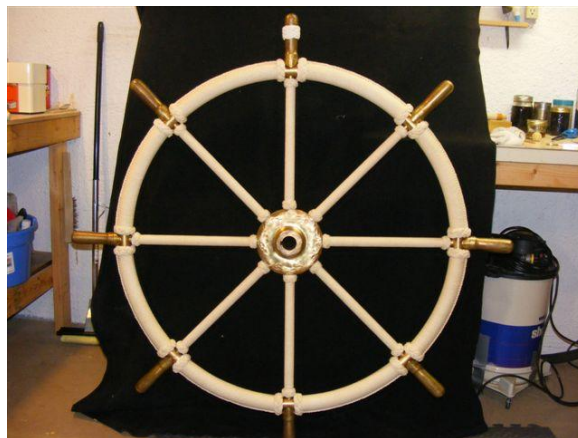
3 x 8 Turk's Head



King Spoke with 7 x 6 Turk's Head



Half way there



The Finished product



What is that knot? Are you sure?



That is not a Monkey's Fist (ABOK 542). It is

T a Tack Knot (ABOK 846). This knot is tripled. Brother Ashley writes "I have found no evidence that the knot was ever tripled, but there is no reason why this should not have been done."

Completing the knot is not difficult. The only problem is keeping the strands tight. Tying it like a flattened Turk's Head makes it much easier. This results in a spherical knot that doesn't need an interior core. It is a bit large for banister rope s perfect for curtain tie-backs.



A stone bench in Anacortes, WA - near the ferry terminal



Becky Jose Linda Joe



Bob Solon - Toledo, Ohio

