

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By Richard Sorokin

Most knots are named for their looks or their function. The square knot looks square. The figure 8 knot looks like an eight. The fishermen's knot is used by fishermen. What was confusing to me were knots with old names but new uses.

The bowline knot is a must for all mariners. A loop that that doesn't change its size. It's great for life saving and many other uses. But where did it get its name? The answer is in its name. Its original use was on a bow string. A loop at both ends of the string attaching it to the bow. The name tells all.

Another knot name that always bothered me was the Sheet Bend. An old knot with a new use again. Today the sheet bend is taught as the knot to use when tying two lines of different diameter together. Where did the term sheet bend come from? All you have to do is really look at the name; Sheet Bend. The old salts called their sails, "sheets". Such as main sheet, jib sheet etc. So the knot had to do with the sails. Then the second word hit me, bend. Bend the sail. Attach a rope to the sail. If you try to put a rope through the corner of a sail it will rip right out. Today we reinforce the corner and use grommets to thread the lines and spread out the forces. In the old days they bent the corner of the sheet and put the line through the bend and completed the sheet bend knot. It spreads the load and holds the sheet. The name actually tells the tale if you can see it.