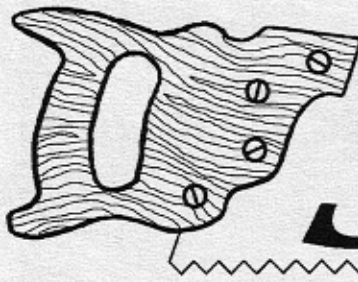


INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL SAW ASSOCIATION



SAW PLAYER NEWS

Vol. 12, No.3 www.SawPlayers.org Email: Info@SawPlayers.org (415)331-9661 Designer: Victoria Whyte Ball Summer 2008

Israel – Land of Milk, Honey and... Musical Saws!



By Natalia 'SawLady' Paruz
www.SawLady.com

When I play the saw in public, oftentimes people come forward to tell me about some other saw player that they know or have seen. I perform in Israel frequently and so I came to hear about many saw players there. What surprised me was that even in such a tiny country as Israel, most of the saw players there had no idea there were other saw players in their own country! Naturally I had to remedy that, so I organized a mini musical saw festival in Tel-Aviv. At the festival we honored the memory of the first two sawists (known to me) in the country:

Morris Solomon, whom I had the pleasure of meeting about 14 years ago, was probably the first sawist in Israel. While serving in the British Brigade (1940's?) he discovered the musical saw and brought one from England. He settled in Kibbutz Ramat Hakovesh where he performed extensively. His favorite song to play on the saw was Over the Rainbow. "Grandpa Morris," as he was known, inspired and taught many to play the saw.



Morris Solomon playing for kindergaten kids at a holiday celebration, 1996

Dr. Moshe Neumann (1882 - 1964) was born in Jerusalem, where he worked as a physician. During WWI he was a medic in the Turkish army. In 1917 he became a spy for the British army, was caught and thrown into the Damascus prison for a year. Dr. Neumann, who played violin, had 6 children. I met with his son Haim and 4 of his grandchildren who told me how the musical saw came to be a big part of their family. In 1948 Dr. Neumann bought two flexatones – a musical instrument which sounds much like a saw. In 1951 his son, Prof. Eliyahoo Neumann, noticed a

musical saw in a music store in Paris, France, and brought it as a present for his father. The saw has a logo "Sonilame, Eric Tokel, Couesnon S.A, 105 Rue Lafayette, Paris." This saw is 101.5 cm long (including handle), 3.5 cm at tip, 20 cm at bottom.

Couesnon (pronounced QUE-NON) was established in 1882 and reformed in 1931 as Couesnon S.A. (read: Couesnon, Incorporated). The company lasted until 1967 and was a manufacturer of musical instruments.

Dr. Neumann taught himself to play the saw. He played mostly classical music but also Israeli folk tunes. His favorite song to



Gideon Neumann, Adi Neumann, Natalia 'Saw Lady' Paruz, Haim Neumann and ? Neumann with 2 of the 3 saws Dr. Neumann played.

Photo - Rachel Ramras



A painting of Dr. Neumann playing the saw, painted by his son Dr. Haim Neumann.

Photo - Rachel Ramras

play was "Jerusalem of Gold." He was recorded for the radio and held musical gatherings at his home every Saturday night.

The musical saw tradition started by Dr. Moshe Neumann is carried on today by his grand children and great grand children who play the same saws that belonged to Dr. Neumann.

Zvi Rozenfeld was born in Jerusalem in 1929. From age 6 he played violin, but during Israel's war of Independence he was shot in the shoulder, and could no longer play violin. A family friend saw a clown in a circus in France playing a saw and brought the family a hardware store saw. Zvi's father loved the idea and took his son to Dr. Neumann for saw lessons. Over the years Zvi performed extensively all over the country with such performers as Uri Geller (famous paranormalist) and even received medals of honor from the Israeli army for playing the saw. He played classical music such as pieces by Villa Lobos and opera arias such as from Tosca.



Logo of French saw from 1951
Photo Rachel Ramras



From left: Daniel Galay (pianist), Shlomo Shavit, Natalia 'Saw Lady' Paruz, Motke Rotem, Tal-Kravitz, Emil Genger, Noam Pail (clarinet) Bottom: Haim Neumann - son of sawist Dr. Neumann.

Photo - Rachel Ramras

Out of the 15 sawists I came across in Israel, four performed solos at the festival in Tel-Aviv, while others preferred to observe.

It's surprising how many saw players one can find even in such a tiny country as Israel. And to top it off, there is even a new musical instrument based on the musical saw being invented in Israel... the inventor is Elyasaf Shweka. But to read about musical instruments based on the musical saw you'll have to wait for a future Saw Players News.

To see a video from the mini musical saw festival in Israel: <http://sawlady.com/blog/?p=165>.
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My husband, Scott Munson, playing the new saw-based instrument in Jerusalem.

Morgan's Magical Musical Saw Tour in Japan – Part 2



Nagoya Saw Players Group

In the last issue I wrote about the Japan Musical Saw Festival in Tokyo and Osaka, but there were other saw players that I had met and liked at past IMSA Saw Festivals in Santa Cruz, and I wanted to see them too.

Hajime escorted me to the right Shinkansen (Bullet Train) car (all seats are reserved) in Osaka, and soon I was going 180 miles an hour to Yokohama, a port city for Tokyo about 250 miles away. I was met at the train station by my friend "Kazu" Kawaguchi (who I had stayed with in Tokyo my first night), and we walked to a high-rise building and went up to the 16th floor where I met Mr. Mokoto Ogihara (an accomplished saw player) and six of his students who wanted to meet me and learn about the concerts and see how I play the saw. All of the students were women. They were nice, interested in what I had to say, and while we talked, we could see the sun setting in the clouds to the left of Mt. Fuji about 40 miles away. It was very beautiful. After talking a while, we played together for about an hour, and went out to dinner together. It was a really nice experience.

The next morning I was able to take a subway on my

own to the Shinkansen station, and took the train past Mt. Fuji again to Nagoya. I went to Nagoya to meet and do a little performance with Ms. Keiko Tanaka, a very good saw player that came to the Santa Cruz Saw Festival a few years ago—and Linda Imai, a professional pianist and accordion player. I met Linda in 2006 in Hong Kong, when she escorted her 77-year-old father from Shanghai. He is the president of the Shanghai Musical Saw Association. We met at a good friend of Keiko's restaurant, where the whole family is interested in and learning to play the musical saw. Many of Keiko's saw playing friends also came to hear us play, and the three of us played individually and together, to much applause.

We were served a wonderful dinner, but Mr. Yuasa - the very nice owner of the restaurant and his family had other activities planned for me. After meeting the family, I was shown how to write my name in Japanese Kanji calligraphy with a brush... sort of. There is no "r" in Japanese, so they taught me to write "Mo" and "gan." I practiced it about 15-20 times, and finally they had me do it on a beautiful small piece of paper, and then I hand stamped the Kanji with a special stamp for "Mo."



Yokohama Saw Players—Left to Right: “Kazu” Kawaguchi, Makoto Ogihara, Mika Handa, Giriko Shimizu, Atsuko Ichikawa, Smiko Nakamura, Itsuo Ebine, Setsuko Kato and Koko Yokoob. (Note: Mt. Fuji is visible out the window—40 miles in the distance.)

Then they had me write Mo-gan much smaller, and once I did it good enough, they transferred the piece of paper to a small, smooth, river stone to be used as a paperweight - it was a nice gift. After our little performance, I gave Keiko and Mr. Yuasa's family a set of 10 prints of my favorite photos from the U.S. that I had brought with me as a small gift. Soon afterwards, I was SHOWERED with gifts! I was overwhelmed - and am still amazed at their generosity!

It is much nicer being a foreigner in Japan with someone who knows you. Everyone treated me very respectfully and supportively, and my trip was a FANTASTIC experience the whole time (except I didn't sleep as much as I should have).

My only time for sightseeing was when Keiko took me to a beautiful Shinto shrine) near Isa, a town about 90 minutes by train south of Nagoya. We spent a few hours there before we had to go back to Nagoya, when I again caught the Shinkansen back to Tokyo to stay my last night in Japan with Kazu again. The next morning I took the train back to Narita (the Tokyo international airport), and took the 10-hour flight back to California.

There was never a dull moment on my 10-day tour, and I felt REALLY welcomed, honored, and valued both as a saw player and a person. My article and photos don't do justice to the many fine memories I have of the good people I met and the wonderful experiences I had in Japan!



Linda Imai, Keiko and Morgan.



Keiko Tanaka playing in Nagoya.



Makoto Ogihara in Yokohama.

Edward Bert Wilcox (1939 - 2008)

Musical Saw Player and Inventor

By Natalia 'SawLady' Paruz - www.SawLady.com

Edward "Ed" Wilcox of Arkansas, a saw player and inventor of musical saw related items, died Tuesday, Jan. 8, 2008, at the Batesville hospital after suffering a massive heart attack.

A celebration of life was held at the Jimmy Driftwood Barn in Mountain View where Ed had spent many evenings playing the musical saw and other instruments. Ed's wife, Carolyn, plays the autoharp in the traditional Appalachian-Ozark way, in her lap, as well as the piano. Together Ed and Carolyn performed as the duo "Dreamcatchers."

Ed started playing music at the age of 8 and the musical saw at 14. He won first place at the Avoca-Iowa Old Time American Music festival, wrote a musical saw how-to manual, produced an instructional video and recorded many CDs which featured his saw playing as well as the other 20 instruments he played. His CD "Doing the Dishes" features Ed playing two octave scale of dishes which he stroked with mallets (sounds like a cross between a vibraphone and Regina music box) and 'stemware' - various size goblets which Ed played by rubbing dampened fingers on the rims until a ringing note sustained.

Ed was a promoter of the art of playing music with a saw. At one point Ed sold a saw "kit" which included a 26 inch carpenter's saw, a bow, a how-to book he wrote, an instructional video, a cloth case and rosin all for only \$40.

But Ed always sought out how to make things better. He was an inventor with an eye and ear for beauty (the names of his inventions were as beautiful as the inventions themselves). He produced musical saws in stainless steel and brass with different finishes (named 'Le Blade Classique' and 'Golden Blades'), and has created some new innovations in not only saws, but bows (a pocket-



Ed & Carolyn Wilcox

bow for carrying around while looking for saws and the 'Incredibow'), a microphone pick-up (named 'Musicwand'), the 'Hammerflute' (a hammer to tap out tunes on the saw), "Tipgripper" and other accessories.

To many musicians Ed will probably be remembered mostly for his 'Incredibow' - a durable, lightweight and affordable "one-piece bow" which needs no maintenance,

requires no tensioning or replacement of hair and most of all—does not use horsehair. Ed spent 20 years inventing illusions and crafting props for professional magicians, during which time he gained quite a bit of experience and knowledge about plastics and other materials. Then he applied that knowledge to bows.

The Wilcoxes began making bows around 2001. Originally developed specifically for saw musicians, Ed went to a festival in Iowa to sell the bows to a handful of saw musicians but ended selling most of them to fiddlers! This inspired him to make the bow to fit all types of bowed instruments and his business grew to encompass sales around the world.

I was fortunate enough to be chosen by Ed to be one of his "guinea pigs," testing and reporting on the performance of his bows. Bows get a lot more usage with me, since as a busker I usually play stretches of 4 to 5 hours non-stop at extreme temperatures and humidity levels. I was constantly amazed at Ed's ingenuity. Whenever I thought there was no possible way to make the bow any better, Ed still came up with more improvements. I have gone through many a regular bow, but the Incredibow lasts through all the abuse I am giving it, and its extra light weight eliminated the pain I used to feel after a long playing session. Ed made me a custom "diamond" studded bow which I cherish. The bows arrived to Ed's customers wrapped in satin and tied with

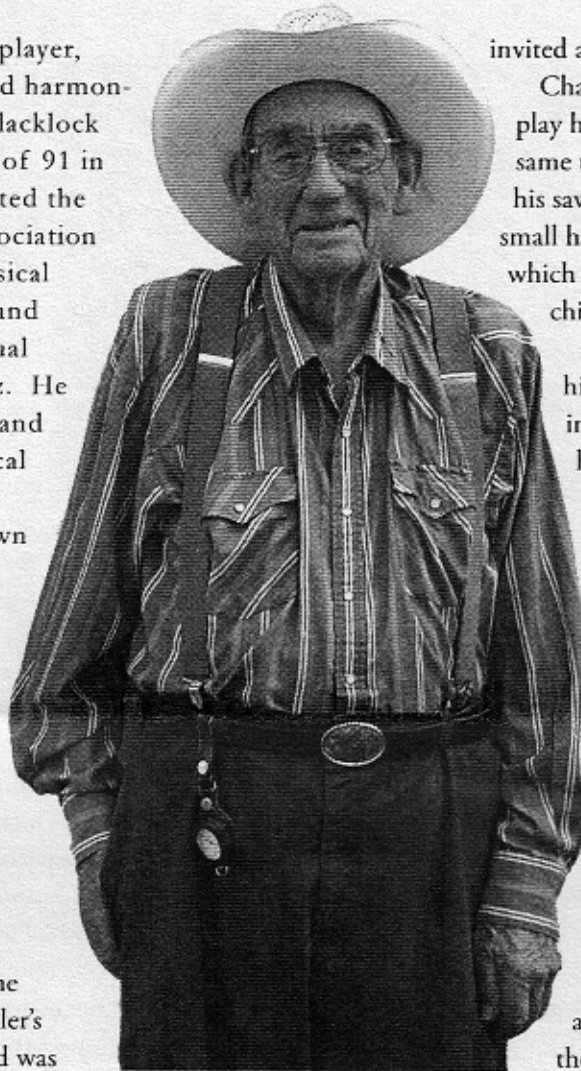
— Continued on page 6

– MUSICAL SAW HISTORY –

More Passing Of The Great Ones!

Famous musical saw player, bluegrass fiddler and harmonica player Charlie Blacklock has passed away at the age of 91 in Alameda, CA. Charlie started the California Saw Players Association (now the International Musical Saw Association) in 1991, and produced most of the annual Saw Festivals in Santa Cruz. He was well known nationally and internationally in the musical saw community, and he designed and produced his own line of musical saws (four sizes of the "C. Blacklock Special Musical Saws") which are still available online through "Lark in The Morning" & "Elderly Instruments."

He was inducted into the American Old-Time Country Music Hall of Fame on September 5, 1999 and attended many music festivals around the U.S. including the annual fiddler's gathering in Weiser, Idaho, and was



invited and honored to play in China.

Charlie had the amazing ability to play his saw AND a harmonica at the same time! He would sometimes play his saw while smiling and hiding a very small harmonica inside his mouth – which would confuse and enchant all the children and adults around him.

Always his own man, and with his wife Viola's support (deceased in 2005), Charlie led a full life. He had a deep love of family, people and music and will be fondly remembered and missed by many whose lives they touched. Our hearts go out to Charlie's family, including his sons Rodney, Kenneth & Paul, and his many grand children and great grand children. Charlie will be fondly remembered and missed.

More information about Charlie and the musical saw can be seen at: www.SawPlayers.org

Look for a more extensive article about Charlie & Viola Blacklock in the next issue of the Saw Player News.

Edward Bert Wilcox – Continued from page 5

roses. Ed wanted to, and succeeded, in creating quite an experience for people opening the carton their Incredibow arrived in.

Fortunately the bow making has become a family business and Ed's wife, Carolyn is continuing it. Ed's son-in-law designed a machine that puts the hair on bows and allows several bows to be done at once. Ed's daughter Heidi as well as her children all play a role in the production of the bows.

For more information, visit www.incredibow.com

Ed worked as a certified licensed social worker but he also manufactured magic props and performed magic

shows throughout the U.S. Always performing as a musician, at one point he also performed as a clown.

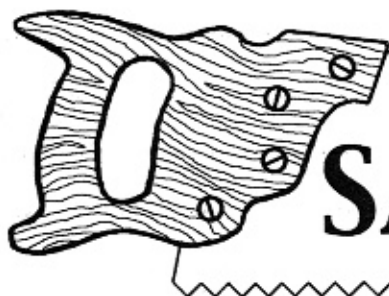
Ed was always happy to answer saw technique questions and to discuss what could make playing the saw easier for people.

Our condolences go out to Ed's wife Carolyn, his son Terry Wilcox of St. Louis, Mo.; his two daughters, Heidi Wilcox of Mountain View and Young Wilcox of Hamm Lake, Minn.; his brother, Richard Wilcox of North Branch, Minn.; his sister, Marilyn Remer of Washington State; and his six grandchildren.

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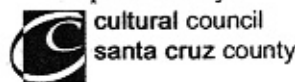
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Take the Mt. Hermon Exit off Hwy. 17 to Graham Hill Rd., Then Left 1/4 mile to Roaring Camp.

For more information contact:
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International Musical Saw Players Association
(415)459-7722 Email: Sawman@DistinctivePhotos.com
Download a Saw Festival Flyer at: www.SawPlayers.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

For great music that's a cut above the rest, come to the 30th annual International Musical Saw Festival, Saturday and Sunday, August 9 and 10, 2008, in beautiful Santa Cruz county, California.

The cutting edge music starts Saturday, August 9, 2008 at 1:00 PM, with a free acoustic jam near the world's only life-sized bronze statue of a saw player - in front of Bookstore Santa Cruz, located at 1520 Pacific Avenue. Next comes a free potluck dinner and jam at 6:00 PM in the outer parking lot of Roaring Camp in Felton, just seven miles north of Santa Cruz.

The big event happens Sunday, August 10, at Roaring Camp when the world's greatest saw players come out of the woodwork to join other acoustic musicians in a variety of musical performances. You'll hear bluegrass, country, folk, gospel, blues, classical, and even show tunes (believe it or not, no heavy metal) throughout the day. Festivities start at 10:00 AM, with spontaneous acoustic jams throughout the day. There's a Saw-Off competition from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM, and a Chorus of the Saws at 3:00 PM., with up to 50 saw players trying to play in unison.

And for those who want to learn how to play music that really has some teeth in it, there's a free Musical Saw Workshop at 4:00 PM.

The entire event is free, and fun for the whole family. For more information, check out www.SawPlayers.org, or www.RoaringCamp.com. Held by the International Musical Saw Association, this event is sponsored in part by KUSP radio and the Cultural Council of Santa Cruz County. Come to the 30th annual Musical Saw Festival, and say you saw it here first!

###

Musical Saw CD Review

David Weiss, Virtuoso Saw

David Weiss: musical saw, oboe, English horn
Alpha H. Walker: Keyboards
With members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic
Arranged and Produced by Gary Mandell



By Kenny Blacklock

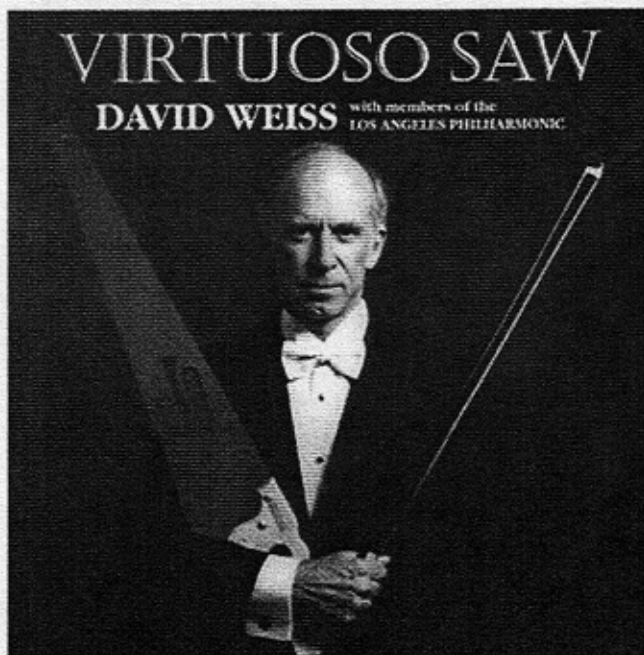
If you are going to buy one musical saw album, *Virtuoso Saw*, should be it. This is the mother of all musical saw albums.

David Weiss plays the saw with a level of virtuosity almost unheard of in the saw-playing world. He also plays with beauty, precision and most importantly of all, excellent music taste. The saw playing on this album is accompanied throughout by lush orchestral arrangements written by Gary Mandell.

The musical selections on *Virtuoso Saw* include a variety of popular songs played on the saw along with several classical selections. The emphasis throughout is on the natural singing voice of the saw. David plays the saw with impeccable intonation and a carefully controlled vibrato. He is also capable of unparalleled virtuosity. Thankfully his tremendous ability on the instrument is always used tastefully and in the service of aesthetic concerns.

This album is very pleasant to listen to. Most of the selections are ballads well suited to the range and tone of the saw. This album demonstrates the musical possibilities that can be teased from a saw with selections by Bach, The Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel, Ravel, and Gershwin all on the same recording.

Another feature of this album is the variety of overdubbed saw harmony parts also played by David Weiss. The keyboard player on several of the tracks is David's wife, Alpha Hockett Walker, who is also a fine musician. David and Alpha are frequent performers at the Saw Players Picnic in Santa Cruz, California.



David Weiss also performs with his wife in a duo called, "DnA."

David Weiss was principal oboist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic from 1973 to 2003. He comes from a very musical family. His brother, Abe, is a professional Bassoonist and his sister, Dawn, is a professional flautist. Since 1982, David has gained notoriety for his musical saw playing. His saw playing credits include appearances at Disneyland, on the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson (twice!), on Prairie Home Companion, on television commercials, and movies, including the 2000 film, "O Brother Where Art Thou?" at the Hollywood Bowl, Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall.

David plays three saws on this album, a 26-inch Stanley Handyman, used for most of the tracks, a Mussehl and Westphal Professional 28-inch tenor saw, which is used for several of the harmony parts, and a 32-inch baritone Sandvikens "Stradivarius," which is featured on "The Rainbow Connection." Before you run out and buy a Stanley, you should know that, as David Weiss explains in his wonderfully detailed liner notes, "the Handyman's specifications have changed, and the recommended hardware-store saws for ease of playing are now the Stanley 'Hard-Tooth' or Stanley 'Thrifty' 26-inch models."

David's introduction to the saw came at a New

— Continued on page 10

Musical Saw CD Review – Continued from page 7

Year's Party, December 31, 1981. At midnight, a violinist named Guido Lamell from the Philharmonic took out a saw and played "Auld Lang Syne." David was captivated by how it was possible to make music on it, and by the eerie tone quality. About three months later Guido helped him choose a saw at a hardware store, and showed him how to hold it, bow it, etc. Since David had a good ear and was used to practicing an instrument, he progressed very quickly. Just a few months later he was in Santa Cruz competing for a prize, and took 2nd place (Morgan Cowin was the first-prize winner that year). Being exposed to dozens of other saw players opened up a whole new world of possibilities, and David's saw playing continued to improve. A year later a talent agent from NBC Television heard David playing on the boardwalk at Venice Beach, which led to his first guest appearance on the Tonight Show.

Virtuoso Saw was released in 1985 and has since enjoyed high critical acclaim. Virtuoso Saw can be purchased directly from David Weiss or online from CD Baby.

David Weiss's web site:

www.davidweissgallery.com

To purchase Virtuoso Saw online go to:

cdbaby.com/cd/davidweiss

NOTE: If you have a CD you would like considered for a review, please send it directly to:

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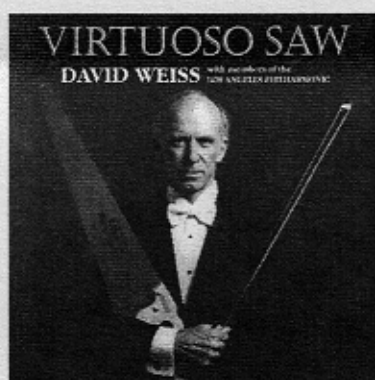


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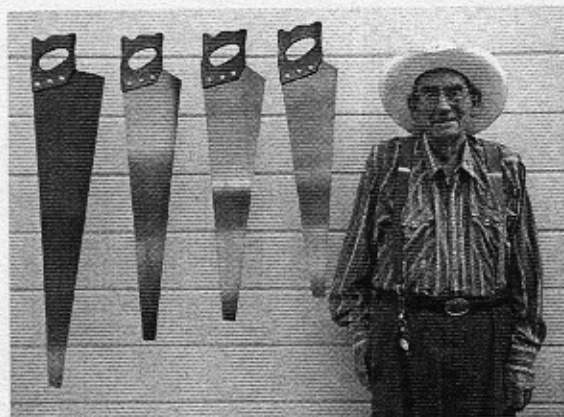
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>>>The Saw Player News<<<

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NOTE: If a green dot appears next to your name, your membership has expired. To continue to receive the SAW PLAYER NEWS, please send a check and a completed Membership Application. Thanks for your support!

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*Membership payments can now be paid by "PayPal" at: www.sawplayers.org/form.html
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Please check the box or boxes that best represents your privacy preferences:

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