INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL SAW ASSOCIATION SAW PLAYER NEWS

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S. Carrier

Charlie's Story

By Charlie Blacklock

Edited by Viola Blacklock and Morgan Cowin

Charlie Blacklock's name is recognized far and wide for his talents and efforts to promote the musical saw, as well as his warm, friendly personality. Charlie is part of a big musical family - his brother



Charlie and Viola Blacklock

Leonard played trumpet in school. and sister Lois played violin. Son Kenneth played clarinet for 34 years in the Santa Rosa (CA) Symphony, and several years with the Oakland symphony. Son Rodney plays folk music on many instruments, and son Paul plays blues and rock

guitar. Charlie's grandson Kenny Blacklock (an IMSA Officer) plays the saw, fiddle, guitar, mandolin, viola, ukulele, bass and keyboards. Granddaughter Karen Exley sings, great-grandson Jack plays drums and xylophone in school, and great-granddaughter Marika (age 4) is learning to play the fiddle from Dad Kenny and Mom Katy Bridges.

Charlie formed the CSPA (California Saw Players Association) and was the President since it's inception in 1993 until the end of 2002, when Charlie's health forced him to slow down. Following are a few of Charlie's many stories... The year I was born, 1917 (in Hollister, CA), my dad bought two expensive items. One was a new Model T Ford for \$400, and an Edison phonograph costing the same, \$400. Along with the phonograph they got 10 records. This was World War I time, and the songs were "I'm forever blowing bubbles," "Sister Suzy Sewing Shirts For Soldiers," and so on. We played these records for many years, and I still have the phonograph in my living room.

My first instrument was the ukulele. When I was in the second or third grade our school teacher would start the day singing and playing the ukulele. To me it sounded real good. I enjoyed it so much that in the summer I worked hard and made enough money to buy a "uke" of my own. I still have that ukulele. Although I never heard him, my dad played harmonica and fiddle at dances. He had quit playing before I was born, but he still enjoyed music. One time he told me to go over to my aunt's house with my uke and get some help. She was a school teacher and could also play the piano. She gave me a lot of encouragement, and said I was doing fine and to just keep it up.

Next was the harmonica. By age ten I was playing harmonica while driving a tractor pulling a plow on the days that I wasn't in school. I had a harmonica holder that went around my neck, leaving my hands free to handle the tractor. At school a friend also played harmonica, so we did a lot of playing together. We would skip every physical ed class we could to play harmonica together. From the 6th grade up into the first year of high school I also played the clarinet in the school marching band.

In the 1930's my dad bought a radio, and we could get some good country music. One program

we liked to listen to was the "Cross Cut Boys from the 'X-Bar B' Ranch." This is where I first heard a musical saw. The show would start with two musicians pulling the two-man saw through a log. I knew what they were doing as I had helped my dad cut logs this way. When that program came on my mother would call us in to listen regardless of how far we were from the house. It was some years later that I started to play the musical saw after hearing it again on the radio and reading articles about saw players in Grit Magazine.

In 1936, the year Viola and I were married, I bought a new mandolin for \$28.00. It was called a "Stradolin." I always took the mandolin with me, just for a little self entertainment, but at one point I thought it was gone forever. One time, needing some money before receiving a paycheck, I took the mandolin to a "hockshop." When I got paid I went back to pick it up, but the lady in charge couldn't find it and neither could I. There was a parrot in the store and it started



Charlie can really play the harmonica and musical saw at the same time! Photo by Morgan Cowin

hollering "It's up there" and nodding his head toward it. The lady said "I believe it is." Sure enough, the parrot saved my mandolin.

Some time later I started playing music on the saw and realized that if I was going to get real good at it, I would have to do a lot of practice. At first I tried to learn on my own, and the first saw I used was a hardware store saw - the same one I had made our first bed with. It didn't have the range nor the sound I wanted. I tried other saws until I heard about one that was a "musical saw," so I bought one. I was doing a lot of practicing and playing by then. I played the saw every place I could, including the streets of Santa Cruz. At one point I started playing the harmonica and saw simultaneously. In this way I could add a little beat to the music and have had people actually dancing to the music.

One day in the 1960's I was driving around San Jose and I found a little factory that made a variety of specialty saws. The owner let me play one of his carpenter saws. It wasn't just what I wanted but it sounded real good. The owner of the factory was also a musician. He got out his accordion and we played some music right there in his shop. We both took an interest in making a good musical saw, and did a lot of experimenting to get just what I wanted, even making our own handles.

I wanted a saw with a greater range so I could play lower notes. We accomplished that by cutting the steel and the handle in a special way. Carpenter saws are measured along the teeth side of the blade, and because of the way my saws are made, the usable length ends up longer than other saws of the same length. "C. Blacklock Special" musical saws can be found in your favorite music catalog and in some stores, but if you can't find one, you can always call me at (510)523-4649 or write to me at 1821 St. Charles St., Alameda, CA 94501 (U.S.A.).

Back in the 1970's I met Art Peterson (an IMSA Officer), who could play a number of instruments. We started playing together and then we organized a band called "Charlie's Band." We played through the 70's, 80's and 90's at restaurants, pubs, coffee houses, weddings, private parties and street festivals. We played at the Saw Players Picnic and Music Festival starting at Santa Cruz and at Portland, Oregon. I played for radio and

television shows and even played for a couple of commercials on radio that paid well.

When I look back, the musical saw has been a lot of enjoyment, just the trips alone were worth it. I went to festivals and fiddle contests in a number of other states. I had played at many old-time fiddle jams, and in Weiser, Idaho I entertained on the main stage at the big fiddle contest several times, and also rode in their annual parade playing "Turkey in the Straw" on my musical saw.

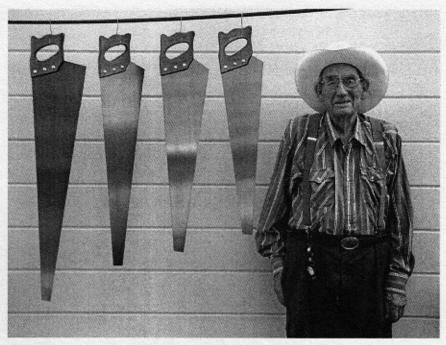
One festival that I enjoyed a lot was the Traditional Old Time Country Music Festival in Avoca, lowa. I attended that one a number of years and played on about four stages and the main stage each year. It was here in lowa that I was nominated and inducted into

America's Old Time Country Music Hall of Fame in September 1999. This was an honor!

One time, coming into Minneapolis, Minnesota, the music house that we were hoping to go to was closed for alterations, so I decided to take out my saw and play it right there on the street. There was a lot of slow traffic and a stop sign. Right off the bat a funny thing happened. The passenger in a car got out and put a dollar in my tip container. After that, every car stopped and put money in my container. They filled that pot in a short time!

There was a bar close by with a large sign in the window saying "live music." I went in to see if they would like me to open the show for them that night. The answer was "No, we can't use you." So I went up the street and started to play. A large crowd came to watch and listen and again put money in my container. The manager of the bar came up to me and asked me to his bar and he would give me \$25.00 for playing for 20 minutes. I wasn't in a hurry to do that but finally I said OK. When I got done I was paid, and as I was leaving a lady brought me a large punch bowl full of money that she had collected from the people there. I will never forget that.

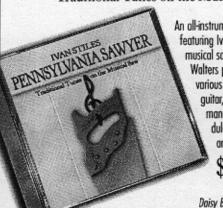
I want to get back to doing more playing, but due to age and health, I will probably be doing more listening and less playing.



Charlie with his 26", 28", 30" and 36 "Charlie Blacklock Special" musical saws.

Photo by Morgan Cowin





An all-instrumental offering featuring Ivan Stiles on the musical saw. Neal and Coleen Walters provide backup on various instruments including guitar, steel guitar, autoharp, mandolin, concertina, dulcimer, fiddle and bass.

\$15 plus postage & handling

Doisy Bell (Bicycle Built for Two)

Londonderry Air (Danny Boy) • Gentle Annie • The Water Is Wide

Hard Times Come Again No More • Goodnight, Irene • My Wild Irish Rose

Going Home • Home on the Range • Westphalia Waltz • Lorena • In the Garden

Aura Lee • When You and I Were Young, Maggie • Tell Me Why

PENNSYLVANIA SAWYER

S15 for each CD plus \$1.50 postage/handling. (No additional postage and handling necessary for additional copies.) Pennsylvania orders add 90¢ Pa. State Sales Tax per CD. Send check or money order payable to: Ivan Stiles • 1585 State Road • Phoenixville, PA 19460

Announcements:

• If you are coming to the Saw Festival in August - arrange your schedule to meet us at 1:00 PM on Saturday, August 7th, 2004 at the Tom Scribner statue - the world's only life-size bronze sculpture of a saw player - created by Marghe McMahon-Lessard and dedicated November 12, 1978. The statue is on a wide sidewalk area called Pacific Mall, in front of Bookshop Santa Cruz at 1520 Pacific Avenue in downtown Santa Cruz, which is on the coast about two hours south of San Francisco, California.

Usually 20 or so saw players - and other musicians and local dignitaries - gather near the statue to play together and promote the Saw Festival the next day. It's an informal gathering, and we usually play together for two or three hours before we break up to enjoy the sights and sounds of this tourist Mecca. There are many good street musicians (called "buskers" in some countries) in Santa Cruz, and there are fine beaches and an established amusement park at The Boardwalk at the beach. The weather is usually pleasant and mild at this time of year, and most people are in a festive mood.

Also, join us Saturday night at Roaring Camp in the small town of Felton, which is about 15-20 minutes north of Santa Cruz - where the REAL fun begins! We have been given permission to meet in the outer parking lot at Roaring Camp to have an informal pot-luck dinner and jam session - which generally lasts from about 6-10 PM and has attracted some GREAT musicians, and their families and friends. It's a relaxed event that enables people to eat and socialize and play music without time pressures or expectations of any kind. It's personally my favorite part of the weekend!

By the way - If you plan to stay in a hotel or motel - you may have trouble finding a room locally because the area is so popular on Summer weekends... But - if you are camping there are more options close by, and if you have a self-contained van or camper or recreational vehicle - you are welcome to stay overnight in the outer parking lot at Roaring Camp with us. For contributing to the pot luck, there is a big grocery store, pizza parlor etc. a short distance down the road from the parking lot, and we rent our own Porta-potty (portable toilet) for our convenience.

- The IMSA is truly International! We have over 50 members from outside the U.S.A., and according to Yoshikazu Kawaguchi, at least five saw players from Japan, and John Jones from New Zealand are planning to attend this year's Saw Festival.
- Mr. Sylvain Pichet, the President of the French musical saw (La Lame Sonore) association A.N.D.I.A.L.S. (Association Nationale Des Interprètes et Amis de la Lame Sonore) has announced that A.N.D.I.A.L.S. is producing an *International Festival for the Lame Sonore and Musical Saw*. I understand that the Festival will be held in Maison-Alfort (a suburb of Paris), France on October 16th and 17th, 2004. Unfortunately, you must have registered by June 1 to be listed in the programme, but you can still enter a contest and perform. You can play up to 6 pieces, with either piano (with sheet music) or a CD as accompaniment. Natalia Paruz from New York, Mr. Li Yuan Qing from China and Kng Shimoda from Japan (not an IMSA Member) will attend. The winner of the contest will have the opportunity to play a Brahms piece with the Moroccan Philharmonic Orchestra, and all musical saw/Lame Sonore players attending will play together with the orchestra. It sounds like a lot of fun! For more information, contact Sylvain Pichet by writing him at: 9, rue Guy Mocquet, 94700 Maison-Alfort, France or emailing him at either: Sylvain.Pichet@andials.com or: Sylvain Pichet c/o Nelly chaubet <nchaubet@9online.fr> (If you can, it is better to write him in French, as his English is somewhat limited.)
- MUSICAL SAW FESTIVAL in JAPAN Hajime Sakita, a very good saw player who will be coming to this year's Saw Festival
 in Santa Cruz, has just announced that the Kansai branch of the JMSA (Japan Musical Saw Association) will be producing
 their first Saw Festival. It will be held at the May Theater in Osaka, Japan, at 7:00 PM on Friday, November 12, 2004.

They are planning to have a 2-hour show by over 50 members of the Kansai Musical Saw Orchestra, and famous musicians including Utaroku Miyakoya (the president of JMSA) and Hajime Sakita (who performed in World Musical saw festival in 1997 in Santa Cruz, California and in the Czech Republic in 2000. This time there will be no contest. They welcome all saw players who would like to join their festival.

For more information go to their homepage: http://www.musicalsaw.net or e-mail: japan@musicalsaw.net or write: Hajime Sakita, Japan Musical Saw Association, Kansai Branch, 4-323-6, Suwanomori-nishi, Hamadera, Sakai City, Osaka, 592-8347 JAPAN

Presented by The



(And Friends) O D MITCIC ECTIVAL

To be held near Santa Cruz, California at

SINCE 1978

International Musical Saw Association

International Musical Saw Contest

Roaring Camp SUNDAY, AUGUST 8, 2004

Musical Saw Workshop

10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

ALSO, join us for a pot-luck dinner & jamming Saturday night, August 7 at the Roaring Camp outer parking lot (6-10 PM). Come on down & PLAY!

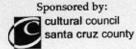
► ALL MUSICIANS INVITED! ◀

Jamming all day - Open mike throughout the day
Old-Time Fiddlers • Bluegrass • Classical • Country • Folk
Acoustic Instruments • Musical Saws • Harmonicas • Accordians • Singers
Guitars • Banjos • And MORE! (Bring YOUR Instrument!)

COME AND JOIN IN THE FUN!

Sponsored by: 88.9 fm

(there is a small parking fee)



For Festival Information: www.SawPlayers.org Call: Morgan Cowin (415)459-7722 Write: 31 South 40 Pier Sausalito, CA 94965



For Directions to
Roaring Camp & Big Trees
in Felton (just North of Santa Cruz)
Call: (831)335-4484
www.RoaringCamp.com

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

2004 "SAW-OFF" COMPETITION INFORMATION

The International Musical Saw Association (IMSA) produces the "Saw-Off" contest each year as part of our annual Saw Players Picnic & Music Festival at "Roaring Camp", located in the town of Felton, about 6 miles North of Santa Cruz, California. The date will be Sunday, August 8, 2004.

Each year, Saw Players from around the world come to play and compete for the opportunity to receive an award in recognition for their skills, and a chance to play one piece with their saw on the main stage. Everyone entering the contest must be a current IMSA member.

So that we can fit everything into the program, we prefer that everyone that is planning to enter the contest to pre-register. To assure your place in the contest, please complete the entry form below and mail it to us As Soon As Possible. There is an entry fee of \$5 (in addition to current membership dues) to help out with our expenses. Those planning to enter the contest should register by 10:00 AM near the main stage, and be ready to play by 11:00 at the smaller contest stage (you will be directed to the contest stage area when you register). The time allotted for the contest will depend on the number of contestants.

Each contestant is to play two songs. You may play one piece with accompaniment of any kind, and then you are asked to play "Auld Lang Syne" without accompaniment. "Auld Lang Syne" is known all over the world, but in some places it is called "Friendship Forever."

Also, at about 3:00 PM, <u>ALL</u> saw players attending The Festival are invited to come up on the main stage to play a few pieces together (we call it the "Massing of the Saws")



INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL SAW CONTEST ENTRY FORM

NOTE: You MUST be an IMSA Member to enter the contest.

Name:	Phone:		
Address:	Email:		
City:	State:	Zip:	
Country (if you live outside the	ne USA):		

Be prepared to (1) Play any one piece with (or without) any kind of accompaniment, and... (2) Play "Auld Lang Syne" (also known as "Friendship Forever") without_accompaniment. Note: you may listen to the melody on our website: www.SawPlayers.org

Mail this form (or a copy) with a check or money order for \$5 US by July 1, 2003 to:

I.M.S.A. c/o 31 South 40 Pier Sausalito, CA94965 (U.S.A.) Email: info@sawplayers.org

Saw Players In China

By Mr. Li, Yuan-qingi



Hello, everyone. I am Li, Yuanqing, the General Executive of the Chinese Musical Saw Players Association and a member of the IMSA (and the former CSPA - California Saw Players Association). I have participated in the 1993 and 1998 "Saw Players Picnic & Music Festivals."

I would like to introduce the situation of our Chinese musical saw players.

Chinese Musical Saw Players Association has been established for fifteen years. The president of the association is Mr. Huang, Peng-nian. He has trained many saw players, and I'm also one of his students. Mr. Huang has joined a number of public performances and published a cassette tape of his music. I believe that currently there are about about 300-500 saw players (and people who are interested in the saw) in China.

Shanghai, China is a famous big city, and the Shanghai Musical Saw Players Association has about fifty saw players, including Mr. Jin, Shao-bai, Mr. Chen, Zhi-kang and Mr. Zhang, Qi. They always rehearse and perform together. Composer Mr. Zhu, Jian-er used a musical saw as the principal musical instrument in his masterpiece "The Second Symphony," and Mr. Zhang, Qi performed it. The

musical saw became the high point in the concert, and it was warmly welcomed by the audience. Mr. Zhang also participated in the 1997 Saw Players Picnic and Music Festival.

Hong Kong, China also has a Musical Saw Players Association that is composed of more than ten saw players, including Mr. Li Xiang-tao and Mr. Liang, Xiong. They often have performances which attract many people who are interested in the musical saw, so they hold classes to teach others how to play.

Two other Chinese saw players are especially notable: a quite famous female musical saw player is Ms Liu, Ya in Hubei Province; and a man with a unique talent - who can play two saws at the same time, in harmony! His name is Mr. Zhao, Ji-ping, in Hebei Province.

Concerning the history of the musical saw in China, in 1930 there was a book written by a musical teacher of Affiliate High School of Zhong-Shan University in Guangdong Province. The book is the first book in China which introduced musical saw. The name of the book (in Chinese) means "The Way To Play The Saw Originally For Industrial Use."

I am grateful to share our story with the readers of the Saw Player News. I am sure in the future, there will be more chances for all of you to communicate with saw players in China. At the end of 2005, there

will be a musical saw festival held in China. Right now it is still in the planning stages, so I will give you more details later. I am looking forward to meeting you at this event. Finally, I hope you enjoy every moment playing the musical saw.

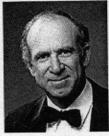
If you wish to contact the China Musical Saw Association, write in Chinese to Mr. Huang Peng-nian (the president), Flat 3, 11 Unit, 2nd Cortile, Ding Hui Bei Lane, Hai Dian District, Beijing, China or call: (010) 88137467 (phone number of Mr. Huang). To contact the Shanghai Musical Saw Association, call: (021)62522802 (Phone number of Mr. Zhang Qi, vice president)



From left to right are officers of the Chinese Saw Players Association - Mr. Yu, Xi-wen (Vice President), Mr. Li, Yuan-qing (the author), Mr. Huang Peng-nian (President), Ms. Chen, Wen-ru (Office Manager and Mr. Huang's wife), Mr. Liu, Xiang-yuan (Secretary).

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Saw Tips: Saw Humor, Part 1



By David Weiss

The concept of playing music on a handsaw is comical enough all by itself. Add to that the visual element: musician bent over a saw, saw bent over a knee, stroking it with a violin bow! There are of course other methods of playing the saw, looking equally funny if not more so. People can't help but smile... and then the jokes start to come.

"His playing was a 'cut above' the rest."

"He came, he sawed, he conquered."

"A musician who can bend steel in his bare hands."

In my concerts, especially when there is a relatively small audience, I encourage a "question and answer" period. This is the chance I have to get some great reactions from the audience, running the gamut from groans to cheers. It also gives my thumb a rest between numbers (!)

Here are some typical questions, and how I use humor in my answers.

Q. What made you start playing the saw?

A. It was during my mid-life crisis. I needed to do something more "cutting edge" and I like "heavy metal" music.

Q. What key or pitch does your saw play?

A. Saws of different lengths play in different keys. A longer saw like my 30 inch Stradivarius has a low E as the lowest note. My 28-inch Blacklock Saw goes to low G. My Stanley's lowest note is a concert C, so I call it my C-Saw.

Q. Is yours a rip saw or a cross-cut?

A. I prefer a cross-cut saw for cross-over music. A rip saw might be better for rap music. The important thing is to play on a well-tempered saw. Try to avoid being a hack saw player.

Q. Do you ever use a mallet?

A. Yes, in fact the very first saw players used mallets exclusively, and the tone can be "strikingly" beautiful. Bows didn't come into use until the late 1800's. Today most folks prefer "absence of mallets." (absence of malice – this pun is especially good if there are any lawyers in the crowd!)

Q. Have you ever cut yourself?

A. No, but if I practice too much, my left arm can get the bends.

Q. Do you have perfect pitch?

A. Well, once I was able to throw my saw into a dumpster without it hitting the rim. Q. What is the range of the saw?

A. When my arm is in good shape, I can throw it about 100 feet.

Q. Has anyone ever tried to steal your saw?

A. No - that's why I keep it in a viola case.

Q. How can you tell when a saw player is playing out of

A. When the bow is moving.

Q. Is it possible for two saw players to play in tune together?

A. Yes, but first you have to shoot one of them.

Q. Is saw playing becoming more popular these days?

A. Yes – more and more saw players seem to be coming out of the woodwork!

Q. Has playing the saw created some new opportunities for you?

A. Oh yes, my saw has opened a lot of doors for me.

Q. Are you self-taught? Is there a school or method to learn to play the saw?

A. Yes, I am pretty much self-taught, but I've been thinking of passing along some cutting edge ideas, giving workshops – maybe call it the "Sawzuki School."

Q. Is the saw hard to learn?

A. It takes a while to become a skill-saw player, and you have to do a lot of wood-shedding before you get a handle on it. It's hard to avoid being sharp.

Q. Are you listed in the Musicians Union as a saw player?

A. Yes. In fact there are about 10 saw players in the Los Angeles Local. Recently, the Carpenter's Union has been after me for dues, too!

Q. Do you call yourself a "sawist" or "sawyer" or what?

A. You can just call me a "psawchologist."

Q. What do you call a saw audition?

A. 1 – a "saw-off"

2 - a "scratch lottery"

Q. I see you made a CD of your saw playing. How well is it selling?

A. I just need to sell 100 more albums, and it will go "ply-wood."

SAW HUMOR, Part II will appear in a later issue. Please send us some of your own saw humor! We hope to create a "saw humor" space in future newsletters, and will credit you for your contribution if your bit is used. You can contact me through Email: weiss440@aol.com or through my website: www.davidweissgallery.com

"Circle-A-Word" puzzle

Find the following words in the puzzle below, which may be written forward or backward, horizontally, vertically or diagonally. (Yes, they are ALL there!)

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A managery

Contributed By Roberta "The Musical Saw Lady" Seibel P.O. Box 967 Newton, KS 67114-0967 316-283-1180

ADVERTISE In The Saw Player News!

We are now accepting both Classified and Display advertising for music-related and Musical Saw-related merchandise and services. You can now reach hundreds of saw players at a reasonable cost!

Terms and Prices for Display ads: Display ads should be "camera ready" (ready to print without resizing or editing).

Full Page(7.5" wide by 10" high) -	\$ 200
Half Page(7.5" wide by 4.75" high) -	\$100
Quarter Page(3.75" wide by 4.75" high) -	\$ 50
Business Card(3.75" wide by 2" high)	\$ 25
Flyer Insertion(8.5" wide by 11" high) -	\$ 200

Terms and Prices for Classified ads: Classified ads should be typed or printed to eliminate errors. There are 36 letters and spaces per line with a two line minimum for \$13/issue. Additional lines are \$3.50 each. Space must be left between words and punctuation marks require a space also. If the word does not fit on the end of the line, please use the next line. Your area code and phone number must be included in your ad information. The Saw Player News reserves the right to refuse any ads. Send payment in U.S. Dollars with your ad payable to IMSA, 31 South 40 Pier, Sausalito, CA 94965 U.S.A.

I nanks for your support: check and a completed Membership Application. receive the SAW PLAYER NEWS, please send a your membership has expired. To confinue to NOTE: It a green dot appears next to your name,

Association

www.SawPlayers.org Sausalito, CA 94965 31 South 40 Pier 0/0 ,AZMI



Application for Membership to the International Musical Saw Association

Annual Membership Fees are \$20/Individual, \$25/Family. Dues entitle Members to 3 issues of the Saw Player News, and eligibility to enter (with \$5 entry fee) the "Saw-Off Competition" at our annual Saw Players Picnic and Music Festival.

Please send your check with completed application to: IMSA, , c/o 31 South 40 Pier Sausalito, CA 94965 U.S.A.



ddress:		
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___ Country:_ 9-Digit ZIP code:

Phone #:() Email: In the future, would you be interested in receiving the Saw Player News by Email (PDF)?

Saw players frequently contact us to look for fellow saw players in their areas, but we don't want to give out your name and contact information without your permission. We do not intend to share your information with anyone but fellow saw players.

Please check the box or boxes that best represents your privacy preferences:

☐ I do not wish to share any of my contact information

Name(s):

- ☐ It is all right to give out my name and telephone number only
- ☐ It is all right to give out my name and Email address only
- ☐ It is all right to give out my name and address only
- ☐ It is all right to give out any or all of my information