



## **She's Got the Music in Her ~** **An interview-biography with Sarah Glew, founder of Manor Music**

**By Jean Bartlett**  
*(A Pacifica Historical Society Project)*

**November 22, 2022**

---

"I don't think readers will want to begin with a photo of me," said Sarah Glew, owner and founder of Manor Music in Pacifica's Manor Plaza. Sarah's shop, measuring at 5,000 square feet, sells (and rents) band instruments, other instruments and provides musical accessories, sheet music, rentals, lessons, consignments, repairs and more.

"I think people would rather see a picture of a guitar," she continued. "That's the instrument that really made my business take off and it is an instrument that never wanes in popularity. I'm just lucky that by happenstance, I have been able to be a purveyor of music for all these years."

"All these years" would be more than 50 years but to satisfy Sarah's request, this interview's official photos begin below with a photo of just one of the many-prized guitars that has made its way into Sarah's shop, as well as, of course, the store's owner.



(Jean Bartlett photo)  
**Sarah in her shop, 2015.**



(Manor Music photo)  
**Gibson BR-6 lap steel guitar.**

Manor Music's Store Manager Jim Moore talks the Gibson BR-6 lap steel guitar, pictured above.

"It has great tone. It's set up very well. It has great action and it's easy to play."

The guitar arrived with its original hard case and its lack of serial numbers suggest it is a mid-1950s' model.

But Jim doesn't want to limit the "guitar" talk to just the one instrument. The store is quite literally, bursting with inventory.

## **She's Got the Music in Her ~ An interview-biography with Sarah Glew, founder of Pacifica's Manor Music**

By Jean Bartlett ([www.bartlettbiographies.com](http://www.bartlettbiographies.com))

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Page 2

"We're happy to be carrying the new Schecter and Peavey line of guitars as well as an incredible collection of vintage Gibson, Fender, G&L and Martins," Jim pointed out. "We also have a guitar technician who takes care of our customers in our repair department."

Jim additionally noted that following the difficult pandemic years, the shop is now bringing back "an array of music instructors covering piano, guitar, bass, ukulele and cello as well as a multitude of band instruments, which include but are not limited to: saxophone, clarinet, trumpet and flute."

Based in Pacifica, along with managing Manor Music, Jim is a singer, songwriter, performer and guitarist. He also teaches music, or more specifically: guitar, bass, ukulele, singing and songwriting. He was, in fact, teaching guitar in one of the shop's teaching spaces when this writer stopped by. His songwriting credits include tunes recorded by Bobby Hendricks of the Drifters, soul singer Jerry Brooks and American Idol finalist Kristy Lee Cook. His website is: [Jim Moore's Music](http://JimMoore'sMusic.com).

Long involved with Manor Music as a music educator and customer before he took on managing the music store, Jim said the real star of music in Pacifica is Sarah Glew.

"Nobody has done more for the Pacifica music scene in the last 50 years than Sarah."

Sarah opened Manor Music in 1965 and while she claims her shop was built by happenstance, one could argue the wheels of her childhood led her directly here.

Sarah Anne (Smith) Glew was born on March 10, 1942 to Thomas Dalton Smith Jr. and June Alberta (Jensen) Smith. Her mother was born in Chadron, Nebraska.



"While not a professional musician, my mother grew up playing the piano and the violin and she was an avid classical music fan. She also thoroughly enjoyed opera. My mother's father, who was also born in Nebraska, moved the family to Elk, Washington, in Spokane County, when my mother was relatively young. Her father worked, at least at some point, as a laborer for the railroad. But they owned and lived on a farm in Elk, so during the Great Depression, when times were difficult, they always did just fine as far as having food on the table and a roof over their heads. My mother's father's parents were both from Denmark and I believe they came from farming families. Certainly they farmed in this country."

←Sarah's parents, Thomas Dalton Smith Jr. and June Alberta (Jensen) Smith married in Jackson, Michigan on March 18, 1939.

"My mother, on the other hand, had no interest in farming," Sarah laughed. "She decided to become a nurse and headed back east. She graduated from Buffalo

General Hospital in New York as a registered nurse in 1936. She only worked a few years as a nurse. She and my father met and married in Michigan and when they married in March of 1939, her days of working were numbered. Those were the times back then for women. But she did work those first few years of marriage. So many people felt that that this country was going to go to war, which of course it did, and working as a nurse gave her, and I think quite a few others at that time, a sense that they were doing something to help their country."

## **She's Got the Music in Her ~ An interview-biography with Sarah Glew, founder of Pacifica's Manor Music**

By Jean Bartlett ([www.bartlettbiographies.com](http://www.bartlettbiographies.com))

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Page 3

"My father was born in early 1908, which made him six years older than my mother. He graduated from the College of Engineering at the University of Michigan in 1936 with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. I believe he was working at a utility industrial supply company when he and my mother met. He was probably working in some sort of engineering capacity, or maybe not as these were still the Depression years and any job, was a good job and he was always willing to work. He put himself through college by taking on a fairly good mix of jobs which included shoveling coal and waiting tables.

"There were a number of things that made them a really good match as a couple. My father was also an avid classical music fan and he additionally liked adventure and learning about history, and he was a great appreciator of architecture and museums. He didn't necessarily like all opera, but for him, Italian opera could do no wrong. These things really aligned with my mother's 'likes' and the fact that he was born in Dallas, Texas, and my mother was born in Nebraska and they found each other in Michigan – it shows an innate go-to-itiveness on both of their parts that is just one of those traits that I believe two people need to share to really make things work. On top of that, they were both smart people who enjoyed being active."

During the Second World War, Thomas Smith served as an ordinance officer in the U.S. Army. He was stationed in North Africa, Sicily and Italy.

"I imagine if there hadn't been a war, my father's decades-long Army career would not have happened. But he found a home with the Army and served as a Major, and that would include serving in Korea, Pakistan and Europe, as well as stateside."

Sarah and her younger sister Nancy, younger by 16 months, were born at the Army Hospital in Gainesville, Florida.



**Major Thomas Dalton Smith Jr., circa 1942.**



**On the homefront, Sarah and her mom June, circa 1942.**

## **She's Got the Music in Her ~ An interview-biography with Sarah Glew, founder of Pacifica's Manor Music**

By Jean Bartlett ([www.bartlettbiographies.com](http://www.bartlettbiographies.com))

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Page 4

"Following the War, we moved to Texas. My youngest sibling, Thomas Dalton Smith III, was born in Bexar County, TX, in 1946. He was one of the kids who did contract polio before the vaccine was available in 1955. You know you read about how fearful people were of polio in the 1950s and they really were and rightly so. As a result of polio, one of my brother's legs was a little shorter than the other. But he did okay. He really was the typical American boy."



The family lived in Texarkana, TX, which is where Sarah went to elementary school. Her father worked at the Red River Army Depot in New Boston, TX. Work at the Depot included: rebuilding vehicle systems and components, materiel maintenance, manufacturing of parts and testing, and technical assistance. Her father, who had been an Eagle Scout in his youth, never tired of parks and family-time often meant traveling to a park, as well as going to museums and attending concerts. There were also visits across the country to see the grandparents. All three of the Smith children took piano and Sarah also played clarinet. She was a Brownie and a Girl Scout, and she played clarinet in band in middle school and high school.

←Sarah, elementary school, Texarkana, TX.

"We always had dogs and those dogs came with us wherever we moved to," Sarah smiled. "To this day I am a dog lover and I have always brought my dog to work with me. You can do that when it's your store! I do like cats and have owned cats. I have a dog and a cat now. But cats are not so easy to move when your family is a military family."

"My father's greatest military assignment, at least as far as the family was concerned, was when we moved to Europe. I attended my first two years of high school in France and my second two in Germany. To say that my family loved it, really doesn't do our feelings justice."

The Major's first two-year assignment was in Orléans.

"Talk about history," Sarah exclaimed "This is where Joan of Arc led the French Army to a great victory in the 100 Years' War between France and England." (That would be in 1429.)

"Orléans is a beautiful city. It's located in north-central France and nestled along the Loire River. The museums are spectacular and they include the Musée des Beaux-Arts and the Musée Historique et Archéologique," Sarah trails off for a moment in French. She does speak both French and German.

"My family did not live in the American Army housing. We chose the option of living 'off base,' or 'on the economy' as they called it then, and I chose the option of not going to the American high school but instead attending the local French high school. Our home was in a French neighborhood and I remember the bathroom was outside, and I loved it, because it was just part of it. We wanted to completely immerse ourselves in this country where we were guests. In addition, Orléans is just an hour southwest of Paris.



**She's Got the Music in Her ~ An interview-biography with Sarah Glew, founder of Pacifica's Manor Music**

By Jean Bartlett ([www.bartlettbiographies.com](http://www.bartlettbiographies.com))

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Page 5

We spent so many weekends in Paris and Paris is thrilling. With my parents both being architectural, art, history, stunning landscapes and classical music devotees—and all operas as far as my mother was concerned, plus she was born a Francophile—and both absolutely thrilled to educate their children with these appreciations – our everyday 'normal' was awe-inspiring. I remember my mother was particularly over the moon regarding cathedrals and whenever we were visiting one, she never spoke above a whisper!"

Sarah said she doesn't remember having any trouble learning French and gives the credit to her belief that "kids are sponges, ready to absorb and learn." She played clarinet in small youth orchestras when the family lived in France, and when they moved to Kaiserslautern, in southwest Germany, she continued to play in her local high school's youth orchestra. She graduated from high school in Germany and took the top prize in the European Science Fair.

"For us, Kaiserslautern was not quite as exciting as Orléans and Paris – I think it is hard to top Paris as far as museums are concerned, and had they let us, we might have lived in the Louvre – but it was still wonderful, and perhaps because I was a little older then, being in my junior and senior years of high school, I made a number of lifelong friends there. I made friends in Orléans as well, but stayed in touch with just one friend. But then high school was more than 60 years ago. How did that happen?"

Sarah's father retired from the military in 1962 and the family bought a home in Pacifica – the city that Sarah has called "home" since.

"My father continued working and got an engineering job with a bank in San Francisco. My parents loved Pacifica. The entire family did. And the thought of being able to look at the Pacific Ocean every day in Pacifica, while still having all the cultural choices that San Francisco and the entire Bay Area offers, my family had yet again landed in a bit of heaven. Then there is its proximity to so many national parks – Muir Woods, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Point Reyes and Yosemite, among others. My parents were constantly in the car traveling to one park or another, when they weren't attending the symphony, or the de Young Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Legion of Honor, the Asian Art Museum, etcetera!"

Sarah attended the University of California, Berkeley, as a bio-chemistry major. She also spent time enjoying the "art vibe" in Pacifica.

"Pacifica was quite a haven for artists and musicians in the early 1960s, which of course was also true of San Francisco. I got to talking to Larry Kempfer. He managed an art gallery in Pacific Manor, the Dal-Pac Art Gallery at 96 West Manor Drive. He was a musician and had traveled all over the world.

"He's the one who talked me into opening a store in Manor. Never in a million years would I have imagined that I would be a business owner."

But that's exactly what happened. In 1965, Sarah opened Manor Music and Books, right next to the Dal-Pac Art Gallery. She opened the store with the \$1,200 she inherited from her paternal grandmother.

"That was an unbelievable amount of money back then," she laughed.

Not long after she opened her shop, her hometown paper wrote an article featuring Sarah and her bookstore startup, as well as Larry Kempfer.

"Sarah will sell new and used books, and records at Manor Music and Books," the *Pacifica Tribune* wrote. "Larry announced that a ceramics workshop has been organized by several leading local potters

**She's Got the Music in Her ~ An interview-biography with Sarah Glew, founder of Pacifica's Manor Music**

By Jean Bartlett ([www.bartlettbiographies.com](http://www.bartlettbiographies.com))

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Page 6

and will set up shop behind the bookstore. It will include a laboratory for mixing glazes, a work bench, a power wheel and a manual wheel for working the clay."

"Even in the beginning, I knew I would sell musical instruments," Sarah recalled. "This was 1965 and the music scene was exploding in the Bay Area. Still, I thought I would begin with specializing in paperbacks and used books, mostly the 'classics,' but also featuring everything else like popular fiction, detective stories, children's books, cookbooks and bestsellers. I remember telling the *Tribune* reporter that as far as records, I planned to concentrate on rock 'n' roll, folk music and jazz. I did keep classical records in stock and I was never without Bach recordings. Bach was number one on my father's list of classical favorites."

For a while, Manor Music and Books and Dal-Pac Art Gallery shared the same phone. The phone was located in the gallery and when there was a call for Manor Music, someone in the gallery would pound on the wall. Larry eventually moved his shop to Palmetto and Sarah got her own phone. By then she was also well-established as a seller of music instruments.

"We just became Manor Music, and as I mentioned, that was due to the guitar. Everyone wanted to play guitar. The Beatles came out before I even opened my store and garage bands were the rage."



Even Sarah joined the guitar wave, circa 1966.

## **She's Got the Music in Her ~ An interview-biography with Sarah Glew, founder of Pacifica's Manor Music**

By Jean Bartlett ([www.bartlettbiographies.com](http://www.bartlettbiographies.com))

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Page 7

Sarah said one day a salesman stopped in her store and talked her into buying a box of folk guitars. She borrowed \$200 from her dad and made the purchase. To her delight, those guitars sold out immediately and to this day, her store is a treasure trove of guitars – electric and folk as well as basses – for every type of musician: beginning, skilled and virtuoso.

When retail record stores came onto the scene in the 1970s, Sarah moved out of the record and book business and devoted her store to musician essentials. Besides guitars and basses she offered, and still offers, drums, saxophones, flutes, clarinets, trumpets, violins, piccolos, harmonicas, percussion instruments of all sorts, amps, music lessons, sheet music and sound gear. Now her shop – which relocated to its current location in the 1990s – is one of the largest and oldest music stores in the Bay Area.

"And of course we carry ukuleles. Those have gotten so popular."



A small look inside Manor Music at its current location.

But it wasn't all about her music store. In March of 1968, Sarah married her husband of 44 years, Ralph Llewellyn Glew.

"He was a quiet man and very smart, and he was an artisan as far as the work he did. He was an expert at all of these things: tailor, carpenter, locksmith and plumber, and in his spare time, he built beautiful model trains and equally stunning were the wooden ships he created. He would spend hours studying old ship

**She's Got the Music in Her ~ An interview-biography with Sarah Glew, founder of Pacifica's Manor Music**

By Jean Bartlett ([www.bartlettbiographies.com](http://www.bartlettbiographies.com))

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Page 8

plans and then remake them, to scale, into new, painstakingly comprehensive model plans. Every detail of the ships he built, down to every bit of rigging looked ready to sail. They are architectural marvels.



**Sarah and Ralph married in Nevada in March of 1968.**

"Ralph loved classical music, the ocean—he joined the U.S. Navy as soon as he was of age—craftsmanship and traveling, and we loved these things together. And we loved our children, Alex, Catherine and Douglas, and being grandparents – well, I still do, there is nothing about that that is past tense for me. But we lost Ralph in February of 2012.

"Did I repeat my parents' love of music and travel with my children? I most certainly did!" Sarah nodded towards her piano. "They are all very familiar with the piano, though my daughter tells me in her next life – she is going to play the cello! Plus, I always brought my children to work and they did work – but they actually liked it! As to travels, you can never go wrong going to Europe or to parks. Music and traveling, as well as museum visiting and live concerts – these were extraordinary gifts my parents gave to me and I was quite happy to be able to pass those gifts along to my children."

Instrument rentals came along, not too many years after Sarah opened Manor Music.

"People could generally afford to buy a guitar of some sort, back in the day, without spending too much money. I also had harmonicas from the start which are fun and really light on the budget. Drums came in early as well. Those always sell. But most other instruments were too expensive for many families. So we began renting instruments. For instance, a decent saxophone back in the 1970s might have been \$600."

Sarah segued into some of the instruments from the 1970s that are still good instruments now. Some of those she mentioned include the first-generation Bundy Tenor Saxophone and the Olds Ambassador trumpet.



## **She's Got the Music in Her ~ An interview-biography with Sarah Glew, founder of Pacifica's Manor Music**

By Jean Bartlett ([www.bartlettbiographies.com](http://www.bartlettbiographies.com))

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Page 9

"Some people think that the wood on the older clarinets from back in the day was better crafted than today. This is not to say there are not excellent instruments made today, because there are. But I do think it's nice, unless someone has the money, to rent an instrument for your child first, or yourself. Get a feel for it. Do you kind of like it or do you love it? I loved playing the clarinet. We didn't invent the trend of renting instruments. It's just a good idea and we have the space to offer a lot of instruments and we've always had music instructors on hand. I want people to love playing an instrument, the instrument that calls to them."



**Sarah in her shop when it was on West Manor Drive, circa 1970s.**

Pacifica-raised, professional drummer Jay Michaelis took drum lessons as a kid at Manor Music, when it was next to Pacifica's old Seavue Theater, where Walgreens is now. He said it was Sarah who booked his first gig. The year was 1985 and it was at San Francisco's famous Mabuhay Gardens on Broadway in North Beach. The Dead Kennedys played there in 1981 as did Black Flag. It was the premier punk rock event space.

"We opened for (acid rock band) Blue Cheer," Jay recalled. "I was 12. The highlight was my drum rolled off the stage!" Due to nerves, Jay forgot to cinch down the toms on his drum set and the "roll" happened halfway through the third song. But the band kept playing.

Jay, who is professionally endorsed by Thumper Custom Drums, Paiste, Aquarian and ProMark, is the drummer for State Line Empire. His performance highlights include: BFD at The Shoreline, the Cow Palace, Slim's and the Great American Music Hall. He created Green Room Music Rock Camp, here in Pacifica, which is "geared toward enhancing children's interest in music and the arts." And every camp ends with a rock performance from the students. Jay additionally teaches at Green Room Music, where he now also subleases 20 rehearsal rooms.

**She's Got the Music in Her ~ An interview-biography with Sarah Glew, founder of Pacifica's Manor Music**

By Jean Bartlett ([www.bartlettbiographies.com](http://www.bartlettbiographies.com))

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Page 10

"Sarah let me start my teaching business out of her shop and for that I am so thankful. I taught at Manor Music for eight years and we started Rock Camp there. Eventually we outgrew the space and relocated to Green Room Music but Rock Camp is still going strong."

Jay noted that any kid in Pacifica who has ever loved an instrument knows Sarah's Manor Music.

"Sarah is a good soul."

*(Green Room Music, on Crespi Drive, just celebrated its 11th anniversary. Rock Camp has passed the 15-year mark. Jay's websites: [GreenRoomMusicCenter](#), [JayMichaelis](#) and [StateLineEmpire](#).)*

Every year, for decades, hundreds of band students in Pacifica and over the hill have shopped Manor Music.

"It is such an experience to play music," Sarah said. "You can't really explain how incredible that feeling is. Once you've done it, you are hooked. To share that with somebody and to observe what they are doing without taking over, letting the learner have the experience, this has always made my business, for me, thrilling."

"I want people to choose the instrument that suits them. Everybody has a different vibe as far as playing an instrument. People have distinct music personalities. They relate to an instrument and when they play it, it's like nothing else. Just because your friend plays one instrument, or your mother or father or sibling does, that doesn't make it the instrument for you. People attach on to their instrument. I love the depth of the clarinet and when I was choosing an instrument, as a kid, one of the reasons I chose it was because everyone wanted to play the flute. I've dabbled on the flute, but nobody will tell you that I play it well. But the clarinet, for me, was it. I found it to have a wonderful expression and its tone is very nuanced, and of course you can play it in an orchestra or in a jazz band. It's also a great instrument for folk music. But that's just me. I love it when someone tells me why they love the instrument that they chose because, not to oversimplify it, but music really makes the world a better place."

If someone wants an instrument that the store doesn't carry in-house, they will call their distributor.

"Something that is very important to me and every musician who has ever worked at Manor is we don't approve of people being stuffy about any instrument. Different people like different instruments and there are prodigies and virtuosos that can make any instrument sing."

"Do I have advice for parents who have a child who wants to learn an instrument? I would take them to a couple of performances – I did this with my kids – where they can hear an instrument, see what they are attracted to. If they lean towards one type of instrument, like drums, or winds or violins, come on in and we will let them try it out in our store. Another thing to do is line them up with a teacher."

"If you can, get your child into a class that is not in your house, they can have some freedom, because music is freedom, freedom of expression. Unless some relative is gifted at teaching, meaning he or she doesn't try to force their opinions down on your child, an outside music teacher can make all the difference between thinking music lessons are a chore to wanting to learn. It is such a necessity that a child feels like it is their idea, not your idea, not my idea. Take them to performances. At a live performance, the vibrations are amazing. You can sit there and watch someone create the sounds."

In 2015, Sarah Glew's Manor Music was the recipient of the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Milestone Award, for "their years of excellent service in the music product industry." Back then, Sarah told this *Pacifica Tribune* writer she was cutting her personal hours back, "Generally no more than 40 hours a week!" Now she has officially cut her hours down to "just visiting."

**She's Got the Music in Her ~ An interview-biography with Sarah Glew, founder of Pacifica's Manor Music**

By Jean Bartlett ([www.bartlettbiographies.com](http://www.bartlettbiographies.com))

Pacifica Historical Society / Jean Bartlett ©2022.

Page 11

"I've had really gifted musicians working and teaching out of my shop for years," Sarah said, "And now that I am retired, Jim is perfect at the helm."

"I'm not sure what the next chapter is for me, other than it will be an adventure!" the longtime business owner continued. "But I know music will be a part of it. Passing that love of music to others – my children, the people who have come to my shop or have yet to come to my shop – that's what matters. These people don't need to remember me. They need to remember music."

Sarah Glew's Manor Music, 460 Manor Plaza, Pacifica, CA, 650-355-5769. Store hours: 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. Offering instrument service and repair, band rentals, PA rentals, microphones, lessons, sheet music, chord books, guitar, bass, ukulele, piano, drums, horns and more. [www.manormusic.com](http://www.manormusic.com).



Jean Bartlett is a longtime Bay Area features writer: Pacifica Tribune, Oakland Tribune, San Jose Mercury, San Mateo Times, Portraits & Roots, Marin Independent Journal, Twin City Times, Ross Valley Reporter, Peninsula Progress, Coastal Connections, Contra Costa County Times, Bay Area Business Woman and Catholic San Francisco. She is also a former Hallmark Card writer, a produced playwright and a published author.

(Copyright 2022. Pacifica Historical Society / Author: Jean Bartlett, City Biographer. Funded by the Sam Mazza Foundation. Available via the Pacifica Historical Society and online at [www.bartlettbiographies.com](http://www.bartlettbiographies.com).)