



THE METEOR

Historic Preservation Society of Santa Clara
Harris-Lass House Museum

Spring Edition – March 2026



Captain Lass's Pool Table returns to the Harris Lass House

In January, the Harris Lass Museum was contacted by Captain Christian Lass's great-great-great granddaughter Laurie McManus. She is granddaughter of the late Betty Stevens who for years was a great friend to the Museum, providing memories, oral history interviews and family photographs to help enhance the story of the Museum. Laurie's father, Ron Stevens, has attended many special events at the Museum and donated Captain Lass's walking cane to the Museum. Laurie McManus is the Lass descendant who inherited Captain Lass's late 19th century Brunswick pool and billiards table and decided that this is the year she wanted to gift the table and its many original accessories back to the Harris Lass House Museum. The only stipulation was that the Museum pay for the transport and proper reassembly of the table from her home in Santa Cruz County to the House Museum in Santa Clara, a condition the Museum Board unanimously approved.



Laurie provided several exquisite photographs, and it was aptly described as an impressive piece of furniture with carved legs and knotted fringed pockets measuring 82" long, 45" wide and 32" tall with a tabletop to cover it when not in use. Captain Lass originally located and used it in the Harris-Lass House double parlor and that is where the Board determined it would be best to situate and reassemble it.

A company was contacted, *Century Billiard Service*, whose owner, Joel Reda is a Brunswick Billiard certified technician and has extensive expertise in the moving and reassembly of antique pool tables.

On the morning of Monday, March 1st, Joel Reda's van pulled up in the Museum's parking lot and Joel and an assistant oversaw layer by layer and pocket by pocket the reassembly of the pool table. Members of the Board watched in fascination as the components of the table were described by Joel during the reassembly process. Boxes with accessories including sticks, cue stick chalk, pool balls and rack were included in the donation. A vintage box with accessories from the 1884 merged billiards company Brunswick-Balke-Collender were included, as was a box of Spinks Billiard chalk, patented in 1897.

The public's first chance to view and ask questions about this table will be during the Museum's public tours on Sunday, May 3rd from 12 noon to 2 p.m. For those who want to come specifically to see the pool table and take a lingering look at it, docents will stay from 2-3 p.m. to present a mini-lecture. We also encourage any visitors with billiard stories or comments to share them!

(See the back page of this newsletter for an 1886 schoolboy's account of the popularity of billiards!)

Calendar of Upcoming & Proposed Harris Lass Museum Events for 2026

The Harris Lass Museum plans to be open for public tours from 12 noon to 2 p.m. on the first Sundays of the month from May through October.

The Harris Lass Museum Board has been busy planning a calendar of events for this year. Where dates are set, mark your calendar. On special events that are planned but with a TBA (to be announced) date, watch for future issues of The Meteor for details as the time draws nearer. You may also want to check the Museum's website at: <https://www.harrislass.org/> and you are welcome to email: info@harrislass.org if you have questions.

Saturday, **April 25th**, 9 a.m. to 12 noon, **Volunteer Workday**-- help with projects to spruce up House Museum and Grounds

Sunday, **May 3rd**, 12 noon to 2 p.m. **Public House Tours** – public's first chance to see the Gadgets Galore exhibits and, new to the museum, Captain Lass's 19th century pool and billiards table.

Saturday, **June 6th**, 12 noon to 3 p.m. **Spring Garden-themed Family Fun Day**. Many fun crafting opportunities and other activities for children. Tours of the first floor of the House Museum will be offered from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. for adults and children accompanied by adults.

Sunday, **June 7th**, 12 noon to 2 p.m. Public House Tours

Sunday, **July 5th**, 12 noon to 2 p.m. Public House Tours

Thursday, **July TBA**, Antiques Appraisal Program -- Bring your own picnic lunch and one antique item to be appraised

Sunday, **August 2nd**, 12 noon to 2 p.m. Public House Tours

Sunday, **September 6th**, 12 noon to 2 p.m. Public House Tours

Friday, **September 25th**, Movie Night in the Barn, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Saturday, **September TBA or October TBA**, Annual Flea Market on the Lawn

Saturday, **October 3rd**, Support the Santa Clara Parade of Champions

Sunday, **October 4th**, Public House Tours

Sunday, **December 6th**, 12 noon to 2 p.m., Photos with Santa
Support the Santa Clara Historic Home Tour on Friday night, **December 4th** and/or Saturday, **December 5th** as a portion of the proceeds benefits the Harris Lass Museum

The Cowboys are Coming!

The Santa Clara Arts & Historical Consortium, of which the Harris Lass Museum is an institutional member, is hosting a fundraiser, a Saturday Afternoon Western Round Up, on **April 25, 2026** at 1:00 p.m. at the Headen-Inman House, 1509 Warburton Ave., Santa Clara. The event will feature live interactive storytelling, bringing the spirit of the Old West to life. This is an opportunity to participate in a "Wild West" reenactment celebrating California's rich cowboy and cowgirl heritage. Tickets are \$25 each and tax deductible. Mail RSVP requests and checks made out to Santa Clara Arts & Historical Consortium by April 18th to S.C.A. & H.C., Attn: Evelyn, 725 N. Broadway, Turlock, CA 95380. If you have questions, or for more information, email: emartinzo7@aol.com or phone (408) 926-1165.

Gadgets Galore: Special House Exhibit for 2026 - 2027

Harris Lass Museum Board members Sue Harper and Carol Lucero in late February began working on a special exhibit that will be on display throughout the Museum in 2026 and 2027. The theme of the exhibit is “Come and Explore: Gadgets Galore.”

The Harris Lass Museum is fortunate to have a multitude of gadgets originally designed to make life easier or more enjoyable. Gadget is a noun defined as a mechanical contrivance or device -- or, any ingenious article! Antique gadgets encompass a wide range of devices that have been used throughout history, often reflecting the technological advancements and societal changes of their time.



The gadget categories you will find on display include personal, home, entertainment, educational, cooking/canning, sewing/quilting, laundry, photography and audio devices. When you have a chance to visit for a tour, the places throughout the museum where you will find cleverly curated gadget displays are in the kitchen, dining room, music room, sun porch, bedrooms and even in the barn. Learn about a

very special gadget that Captain Lass designed himself to replicate an item used on his sailing ships.

Santa Clara Historic Home Tour 2025

The 2025 Santa Clara Historic Home Tour was a great success and half of the profits from the Tour will directly benefit the Harris Lass Museum. The Home Tour Committee was pleased that the Museum held a bonus open house and photo opportunity with Santa Claus for tour participants and the public the Sunday following the Home Tour.

The Harris Lass Museum Open House on Sunday, December 7, 2025 was indeed a fun event. Numerous children and their parents visited in order to have their photograph taken with Santa Claus in the sitting room with the backdrop of a beautiful Christmas tree decorated with vintage ornaments. This event is becoming a tradition for some neighborhood families who said this was their second or third year in a row attending the “Photo Op with Santa.” While waiting in line to talk to Santa Claus, the families had a chance to see a miniature Christmas village that was set up in the parlor. A musician softly playing melodious songs on a classical guitar provided additional entertainment. Families also enjoyed the cookies that were served in the Summer Kitchen by youthful volunteers, and many visited the Tank House Gift Shop. About 130 people attended the open house.

HPSSC Board of Directors

(Aka the volunteers who manage the
Harris Lass House Museum for the
City of Santa Clara)

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**The Meteor newsletter is usually
published in the Spring, Summer &
Fall by the HPSSC.**

**To see the full-color edition, view
on the web at www.harrisslass.org
or request an emailed copy.**

We're listening!

What would bring you to our events?

What would you like to change?

The Board members are interested in hearing, so we're taking a survey which was sent along with the membership drive communication. It is also included with this newsletter.

You can return your input either by mail or email.

membership@harrisslass.org

A membership form is also included

*The following is transcribed from a book of 1886 Santa Clara County school children's essays titled **Compositions**, shelved in the locked case collection in the Heritage Pavilion at Santa Clara Central Park Library. Here is an essay that suggests the popularity of billiards among men and teenage boys of the late 19th century.*

Billiards

By Frank Holingbery; age 16 years
Gilroy School, First Grade

Mrs. M. A. Van Schaick, Teacher

Billiards is a very common game amongst boys and men in every City. This game is played on a table which has four legs. The top of the table is about six feet and a half long and about four feet wide.

This table has two sides and ends which extend about two inches above the top of the table, and have on each edge a thick piece of rubber which extend all around the table. These edges are called cushions. The table is covered with a thin cloth which is stretched tight over the top of the table so as to make the balls roll easy. This game is generally played with four balls. You have a stick or cues to punch the balls.

Four persons can play this game. The set of balls and cues and a table is worth about two hundred and fifty dollars.

Billiards is a very nice game, but you have to go into bad company to play.

I think that there are as many as twenty boys in this town that play.

Billiards cost twenty-five cents a game. There are fifty points in each game.

I know that I have spent or thrown away at least twenty dollars on this game. I know that there are other boys in this town that have spent as much again as I have.

There is more playing done on G. Seamon's table than any other.