

# Quinlan Museum Doll & Teddy Bear Newsletter

*Post-Philadelphia Convention Issue*

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## **2018 Helen Bullard and Beverly Port Award Recipients**

One of the most exciting and fun activities at the Quinlan Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Convention held in Philadelphia each year is for the attendees to be the first to view the gallery of 80-90 one-of-a-kind, signed and certified entries to the judging for the Helen Bullard Artist Doll Award for Excellence and the Beverly Port Artist Teddy Bear Award for Excellence. The recipients of the 2018 Awards as voted by the convention attendees were the following artists from a broad national and international spectrum:

### **Helen Bullard Artist Doll Award for Excellence    Beverly Port Artist Teddy Bear Award for Excellence**

- Joy Calhoon (Florida)
- Marguerite Noschese (New York)
- Rafael Nuri (Pennsylvania)
- Anna Potapova (Russia)
- Tami Eveslage (Ohio)
- Katherine Hallam (England)
- Candi Taylor (Oregon)
- Sue VanNattan (Illinois)



*Left to right: Anna Potapova, Rafael Nuri, Tami Eveslage, Katherine Hallam, Joy Calhoon, Sue VanNattan, Marguerite Noschese*

These are the 2018 Helen Bullard and Beverly Port Award winning pieces



*Clara*  
*Joy Calhoon*



*Georgia O'Keeffe*  
*Marguerite Noschese*



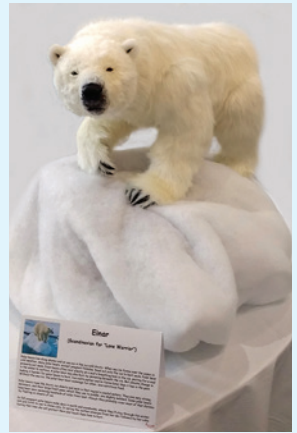
*Bug*  
*Rafael Nuri*



*Lotanarie*  
*Anna Potapova*



*The Artful Dodger*  
*Tami Eveslage*



*Einar, the Lone Wolf*  
*Candi Taylor*



*Asbjorn & Moe*  
*Katherine Hallam*



*Teddy Puppet Show*  
*Sue VanNattan*

## **New Use and Display for Teddy Bears (or Dolls)**

A man meets a woman in a bar. They talk; they connect; they end up leaving together. They get back to her place, and he notices that one wall of her bedroom is completely filled with teddy bears. There are three shelves in the bedroom, with tons of teddy bears carefully placed in rows, covering the entire wall! There were small bears all along the bottom shelf, medium-sized bears covering the middle shelf, and huge bears along the top shelf. He is quite impressed by her sensitive side, but doesn't mention this to her. He turns to her and kisses her lightly on the lips. The passion builds, and he lifts her in his arms and carries her into her bedroom where they make mad, passionate love. After a night of raw passion, they are lying there together in the afterglow. The man rolls over, and asks coyly, "How was it?" She smiles at him and says: "Help yourself to any prize from the bottom shelf."

Source: <https://joke4fun.com>

## **How War, Gender Stereotypes, And The Economy Gave Birth To "G.I. Joe"** by Chris Illuminati

*This article describes how marketers created huge new doll markets by calling "dolls" something else. There may be some ideas and lessons here for doll artists regarding name changes, creation of new products/by-products, product design and promotion.*

People love a good comeback story — especially if it involves an American icon. The genesis of this particular revival story began in the place where some men do their best thinking: the bathroom. The story goes that the presidents of Hasbro and Marvel entertainment introduced themselves to one another in the restroom at an early 1980s charity event. During their conversation about their respective companies, the Hasbro exec confided in his new friend that the company was ready to reactivate the trademark on G.I. Joe — one of the most popular toys of the 1960s and 1970s — but was stuck on how to develop a new approach to the forgotten American hero. That chance meeting at a urinal put the wheels in motion for one of the most lucrative joint ventures in toy and comic book history.

### **Every Hero Has An Origin Story**

In 1964, the Hasbro toy company had plans to appeal to young boys with figures similar to the popular Barbie® dolls. Marketing executives working for the company thought young boys would "never play with dolls" and made certain to never use the word doll during the development or marketing of their new line of posable soldiers. The Hasbro team developed the phrase "action figure," a term that would soon become the industry standard for any toys marketing to young males. Dubbed "America's movable fighting man," the original figure prototypes each had individual names and served in the four branches of the U.S. military. Eventually, the action figures were all classified as G.I. Joes with the generic names of Action Soldier, Action Sailor, Action Pilot, and Action Marine. The action figures were a success and millions of young American boys were enlisted into Joe's army.

### **"A Real American Hero"**

The Vietnam War was long over by 1982, and "The Me Decade" of the 1970s gave way to

the affluent 1980s and great personal wealth for many Americans. Thus, the time was right for Hasbro to bring back America's greatest fighting heroes — but with a fresh new look. Hasbro hired Tom Griffin and Joe Bacal, two young advertising executives, to give the G.I. Joe brand a makeover and thus reach a new young audience. The brash young duo developed an idea that had never been attempted before and has never been duplicated with the same success since. Understanding Hasbro's relationship with Marvel, Griffin and Bacal's big idea naturally involved a comic book and cartoon series, believing these to be the perfect vehicles with which to sell toys. Marvel and the marketing guys worked together on storyboards and a mocked up cover of the proposed comic book titled "G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero."

Executives from both companies agreed that G.I. Joe needed a new adversary. Civil uprising in the Middle East and the spread of Islamism gave way to the rise of terrorist organizations threatened by the American way of life. Marvel proposed that instead of the Joes battling a specific country, they fight a terrorist organization hell bent on world domination. It was there that the Cobra organization was born.

The next plan of attack was a body makeover for America's movable fighting man. The high price of oil — one of the key components in plastic manufacturing — at the time, made producing the original 12-inch figures of the '60s and '70s far too expensive. Inspired by the success of the *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back* lines of action figures, Hasbro scaled down the size of G.I. Joe to 3 ¾ inches. In another stroke of brilliance, Hasbro also created figures and vehicles for the enemies of the Joes, an idea that wasn't all that common at the time.

### **From Print To Printing Money**

With a best-selling comic book and top-selling toy line, Hasbro and Marvel were on a winning streak. That's when Hasbro really began to tinker with the idea of using other mediums besides print and TV ads to sell toys. Instead of a popular TV show launching a toy line, why couldn't a toy come first and then have its small screen debut? What if a cartoon did all of the selling for the company? Hasbro once again commissioned Marvel to produce animated TV commercials for their popular comic. The ads generated such a buzz around the toys that Marvel turned those commercial ideas into a five-part G.I. Joe mini-series in 1983 with a second five-part mini-series, *The Revenge of Cobra*, running in 1984. By 1985, a full-fledged TV series was in the works. The goal of the series was two-fold: reach the largest audience of young consumers as possible and act as a 30-minute advertisement masked as entertainment. Each episode made sure to make a different Joe the focus of the story and introduce a new vehicle or accessories that was already available in stores prior to the episode airing on TV. The series ran in syndication for only one year but Marvel, with help from Sunbow Productions, produced 96 episodes between 1985 and 1986. Hasbro's G.I. Joe toyline lasted from 1982 to 1994 and produced more than 500 figures and more than 250 vehicles and play sets. G.I. Joe's immense popularity spawned a litany of spin-off merchandising like posters, video games, board games and clothing. In 1985, *Toy & Lamp* and *Hobby World* magazines named G.I. Joe the top-selling American toy of the year.

*Source: <http://allthatsinteresting.com/g-i-joe>, December 24, 2016*

# Health Benefits of Teddy Bears

by Dr. Ben Kim

Before my wife and I got married, I had no idea that some adults maintain very strong attachments to their childhood teddy bears. It wasn't long before I realized that Margaret had very real feelings of affection for her two favorite bears: Snuffles (a brown grizzly) and Mika (a pink polar bear). I have to admit, it wasn't long before I started to enjoy having Snuffles and Mika around, especially in the evenings when we would lie in bed and talk about how our day went. As silly as it might seem, Margaret has two distinct voices and personalities for Snuffles and Mika that really bring them to life. Now, instead of seeing two cute and lifeless teddy bears on our bed, I see two important and charismatic members of our growing family.

Sometime last year when I told Margaret that a busy week at our clinic had me scrambling to write a health article for our weekly newsletter, within about an hour, I received an article via e-mail entitled "Health Benefits of Teddy Bears." Whether you have a teddy bear in your life or not, I hope that you find the following article to be as amusing as I do. Enjoy!

For the past century, teddy bears have enjoyed immense popularity among the young at heart. What many people underestimate is the positive effect these bears have on your health. Not only do teddy bears make wonderful sleep time companions, they are also effective in alleviating many chronic health conditions such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, obesity, flatulence, and ear wax build-up.

Studies have shown that it is the cuteness and apparent attentiveness of the bear that affects change in a person's health status. Cuteness depends on how well-loved a bear appears, roundness of features, and amount of fat the bear possesses. Bears that look too new (e.g. like they have never been touched) or too worn (e.g. they have bits and pieces missing) are not considered as cute as bears that look like they've been slept on for a few years, and still have all of their vital organs (e.g. nose and eyeballs). Round and chubby features are best, but if the bear is too round it can be mistaken for a ball which then renders its health effect nil.

Apparent attentiveness is an important feature, because human owners (also known as parents) of the bears tend to find comfort in the fact that their bears are listening to them. That is what helps the human to feel like their health is improving – the attention factor. Thus, if you have a bear that can't sit up or is always looking at something else when you're talking to them, you should find a new bear. The best teddy bears are modeled after wild bears, with the same shape and perky ears. These teddy bears can sit there and look you straight in the eye while you complain about how life sucks, and their round, chubby faces deliver compassion and empathy. However, as these types of teddy bears are quite small compared to wild bears, they are sometimes mistaken for pigs, especially if they are pink in color. One should be careful to shield these bears from hearing such comments, as they then become angry and resentful, which decreases their ability to improve your health condition.

Teddy bears are the best companions to have because they provide help in a wide range of areas. They aren't only good for sleeping and cuddling, which is what most people think. They have also been known to help students prepare for speeches, throw surprise birthday celebrations, provide therapy, and dispose of leftover honey. And, despite working so hard, teddy bears don't need regular baths. Actually, they don't need baths at all! You should

never wash your teddy bear, as washing also decreases their healing potential. This is a fact.

In recent years, imposters such as teddy ducks, teddy dogs, teddy cats, and even teddy cows have made an appearance. Don't be fooled, as these charlatans cannot heal the way teddy bears can. If you want to improve your health, teddy bears are the genuine article. If you REALLY want to improve your health, you should leave some cookies out for your teddy bears. Scientists are not sure how or why this works, but it does.

Source: <http://drbenkim.com>, July 12, 2006

## **Dolls and Doll Play: A New Look at a Familiar Prop**

### **from Texas Child Care Quarterly**

Dolls have been a fixture in dramatic play centers for decades. Despite changing doll styles and increasing doll gadgetry, experienced teachers continue to recommend simple and realistic dolls for pretend play. Why do baby dolls beat out Barbies®? How can you use dolls to support children's learning and development? When you buy dolls, what do you look for?

### **Dolls in Children's Play**

Playing with dolls is basic to dramatic play. The roots of make-believe begin between 12 and 18 months of age. During this time, children start to use objects as symbols and imitate behaviors (Rogers and Sawyers 1988). For example, 16-month-old Josh pretends to talk on a toy telephone.

True doll play begins about age 2 (Bronson 1995). Toddlers begin to talk to dolls, feed them, and tuck them into bed. Later children assume roles for themselves, beginning with the most familiar, mommy and daddy. Andrea plays mommy, for example, and says to baby, "Eat your peas." As role playing becomes more comfortable, children learn to play more than one role at a time. For example, David not only plays daddy but also speaks for baby: "Time for bed." "No, I'm not sleepy."

By age 4, children are playing cooperatively with peers. They use dolls to act out family and school roles. They also act out roles they have observed, either real or fantasy, such as doctor, firefighter, and Cookie Monster®.

In kindergarten and the primary school years, children play with all kinds of dolls and engage in elaborate fantasy play. Doll play increasingly becomes something only girls do. "Compared with girls, boys prefer toy guns, adventure fantasy play, and video games with aggressive themes, whereas girls prefer household objects, enacting familiar roles, and dolls" (Goldstein 1994). According to experts, pretend play is common to all children, with at least one exception. Children with autism have a neurological disorder that impairs imaginative play and social interaction (Autism Society of America).

### **Benefits of Doll Play**

Pretend play, of which dolls are a part, benefits all areas of development. By dressing and feeding dolls, children enhance fine-motor skills. By assuming roles and interacting with other children, they practice language and social skills, including sharing, cooperation, helping, and problem solving. They learn the different roles people play and begin to see their own place in the world. Children have a fundamental need to bring the large, loud



world into manageable size, according to Jerome Singer, psychology professor at Yale University (1994). Pretend play gives a child “a miniature world of downsized objects and people where she is the giantess and the trucks, cars and airplanes are easily manipulable. She can reshape her own bedtime or feeding experience with the help of some props we adults can offer – dolls, toy beds, or toy kitchen tables. She can come to grips with what are often major crises, such as a battle over feeding or messy toileting, but “writing” the scenarios herself and putting dolls into the now miniaturized situations and experiencing the power of watching them suffer as she pretends to be Momma.”

Doll play allows children to work through strong emotions. Hallie Speranza, who teaches at the Priscilla Pond Flawn Child and Family Laboratory, the University of Texas at Austin, says doll play can be therapeutic. Sometimes children “do mean things” with dolls, such as “putting a baby in the oven.” Such behavior allows children to release tension, rather than keeping it bottled up. Children often use dolls to “work through things that may be going on in their family,” says Dawn Leach, director of the Austin Community College Children’s Lab School. “They may do and say things with dolls they wouldn’t dare do or say with their families.”

### **Matching Dolls to Children’s Development**

Most early childhood educators recommend providing dolls appropriate to children’s development. For infants, dolls are comfort objects in the same category with stuffed animals, says Leach. These dolls need to be soft and cuddly, yet washable and sturdy. If an infant becomes attached to a doll at home as a lovey, teachers allow the family to bring it from home but don’t let other infants use it. Dolls made of cloth are fine, as long as they can withstand frequent laundering. “If an infant mouths the doll, we rotate it into the laundry basket,” says Leach, “so our dolls get washed every day or two.” Dolls also allow infants to practice grasping objects with their hands. Dolls with rattles inside provide auditory stimulation and allow infants to experience cause-and-effect: shaking the doll causes noise.

Realism is important, Leach says. It ought to be clear that the doll represents a person, and not a cartoon or fantasy figure. For infants, this can mean a simple body form made of fabric as well as a plastic baby doll. Children 3 to 5 typically prefer dolls that look like real babies and those with moveable arms and legs that can be posed in different positions. The best dolls look realistic but “don’t really do anything,” Leach says. “Dolls that walk and talk take away from what a child can imagine it will do.” Battery-operated mechanisms have other disadvantages: batteries must be replaced and mechanisms tend to break or wear out with heavy use. Even drink-and-wet dolls pose a problem: mold and mildew can grow inside. Realism includes diversity. Beginning at infancy, dolls ideally represent various ethnic groups and cultures. Even in classrooms in which all children are from the same ethnic or racial group, dolls need to represent the diversity of the community. It’s not enough for dolls to have different skin colors, says Leach. They need different kinds of hair and facial features. Dolls for preschoolers can introduce diverse abilities as well, through the use of props such as a doll wheelchair, hearing aid, and eyeglasses. Both Leach and Speranza advocate anatomically correct dolls, beginning at infancy. These dolls “normalize” boy-girl differences, something children are already observing and discussing when they use the toilet, says Speranza. In some communities, however, parents may find these dolls objectionable, particularly if a school or center has never had them before. “It might be wise to check with parents first,” says Linda Ard, who teaches at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi. Attractiveness also matters, says Speranza. Children tend to pass over dolls with

matted hair, a missing eye, or a body with ink scribbling. As a result, children need to be taught to care for dolls, and teachers need to clean and store them properly.

### **Baby Dolls Versus Barbies**

Many experienced teachers look with disfavor on fashion or teen dolls in the classroom. From a practical standpoint, fashion dolls have many tiny parts that can be lost. Children—and teachers—get frustrated looking for tiny shoes or hats. From the standpoint of social-emotional development, fashion dolls promote a stereotype of a beautiful woman as tall, skinny (some would say anorexic), busty, and blonde. They “place an emphasis on fashionable clothes and other possessions; and they suggest teenage or adult role-play activities rather than activities that are appropriate for young children” (Bronson 1995). These dolls “create interest in teen appearance, music and risk-taking behaviors that children imitate but don’t understand” (TRUCE). But some educators say teen dolls can have a place, depending upon children’s needs and the teacher’s values and beliefs. “For example, if you believe that fashion dolls have impossible figures that no person could live up to, and if you believe that children already are exposed to models that the vast majority of people could never look like, then those beliefs may influence you to keep teen fashion dolls out of the child care environment. If you value the creative process that children go through in pretend play and you want them to be able to use dolls to act out what they may be seeing in part of their world of teenage siblings, friends and relatives, then you may want to allow fashion dolls” (Thompson).

Similar arguments apply to toy soldiers like G.I. Joe®. Many educators believe such “dolls” promote aggressive play and the use of violence in problem solving. However, if children are from police or military families, a teacher may want to allow toy soldiers so children can explore these roles and their feelings within the context of units on safety and peacekeeping. Professor Singer argues that toy soldiers have been popular for generations, and many boys who played with them grew up to be well-known pacifists. “I am much more concerned about the millions of children who have no toys, no parents who tell stories or read to them, and no sense of history but who do have available real guns and who are stimulated to imitation by older peers and by the heavy doses of daily exposure to realistic violence on television” (1994). He suggests that pretend play with toy soldiers could allow boys to release negative emotions and learn the consequences of their actions.

### **Supporting Children’s Dramatic Play**

Children need little, if any, encouragement to play with dolls. “We may say something like, ‘This baby looks really hungry,’ and then we let them go,” says Speranza. Children take it from there. Dolls are an open-ended learning material; they can be played with again and again in many different ways. Actually, experienced teachers advise staying out of children’s pretend play, except for basic supervision. If children invite the teacher to “come to our tea party,” the teacher can participate in their play but without becoming the focus of attention. Teachers can excuse themselves at an appropriate opportunity: “Oh, I need to go to the doctor now. Thank you.”

Careful observation of doll play can provide insight into what children are thinking and feeling. Experienced teachers tolerate behavior in pretend play that would not be allowed in real life, like hitting a doll, as a way for children to work through strong feelings, but only up to a point. “If the play degenerates, it’s time to intervene,” says Speranza. When



intervening, teachers need to focus on the feeling. Not: "Moms don't treat babies that way," but: "How do you feel when hitting the baby? How does the baby feel?" At the same time, children need to understand that dolls, like other toys and learning materials, must be used as intended. "We respect people and things" is a common rule. In preparing the dramatic play center, teachers put dolls in their beds or on a shelf, rather than dumping them in a box. Careful handling and display is "a nonverbal way of suggesting use," says Speranza. Before leaving the center, children put the dolls back where they found them. It's not necessary to dress dolls after play (or for storage), except perhaps for a diaper, because children change the clothes during play anyway. To protect hair during storage, Speranza advises a tight-fitting doll cap.

The number of dolls put out for children to play with depends on many things, including the children's age and space. For toddlers, who cannot share toys, teachers put out at least two of the same doll. For preschoolers, in a dramatic play center that can hold five children, two or three dolls may be enough. If children are playing "doctor's office," five or six dolls may be necessary.

Boys play with baby and child-like dolls until about age 4 or 5 when they may switch to "boy dolls" like G.I. Joe. If a boy gets teased about playing with baby dolls, experienced teachers step in: "We read the book, William's Doll, with children to remove the stigma," says Speranza. Some educators insist that doll play is OK for boys because it teaches the nurturing attitude they will need as fathers. Teachers can encourage boys to engage in more doll play by changing the housekeeping props in the dramatic play center. If the center is a doctor's office, dolls become the patients, for example. If the center is an airplane, dolls become child passengers.

### Dolls in Other Learning Centers

While essential to the dramatic play center, dolls can support learning in other centers.

- **Water table.** Children enjoy "giving baby a bath." In addition to vinyl baby dolls, children will need materials such as mild soap and shampoo, towels, and lotion.
- **Blocks.** Small people figures are common in block centers, but ordinary dolls can enhance the fantasy of play. A doll can become a giant child among Lilliputians, or ride as a passenger in a child-sized block train.
- **Science/discovery.** Dolls offer a model for teaching about body parts. "When you say, 'Point to the eye,' children can poke the doll's eye instead of another child's," says Leach.
- **Manipulatives.** A doll and an assortment of clothing with snaps, hook-and-loop fasteners, and buttons can help children practice fine-motor skills.
- **Library/language.** Children can "read" to dolls and repeat flannel board stories to them.
- **Outdoors.** Children play with dolls in the sand, stroll with them in carriages, or pull them in wagons. Some teachers designate older, worn dolls as "outside only."

### Choosing Dolls for the Classroom

In choosing dolls, as with any toys or learning materials, teachers need to consider the child's development as well as how the doll will be used:

- Is the doll safe? For infants and toddlers, make sure dolls have no small objects (button eyes, pacifiers) that pose a choking hazard. Eliminate cords that can get wrapped around a child's neck.
- If you buy from a source other than a reputable educational supplier, make sure the doll has no protruding wires or sharp edges that can pinch or cut fingers. Question whether

the body material, stuffing, and paint are non-toxic.

- Will the doll withstand heavy laundering? Cloth dolls for infants need to be machine washed and dried every day or two, especially after an infant puts a doll in her mouth. Vinyl dolls will undergo frequent baths by children.
- Will the doll withstand heavy use? Infants and toddlers will drag dolls around, drop them, and sometimes bang them. Look for flexible materials and sturdy construction.
- Is the doll suited to the children's developmental level? Age ranges stated on the label can be misleading. Be realistic about the children's skills and interests.
- How much does the doll require children to use their imagination? Educators criticize battery-operated and computerized dolls as little machines that distract children from real play. By contrast, simple dolls let children take the lead and use their own imaginations.
- Does the doll help reflect diversity? Aim for a true reflection of culture, ethnicity, gender, and ability. Avoid tokenism. One black or one Hispanic doll is not enough in an ethnically diverse community.
- How much does the doll cost? Dolls in educational supply catalogs range in price from \$10 to \$50. In tight budget times, "put your money in a quality doll, not the accessories," says Leach. "You can use boxes for cradles and empty food cartons for play food."

### **Buying Tips**

- See and touch the doll for yourself, if possible, says Ard. Instead of relying on pictures in catalogs or on the Internet, visit doll vendors at conferences and shows. Or visit other centers that have the dolls you're considering.
- Be cautious about heavy advertising. It could mean the doll is this year's fad and tomorrow's junk.
- Check garage sales and thrift shops for doll and baby clothes. Parents may also be willing to donate baby clothes they no longer need.
- Remember that children will get into doll beds and other accessories. Look for large size and sturdiness.
- Ask parents if they or grandparents are willing to make doll clothes, doll houses, and play furniture for you.

Source: [www.childcarequarterly.com/summer04\\_story1a.html](http://www.childcarequarterly.com/summer04_story1a.html)

## **Cop's Daughter Makes Teddy Bears from Uniforms of Fallen Officers from PoliceOne.com**

After receiving an essay prompt to write about something she believes in, Megan O'Grady came up with an idea to help families of fallen officers. O'Grady, whose father is a police officer, realized the impact policing has on law enforcement families and decided to create "Blue Line Bears." She and her grandmother hand-stitch the bears for the children and families of the fallen cops. They dress each bear with the fallen officer's uniform, badge, patch and stripes. Each bear also comes with a medal of Saint Michael, the patron saint of police officers and takes about four days to finish. "I just thought of an idea that would reach out to them personally, and give them something that was a piece of their parent ... so they can hold that every single night and think of them," O'Grady said. She delivered the first bears this week to the families of fallen Lt. Debra Clayton and Deputy Norman Lewis. Clayton was fatally shot while approaching a murder suspect and Lewis was killed in a motorcycle accident pursuing her killer. Clayton's son, Johnny Brinson, said out of all the gifts he received after his mother's passing, the bear was the best. "I always hugged her in

her uniform - even before she went to work, while she was on duty..." Brinson said. "Seeing this patch, feeling it again ... I'm very thankful for it, to make it - it's amazing. I love it. I really do." O'Grady's father said "With all the craziness and unrest, it is good to know that there is still someone I can look up to and call my hero." Who knew that it would be my daughter?"  
*Source: [www.policeone.com](http://www.policeone.com), February 22, 2017*

## **Girls Can Choose for Themselves Between a Superhero Doll or Pink Princess** **by Ailin Quinlan**

Toy makers are now producing action dolls. But what girls really need is play diversity. Wander through the girls' aisles of any major toy shop and you'll be met by rows of buxom, scantily-clad dolls with huge eyes and plump, sexy lips. It's a wearisome sight, but one which is about to change thanks to a new range of superhero dolls. Designed with creative input from young girls who wanted stronger, more heroic looking, and, yes, less 'girly' dollies, the new team of six action heroes are set to get out there and kick ass in Toyland. Maybe the sexism, which has traditionally surrounded girls and their toys, is finally beating a retreat. The end of October saw the first Sky One broadcast of the US comic series Supergirl – based around a feisty costumed super-heroine who is related to Superman, and one of the last surviving Kryptonians.

This all looks like somebody's taking a giant step away from Barbie® who for generations has dominated our definition of doll-like femininity – blonde, tall, curvy, beautifully dressed and, if you choose to close your eyes to those inhuman body proportions, even scarily attractive. And just maybe, it also signals a big move away from traditional girl-play, which, for more generations than we care to count, has emphasised the tooth-achingly pink and sweet. The accepted social conditioning around girls' play doesn't encourage them to be loud and boisterous or physically active – in fact, says child and adolescent psychologist Dr. Patrick Ryan, some girls may not even be aware of their capacity for loudness, robustness or physicality because of the way they are traditionally expected to play. "What we want to foster is experiences that allow for the natural expression of whatever play works for the child. So an introverted boy might want to sit and read, while an extroverted girl might want to play soldiers with the boys next door. "We don't need to value-judge this – just to see it as an expression of personality rather than a 'girl' thing or 'boy' thing." Instead however, we often unthinkingly expect girls to want dolls and boys to want soldiers. There's nothing wrong with that if it's their natural inclination, says Ryan. But the behavior of a girl who wants to express herself otherwise – by climbing trees or playing football with the boys next door – may be met by disbelief or even disapproval if we insist on stereotypical toys and games. Which surely means that we should all be applauding the arrival of the new SuperHero Girls early next year – a new breed of sisters-doin'-it-for-themselves-style toys and, probably, the next generation of comic-book heroines of the Wonder Woman or Supergirl genre.

The dolls, which have already received a positive response from commentators, are clearly more athletic. They are tall and fit, wear action-gear rather than ball gowns, and their raison d'être is to get out there and get things done – a little in the style of the new movie *Sicario*, in which Emily Blunt plays a tough but idealistic FBI agent recruited for a black-ops border mission in the war against the Mexican drug cartels. It's a long way away from Mattel's Barbie® concept, and perhaps one of desperation for the toy-maker, whose profits have declined significantly – last January it reported a 59% fall in fourth quarter profits, partly thanks to a decline in sales of Barbie®. Added to that, it is set to lose the licence to

make Disney Princess and Frozen figures to rival Hasbro early next year. So, yes, Mattel desperately needs a game-changer and SuperHero Girls could be it.

Mummy blogger Alison Curtis, radio producer and presenter on Today FM feels that the dolls may well be a step forward: "I like where people are going with this because they are assigning good, robust characteristics to these dolls – they have a purpose, they are making their own stories so to speak, whereas Barbie® is like a consumer — she likes to buy things." However, she observes, the SuperHero dolls still look "pretty unrealistic", pointing to "the long necks, the skinny waists, the big eyes and the luscious hair." The emphasis is still on physical attractiveness.

"In their defense, the new SuperHero Girl dolls do promote a different sort of ethos," says Laura Haugh of MummyPages.ie. "The dolls," says Haugh, a mother to a four-year-old girl, "portray a world where girls are brave, are confident, are not overtly sexualized in clothing or make-up and have special powers with a focus on helping others – a much more positive message for a developing young girl. They are a welcome departure from the super-skinny, oversexed dolls of Barbie® and Monster High." But Haugh believes that the toy manufacturers missed a beat by not being more gender-inclusive with the range: "A complementary range of compatible boy superhero dolls marketed with the girl dolls in a gender-neutral way, would more fairly reflect the reality of society and could have promoted more play and enjoyment between siblings and friends of the opposite sex," she says.

Meanwhile, Curtis feels another new doll, the Super Lottie doll – designed by a six-year-old girl called Lily from Ohio – is attractively realistic. "It looks like a little kid," she says. Curtis, who says as children, she and her sister were "quite tomboyish". "Our parents went along with that – they let us lead the way on play and we weren't girly-girls." "We were encouraged to go our own way on things and once when we were picking bikes, we chose the boy models because we preferred the handlebars and the feel of them." Pinkification can become a problem if girls are only being given pinky-girly toys, she says. "It will shape what they like. I think that girls should be able to lead the way. Little girls and boys should be exposed to a whole range of different toys and perhaps we should stop genderifying toys and stop with the pink and blue aisles and let children choose what they like from a wide selection." If, given the option of choosing from a wide range of toys, girls still want to be girly, that's their choice, she says. "It should not be automatically assumed that little girls will love Barbie®. You don't want to give them negative messages about being female because that is valid – we should give them the choice of expressing themselves more robustly than in pink and with Barbie®." But says Dr. Ryan, parents really need to "butt out" of play altogether and let kids express themselves as long as it's healthy and safe. "Play should be about freedom and about the liberty of expression and to engage in activities both real and imaginary that causes joy and it should not be rule bound." "If girls want to be superheroes or Barbie® girls, from an internal desire to express themselves, let them at it," he counsels. "What we don't want to do is make play another project. We have got to keep a space that is very free and freeing so that kids do naturally whatever they know how to do." Kids know how to play, so we as parents constrain them if we get involved and start deciding what they should and shouldn't do." Follow the kid's lead he says. Some little girls may want to be super heroes, others aspire to be pink princesses, no matter how many trucks and trains you throw at them. "You can shape how a child plays by deliberately doing something – telling them what to do – or by not doing something such as not inviting daughters to play football with sons. "Let them create the lead and you follow it. Get out of their play space.

Source: *Irish Examiner*, [www.irishexaminer.com](http://www.irishexaminer.com), November 7, 2015

# Teddy Bear That Became World War Two Hero

by George Winston

World War Two widow, Jean Mellows, who is now 89, has stolen the hearts of the British public as she revealed that a tiny 20cm teddy bear accompanied her husband, a Royal Air Force (RAF) pilot, throughout the war. During their courtship Jean gave her fiancé her teddy bear as a lucky charm before he went off to fly with the RAF and from that point on it didn't leave Paul's side. Her husband had her maiden name sewn onto it. Pilot Officer Paul Mellows was a Mosquito night-fighter pilot and flew more than 50 missions over enemy territory, and throughout his entire service Jean's bear went with him. Mellows was awarded with the Distinguished Flying Cross for his service.

*Source: War History Online, [www.warhistoryonline.com](http://www.warhistoryonline.com), May 8, 2015*

## 12 Reasons People Collect Dolls

by Denise Van Patten

When I first started collecting dolls 30 years ago, I hardly ever heard the question "Why do you collect dolls?" That was before the internet and most electronic entertainment. People were used to collectors collecting all sorts of things for entertainment – coins, stamps, dolls, toys. Today, however, our culture is very different, and many people have trouble understanding collections and collectors. This article will put forth several of the many reasons that doll collectors collect dolls – there are many others, but these are the ones that I have heard the most during my doll collecting career.

**1. Antiques:** Many people collect dolls that are antiques. Dolls are some of the most beautiful antiques that are available to antique collectors today, with dates of manufacture generally from about 1800 through the early 1900s. They are also very accessible antiques – they can be collected with a minimum amount of room, unlike antique furniture. They tug at the heartstrings more than, say, antique books or antique tools. Many antique dolls as old as the mid-1800s such as china dolls, can be collected quite inexpensively. Dolls also fit in beautifully with collections of antique toys, trains, Christmas, 19th-century paper ephemera and sewing items.

**2. History:** Some collectors of dolls love history. They love the historic place dolls hold in our culture, from Barbie in the 1960s to the manufacture of bisque dolls in France and Germany in the 1800s. These types of doll collectors often will collect the dolls of one time period or of one manufacturer that they have studied and researched. Sometimes historic collectors are interested in the history of fashion (see below).

**3. Fashion:** Sometimes, it is a love of fashion that brings collectors to doll collecting. Through dolls, you can collect the history of fashion, either through buying dolls costumed with clothing from many eras, or buying dolls from those eras and places (there is a difference – you can have a Barbie doll dressed in a Victorian outfit, or you can have a doll from the Victorian era dressed in an outfit from that time period. Collecting dolls that reflect fashion certainly is easier and easier on space (full-size 19th Century outfits can be quite bulky – hoop skirt, overskirt, underclothes, shoes, hat, purse, gloves...storage space for one human-sized outfit can fit a small collection of dolls!) Also, dolls make perfect tiny models/mannequins for dolls, and there is something charming about fashion writ small.

**4. Sewing and Costuming:** Costuming is a little different than historic fashion – costuming can encompass anything from fanciful fairy and literary costumes to pedestrian baby doll

or children's play outfits on a doll. Many people who come to dolls through costuming interests often like to sew. There are a plethora of sewing patterns available for dolls of all type, including American Girls, Barbie dolls, vintage, dolls, antique dolls – nearly any type of doll that has been manufactured in some quantity. It is also fun to find and collect scale-appropriate materials, buttons, trims, and other items sized right to costume and sew for small dolls.

**5. Nostalgia:** I think that the greatest number of collectors come to collecting through their childhood dolls – often, nostalgia for or a love of the dolls they spent their childhood with. I know that this was true for me – I became a fervent collector when trying to find and replace the lost Barbie dolls of my childhood (by the 1980s, expensive collector items... who knew?!) You can often identify the age of a doll collector of vintage dolls by just walking into the room where they house their collection.

**6. Christmas:** Many collectors of Christmas antiques and ornaments also collect dolls. Seeing the cross-over appeal is easy – dolls make beautiful displays under or next to Christmas trees.

**7. Therapeutic Value:** Dolls can often soothe a psychological need or an emotional void. Sometimes, the loss of a child or the inability to have a child or retirement from a career dealing with children can lead to doll collecting. After all, dolls are representations of people. You can often see a therapeutic value or connection with collectors of baby dolls of all types.

**8. Decorating:** Dolls can be used to make visual statements and can be used to decorate homes. A single dramatic doll may be a focal point in a home, or an entire room might be decorated around dolls to evoke days gone by. A fashion designer might decorate a room with dolls that show off their designs, or with dolls that serve as creative inspirations. Dolls also make great (and useful!) decor in sewing rooms.

**9. Family Members:** Collectors sometimes inherit the beginning of their collections from a mother or grandmother. There can be no intention to start collecting themselves. I've had customers who often approach me to sell a collection. They learn a bit about the dolls, they get fascinated, and next thing you know, they are adding to the collection instead of selling it.

**10. Hoarding:** Sadly, just like with merely anything else that can be collected in great quantity, some doll collectors hoard dolls. This is a very small percentage of doll collectors, but in all my years of visiting homes to appraise doll collections, I have seen a few cases of doll hoarding.

**11. Cute Factor:** Face it, many dolls are cute. The "cute" factor is very appealing to some collectors, especially some women collectors. They may be a hard-hitting corporate executive with a high-tech house and all the latest gadgets, but their only "cute" fix is when they get to play with and collect dolls. Not all dolls are cute – some are high fashion, some are scary, some make an artistic statement, some are historic pieces. But, some dolls are just so darn cute!

**12. Celebrity Worship:** Finally, dolls intersect greatly with today's culture of celebrity worship. Many of the best-selling dolls are celebrity dolls, created in the likeness of popular celebrities – singers, actresses, dancers, and even reality TV stars. If a person absolutely



loves a particular celebrity and there is a doll of that celebrity available, a new doll collector may be born!

Source: About.com, December 10, 2016

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