

Quinlan Museum Doll & Teddy Bear Newsletter

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Show Replacement of Cancelled Convention

With the cancellation of the Quinlan's Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Convention, teddy bear artist Cindy Malchoff organized and conducted an online show and sale May 1-3, 2020 made up of fifty (50) artists (20 doll and 30 bear artists) originally scheduled to participate at the convention. The online show had over 2,500 individual visitors and the artists seemed pleased with the results. In addition to shopping for dolls and bears, visitors were invited to cast their vote for three doll artists and three bear artists to be presented with the Helen Bullard Award for Excellence among the doll artists and Beverly Port Award for Excellence among the bear artists – an event that was held at the convention each year. Rather than selecting winners based on the artists' single entry of a doll or bear in the competition, voters were asked to base their selections on the artists' complete gallery of pieces up for sale. Based on 132 collectors and artists casting votes, the winners of the awards were:



*Helen Bullard
Award Recipients*

Mark Dennis*
Esther Manso
Marguerite Noschese
Christine Shively-Benjamin
Noemi Smith

*Beverly Port
Award Recipients*

Dolores Austin
Tami Eveslage*
Pamela Kisner
Michelle Lamb*
Elena Nagel



* recipients of the Decade of Excellence Awards

Special Convention Tenth Anniversary Awards

The Quinlans were sorry to see their 10th annual Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Convention scheduled for April 30-May 2, 2020 in Philadelphia cancelled due to the coronavirus epidemic and go out on a whimper, but some convention activities were still conducted, such as, the presentation of the Bullard and Port Awards, some special awards, and distribution of the convention souvenir pins.

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Quinlan Artist Convention, the Susan Quinlan Doll & Teddy Bear Museum presented two special artist awards for the first time. To recognize artists that have been consistent recipients of the Helen Bullard and Beverly Port Awards at the Quinlan Convention over the years, they were each presented with the Quinlan Museum Decade of Excellence Award. Over the years, many of the same artists won the Bullard and Port Awards most years, which denied other artists a chance to be a winner. This year, the other artists had their opportunity. Since this Decade of Excellence Award recognized the results of the voting in the 2020 convention competition, it allowed other artists to receive Bullard and Port Awards.



Decade of Excellence Awards

To recognize those artists who were awarded the Helen Bullard and Beverly Port Awards on a regular basis over the past 10 years, the following artists received a special award inscribed “The Most Outstanding Artist Award Chosen by Your Peers and Collectors Over the Past Decade (2011-2020):”

Doll Artists

S. Joy Calhoon
Mark Dennis
Diane Keeler
Natalie Ruiz

Teddy Bear Artists

Wanda Carson
Tami Eveslage
Katherine Hallam
Michelle Lamb

Contribution to the Profession Award

In addition, the Quinlan Museum Contribution to the Profession Award went to those artists who have made a major contribution to the support and growth of the doll artist and teddy bear artist professions. The following teddy bear artists received this special Contribution Award inscribed “The Outstanding Contribution Award For Your Generosity, Dedication and Support to the Profession and World of Teddy Bear Artists” for organizing and conducting so many of the best Artist Teddy Bear Conventions and Show over the years:

Cindy Malchoff
Donna Nielsen

Both artists have enthusiastically organized and conducted some of the most popular teddy bear artist conventions and shows. Years ago Cindy Malchoff took over from the venerable Millie Gage the Teddy Bear Artist Invitational (TBAI) Convention and Show and maintained its 26 year history. Donna Nielsen for years has provided the Bears Near Bristol Show & Sale in Farmington, CT and the Hunt Valley Teddy Bear Show & Sale in Maryland. They both are also conducting the Bears with a Mission Show & Sale in San Diego, CA

The legendary international doll maker **Jack Johnston** also received the Contribution Award inscribed “The Outstanding Contribution Award For Your Generosity, Dedication and Support to the Profession and World of Doll Artists” for his tireless effort to educate, develop and promote other doll artists as an instructor, author and film producer since 1970. He has taught over 37,000 students during his career and published numerous books on sculpting art dolls. He has also produced 15 films on how to make one-of-a-kind dolls. He is the founder of the Professional Doll Makers Art Guild (PDMAG) and Johnston Original Artdolls LLC, the ProSculpt Company. He is the recipient of too many Awards of Excellence and Lifetime Achievement Awards to mention.

Congratulations to all eighteen (18) award recipients. There could be no finer way to share our thanks for your support of our convention over the past decade. Cheers!

2020 Convention Pins

Although the Quinlan Artist Doll and Teddy Bear Convention had to be cancelled, it did not prevent them from distributing to the convention registrants their annual collectable souvenir pins honoring two leading artists – one doll artist and one teddy bear artist. The artists honored this year were doll artist Natalie Ruiz and teddy bear artist Wanda Carson.



In addition, another artist honored with a souvenir pin was Betsey Baker, a doll artist that creates miniature pieces. The Quinlans always felt that the diminutive size of her pieces was overshadowed by the larger dolls in the Helen Bullard Award competition and judging over the years. There always should have been a separate competition among miniaturist artists, but the convention unfortunately never attracted enough of them for a separate competition. So it is our honor to finally recognize publicly a long overdue tribute to doll artist Betsey Baker.



Finally, a special commemorative pin honored the recent passing of doll artist Roxanna Maria (Sullivan) for her career of excellence in her creations. Although the cancellation of our convention denied all of us from paying her tribute with words of love, admiration and praise, the Quinlans can share with you the letters below that Roxanna wrote to them nine years ago in a call for stories about a person's special doll or teddy bear. [The stories were to be published in a book, but we never received near enough stories to draft a book.] Roxanna's story provides a little insight into the woman we will all miss. The doll referenced in the letter is the one pictured on her commemorative pin.



Roxanna the Artist



Roxanna with Her Creations



Roxanna's Table at the Quinlan Sale

Letter and Story from Roxanna Maria

Initial Letter from Roxanna

I do have a story that has just happened within the last week, and I find it to be amazing. My name is Roxanna Maria and I am a OOA Original Figurative Artist who recently came back into the industry last year (2010) after having been in remission for 15 years. Last year was my first IDEX show ever, and I sold out and won the DOTY award twice. I have been very blessed. I would like to write a story on what has recently transpired in my life with a piece I have just finished and include a photograph of her [Matoaka] for you. I never knew my father and had heard some stories about my having a grandmother that was Native American. I decided to do a Pocahontas doll and started researching her when I came upon TRNS (*The Red Nation Society*). I had in the past tried to find my heritage and even had contacted the Indian Tribunal Counsel and was told that without proof, I could not get any information. I told TRNS my story that had been passed down on how my grandmother and her children were burned out for being half-breeds, and so on, and submitted it. They in turn accepted me into their society. Within their society, they have a genealogy group that told me to check on the LDS (Latter-day Saints) genealogy group, where I found a name that was similar to my father's name. I took that and put it into Ancestry.com where I found and contacted said person and he led me to this amazing genealogy tree that dates back to the first settlers in Virginia where my great, great grandmother was born. At the time, they were primarily Powhatan Indians, which we are pretty sure my grandmother was a descendant. Well, so was Pocahontas, so as I was completing my sculpture of the real Pocahontas (Matoaka) who married John Rolfe and had a son named Thomas who died

in England, my search for my heritage came full circle. I have found it to be so amazing that here I was researching a doll, and that search took me in a complete circle to finding my heritage, lost family ties, and completing a wonderful piece of art. I would like to have a week or two to gather all the information for you. My daughter, who has a BA in journalism and writes beautifully, will compile this information into a heartwarming story, which it is, and have my photographer take pictures of Matoaka and send all this to you. Hopefully we have time to do so. If not, please let me know and I will try to do the best I can for you.

Artistically Yours,
Roxanna Maria

Final Submitted Story



Matoaka: A Doll with a Purpose
by Roxanna Maria

My parents were divorced when I was eight months old, and I was raised by my mother and her family. She had told me a story as I was growing up about my father that he had told her. He said that he was German and part Native American, that his mother was Native American and had lived in Pennsylvania, that his father was a coal miner and my father had five brothers and sisters. They were hated and called half-breeds and were burned out of their home. The only ones to survive were my father and my grandfather. Never having known my father, I was very curious about not only him but also my Native American heritage. Many, many years had passed and my father also passed. After a while, I just never gave it another thought. Just recently I returned to doing what I loved most – sculpting. I had been sculpting mostly fairy tale pieces, such as, Jack and the Bean Stalk, Tinker Bell, etc. I decided to sculpt Pocahontas, and as with all my work, I always did research first. While I was doing research, I came across a website called *The Red Nation Society*, which is actually a worldwide society of Native Americans. The site is a facebook for Native Americans. Within the site there are groups including one that is used to find your heritage. Well, of course I joined the group, as I never knew what tribe my grandmother's heritage was from. Not having much information to go on, they recommended that I do research with the *Mormon Ancestry* site to obtain more information on my father. Through them I was able to get my father's birth certificate, which in turn gave me my grandmother's name and my grandfather's name. All along, I was still working on my Pocahontas and doing research on her. I found out that she was not named Pocahontas, which in her language meant "mischievous one." Her true name was Matoaka and she came from the Powhatan Tribe from West Virginia. Her father was chief Powhatan and was over about five other territorial tribes. She had fallen in love with John Smith, but he turned her away and she wound up marrying John Rolfe, a prominent tobacco farmer who fell madly in love with her. Their marriage was also to help heal the relationship between England and the Native Americans because England was interested in the tobacco trade. They had a son named Thomas, and Matoaka died while on a visit to England. As I was researching and sculpting Matoaka, I was still diligently trying to find out my heritage. I took the information that I had and went to Ancestry.com and put in my father's last name. A similar spelling came up that wasn't exactly the same, but I thought, *oh what the*

heck, I'll try it. So I wrote to the person and asked if we were related. His response was “Yes, in fact the name you gave me is your father.” He had never heard of me, had no knowledge of my father’s marriage, etc. Well, I sent him copies of the marriage license, my birth certificate and pictures. Much to his surprise and mine, he was my first cousin. What an amazing thing to find my father’s family after all these years. But wait it doesn’t end there. I asked him about the story that I had heard. “Am I Native American?” “Yes, you are. Your great, great, great, great, great grandmother’s bloodline runs through you.” I asked, “Well do you know what tribe she was with?” “Yes, her name was Zilpha B and she was Powhatan from West Virginia.” Every hair on my body stood on end, not just on the back of my neck, but everywhere! Two days before I had the answer to my question, I had just finished Matoaka. Matoaka is in my collection, never to be sold. She had taken me full circle, I had found my lost family, my heritage, and my tribe. Just recently at a Doll Show back east, I finally met my first cousin. We both cried.

Last Year of the Quinlan Convention in Philadelphia



In 2005 Susan and Terence (Terry) Quinlan opened the Susan Quinlan Doll & Teddy Bear Museum & Library in Santa Barbara, CA, the largest doll and teddy bear museum in the U.S. The Museum gave them a local stage for promoting teddy bears and dolls, but they wanted to make a national impact, so they considered how they could do the most good. They were both educators, authors, and passionate about supporting artists who designed and created unique and one-of-a-kind bears and dolls. Teddy bear and doll shows and conventions had dwindled in number and size for a number of years, but no one seemed to know how to change things. Susan and Terry knew that they would have to do things differently to motivate collectors and artists to attend their 3-day Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Convention and the Saturday Show & Sale portion that was open to the public.

So 10 years ago, they decided to organize an Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Convention that provided a vehicle for educating collectors and artists as well as providing a one-stop shop for meeting and buying from more worldwide leading artists than at any other event.

They also wanted to provide an event that was as affordable and convenient as possible for the artists and collectors. So they chose Philadelphia as a convenient location in the heart of the U.S. northeast region where there was the heaviest concentration of people and a hotel that offered an economical room rate and free airport transportation. To attract collectors, they offered a show with 100-130 participating artists – the maximum capacity of the hotel meeting space. To be truthful in advertising their artist “Doll and Teddy Bear” sale, they required at least 75% of the sales items to be dolls or teddy bears, although it was actually 100% at most sales tables. Also, vendors were not allowed to participate because it was an “artist” convention & show. Artists paid no table fee, and workshop instructors kept 100% of the class fee. A convention registration fee of only \$95-\$195 was charged to cover the \$400 to wine, dine, educate and entertain an attendee. That covered the cost of 6-7 buffet meals, nightly cocktail hours, all-day refreshments,

collectable souvenir pins, and doll & teddy bear magazines. Optional half-day and full-day workshop fees were limited to \$100 or less, with the exception of one year.

Why do we tell you all this? When Susan and Terry originally went down this road, it was never their intent to conduct this event forever – maybe 5 or 10 years. They knew from their business background, there were two types of people. There are the risk-takers who are good at starting up an organization, and there are managers who are good at managing and growing the business. That is why so many founders of organizations are pushed aside or out the door once the business is up and running well. The Quinlans just wanted enough time to experiment with the process and content of their annual Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Convention & Show until they had a pretty good model in place for someone else to take over. Their strategy of “doing things differently to motivate collectors and artists to attend” would require a lot of experimenting – seeing what did and did not work – as the Quinlans knew nothing about the players (collectors and artists) and the market.

Their goal was to create an educational, social and fun event, but overall, the convention did not turn out to be the educational program the Quinlans envisioned. They were not able to attract enough speakers and attendees for the educational aspects. It turned out to be all about buying, selling and socializing, which there was nothing wrong with it – just a reflection of the market and player demands. So the future for this event might best be suited to be a Show & Sale – something that does not need the Quinlans to conduct, as there are others that can do a show as well, if not better. The Quinlans feel they took the event as far as they could, and it was time for someone else to take over.

It is the Quinlan’s hope that other doll and teddy bear event organizers can learn from their mistakes and successes so the entire world of artists and collectors will benefit. Below are lists of the things that worked and things that did not work for them. They hope some artist(s) will take over the Quinlan event and find these lists useful in setting their roadmap to grow the event.

Let us preface the following observations by saying that the greater majority of artists and collectors appreciated what we did and supported us in so many ways. Below are just general statements where there are always exceptions to anything we say, so don’t take things personally.

Among the things that did work well over the 10 years were:

- Use of a sponsor (Quinlans) to help subsidize cost
- Free admission form was good source of contact information
- \$195 convention fee had more benefits than \$95 fee
- Convention was important to artists for socializing
- Souvenir pins honoring two leading artists
- Free new and old magazines
- Helen Bullard Award for Excellence and the Beverly Port Award for Excellence
- Allow everyone to vote for **both** doll and bear artists
- Market Place where artists and collectors could sell and buy material and supplies
- Six Special Theme Displays & Sale
- Major source of supplies for artists, e.g., fur for bear artists, but difficult to attract supplier of material for doll artists
- All-day refreshments
- Meals were the major, if not only, attraction for spouses beyond helping at the sale
- Evening cocktail hours and Friday open bar for artists during set-up for the Saturday Show & Sale

- Most popular meal was one with award presentations
- Pictures of the award winning pieces on the screen for all to see at the award banquets
- Video of artist pieces shown all day behind the convention registration desk
- Hanging banner and two pull-up banners in the hotel lobby for promoting the event
- Hotel room set-up staff and catering staff
- Gallery to display creations by workshop students for all to see
- Bear-aerobic 15-minute breaks by artists Agnes Intelicato and Audrey Howell (needed larger out-of-the-way space)
- Artist Shopping Guide listing each artist's name, a sample picture of their creations, description of the unique features of their creations, explanation of why collectors bought their pieces, and their sales table number
- Representatives from Good Bears of the World, Hunt Valley Show, NIADA, ODACA, PDMAG, and TBAI describing their event or organization at dinner (not always easy to find a speaker)
- Professional Doll Makers Art Guild (PDMAG) Award Ceremony
- Good Bears of the World General Membership Meeting, Sales Table, Charity Silent Auctions, and Gifting of Teddy Bears to the local Police Department
- Free admission was effective for public relations and not necessarily for increasing attendance at Saturday Show

Not everything was successful, such as these content features and promotional efforts:

Content Features

- Educational and entertainment sessions only attended by 20-40% of the attendees; attendance by spouses was nearly non-existent
- Contributing to the low attendance at these sessions was the refusal of a teddy bear fur supplier to close down sales from her hotel suite while our educational sessions were being held
- Lunch-time session or activity for children to attract a new generation of collectors – some artists felt it took parents away from shopping so it was discontinued
- Free mentoring by leading and experienced artists for new artists – drew few new doll artists and not a single new bear artists over the years
- Only 2-3 workshops had 10+ students – 85% of workshops averaged 2-4 students
- Workshops and sessions conducted for spouses had nil attendance
- Wining and dining spouses did not motivate them to be part of the event – nearly all just there to assist wives
- 2011 auction attracted vendors and bargain hunters – artists received little for all of their hard work and creativity
- The “Under \$100 Sales Tables” with affordable items to attract new and young collectors was shopped early and picked over by adults and long time collectors
- Artist Book Signing and Sale to meet and get autographs from leading artists, authors and illustrators
- Discount Coupon Raffle allowing drawing winners to purchase any piece(s) off their favorite artists' sales tables at 10-50% discounts
- “Boot Camp” session conducted by the Quinlans to explain to first-timers the convention agenda, activities and procedures usually had low attendance
- End-of-day entertainment session for collectors while artists were setting up their sales tables
- Professional photographer to take pictures of pieces brought to or bought at the convention

Promotional Efforts

- The attendance at the 3-day convention and Saturday Show did not grow but it did not decline – nearly everyone came from PA, NY, NJ with a few from a couple of other states and a token number from the central and west coast states
- Convention attendance of artists outnumbered collectors; most artists not able to attract one customer to the convention; attendance at Saturday Show was better
- Attempt to organize the artist community to work jointly in promoting the event among their customers (artist effort declined over the years)
 - Less than 40% requested promotional material to distribute
 - Relied solely on email notices and attachments but unwilling to distribute hardcopy convention pamphlets – the most effective form of advertising
 - No promotion of convention or show on most artist websites
 - Artist emailing notice of convention/show to customers
 - Artist emailing of free passes to customers
 - Event postcards requested by artists often, if not generally, not mailed out
 - Nil offers by locals (PA, NY, NJ) to distribute show flyers for storefronts/bulletin boards or to place free ads in local publications
- Collectors and artists spread the word by mouth, but collectors never requested literature to distribute
- Effort to centralize the promotion of the event by asking artists to send us their contact lists in hopes that they would view us as a reputable third party they could trust to not misuse the information and use it only to promote the convention & show – only four artists ever sent us their contact list
- A small \$1,800 ad in the local Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper drew nil attendees each year at Saturday Show and the ad was only distributed to one section of Philadelphia by the Inquirer
- Increase of convention registration fee from \$95 to \$195 for artists (same as collectors and spouses paid) at the suggestion of some artists caused a 25% decline in artist attendance; later reduced the fee back to \$95, which did not increase artist overall attendance
- “Early access” offer to groups of 5, 10 or more did not attract groups or doll clubs more than once or twice
- Education Certificates for each 30 hours of attendance at lectures and demonstrations
- Attempt to get doll and bear show organizers on the east coast to promote each other’s events
- Attempt every year to discourage the 20-25 people who skipped the pre-paid Saturday dinners without notifying the organizers

We felt the lack of growth of this event was due partly to the misconception that this was the Quinlan’s event and never viewed by doll and teddy bear artists as **their** event and took little responsibility for its success. With some exceptions, the effort by artists to promote the convention and show declined over the years. For this event to succeed, **all artists** (not just one or two artist organizers) will need to take “ownership” of this event. This was the artist’s event – not the Quinlan’s event. The artists are the only ones benefiting and getting money from this event – not the Quinlans. Certainly a handful of artists did way more to support the event than the rest of the artists. It is the greater majority that needs to step up and do at least something to promote the event. One of the problems holding back the artist bear and doll professions is that the artists and most show organizers work independently of their peers. Artists need to understand that **they** – not the Quinlans – hold the key to the event’s greatest promotional tool. More ads in magazines and newspapers is not the answer. Paid ads are great for promoting new events and maintaining event name recognition, but they are only a small part of the solution to attracting attendees to a well-known event. The key to success is the artist’s own customer contact list. Collectively, that is the best and most effective promotional vehicle – way better than the contact list of magazines and local newspapers, because many, if not most, of those readers are not artist doll and bear collectors or located in PA, NY and NJ.

This does not mean the Quinlans are fading off into retirement. Susan will continue running her museum. Terry will continue conducting conferences in the business world as well as getting back to his museum responsibilities, which he has neglected for 10 years. During the coronavirus shutdown, Susan has been working full time on her two-volume Teddy Bear Book series that provides annotations of the approximately 4,000 teddy bear books in her museum library, similar to her earlier *Guide to Dollhouse Books*. Terry has been working full time on his book about himself and two close buddies growing up in San Francisco in the 1940s and 1950s – tentatively entitled *Young San Franciscans in a Sandbox, Out of the Mud Grew the Lotus*. We also have gotten back to exercising each afternoon and intend to continue supporting the doll and teddy bear world, just in different ways.

“Thank you everyone for all your support these past 10 years, especially those of you who did more than most to make our event all it could be – you know who you are. Those of you who were participants year after year, and that is over half of the artists – our success was your success in that ‘you were the event’ as there would be no event without you. On behalf of the artists, we want to thank all of the collectors who ever attended our event – without you, there would be no participating artists. We hope you all will continue to support whatever replaces our event.”

– Susan and Terry Quinlan