

# 3 Days to doll collecting

RICHMOND HILL — In the last few weeks, Santa's elves should have been around to watch Marg Gilbert.

She's been busy, sometimes until the early hours of the morning filling her Christmas list.

The 53 year old Unionville resident has taken to dollmaking, five of them at once, in fact.

The dolls are not the modern day Cher type, but rather bisque reproductions of French and German antiques.

Their original producers, Bru and Jumeau, for example, led an era of dollmaking in France at the beginning of the 1860's. At that time, they were making tinted bisque dolls, white porcelain bisque dolls, legs etc. were tinted flesh tone colours.

The dolls that Marg constructs are exact replicas of the antiques, carrying their makers original markings but are now cast in flesh tone porcelain.

The craft is being taught here by resident dollmaker, Marion Fasan, owner of Marion's Doll House on Newkirk Drive.

Mrs. Fasan opened her doll house early in September after dabbling in ceramics for a few years. She has imported the moulds for 28 antique reproduction dolls and after pouring the

bisque, teaches people how to put the dolls together.

Collectors, who are interested quite literally in building their own collection, can enroll in the three day course and walk away with a finished reproduction, a new hobby and a healthy start on a collection.

The first day of the program is devoted to cleaning the "greenware" or the unfired ceramic pieces. Once scraped smooth, mouths and eyes are cut out and the bisque is fired.

The second and third day of the program are devoted to china painting of the facial features, followed by another firing, affixing the eyes and finally stringing the arms, legs, body and head together.

The course costs \$25 and dolls range in price from \$22 to \$75, depending upon the size and the options the dollmaker chooses.

"Some of the people who have made the doll have had no ceramic experience," Mrs. Fasan explained.

"Some say that they're just not talented, or they could never do it, but that's silly. All that is required is patience and care."

"The reproductions are the antiques of tomorrow," she added.



## Which one is the antique?

The doll on the left is an original Armand Marseille made in 1910. Unfortunately, the doll has a slight crack in its head, substantially reducing its value, but in good condition the value is

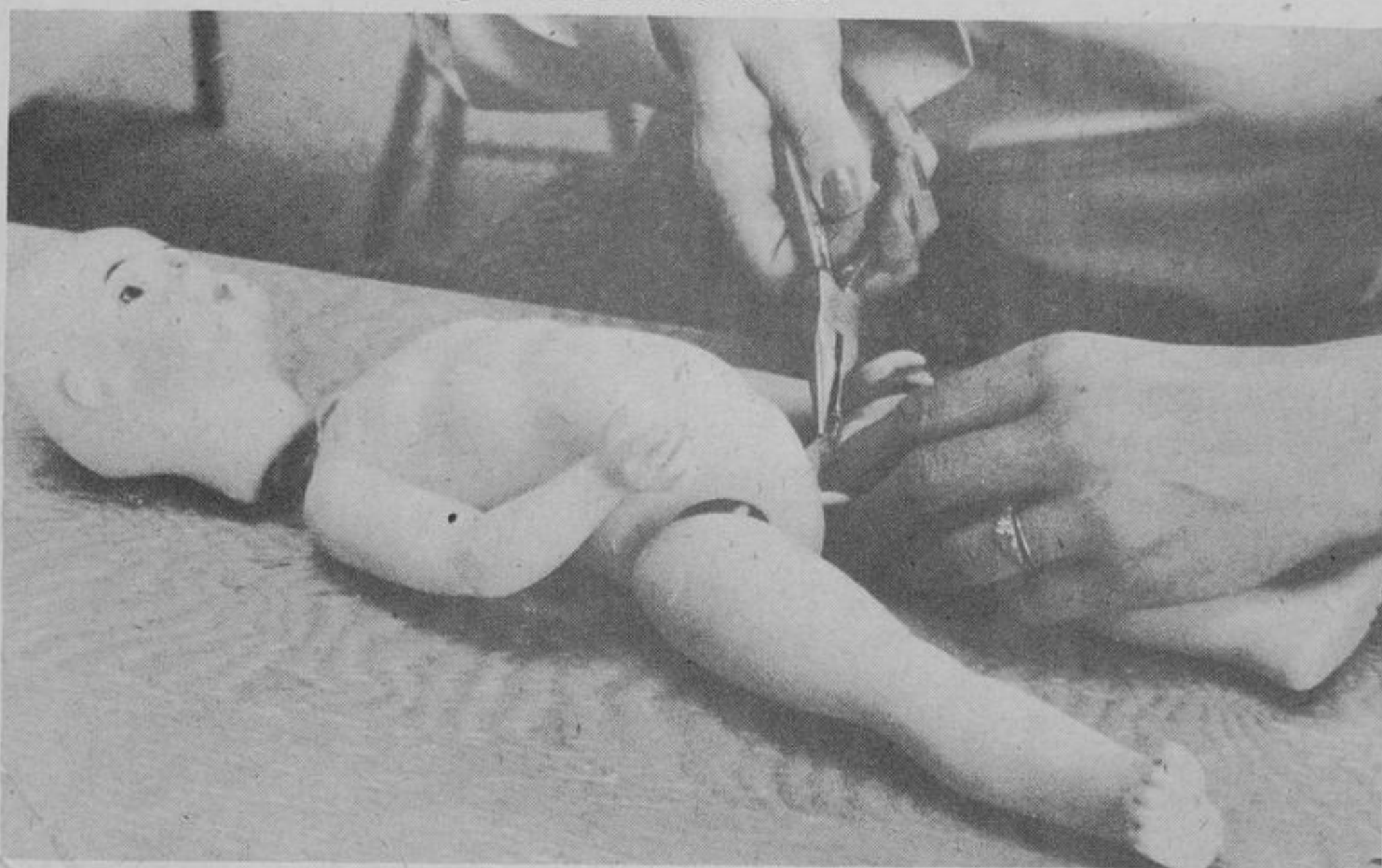
estimated at \$300. The doll on the right is a reproduction of the antique Bye-Lo doll and was made as a sample by Marion Fasan.

Story, photos  
by Denise Romberg



## Tiny dolls too

Dollmaker, Marion Fasan holds a miniature bisque reproduction of a 19th century antique. She discovered dollmaking after dabbling in ceramics for a few years.



## Getting it together

In the third day of the course, dollmakers string their dolls together. Above, a long face Jumeau reproduction doll is in the final stage.



## A new hobby

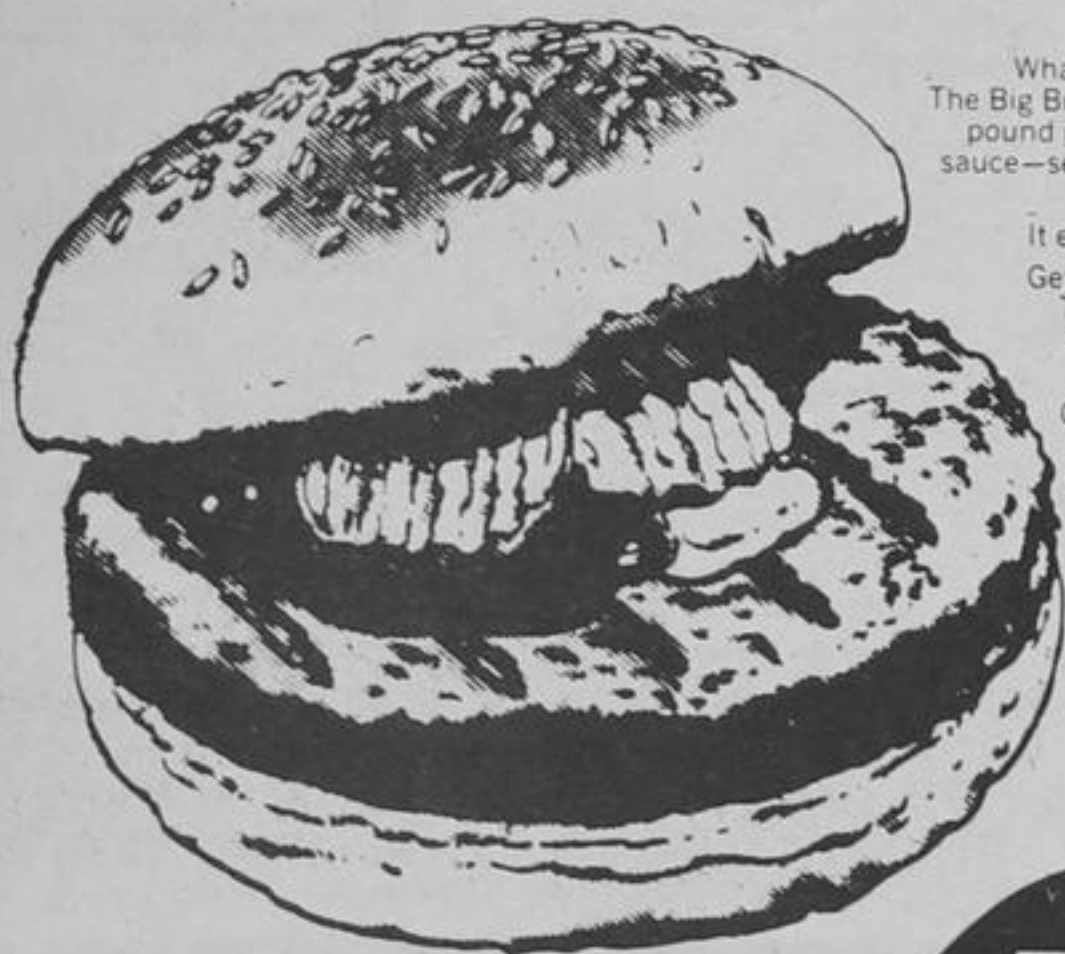
Marg Gilbert, 53, has found herself a new hobby that could well be the envy of Santa's elves. To date she has made seven different dolls, some for Christmas gifts and some to add to her growing collection. "You're never too old to find a new challenge," Mrs. Gilbert said.

Every Tuesday—5.00 p.m. 'til closing.

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